Justinian's Frankish War, 552–c. 560

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The Gothic War was a defining event of Justinian's reign, bringing both a short-term triumph for the ambitious emperor and a province plagued by threats back into the Eastern Roman Empire. Launched to take advantage of infighting within the ruling house of Ostrogothic Italy, early successes were quickly achieved by 540, but the following decade was more fraught for the Romans. Not only were the Goths now led by the capable Totila (r. 541–552), the conflict also drew the attention of the Merovingian kingdoms in Gaul.[1] Despite being open to imperial overtures initially, from 537/8 onwards Frankish forces under King Theudebert I of Austrasia (r. 533–547/8) first aided the Goths and then increasingly aimed to directly seize Italian territories.[2] This culminated in the invasion of 553, in which two Alamanni *duces* who nominally served Theudebald (r. 547/8–555), Theudebert's son, invaded Italy. Narses, the imperial generalissimo, defeated these invaders in 554, a battle that for many historians represented a decisive end to this decades-long conflict.[3]

The following years are rarely treated in detail, with modern narratives running to mere pages or paragraphs, which suggest to the reader that the last vestiges of conflict were mere footnotes to what had come before.[4] Yet the Italian peninsula in the late 550s was far from peaceful. Clues to an enduring conflict are preserved in both Greek and Latin sources, but unfortunately surviving texts neither provide a continuous narrative nor add the depth of detail found in accounts of Procopius of Caesarea and Agathias of Myrina. Events in Italy after 555, for example, are no longer narrated in detail by a near-contemporary Greek source, for Agathias left his work unfinished and its continuation, Menander the Guardsman's *History*, only survives in fragments.[5] Near-contemporary chronicles, such as the Constantinopolitan edition of John Malalas' Greek text or the Latin work of Marius of Avenches from Frankish Burgundy, likewise comment on Italian affairs, but laconically and only when they impinge on their chief interests.[6]

Narrating the aftermath of the Gothic War, even for elements as fundamental as the dates and the key political players involved, is therefore far from straightforward.

One piece of this puzzle is the fate of Frankish Italy. Having repeatedly intervened in the Gothic War and seized, or were given control over, various provinces, how Merovingian rulers defended their Italian territories after the Gothic War remains an understudied topic. Many reconstructions of this period attempt to link together the often-contradictory texts to offer a coherent narrative, with the broad consensus settling on gradual territorial losses in the 550s, perhaps with the Franks retaining a sliver of Venetia.[7] As the course of Frankish history has received renewed attention in recent years, it would be appropriate to flesh out this narrative and develop a new synthesis of the abundant scholarship.

With the integral connections, whether cultural, diplomatic, or economic, between Gaul and the Mediterranean having now been firmly established, we can also reframe the Italian conflict within this context of continuous interactions.[8] The ongoing debate over the Three Chapters, Justinian's signature theological concern, was for example a persistent issue that drew in the Frankish church and its impact on diplomatic matters needs to be reconsidered. The royal protagonists concerned, Theudebald and his great-uncles, King Childebert I of Paris (r. 511–558) and King Chlothar I of Soissons (r. 511–561), likewise deserves further analysis, for one king's hostility to Constantinople did not imply that others acted in a similar fashion. Indeed, given the endemic conflict between relatives within the Merovingian dynasty, it would be more plausible to suggest that each ruler would act to counter his competitors' interests abroad. This renewed focus on the primary sources needs also be applied to the vibrant historiography. Among Byzantinists, the most important contribution is perhaps Dariusz Brodka's 2018 monograph on Narses, the imperial generalissimo who repeatedly defeated the Franks in Italy, which artfully fuses together the Latin and Greek evidence to provide a valuable reconstruction of the Italian wars.[9] Florian Battistella's 2017 volume on Pope Pelagius I (556–561) similar strengthens our understanding of this frequently-disregarded pope, whose letters reveal much about Frankish-

Roman contacts beyond military matters.[10] Combined with more fine-grained studies published by historians of the early medieval West, it is now possible to chart the history of Merovingian Italy as one part of a larger story entangling both emperors and kings, in which conflict did not preclude more nuanced exchanges across the Mediterranean.

This article thus embraces a broader vantage point. By surveying Frankish involvement in Italy from 552 until c. 560, it aims to account in full the far from straightforward trajectory of Merovingian-Roman relations. Instead of an unimportant epilogue to the Gothic War, Justinian's Frankish War, for lack of a better descriptor, proved to be a long-term headache for Constantinople. While the Frankish invasion of 553 has received some attention, the war following Theudebald's death, which was led by Chlothar after he inherited the young king's realm, has yet to be examined in its full context. For example, by also investigating the host of other issues faced by Chlothar, we can trace how and why the conflict was initially disastrous for the Franks. From 558 onwards, however, the king's problems in Gaul resolved themselves and it was imperial fortunes that faltered, leading to a truce that preserved Merovingian Italy. This change of prospects hinged much on the death of Childebert of Paris, whose reign has similarly been neglected in the historiography of the Italian wars. A reading of his correspondence with Rome reveals that he pursued a more conciliatory approach with the Roman Empire, while his war with his younger brother Chlothar after 555 likewise needs to be viewed with events beyond Gaul in mind. This new narrative does not only strengthen our understanding of Mediterranean diplomacy, for it also reshapes our interpretation of the oft-maligned Three Chapters controversy and Pelagius I. The pope's letters to Gaul, one of which recently characterized as a 'pathetic plea', were written amidst a long-running struggle for Italy, making his neglected words crucial clues to imperial diplomacy in the 550s.[11] Drawing these often fragmentary narratives together, I suggest that the Frankish War ought not to be seen as a mere afterthought to the far better-recorded Gothic War, but was a conflict that still deserves greater attention from both Byzantinists and historians of the post-Roman West.

Theudebald's War, 552–555

The year 552 proved to be the end of Ostrogothic hopes for victory in the Gothic War. The charismatic Totila fought against Narses in June/July 552 at Taginae, but fell in battle and his forces were routed. His short-lived successor, Teia, fared no better, as he was promptly defeated and killed in October the same year.[12] Nonetheless, Gothic holdouts remained in places such as Cumae and Lucca, while another group sought the aid of the Franks to continue the fight.[13] This was an understandable choice for the diehard resistance, since Theudebert of Austrasia had secured territories throughout northern Italy as imperial and Gothic armies kept each other occupied.[14] In the seventh-century *Life of John of Réomé* composed by Jonas of Bobbio, Theudebert's expedition into Italy was even associated with the removal of imperial jurisdiction over Gaul, which is perhaps another hint of the king's decisive break with the empire.[15] Parts of Liguria were likely seized in 539, while the Cottian Alps were lost to the Franks at some point in the early 540s.[16] A substantial portion of Venetia, finally, was handed over as part of a treaty of friendship with the embattled Goths in 546/7.[17] As the Gothic regime fractured in 552, it is also evident the Frankish forces acted opportunistically to defend their interests, for example by preventing the city of Verona from being seized by imperial forces.[18] Given that Teia had already tried to secure Frankish reinforcement in the second half of 552, it is little wonder that after his death the final Gothic stalwarts would hold out hope for another military intervention.[19]

The Austrasian king in 552 was Theudebald, the teenage son of Theudebert, and the only source for his response, the Greek historian Agathias, noted that the young ruler refused to be involved. Yet two Alamanni brothers, Butilinus and Leutharis, both high in the esteem of the Frankish court, nonetheless decided to take an army of 75,000 men into Italy to fight nominally on the Goths' side, with Agathias supposing that they had territorial conquest in mind instead.[20] While much of modern scholarship agrees with Agathias that the Italian expedition was the

brainchild of the two brothers and not Theudebald, other sources paint a more complex picture.[21] An earlier bout of fighting between Franks and Romans had already occurred after Theudebald's accession in 548 and resulted in the death of a Frankish *dux*.[22] This conflict was presumably a localized affair, since it is not mentioned in Procopius' detailed narrative of the Gothic War, but as the conflict was described by Marius of Avenches as a "Roman war," the same description the chronicler gave to Butilinus' Italian adventure, this struggle most likely took place in Italy, where both Frankish and Roman forces were active.[23] Since only Austrasian Franks had a foothold in the peninsula, Marius' brief notice therefore suggests that some in Theudebald's kingdom, whether under direct orders or as free agents operating from Austrasian territories, had already fought against the empire.[24] Procopius further reported that in 552, Frankish forces in Venetia sought to hinder Narses' Italian expedition.[25] As a large portion of Gothic Venetia was granted to Theudebert, this Frankish blocking force, again, likely served Theudebald at least on a nominal level.

Finally, the Austrasian court had also made its feelings known when it defiantly defended the actions of the young king's father against imperial accusations of misconduct, a rebuttal recorded both in Procopius and a dossier preserved in the epistolary collection now known as the *Austrasian Letters*.[26] Combined with Procopius' report of Teia's (dashed) hopes of Frankish aid and Agathias' claim that the Gothic stalwarts preferred to seek aid from Theudebald over Chlothar and Childebert (allegedly due to their realms' distance from northern Italy), it is eminently possible that the Austrasian court, if not the young king himself, was already hostile to imperial interests.[27] When Butilinus and Leutharis invaded, Teia was admittedly already dead, but an Austrasian army would still have been of use for the empire's enemies, for Gothic holdouts remained defiant.[28] A muscular response would no doubt also have deterred imperial forces from capitalizing on their success by advancing on Frankish-held territories in northern Italy, even if we put aside the attraction of simple conquest. Regardless of young Theudebald's personal

involvement in his regime, the Austrasian establishment would therefore have had ample reasons to support an Italian expedition.

