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Two portraits of Pippin

There is no serial image of Pippin, since, on the one hand, the coins minted in Italy during his reign were minted in the name of Charlemagne and, on the other hand, we did not keep a diploma which could have carried the seal of Pippin (there is a debate on the very fact of knowing whether Pippin was able to deliver diplomas on his own initiative).¹

The most famous ‘portrait’ of Pippin, in the *Liber legum* copied for Eberhard of Friuli (Fig. 1) is therefore one of the rare ones executed in the early Middle Ages, representing the King of the Lombards, son of Charlemagne – I do not take into account late pictures, such as the one that precedes the false diploma of Pippin in favour of S. Vincenzo al Volturno in the *Chronicon Vulturense* (twelfth century).² Before examining it in more detail, I would like to remind that there is another one (Fig. 3), which is part of the iconographic cycle of manuscript 4 of Cava dei Tirreni abbey, copied around 1005 probably in Benevento.³ The book first presents the laws of the Lombards, introduced, as is often the case, by the *Origo gentis Langobardorum*. This traditional corpus is followed by two southern historiographical texts, which open the regional legislative series, composed of the novellas of the princes Arechis II (774–787) and Adelchis (854–878), then of texts regulating the relations between the Benevento and Naples. Finally, there are some capitularies from Charlemagne to Lothar.

Fig. 1. *Carlo Magno, Pipino e uno scriba*, Modena, Biblioteca Capitolare, ms. O. I. 2, fol. 154v.

Fig. 3. *Pipino a cavallo*, Cava dei Tirreni, Biblioteca Statale del Monumento Nazionale, ms. 4, fol. 232r.

In its original state, the manuscript probably contained no less than thirteen illustrations directly related to the text of the law. The loss of folios in places corresponding to a change of ruler suggests that they were detached not for the bits of text they wore but for their images, which testimonies the interest they may have aroused at an undetermined time. The succession follows an almost perfect chronological order, from Rothari to Lothar. Most of the images are placed at the beginning of the relative law and follow the usual theme of the sovereign legislator. The process of enacting and writing the legislation is presented in an original way. In the scene

¹ B. Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft. Untersuchungen zur Teilhabe am Reich in der Merowinger- und Karolingerzeit*, MGH, Schriften, 44 (Hannover 1997), p. 348: three mentions of hypothetical *deperdita*.

² BAV, Barb. lat. 2724 (https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Barb.lat.2724), fol. 68v; *Chronicon Vulturense del monaco Giovanni*, ed. by V. Federici, FSI, 58–60, 3 vols (Roma 1925–1938), I (1925), p. 189.

³ Cava dei Tirreni, Biblioteca Statale del Monumento Nazionale, ms. 4. See M. Rotili, *La miniatura nella Badia di Cava*, 2 vols (Cava dei Tirreni, 1976–1978), II: *La raccolta di miniature italiane e straniere* (1978), pp. 64–70 and pp. xxii–xxx; L. M. Fobelli, ‘Codici miniati dell’abbazia di Cava: le *Leges Langobardorum* e il Beda’, *Rivista storica salernitana*, 11, 6 (1989), 35–63 (pp. 35–47); H. Mordek, *Bibliotheca capitularium regum Francorum manuscripta. Überlieferung und Traditionszusammenhang der fränkischen Herrschererlasse*, MGH Hilfsmittel, 15 (München 1995), pp. 98–111; W. Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung. Montecassino und die Gestaltung der langobardischen Vergangenheit*, VIÖG, 39 (Wien and München 2001), pp. 109–13; G. Orofino, ‘La miniatura a Benevento’, in *I Longobardi dei ducati di Spoleto e Benevento*, Atti, 16 (Spoleto 2003), pp. 545–65 (p. 557); G. Z. Zanichelli, ‘I *Libri legum* tra *Langobardia Maior* e *Langobardia minor*’, in *Napoli e l’Emilia. Studi sulle relazioni artistiche*, ed. by A. Zerza (Napoli 2010), pp. 7–18 (pp. 10–14).

that opens Rothari's edict (fol. 15v), the king's hand, stretched out towards a standing figure, bears the inscription *lex*. With his finger facing down, the king's interlocutor points to the scribe, who takes note on a scroll also inscribed with the word *lex*. The indication of the *lex* gives both meaning and movement to the image: it is the injunction of the hand that underlies the legislative act. Let us note that only the hands of the Lombard kings or princes are inscribed, unlike those of Louis the Pious and Lothar (fol. 220v, 232r), who are not represented as promulgators of the law: as if the capitulars, in the end, only came second, as well as the territories for which they apply.

