Early Merovingian Bavaria: A Late Antique Italian Perspective

Bavarian historiography traces the origins of the medieval duchy to the late sixth century with the arrival there of the Frankish dux Garibald, who established an ethnically based duchy over the Bavarians and founded the hereditary ducal line of the Agilolfings. This paper contextualizes Garibald and his immediate successors in the early seventh century within important developments taking place in late antique northern Italy: the attempt to reassert direct Roman authority there; Frankish invasions aimed at some form of annexation; and the establishment of the Langobard regime. It argues that Garibald headed a Frankish frontier duchy in southern Raetia II and Noricum Mediterraneum that secured Frankish access to Italy. When he attempted to convert his command into an independent realm in cooperation with the Langobards, he was overthrown by the Franks, who subsequently relinquished control of the area along with their Italian ambitions. Although some people known to contemporaries as “Bavarians” and located in northern Raetia II may have been under Garibald’s nominal authority, there is no good evidence to link his rule to any particular ethnic group. Thus, it is anachronistic to speak of a “Duke of the Bavarians” or a “Duchy of Bavaria” in this early period.

The origins of the Bavarians and their country have been the subject of intensive research and debate since the Middle Ages. Despite many variations in emphasis and detail, the political foundation of the early medieval duchy has generally been ascribed to the actions of the early Frankish Merovingians in the mid- to late sixth century. Thus, the late Joachim Jahn, in his massive and stimulating studies of the early medieval duchy, writes, “Historical circumstances in the middle of the sixth century were favorable to the installation of the Bavarian duke by the Merovingian Frankish king and thus to the ducal organization of the emerging Bavarian people.” And yet, the sources for these...

1 For these problems, see Wilhelm Störmer, Die Baiuwaren: Von der Völkerwanderung bis Tas-silo III., 2nd ed. (Munich, 2007), 13–37.
important developments are pitifully few, late, and remarkably disparate. As Wilhelm Störmer carefully notes regarding the first supposed duke, Garibald, "Unfortunately, we don't know where the Bavarian center of his authority was located. . . . We do not learn how he accommodated himself with the ethnic Bavarian population . . . [nor] even to what extent later ethnic Bavarian territory was integrated into his duchy." Such fundamental uncertainties must surely temper our confidence in any political genealogy that claims the sixth century duke, Garibald, as the direct predecessor of the better-documented Bavarian dukes in the eighth century and even as their ancestor.4

Störmer's reservations point—in my view correctly—to a fundamental problem in the earliest history of Bavaria has been formulated. Historians, as Jahn's statement shows, have conflated two distinct developments only tenuously connected in the sources: (1) the establishment in the late sixth century of a Frankish political entity lying to the north of Italy, which is most comprehensively described only in later Langobard sources, most notably by Paul the Deacon; and (2) the ethnogenesis of a Bavarian people, centered in the early-medieval period south of the Danube and between the rivers Lech and Enns. The argument here will be that these two "Bavarias" have little to do with each other in this very early period. Bavarian ethnogenesis is an interesting and still highly controversial subject combining complex historical, anthropological, and archaeological issues. Much of the research on Bavarian ethnogenesis has come from the "school" established in Vienna by Wolfram and continued by Pohl and others.5 Their whole approach to ethnogenesis has been heavily criticized by a number of scholars primarily associated with the eminent North American medievalist, Walter Goffart, and political under-

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3 Störmer, Die Baiuwaren, 61–62: "Wo dessen baiuwarisches Herrschaftszentrum lag, wissen wir leider nicht. . . . Wie er sich mit dem baiuwarischen Stammesvolk arrangierte, erfahren wir nicht. . . . Wie weit das spätere bayerische Stammesgebiet schon in den Dukate Garibalds integriert war, ist jedoch nicht bekannt."

4 For the historical sources, see Carl Hammer, From "Ducatus" to "Regnum": Ruling Bavaria under the Merovingians and Early Carolingians (Turnhout, 2007), 25–40, which is primarily concerned with disputing the universally accepted claim that the earliest dukes belonged to the same genealogia as the later ones, the Agilolfings.

5 See, e.g., Herwig Wolfram, Walter Pohl, eds., Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern, part 1 (Vienna, 1990); Herwig Friesinger, Falko Daim, eds., Typen der Ethnogenese unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Bayern, part 2 (Vienna, 1990). This work builds upon Reinhard Wenskus’ seminal Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes (Cologne/Graz, 1961), which redirected the study of early-medieval gentes away from discredited racial concepts and towards social anthropology.
tones have not been entirely absent.\textsuperscript{6} It is possible that archaeological evidence will eventually provide a satisfactory solution to this vexed problem. But we shall not be concerned with Bavarian ethnogenesis until the very end of our investigation and then only incidentally. It is a separate topic to be dealt with by sources and methods different from those that we shall employ here to establish a new perspective on the political development alone. Our concern will be the history of Bavaria with the Bavarians (largely) left out.

Bavaria's close historical connections to Italy are well known.\textsuperscript{7} For example, it has long been noted that the Gothic regime in Italy exercised some sort of authority over Raetia and Noricum, the center of early medieval Bavaria, and may even have played some role in ethnic formation there.\textsuperscript{8} But an Italian perspective on the early Merovingian Bavaria is still lacking even though late antique northern Italy was the focus of three critical but conflicting political developments during late sixth and early seventh centuries precisely when the earliest political formation has been asserted for adjacent Bavaria. The emperor Justinian and his successors made a massive effort to eliminate Gothic rule and to restore the Roman regime throughout the entire peninsula. The Franks attempted to extend their rule southwards over the eastern Alps into Venetia and Liguria. The Langobards entered northeastern Italy from Pannonia and gradually established their dominion over the rest of northern Italy at the expense of both the empire and the Franks. However we may wish to weight the relative importance of these developments and their legacies, classical and barbarian, Roman and Germanic, still together they clearly mark the beginnings of a transition from the late antique to the early medieval world.

What can we say about the extent of any Bavarian polity and the nature of authority there, if we view it from this southern perspective and within the context of this decisive political transformation? That is the aim of the following study. Because the early sources are so sparse and largely concerned with other matters, the approach here must be somewhat indirect and circumstantial. In the first place, we must try to understand the political and ecclesiastical organization of late sixth-century northern Italy, particularly because it included the only entity that legitimately could claim traditional authority over

\textsuperscript{6} E.g., Andrew Gillett, ed., \textit{On Barbarian Identity; Critical Approaches to Ethnicity in the Early Middle Ages} (Turnhout, 2002); in which for the absence of current consensus on Bavarian ethnogenesis, see Charles Bowlsu, "Ethnogenesis: The Tyranny of a Concept", 242–56, at 249–56.

\textsuperscript{7} E.g., Hans-Michael Körner, ed., \textit{Bayern und Italien: Kontinuität und Wandel ihrer traditionellen Bindungen} (Lindenberg im Allgäu, 2010), contributions from Karlheinz Dietz (late antique: 11–40) and Jörg Jarnut (early medieval: 41–53).

\textsuperscript{8} See review in Störmer, \textit{Die Baiuwaren}, 23–25, and below for the earliest evidences; whether any Gothic influence can be documented archaeologically is still an open question.
territories forming the core of early medieval Bavaria: the episcopal diocese of Raetia II. This will also necessitate an understanding of the highly contentious theological situation there, which informed all political relationships. Then, in the second part, we must understand more precisely the nature of the earliest Frankish involvement in Italy, particularly regarding the northeastern church province of Aquileia. The Franks evidently projected their authority there from bases in southern Raetia and Noricum, which bordered it to the north, and Aquileia's territories were connected to what later became the traditional Bavarian heartlands further north by two major Roman highway routes through the Alps, which determined communications into the Early Middle Ages. The character and extent of this frontier Frankish presence is vital to understanding the position of the Frankish duke, Garibald, who, as just noted by Störmer, is associated traditionally with the establishment of an ethnically based Bavarian polity. Thus, the third part asks: What sort of authority did Garibald exercise and where did he exercise it? Then, in the fourth part we will try to push the enquiry into the early seventh century, which is even more poorly documented than the sixth, to see whether the sparse evidence for Garibald's ducal successors is consistent with our previous findings. In a fifth and final part, based upon the reconstructed historical context of the previous parts, we will try to combine the evidence to reach some conclusions about the relationship between our “political” Bavaria and the Bavaria of ethnogenesis.