Agathias' historiographical context likewise needs to be considered. The sole historian to record Theudebald's reluctance to intervene was writing in the 570s, when some in Constantinople wished to broker an alliance with the Franks in order to contain the Lombards in Italy. As such, the historian presented a very positive interpretation of the Merovingian rulers, despite their history of conflict with the empire.[29] The same narrative strategy is applicable to his account of the Austrasian invasion of Italy, for he ascribed the initiative exclusively to the Alamanni Butilinus and Leutharis. The Alamanni, furthermore, were described in a moralizing excursus as a pagan people, which further distanced these 'barbarians' from the Christian Franks whom Agathias favoured.[30] However, since Butilinus was reportedly a general who had served Theudebert in Italy as early as 539, he was most likely a long-term member of the Austrasian establishment and would have been the ideal candidate to lead the army meant to reinforce Teia.[31] Indeed, Brodka rightfully highlights that sources other than Agathias all describe the expedition as a Frankish invasion, which is suggestive of how this intervention was viewed by sixth- and seventh-century observers.[32] We can push this interpretation a little further, for one of Justinian's constitutions that was sent to Narses in Italy specifically referred to a "recent incursion of Franks", thus dating the edict to shortly after 554.[33] This law survives only in one manuscript and in fragmentary form, but if this particular phrasing is at all representative, then we possess a very early official perspective on Butilinus' invasion – that Narses clashed with the Franks, not the Alamanni.

Butilinus and Leutharis both met their end in Italy, the former in battle with Narses while the latter and allegedly his entire army succumbed to disease, but the aftershocks of their invasion remain understudied.[34] The historian Agathias, unfortunately, does not advance his story much further, as he then moves on to the final subjugation of a Gothic garrison in 555, an event that he placed around the time of Theudebald's death the same year.[35] Thus ends Agathias'

Italian narrative, even though he continued to chronicle events on the eastern front up to 559, which suggests that his *Histories* were not completed, presumably due to his untimely death.[36] Nonetheless, Agathias writes that Narses was aware that there would be more conflict with the Franks and gave a speech (no doubt one invented by the historian) warning Roman soldiers that as only a small number of Franks have been defeated, this imperial victory could provoke yet more incursions.[37] Given that Agathias wrote in the 570s, he was in a good position to know that this conflict would continue and so able to hint to the reader in the completed part of his *Histories* that Narses' work was not yet done. Indeed, the ending of the Italian narrative as we have it, the inheritance of Theudebald's territories by Chlothar, would have provided an excellent introduction for Agathias to the next phase of the war, which would now be conducted by Narses against a king who had thus far played a minimal role in Italy.[38]

Chlothar's War, 555–c. 560

Unfortunately, we are left with a dearth of sources for the following years, with reconstructions of Italian events dependent on the Burgundian Marius of Avenches, the letters of Pope Pelagius I, and the anonymous chronicle now known as the *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*. According to Marius' *Chronicle*, in 556 Frankish forces first defeated the Romans, before the empire seized the initiative and conquered 'the part of Italy that King Theudebert had acquired', which must refer to Frankish holdings in the Cottian Alps, Liguria, and Venetia.[39] The victory is not fleshed out in any other source, but Brodka plausibly attributed one surviving quotation from Menander the Guardsman's *History*, which described Narses' flight from a rare battlefield reverse, as possible corroboration to the defeat described by Marius.[40] In terms of chronology, as Marius had misplaced the death of Butilinus to 555 instead of 554, it is possible that in reality this series of battles was similarly misdated and so should be placed c. 555 instead. However, as the conquest of Merovingian Italy was unlikely to have been accomplished within a year, it would remain

prudent to be more ambiguous and posit that warfare continued into the late 550s and ended at an unknown point. This interpretation is supported by letters written by Pope Pelagius in 559, which together suggest that parts of Liguria and Venetia returned to Roman authority before this point, leading scholars such as Stein and Brodka to place an end to the war around 558/9.[41] One caveat nonetheless remains, as in another neglected letter written in 560/1, Pelagius bewailed the devastation wrought on Italy by "over twenty-five years" of war to the praetorian prefect of North Africa.[42] If read literally, it suggests that embers of conflict remained potentially as late as 561, long after the beginning of the Gothic War in 535, though of course it is equally plausible that the pope had exaggerated the situation for rhetorical effect.[43]

The campaign to conquer Frankish Italy is otherwise undocumented by near-contemporary texts, and we are reliant on yet more oblique references in later sources. The *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, a Lombard composition first completed around 625 that continued Prosper of Aquitaine's fifth-century chronicle, warrants particular attention.[44] Much of the sixth-century narrative in this text is muddled, with a certain "Asbadus" being the general who was initially sent by Justinian to conquer Italy, instead of Belisarius. This general allegedly campaigned chiefly in Liguria and then died in Pavia in the "second year" of Justinian, which led to Narses being sent instead, who conclusively ended the war. [45] This is of course incorrect and speaks of a seventh-century author attempting, and failing, to plausibly tie together the principal sources at their disposal, the *Chronicle* of Isidore of Seville and Asbadus' epitaph in Pavia, which is quoted in full.[46] Nonetheless, Asbadus has generally been identified as a Gepid who served Narses and who had, according to Procopius, slain Totila in 552.[47] This Asbadus does not feature in later Greek sources, but given his early appearance in Narses' following, it is certainly reasonable for him to be eventually promoted further in Italy to become a *magister militum*, Asbadus' title as preserved in this seventh-century text. As his epitaph references Asbadus' conquest of Liguria and the "Gothic Alps" for the empire, the conflict described has thus been tied to Narses' retaking of northern Italy in the 550s.[48] An error in this account, the impossible

claim that Asbadus had died in the "second year" of Justinian, has meanwhile been plausibly suggested to be a mistaken reference instead to Emperor Justin II.[49] This would be a very understandable mistake, for even the well-informed *Liber pontificalis* had misnamed Justin as Justinian in the seventh century.[50] More recently, both Christophe Badel and Dariusz Brodka have suggested that this dating clause originally did not refer to an emperor's regnal year, but that it was originally a reference to the general dying in the second year of his term as a *magister militum*.[51] Although we cannot ascertain what occurred in Venetia, we can therefore presume that it was under Asbadus' leadership that Liguria was conquered by imperial forces, even though the precise details remain unrecoverable.

From this brief overview, it suffices to say here that Frankish territorial losses were heavy, even if we are restricted to only using the words of Marius of Avenches and Pope Pelagius. What happened next is still more tortuous to reconstruct. According to Menander the Guardsman, in a later encounter with Frankish forces that took place around 561, a Roman official noted that there was a truce between the empire and the Franks, which is suggestive of an end to this conflict.[52] Moreover, Menander places this meeting at the bank of the river Adige, which flows past the city of Verona, and adds that the Frankish commander blocked Narses' crossing. The whole of Venetia was thus not under imperial control, for a Merovingian army was able to hinder Narses' movement near such a major settlement. As John Malalas' *Chronicle* further describes Verona as a "city of the Goths" when news of its fall was triumphantly sent to Constantinople in 562, it seems unlikely that the Frankish army was invading imperial territories, for otherwise it would have been pointless for a Roman envoy to remind the Franks of their existing truce, or that Verona was an imperial city in revolt.[53] If this is the case, then Merovingian Italy was perhaps a rather less moribund entity by the end of the 550s than it is often supposed, since it could intervene in favour of an independent "Gothic" city. With some settlements still under Gothic control, it would also provide a plausible context for this truce, as it implies that earlier imperial successes against the Franks did not last.

Thus, while it is often simply said that there was a treaty between the Franks and the Romans, particular with regards to a sliver of Venetia remaining under Frankish control, what this means in context of Marius' statement needs to be refined further.[54] Menander's fragmentary account, for instance, can be read together with a brief comment by Gregory of Tours. According to this Gallo-Roman bishop, an area of unknown size in north-eastern Italy conquered by King Childebert II of Austrasia (r. 575–596) had once belonged to his father, Sigibert I (r. 561–575).[55] It is possible, as Carl Hammer and Simon Loseby suggest, that this only referred to the Italian territories Sigibert had gained in 574/5, when Paul the Deacon reported that the fortress of Nano in Trent surrendered to the Franks.[56] Other territorial gains beyond this site, however, were not noted for this raid by Paul. Indeed, the historian then noted that the Franks were driven out by a Lombard *dux*, which Paul placed around the time of Sigibert's death in 575.[57] The Frankish conquest of Nano was thus an exceedingly ephemeral one, making it rather unlikely that this minor gain by Sigibert at the end of the king's life was what Gregory of Tours had meant. Frankish Venetia, on the other hand, was a more substantial piece of territory and would have been inherited by Sigibert upon Chlothar I's death in 561, making it a fitting goal for Childebert's forces decades later, a point first made by Richard Heuberger in 1932.[58] Marius was therefore wrong to say that Theudebert's gains were lost, for Frankish Venetia remained in existence nearly a decade after the climactic defeat of Totila and Teia. Even so, this conclusion only raises the question of why northern Italy was not retaken by imperial forces in the 550s. Narses, after all, was an accomplished general and it seems illogical not to take major settlements such as Verona if his earlier campaigns were entirely successful.