Rothari and Lothar, who open and close the compilation respectively, are represented in two images. Consequently, the illustrator had to draw on a different register. Scenes representing the exercise of power in the same way as the creation of law were mobilized for this purpose. At the end of his edict, Rothari is represented throne in a banquet (fol. 69v). For Lothar (fol. 241r), it was used a hunting scene: followed by another rider with a spear and a horn, he carries in his left hand the long scepter flowered and holds in a leash of the right hand a molossus thrown in pursuit of a deer.

Pippin is also depicted on a horse, but not in a hunting scene. The mount has a raised left foreleg, as would be done for a triumphal equestrian statue. The image certainly has a triumphal dimension, but it is perhaps worth noting that it is not the theme of the legislator that has been exploited, even though it introduces a capitular promulgated by him and even though Pippin is represented in a single image. Perhaps this is an echo of the memory of a warrior king.

The figuration proposed by the Modena manuscript, Biblioteca Capitolare O I. 2 (Fig. 1), is more traditional. It is part of an iconographic cycle as in Cava and, as in Cava, this cycle is not complete due to the loss of a few sheets.

The manuscript is a copy of a collection composed in all likelihood at Fulda around 830 by a certain Lupus, in whom one traditionally recognizes Lupus of Ferrières, at the request of Eberhard, duke of Friuli. The volume, probably made in Modena itself, was long dated from the late tenth century. Its dating today varies between the end of the ninth and the first half of the tenth century.⁴ It is endowed with a prologue describing the contents and its illustration: the Salic law with Salian legislators are well present (fol. 11v), the law of Ripuarian Franks (fol. 30r), that of the Lombards (fol. 42r), that of the Alamans (fol. 110r–111r), then 'Charlemagne with Pippin', and finally Louis and Lothar. The fall of two folios led to the loss of the image of the first Lombard legislators, Rothari, Grimoald and Liutprand, as well as that of Louis the Pious and Lothar.

The image of Charlemagne and Pippin, sovereigns whose *titulus* underlines the federating role in legislation ("isti sunt qui constituerunt capitula congruentia omnium legum: Karolus christianissimus imperator augustus; Pipinus gloriosus rex filius eius"), offers this interesting fact, that it is replicated in the manuscript Erfurt/ Gotha, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek, Memb. I 84 (Mainz, late tenth-early eleventh century) (Fig. 2), which is another copy of Lupus of Ferrières's collection, within a larger group including Ansegisus' Collection, Benedictus Levita and the Breviary of Alaric.⁵ The presence of an identical or almost identical image in the two codices is an indication that both depend on the same book. Likewise, the folios 161r and 166v of Erfurt/ Gotha Memb. I 84, which remained white, provided for illustrations introducing to the laws of the Ripuarians and Lombards. Unlike the Modena manuscript, the image is decontextualized by the absence of *titulus* and by its position

⁴ Mordek, *Bibliotheca*, pp. 256–68; O. Münsch, *Der 'Liber legum' des Lupus von Ferrières*, Freiburger Beiträge zur mittelalterlichen Geschichte; Studien und Texte, 14 (Frankfurt/Main 2001); *Leges Salicae, Ripuariae, Longobardorum, Baiuvariorum, Caroli Magni. Archivio del Capitolo della Cattedrale di Modena MS. O.I.2. Commentario all'edizione in facsimile* (Modena 2008), especially the contributions of P. Golinelli, 'Il 'Codice delle leggi' della Cattedrale di Modena. Descrizione', pp. 17–35, G. Z. Zanichelli, "'Liber Legum': il sistema illustrativo', pp. 37–73, and G. Nicolaj, 'Il "'Liber legum" di Everardo e altre storie', pp. 75–117.

⁵ Mordek, *Bibliotheca*, pp. 131–49.

in the work, since it is placed before the Salic law. As it occupies only the upper left third of a blank sheet, it must also be assumed that other figurative elements were foreseen. It is also as if it were inverted right/left in comparison to that of Modena.