"Galliarum Archiepiscopi Vicini Sunt"9

In 591, the Byzantine emperor Maurice (582–602; see Exhibit 1) sent a letter to Pope Gregory I (590–604).10 There Maurice referred to three letters that he recently had received: one from the bishops of Italian cities and fortresses ("civitatum et castrorum") which at that time were held by the Langobards; the second from bishop Severus of Aquileia (587–607) and other bishops who were then with him; and a third from bishop Severus alone. As a result of these petitions, Maurice instructed Gregory not to trouble Severus further until affairs within his northeastern Italian province of Venetia and Histria have been put in better order. Of these three letters, only the first, that of the bishops in Langobard-occupied territory, has been preserved.

9 “Gallic [Frankish] archbishops are near neighbors”; see below and Exhibit 2.

10 Eduard Schwartz, Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum, vol. 4.2 (Strasbourg, 1914) (hereafter ACO), 136–37. The manuscript context (Paris, B.N. Lat. 1682) for this letter and the petition from the Venetian bishops (see next note) is discussed in detail in Claire Sotinel, Rhétorique de la faute et pastorale de la reconciliation das la letter apologetique contre Jean de Ravenne (Rome, 1994), 5–31, at 13–14, 30 (Nrs. 4, 5). This must be the emperor's letter that Pope Gregory references in his July 592 letter to bishop John of Ravenna which indicates that Gregory and John were pursuing quite different agendas; Greg. Mag. Regest. 2.38.
It is highly instructive. There ten bishops, all of whom had sworn loyalty to the empire at their ordinations but now were living under "the most heavy yoke of the gentiles," recount the persecution that Severus and his predecessor, Bishop Elias (571–587), have suffered for their refusal to join in the condemnation of the "Three Chapters." They then respectfully advise the emperor that, if this mistreatment should continue, the entire province of Aquileia might be lost to the empire, because Gallic, that is, Frankish archbishops, who also were partisans of the Three Chapters, "are near neighbors" (vicini sunt) and already have both exercised jurisdiction over several Aquileian churches and also ordained clergy there.

The dispute referred to in the bishops' letter, that of the Three Chapters, is one of those arcane Christological controversies that frequently disturbed the early church. It refers to a decision taken at the fifth ecumenical council convened in Constantinople by the emperor Justinian (527–565) in 553 to condemn the writings of three Eastern theologians, the so-called Three Chapters, who had been approved a century earlier by the fourth ecumenical council held at Chalcedon in 451. This condemnation was promulgated with imperial approval to appease Miaphysite factions, which were strong in the Greek east. But it incensed the entire western, Latin-speaking church, which was staunch in its adherence to Chalcedon, the orthodox authority of which the Council of Constantinople seemed to impugn. By the late sixth century,

11 ACO 4.2.132–35. According to the bishops' letter, this was the second petition to Maurice protesting the conduct of the exarch Smaragdus (see below); the first was from Severus' predecessor, bishop Helias, "cum nostro omnium [i.e. the bishops] consilio et consensu." See the comment in Claire Sotinel, "L'Échec en Occident: l'affaire des Trois Chapitres," in Luce Pietri, ed., Histoire du Christianisme des Origines à nos Jours, vol. 3 (Paris, 1998), 427–55, at 499–500, who seems to conflate the two episodes. I cannot agree with Georg Hauptfeld, "Zur langobardischen Eroberung Italiens: Das Heer und die Bischöfe," Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 91 (1983), 37–94, at 52–53, who asserts that "Die norditalienischen Bischöfe scheinen keinswegs pro-byzantinisch eingestellt." For the probably correct suggestion that Aquileia's theological separatism served the establishment of Langobard authority by creating a quasi "national" church, see, Thomas Brown, "Lombard Religious Policy in the Late Sixth and Seventh Century: The Roman Dimension," in Giorgio Ausenda, Paolo Delegu, Chris Wickham, eds., The Langobards before the Frankish Conquest: An Ethnographic Perspective (Woodbridge, 2009), 289–99, at 295–97.

12 In addition to Sotinel, "L'Échec," see Averil Cameron, "Justin I and Justinian," in The Cambridge Ancient History 14 (Cambridge, 2000), 63–85, at 79–82; Robert Markus, Gregory the Great and his World (Cambridge, 1997), 124–42; and James O'Donnell, The Ruin of the Roman Empire (New York, 2008), 296–300, which is remarkable for its hostility to Justinian. There is a recent collection of essays on the schism in Célia Chazelle, Catherine Cubitt, eds., The Crisis of the Oikoumene: The Three Chapters and the Failed Quest for Unity in the Sixth-Century Mediterranean (Turnhout, 2007).

the province of Aquileia was the center of Chalcedonian orthodoxy and was in schism from Rome (or vice versa), which, with some notable vacillations, finally had submitted to imperial authority.\textsuperscript{14}

Paul the Deacon, in his late eighth-century History of the Langobards, provides some interesting context for the bishops' letter. Drawing on the now-lost work of Secundus of Trent, a contemporary churchman who was an important partisan of the Three Chapters, Paul tells us that the Roman exarch of Ravenna, Smaragdus (584–590), personally dragged bishop Severus together with three Histrian bishops and a fourth, aged cleric out of the cathedral church, now at nearby Grado, and brought them to Ravenna, where they were subjected to threats of violence until they agreed to hold communion with bishop John of Ravenna, who had loyalty condemned the Three Chapters.\textsuperscript{15} After a year the bishops were returned to Grado, but, as apostates from Chalcedon, most of the other bishops of the province would not receive them. Paul, evidently quoting Secundus' text directly, then names twelve bishops, "who had withheld themselves from this schism (\emph{ab hoc scismate})," that is, from Severus' apostasy, and identifies five additional suffragans, including the three Histrians also taken to Ravenna, who had maintained communion with Severus throughout the crisis. Finally, at a synod held at nearby Marano, a repentant Severus was reconciled with the incumbent suffragans from ten of the sees that initially had refused to accept him back.\textsuperscript{16} These must be the ten bishops who signed the letter on Severus' behalf to Maurice, all of whom are listed by Paul amongst those who had shunned their metropolitan as apostate (Exhibit 3).\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{16} The dioceses of Altino (Venetia) and Pola (Hustria) were not under Langobard control and, thus, not represented amongst the signatories at Marano (see below). By 590 Altino was again under Roman authority which is why its bishop, Peter, does not appear amongst the signatories: Epist. Aust. 40: MGH Epist. 3.146.

\textsuperscript{17} In addition to the episcopal lists in Paul and in the bishops' letter, Exhibit 3 includes lists from one or possibly two provincial synods held at Grado in the 570s for which see Stefan Karwiese, "Von der ecclesia Petenas zur ecclesia Petenensis: Neue Überlegungen zur Frühzeit der Salzburger Kirche," Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 101 (1993), 228–83, at 231–237. I have not attempted any further normalization of the Latin personal and place names. In the second part of the Exhibit, I have added the Milanese suffragans from a synod held in 451: Mansi, Concilia, 6.141–44.
Because their letter to the emperor was official business of the highest order, the ten bishops reconciled with Severus at Marano probably signed with their official titles; at their head is “Ingenuinus, bishop of the holy church of Second Raetia.” The rest come from various cities throughout Venetia, but none from Histria, which was still under imperial control. Ingenuinus’ see is identified (solely) by its late Roman province, the most northerly of the three provinces that later made up early medieval Bavaria. This designation was clearly the correct form, because a century earlier in 451 at a Milanese provincial synod the absent bishop Asinio’s see was uniquely identified as “ecclesiae Curiensis, primae Rhaetiae.”