A little more light can be shined on this war in the late 550s, however, by an awareness that Narses clashed not only with the forces of Theudebald, but also that of his grand-uncle, Chlothar I. After Theudebald's death in 555, his kingdom was seized by Chlothar instead of being shared with his other surviving grand-uncle, Childebert I.[59] The war in Italy was therefore fought by forces that served, at least nominally, Chlothar and the eventual truce, blurry though it

may be, was likewise forged under his reign. Chlothar, unfortunately, remains an enigma for much of the Gothic War and we cannot establish his stance, if any, to the war between Goths and Romans.[60] Yet he undoubtedly had to take an interest in Italy, for Marius of Avenches ascribes a victory and defeat for Frankish forces that he dates to after Chlothar's inheritance of Theudebald's kingdom.[61] Modern scholars who turn their eye to Chlothar's attitudes to Italy have so far only highlighted the other threats the king had to deal with, namely the rebellion of his son Chramn and wars with the Saxons.[62] In their interpretations, these conflicts drew Chlothar's attention more than the war against the empire, which, when combined with military defeats in Italy, contributed to the eventual truce. As Merovingian Italy was preserved under his watch, Chlothar's reign nonetheless merits further analysis.

One clue is provided by a diplomatic revolution between the Franks and the Lombards, as seen by the marriage of Chlothar's daughter Chlodoswintha to Alboin, the future ruler of Lombard Italy, at some point in 555–61.[63] There had been a tense relationship between the Lombards and Theudebald, as both the young king and his father had married Lombard princesses of the previous ruling dynasty overthrown by Alboin's father.[64] After Theudebald's death in 555, Chlothar may have attempted to maintain an anti-Lombard stance, for Gregory of Tours reported that he had a relationship with Walderada, the Austrasian king's widow.[65] Chlothar allegedly put her aside after criticism from his bishops and gave the former queen in marriage to the *dux* of the Bavarians, which, when combined with the reported marriage of his daughter to Alboin, a scion of the new Lombard ruling dynasty, can be interpreted as an attempt at rapprochement with the Lombards.[66]

Forging better relations with the Lombards was an astute move, for despite Paul the Deacon's claim that the Lombards were always friends of Constantinople while they had remained in Pannonia, his account is not borne out by earlier sources.[67] The Lombards' last appearances in Procopius' *Wars* were not happy ones. In 552, imperial reinforcement for a Lombard attack on the Gepids was delayed, causing a Lombard embassy to reproach Justinian

for not honouring their alliance.[68] In the same year in Italy, Narses had to send away the Lombard auxiliaries under his command as they were too lawless for his liking.[69] We know nothing more until a decade later, when Justinian had allegedly planned to settle the Avars in Pannonia Secunda in 562, a move that would have damaged the interests of both the Gepids and the Lombards, the two competing powers in the region.[70] The Lombard relationship with Constantinople had evidently become much worse by 566/7, when the new emperor, Justin II, sent an army to help the Gepids defeat the Lombards.[71] The Lombards were therefore certainly not constant friends of the empire before 568, for they had recently been at war, and it would also be plausible to suggest that ties had been cooling ever since 552. Neil Christie's suggestion, that the Frankish marriage was an indication of Lombards' distance from the empire, is thus quite justified.[72] Given the Italian war of the late 550s, it would indicate that Chlothar, whether he was currently in conflict with the empire or had recently secured a truce, was nonetheless creating marriage ties with another polity that was also increasingly at rift with Constantinople. The marriage, although undatable with any more precision, is therefore a further clue to Chlothar's war with the empire.

The problems of Chramn and the Saxons were similarly more complicated, for both issues had been resolved in Chlothar's favour by 558. Chramn broke with his father in 555 and gained the support of Childebert, his uncle.[73] The uncle and the nephew then both campaigned against Chlothar in 556/7.[74] The Saxon war was also, according to Gregory of Tours, incited by Childebert.[75] Nonetheless, no matter how dangerous these conflicts were for Chlothar, they were promptly resolved in December 558 with Childebert's death.[76] As modern reconstructions place the conquest of much of Frankish Italy as having been completed by 558/9, the chronological coincidence is a convenient one indeed. With the resolution of his internal woes and his reunification of the Merovingian kingdoms, Chlothar now had an opportunity to stabilise the so-far disastrous Italian situation and negotiate a truce with Narses. The Romans may likewise have had reason to be cautious, for an outbreak of the plague afflicted Constantinople in 558, while

Kutrigur raiders breached the Long Walls in 559, allegedly causing panic in the capital.[77] It is therefore possible that imperial resources were again overstretched, making efforts to end the long-running conflict in Italy, at least for the moment, more palatable. Events in Italy leading up to this moment are, again, impossible to chronicle today, but no matter how it was agreed, this truce is surely one of Chlothar's more significant achievements, for his Italian realm managed to weather the seemingly undefeatable Narses.

Childebert and the Empire, 546–558

Given his deliberate two-pronged attack against Chlothar, we must also examine Childebert's connections to the empire and why his death may have been particularly inopportune for Constantinople. Childebert, ironically, was the recipient of several letters from imperial Rome, so we can reconstruct in some detail his attitudes to Constantinople, making it all the more striking that the same sources have not been brought together with the sources for Justinian's Frankish War. What evidence we can piece together from before 556 certainly suggests that Childebert was open to imperial diplomatic overtures. The earliest testament is admittedly inauspicious, for Childebert and his brothers first agreed to support the Romans against the Ostrogoths, before making a deal with the latter and reinforcing Gothic Italy instead.[78] Later clues, however, suggest that Childebert had a change of heart, or that Constantinopolitan policy-makers had at least thought that the king became more amenable to imperial diplomacy. From the letters of Pope Vigilius (537–555), we learn that the pontiff urged the papal vicar for Gaul to ensure that Childebert keeps his agreements with Justinian in 545 and 546.[79] After hearing of the fall of Rome in January 550 to Gothic forces, Vigilius further asked the vicar to urge the king to write to Totila and ensure that the Gothic ruler would not harm the church's interests.[80] The latter move is particularly revealing, for it implies that Childebert was seen by the pope as someone who could rein in Totila's actions in Italy.[81]

An appeal for support in the religious sphere would not also imply political connections, but in the case of Vigilius we can be more certain. In 545 and 546, for example, the pope had made clear that the appointment of two successive bishops of Arles as the papal vicar had required Justinian's permission and the support of Belisarius, the chief imperial general in Italy.[82] The grant of a pallium to a Frankish bishop may appear at first glance to have been of little concern to Justinian, but these events need to be viewed through the prism of Childebert's previous anti-imperial stance and his nephew Theudebert's Italian acquisitions in the 540s.[83] Indeed, the timing of the two grants is suggestive of a more complex reality hidden by the sources. The former bishop of Arles, Auxanius, had announced his election in 543 to Vigilius, but only received the pallium in May 545.[84] On the other hand, a sense of urgency can be discerned from his successor Aurelian's reception of the pallium, as the twenty-three-year-old Aurelian received his privileges shortly after his elevation in 546.[85] Vigilius' grant to Aurelian was also likely linked to the grant of papal privileges to a monastery Childebert founded in November 547, which the king had specifically written to Rome for.[86] As Vigilius appears to have served Justinian as a loyal advisor throughout the 540s, his letters thus suggest that tentative steps, at the very least, were made to align Childebert with the empire.[87] Moreover, as these communications would have taken place at the same time as the fall of Rome to Totila and Theudebert's treaty with the ascendant Gothic king in 546–7, it is tempting to think that the imperial court made improving relations with another Frankish ruler something of a priority. Childebert no doubt appreciated these timely concessions, for Aurelian was the son of another bishop favoured by the king and the monastery at Arles was a royal foundation, one of the first of its kind in the Merovingian kingdoms.[88] Even if these grants had nothing to do with the Gothic War, the prompt fulfilment of Childebert's wishes would nevertheless suggest a rapprochement with the Roman Empire from the mid-540s onwards, a move that had the approval of both Justinian and Belisarius.

Austrasian Franks in Italy certainly remained a real and present danger, for Theudebald's troops skirmished with imperial forces in 548 and would hinder Narses' Italian expedition in 552, which suggests that the treaty with the Goths was indeed taken seriously by the Austrasian court.[89] In this context, Procopius' claim that a Frankish king had rejected Totila's offer to wed a Merovingian princess takes on greater significance.[90] The positioning of this anecdote suggests that it took place shortly before he captured Rome in 550, so Totila's planned marriage alliance must have involved either a daughter of Childebert or Chlothar. As there is no evidence for Chlothar's *Italienpolitik* at this point and given Vigilius' letters, Childebert would be the likelier candidate to have distanced himself from Totila.[91] This diplomatic repudiation provides a fitting context for Vigilius' letter in 550, for Childebert was asked to again curtail Totila's actions. Since Childebert had asked for and successfully received appointments and privileges from both Rome and Constantinople over the preceding decade, Vigilius and his handlers could have been quite confident that this request would not be rejected out of hand. Even if Childebert's forces never involved themselves directly, it would have been advantageous for Justinian to at least sow divisions between the three Frankish kings, so that instead of facing a united Merovingian front as in the 530s, the Romans only had to contend with the young Theudebald. This then raises an interesting question for Childebert's conflict with Chlothar after 555: with the two brothers actively fighting against each other while the latter was also contesting Italy, could Childebert have also been partly motivated by his links with the Roman Empire?