Fig. 2. *Carlo Magno e Pipino*, Erfurt, Universitäts- und Forschungsbibliothek Erfurt/Gotha, Memb. I 84, fol. 149v.

Let us focus on the image of Modena. Charlemagne sits three-quarter-faced, mustached, crowned, holding a long stick (*baculus*, – *Richterstab*) in the left hand. Pippin, naked head, is also equipped with a *baculus*; directing his right hand towards a scribe who looks up at him from the lower register, he transmits the law resulting from the deliberation with his father. Charlemagne seems to be addressing his son while holding a very small circular object between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand. He seems to be tending this object towards his heir. In Gotha's manuscript, the frontal position gives more authority and leads to a greater appreciation of the object, which is presented to the reader and not to the other side, while the latter underlines its importance by pointing it out. Just as the manuscript text produced in Mainz seems to respect a more correct state than Modena's, it is likely that the image he has kept is the one closest to the model.

But which object is it? A ball/ marble, a coin, a ring? It was brought closer to the one held by the personification of Rome on the Magnus consular diptych, made in Constantinople in 518.⁶ On the part of this diptych kept in Milan, which has its counterpart in Paris, Rome holds a disc, dug in its center as if to represent a ring. The medieval copies of the same diptych (in Paris, Saint-Petersburg, Liverpool)⁷ have a solid object, as do two other diptychs preserved in the original, that of Clementinus (Constantinople, 513) and that of Orestus (Rome, 530);⁸ on the object, in addition, is sometimes engraved a capital Alpha. But the interpretation remains highly debated, between whom sees a coin, a sign of the consulate's munificence, or the sign of the sending of the first sequence of circus games. The most recently expressed hypothesis sees the world in this circle, but this does not solve the Alpha question that is written in it.⁹

The most common interpretation, last proposed by Hubert Mordek, is that it is an allusion to the *denariatio*, the emancipation by the *denarius*, in the presence of the king.¹⁰ This is based on the manuscript Paris, BnF, lat. 4787, from the ninth century, probably coming from northern France and containing the Salic, Alamannic and Ripuarian laws. Titles 60 and 61 of the Ripuarian law, relating to the two modes of emancipation, one *per denarium* in front of the king, the other in a church, have a full-page illustration that perhaps reproduces a Merovingian model (fol. 95v).¹¹ A person standing upright with a crown or something like that touches with the fingertips of his left hand which seems to be a vertical structure, while he brandishes with his right hand, above his left shoulder, a circular object barely held back by a finger, as if he were throwing it behind him, according to the rite described in the text. However, such a

⁶ R. Delbrueck, *Die Consulardiptychen und verwandte Denkmäler* (Berlin 1929), p. 22; W. F. Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten der Spätantike und des frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz 1976), pp. 23–24; see J. C. Anderson, in *Age of Spirituality. Late Antique and Early Christian Art: Third to Seventh Century*, ed. by K. Weitzmann (New York 1978), p. 50; J. Arce, *Dagli imperatori ai re barbari: simboli e rappresentazione del potere*, in *I Longobardi. Dalla caduta dell'Impero all'alba dell'Italia. Catalogo della Mostra*, ed. by G. P. Brogiolo and A. Chavarría Arnau (Cinisello Balsamo 2007), pp. 23–32 and pp. 68–69.

⁷ Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, pp. 23–25; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, pp. 24bis.

⁸ Delbrueck, *Consulardiptychen*, pp. 16, 32; Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, pp. 15, 31.

⁹ C. Olovsson, *The Consular Image. An Iconological Study of the Consular Diptych*, BAR, International Series, 1376 (Oxford 2005), pp. 101–03.

¹⁰ H. Mordek, 'Frühmittelalterliche Gesetzgeber und Iustitia in Miniaturen weltlicher Rechtshandschriften', in *La giustizia nel Medioevo (secoli V–VIII)*, Sett., 42, 2 vols (Spoleto 1995), II, pp. 997–1053 (pp. 1023–24).

¹¹ <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b10511004g/f198.image>; *Les temps mérovingiens. Trois siècles d'art et de culture (451–751)*, ed. by I. Bardiès-Fronty, Ch. Denoël and I. Villela-Petit (Paris 2016), pp. 86–87, note 31.

particular scene, if this reading is correct, has no place in the opening of a collection of laws such as that of Modena, where the act of legislating is usually shown, with a certain solemnity.