Paul the Deacon, on the other hand, refers to the bishopric by its late eighth-century Bavarian designation as Säben (Sabiona), an isolated promontory located on the eastern branch of the Via Claudia below the Brenner pass, which could be one of the “fortresses” (castra) under Langobard control mentioned by the emperor in his letter. Impressive churches at Säben date from the fifth century. The vita of the late fifth-century monk Severinus of Noricum, composed in 511, reports that at the time of Severinus’ death in 482, an obituary for “Saint Valentinus, late bishop of the Raetias,” evidently only recently dead, was being celebrated on the morrow of Epiphany far away at Favianis in Danubian Noricum Ripense. According to Venantius Fortunatus, in the mid-sixth century Valentinus’ shrine was located somewhere between the Inn valley and Noricum. In the early eighth century his tomb was located at the statio of Mais...

18 ACO 4.2.135: “Ingenuinus episcopus sanctae ecclesiae secundae Raetiae hanc relationem a nobis factam subscripsi.” The order of signature does not seem to be strictly by seniority, where we would expect Maxentius ahead of Ingenuinus. Four of the bishops (Belluno, Concordia, Verona, and Vicenza) preside over “sanctae catholicae ecclesiae,” possibly indicating Arian bishops also established in those places?

19 For the places, see Richard Talbert, ed., The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World (Princeton, 2000), Map 19 (Raetia), with adjoining maps.

20 The other two provinces were Noricum Ripense which adjoined Raetia II to the east along the southern bank of the Danube and Noricum Mediterraneum on the southern side of the Alps and bordering Venetia on the north.

21 Exhibit 3; Mansi, Concilia 6.144. Unlike Säben, Chur had municipal status and was the capital of Raetia I; for its early history see Oskar Clavadetscher, “Churriitien im Übergang von der Spätantike zum Mittelalter nach den Schriftquellen,” in Joachim Werner, Eugen Ewig, eds., Von der Spätantike zum frühen Mittelalter: Aktuelle Probleme in historischer und archäologischer Sicht (Sigmaringen, 1979), 159–78, at 174–75.


on the western branch of the Via Claudia above Bozen, but it subsequently was
removed south by the Langobards to Trent. Although there is no later record
of special veneration for Valentinus at Säben, the original seat of his bishopric
of the “Raetias” and his first resting place might have been there and his subse-
quent translations a consequence of fluctuating political control of this border
region between the kingdoms of the Franks and the Langobards. But from an
official, imperial point of view he was the bishop of a province, not a place.

Raetia II also was territory that had been contested ecclesiastically
between Milan and Aquileia. During Milan’s heyday in the late fourth cen-
tury under Ambrose, Milanese missionaries had been sent into the Val di
Non (Anaunia) north of Trent, where they had been martyred. Now, at
the end of the sixth century, as our list of signatories shows, there was no
close challenge to Aquileian authority over this far western portion of Venetia and
adjacent Raetia. Milan, in contrast, had suffered several serious losses from
political and theological conflicts as can be seen in the contemporary letters
of Pope Gregory, and the metropolitan seat had been removed to Genoa after
the Langobard invasion. If we examine the very complete list of suffragan
Milanese bishops in 451 (Exhibit 3), at least five of those bishoprics had been
lost or suffered serious diminution a century and a half later. Aosta, now a
Frankish city, may have lost its bishopric and been completely absorbed by
a neighboring Frankish diocese. The diocese of Turin had lost extensive
territories in its west when around 575 the region of Susa had been ceded
to the Burgundian Franks and incorporated into new Frankish ecclesiasti-
cal structures. Three additional Milanese dioceses had been alienated as a

a route over the Jaufen pass that may not have been in general use at that time. Venantius’ poem
could indicate either Mais or Säben as the site of the saint’s “templa.”

die Lebensgeschichte des hl. Korbinian, (Munich/Zurich, 1983), 77–159 at 150–53. From Trent, Valentinus was brought in the early 760s by the Bavarian Duke Tassilo III to Raetian Passau where he joined Stephan as the patron of the cathedral.

26 The eighth-century bishopric appears to be a recent Bavarian refoundation, which would account for the lack of a contemporary cult there that soon became identified with Passau.

27 None of the extant lists of the Regions of Italy to which Raetia was attached (Italia Annonaria)
in Late Antiquity names any principal place there as they do for other regions. This must reflect
the early decline in importance of the provincial capital, Augsburg; see Theodore Mommsen, “Die
Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus,” Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für Ältere

28 See Carl Hammer, “The Examples of the Saints: Reading Eugippius’ Account of Saint Sev-

29 Antoon Bastaensens, ed., Paulinus, Vita Ambrosii, in Vita de Cipriano, Vita di Ambrogio,
Vita di Agostino (Milan, 1974), c. 52, 118–21.

30 Aosta’s history at this time is exceptionally obscure, and it is not mentioned by Pope Gregory; see below.

result of the Three Chapters schism. Pope Gregory had obtained a reliable Milanese metropolitan, Constantius (593–600), but his acquiescence to the condemnation had caused these three dioceses to separate themselves from his province: Brescia, Como, and Chur. All three were at the northeastern margin of the province. Brescia and Como abutted Verona and Trent on the west, and, like their Venetian contemporaries, they were subject to the Langobards, whereas Chur was Frankish.

Thus, one can readily appreciate why the province of Milan might fear interference from Frankish archbishops, because the Frankish provinces of Besançon and Vienne bordered it immediately on the north and the west. It is more difficult to understand the danger of Frankish intervention farther to the East in Aquileia unless the rebellious Milanese (but still Langobard) dioceses of Brescia and Como are meant. And no obvious candidates attended the great Frankish councils held at Orléans in 549 and Paris in 614. But the Venetian bishops’ letter also provides some specific evidence for their fears of imminent threats nearer to home. They identify three churches or dioceses, the “Breonensi,” “Tiburniensii,” and “Augustana,” which for some time had been under Frankish ecclesiastical control (Exhibit 2). Although the identification of these churches has been the subject of much controversy, they are best located in southern Noricum Mediterraneanum along the Roman road in the valley of the Drau river. This makes best sense of the bishops’ letter to the emperor, and, in fact, they are listed there in order beginning at Virunum in southeastern Noricum and progressing west through Teurnia to Aguntum along the highway which then proceeded on to join the eastern branch of the Via Claudia just above Säben. Excavations at all three places have produced

32 Greg. Mag. Regest. 4.2–4 (593).
clear evidence of churches consistent with episcopal status, and the entire region is dotted with impressive hilltop sanctuaries from this period, some of which may have served as refuges for the threatened episcopal cities in the Drau valley or as episcopal seats for displaced bishops whose dioceses now were in partibus.36

Of the three, the identification of the “ecclesia Tiburniensii” with ancient Teurnia has not been seriously disputed. Only eighty years earlier Eugippius described this place as the “metropolis” of Noricum, and its bishop may well have exercised some provincial authority there.37 Nevertheless, by the 570s its bishop, Leonianus, was clearly a suffragan of Aquileia when he attended the synod(s) held at Grado, but after that his church was evidently lost to the province (Exhibit 3). We know from Paul the Deacon, undoubtedly citing Secundus of Trent, that the church of Aguntum was under Frankish control in the 550s and 560s, because Vitalis, the bishop of Altino, evidently fled there only to be taken captive after many years and exiled to Sicily by the triumphant Roman general, Narses.38 It appears, therefore, that Vitalis was a particularly notorious partisan of the Three Chapters, who, in the wake of the Fifth Council (553), fled newly-reestablished Roman authority in Italy around the time of the “Pragmatic Sanction” (554); that would be “many years” before Narses finally got hold of him prior to his recall in 568. Aguntum as a safe haven for the orthodox churchmen of Aquileia fits well with the story told by the ten bishops to Maurice.