With this in mind, we must now turn to the much-maligned Three Chapters controversy, as the only sources for Childebert's attitudes to the empire in the 550s are concerned with this particular dispute. The king seemingly took a strong interest in this theological debate, for he convened the fifth council of Orléans in October 549, where the bishops specifically anathematized two Christological heresies and aligned itself with the papacy, which has been conventionally viewed as evidence of the king's pro-Three Chapters stance.[92] This particular condemnation, however, remains a broad and general one, and not one that Justinian would have

disagreed with in any way, for he too anathematized the Eutychian and Nestorian heresies. Moreover, Bishop Aurelian of Arles had sent an envoy to Constantinople, a certain Anastasius, to specifically ask Vigilius about his doctrinal position.[93] As the envoy reached the pope on 14 July 549 and the pope only wrote a reply on 29 April 550, by the time the bishops had gathered at Orléans the Frankish church would have had no official confirmation of the papacy's stance.[94] It would then be reasonable for the council to offer a universally acceptable formulation that still emphasized their adherence to the papacy, one that touched on the Christological debate of the day without committing explicitly to one position or the other. This is not to say the king and his bishops were disinterested. Despite Aurelian receiving privileges from Vigilius in previous years, by 549 he had evidently been under pressure to ask questions about the pope's orthodoxy. Indeed, in the same letter Vigilius specifically warned Aurelian and other Frankish bishops not to heed "false writings", which is surely an indication that a healthy debate on the Three Chapters was already raging in Gaul.[95] The fact that Vigilius nevertheless mounted a defence of his doctrinal position at the same time as requesting Childebert to rein in Totila's behaviour in this letter, however, suggests the productive relationship between Rome and Arles had yet to disintegrate.[96]

The divisions within the Frankish church are further evident in another letter written by the Milanese clergy to Merovingian envoys travelling to Constantinople around 552.[97] This missive is much more hostile to Justinian's doctrinal initiative, for it accuses Anastasius, the envoy from Arles, of supporting the imperial heresy and that he was given the difficult task of convincing the Frankish church of the same.[98] This letter further urged the reader to write to the bishops of Provence, so that they too would in turn write to Pope Vigilius in Constantinople and oppose the condemnation of the Three Chapters.[99] The recipients of the Milanese clergy's exhortation are unfortunately unknown, with both envoys from Theudebald and Childebert being plausible targets.[100] But even so, given the author's warning of the spread of Anastasius' deception in Gaul and the implication that some bishops in Provence did not yet feel the need to

write to Vigilius, it is plausible that at least some within the Frankish church were open to condemning the Three Chapters. As Arles was where Anastasius was originally sent from and presumably where his supposed deception was the most widespread, the same letter also supplies an indirect hint that Childebert's attitudes regarding theology were likewise ambiguous.

If the reception in Gaul was not entirely hostile to imperial theology, but instead more mixed, then Childebert's concerns from 556 onwards become more intelligible, for he and Sapaudus, Aurelian's successor at Arles, would write letters to the newly-consecrated Pope Pelagius I on this matter. Again, questions were raised of the pope's orthodoxy, but this did not prevent Childebert from acquiring what he sought, which was a pallium for Sapaudus, who had been bishop of Arles since 551.[101] Pelagius further noted that he sent the requested relics to Childebert and to the monastery at Lérins.[102] If the Frankish church was uniformly critical of the papacy's condemnation of the Three Chapters, then these gifts would have been meaningless and would not have helped to enhance Childebert's position.[103] Instead, I suggest that it is more plausible to see the king as walking a fine line theologically, at once relaying the questions of those doubting Pelagius' doctrinal purity and still using Rome to strengthen the see of Arles' prestige, much as he had done while Aurelian was the bishop. Similarly to his predecessor, Sapaudus was the son of another prominent official serving Childebert, this time a certain Placidus, the governor of Provence.[104] As this was now the second time Childebert had parachuted a loyalist scion into Arles, the king surely would have been aware that as the previous pope had needed permission from Justinian to grant the pallium, a request to another pontiff may have to meet the same requirement. Even if Pelagius' letters do not explicitly say so, the emperor's potential involvement must have weighed on the minds of everyone involved.[105] As Pelagius granted the pallium relatively promptly, in February 557, the same urgency that led to the swift award to Aurelian in 546 may thus have also impacted on the pope's thinking. Just as it was in the mid-540s, another Frankish king was fighting the empire, making it perhaps prudent for Rome to accede to Childebert's wishes, lest he too become involved in Italy.

Pelagius' defence of his own doctrinal stance in these letters has rightfully been seen as rather desperate, for he blamed the theological furore on the long-dead Empress Theodora and shadowy "Nestorians" in Constantinople, when neither were involved in imperial policy-making in the 550s.[106] We do, however, have grounds to think that his arguments still had some justification. Pelagius had already spent much time in the eastern Mediterranean as the papal envoy, gaining the favour of Justinian and involving himself in the affairs in the patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem.[107] His swift about-turn from a defender of the Three Chapters to an adherent of Justinian's condemnation of the same texts, which facilitated his accession to the papal see, likewise suggests that he was a canny political operator.[108]

Pelagius' letters to the Franks may thus have been written with more skill than historians today are willing to give him credit for. Battistella has already highlighted how the pope consistently tried to strengthen papal authority, perhaps even using the chaotic situation in the 550s to extend his influence.[109] Similarly, although the pope's studious focus on the four earlier ecumenical councils, instead of the fifth and most recent council held at Constantinople in 553 that condemned the Three Chapters, in his letters to Gaul (and indeed also in that of later popes) has conventionally been read as a rhetorical tool to ignore a particularly contentious issue, Pelagius was far from alone in doing so.[110] Even though the eastern evidence remains uneven, it is nonetheless intriguing that both Patriarch John IV of Jerusalem (575–594) and Patriarch Sophronius of Jerusalem (634–c. 638) similarly prioritized the four earlier councils in their letters.[111] A letter by Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (580–607) meanwhile was noted by the ninth-century Photius as not describing in detail the four ecumenical councils, causing the letter to be critiqued by a Roman pope.[112] As Eulogius not outlining the four councils more explicitly was the highlighted critique, we might suppose then that the fifth council was not only neglected, but also that its omission was not a particular problem in either Alexandria or Rome. From this broader perspective, Pelagius' letters may have been less desperate than commonly supposed, for

his discussion (or lack thereof) of the ecumenical councils followed the same convention as that adopted by sixth-century patriarchs of Jerusalem and Alexandria.[113]

Given his war-torn context, even if the pope was grasping at straws theologically, his communication with Childebert's realm still had a very real use, for these letters were written at the same time as when Frankish armies battled Narses in Italy. With Childebert the only other Frankish king left standing after Theudebald's death in 555 and his ongoing conflict with his brother, ensuring that Childebert did not decisively turn against Justinian was likely a priority for the empire. Fortunately for the pope, the king at least had kept somewhat of an open mind. Despite evidence of some doubt within his kingdom as early as 549, when an envoy had to be sent to Constantinople to quiz Vigilius regarding his orthodoxy, Childebert remained content to ask Pelagius to answer his detractors' criticisms instead of attacking the pope directly.

This relatively neutral attitude can be contrasted with that of Nicetius of Trier, a bishop within Theudebald's and then Chlothar's kingdom, who wrote an undated letter addressed to Justinian attacking him as the "son of the devil".[114] We do not otherwise possess clues to other bishops' views under Chlothar, but Nicetius' example certainly provides a striking contrast with that of Sapaudus, for his letters to Rome were far from polemical. Pelagius' laboured defence of his own orthodoxy was therefore a necessary one, for there remained a possibility that Childebert's kingdom could remain on the sidelines, not openly condemning or supporting the Three Chapters. Even if the Frankish church stood resolutely against imperial religious policy, Pelagius' efforts would have still mattered, if only to maintain a line of communication with Childebert, who was helping the imperial cause, perhaps inadvertently, by keeping Chlothar occupied on other fronts. Nor can we be so certain that Pelagius' letters were in vain, for the last surviving letter to Gaul was composed between December 558 and February 559. This has surely more to do with the lack of surviving sources and does not suggest that the pope was no longer in contact with the Frankish church until his death in 561.[115] Childebert's death in December 558 no doubt complicated matters, for his kingdom would be inherited by Chlothar, but as a truce in

Italy would soon be agreed, Pelagius' influence could not have been negligible in peacetime either, if only due to the papal estates in Provence.[116] Without further evidence, we cannot say that the pope's case was entirely unconvincing. The Frankish church, after all, was willing to accept letters and relics from popes and emperors alike in the following decades, even though both Rome and Constantinople stood by their condemnation of the Three Chapters.[117]

The pope's repeated requests for supplies from Gaul have similarly received a dim reception from modern historians, for they suggest that the papacy was thoroughly impoverished after the Gothic War.[118] But if we situated his words in the context of the Frankish War, these requests take on greater significance, for Pelagius' resources were no doubt constrained further by the fact that northern Italy remained in flames. Childebert's kingdom on the other hand bordered Italy and was where the papal patrimony was located, which gave Pelagius yet another reason to secure Childebert's friendship. Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen have argued that Pelagius was careful to ascribe blame to neither the Goths nor the Romans in his letters to Sapaudus of Arles in 556–7, but the avoidance of blame is a delicate issue regarding the Merovingians as well.[119] Battistella has rightfully pointed out that this silence has more to do with the pope's relationship with the Franks, as it would have been impolitic to mention their involvement when Merovingian forces under Butilinus had recently intervened in the Gothic War.[120] However, avoiding offending the Franks was a much more pressing issue in 556–7, for the devastation in Italy Pelagius described were not caused by the Goths or Butilinus, but Franks serving Chlothar. In letters sent to ensure that supplies would be sent from Frankish Provence to Rome, it would be all the more important to be silent about the ultimate source of the disasters facing Italy. This was certainly a calculated manoeuvre, for the pope had no problem noting the damage wrought by the Franks in another letter sent to a Roman general in 559.[121] Pelagius had been dealt a bad hand by the circumstances, but in this instance his writings demonstrate how he was able to rework his message to suit different audiences.

