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## **An exemplary revolt of the central Middle Ages? Echoes of the first Lombard League across the Christian world around the year 1200**

There is some consensus among historians on the fact that the central middle ages played a pivotal role in the growth of European administrative institutions and the development of principles of accountability, consultation and public responsibility. This study engages with that scholarship by discussing some neglected viewpoints, that is, the degree of awareness and the perception across the Christian world of contemporary developments and local socio-political variations, which will be tackled by focusing on the momentous conflict between the Lombard League and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa of 1167-1183. There is no wide-ranging study of that awareness, but this analysis argues that the representation of the conflict between Barbarossa and the League across Christendom could represent a valuable paradigm, which, moreover, challenges some significant noteworthy preconceptions. Indeed, scholarly considerations of the broader European power dynamics in the central middle ages and their legacy have tended to side-line Communal Italy (as scholarship often calls the northern half of the peninsula, dominated as it was by numerous quasi-independent city communes), and to neglect the conflict between the League (an association that united most of the city communes of the Po Plain) and Barbarossa as well as its status of revolt by subjects against their ruler.<sup>1</sup>

Three main factors have traditionally led to that state of the research regarding the conflict between the League and Barbarossa, and they are the perceived exceptionalism of Communal Italy, its peculiar relationship with its emperor, and the challenge categorising the social features of that conflict. To start with, the Italian cities' contribution to central medieval political culture has been primarily considered in the intellectual spheres, rather than in more practical political terms.<sup>2</sup> That is largely due to the fact that the autonomy of the numerous Lombard city communes, and their degree of regional dominance were quite atypical in the European panorama of that time.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the claims of the German emperor

over Italy are considered as having been little more than notional, and his presence there sporadic at best. That has created the general perception that imperial authority was a foreign body in Communal Italy, which, in turn, has induced scholars to focus on the bilateral features of the conflicts between the Italian cities and the emperors, rather than hierarchical ones.<sup>4</sup> Finally, on one side, the predominant urban features of Communal Italy have meant that historians have not fully seen its conflicts with the emperors as aristocratic revolts. On the other, the often-prevailing interpretation of twelve-century Lombard urban governments as oligarchic/aristocratic in nature, together with the existence of pro-imperial factions, has precluded the classification of those conflicts as popular revolts (this will be discussed more in depth later).

This study challenges those views by arguing that, in the decades straddling the turn of the twelfth century, the conflict between the League and Barbarossa was one of the best known practical examples, if not the best known, across the Christian world, from England to Byzantium, of a successful rebellion by subjects against their ultimate ruler. Indeed, the way in which non-Italian sources described that conflict suggests that its distinctive urban communal features were not perceived as necessarily discordant with wider contemporary European and Mediterranean political culture. On the one hand, Barbarossa was far more present in northern Italy than any of his predecessors and successors, and he wished to “normalise” the region by enhancing his control and administration there to the detriment of the city communes. On the other, the varied and communal features of the opposition to him led to the League being generically portrayed as a rebellion by subjects as a whole against a despotic ruler or, in the case of German sources, as a reprehensible rebellion by unruly subjects against their legitimate ruler. In point of fact, the conflict between the League and Barbarossa reflected very well the above-mentioned developments that characterised European power dynamics in that period, representing a celebrated case in point of successful resistance against what was perceived as a tyrannical growth of royal government.

After outlining the history of the conflict between the League and Barbarossa, this study will chart the awareness and representation of it outside the lands of the empire, from

England to Byzantium passing through France and Southern Italy, by mainly relying on historical works from the decades around the year 1200. That information will then be compared to representations of the League from within the empire, considering both Northern Italy and the vast area north of the Alps, from the border of Denmark to Bohemia. The findings will then be combined with a brief discussion of the socio-political features of the Lombard city communes and of the League through the lenses of non-Italian primary sources and of modern scholarship. Finally the impact of those features on the conflict against Barbarossa and on its portrayal by primary sources will be considered by focusing on some representative examples.

### **Historical Background**

By the time of Barbarossa's imperial coronation at Rome in 1154, the Kingdom of Italy/Lombardy (*Regnum Italie* or *Lombardorum* in the sources), which comprised the northern half of the peninsula, was a very loose commonwealth dominated by autonomous city communes under the distant authority of German Holy Roman Emperors/kings. That was especially the case in the Po Valley, then known as Lombardy (now that name applies to a fraction of that region), which throughout the Middle Ages featured probably the highest urban density in Europe. In the central Middle Ages the Lombard cities were growing fast, and that growth also took a political turn with the birth of autonomous communal governments between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, which, half a century later, had already reached a respectable level of maturity. At the peak of its success in 1172, for example, the Lombard League, despite its relatively small geographical size, included more than twenty city communes (*civitates*), all of which were fairly large by European standards, and each of which claimed authority over the surrounding lands. There were some territorial lordships in the region too, but very few matched any of its *civitates* in size and resources, and most of them orbited around *civitates*. The League, in any case, was the regional association of a land dominated by cities, rather than a mere league of towns. Its

full official name was *Societas civitatum, locorum et hominum Lombardie*, that is, the League of the cities, non-urban communities and men of Lombardy, with the term *homines* including territorial lords. Indeed, the League did not preclude membership to them: the Marquis Malaspina, for example, who was largely autonomous, consistently sided with the League after it was founded in 1167, and his standing within it was comparable to that of a *civitas*.<sup>5</sup>

The Lombard League, however, was a complete novelty in that region, which was expressly created in order to repel the radical attempt by Barbarossa to enhance imperial authority in Italy, because no analogous general regional association had previously existed there. During his long reign, Barbarossa, who could count on unusually stable support in Germany, spent far more time in Italy than any of his predecessors. In the first half of the 1160s he established an administrative structure in Lombardy whose pervasiveness was comparable to the most advanced central governments of the time, such as those of England and Sicily. He secured fortifications in key points and appointed officials (many of them Germans) to govern towns and districts, with special emphasis on the collection of imperial dues.<sup>6</sup> A highpoint in the development of Barbarossa's Italian ambitions was the famous Diet of Roncaglia in 1158, whose expansive definition of royal/imperial prerogatives (*iura regalia*) is commonly regarded as a milestone in the conceptualisation of public law in Western Europe.<sup>7</sup> In order to implement his claims, though, Barbarossa first had to defeat the leading power in the region, that is, the city of Milan and its network of allies. The emperor achieved that in 1162, partly thanks to the support of Milan's regional enemies, such as Cremona and Pavia, which led to the destruction of Milan that year. Indeed, Barbarossa's domination across the region reached its peak between 1162 and 1167, though it is important to recognize that it was uneven: he granted a degree of autonomy to his supporters, while his officials had almost free rein to rule over former enemies.<sup>8</sup>

Yet it is from former allies, like Cremona, where rebellion first stirred in 1164. The reasons for their revolt were multiple: they felt vexed by Barbarossa's domination and by the exploitative behaviour of his agents, but they were also bribed by his enemies, like Byzantium, and supported by Pope Alexander III, who had taken the upper hand in the papal

schism that had started in 1159 (while Barbarossa was the principal backer of a series of anti-popes). By 1168, the rebellion against Barbarossa had enveloped the whole of Lombardy, leading to the reconstruction of Milan, the creation of the League, and the obliteration of Barbarossa's governing structure across the region. After the League's victory at the Battle of Legnano in 1176 and the Peace of Venice in 1177 between Barbarossa and Alexander III (which also entailed negotiations between the League, the king of Sicily and Barbarossa), the League and the emperor reached a written settlement at the Peace of Constance in 1183.<sup>9</sup>

The Peace of Constance, however, was not a capitulation by Barbarossa but a compromise, which aimed to set the future balance of power in the region. On one side, it recognised an extensive level of self-government for so many Lombard communes (not all of which were included in the settlement) that these freedoms practically became a general benchmark of autonomy for the entire region.<sup>10</sup> On the other, the Peace of Constance acknowledged imperial superiority over Lombardy. That superiority was embodied by a set of reserved prerogatives, such as appellate jurisdiction, the duty of city consuls to take an oath of fealty to the emperor and to seek investiture from him, as well as the duty to help the emperor in times of need and during his coronation journey to Rome, and imperial control over some districts.<sup>11</sup>

The Peace of Constance worked well until the death of Emperor Henry VI in 1197, when a long struggle for the succession ensued, lasting for over two decades and vastly eroding the remaining imperial prerogatives in Italy.<sup>12</sup> When Emperor Frederick II, having stabilised his rule in Germany and in southern Italy (a maternal inheritance), turned his attention to Lombardy in 1226, a long conflict ensued with the renewed League that continued until his death in 1250 and beyond.<sup>13</sup> The fortunes of the empire in Italy then rapidly and lastingly declined, but Lombardy notionally remained under imperial sovereignty, emperors intermittently paying heed to it now and again, and the Peace of Constance continued to be considered and to celebrated as the legal foundation of the autonomy of the Lombard cities until the end of the middle ages and beyond.<sup>14</sup>

## **Representations of the Conflict Outside the Empire (England, France, Southern Italy and Byzantium)**

In late 1167, John of Salisbury sent a letter to William Brito, sub-prior of Christ Church in Canterbury. In it, after outlining the collapse of Barbarossa's rule in Lombardy and his narrow escape to Germany, John asked: 'Why do I tell you what you know already? Everywhere news of this is being loudly proclaimed. Everyone, I think, knows it, save only those perhaps who live apart from the crisis of the age, exiles in their own home'.<sup>15</sup> John's statement is confirmed by the vast coverage of the conflict in historical works produced across Christendom from the last quarter of the twelfth century through the first quarter of the thirteenth. Substantial coverage of those events can be found, for example, in the work of the Byzantine John Kinnamos (d. 1185 circa, secretary and biographer of Emperor Manuel Komnenos) and of the southern Italian Romuald Guarna (d. 1178, archbishop of Salerno and envoy for the King of Sicily, including at the Peace of Venice), but also in those of English authors such as William of Newburgh (d. 1198 circa, an Augustinian canon from the priory of Newburgh), Robert of Torigni (d. 1186, abbot of Mont Saint-Michel in Normandy), and Ralph of Diceto (d. 1202 circa, dean of Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, who visited Italy in the 1170s during a diplomatic mission for King Henry of England in the aftermath of the murder of the archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Becket<sup>16</sup>), and in an anonymous French chronicle from Laon (completed around 1218). Passing references can be found in other works from those countries, and especially from France and England, including the chronicle of Ralph Niger (d. around 1217, theologian and cleric), that of Richard of Poitiers (d. 1174, a monk at Cluny), an anonymous English eyewitness account of the Peace of Venice, and the historical/political poetry of Bertran de Born (d. 1215, a lord from the Limousin).<sup>17</sup> This list does not claim to be exhaustive, but it is certainly representative of the spread of the fame of the revolt.