The “Breonensi” church does not, at first sight, seem to be a recognizable form of Virunum, and its name has led to speculation that it was located amongst the Breones far to the north in the middle Inn valley.39 But Suda’s great Byzantine encyclopedia gives the Greek transliteration of the Latin name as “Brjpuvwov” and provides a fanciful tale of its supposed etymology: “one man,” that is, “vir unus,” who saved the region from a ferocious wild boar.40


37 VSeverini 21: “nam cives Tiburniae, quae est metropolis Norici, coegerunt praedictum virum [the priest Paulinus] summii sacerdotii suscipere principatum.”

38 Paul.Diac. Hist.Lang., 2.4: “qui ante annos plurimos ad Francorum regnum confugerat, hoc est ad Agontiensem civitatem”; this adjectival form is preserved in a large number of minor ms. variants and elsewhere Paul refers to it “in Agunto” (4.39). It is not entirely clear to me that the “Avoriciensis/Avonciensis” church present at Grado in the 570s is, as generally supposed, Aguntum. In any event, like Teurnia, it does not reappear later.

39 See most recently Heitmeier, Das Juntal, 185–86.

40 Suda s.v.: “οἱ δὲ Νορίκοι ἐπεβόησαν, εἰς ἄνηρ τῇ ἑδε ἑωή, τοπεττί Βηρούνους. οὔτεν ἢ πόλις Βηρούνιον ἐκλάθη.”
Presumably, the ninth century copyist of the manuscript misread the unfamiliar Greek form of the now-obscure “Βηνούτων” for the ancient \textit{ethnicum} of the Breones who still inhabited the upper valley of the river Inn. Virunum appears in neither of the Grado lists; its continued civic existence in far southeastern Noricum must, like Celeia and Poetovio (Petenatis?), have been quite precarious. Thus, the church of Aquileia appears to have had three Frankish bishoprics, all of which earlier had been part of its province, along its northern, Norican border—certainly worrisome “near neighbors.” Whether, as the bishops’ letter implies, they were organized into their own province or subordinated to an unidentified Frankish province is unknown, but the immediacy of their threat to Aquileia can hardly be doubted at the time of writing when northern Italy was the object of a great Frankish invasion.

“Φράγγοι Βενετίων τα πλειστα σφισι προσεποιησαντο”

Around 545 the powerful Austrasian ruler of Reims, Theodebert (533–547), wrote a well-known letter to the emperor Justinian (527–565) where he enumerated the lands under his authority which at that time stretched from Francia along the Danube to Pannonia and included the northern region of Italy. The Greek historian Procopius, a former secretary to the Roman general Belisarius and thus very well informed about Italy, confirms the extent of Theodebert’s claims but vigorously disputes their legitimacy. He tells us that at his death, “Theodebert, the ruler of the Franks . . . without justification made some parts of Liguria and the Cottian Alps and the most of Venetia subject to the payment of tribute. . . . And the Goths indeed had a few fortresses left in Venetia, while the Romans held the coast towns, but


42 “Franks grabbed most of Venetia for themselves”: Procopius; see below. Because the written documentation has not increased, the older accounts by Ludwig Hartmann, \textit{Geschichte Italiens im Mittelalter}, vol. 2.1 (Gotha, 1900), 56–84, and by Georg Löhrlein, \textit{Die Alpen- und Italienpolitik der Merowinger im VI. Jahrhundert} (Erlangen, 1932), are still worth consulting. See also Erich Zöllner, \textit{Geschichte der Franken bis zur Mitte des sechsten Jahrhunderts} (Munich, 1970), 89–103; Walter Goffart, “Byzantine Policy in the West under Tiberius II and Maurice: The Pretenders Hermenegild and Gundovald,” \textit{Traditio} 13 (1957), 73–118, at 74–87; and the recent summary by Ian Wood, “The Frontiers of Western Europe: Developments East of the Rhine in the Sixth Century,” in Richard Hodges, William Bowden, eds., \textit{The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution and Demand} (Leiden, 1998), 231–53, at 238–43.

43 \textit{Epist. Aust.} 20: MGH \textit{Epist.} 3.132–33, “incolomes Franciae, septentrionalem plagam Italiæque Pannoniae . . . per Danubium et limitem Pannoniae. . . .” It is not clear whether he was claiming some portion of Pannonia I for which there is no other evidence. \textit{PLRE III}, s.n. “Theodebertus 1,” is (unusually) not quite accurate in its summary of this letter. Whether “incolomes” refers to the inhabitants of Francia or to “the whole” of Francia is unclear; both would overstate his rule.
the Franks had brought all the others under their sway.”44 Procopius notes, however, that, in sharp contrast to Franks, who had “grabbed for themselves with no justification most of Venetia,” Justinian legitimately “had bestowed upon the Langobards the city of Noricum and the strongholds of Pannonia.” Thus, he attempted to set an eastern limit to Frankish expansion, which probably also had penetrated from Venetia into easily accessible Noricum Mediterraneum, where we find it entrenched at the time of the bishops’ letter.45

This “unlawful” regime of the Franks in Venetia did not long survive Theodebert. Narses, an aged palace eunuch made commander in Italy by Justinian in 551, turned out to be both a brilliant strategist and a skilled tactician.46 He quickly rolled up the remaining forces of the Goths and expelled the Franks, whose direct presence as “tribute takers” was probably quite limited in any event. He dealt efficiently with the Frankish-sponsored incursion by the Alemmanic commanders, Leutharis and his brother, Butilinus, in 553–554; Butilinus was killed in battle and Leutharis in retreat died of sickness at Ceneta, one of the few places remaining to the Franks in Venetia.47 For 556 the contemporary Frankish chronicler bishop Marius of Avenches noted that “the imperial army took possession of that part of Italy that Theodebert had gained.”48 Only isolated Frankish garrisons remained, and in 561, on the river Adige/Etsch by Verona, Narses defeated and killed a Frankish commander, Aming, who had allied himself with the Gothic rebel Widin.49 Thus, Agnellus, a ninth-century bishop of Ravenna drawing on earlier sources, concludes that in the days of a previous bishop Agnellus (557–570), “the Franks were...
expelled from Italy by the patrician Narses. Only the adjacent territories of southern Noricum and Raetia, evidently of no great interest to the Romans, were left to them.

The entrance of the Langobards into Italy from Pannonia, immediately after Narses' recall in 568, changed the strategic situation completely. During their interregnum (574–584), the several Langobard duces aggressively strove to expand their individual authority, but not always with good results. A Langobard incursion through the western Cottian Alps by three duces deep into Gunthram's Burgundian kingdom in 575 was decisively defeated by his general, Mummolus, and, as a result, tribute was paid to the Franks and the territory of Susa, even though still occupied for the emperor by a Roman magister militum, was ceded to Burgundy. And at just this time, at the very end of the reign of King Sigibert in Austrasia (561–575), serious border warfare broke out in the western Venetia. Paul tells us that the Italian fortress of Nano (Anagnis castrum) in the Val di Non north of Trent surrendered to advancing Franks, who no doubt had been incited by the recent successes of their Burgundian colleagues. In response, the Langobard comes of the adjacent Val Lagarina, Ragilo, launched a successful counterattack, but he was then defeated and killed by the Frankish dux Chramnichis, who proceeded on to attack Trent itself. He, in turn, was defeated and killed by the Langobard dux Eoin who then expelled the Franks and "recovered" or, possibly, first "received the territory of Trent" ("Tridentinum territorium recepit").