In another telling letter dated to April 557, Pelagius specifically asked for Placidus, the governor of Provence, to support Roman refugees fleeing war, which is another likely reference to the ongoing conflict in northern Italy.[122] The pope again had to tread carefully, for the hostilities noted here could well have been the result of Chlothar's Italian entanglements, which made this request to Placidus, who served Childebert, a rather delicate one. Here we can detect one final fruit of Pelagius' efforts, for despite his sometimes unconvincing theological arguments, his letters to Gaul served an important purpose, to ameliorate the consequences of the Frankish War. The course of the conflict itself cannot be sketched out in any more detail, but in this letter we find the very human consequences of this conflict, a reality that we could only detect if we consider the Merovingian kingdoms as a whole, not focusing solely on individual rulers or specific aspects of their reign.

Even without Gregory of Tours and Marius of Avenches' reports of their fraternal conflict, Pelagius' words are sufficient to illustrate the strikingly different stances of Childebert and Chlothar towards the Roman Empire. Childebert may have had genuine qualms over the Three Chapters, but Pelagius' letters suggest that they did not prevent the pope from seeking more material aid, nor, for that matter, hinder the king from requesting the pallium and relics from a theologically dubious pontiff. This is not to say that Childebert did not have his own reasons for attacking Chlothar. The latter had, after all, seized sole control of Theudebald's territories in 555 instead of sharing the inheritance with his brother, but it is also unlikely that the Romans did not take into account this feud in their strategic calculations. Why else would Pelagius attempt to repeatedly persuade the Franks, particularly the bishop of Arles and Childebert, of his own and Justinian's theological propriety? With the two Merovingian brothers already in conflict, it would have been an obvious move for the imperial church to step in and ensure that the one outstanding issue between the Frankish church and Rome, the Three Chapters, did not unnecessarily damage relations further.

Conclusion

Childebert's death in 558 and the resulting end of military support for Chramn had thus come at a very fortunate time for Chlothar. Indeed, we hear of no further domestic trouble for Chlothar until 560, when Chramn made one last futile attempt at power and was executed by his father. We then have a plausible explanation for why elements of Frankish Venetia remained under Merovingian rule, for Narses no longer contended with a king beset on all fronts, but was now facing the ruler of a reunited Gaul. In these circumstances, agreeing to a truce that was relatively favourable to the Franks, that preserved some of their Italian holdings, would have been an eminently sensible decision by Narses. We know that this truce would not last, for in 561–2 the Franks seemingly violated the terms and came to the aid of Gothic Verona, but by tracing how this truce came about, we can now state with more confidence how Merovingian history in the 550s was entangled with the Mediterranean.

The Gothic War had ended in 552 with the fall of Totila and Teia, but the resulting Frankish interventions continued to devastate northern Italy in the following years. This decade is poorly served by the sources, but by bringing together what does survive, we can chart the broad contours of this conflict. By considering the different priorities of Chlothar and Childebert, whether dynastic politics or the murky problems posed by the Three Chapters controversy, this paper demonstrates the complexities of Frankish-Roman exchanges in the 550s and the necessity of consulting a wide range of Greek and Latin texts. In the process, new light can be shined on how Constantinople dealt with its enemies, such as the role played by the embattled Pelagius in bolstering links to Gaul. We owe much to Procopius and Agathias, but even without the words of these classicizing historians, Justinian's Frankish War can still be chronicled and ought to be seen as a significant conflict in its own right.

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[1] For narratives of the Gothic War: Ludo Moritz Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter*, vol. 1, *Das italienische Königreich* (Leipzig: G.H. Wigand, 1897), 244–347; Ernst Stein, *Histoire du bas-empire*, vol. 2, *De la disparition de l'Empire d'Occident à la mort de Justinien (476–565)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1949), 328–68, 565–611; Berthold Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Iustinians*, vol. 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1995), 95–200; Peter Heather, *Rome Resurgent: War and Empire in the Age of Justinian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 147–79, 251–68; Mischa Meier, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung. Europa, Asien und Afrika vom 3. bis zum 8. Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019), 805–25.

[2] Merovingian territorial divisions remain complex and "Austrasia" here is only used as a shorthand to delineate the territories held by Theudebert and Theudebald that would, eventually, coalesce into Austrasia.

[3] On Frankish interventions in Italy: Georg Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik der Merowinger im VI. Jahrhundert* (Erlangen: Palm & Enke, 1932); Heinrich Büttner, "Die Alpenpolitik der Franken im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert," *Historisches Jahrbuch* 79 (1959): 62–88, at 62–69; Erich Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1970), 89–104; Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Imperium* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1983), 12–25; Giuseppe Albertoni, "Incursioni, ribellioni e identità collettive alla fine della guerra greco-gotica in Italia e nel territorio tra Trento e Verona: la rappresentazione delle fonti storico-narrative," in *Studi sul Medioevo per Andrea Castagnetti*, ed. Massimiliano Bassetti, Antonio Ciaralli, Massimo Montanari, and Gian Maria Varanini (Bologna: Cooperativa Libraria Universitaria Editrice Bologna, 2011), 1–18; Jonathan J. Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy: Ostrogoths and Early Lombards," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Merovingian World*, ed. Bonnie Effros and Isabel Moreira (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 442–60, at 449–54. On the relationship between the Franks and the empire more generally: Jörg Drauschke, "Diplomatie und Wahrnehmung im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert: Konstantinopel und die merowingischen Könige," in *Byzanz in Europa: Europas östliches Erbe*, ed. Michael Altripp (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 244–75; Stefan Esders, "The Merovingians and Byzantium: Diplomatic, Military, and Religious Issues, 500–700," in Effros and Moreira, ed. *Merovingian World*, 347–69.

[4] For conflicts in Italy after 554: Hartmann, *Geschichte Italiens*, 348–9; Thomas Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, vol. 5, *The Lombard Invasion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), 55–6; Ludwig Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," *Zeitschrift für schweizerische Geschichte* 3.4 (1923): 443–55, at 446–7; Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik*, 48–50; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 609–11; Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, 101–4; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24–25; John Moorhead, *Justinian* (London: Longman, 1994), 108; Rubin, *Das Zeitalter Iustinians*, 196–200; J. A. S. Evans, *The Age of Justinian: The Circumstances of Imperial*

Power (London: Routledge, 1996), 180–1; Dariusz Brodka, *Narses: Politik, Krieg und Historiographie* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2018), 200–7; Heather, *Rome Resurgent*, 291–2; Meier, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung*, 822–3; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 453–4.

[5] Agathias, *Histories*, ed. Rudolf Keydell, Corpus Fontium Historiae Byzantinae [hereafter CFHB] 2 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967); Menander the Guardsman, *History*, ed. R. C. Blockley (Liverpool: Francis Cairns, 1985).

[6] John Malalas, *Chronicle*, ed. Johannes Thurn, CFHB 35 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2000); Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, ed. Justin Favrod (Lausanne: Université de Lausanne, 1991). Malalas is generally seen as the author of the Constantinopolitan continuation of his *Chronicle*: Brian Croke, "Malalas, the Man and his Work," in *Studies in John Malalas*, ed. Elizabeth Jeffreys, with Brian Croke and Roger Scott (Sydney: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1990), 1–25, at 21–2; Warren Treadgold, *The Early Byzantine Historians* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 240, but cf. Michael Whitby, "*Malalas Continuatus*," *The Classical Review* 41.2 (1991): 325–7.

[7] Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 446–7; Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik*, 49–50; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 609–11; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24–5; Heather, *Rome Resurgent*, 292; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 453.

[8] Andreas Fischer and Ian Wood, ed., *Western Perspectives on the Mediterranean: Cultural Transfer in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, 400–800 AD* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014); Stefan Esders, Yaniv Fox, Yitzhak Hen, and Laury Sarti, ed., *East and West in the Middle Ages: The Merovingian Kingdoms in Mediterranean Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Stefan Esders, Yitzhak Hen, Pia Lucas, and Tamar Rotman, ed., *The Merovingian Kingdoms and the Mediterranean World: Revisiting the Sources* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019).

[9] Brodka, *Narses*, 119–207.

[10] Florian Battistella, *Pelagius I. und der Primat Roms. Ein Beitrag zum Drei-Kapitel-Streit und zur Papstgeschichte des 6. Jahrhunderts* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovač, 2017).

[11] Pauline Allen and Bronwen Neil, *Crisis Management in Late Antiquity (410-590 CE): A Survey of the Evidence from Episcopal Letters* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 187.

[12] Procopius, *History of the Wars*, 8.29–35, ed. Jakob Haury, rev. Gerhard Wirth, 4 vols. (Leipzig: Teubner, 1962–64], 2:642–78; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 601–4; Philip Rance, "Narses and the Battle of Taginae (Busta Gallorum) 552: Procopius and Sixth-Century Warfare," *Historia* 54.4 (2005): 424–72; Hans Norbert Roisl, "Theia und die versuchte Durchbruchsschlacht in der Ebene des Sarno im Oktober 552," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 40 (1990): 69–81; Brodka, *Narses*, 142–64; Heather, *Rome Resurgent*, 266–8. A number of scholars place Teia's final defeat in 553, but the precise date does not affect this article's argument: Michael Kulikowski, *Imperial Tragedy: From Constantine's*

Empire to the Destruction of Roman Italy (AD 363-568) (London: Profile Books, 2019), 308; Eduardo Fabbro, *Warfare and the Making of Early Medieval Italy (568–652)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 26.

[13] Agathias, *Histories*, 1.1.6–7, ed. Keydell, 10. I am convinced by Marco Cristini, "Frankish ἁρμοσταί in Lucca? Reading Agathias *Hist.* 1.18.5," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 60.1 (2020): 158–164, that Frankish forces were not already in Lucca and that a scribal error had obscured Agathias' original reference to "Goths." Cf. Brodka, *Narses*, 170, and Dallas DeForest, "Agathias on Italy, Italians and the Gothic War," *Estudios bizantinos* 8 (2020): 61–81, at 69–70. Note also the uncertainties involved in determining the extent of Frankish and Gothic territories: Federico Marazzi, "L'ambita preda. Contese geopolitiche e prospettive di egemonia sulla Penisola italiana fra VI e VIII secolo," in *Longobardi. Un passato declinato al future*, ed. Paolo Giulierini, Federico Marazzi, and Marco Valenti (Cerro al Volturno: Volturnia Edizioni, 2019), 25–37, at 32.