Despite coming from different corners of the Christian world, these sources are remarkably consistent in presenting the conflict as a struggle to preserve time-honoured rights

against a tyrannical ruler intent in trampling them, with ethnic issues exacerbating tensions. Their terminology is also remarkably consistent across the board, key words among them being *libertas* (freedom) for the objective of the Lombards, and *insolentia* (want of moderation, arrogance, but also unusualness) for Barbarossa's actions. Scholarship has spent rivers of ink on medieval views on *libertas*, but the use of the term *insolentia*, which these sources portray as its nemesis, has largely passed unnoticed. Differently from many later medieval revolts, these appeals to *libertas* did not have a socially charged dimension.<sup>18</sup> Yet, as in some late medieval revolts, they took a truly communal nature. As it will be further discussed later, that evidence suggest that the distinction between community rights defined by elites as opposed to those defined by commoners was far less clear than scholarship has often taken it to be.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, those sources ascribe the Lombard uprising to urban communities coalesced into a general regional association of the emperor's subjects, which is sometimes presented as capable of collective actions in its own terms. Overall, the *libertas* of these sources is a collection of traditional communal rights regarding self-rule, taxation, property holding, but it is also the very freedom from arbitrary rule that the term *insolentia* typified.

Starting in the Christian East, we see that Kinnamos explained Lombard disaffection towards Barbarossa, 'king of the Germans', with the fact that, out of lust for power and insatiable greed, he strove to undo effortlessly what had been long established by time and custom, especially by laying claim to money. This pushed various Lombard cities, of which Kinnamos named some, to seek help against him and eventually to go over to the Byzantine emperor.<sup>20</sup>

On the other side of Christendom, comparable arguments can be found in Anglo-Norman sources, which are particularly rich in references to the League.<sup>21</sup> Ralph Niger mentioned that the Lombards toppled the insolence and oppression (*insolentia* and *oppressiones*) of Barbarossa and of his Germans.<sup>22</sup> On similar lines, William of Newburgh, who called Frederick the 'German and Italian emperor' (*Teutonicus atque Italicus imperator*), and explained the conflict with the fact that, after his destruction of the rebel (*rebellem*) city



of Milan, he acted insolently (*insolentius ageret*) and that the Lombards could not tolerate the resulting 'German yoke' (*jugum Alemannicum*).<sup>23</sup> According to Ralph of Diceto, the Lombards were Barbarossa's subjects, but he invaded Italy in order to cast his name above those of all the other magnates of the earth; he found his main obstacle in the city of Milan, which enjoyed immunity from extraordinary obligations, was conscious of its *libertas* and thus refused to acknowledge to him more than the customary dues; eventually the people of Milan, Piacenza, Brescia and Verona decided to defend the *libertas* of their homeland (*patria*) with their lives;<sup>24</sup> following his defeat at Legnano, judging that Italy was rebellious to him (*sibi rebellem intelligens*) and that he could not face the Lombards on the battlefield again without recovering his strength, he moved to Germany.<sup>25</sup> The anonymous English eyewitness of the Peace of Venice underlined that the emperor had introduced grievous and previously unheard of customs in northern Italy (*importunas et antea inauditas consuetudines*) as the cause of Lombard opposition to him.<sup>26</sup>

The southern Italian Romuald of Salerno wrote that Barbarossa, after his victory over Milan, had Lombardy at his will and turned it into his domain (which probably referred to Barbarossa's reclamations of what he perceived were usurped public estates and assets) by appointing officials in cities and castles, the result being that, by supporting the emperor against Milan, the Lombards had placed themselves in servitude to the Germans.<sup>27</sup> Then at the Peace of Venice (more on which later), the representatives of the Lombards assured that they recognized the emperor's ancient dues and were happy to comply with them, but they categorically refused to relinquish the *libertas* which they held by hereditary right from their ancestors, and which they were ready to defend with their lives, equating the alternative to servitude.<sup>28</sup>

Moving to France, the anonymous chronicler of Laon mentioned Barbarossa's growing power in the region and the destruction of Milan in 1162, but also that, weary of his *insolentia*, the Lombards decided to submit their kingdom to the Byzantine emperor and shortly after this entered into similar negotiations with King Henry II of England.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, according to this chronicle, 'as they say', Barbarossa later took the cross because he was

filled with remorse for the injuries he had inflicted on the Lombards.<sup>30</sup>

Those authors clearly viewed the outcome of the struggle as favourable to the Lombards. Kinnamos' work ends in 1176, but he had lost interest in northern Italy after stating that many of the main cities of the region had gone over from Barbarossa to his emperor (which came to nothing in the end).<sup>31</sup> According to Ralph Niger, the Lombards, having driven the oppression off, obtained 'greater liberty' (*maiolem libertatem*).<sup>32</sup> Ralph Diceto inserted in his work a letter sent by the Milanese to the Bolognese announcing the triumph of Legnano, and, although he did not mention the final outcome of the conflict, his work implies that a settlement had been reached, because it mentions the wedding of the future Emperor Henry VI with Constance of Sicily, together with the resulting coronation ceremony, that took place at Milan (by then the leading city of the League) in 1186.<sup>33</sup> For William of Newburgh, the Lombards eventually recovered their ancient liberty (*in libertatem se pristinam receperunt*), and he also implied that a settlement was reached when he mentioned how Frederick made his son Henry king of the Lombards.<sup>34</sup> Robert of Torigni ended his account of the conflict with the crushing victory of the League at Legnano.<sup>35</sup> Romuald of Salerno died before the Peace of Constance, but he also described the Lombard triumph at Legnano, and his work is one of the best sources on the negotiations between Barbarossa and the League during the Peace of Venice. The chronicle of Laon closes its account of the conflict with Barbarossa's calamitous failure at the siege of Alessandria of 1174-5.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, the sympathy of these non-imperial sources is largely on the side of the Lombards, and criticism of their uprising is hard to come by, which is perhaps surprising, given how many of those sources came from countries with strong central governments, such as England, southern Italy, and Byzantium. Some sources do highlight the urban nature of Lombard society and its unusual degree of *libertas*, and some of them also consider Barbarossa's point of view, but none of them particularly overstress those distinctive features. The best example of such comments probably comes from Romuald of Salerno, who noted that, before Barbarossa, the Lombards enjoyed an extraordinary degree of liberty when

compared to other nations (*‘inter alias nationes libertatis singularitate gaudebant’*), but he also later stated that in his 1170s campaigns, Barbarossa took action against the ‘injury’ (*iniuria*) he had received from the Lombards.<sup>37</sup> Similar, but perhaps more judgemental, views can be found in the work of William of Newburgh, who described as *immoderata* (which probably means excessive and extravagant here) the *libertas* which the Lombards enjoyed before Barbarossa, when they had largely freed themselves from the emperor; indeed, for William the Lombard people (*gens*) was restless and warlike (*inquieta, bellicose*), as well as *superba* for its number of cities and strength, an adjective which in a bad sense means arrogant and in a good one outstanding,<sup>38</sup> in any case, the Lombards do seem to have redeemed themselves in William’s eyes when he notes that the Milanese, fighting against Barbarossa, converted ‘the desire of dominion [over other Lombards] into an obstinate defense of liberty’, and how they fought back against Barbarossa’s *insolentia*.<sup>39</sup>

The French troubadour Bertran de Born approved of the covenant formed by the Lombards in one of his poems, in which he noticed how the Gascons had similarly coalesced against their king (Henry II of England or his son Henry the Young King) (*‘Li Gascon si son acordat / entr’ elhs et ves lui revelat / quon aissilh de Lombardia ... D’aitan lur trac garanteia’*).<sup>40</sup> Other poems by Bertran also approvingly alluded to the conflict between the League and Barbarossa, one portraying the situation in Limousin as the ‘little Lombardy’ (*‘Sa pauca Lombardia’*) of Count Aimar of Limoges.<sup>41</sup>

The most sympathetic with the emperor among these authors seems to have been Robert of Torigni, but he has no particularly harsh comment for the Lombards, especially when compared to the harshness of the German sources discussed below. After mentioning that the emperor had subjected Lombardy to his will – a statement which might harbour negative overtones of arbitrary rule – Robert underlined how that had brought peace and security for natives and strangers as well as a restoration of royal revenues; perhaps surprise, hinting to some measure of criticism against the Lombards, can be detected in his prose when he notices how ‘on the other hand’ (*iterum*), the cities of the Veronese March rebelled in 1164 (a prologue to the Lombard League).<sup>42</sup>

Those sources generally portray the conflict between the League and Barbarossa as a collective struggle by a regional community, even a people, that is, the *Lombardi* whose constituent parts were urban communities. Some sources acknowledge that some Lombard cities sided with the emperor, but they usually point out they were a small minority, which justifies their consistent use of the collective ethnic name *Lombardi* to describe Barbarossa's opponents. William of Newburgh called those Lombards a *gens* and Romuald of Salerno a *natio*.<sup>43</sup> Robert of Torigni provided a sketch of the political and religious configuration of the region, stating that it was divided into three archdioceses (Milan, Ravenna and Genoa) and twenty-five cities.<sup>44</sup> He subsequently remarked that all the twenty-five cities of Lombardy defected from the emperor apart from Pavia and Vercelli, and that the *Lombardi* won the Battle of Legnano.<sup>45</sup>

While Anglo-Norman and Byzantine sources did not enter into the details of the bond between the Lombard cities, French, German and southern Italian ones describe it as a *coniuratio* capable of major public collective actions. That reflected the structure of the League, which partially filled the power vacuum left by the conflict with its emperor and his papal excommunication, the result being that, to some extent, the League even usurped imperial prerogatives, such as judging appeals against the sentences of local judges and recognising urban status to the new centre of Alessandria.<sup>46</sup> *Coniuratio* literally means collective oath, or sworn alliance, but it often had the negative connotation of plot or conspiracy (from which the modern Italian *congiura* comes from).<sup>47</sup> Yet, overall, the way in which the sources examined above explained the conflict, and their general lack of other negative comments on the Lombards (which, as we shall see, are abundant in German sources), suggest ruling out that negative connotation.