Paul represents these events as happening over a relatively short period, but the Frankish (re)occupation of these Tridentine territories may have been more durable and certainly was regarded as significant by Sigibert's son, Childerbert II (575–596). Bishop Gregory of Tours tells us that in 587 when the Treaty of Andelot was concluded between the Austrasian ruler, Childerbert, and his Burgundian uncle, King Gunthram, Childerbert, through his envoy, Felix, tried to persuade Gunthram to invade Italy with him so that "with them [the Langobards] expelled, that part that his father claimed while still..."
alive might revert to him and the remaining part, through your effort and his, might be restored to the authority of the emperor." 55 Gunthram wisely declined the opportunity. But three years later in 590, when Childebert, in agreement with the Romans, finally launched a major invasion on his own, his stipulation to Gunthram was decisive in determining its extent.

Paul, relying on Secundus, describes in minute detail the thorough but limited progress into the northern Trentino of the Frankish forces under the dux Chedinus or Ethenus. 56 In fact, as we know from a letter sent by the Roman exarch Romanus to Childebert, Ethenus’ inaction after his initial advance was a notable cause for chagrin to the Romans; this Frankish “vir magnificus” remained encamped (resedente) near Verona and even agreed upon a separate peace treaty with the Langobard king, Authari (584–590). 57 According to Gregory of Tours, since Ethenus’ forces were suffering from disease and hunger, he decided to withdraw with hostages and booty after “having received oaths and subduing to the king’s authority that which his father earlier had held.” 58 Thus, Frankish territorial ambitions seem to have been limited strictly to the valley of the Adige/Etsch and, thus, to securing Austrasian access to Italy by the Via Claudia over the Reschen and Brenner passes.

This was the ominous situation that informed the bishops’ letter to emperor Maurice. Three of the signatories’ sees, Second Ractia, Verona, and Trent, were at the very center of the hostilities, and it is quite possible that their bishops had taken refuge in coastal Marano under the imperial protection of Smaragdus’ more discreet successor, Romanus. We know from Paul that Ingenuinus and his colleague Agnellus of Trent were closely involved in redeeming the hostages that Ethenus had taken with him from their dioceses. 59 Bishop Agnellus was even sent by the new Langobard king, Agilulf, into Francia for that purpose, and the dux Eoin went there as well to negotiate the terms of the peace. 60 The Franks, having had the usual mixed results in Italy, did not launch another major invasion there until the eighth century, finally culminating in Charlemagne’s more successful venture of 774.

57 Epist. Aust. 40: MGH Epist. 3.146 (which mis-transcribes “Ethenus” as “et Henus”, followed by the PLRE): “iam ad Autharit [Eth]enus suam legationem transmiserat, et de pace aliqua cum eo fuerat iam depectus.”
58 Greg. Tur. Hist. 10.3: “redire ad propria distinavit, subdens etiam illud, accepta sacramenta, regis ditionibus, quod pater eius prius habuerat, de quibus locis et captivos et alias abduxere praedas.”
"Perturbatio Garibaldo regi advenisset"61

Ethenus' invasion had another important consequence: Garibald, a Frankish dux now exercising authority directly to the north of the Langobards, was overthrown in a "perturbatio," probably as an immediate consequence of his involvement in an extensive Austrasian conspiracy against king Childebert.62 Our information about Garibald is very limited but of great interest, and nearly all of it is about his marriage alliances.63 He was a dux of king Chlothar I and sometime between 555 and 561 Chlothar, who now held both Austrasian courts of Soissons and Rheims, presented him as a spouse to Walderada, the widow of king Theodebald.64 This action points unmistakably to Garibald's importance in Austrasia; not only was Walderada a royal widow, but she was also descended from both Langobard and Gepid royalty.65 Garibald clearly had married up.

Probably at some point after his advantageous marriage, Garibald relocated to the southeastern Frankish frontier, but we do not know when. Possibly he was a contemporary colleague or even a successor to the Frankish dux Chramnichis, who was killed by the Langobard dux Eoin in 575. In the event, we first hear of Garibald there directly after this event and the death of King Sigibert in 575. At that time, so Paul reports, Eoin took Garibald's unnamed daughter as wife.66 Presumably, this marriage alliance was to ensure against a repetition of the recent border hostilities between Chramnichis and Ragilo. Thus, Garibald's first task as dux must have been to secure the territories remaining to the Franks in southern Raetia and Noricum against the new threat posed by the Langobards. But he appears soon to have exceeded his original remit.

Just before his ejection in 590 by Ethenus, Garibald had married his other daughter, Theodelinda, to the Langobard king, Authari.67 The initiative for this

61 "An upheaval overtook King Garibald": Paul, see following.
62 Paul.Diac. Hist.Lang. 3.30: "cum propter Francorum adventum perturbatio Garibaldo regi advenisset" (for the title and use of the term "rex", see below); Hammer, From "Ducatus" to "Regnum", 29-40, which assumes, as here, a more direct route by Ethenus' eastern Frankish forces from Austrasia to the Adige/Etsch valley via Augsburg (or, perhaps, Kempten) much like Venantius' itinerary a quarter of a century earlier rather than some circuitous alpine route (cf. Clavadetscher, "Churrätien," 167) although it is always possible that a more northerly route might have been followed only on Ethenus' withdrawal from Italy.
63 PLRE III, s.n. "Garibald 1."
65 See the genealogy in Hammer, From "Ducatus" to "Regnum", Figure 2, 33. Indeed, it was precisely this Langobard royal heritage that their daughter, Theodelinda, chose to emphasize in the remarkable historical murals that she later commissioned for her palace at Monza: Paul.Diac. Hist. Lang. 4.22: "aliquit et de Langobardorum gestis depingi fecit."
marriage may have come from Authari, who earlier had been rebuffed when he sought to marry King Childebert’s sister. The oldest surviving Langobard account of these events, probably written by a cleric favorable to Theodelinda in Milan or Pavia at the end of her reign (d. ca. 627), states that “after entering a treaty of amicitia with the Franks,” Authari “joined himself in marriage to a wife taken away from amongst the Bavarians.”

While it is possible that this “amicitia” refers (anachronistically) to the truce that Authari subsequently reached with Ethenus, its connotations of sovereign authority fit very well with the other indications we have about the Frank Garibald’s ambitions.

Indeed, Paul calls Garibald “king [rex] of the Bavarians,” but—as Garibald’s Frankish contemporary, bishop Gregory, knew—this is certainly inaccurate: amongst the Franks, only the Merovingians were reges. Rather, it is likely that in these passages Paul follows his primary source, Secundus of Trent, who may have wished to flatter his royal patroness, Theodelinda, by ascribing a suitably exalted status to her father. Nevertheless, the unsettled circumstances of the late sixth century did offer ample opportunities for ambitious men to carve out lordships for themselves that might appear to be “regal.” The contemporary Herul leader Sindual had been a protégé of Narses, and Paul refers to him as “king of those who live near the river Brenta” (Breton regem).

Garibald, too, may have been one of them; indeed, his connubial

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68 Auctarii Havniensis Extrema: MGH AA 9.337–39: “Qui [Authari] etiam amicita post cum Francis inita coniugem de Baioarissi abductam gloriosissimam Theudelindam reginam . . . sibi matrimonio copulavit.” This important “Final Additions” to the “Continuations” of Prosper of Aquitaine’s chronicle was not included in Hans Zeiß’s influential “Quellensammlung für die Geschichte des bairischen Stammmesherzogtums bis 750,” Der Bayerischer Vorgeschichtsfreund 7 (1927–1928), 39–66, and appears to have been unused by Bavarian historians (including the present author). It was probably composed at the very end of Theodelinda’s reign (d. ca. 627) by a highly favorable cleric in Pavia or Milan, for which see Wilhelm Levison, ed., Wattenbach-Levison, Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter, vol. 1 (Weimar, 1952), 86.