[14] On Theudebert and his portrayals: Roger Collins, "Theodebert I, 'Rex Magnus Francorum,'" in *Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society: Studies Presented to J. M. Wallace-Hadrill*, ed. Patrick Wormald (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 7–33; Martha Jenks, "*Romanitas* and *Christianitas* in the Coinage of Theodebert I of Metz," *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 4 (2000): 338–68.

[15] Jonas of Bobbio, *Life of John of Réomé*, 15, ed. Bruno Krusch, Monumenta Germaniae Historica [hereafter MGH], Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum 37 (Hannover: Hahn, 1905), 337–8; on its historical validity, Alexander O'Hara and Ian Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio: Life of Columbanus, Life of John of Réomé, and Life of Vedast*, Translated Texts for Historians [hereafter TTH] 64 (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), 65–6. This claim of imperial oversight somewhat mirrors Procopius' description in *Wars*, 7.33.4, ed. Haury, 2:442. Averil Cameron, "Agathias on the Early Merovingians," *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa. Lettere, Storia e Filosofia*, 37.1/2 (1968): 95–140, at 121, discusses an identical passage from the so-far undated *Life of Treverius* (Acta Sanctorum, January II [Paris: Palme, 1866], 397), but unfortunately the anonymous author had plagiarised this section from Jonas' *Life of John*: Bruno Krusch, "Zwei Heiligenleben des Jonas von Susa," *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 14.3 (1893): 385–448, at 411.

[16] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.24.6–7, ed. Haury, 2:617; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 18; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 451. I am very grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out that only parts of Liguria were ruled by the Franks, as Gothic territories are noted by Agathias, *Histories*, 1.15.7, ed. Keydell, 29.

[17] Procopius, *Wars*, 7.33.7, 8.24.7–8, ed. Haury, 2:443, 617; Marco Cristini, "The Diplomacy of Totila (541–552)," *Studi Medievali* 61.1 (2020): 29–48, at 38–40, particularly 38 n. 38. Cf. Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 21.

[18] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.33.5, ed. Haury, 2:662.

[19] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.34.17–18, ed. Haury, 2:669; Teia eventually despaired of a quick Frankish invasion and so gave battle to the Romans: *Wars*, 8.34.21, ed. Haury, 2:670.

[20] Agathias, *Histories*, 1.7.8, ed. Keydell, 19; "Butilinus 1," "Leutharis 1," in *The Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* [hereafter PLRE], vol. 3, ed. J. R. Martindale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 253–4, 789–90.

[21] Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik*, 46; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 605; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24; Sebastian Scholz, *Die Merowinger* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 2015), 99; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 453. On the other hand, Cameron, "Early Merovingians," 124, Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, 98, and Brodka, *Narses*, 166–7, correctly to my mind, argue that Agathias' account is disingenuous and that this intervention required Theudebald's consent.

[22] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 548.2, ed. Favrod, 74.

[23] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 548.2, 555.4, ed. Favrod, 74, 76: "bello Romano."

[24] Stein, *Bas-empire*, 530; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 21. There is some doubt regarding whether Theudebald became king in 547 or 548, as Marius' chronology can be erratic: Bruno Krusch, MGH Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum [hereafter SRM] 7 (Hannover: Hahn, 1920), 487; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 816–17; Cameron, "Early Merovingians," 123. This potentially introduces ambiguity as to whether a battle that Marius assigned to 548 occurred under Theudebert or Theudebald, as highlighted by Till Stüber, "The Fifth Council of Orléans and the Reception of the "Three Chapters Controversy" in Merovingian Gaul," in Esders et al., ed., *Merovingian Kingdoms*, 93–102, 193–9, at 196 n. 44. Nonetheless, as Marius placed this entry directly after Theudebald's accession, in the chronicler's eyes this event took place in the latter's reign, regardless of when Theudebald became king. Jörg Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte einer adligen Familie im 6. und 7. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1986), 49, links this conflict to the diplomatic revolution brought about by a pro-Justinian coup among the Lombards, who were formerly aligned with Austrasia.

[25] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.26.18–19, ed. Haury, 2:632–3.

[26] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.24.11–30, ed. Haury, 2:618–22; *Austrasian Letters*, 18–20, ed. Elena Malaspina (Rome, 2001), 132–8; Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1985), 214–5; Andrew Gillett, "Telling Off Justinian: Theudebert I, the *Epistolae Austrasicae*, and Communication Strategies in Sixth-Century Merovingian–Byzantine Relations," *Early Medieval Europe* 27.2 (2019): 161–94, at 180–7. Note also the religious tensions between Austrasia and Constantinople highlighted in Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 98–9.

[27] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.34.17–18, ed. Haury, 2:669; Agathias, *Histories*, 1.5.2, ed. Keydell, ed. 15.

[28] On this intervention as reinforcement originally meant to support Teia: Heather, *Rome Resurgent*, 289; Meier, *Geschichte der Völkerwanderung*, 822.

[29] Agathias, *Histories*, 1.2, ed. Keydell, 11–12; Cameron, "Early Merovingians," 136–9; Helmut Reimitz, "*Pax Inter Utramque Gentem*: The Merovingians, Byzantium and the History of Frankish Identity," in Esders et al., ed., *East and West*, 45–63, at 56–7. Cf. Anthony Kaldellis, "The Historical and Religious Views of Agathias: A Reinterpretation," *Byzantion* 69.1 (1999): 206–52, at 243–6; Anthony Kaldellis, *Ethnography after Antiquity: Foreign Lands and Peoples in Byzantine Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 23–4; DeForest, "Agathias on Italy," 80.

[30] Agathias, *Histories*, 1.7, ed. Keydell, 18–19; Cameron, "Early Merovingians," 126, 137–8. Cf. Brodka, *Narses*, 169 n. 531.

[31] Gregory of Tours, *Ten Books of Histories*, 3.32, ed. Bruno Krusch and Wilhelm Levison, MGH SRM 1.1 (Hannover: Hahn, 1951), 128, combined with Jonas, *Life of John of Réomé*, 15, ed. Krusch, 337–8, and Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, 2.2, ed. Ludwig Bethmann and Georg Waitz, MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum (Hannover: Hahn, 1878), 72–3. Butilinus' early service under Theudebert is accepted in Krusch, "Zwei Heiligenleben," 396–7; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 18; "Butilinus 1," PLRE, 253; Simon Loseby, "Gregory of Tours, Italy, and the Empire," in *A Companion to Gregory of Tours*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 462–97, at 480 n. 70; O'Hara and Wood, *Jonas of Bobbio*, 65; Marazzi, "L'ambita preda," 29. Cf. Albrecht Diem, "The Rule of an "Iro-Egyptian" Monk in Gaul: Jonas' *Vita Iohannis* and the Construction of a Monastic Identity," *Revue Mabillon* 19 (2008): 5–50, at 20.

[32] Brodka, *Narses*, 168. The last reference in note 528 should, however, point to *Liber pontificalis*, 63.2, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Thorin, 1886–92), 1:305, not Agnellus' Ravennate composition.

[33] Justinian, *Novels*, Appendix 8, ed. Rudolf Schoell and Wilhelm Kroll, 3 vols. (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895), 3:803: "ad nuper factam incursionem Francorum;" "Narses 1," PLRE, 923; David J. D. Miller and Peter Sarris, *The Novels of Justinian: A Complete Annotated English Translation*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 1132. I have not been able to consult Telemachos C. Lounghis, Basilike N. Blysidu, and Stelios Lampakes, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 476 bis 565* (Nicosia: Zyprisches Forschungszentrum, 2005), 337.

[34] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.3.6–8, 9.11, ed. Keydell, 44, 52–3.

[35] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.13–14, ed. Keydell, 57–9. On dating Theudebald's death to November/December 555: Krusch, MGH SRM 7, 487. Cf. Stein, *Bas-empire*, 817, for the argument that it should be dated to early 555.

[36] Averil Cameron, *Agathias* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 10.

[37] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.11.4–12.9, ed. Keydell, 55–7. Cf. Kaldellis, "Views of Agathias," 244, on Narses' warning being a literary tool to avoid anachronism, for Agathias knew that "the Franks did not thereafter invade Italy."

[38] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.14.8–11, ed. Keydell, 58–9.

[39] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 556.4–5, ed. Favrod, 76–8. Favrod, at 102, and Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, 101, suggest that these notices were instead a repeated and further garbled account of Butilinus' war, but see the convincing arguments of Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24; Brodka, *Narses*, 202–3.

[40] Menander the Guardsman, *History*, 30.1, ed. Blockley, 242; Brodka, *Narses*, 204.

[41] Pope Pelagius I, *Letters*, 59.3, 60.3, ed. Pius M. Gassó and Columba M. Batlle (Montserrat: Abadia de Montserrat, 1956), 156, 160; Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 446; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 609 n. 3; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24 n. 96; Brodka, *Narses*, 200–4.

[42] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 85, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 207: "post continuam uiginti quinque et eo amplius annorum uastationem bellicam in Italiae regionibus accidentem;" on dating, see the editors' comments at 207–8.

[43] For the letter's context: Bronwen Neil, "*De profundis*: The Letters and Archives of Pelagius I of Rome (556–561)," in *Collecting Early Christian Letters: From the Apostle Paul to Late Antiquity*, ed. Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 206–20, at 217–8.