The rapprochement with an ivory plaque made in Reims or in its region around 870, now in the Bargello Museum in Florence, and representing king David enthroned is more convincing.¹² The circular object that David holds between the fingers of his left hand, in a gesture identical to that of the collection of Lupus of Ferrières, can only be here the world (or earth), which has been David's attribute since at least the eighth century. With David, we approach the religious repertoire of majesty. The representation of the *Maiestas Domini* as it was conceived in Saint-Martin of Tours from the 840s onwards provides a rich series of useful images about us. Christ, sitting on the celestial sphere, presents a circular object held between two or three fingers of the right hand. The aspect is sometimes that of a marble, as in the Gospels of Le Mans,¹³ rather close to the illustration of the Modena manuscript for this detail. But the object is generally a little larger, frequently gilded, surrounded by red or white: among many others, here are for example the Du Fay Gospels.¹⁴

There has been a debate between those who believe that it is a disc and therefore a host, and those who maintain on the contrary that it is a sphere, i.e. the earth or the world. It is this second reading that is the right one, if we relate the image to this verse of Isaiah:

Who has measured the waters with his fist and weighed the heavens in his palm? Who weighed the mass of the earth with his three fingers and calibrated in the balance the weight of the mountains and hills? (Isaiah 40.12).

What Christ holds between his fingers in the Carolingian *Maiestas Domini* is a globe, the same globe that Charlemagne and David hold in an identical gesture. In the years 830–840, the celestial sovereign and the terrestrial sovereign were thus equipped with the same *orbiculus* by the illustrators. A few decades later, the same thing was done for David, the biblical king.

From a chronological point of view, since the small size of the globe can only be explained by the reference to Isaiah, it must be thought that it was the illustration of divine majesty that set the scene. Ancient imagery certainly did not lack emperors with a globe, held in their hands or placed at their feet, but on the one hand this iconographic tradition was not maintained in the West, except in the Duchy of Benevento; on the other hand, this *polus* is never held between the fingers, or even on the fingertips as it is in the *Maiestas Domini* and in the Modena or Erfurt/Gotha manuscripts. Lastly, and above all, it is a celestial sphere and not the orb of the earth.

However, while this type of *Maiestas Domini* continued its career on all kinds of media until the twelfth century, kings and emperors did not benefit from the motif since the end of the ninth century. Ceasing to use this attribute may be due to a desire not to mix genres, and probably also because it was considered more effective and immediately perceptible, in relation to the earthly authorities, to adopt a larger globe, directly inspired by the imagery of Late Antiquity or Byzantium. It is the party adopted for the portraits of Charles the Bald,¹⁵ which were otherwise not followed up until the Ottonian period: as if, after a time of experimentation, it had been carefully chosen, within the same workshops, not to maintain a confusion, perhaps considered daring, between the two types of majesty.

¹² Firenze, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, inv. 33 C. See D. Gaborit-Chopin, *Ivoires du Moyen Âge* (Paris 1978), p. 68, fig. 84; D. Gaborit-Chopin, 'Avori alto medievali e carolingi', in *Gli avori del Museo Nazionale del Bargello*, ed. by I. Ciseri (Firenze 2018), pp. 83–106.

¹³ Paris, BnF, lat. 261, fol. 18, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8427443x/f45.image>.

¹⁴ Paris, BnF, lat. 9385, fol. 179v, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8426037h/f364.image>.

¹⁵ Paris, BnF, lat. 1152, fol. 3v, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b55001423q/f12.image> (Charles the Bald's Psalter); Bibel of St Paul's outside the walls, fol. 1v; *Cathedra Petri* in St Peter; equestrian statuette in the Louvre Museum. See P. E. Schramm, *Sphaira, Globus, Reichsapfel. Wanderung eines Herrschaftszeichen von Caesar bis zu Elisabeth II. Ein Beitrag zur „Nachleben“ der Antike* (Stuttgart 1958), pp. 58–59.