69 The primary meaning of “rex” was “king,” but it could have more general application as “ruler” or “leader.” The Auctarii Havniensis Extrema does not mention Garibald (see previous note), and Paul’s early source, the “Origo Gentis Langobardorum,” does not provide Garibald with any title although it also names her mother, Walderada: Orig.gent.Lang.6: Annalisa Bracciotti, Origo Gentis Langobardorum—Introduzione, testo critico, comment (Rome, 1998), 117; also MGH, Scriptores Rerum Langobardicarum 1–6. Perhaps the desire to flatter is also why the euphemism “perturbatio” is used to describe Garibald’s removal. Because of Theodelinda’s patronage, Pope Gregory had to treat Secundus with great deference; see Greg.Mag. Regest. 9.148, 14.12. I suspect that it is wrong to consider Secundus’ “succinctam de Langobardorum gestis . . . historiam” as only terse annals of local history much like Marius of Avenches (so Gardiner, “Paul the Deacon,” 151–52). Rather, it seems likely that Theodelinda’s pronounced interest in the Langobard past may have inspired a more discursive history of Langobard gesta which in some way paralleled the gesta depicted in her palace murals (see above) and undoubtedly glorified her role in Langobard history (so, e.g., Paul.Diac. Hist.Lang. 3.30, 35).

70 PLRE III, s.n. “Sindual”; Paul.Diac. Hist.Lang. 2.3; Marius calls him simply a “tyrannus” or usurper who was destroyed by Narses in 566: Mar.Avent. Chron, s.a.: MGH AA 11.238.
connections may have promoted higher ambitions. It looks very much then as though he was aiming to establish himself, like Sindual, as a *tyrannus* or "usurper" in alliance with the Langobards. If so, Garibald's ambitions clearly conflicted with Childebert's efforts to regain his father's territories along the eastern Alpine route to Italy. There was, thus, ample reason to "perturb" him as a traitorous conspirator and a rebel.

Paul provides few additional items and none from the period after Secundus' death in 612. Apparently directly after Garibald's removal, king Childebert installed Tassilo as his new official on the southeastern frontier. Paul also calls Tassilo a "rex," but we may be confident that Childebert did not regard him as such, and Paul later refers to Tassilo as "dux." After some initial success, Tassilo and then his son and successor, Garibald II, suffered serious defeats against the Slavs and Avars in southern Noricum, one near Aguntum, although, in what may be a supplementary gloss by Paul, Garibald II was able finally to secure his borders. By the early seventh century our three "Gallic" bishoprics in the valley of the Drau must have been in terminal decline as a result of these protracted frontier conflicts. The end of Frankish ambitions in Italy, the loss of Noricum Mediterraneum to the Slavs, and the solidification of Langobard authority at the southern end of Raetia II would, taken together, explain why we hear of no new Frankish *duces* after Garibald II. The strategic rationale for one had disappeared. Only much later did Paul again turn his attention to the northern border of the Langobards where we hear, rather, of a "comes" or "grafio" of the Bavarians whose authority around 680 was limited to Bozen and other frontier outposts, very possibly as an official of duke Theodo, who by then clearly was established north of the Alps in the more familiar, later Bavarian heartlands along the Danube.

Of the sixth-century Frankish dukes, we know Chramnichis and Garibald by name, and, no doubt, there were others. So far as we have evidence, their essential duties, like those of their immediate successors, were military.

74 For Garibald II's political circumstances see Hammer, *From "Ducatus" to "Regnum"*, 40–46.
76 Perhaps including Aming who was defeated by Narses near Verona (above).
The primary early meaning of *dux* is "commander," and the Law Code of the Bavarians, in what is probably an early Title (2), "Concerning Dukes and the Matters which Pertain to Him," describes, in very archaic terms, the duke’s qualifications and duties as those of a royal commander and judge.\(^{78}\) This was the essence of his *ducatus*, his ducal authority, which even much later lacked any connotation of a territorial entity.\(^{79}\) The *dux* was an official of the Frankish king charged with protecting royal interests. These interests, particularly in a sensitive frontier region such as Raetia and Noricum, would have been strategic: to assert Frankish authority there and secure the Via Claudia, now the primary eastern Austrasian route into Italy. But they must also have been fiscal, as shown by Theodebert’s making his Venetian conquests subject to tribute.

"*Alii idololatriis cultibus dediti, alii errore maculati erant*"\(^{80}\)

It is unfortunate that our written sources for northern Raetia and Noricum largely fail us in the evidently critical early seventh century. Our primary narrative for that period by the Burgundian historian known as Fredegar provides only a single enigmatic reference to an early seventh-century Bavarian massacre of Bulgarians under king Dagobert I.\(^{81}\) No Frankish *duces* are known after Garibald II, and it is unlikely that he survived much beyond the 620s.\(^{82}\) Jonas’ hagiographical writings about Columbanus and his successors at Luxeuil, however, contain valuable information about the early missions to the Bavarians. Eustasius, Columbanus’ successor as abbot of Luxeuil, determined to go on a mission, first to the unidentified "Warasquos," who were sunk in both paganism and heresy, and then to the Bavarians, who evidently suffered from similar errors. There, at an unspecified date but probably not long after 615, “he instructed them with much effort and corrected them according to right doctrine and converted many of them to the faith.”\(^{83}\)

\(^{78}\) The essential ducal qualifications were epitomized in Edwin von Schwind, ed., *Lex Baiwariae*, *MGH, Legum* 5.2.302-03: "potest iudicio contendere, in exercitu ambulare, populum iudicare, equum viriliter ascendere, arma sua vivaciter baiulare, non est surdus nec cecus, in omnibus iussionem regis potest implere."


\(^{80}\) “Some were devoted to idolatrous cults, others were defiled by error”: Jonas, see following.

\(^{81}\) Fred. *Chron*. 4.72.

\(^{82}\) Hammer, *From “Ducatus” to “Regnum”*, 45-46.

\(^{83}\) *Columbani* 2.8: *MGH SRM* 4.121-22: “Progressus ergo Warasquos praedicat, quorum alii idololatriis cultibus dediti, alii Fotini vel Bonosi errore maculati erant. Hos ad fidem conversos, ad Boias, qui nunc Baioardii vocantur, tendit, eosque multo labore inbutos fideique liniamento correctos, plurimos eorum ad fidem convertit. Ubi cum quantisper moratus fuisset, dimisit sagaces viros, qui coepi laboris in studio desudarent. . . .” Eustasius died in 629. It is worth noting that Jonas’ learned ethnographic description of the Bavarians as descendants of the Celtic *Boii* has
According to Jonas, Eustasius left experienced missionaries to advance his work, but he was soon followed by another missionary to Bavaria from Luxeuil, Agrestius, who was a scandal and an embarrassment to Jonas. Nevertheless, his importance is indicated by the considerable space his story occupies in the last two chapters of Eustasius' Life. Agrestius was a former high official, a notary at the Burgundian court of king Theoderich II, and possibly entered Luxeuil only after the latter's death in 612, where he caught the missionary fever so characteristic of Irish foundations. Despite Eustasius' opposition, "[Agrestius] heading off for the Bavarians, reached them and stayed there for a while, but bringing forth no fruit . . . he passed on to Aquileia." There, so Jonas tells us, he became a fervent and effective adherent of the Three Chapters.