Romuald, for example, wrote that almost all of the Lombards made a *coniuratio* against the emperor.<sup>48</sup> Bertran de Born simply refers to it as a collective agreement among the Lombards (*'si son acordat / entr' elhs'*).<sup>49</sup> The chronicle of Laon describes the *Lombardi* as taking deliberations (*deliberaverunt*) on matters such as offering the Lombard Kingdom to other rulers, although it also notices how the Lombards were divided into an anti-imperial

group led by Milan and a smaller number of imperial supporters, describing the former as a Milanese confederacy (*'confederatio mediolanice'*), or 'the cities that had formed a *coniuratio* together with Milan' (*'urbes que mediolano coniuraverant'*).<sup>50</sup> This focus on Milanese leadership might have been influenced by developments after the Battle of Legnano, and particularly during the first quarter of the thirteenth century, when the chronicle of Laon was produced, because the Milanese influence over the League took time to build up after the city's reconstruction.<sup>51</sup> On similar lines, according to the *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, which is more fully discussed below, a vast *coniuratio* covering the whole of Lombardy was made against the emperor, and in 1175 it declared a public war (*'bellum publicum'*) against him, gathering an extraordinary mass of people from all over the region.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, an addition to the chronicle of Richard of Poitiers reports that Barbarossa's plan to submit the whole of Italy to his rule was foiled by the fact that all the Italian cities (read here northern Italy), apart from Pavia, formed a *coniuratio* against him with the approbation of Pope Alexander III.<sup>53</sup>

The interest and sympathy of non-Italian sources for the League was certainly connected to the conflict between Pope Alexander III and Barbarossa. Apart from Bertran de Born, all the authors mentioned above were, after all, clerics, as it was the norm in that period outside Italy. Lombardy traditionally played a crucial geopolitical role in the relations between empire and papacy, whose conflicts, in turn, inevitably touched the whole of Christendom and interlaced with a myriad of other local and regional issues across it. The conflict between Barbarossa and Alexander had started as a papal schism, but well before the creation of the League most of Christendom had already accepted Alexander, to whom the League became the principal ally, and who had excommunicated Barbarossa.<sup>54</sup> Allegiance to the series of anti-popes who opposed Alexander was restricted to Barbarossa's areas of control, especially Germany and central Italy.<sup>55</sup> It is probably not a coincidence that, as we shall see, German sources are also the only ones across Christendom that consistently criticised the League. In addition to the conflict between empire and papacy, there was the fact that the resources that Barbarossa was gathering by controlling an area as rich as

Lombardy threatened to upset continental and Mediterranean balances of power, and thus greatly worried his neighbours (Kinnamos mentioned that explicitly in the account mentioned above). On the other hand, the sources examined above undoubtedly treat the uprising on its own terms and do not confuse it with the papal schism or with the conflict between pope and emperor.

### **Representations of the League within the Empire (Northern Italy and Germany)**

The representation of the League outside the Empire was far closer to that by Italian sources than to German ones, whose attitude clearly stands out from the rest of the surviving sources.

Among Italian historical works, one of the most exhaustive explanations for the Lombard uprising comes from the chronicles of Lodi, a city which originally supported the emperor, but was forced to join the League in its early stages and then consistently sided with it for the rest of the conflict. One of their authors, the lay judge Acerbo Morena (an imperial supporter who died in the epidemic which forced Barbarossa to retreat from Rome in 1167) blamed the massive burdens (*'enormiter gravatos'*) that imperial representatives (*'missi imperatoris'*) imposed over the cities which gave birth to the Veronese League in 1164, but also the *'pecunia Venetorum'* (that is, the bribes mentioned above, Venice being the conduit of the financial incentives from Byzantium and Norman Sicily).<sup>56</sup> His anonymous continuator, who wrote after Lodi joined the League, stated that the Lombards were not used to the intrusive imperial presence introduced by Barbarossa: accustomed to living freely and comfortably, they suddenly found themselves victims of a plethora of uncustomary taxes and expropriations, which led to open opposition against the emperor and to the creation of the League by 1167-8.<sup>57</sup> On the same line was Cardinal Boso (supporter and biographer for Pope Alexander III), who pointed to arbitrary extortions, expropriations, and also sexual violence by imperial officers, and described how, during the negotiations between League and emperor

of 1175, some mediators likened Frederick's deeds to a lord who has taken by force what belongs to his serfs by right.<sup>58</sup>

The most stirring Italian account, however, comes from a Milanese source eloquently known as 'the story of the oppression of Lombardy' (*Narratio de Longobardiae obpressione*), which describes the misfortunes of the Milanese in the years between the destruction of their city in 1162 and their return to it in 1167. During this time, they had been dispersed in settlements in the surrounding countryside and found themselves under the rule of imperial representatives who clearly treated them as defeated recidivist rebels, making them provide free labour, extorting money, and forcing expropriations in various unpleasant ways.<sup>59</sup> The comments on expropriations closely recall Romuald's passage according to which Barbarossa transformed most of Lombardy into his domain. Documentary evidence from Piacenza, which was in a similar position to Milan, would confirm that the claims of Lombard writers were not just rhetoric.<sup>60</sup>

Those accounts largely mirror the appeals, found in the documentary evidence of the creation of the League and of its negotiations with the emperor, to the by en large unwritten good customs ('*salvis rationibus et bonis usibus*'), which in the eyes of the Lombards justified their control of what Barbarossa perceived as public, read imperial, assets.<sup>61</sup> A letter sent to Archbishop Becket of Canterbury by his representatives at the papal curia in May 1164, on the eve of the uprising of the Veronese League, exemplifies how that information travelled outside Italy: it noticed how relations between the emperor and the Lombard cities had deteriorated so much that they were threatening to abandon him if he did not change his tyrannical attitude and adopt a more civilised one, so that they could regain the liberty they had enjoyed under his predecessors ('*nisi deponat tirrannidem et civiles induat mores, ut liberi esse possint, sicut in diebus aliorum imperatorum*').<sup>62</sup>

In works produced in the Italian schools of law and rhetoric the status quo as it existed before Barbarossa was also justified by pointing to the privileges (known as *Ius Italicum*) that Italy had enjoyed within the ancient Roman empire of which Barbarossa claimed to be the heir. Those privileges mainly featured exemption from tributes, but they

implied far more than that, because they also had strong communal elements (the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* cites them in relation to grants to non-Italian cities). Indeed, they originally derived from the identification of the Italian peninsula with the Roman state itself, which meant that Italians were not mere subjects of the emperor (a position which applied to the inhabitants of the provinces of the empire, who were subjects by right of conquest), but Roman citizens of the highest rate, which secured personal property and protected from arbitrary jurisdiction.<sup>63</sup>

No explicit references to the ancient *Ius Italicum* can be found in chronicles and in the surviving records of the negotiations between the League and Barbarossa. Those references were rather part of a learned debate linked to the participation of jurists from the law schools of Bologna to Barbarossa's Diet of Roncaglia of 1158, where they had helped shaping imperial claims by connecting them to the Roman law of Justinian *Corpus Iuris Civilis*. That compilation was also the main source of information regarding the *Ius Italicum*, which other jurists and rhetoricians then used to criticise the findings of their colleagues at Roncaglia.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, a wider debate existed at that time on the relationship between unwritten customs, written laws and new legislation.<sup>65</sup> Ultimately, however, the intentions of the upholders of the *Ius Italicum* were the same as those based on good custom, but they preferred to back them with Roman law.

At the same time, it should not be taken for granted that those learned arguments were necessarily confined to academic ivory towers. As jurists helped Barbarossa at Roncaglia, Lombard schools of law and rhetoric (which attracted students from all over Western Europe) often had a symbiotic relationship with Italian communal governments, and that was especially the case at Bologna, which a decade after Roncaglia became a consistent member of the League.<sup>66</sup> In fact, references to the Roman heritage and to ideas of citizenship in relation to the Lombard city communes can be found in some contemporary sources that will be examined shortly, and most notably those of the German Otto of Freising and of the Italian Boncompagno da Signa, the latter in a work which he publicly read to the township of Ancona.