Around 870, the same artists could thus produce images of the King of the Franks with a large globe in his left hand and others of Christ in majesty weighing the miniature world. It is then necessary to wait until the end of the tenth century, as Percy Ernst Schramm showed, for Christ and the king/ emperor to share again the same attribute, in the form of an enlarged globe, held indifferently in the right or left hand. But while Christ could have used either the *globulus* or its enlarged version, the earthly king soon found himself confined to the ‘great’ globe. It could be the effect of the transition from drawing to three-dimensional realisation: the equestrian statue known as Charlemagne had paved the way, which Emperor Henry II once again took, to which the pope sent a ‘golden apple’ echoing the image of the world on the occasion of the coronation in 1014.¹⁶ The small orb of the earth reappears at the fingertips of kings only in an isolated and late manner. A very late example, in the 1230s, is in the left hand of St Louis, in Toledo’s Moralized Bible.¹⁷

On the other hand, those who are closely or remotely associated with the celestial kingship have been endowed without hesitation with the world in reduction. Thus David on the mosaic of St Gereon at Köln (mid–twelfth century); Augustus in a tropar-gradual of Prüm at the end of the tenth century,¹⁸ which shows the ruler ordering the ‘description of all the earth’ (Luke 2.1), according to a model taken from that of the David of Bargello Museum.

Let us return to the image of Modena and Erfurt/ Gotha’s manuscript, with three considerations as a conclusion:

- a) the fact that the emperor is associated with his son in an image that exalts mastery over the world is a way of legitimizing the heir. Not only in a hierarchical scene intended to illustrate the reception of the law, from the one who promulgates it to the one who transmits it to the people as the holder of a *Mittelgewalt*:¹⁹ the scope of the image goes beyond legislation alone, it has to do with the transmission of supreme power, as if Charlemagne were to designate his successor. Unfortunately, we no longer have the illustrations representing Louis the Pious and Lothar and therefore we do not know the figurative treatment that was reserved for them. It is therefore difficult to go further in interpreting a possible preference for Pippin;
- b) the idea of the domination on the world refers to Charlemagne and Louis the Pious’s interest in everything related to scientific knowledge of the world and the *orbis*, as well as to that of the movement of the stars, a knowledge that is closely linked to the exercise of power in a concrete and symbolic way. Charlemagne questioned Alcuin and Dungal on astronomical matters. One of the three silver tables mentioned in his ‘testament’ of 811 was decorated with a geography and a cosmography, with three concentric circles: one for the earth, one for the moon, the sun and the planets, and a third for the fixed stars. It could have been distributed in the form of alms, but Louis the Pious, according to Thegan’s testimony, preferred to keep it for himself.²⁰ It is not forbidden to imagine that if, in 842, as the *Annals of Saint-Bertin* tell us, Lothar had this table cut into pieces, divided among his followers, when the troops of Louis the German and Charles the Bald were dangerously close to Aachen, it was not so much for the silver value of each fragment as for not leaving this symbol of knowledge and power in enemy hands.²¹ The

¹⁶ Rodolphus Glaber, *Historiae* I, 23, ed. and transl. M. Arnoux (Turnhout 1996), pp. 78–79.

¹⁷ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 240, fol. 8, <https://www.themorgan.org/manuscript/77422>.

¹⁸ Paris, BnF, lat. 9448, fol. 4r, <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84229915/f.17.image>.

¹⁹ Kasten, *Königssöhne und Königsherrschaft*, p. 332, with a parallel between the image of Modena and the transmission of God’s law to Moses.

²⁰ VK, c. 33, p. 40; Theg., *GHI*, c. 8, pp. 188–90; D. Deliyannis, ‘Charlemagne’s Silver Tables: The Ideology of an Imperial Capital’, *EME*, 12 (2003), pp. 159–77.

²¹ *Annales Bertiniani*, a. 842, ed. by F. Grat, J. Vielliard and S. Clémencet, *Annales de Saint-Bertin*, Société de l’histoire de France, 470 (Paris 1964), p. 41.

very figuration of the world, with a point or a small circle in the centre, as in the manuscript of Erfurt/ Gotha or on the ivory of the Bargello Museum, is not unrelated to the representation of the space in force in the ninth century, with the earth in the centre and all the parts of the sky equidistant to it;

- c) finally, let us not forget that the innovative conception of this image dates in all likelihood from the reign of Louis the Pious. Everything thus leads us to believe that, in the 830s, there was a willingness to exalt the Christic side of power, which is in line with the message conveyed by the biography of the Astronomer.