But, perhaps, Agrestius was already a partisan. In his native Burgundy, where he subsequently evangelized with considerable success, the Three Chapters evidently had sympathizers at the very highest levels of church and state: king Theoderich's grandmother, the formidable queen Brunhilde and her protege, Syagrius, metropolitan of Autun, who had been sheltering the renegade bishop of Chur. Agrestius was supported, probably for various reasons, by his close kinsman (consanguinitatis proximus), Abelen, the bishop of Geneva, and by other influential figures such as the Burgundian majordomo, Warnachar. Moreover, Agrestius and his former colleague from the court of Theod-

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85VColumbani 2.9: "Ad Baiarioris tendens venisset, ibi paululum moratus, nullum fructum exercens . . . Dein ad Aquileiam pertransit . . . socius statim scismatis effectus, Romanae sedis a communionem seuncust ac divisus est." From 607 "old" Aquileia, under Langobard authority, again had a metropolitan supporting the Three Chapters and was in schism from Grado, where the bishops had submitted to the condemnation.

86 Greg. Mag. Regest. 8.4; Markus, Gregory the Great, 173–75.

erich, Warnachar, were even able to instigate a provincial Burgundian synod presided over by the metropolitan of Lyon at Mâcon in 626/7 to advance the cause of the Three Chapters against Jonas’ hero, Eustasius. 88

Jonas does not tell us precisely where among the Bavarians Agrestius sojourned. The use of the *ethnica* *m*—*Baioarii*—might indicate the northern portion of Raetia II, but it is quite possible that this term had gained a wider scope in the nearly three-quarters of a century since Venantius Fortunatus encountered them on his way from Italy to Francia. Nor is Agrestius’ stay there dated, but it evidently took place well before the death of the Burgundian majordomo, Warnachar, in 626/7, which is mentioned in Jonas’ account. Thus, Agrestius would have been active in Bavaria during the later years of King Chlothar II (d. 629) and appears to have been a contemporary of the last-known Frankish *dux*, Garibald II. There is no other evidence that he was unwelcome in Bavaria, and Jonas’ deprecatory remarks about his effectiveness may only reflect the hagiographer’s evident prejudices. In this regard, it is worthwhile to consider the two important persons who were buried within the pilgrimage shrine of St. Afra at Augsburg in the early seventh century. 89 One of them wore a reliquary buckle peculiar to northern Burgundy. 90 Although it may seem obvious to connect these worthies with Luxeuil and Eustasius’ missionary efforts, the distribution of such buckles in Burgundy is limited to the area directly to the north of bishop Abelen’s heterodox see on Lake Geneva. 91

**Conclusion: Bavaria before Bavaria?**

It is notable that all of the early sources discussed so far speak only of Franks, Langobards, and Romans as political actors, and we have no clearly political references to Bavaria as a distinct entity of any sort. We do have three

88 In the event, the synod produced the opposite result due to the untimely death of Warnachar: see Charles de Clercq, ed., *Concilia Galliae A. 511-A. 695*, CCSL 148A (Turnhout, 1963), 299; and Eugen Ewig, *Die Merowinger und das Frankenreich*, 4th ed. (Stuttgart, 2001), 125. Jonas presents the charges at Mâcon as minor matters of Celtic usage; see the commentary from this perspective in Caitlin Corning, *The Celtic and Roman Traditions; Conflict and Consensus in the Early Medieval Church* (Basingstoke/New York, 2006), 48–54.


early references to “Bavarians,” all of them from Roman literary sources. The oldest, perhaps as early as 520, is the “Frankish Table of Nations,” which includes the “Baioarius/Baioarios” amongst the sons of Ingo after the Burgundians, Thuringians, and Langobards. In about 551 Jordanes in his *Getica* located the “Baibaros” to the east of the “regio illa Suavorum.” In the late 560s, Venantius Fortunatus, describing the route from Francia to imperial Italy, locates the evidently hostile “Baiovarius” between Augsburg on the river Lech and the Breones living in the Inn valley. Possibly, this emerging threat gave additional urgency to Garibald I’s initial dispatch to the Austrasian southeast (see above). Thus, by the mid-sixth century the Roman and the Frankish worlds were certainly conscious of a Bavarian *ethnos* located somewhere beyond the river Lech, but there is no clear contemporary evidence, Roman, Frankish, or Langobard, for a distinct “Bavarian” polity of any sort, at least one recognized by the Franks. Perhaps, that is why king Theodebert passes over it in silence in his letter to Justinian (see above2). Only from the late 620s, that is, directly after Garibald II’s disappearance from the historical record, do the earliest Langobard sources, the “Final Additions” to Prosper’s Chronicle, and the “Origo Gentis Langobardorum” refer to Theodelinda’s origins using ethnic terms that might be interpreted either in some territorial or in any political sense. Nevertheless, much older allegiances toward the south clearly persisted well into the seventh century. Agrestius, following, it seems, Venantius’ itinerary from the preceding century, traveled onward from the Bavarians directly to Aquileia which evidently was still viewed as a primary spiritual center for someone coming from there. On analogy with the land of the “Warasquos” we might imagine a “Bavaria” in the early seventh century still permeated by

93 *MGH AA* 5.130.
94 Ven.Fort. *Carm.*: *MGH AA* 4.1.368: “si vacat ire viam [from Augsburg] neque te Baiovarius obstat, qua vicina sedent Breonum loca. . . .” In the Preface to his collected poems, Venantius also locates the river Lech in “Bauvaria” (*ibid.*, 2: “Liccam Baiuvaria . . . transiens”) which seems to be a topographical invention by Venantius based upon the *ethnicum*; the other place-names such as “Germania” in this passage are a mixed lot and not overtly political. I am unsure whether Reindel considered “Bauvaria” to be an indigenous expression (“Die Bajuwaren,” 453: “. . . von einem Landstrich, dem dieses Volk seinen Namen gegeben hat.”; my emphasis). In any event, there is no clear archaeological evidence then or later for any ethnic boundary at the Lech: Volker Bierbrauer, “Zur ethnischen Interpretation in der frühgeschichtlichen Archäologie,” in Walter Pohl, ed., *Die Suche nach den Ursprüngen: Von der Bedeutung des frühen Mittelalters* (Vienna, 2004), 45–84, at 69–71.
a variety of pagan and syncretistic practices in its ecclesiastically unorganized far northern parts but that gradually yielded to schismatic albeit fervently orthodox Catholicism under established episcopal authority further to the south. Such Christian piety was probably also prevalent amongst much of the Frankish elite there. After all, arguably the most important “Bavarian” of this period, queen Theodelinda, was a staunch supporter of the Three Chapters. There is no reason to suppose that she first took this position only under Secundus’ tutelage after arriving in Italy to wed the Langobard king Authari in 589. Eustasius’ own opposition to the Three Chapters is clear, because Agrestius attempted to have him condemned at Mâcon for his “doctrina.” But Jonas’ highly partisan account may have misled us regarding the true nature of Catholic orthodoxy in early “Bavaria” by implying that Eustasius’ opposition to the Three Chapters was dominant there.96

The continued easy communication with Aquileia as witnessed by Venantius’ journey in the 560s and Agrestius’ in the 620s, would naturally facilitate cultural attachment, which may also have influenced political consciousness. Ingenuinus and his Aquileian colleagues continued to conceive their political topography—as did emperor Maurice in his response—using late Roman administrative constructs: Venetia, Histria, Secunda Raetia. For them all, the Langobards were merely another “gentile” interloper from whom they fervently hoped to be delivered by restored Roman authority. Nor do we know that the Langobards or the Franks had anything better to describe their contemporary world. King Theodebert knew of an abstract, geographical entity called “Francia” over whose “inhabitants” (? incolomes) he ruled, but in his letter to emperor Justinian (see above), he described his subject peoples and lands in an odd mixture of ethnic (Thoringii, Norsavori, Wesigoti, Saxones, Eucii), Roman administrative (limes Pannoniae), and topographical (per Danubium) terms. Venantius used a similar mixture to describe the topographical stages of his journey between Italy and Francia. The novel political situation clearly required improvisation.