Regarding the bond among the insurgents, Italian sources sometimes feature the term *coniuratio*, but more often *concordia* (agreement or harmony) or *societas civitatum* (league of cities), which are interchangeable but not totally synonymous. The term *concordia* had intrinsically positive connotations, and *societas* was quite neutral, but again, like in non-imperial sources, *coniuratio* did not necessarily entail negative implications. The work of the continuator of Morena, for example, states that by 1168 the cities which had already formed a *coniuratio* (*'iam coniurate fuerant'*) evolved into a corporate association (*'atque insimul unum corpus omnes effecto sunt'*), which coincided with the creation of the governing college of the rectors of the League and the appearance of its official name.<sup>67</sup> In that case *coniuratio* was probably simply meant to refer to a pre-incorporation stage, when the League was only a sworn multilateral agreement.<sup>68</sup>

The contrast between Italian and non-imperial sources on one side and those from the empire north of the Alps (from as far north as Schleswig-Holstein, on the border with Denmark, to as far east as Bohemia) could not be starker, because the latter unmistakably and consistently portrayed the League as the villain. Indeed, with the partial exception of Burchard von Ursperg (who also used the term *insolentia* referring to Barbarossa's agents), they feature no remarks concerning uncustomary rule and oppression by Barbarossa. Vincent of Prague (d. 1170, a notary and canon from Prague who took part to Barbarossa's Italian expeditions), whose work ends just before the formation of the League, remarked that, after the fall of Milan in 1162, Barbarossa exercised his authority over the whole of Italy, which trembled in his presence, and he appointed his *potestates* over the Italian cities, the result being that 'what he wished in Lombardy he did'.<sup>69</sup> The latter echoes some of the statements considered above, but it was clearly meant as praise for Barbarossa's might, because Vincent consistently sided with him throughout his work. The *Chronica Regia Coloniensis* (written around 1200 by an unidentified canon from Cologne) also remarks that, after the destruction of Milan, the whole of Lombardy bowed to Barbarossa's will.<sup>70</sup> Gottfried of Viterbo (d. 1202, a member of the imperial court) praised imperial rule in that period for bringing peace and suitable royal revenues.<sup>71</sup> Only Burchard of Ursperg (provost of the Swabian

Premonstratensian monastery of Ursperg, who was writing around 1230) stated that, when the League was created, the Lombards expelled the *iudices* whom Barbarossa had appointed throughout Lombardy because of the ‘*insolentias*’ with which those Germans had behaved. Incidentally, Burchard’s work features one of the most informative and balanced account of the Peace of Constance, mentioning that Barbarossa reached an agreement with the Lombards regarding what they owed him, and that since then they had been refusing to do more than what that written settlement prescribed.<sup>72</sup>

German authors also referred to the League more consistently as a rebellion, and they often described it as a *conspiratio*, a term far less ambiguously negative (from which the English ‘conspiracy’ comes from) than *coniuratio*, as confirmed by frequent derogatory comments on the Lombards. The *Chronica Regia Coloniensis* calls the League a *coniuratio*, mentions the *perfidia* of the Milanese while reporting its reconstruction without the emperor’s permission, and describes the new city of Alessandria (a member of the League) as a collection of petty thieves, robbers and serfs freshly escaped from their lords, to which the League lent its support.<sup>73</sup> For Gottfried of Viterbo the Lombards conspired to form a sworn rebellion (‘*conspirant ligures ... rebellio iurata*’), the League was the revival of the previous rebellion by Milan, a city which he had called barbarous, arrogant, untamed and fully rebellious (*seva, superba, fera, tota rebellis*), but the Lombards as a whole were a bad rabble (*plebs mala*), their deeds crimes (*crimina*), and their arrogance repressed all royal rights and replaced them with self-rule.<sup>74</sup> The verb ‘*rebellant*’ was used by Rahewin and the *Annales Magdeburgenses* (from the last quarter of the twelfth century), which calls the Lombards ‘a perfidious people deserving reproach/chastisement’ (*gentem perfidam digna animadversione*).<sup>75</sup> The *Chronica Slavorum* of Helmold of Bosau (d. 1177 circa, priest at Bosau in Schleswig-Holstein) states that, with the destruction of Milan, fear for Barbarossa temporarily put an end to Lombard rebellions, who had so ill-treated his predecessors, but then the Lombards unanimously *conspiraverunt* against the emperor.<sup>76</sup> Despite his relatively balanced explanation of the Lombard uprising, Burchard of Ursbergh also described the League as a *conspiratio*.<sup>77</sup>

The representation of the League by those German sources reflected closely that by the imperial court, from whose propaganda the inhabitants of the ultramontane empire obtained at least some of their information about it. The appendix to Rahewin's work, for example, states that in 1167 Barbarossa sent letters throughout the empire denouncing the '*rebellionem Italarum*'.<sup>78</sup> This is probably a reference to the extant letter in which Barbarossa highlighted how the Lombards had rebelled against him as well as against the '*Teutonicorum Imperio*', with no good reason or fault by the emperor ('*sine causa*' and '*sine aliqua praecedenti culpa*'), but because of the *malitia* and *perfidia* of the Italians. That is exactly how the German sources examined above described those events.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Socio-Political Features of the Lombard City Communes**

The sources considered above do not ostensibly discuss the situation within the Lombard city communes, and for that we must turn primarily to the German Otto of Freising (d. 1158, bishop of Freising and a close relative of Barbarossa himself), who, interestingly, explained it by adopting the dichotomy *libertas* versus *insolentia* as well, and died just before the beginning of the papal schism. That means that Otto did not see the formation of the League, but he did witness the early Italian campaigns of Barbarossa against Milan, and it was in order to explain them that he left what is probably the most compelling cross-sectional panoramic view of twelfth-century Communal Italy.<sup>80</sup>

While Otto outlined the regional domination by cities and their relations with the emperor, he also discussed their form of government and their internal social stratification. Regarding politics, Otto noticed how, following their ancient Roman heritage, the Lombards loved *libertas* ('*Denique libertatem tantopere affectant*') and rejected the insolence of power ('*ut potestatis insolentiam fugiendo*'), so that, rather than by masters, they preferred to be ruled by officers called consuls ('*consulum potius quam imperantium regantur arbitrio*'), who were drawn from different social groups and, lest they exceeded their bounds by lust for power, held short-term office.<sup>81</sup> On one side, Otto criticised the relative social mobility of the

Lombard city communes, as when he mentioned how they offered ‘knightships and grades of distinction to young men of inferior status or workers of the vile mechanical arts, whom other peoples barred like the pest’.<sup>82</sup> On the other, he obviously admired the overall results of that Lombard system, which, he stated, meant that the Lombards surpassed all other cities [or body politics] of the world in riches and power (*‘Ex quo factum est, ut caeteris orbis civitatibus divitiis et potentia praemineant’*).<sup>83</sup> That, however had a dark side, because, while the Lombards claimed to adhere to the law [Otto most probably referred to Roman law there], they forgot their ancient nobility, and in reality disdained the law by disregarding their rightful ultimate ruler, that is, the emperor, to whom they should have displayed a voluntary deference of obedience. The result was that the Lombards did not behave like citizens [Otto used the term *civis*, which in this case seems to refer to the concept of the Roman citizen rather than a mere town dweller], but like an enemy (*‘adversarius’*) who needed to be subjugated by force of arms [which seems to reflect the lawyers’ distinction between Italians and conquered provincials in the Roman empire mentioned above]. That excused the emperor for such actions in the sight of God. Barbarossa’s predecessors had allowed that situation to worsen with their neglect, but he planned to put remedy to it.<sup>84</sup>

Otto’s account can be coupled with passages from the *Policraticus*, which was one of the most influential political works from the central Middle Ages. Scholarship seems to have utterly overlooked those passages, but they engage with themes that are similar to those of Otto’s work by presenting non-German points of view on them. Indeed, they present on the Lombard cities as epitomes of popular sovereignty, and, as many of the other works here considered, feature the dichotomy *libertas* versus *insolentia* too. John travelled to Italy in several occasions, and his *Policraticus* includes a conversation he had with an anonymous person who hosted him at Piacenza. In it the host presented argued that as long as the inhabitants of the Italian cities cherished peace and justice, they rejoiced in liberty (*libertas*) and peace; indeed, the merits of the people make princely regimes superfluous or cause them to be administered with the greatest mildness (*‘merita populi omnem evacuant principatum aut eum faciunt esse mitissimum’*); conversely people’s sins bring hypocrites to reign, Roman

arrogance and the German fury being examples of how God punished the Italians when they strayed away from the above-mentioned merits.<sup>85</sup> The terms used for Roman arrogance, ‘*fastus*’, was a synonym of *insolentia*, and, together with the ‘*furor Teutonicus*’, in all probability referred to the emperor. As with Otto of Freising, John of Salisbury wrote the *Policraticus* in the late 1150s too, before the beginning of the papal schism, and roughly a decade before his letters commenting on Lombard affairs mentioned above.<sup>86</sup> Therefore those passages from the *Policraticus* probably commented on Barbarossa’s early campaigns against Milan, of which Piacenza was the closest ally in the region.<sup>87</sup>

Although the other sources examined above do not explicitly discuss the internal features of the Lombard cities’ communal governments, their representation of the Lombards’ acts as undertaken collectively by a regional community constituted by urban ones suggests that they took for granted at least some of the featured that Otto and John depicted. On the other hand, the *Annales Magdeburgenses* represented the League as a rebellion by ‘*Italici principes*’.<sup>88</sup> What those annals actually meant with *principes* is open to interpretation. In the light of the little role that territorial lords played in the League, one is left wondering whether *principes* simply meant the leading powers in the region by comparing the city communes to collective forms of lordship. Yet it is also perhaps possible that it referred to the local elite that largely controlled the Italian city communes.

Scholarship has largely ignored these passages from John of Salisbury and the *Annales Magdeburgenses*, but the seeming contrast between the *populus* of the former and the *principes* of the latter echoes the existence of opposite scholarly traditions regarding the social and institutional makeup of the Italian city communes. One school of thought portrays twelfth-century city communes as primordial models of representative institutions, and the other as oligarchies dominating urban masses.<sup>89</sup> It is now generally accepted that the city communes of that period acted as public entities; after all, they described themselves in terms such as *res publica*, *commune*, or *civitas*. On the other, in the second half of the twentieth century scholarship focused in particular attention on the local aristocracies and elites called *milites* (usually translated as knights or consular aristocracy, as opposed to the *populus*, or

*pedites* whose members fought on foot), who controlled and ran the communal governments. In some cases that scholarship portrayed the rise of the city communes as the conquest of cities by the rural nobility and its integration with urban mercantile, administrative and financial elites. In this approach, the city communes are effectively understood as collective lordships based on the concord between aristocratic families, rather than on the concord of the *cives* as a whole. This view resonates with suggestions to replace the use of the term state with lordship for the Middle Ages, especially for this period.<sup>90</sup>

More recently, however, this focus on the urban aristocracy has been attacked as unjustifiably slighting the public and more inclusive features of twelfth century-Italian communal governments.<sup>91</sup> This has led to renewed attention upon issues such as offices, judicial and fiscal administrations, assembly politics, and the expansion of rhetorical and legal education as the forgers of a distinctive communal political culture. After all, the *milites* themselves were a relatively fluid, porous and diverse group at that time, whose composition and features varied from town to town, and who did not completely monopolise the running of the communes. Consuls did exchange oaths with the assembly of all the *cives*, who gathered for that and other important purposes in the main square of the cities. The relatively high cohesion of Lombard urban communities of that time, which was quite remarkable in comparison to previous and later periods, is suggestive: indeed, overall, their communal governments had been created out of broad compromise among the various components of local communities.<sup>92</sup> It was a few decades after the end of the conflict with Barbarossa, for example, that the Italian cities started to be lacerated by clashes between the *milites*, or magnates, and the *populus*.<sup>93</sup> Overall, this evidence implies that communal institutions were not as frail and diminutive in the twelfth century as has often been assumed. This does not deny the preponderance of the local elites, but integrates their dominance within a more complex communal setting. Indeed, in many ways that re-evaluation of twelfth-century communal institutions does some justice to the account by Otto of Freising, and suggest that those by John of Salisbury and the *Annales Magdeburgenses* did not necessarily represent

contrasting images, but reflected the complexity of the Italian cities and the awareness of it outside Italy.