[44] *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 9 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), 298–333, 337–9; Roberto Cessi, "Studi sulle fonti dell'età gotica e longobarda, II. - 'Prosperi continuatio Havniensis,'" *Archivio Muratoriano* 22 (1922): 585–641; Steven Muhlberger, "Heroic Kings and Unruly Generals: The "Copenhagen" Continuation of Prosper Reconsidered," *Florilegium* 6 (1984): 50–70, at 52–61; Francesco Borri, "Romans Growing Beards, Identity and Historiography in Seventh-Century Italy," *Viator* 45.1 (2014): 39–71, at 45–9.

[45] *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, 1–3, ed. Mommsen, 337.

[46] *Copenhagen Continuation of Prosper*, 2, ed. Mommsen, 337; Cessi, "Studi sulle fonti," 610; Muhlberger, "Heroic Kings," 56

[47] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.26.13, 32.22–5, ed. Haury, 2:632, 658–9; "Asbadus 2," PLRE, 133.

[48] Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 446; Muhlberger, "Heroic Kings," 56; Brodka, *Narses*, 201–2. Cf. Cessi, "Studi sulle fonti," 611.

[49] Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 446 n. 10a; D. A. Bullough, "Urban Change in Early Medieval Italy: The Example of Pavia," *Papers of the British School in Rome* 34 (1966): 82–130, at 93 n. 42.

[50] *Liber pontificalis*, 63.3, 64.1, ed. Duchesne, 1:305, 308; on the date and context of composition: Rosamond McKitterick, "The Papacy and Byzantium in the Seventh- and Early Eighth-Century Sections of the Liber pontificalis," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 84 (2016): 241–73.

[51] Christophe Badel, "Un chef germain entre Byzance et l'Italie: l'épitaphe d'Absadus à Pavie (*Suppl. It.* 9, 15)," in *Les cités de l'Italie tardo-antique (IVe–VIe siècle): institutions, économie, société, culture et religion*, ed. Massimiliano Ghilardi, Christophe J. Goddard, and Pierfrancesco Porena (Rome: École française de Rome, 2006), 91–100, at 93–4; Brodka, *Narses*, 201–2.

[52] Menander the Guardsman, *History*, 3.1, ed. Blockley, 44.

[53] John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 18.140, ed. Thurn, 425: "πόλεις ὀχυρὰς τῶν Γότθων." The fall of Verona is also placed in 561 by Agnellus, *Liber pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, 79, ed. Deborah Mauskopf Deliyannis, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 199 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 247. This siege is frequently associated with the undated revolt of a Gothic count named Widin against Narses, as reported in Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, 2.2, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 73: Stein, *Bas-empire*, 610–11; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 25. More recently, Kulikowski, *Imperial Tragedy*, 308, briefly commented that this notice indicates that Gothic resistance lasted until 561. I have reached a similar conclusion and will advance my argument on the battle for Verona and the fall of Merovingian Italy in a future article.

[54] Schmidt, "Die letzten Ostgoten," 446–7; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 25; Brodka, *Narses*, 204.

[55] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 10.3, 9.20, ed. Krusch and Levison, 486, 440.

[56] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, 3.9, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 97; Carl I. Hammer, "Early Merovingian Bavaria: A Late Antique Italian Perspective," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 4.2 (2011): 217–44, at 229–30; Loseby, "Gregory of Tours," 496 n. 134. Eduardo Fabbro, "The Italian Job: A Reassessment of the Frankish Italian Campaigns (584–590)," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 12.2 (2019): 519–49, at 520, suggests that Sigibert and Childebert's Italian claims were derived from the conquests of Theudebert, but this seems unnecessary when Austrasian interests would have been inherited directly from Chlothar, who ruled a united Frankish kingdom. The causes of this Frankish invasion are discussed in Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik*, 62–4; Neil Christie, *The Lombards* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 86; Hammer, "Merovingian Bavaria," 229; Andreas Fischer, "Money for Nothing?: Franks, Byzantines and Lombards in the Sixth and Seventh Centuries," in Esders et al., ed., *East and West*, 108–26, at 117; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 455.

[57] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, 3.9–10, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 97.

[58] Richard Heuberger, *Rätien im Altertum und Frühmittelalter: Forschungen und Darstellung* (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1932), 262, but note the minor correction offered by Stein, *Bas-empire*, 611 n. 1. See also the similar interpretation of Marazzi, "L'ambita preda," 30–1.

[59] Agathias, *Histories*, 2.13.9–11, ed. Keydell, 59; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 555.1, ed. Favrod, 76; Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.9, ed. Krusch and Levison, 141.

[60] Chlothar's appearances in Greek sources: Procopius, *Wars*, 5.13.27–9, ed. Haury, 2:75; Agathias, *Histories*, 1.3.2, 1.5.1–2, 2.14.8–11, ed. Keydell, 12, 15, 59. As Chlothar always appeared alongside the other Frankish rulers, it is impossible to determine where his relationship with Constantinople differed from his relatives.

[61] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 556.4–5, ed. Favrod, 76–8

[62] Löhlein, *Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik*, 49; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 610; Büttner, "Die Alpenpolitik," 68-9; Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, 101-4; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 24; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 453.

[63] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.3, 41, ed. Krusch and Levison, 137, 174; *Austrasian Letters*, 8, ed. Malaspina, 86–97; Paul the Deacon, *Histories of the Lombards*, 1.27, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 69. On dating: Joachim Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien: Beiträge zur Kenntnis der langobardischen Bodenfunde vor 568*, 2 vols. (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1962), 1:141. Cf. the significantly revised chronology in Fabbro, *Early Medieval Italy*, 48, 55.

[64] Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien*, 1:141; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, 49. Cf. Federico Marazzi, "Byzantines and Lombards," in *A Companion to Byzantine Italy*, ed. Salvatore Cosentino (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 169–99, at 173–4, who instead sees continuity between the pro-Lombard policies of Theudebert, Theudebald, and Chlothar.

[65] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.9, ed. Krusch and Levison, 141.

[66] Werner, *Die Langobarden in Pannonien*, 1:141; Jarnut, *Agilolfingerstudien*, 53; Jörg Jarnut. "Thüringer und Langobarden im 6. und beginnenden 7. Jahrhundert," in *Die Frühzeit der Thüringer: Archäologie, Sprache, Geschichte*, ed. Helmut Castritius, Dieter Geuenich, and Matthias Werner (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 279–90, at 284–5; Arnold, "The Merovingians and Italy," 453.

[67] Paul the Deacon, *History of the Lombards*, 2.1, ed. Bethmann and Waitz, 72.

[68] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.25.15, ed. Haury, 2:626. Alexander Sarantis, *Justinian's Balkan Wars: Campaigning, Diplomacy and Development in Illyricum, Thrace and the Northern World A.D. 527–65* (Prenton: Francis Cairns, 2016), 314-19.

[69] Procopius, *Wars*, 8.33.2, ed. Haury, 2:661–2.

[70] Menander the Guardsman, *History*, 5.4, ed. Blockley, 50–2; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 543; Sarantis, *Justinian's Balkan Wars*, 351–2; Walter Pohl, *The Avars: A Steppe Empire in Central Europe, 567–822* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 54.

[71] Theophylact Simocatta, *History*, 6.10.7–12, ed. Carl de Boor, rev. Peter Wirth (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1972), 240–1; Sarantis, *Justinian's Balkan Wars*, 378; Fabbro, *Early Medieval Italy*, 46–7.

[72] Christie, *The Lombards*, 58.

[73] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.16, ed. Krusch and Levison, 148; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 555.2, ed. Favrod, 76. On Chramn's revolt: Gregory Halfond, "Ecclesiastical Politics in the Regnum Chramni: Contextualising Baudonivia's *Vita Radegundis*, ch. 15," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 68.3 (2017): 474–92. Gregory's account of Chramn also served a didactic purpose for the bishop: James M. Harland, "Imagining the Saxons in Late Antique Gaul," in *Sächsische Leute und Länder: Benennung und Lokalisierung von Gruppenidentitäten im ersten Jahrtausend*, ed. Melanie Augstein and Matthias Hardt (Brunswick: Braunschweigisches Landesmuseum, 2019), 45–56, at 49–51.

[74] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.16–17, ed. Krusch and Levison, 149–50; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 556.3, ed. Favrod, 76.

[75] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.16, ed. Krusch and Levison, 150.

[76] Gregory of Tours, *Histories*, 4.20, ed. Krusch and Levison, 152; Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 560.2, ed. Favrod, 78. On dating Childebert's death: Krusch, MGH SRM 7, 487.

[77] John Malalas, *Chronicle*, 18.127, 129, ed. Thurn, 420–2; Agathias, *Histories*, 5.10–23, ed. Keydell, 175–95; Sarantis, *Justinian's Balkan Wars*, 336–45.

[78] Procopius, *Wars*, 5.5.8–10, 13.27–8, ed. Haury, 2:26, 74–5.

[79] *Epistolae Arelatenses genuinae*, 41, 44, ed. Wilhelm Gundlach, MGH Epistolarum 3 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892), 62, 66; Scholz, *Die Merowinger*, 101–2.

[80] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 45, ed. Gundlach, 68; *Acts of the Second Council of Constantinople*, 7.10, ed. Johannes Straub, Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum 4, vol. 1 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1971), 197–8.

[81] John Moorhead, "Italian Loyalties during Justinian's Gothic War," *Byzantion* 53.2 (1983): 575–96, at 590.

[82] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 41, 44, ed. Gundlach, 62, 66; Sebastian Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops in the Sixth Century," in Esders et al., ed., *East and West*, 129–37, at 130–1, 133; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 99–100.