Although, aside from possible traces in the Law Code, as seen above, we have no indigenous, contemporary Bavarian evidence for how any of the people there thought of their polity and their political allegiances in this early period, still, the evidences for their southern neighbors may provide an oblique perspective on Bavaria. The only diocese within Raetia II, Säben, became a Bavarian bishopric in the mid-eighth century.97 But it would be anachronistic to claim bishop Ingenuinus for Bavaria in the sixth century even though his diocese of Raetia II reached, in the late antique Roman political scheme, to

96 So, for example, Prinz, “Augsburg,” 380.
97 Hammer, From “Ducatus” to “Regnum”, 138.
the Danube and must have been, in part, under Frankish authority. In fact, we know his political allegiances from the letter: he (and his flock?) was a loyal citizen of the “holy commonwealth,” the “sacra res publica.” The same was, no doubt, true for his predecessor, Materninus, who attended Grado I (Exhibit 3). Ingenuinus’ ecclesiastical connections were all to the province of Aquileia and particularly to his neighboring diocese, Trent, where the Raetian saint and bishop, Valentinus, was venerated into the eighth century. All the evidence suggests that Ingenuinus’ diocese of Raetia II was a northern extension of Aquileia and Italy just as it had been throughout Late Antiquity as a Region of Italia Annonaria. 98

For their part, the bishops of southern, Frankish Noricum may well have continued to think like their former Raetian and Venetian colleagues in late antique Roman terms despite their political and ecclesiastical reorientation to “Gaul.” Of course, Frankish political institutions—dux, comes, mallus, and the other concepts that pervade the ethnic law codes—would be current amongst the political elite, many of whom came from Francia. But a Roman, Latin-speaking population, including some of high status, survived in significant enclaves even in Raetia II north of the Alps, particularly in the valley of the middle Inn and around Passau and Salzburg, and there are scattered evidences that they were highly conservative guardians of their Roman heritage. 99

To be sure, some of the persons who buried their dead in the great contemporary row-grave cemeteries of Old Erding and Straubing in northern Raetia II must have thought of themselves and their neighbors in quite parochial ethnic terms without any taint of Roman imperial geography. And some of them—but almost certainly not all—must have considered themselves “Bavarians.” 100 At least, they convinced classically educated poets and ethnographers that they did! But that is not to say that they yet constituted a polity.

Of the three Roman provinces that composed early medieval Bavaria, easily the wealthiest was Noricum Mediterraneum with its numerous cities and abundant natural resources, which would have provided valuable tribute to the Franks along with the neighboring cities of Venetia. The least populous and valuable would have been the city-poor northern portion of Raetia II lying east of the river Lech between the Alps and the Danube, the apparent

98 This distinguished it from Noricum, which was part of neighboring Illyricum.
100 See now the review of archaeological and philological research by Hubert Fehr, “Am Anfang war das Volk? Die Entstehung der bajuwarischen Identität als archäologisches und interdisziplinäres Problem,” in Walter Pohl, Mathias Mehofer, eds., Archaeology of Identity—Archäologie der Identität (Vienna, 2010), 211–31, at 212–24; but the historical argument presented there (225–31) differs fundamentally from that of the present discussion.
site of Bavarian “ethnogenesis” and the heart of early medieval Old Bavaria. We might expect, therefore, that the Frankish duces stationed in Bavaria with the strategic responsibility to secure the route to Italy would have focused their interests and concentrated their authority and resources in the far south and southeast in areas abutting the Romans and Langobards in Venetia, that is, in far southern Raetia II and Noricum Mediterraneum. This is precisely what Paul reports concerning the activities of the last Austrasian duces there, Tassilo and Garibald II. It is, to my mind, a very open question precisely how far from Augsburg and the upper portions of the Via Claudia eastwards into Raetia II and Noricum Ripense effective Frankish authority (and even their interests) reached.

In simple terms, I think we must conceive of (at least) two “Bavarias” in this very early period: a Frankish political entity under duces centered in southern Raetia and Noricum and an incipient ethnic entity emerging in northern Raetia east of the Lech, which became politically coherent and dominant only during the course of the seventh century. The consolidation of a unified Bavarian polity with a common ethnic identity must have proceeded from widely different bases and at markedly different speeds depending upon location and status. Even two centuries later in the eighth century when our indigenous information becomes (relatively) plentiful, the process of political, ecclesiastical, and cultural integration that finally produced a coherent Duchy of Bavaria from the Lech to the Drau was not yet complete. In the late sixth century we are witnesses to only the very earliest stages of its protohistory. On the other hand, the political entity that we know from the earliest sources was a Frankish frontier ducatus with its primary presence along the routes to Italy and in southern Raetia and Noricum, and Garibald was one of a succession of Frankish dukes there. He, however, is notable because he conceived a larger role for himself and overstepped his remit leading to his precipitous ouster by Frankish arms. In view of this history, it is anachronistic to speak in the sixth and early seventh centuries of a “Duke of the Bavarians” and all the more so of a “Duchy of Bavaria.”

University of Pittsburgh

101 See above; the topographical interests of Paul’s source, Secundus of Trient, may, of course, play a role here.

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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>BURGUNDY</th>
<th>AUSTRIAS</th>
<th>LANGOBARDS</th>
<th>EMPEROR</th>
<th>EXARCHY</th>
<th>POPE</th>
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<th>MILAN</th>
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<td>Wacho (510–540)</td>
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<td>Decius (584x$^5$)</td>
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<td>Maurice (582–602)</td>
<td>Smaragdus (584x5–589x90)</td>
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<td>Childebert II (592–596)</td>
<td>Tassilo I (590–610x20)</td>
<td>Agilulf (591–616)</td>
<td>Sevus (586/7–606/7)</td>
<td>Constantius (593–600)</td>
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Exhibit 2: Excerpts from a Letter by Ten Suffragan Bishops of the Province of Aquileia to the Emperor Maurice in 591

For, although our sins have for a time submitted us to the most heavy yoke of the gentiles, with the Lord’s assistance by no amount of coercion are we found to waver from the soundness of the Catholic faith in any manner; nor have we forgotten thereafter your holy commonwealth under which we once lived in quiet and with the Lord’s help we hasten with all powers to return. Most pious lord prince, we advise accordingly that the scandal of the church which in the time of that prince of pious memory, Justinian, brought confusion to the churches of the whole world, to wit, the condemnation of the Three Chapters, also since then and even now is manifest amongst some parts of our provinces. . . . Pious ruler, we advise accordingly because, at the time of our ordinations in the holy see of Aquileia, each of us priests produced a written undertaking by the devotion and faithfulness of our ordainer that we would observe perfect loyalty to the holy commonwealth, which, as our Lord knows, we have faithfully kept with whole heart and thus far continually observed. If this confusion and constraint are not removed by your pious commands, then, if it happened that one of us who now are were to die, none of our people would suffer to accede to the ordination by the church of Aquileia, but rather, because Gallic archbishops are near neighbors, they would hasten without doubt to them for ordination, and the metropolitan church of Aquileia, established under your imperial authority through which by divine favor you now possess churches amongst the gentiles, would be dissolved. Which thing already some
years ago had begun to happen, and in three churches of our synod, that is, the Breonensi, Tiburniensi and Augustana, Gallic bishops established priests. And, if the uproar in our regions caused at that time by the command of the same ruler, Justinian, of happy memory had not been set aside, for our iniquities Gallic priests would have spread throughout nearly all the churches pertaining to the synod of Aquileia.
<table>
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<th>Marano</th>
<th>Grado I</th>
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<th>Marano</th>
<th>Milan</th>
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<td>589 (90)</td>
<td>590 (91)</td>
<td>572 (7)</td>
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<td>Altino</td>
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<td>Ingenuinus/Sabione</td>
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