### **The League's Approach to Politics**

The historiography on the League presents similar dichotomies to that of the city communes, but in its case they are less a product of opposing schools, than a reflection of changes in scholarship over time related to contemporary political experiences. While, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the League could be portrayed as a precursor of the French revolution, it took stronger and stronger nationalistic overtones during the Risorgimento (the movement that unified the Italian peninsula and expelled the Austrian empire). Then the topic started to go out of fashion after the creation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, to which the League bore little geographic or qualitative correspondence, and it never recovered its previous popularity. Although the Fascist regime named military units after the Battle of Legnano, it did not pay much attention to the League itself. Post-War scholarship has regularly mentioned the League, but mostly in passing and primarily to debunk what remained of its Risorgimento myth, which still lingers in popular perceptions. The political party of the Lega Nord/Lega Lombarda, for example, has adopted a warped version of that Risorgimento myth in the last decades of the twentieth century, switching, as opponent, the German emperor with the Italian central government and with southern Italian influences, while, most recently, it has focused its attention on criticising the European Union.<sup>94</sup>

To some extent the shadow of the Risorgimento still lingers in academia as well, and it shoulders the responsibility for dictating the evaluation of the League in terms of nationhood and state formation, in which it has always been found wanting, or simply in terms of preservation of the Lombard city communes (viewed as they are as an early stage for the city states of the Italian Renaissance).<sup>95</sup> On the other hand, the tacit corollary of the above-mentioned focus on urban aristocracies was that the League was represented as little more than a fleeting alliance of petty local oligarchic interests. The recent re-evaluation of

twelfth-century communal governments has rather focused on how the experience of the League helped to collectively consolidate them by rejecting Barbarossa's threat and by improving political and institutional integration across the region.<sup>96</sup>

Those views have overshadowed how the League attracted attention as a case of rejection of a despotic princely government, as well as how it also stood for, and, as will be shown in a moment, put a spotlight on a certain approach to the exercise of power that reflected the experience of the city communes, as opposed to the top down style that Barbarossa's critics attributed to him. To be sure, the depiction, by the sources examined above, of the League as a *coniuratio* that was capable of complex collective actions is confirmed by documentary evidence regarding its structure and activity, which were infused with principles of consultation, accountability and public responsibility. The League was built on a chain of collective oaths that were routinely confirmed: it was founded by agreements between city communes, which were then cemented by the oaths of their whole male population between the age of fifteen and sixty. Clauses of allegiance to the League were also inserted in the oaths that city consuls took upon entering office, in which they swore not to contradict the terms of the League, but to act for the common utility of all the men of the association. In turn, a college of rectors governed the League, who held short-time office, took an oath in which they also swore to act for the common utility, and also to share any goods they received during their mandate, since cases of corruption and duress officially disqualified their actions. The college of the rectors had its own seal and they met in assemblies where they took decisions by majority vote. Each of them came from one of the *civitates* of the League, each of which therefore had, at least in principle, equal representation. Finally the League did not only deal with the war against the emperor, but coordinated the collaboration and relations between its members more generally, including the resolution of disputes. Yet in their activity the rectors relied entirely on the goodwill of the members, though they could ban members from the association.<sup>97</sup>

Boncompagno da Signa's *Liber de Obsidione Ancone* is well known among scholars of political thought as one of the most convincing displays of Italian communal ideology, but



it has been often neglected by wider scholarship, and it has been virtually disregarded as the most compelling proof that the opposition against Barbarossa in Communal Italy came to be perceived as a particularly powerful example of resistance against bad princely government. Boncompagno was a teacher of rhetoric whom the Bolognese lawyer and knight Ugolinus Gosia commissioned the *Liber de Obsidione Ancone* to be publicly read in Ancona for the celebrations of his appointment as the city's *podestà* (the executive officer, usually a foreigner, who gradually replaced the college of consuls from the end of the twelfth century) in 1201. Yet Boncompagno's work recounted the heroic resistance against the imperial army that besieged Ancona during the reign of Barbarossa, in 1173, which was broken by in the intervention of the Lombard League.

A *podestà* celebrating his appointment by commemorating an act of defiance by the city that he was about to rule against its ultimate ruler is quite remarkable in and of itself. Indeed, Boncompagno's piece reviews the significance of Barbarossa's Italian wars by stating that kings naturally tend to imitate rulers such as Nebuchadnezzar (the quintessential biblical tyrant), that without memory humans would regress to the state of irrational animals, and nothing would be undertaken according to law, but the will of anyone who happens to be in power would be the law and the weak would only be able to submit. 'Therefore if any citizens [*cives*] is besieged by kings or princes, let them take the Anconitans as an example'.<sup>98</sup> By sponsoring this work, Ugolinus clearly made a political statement, which wished to underline the distinction between his office as temporary rector of the city, and his intended approach to it, as opposed to those of a notorious emperor. At the same time, Boncompagno's *Liber* does not reject imperial authority per se, and it actually introduces Ugolinus Gosia by noticing the close and traditional links between his family and the imperial court.<sup>99</sup>

Regarding communal ideology, Boncompagno built his depiction of the siege of 1173 around a series of speeches and vignettes, which portray the city's resistance as a truly communal endeavour. The settings of the speeches are not ceremonial assemblies but genuine debates: the central speech of the work is delivered by an old man (who claims to have been a consul in the 1130s, around forty years before the siege) in the course of a very divided

assembly attended by the council of consuls and notables which governed the city, whom, however, Boncompagno described by using terms designating quality and expertise rather than mere social stratification (*'viri discreti et sapientes ... quorum consilio civitas regebantur'*).<sup>100</sup> The old man succeeded to convince the assembly not to surrender to the imperial army, but the continuation of the siege worsened the hardships for the Anconitans, which brought further assemblies involving this time the entire Anconitan *populus*.<sup>101</sup> It might be argued that a siege is an emergency situation and that those behaviours might not have reflected more mundane meetings. Yet in the introduction to the work, which describes the Anconitan invitation to the Bolognese Ugolinus in 1201, the latter asks an assembly of his fellow citizen composed by the podestà, the *milites* as well as the *populus* permission to accept that invitation, which they grant him collectively.<sup>102</sup>

Boncompagno's vignettes of the siege equally cut across Anconitan society, and they are gender inclusive too. The first vignette concerns a commoner widow called Stamira, who surpasses in dare all the defenders by setting fire to the war machines of the besiegers with an axe and a torch.<sup>103</sup> Another vignette features a cathedral canon, who swims to the vessels that besieged the city by sea and causes havoc by cutting their anchors.<sup>104</sup> Then a noblewoman carrying a baby offers her breast milk to a starving crossbowman who has no strength left to recharge his weapon but feels so ashamed at this that he springs to action.<sup>105</sup> The expeditionary force sent by the League is led by a man and a woman: the man is formally in charge and the woman represents her minor son, but she is of far higher social ranking: he is an influential knight (*miles*) from the city of Ferrara, but she is the countess of Bertinoro, who is called here *'speculum dominarum'*, and they both deliver speeches to their troops, which comprised both members of the *milites* and of the *populus*.<sup>106</sup>

The communal features of the League then came to the fore in episodes of contacts with the emperor that attracted widespread attention outside the empire, including the decisive Battle of Legnano of 1176. Many sources here considered mention that battle, from the English Ralph of Diceto, Robert of Torigni and Roger Howeden, to the southern Italian Romuald of Salerno, for example. Most simply ascribe the victory to the *Lombardi*, but

Romuald provided an overview of the dynamics of the battle. He recounted that it was decided by the foot-soldiers (who were usually commoners): the imperial cavalry (in this occasion the imperial army had no infantry) routed its Lombard counterpart (which was recruited from the local elite), but the Lombard's 'multitude of footsoldiers' (*pedestris multitudo*) stood its ground in defence of the Milanese *carroccio* (a totemic emblem of the city), and it repelled imperial assaults, which gave time for the Lombard cavalry to rally.<sup>107</sup>

Another prime and momentous episode of contact between the emperor and the League, which bore the imprint of Lombard political culture and touched the whole of Christendom, was the Peace of Venice of 1177, and once again the most valuable testimony comes from Romuald of Salerno, who eyewitnessed the core of that peace conference. Indeed, he was the chief negotiator of the king of Sicily, who, together with the League, in that occasion reached a truce with Barbarossa. The Peace of Venice was a truly international event, which lay and ecclesiastical authorities from across Western Christendom attended. As we have seen, for example, the account also survives of an anonymous English eyewitness, but it is far less detailed than that by Romuald. The *Historia Ducum Veneticorum* listed more than eight thousand participants, with some leading lay and ecclesiastical authorities being escorted by hundreds of people; they included a delegation jointly sent by the kings of England and France led by the Cistercian Abbot Hugh of Bonnevaux, who during the negotiations acted as mediator between the warring parties, and thus must have been acquainted with what it is about to be examined here.<sup>108</sup>