[83] On the role of Justinian in granting the pallium: Erich Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums von den Anfängen bis zur Höhe der Weltherrschaft*, vol. 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1933), 235–8; Georg Langgärtner, *Die Gallienpolitik der Päpste im 5. und 6. Jahrhundert. Eine Studie über den apostolischen Vikariat von Arles* (Bonn: Peter Hanstein, 1964), 150–3.

[84] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 39, 41, ed. Gundlach, 58–9, 61–2; William E. Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles: The Making of a Christian Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 262; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 99.

[85] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 43, 44, ed. Gundlach, 63–5; Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 262–3.

[86] Gregory the Great, *Letters*, 9.217, ed. Dag Norberg, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina [hereafter CCSL] 140–140A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982), 780–1; Hartmut Atsma, "Die christlichen Inschriften Galliens als Quelle für Klöster und Klosterbewohner bis zum Ende des 6. Jahrhunderts," *Francia* 4 (1976): 1–57, at 25; Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 263. The first abbot of the monastery may also have been Aurelian's relative: Martin Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien: Zur Kontinuität römischer Führungsschichten vom 4. bis zum 7. Jahrhundert. Soziale, prosopographische und bildungsgeschichtliche Aspekte* (Munich: Artemis Verlag, 1976), 151 n. 356.

[87] Procopius, *Wars*, 7.35.9, ed. Haury, 2:454; Moorhead, "Italian Loyalties," 589–92; Claire Sotinel, "Autorité pontificale et pouvoir impérial sous le règne de Justinien: le pape Vigile," *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome – Antiquité* 104.1 (1992): 439–63, at 453–4.

[88] Heinzelmann, *Bischofsherrschaft in Gallien*, 148; Albrecht Diem, "… *ut si professus fuerit se omnia impleturum, tunc excipiatur*. Observations on the Rules for Monks and Nuns of Caesarius and Aurelianus of Arles," in *Edition und Erforschung lateinischer patristischer Texte. 150 Jahre CSEL. Festschrift für Kurt Smolak zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. Victoria Zimmerl-Panagl, Lukas J. Dorfbauer, and Clemens Weidmann (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), 191–224, at 196.

[89] Marius of Avenches, *Chronicle*, 548.2, ed. Favrod, 74; Procopius, *Wars*, 8.26.18–19, ed. Haury, 2:632–3.

[90] Procopius, *Wars*, 7.37.1–2, ed. Haury, 2:463.

[91] Stein, *Bas-empire*, 587; Cameron, "Early Merovingians," 124; Zöllner, *Geschichte der Franken*, 97 n. 3; Brodka, *Narses*, 124 n. 354; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 99. Cf. Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 21; Eugen Ewig, "Die Namengebung bei den ältesten Frankenkönigen und im merowingischen Königshaus. Mit genealogischen Tafeln und Notizen," *Francia* 18.1 (1991): 21–69, at 52.

[92] *Canons of the Fifth Council of Orléans*, 1, ed. Charles de Clercq, CCSL 148A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1963), 148–9; Ian Wood, 'The Franks and Papal Theology, 550–600', in *The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean*, ed. Celia Chazelle and Catherine Cubitt (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 223–41, at 223–6; Scholz, *Die Merowinger*, 102–3; Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops," 134–5; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 95–6.

[93] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 45, ed. Gundlach, 67.

[94] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 45, ed. Gundlach, 68.

[95] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 45, ed. Gundlach, 67: "falsis scriptis."

[96] *Epistolae Arelatenses*, 45, ed. Gundlach, 68.

[97] *Letter from the Church of Milan to the Frankish Envoys*, ed. Eduard Schwartz (Munich: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1940), 18–25; Claire Sotinel, "The Three Chapters and the Transformations of Italy," in Chazelle

and Cubitt, ed., *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, 85–120, at 92; Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology," 225; Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops," 135; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 101.

[98] *Letter from the Church of Milan*, ed. Schwartz, 23.

[99] *Letter from the Church of Milan*, ed. Schwartz, 24.

[100] On the recipients being from Theudebald's kingdom: Schwartz, *Vigiliusbriefe*, 28 n. 2; Ewig, *Die Merowinger*, 22; Sotinel, "Autorité pontificale," 460; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 101. From Childebert's kingdom: Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops," 135.

[101] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 3–9, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 6–30; Klingshirn, *Caesarius of Arles*, 264.

[102] Pelagius I, *Letter*s, 3, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 9–10.

[103] As also noted in Langgärtner, *Die Gallienpolitik der Päpste*, 158.

[104] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 4, 9, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 12, 29. On the governors of Provence more generally: Yaniv Fox, "New *Honores* for a Region Transformed: The Patriciate in Post-Roman Gaul," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire* 93.2 (2015): 249–86.

[105] Cf. Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops," 137.

[106] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 3, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 6–9; Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 299–303; Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology," 227–30.

[107] Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 241–2; Stein, *Bas-empire*, 389, 392–5; Alois Grillmeier, with Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, pt. 2, *The Church of Constantinople in the Sixth Century*, trans. John Cawte and Pauline Allen (London: Mowbray, 1995), 388–401.

[108] See now the extensive discussion and more positive interpretation in Battistella, *Pelagius I.*, 29–76. Cf. Caspar, *Geschichte des Papsttums*, 286–8; John Moorhead, *The Popes and the Church of Rome in Late Antiquity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 100–1.

[109] Most relevantly the discussion on the Frankish letters: Battistella, *Pelagius I.*, 119–20.

[110] Carole Straw, "Much Ado About Nothing: Gregory the Great's Apology to the Istrians," in Chazelle and Cubitt, ed., *The Crisis of the Oikoumene*, 121–60, at 123–4, 158; Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology," 228-30; Richard Price, *The Acts of the Council of Constantinople of 553, with Related Texts on the Three Chapters Controversy*, 2 vols., TTH 51 (Liverpool, 2009), 1.55, 99; Moorhead, *Popes and the Church of Rome*, 103.

[111] John IV's letter only survives in Armenian and is translated in Abraham Terian, "Monastic Turmoil in Sixth-Century Jerusalem and the South Caucasus: The Letter of Patriarch John IV to Catholicos Abas of the Caucasian Albanians," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 74 (2020): 9–40, see in particular the mentions of the four councils at 14, 30, 32–

3; see also the structural parallels with Pelagius I's confession of faith highlighted in Alois Grillmeier and Theresia Hainthaler, *Christ in Christian Tradition*, vol. 2, pt. 3, *The Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch from 451 to 600*, trans. Marianne Ehrhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 164–5. Sophronius of Jerusalem, *Synodical Letter*, 2.5.1, ed. Pauline Allen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 66–156, at 124–8.

[112] Photius, *Bibliotheca*, cod. 230, ed. René Henry, vol. 5 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1967), 8; Jean Maspero, *Histoire des patriarches d'Alexandrie depuis la mort de l'empereur Anastase jusqu'à la réconciliation des églises jacobites (518–616*) (Paris: E. Champion, 1923), 273; Allen, *Sophronius*, 48–9.

[113] Other examples of the eastern focus on four councils are discussed in Peter Schadler, "Constructing a Church of Councils: The Heresy of Conciliar Rejection in Eighth-Century Palestine," in *Inclusion and Exclusion in Mediterranean Christianities, 400–800*, ed. Yaniv Fox and Erica Buchberger (Turnhout: Brepols, 2019), 133–144, at 135–8.

[114] *Austrasian Letters*, 7, ed. Malaspina, 86: "filius diabuli". This letter is generally associated with the Three Chapters controversy: Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology," 225; Stüber, "Fifth Council of Orléans," 96. The alternative view is that it referred to Justinian's theological errors in 565: Stein, *Bas-empire*, 687, 833; Benjamin Wheaton, "Nicetius of Trier's Letter to Justinian and the Aphthartodocetic Controversy," in *Litterarum dulces fructus: Studies in Early Medieval Latin Culture in Honour of Michael Herren for his 80th Birthday*, ed. Scott G. Bruce (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming 2021).

[115] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 19, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 55–61; Battistella, *Pelagius I.*, 98–9. Cf. Wood, "The Franks and Papal Theology," 230; Scholz, "The Papacy and the Frankish Bishops," 137.

[116] On the papal patrimony: Gregory I. Halfond. "*Patrimoniolum Ecclesiae Nostrae*: The Papal Estates in Merovingian Provence," *Comitatus* 37 (2007): 1–18; Fox, "New *Honores*," 261–2.

[117] Averil Cameron, "The Early Religious Policies of Justin II," *Studies in Church History* 13 (1976): 51–67, at 54–62; Stefan Esders, "'Avenger of All Perjury' in Constantinople, Ravenna and Metz: Saint Polyeuctus, Sigibert I, and the Division of Charibert's Kingdom in 568," in Fischer and Wood, ed., *Western Perspectives*, 17–40.

[118] Allen and Neil, *Crisis Management*, 187; Neil, "*De profundis*," 217–8.

[119] Allen and Neil, *Crisis Management*, 31.

[120] Battistella, *Pelagius I.*, 85.

[121] Pelagius I, *Letters*, 52, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 139. See also Pelagius' various rhetorical strategies adopted for different audiences regarding the Three Chapters: Claire Sotinel, "Le concile, l'empereur, l'évêque. Les statuts d'autorité dans le débat sur les Trois Chapitres," in *Orthodoxie, christianisme, histoire*, ed. Susanna Elm, Éric Rebillard, and Antonella Romano (Rome: École française de Rome, 2000), 277–99, at 295–7.

[122] Pelagius I, *Letter*s, 9, ed. Gassó and Batlle, 29. Cf. Battistella, *Pelagius I.*, 89.