Romuald recounted how, during the peace negotiations, which were presided by the pope, the leading representative of the emperor, Archbishop Christian of Mainz, gave three options to the delegation of the Lombards (whose members, incidentally, Romuald described as extraordinarily knowledgeable in public speaking to the people: '*ad concionandum populo mirabiliter eruditi*').<sup>109</sup> One of the options simply asked to do justice to imperial rights, the second was to enforce the verdict (*sententia*) that the Bolognese judges had issued against the Lombard cities at the Diet of Roncaglia of 1158, and the third was to take as a model the situation as it was under the reign of Emperor Henry IV (d. 1106).<sup>110</sup> To that the chief

negotiator of the League, the Milanese *iudex* and ex-consul Gerardo Cagapesto (who came from a well to do family, but whose name, which literally means ‘crush-a-shit’, betrays quite obvious non-aristocratic origins<sup>111</sup>), replied that they were ready to render the emperor his due as their lord, but, since Cagapesto represented a multitude of people and cities, he needed time to consult them.<sup>112</sup> Even so Cagapesto openly refused to recognise the proceedings of the Diet of Roncaglia as a *sententia*, stating that it was rather an imperial order (*imperatoriam iussionem*), and, in any case, many members of the League had not attended that diet, though not because they were contumacious, and a *sententia* issued *in absentia* had no value; finally Cagapesto reasoned that there was no living memory of the reign of Henry IV, which therefore could not be reconstructed in a suitably detailed manner.<sup>113</sup>

It was then Cagapesto’s time to make counterproposals. Rather than the reign of Henry IV, he suggested considering more recent ones, from that of Henry V to that of Conrad III [which entirely mirrored the position of the League as testified by the documentary evidence since its inception]; otherwise the assembly could rely upon the written settlements that the League and the emperor had reached a couple of years earlier through the mediation of Cremona, which had eventually come to nothing, leading to the Battle of Legnano; in the end it was this proposal that won the day, but that led to several days of discussions because the parties had different interpretations of that settlement, and although the Cremonesi (who had recently left the League for the emperor) were summoned to testify, no satisfactory conclusion could be reached. Pope Alexander III eventually suggested a six-year truce between the League of Barbarossa, and the parties kept it until the Peace of Constance of 1183.<sup>114</sup>

Of particular interest in Romuald’s account of the Peace of Venice are its references to the Diet of Roncaglia of 1158. As mentioned above, scholarship commonly regards its expansive definition of royal/imperial prerogatives as a milestone in the conceptualisation of public law in Western Europe. On the other hand, historians have generally ignored the reconstruction of the events offered by Romuald’s account, which, however, is fundamental in order to evaluate the Lombards’ perception of that momentous event, because imperial

supporters produced all the other surviving accounts of that diet.<sup>115</sup> Not to mention that, in Romuald's account, the Lombard perception of Roncaglia was delivered at such a Western Christendom-wide event as the Peace of Venice. Indeed, Romuald's account lends support to Bisson's recent remark that, in line with the common practices of the time, the Diet of Roncaglia was a convocation aimed at eliciting submission rather than a consultative assembly.<sup>116</sup> On the other hand, those features of the Diet of Roncaglia are precisely the reason that Cagapesto openly gave to utterly reject its proceedings, suggesting that, in order to be acceptable, that diet should have been a consultative assembly instead, or that it should have followed judicial procedures, which, in his view, Barbarossa had ignored.

### **Conclusion**

Scholarship has generally perceived the conflict between the League and Barbarossa in terms of nationhood, state formation, rejection by the Lombard cities of an external threat, or, indeed, of defence of petty local interests. Yet the sources here examined show that, in the decades straddling the turn of the twelfth century, that conflict acquired widespread fame throughout Christendom as a prime case of a successful uprising against what was perceived as a tyrannical ruler who wished to introduce a pervasive, intrusive and exploitative administration. Furthermore, with the exception of German sources, that uprising was generally portrayed in a favourable light, which is quite notable because many authors considered here were close to royal courts, which, in theory, should have shown sympathy for a fellow monarch. Given the lack of similar studies regarding other momentous central medieval revolts, it is impossible to evaluate accurately how exceptional was the fame of the League. It is very likely, however, that it was highly remarkable, possibly constituting the most widely known case of its kind at that time. Only further comparative research will be able to test that.

The widespread knowledge and approval for the actions of the League were probably related to its close connections with the parallel conflict between empire and papacy, which

inevitably touched the whole of Christendom, and in which the papacy enjoyed the support of most rulers. Moreover, the geographical distance between the authors who covered the League outside the empire certainly made it less troublesome to approach it for them. The consistent criticism for the League found in German sources is a good opposite case in point, because it mirrored Barbarossa's strong support there, which he harnessed for his Italian campaigns.

The conflict between pope and emperor was not the only factor, though. The interest for the Lombard cities found in works such as those by Otto of Freising and John of Salisbury predated it. The other sources examined here did consider the conflict between League and emperor on its own terms, showing awareness of the fact that it was not fully coterminous with that between empire and papacy. In other words the role of the League in the conflict between Barbarossa and Alexander III served to multiply the audience for Barbarossa's conflict with the League rather than supply it.

Regarding the fame of the League, Bertran de Born's likening of it to occurrences which were directed not only against royal, but also against comital power, and which took place in regions of France that were not particularly similar to Lombardy, suggests that the Lombard challenge against Barbarossa had become somewhat archetypal. It is significant that even some pro-imperial sources from within the empire, such as Acerbo Morena in Italy and Burchard von Ursberg in Germany, recognized that Barbarossa's agents had behaved in an unacceptable way. That points to the existence of a contemporary sensitivity, shared across Christendom, regarding the boundaries of proper rulership and legitimate responses to their infringement. Indeed, the sources here examined show a notable terminological consistency in the way they portray the conflict and its causes, with key words being on one side *libertas* and on the other *insolentia*. The former represented traditional rights on self-rule, taxation and property holding, but also the very freedom from the kind of arbitrary and top down rule embodying *insolentia*.

In effect, anyone across the Christian world of the central Middle Ages could relate to at least some of the themes touched upon by the League. Exploitative lordship, exacerbated

by the growth of administrative institutions that was typical of that age, as well as cases of resistance to it taking the shape of *coniurationes*, abounded.<sup>117</sup> Just to give a couple of examples: under Emperor Henry IV Germany itself had experienced the Saxon Revolt against the emperor and his representatives, which had many parallels with the rebellion of the League. The rhetoric and motivations of the Saxons, whose protagonists were local nobles and free peasants, had equally featured complains of infringement of local customs and common rights, challenges to proprietary titles, cries of liberty, tyranny and accusations of imposing servility.<sup>118</sup> On a very different scale, the Lombard case, and the way it was resolved, bore many affinities with the dispute that raged in the 1110s in the diocese of Autun, in central France, regarding the new ‘evil customs’ that the Duke of Burgundy had imposed over certain villages and persons, while the latter were supported by the bishop: eventually the parties drew up written statements regarding their positions, but the final settlement was reached by an assembly that featured representatives of each party, which judged against the duke on the basis of the available memory of his father’s practices and then wrote that settlement down.<sup>119</sup> In turn, the constitutional role of the Peace of Constance recalls in many ways even the later case of the English Magna Carta.<sup>120</sup>

The sources here examined show awareness of the distinctive urban features of the Lombard setting, of the rather unusual autonomy that its cities had achieved, and, to some extent, of regional power dynamics within Lombardy, but they do not use them in order to set apart the League from the rest of Western Europe. On the contrary, they rather portray that of the League in generic terms as a conflict between subjects, indeed, a people, against their ultimate ruler. Once again, the poems of Bertran de Born epitomise the non-specific character of the perception of the League particularly well, by likening it to occurrences in French regions that were not particularly similar to Lombardy.

In actual fact, the Lombard communal setting probably greatly helped in evoking such a representation of the League as a collective endeavour. The German Otto of Freising used the very *libertas – insolentia* dichotomy to discuss the particular Lombard communal approach to politics, underlining its relatively inclusive attitude, social mobility, and implying

that, with that system, the Lombard city communes had achieved a degree of local success in avoiding *insolentia*. The English John of Salisbury represented the Lombard cities as prime examples of how the merits of the people (*'merita populi'*) could stir princely regimes towards the greatest mildness or even make them superfluous. Those passages struck a cord with the latest scholarly debates among historians of the Italian city communes, who have sought to better contextualise the role of local elites in Lombard urban communal governance. After all, twelfth-century Lombard city communes did display a remarkable degree of social cohesion when compared to previous periods, but especially with later ones.

The conflict between Barbarossa and the Lombard League tested those features of Lombard politics dramatically, but the League itself embodied them, and its conflict with the emperor, together with its close connection to that between empire and papacy, put a spotlight on them that attracted the attention of the whole of Christendom. In that respect, the League provided what was probably the best known practical case in point addressing some of the most distinctive political developments of the central middle ages directly: in the eyes of contemporary sources from outside the empire the League successfully stood against what was perceived as a despotic and exploitative growth of administrative institutions and, as Romuald's portrayal of negotiations testifies, its arguments were based on principles of accountability, consultation and public responsibility.

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<sup>1</sup> For most recent cases: T. N. Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; R. I. Moore, *The First European Revolution*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. That trend has recently been also noted in M. C. Miller, 'Italy in the long twelfth century: ecclesiastical reform and the legitimization of a new political order, 1059-1183', in T. F. X. Noble and J. Van Engen (eds), *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012, pp. 117-31; Communal Italy is more organically integrated in S.



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Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300*, 2nd edn, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997, which, however, does not particularly focus on Barbarossa and the League.

<sup>2</sup> There is an immense bibliography on the influence of Communal Italy on history of political thought, but a very influential example is Q. Skinner, *The Foundation of Modern Political Thought. Volume 1: the Renaissance*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> For a comparison with other urban environments in Western Christendom: D. Nicolas, *The growth of the medieval city: from late antiquity to the early fourteenth century*, London: Longman, 1997.

<sup>4</sup> D. Waley, *The Italian city republics*, 3rd edn, London: Longman, 1988, which is probably the leading survey on the topic in English, examines the role of the empire in a chapter entitled 'External relations'.

<sup>5</sup> For an overview of the political geography of the region: G. Raccagni, *The Lombard League 1167-1225*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

<sup>6</sup> A. Haverkamp, *Herrschaftsformen der Frühstauffer in Reichsitalien*, 2 vols, Stuttgart: Hiesermann, 1970–1.

<sup>7</sup> On Roncaglia: K. Pennington, *The Prince and the Law, 1200–1600: Sovereignty and Rights in the Western Legal Tradition*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 12–21; G. Dilcher and D. Quaglioni (eds), *Gli inizi del diritto pubblico: l'età di Federico Barbarossa: legislazione e scienza del diritto*, Bologna and Berlin: Il mulino and Duncker and Humblot, 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 25–9.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> G. Raccagni, 'Il diritto pubblico, la Pace di Costanza e i *libri iurium* dei comuni', in G. Dilcher and D. Quaglioni (eds), *Gli inizi del diritto pubblico europeo, II. Da Federico I a Federico II*, Bologna and Berlin: Il mulino and Duncker and Humblot, 2008, pp. 309–39.

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<sup>11</sup> For the text of the *Friderici I Diplomata. 1181–1190*, in MGH, *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae*, 10/ pt. iv, ed. H. Appelt, Hannover: Hansche Buchhandlung, 1990, no. 848.

<sup>12</sup> Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 147-59.

<sup>13</sup> G. Raccagni, 'The teaching of rhetoric and the Magna Carta of the Lombard cities: the Peace of Constance, the Empire and the Papacy in the works of Guido Faba and his leading contemporary colleagues', *JMH*, 39, 2013, pp. 61-79.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> *The Letters of John of Salisbury*, 2 vols, ed. W. J. Millor and C. N. L. Brooke, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979, 2, no. 242: *Sed quid nota recenseo? Hoc ubique locorum fama quasi praeconia voce concelebrat, nec aliquibus dubium puto, nisi forte lateat illos qui soli tempestate hac exulant domi suae.*

<sup>16</sup> J. F. A. Mason, 'Diceto, Ralph de (d. 1199/1200)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7591>, accessed 4 Sept. 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Biographical and bibliographical information on these works and authors can be found in G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, Leiden: Brill, 2010. I could not find references to the League in Spain, but its Latin historical sources for that period are far fewer, thin and less interested in non-native affairs than those from north of the Pyrenees: R. M. A. de la Peña, 'Latin chronicles and histories', in F. A. Domínguez and G. Greenia (eds), *Dictionary of literary biography*, vol. 337, *Castilian writers: 1200-1400*, Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2008, pp. 325-32.

<sup>18</sup> S. Chon, *Lust for Liberty. The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200-1425. Italy, France and Flanders*, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2006, pp. 228-44. Regarding the twelfth century: R. L. Benson, 'Libertas in Italy (1152-1226)', in G. Makdisi, D. Sourdél and J. Sourdél-Thomine (eds), *La notion de liberté au Moyen Âge: Islam, Byzance, Occident*, Paris: Belles Lettres, 1985, 191-213,

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- <sup>19</sup> A. Harding, 'Political liberty in the Middle Ages, *Speculum*, 55 1980, pp. 423-42.
- <sup>20</sup> Ioannes Kinnamos, *Epitome Rerum ab Joanne et Alexio Comnenis Gestarum*, ed. A. Meineke, Bonn: Impensis ed. Weberi, 1836, v, 227.
- <sup>21</sup> G. Raccagni, 'English views on Lombard city communes and their conflicts with Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa', *Quaderni storici*, 145, 2014, pp. 183-218.
- <sup>22</sup> *Radulfi Nigri Chronica universalis*, ed. R. Pauli and F. Liebermann, MGH *Scriptores in folio*, vol. 27, Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1885, p. 335: *Veruntamen insolentiam Theotonicorum non diu sustinuerunt Lumbardi; unde et apud eundem imperatorem, explosis oppressionibus, maiorem libertatem evicerunt.*
- <sup>23</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, ed. R. Howlett, 4 vols, London: Longman 1884, 1: 115, 144: *Cum enim in Longobardos insolentius ageret, illi jugum Alemannicum non ferentes, in libertatem se pristinam receperunt.*
- <sup>24</sup> *The Historical works of Ralph of Diceto*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols, London: Longman 1876, 1: 427, 408-9.
- <sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 2: 39.
- <sup>26</sup> R. M. Thomson, 'An English Eyewitness of the Peace of Venice, 1177', *Speculum*, 50, 1975, pp. 29-30.
- <sup>27</sup> Romualdo Guarna, *Chronicon*, ed. C. Bonetti, Cava de' Tirreni: Avagliano, 2001, pp. 184-5: *Qua victoria positus, imperator Lombardiam cepit pro sua voluntate disponere, ministros et baiulos in castellis et civitatibus ordinare, regalia et tributa exquirere et magnam partem Lombardie in demanio suo convertere. Sicque factum est, quod Lombardi, qui inter alias nationes libertatis singularitate gaudebant, pro Mediolani invidia cum Mediolano pariter corruerunt et se Teutonicorum servituti misere subdiderunt.*
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 230-3.
- <sup>29</sup> *Ex chronico universalis anonymi Laudunensis*, in MGH *Scriptores in folio*, vol. 26, Hanover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1882, pp. 444-6: *Lumbardi per insolentias imperatoris*

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*Frederici tedio et angore fatigati, Manuelli Gregorum imperatori submittere eorum regnum deliberaverunt ... Currente adhuc anno Domini 1169 ... Henricus rex Anglorum, illectus promissione regni Lombardorum, inter filios fecit regni sui et aliarum provinciarum suarum distributionem.*

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 451: *Federicus, pro malis que Lombardis intulerat, ut aiunt, compungtus, signum cruces ad subventionem Terre Sancte suscepit.*

<sup>31</sup> Kinnamos, *Epitome*, v, p. 227.

<sup>32</sup> *Radulfi Nigri Chronica*, p. 335.

<sup>33</sup> *The Historical works of Ralph of Diceto*, 2: 39.

<sup>34</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, pp. 115, 144, 286.

<sup>35</sup> *The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni*, in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I*, 4: 270.

<sup>36</sup> *Ex chronico universali anonymi Laudunensis*, p. 449.

<sup>37</sup> Romualdo, *Chronicon*, pp. 184-5, 208-9.

<sup>38</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, p. 115.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 115, 144.

<sup>40</sup> *The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born*, ed. and transl. W. D. Paden, T. Sankowitch and P. H. Stäblein, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986, p. 209.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 229.

<sup>42</sup> *The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni*, p. 222: *Fredericus imperator cum ad libitum subdisset sibi Langobardiam ... et fiscum regium ad L. milia marcarum summam in eodem regno reparasset, et pacem ibidem tam indigenis quam peregrinis reformasset: iterum Verona et quedam alie civitates adversus eum rebellant.*

<sup>43</sup> William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum anglicarum*, p. 115; Romualdo, *Chronicon*, pp. 184-5.

<sup>44</sup> *The Chronicle of Robert of Torigni*, p. 222.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

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- <sup>46</sup> Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 81-122.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 123-36.
- <sup>48</sup> Romualdo, *Chronicon*, pp. 208, 212.
- <sup>49</sup> *The Poems of the Troubadour Bertran de Born*, p. 209.
- <sup>50</sup> *Ex chronico universalis anonymi Laudunensis*, pp. 444-6.
- <sup>51</sup> Raccagni, *Lombard League*, pp. 171-98.
- <sup>52</sup> *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, p. 126: *Igitur ante pascalem sollempnitatem coniuratio grandis per omnem Longobardiam contra imperatorem et suos facta est. Coadunatis itaque viribus Mediolanenses, Veronenses, Novarienses, Brixienses aliarumque Italiae urbium populi incredibilem conduxere exercitum, indicto bello publico imperatori in campis Alexandriae.*
- <sup>53</sup> *Ex Richardi pictaviensis chronica*, in *MGH Scriptores in folio*, 26, p. 83.
- <sup>54</sup> J. Laudage, *Alexander III und Friedrich Barbarossa*, Cologne: 1997
- <sup>55</sup> J. Johrendt, 'The 'empire and the schism'', in P. D. Clarke and A. J. Duggan (eds), *Pope Alexander III (1159-1181). The arts of survival*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2012, pp. 99-126.
- <sup>56</sup> *Otonis Morenae eiusdenque continuatorum Libellus de rebus a Frederico imperatore gestis*, in *Italische Quellen über die Taten Kaiser Friedrichs I.*, ed. and transl. F. J. Schmale, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1986, p. 194.
- <sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 198-200.
- <sup>58</sup> *Liber Pontificalis*, ed. L. Duchesne, 2 vols, Paris: E. Thorin, 1886-92, 2: 411, 429: *Que maior insania vel quod excellentius malum excogitari potest aut operari, quam ut dominus servum sive servi dominum iure suo privare omnino contentur et per violentiam possidere? Sit ergo unaqueque pars suo iure contenta, et tam gravibus malis iam cessantibus pax optata inter vos cooperante Domino reformetur.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Civis Mediolanensis anonymi Narratio de Longobardiae obpressione*, in *Italische Quellen über die Taten Kaiser Friedrichs I.*, publication information?, see note 57 pp. 268-88.

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- <sup>60</sup> F. Güterbock, 'Alla vigilia della Lega Lombarda. Il dispotismo dei vicari imperiali a Piacenza', *Archivio storico italiano*, 95, 1937, pp. 199-201.
- <sup>61</sup> C. Vignati, *Storia diplomatica della Lega Lombarda*, Milan: Agnelli, 1866, pp. 105–7.
- <sup>62</sup> *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, ed. A. Duggan, 2 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 1, no. 29.
- <sup>63</sup> G. Raccagni, 'Reintroducing the emperor and repositioning the city republics in the 'republican' thought of the rhetorician Boncompagno da Signa', *Historical Research*, 86, 2013, pp. 579-600.
- <sup>64</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>66</sup> R. Greci, 'Bologna nel duecento', in Ovidio Capitani, ed., *Storia di Bologna, II: Bologna nel medioevo*, Bologna: Clueb, 2007, p. 533.
- <sup>67</sup> *Otonis Morenae eiusdenque continuatorum Libellus*, p. 234.
- <sup>68</sup> On the conceptualisation of the League: Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 123-46.
- <sup>69</sup> *Vincentii Pragensis Annales*, ed. W. Wattenbach, in *MGH Scriptores in folio*, vol. 17. Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniiani, 1861, p. 681: *in tota italia imperialem exercebat potestatem, tota enim in conspectu eius tremebat ... et in urbibus Italie suis positis potestatibus*; *ibid.*, p. 683: *et sic in Lonbardia quod volebat faciebat*. On Vicent's background: L. Wolverton, 'Vincent of Prague', in G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, [http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-the-medieval-chronicle/vincent-of-prague-EMCSIM\\_02496](http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopedia-of-the-medieval-chronicle/vincent-of-prague-EMCSIM_02496), accessed 4 Sept. 2015
- <sup>70</sup> *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, p. 112: *et sic tota Lonbardia ac Tuscia et Romania ad nutum imperatoris fuit inclinata*, and p. 120.
- <sup>71</sup> *Gotifredi Viterbiensis Gesta Friderici I. et Heinrici VI. imperatorum metricè scripta*, ed. G. H. Pertz, in *MGH Scriptores separatim editi*, vol. 30, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniian, 1870, pp. 1, 4, 20, 29, 32. For Godfrey's background: K. Hering, 'Godfrey of Viterbo: historical writing and imperial legitimacy at the early Hohenstaufen court', in T. Foester (ed.),

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*Godfrey of Viterbo and his readers. Imperial tradition and universal history in late medieval Europe*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015, pp. 67-88.

<sup>72</sup> *Burchardi praepositi urspergensis chonicon*, ed. O. Holder-Hegger and B. von Simon, in *MGH Scriptores separatim editi*, vol. 16 (Hannover, 1916), p. 52: *Quod factum est propter multiples insolentias, quas Teutonici in partibus illis exercebant*; *ibid.*, p. 57: *Eo tempore iam bellis nimis fatigatus imperator Lombardis omnibus condixit curiam apud Constantiam, ubi principes et potestates eorum se representaverunt, et pacta quedam de faciendo servito imperatori de singulis civitatibus Lombardie ibidem statuta sunt, que adhuc dicunt se tenere in scriptis nec ad serviendum ultra hec compelli volunt.*

<sup>73</sup> *Chronica Regia Coloniensis*, p. 112: *et sic tota Lonbardia ac Tuscia et Romania ad nutum imperatoris fuit inclinata*, and p. 120-6.

<sup>74</sup> *Gotifredi Viterbiensis Gesta Friderici I. et Heinrici VI. imperatorum metricè scripta*, ed. G. H. Pertz, in *MGH Scriptores separatim editi*, vol. 30, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii hanian, 1870, pp. 1, 4, 20, 29, 32.

<sup>75</sup> *Annales Magdeburgenses*, ed. G. H. Pertz, in *MGH Scriptores in folio*, vol. 16, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1859, p. 193.

<sup>76</sup> *Helmoldi presbyteri chronica Slavorum*, ed. J. M. Lappenberg, in *MGH Scriptores in folio*, vol. 21, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1869, p. 95.

<sup>77</sup> *Burchardi praepositi urspergensis chonicon*, ed. O. Holder-Hegger and B. von Simon, in *MGH Scriptores separatim editi*, vol. 16 (Hannover, 1916), p. 52: *Quod factum est propter multiples insolentias, quas Teutonici in partibus illis exercebant*; *ibid.*, p. 57: *Eo tempore iam bellis nimis fatigatus imperator Lombardis omnibus condixit curiam apud Constantiam, ubi principes et potestates eorum se representaverunt, et pacta quedam de faciendo servito imperatori de singulis civitatibus Lombardie ibidem statuta sunt, que adhuc dicunt se tenere in scriptis nec ad serviendum ultra hec compelli volunt.*

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<sup>78</sup> *Gesta Friderici I. imperatoris auctoribus Ottone et Ragewino praeposito Frisingensibus*, ed. G. H. Pertz, in *MGH Scriptores in folio*, vol. 20, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, p. 492.

<sup>79</sup> MGH, *Leges IV, Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum*, vol 1, ed. L. Weiland, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1893, no. 230.

<sup>80</sup> M. Zabbia, 'Tra modelli letterari e autopsia. La città comunale nell'opera di Ottone di Frisinga e nella cultura storiografica del XII secolo', *Bullettino dell'istituto storico italiano*, 106 (2004), pp/ 105-38.

<sup>81</sup> *Gesta Friderici I.*, pp. 396-7.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*: *inferioris conditionis iuvenes vel quoslibet contemptibilium etiam mechanicarum atrium opifices, quos caeterae gentes ab honestioribus et liberioribus studiis tanquam pestem propellant, ut militiae cingulum vel dignitatum gradus assumere non dedignantur.*

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 349.

<sup>85</sup> *Ioannis Saresberiensis Policraticus*, ed. K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, Turnhout: Brepols, 1993, p. 271: *Adiciebat etiam quod merita populi omnem euacuant principatum aut eum faciunt esse mitissimum, cum e contrario certum sit quod propter peccata populi permittit Deus regnare hypocritam, et impossibile esse ut diu regno gaudeat qui in populi humiliatione et proprio fastigio superbe nimis exultat.*

<sup>86</sup> David Luscombe, 'Salisbury, John of (late 1110s–1180)', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14849>, accessed 16 Dec 2015

<sup>87</sup> Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 25-8.

<sup>88</sup> *Annales Magdeburgenses*, p. 193.

<sup>89</sup> For a recent discussion of these schools of thought: M. Vallerani, 'Comune e comuni: una dialettica non risolta', in M. C. De Matteis and B. Pio (eds), *Sperimentazioni di governo nell'Italia centro-settentrionale nel processo storico dal primo comune alla signoria*,



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Bologna: Bononia University Press, 2011, pp. 9-34; C. Wickham, *Sleepwalking into a New World: The Emergence of Italian City Communes in the Twelfth Century*, Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 2015, pp. 1-20.

<sup>90</sup> R. Davis, 'The medieval state: the tyranny of a concept?', *Journal of historical sociology*, 16, 2003, pp. 280-300; for a response to this article: S. Reynolds, 'There were states in medieval Europe: a response to Rees Davies', *Journal of historical sociology*, 16, 2003, pp. 550-5.

<sup>91</sup> P. Grillo, 'La frattura inesistente', *Archivio storico italiano*, 167, 2009, pp. 673-700, who noted the relative lack of attention that the twelfth century has attracted when compared to the thirteenth. The same applies to rhetorical education, which was much needed in assembly politics: S. Hartman, *Ars dictaminis. Briefsteller und verbale Kommunikation in den 11. bis 13. Jahrhunderten*, Ostfildern: Jan Thorbecke, 2013.

<sup>92</sup> Wickham, *Sleepwalking into a New World*, p. 9.

<sup>93</sup> For a recent overview of the subsequent rise of conflicts between magnates and *popolo*: A. Poloni, *Potere al popolo. Conflitti sociali e lotte politiche nell'Italia comunale del duecento*, Milan, Mondadori, 2010.

<sup>94</sup> E. Coleman, 'The Lombard League: history and myth', in J. Devlin and H. B. Clarke, *European encounters: essays in memory of Albert Lovett*, Dublin: University College Dublin press, 2003, pp. 22-45.

<sup>95</sup> For a good recent example, which briefly examines the League under the heading 'the missed federalist development': M. Ascheri, *Le città stato*, Bologna: Il mulino, 2006, pp. 72-7.

<sup>96</sup> R. I. Bordone, 'I comuni italiani nella prima Lega Lombarda: confronto di modelli istituzionali in un'esperienza politico-diplomatica', in H. Maurer, ed., *Kommunale Bündnisse Oberitaliens und Oberdeutschlands im Vergleich*, Sigmaringen: J. Thorbecke, 1987, pp. 45-62; M. Vallerai, *I rapporti intercittadini nella regione lombarda tra XII e XIII secolo*, in G.

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Rossetti (ed.), *Legislazione e prassi istituzionale nell'Europa medievale*, Naples: Liguori, 2001, pp. 221-290.

<sup>97</sup> Raccagni, *The Lombard League*, pp. 55-80.

<sup>98</sup> Boncompagno da Signa, *Liber de obsidione Ancone*, ed. G. Zimolo, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1936, section 8, <http://scrineum.unipv.it/wight/index.htm>, accessed 15 Sept, 2015. On Boncompagno's ideology: Raccagni, 'Reintroducing the emperor', 582-6.

<sup>99</sup> Boncompagno da Signa, *Liber de obsidione Ancone*, section 28.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, section 8.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, section 14.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, section sections 28-30

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, section 4.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, section 5.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, section 13.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, sections 19-24.

<sup>107</sup> Romualdo, *Chronicon*, pp. 216-7; for a recent analysis of the Battle, including its social features: P. Grillo, *Legnano 1176, una battaglia per la libertà*, Rome-Bari: Laterza 2010, pp. 116-52.

<sup>108</sup> For a list of participants: *Historia Ducum Veneticorum*, ed. H. Simonsfeld, in MGH, *Scriptores in folio*, vol. 14, Hannover: Impensis bibliopolii haniani, 1863, pp. 84-9.

<sup>109</sup> Romualdo, *Chronicon*, p. 230.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>111</sup> F. Menant, 'Une forme de distinction inattendue', in D. Boisseuil et al. (eds), *Écritures de l'espace social*, Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2010, pp. 437-56.

<sup>112</sup> Romualdo, *Chronicon*, pp. 236-8.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 236-41.

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<sup>115</sup> For an overview of the sources, excluding Romuald: B. Frenz, 'Barbarossa und der Hoftag von Roncaglia (1158) in der Historiographie des 12. Und 13. Jahrhunderts', in Dilcher and D. Quaglioni (eds), *Gli inizi del diritto pubblico*, pp. 10126.

<sup>116</sup> Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century*, p. 563.

<sup>117</sup> See the bibliography of note 1.

<sup>118</sup> K. Leyser, 'The crisis of medieval Germany', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 6, 1983, pp. 409-43.

<sup>119</sup> J. Van Engen, 'The twelfth century: reading, reason, and revolt in a world of custom', in *European Transformations*, p. 26.

<sup>120</sup> J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 25, 76, 87, 519.