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Theodelinda, 'Most Glorious Queen': Gender and Power in Lombard Italy

Ross Balzaretti

Theodelinda, Queen of the Lombards (590–628), has been known for long to historians through the portrait depicted by Paul the Deacon in his Historia Langobardorum. However, as this was written some 150 years after the queen's death, its evidence needs to be treated with great caution. In this essay, the earliest contemporary evidence of Theodelinda's life is examined and compared to Paul's account. The latter turns out to be a highly-gendered representation, made up largely by Paul. Nevertheless, the early evidence (Gregory the Great's letters and various short historical texts) does show that she was a 'most glorious queen'.

Theodelinda, the regina gloriosissima of my title and one of the most famous women in Italian history, has, like most famous people, been remembered in a variety of roles. At one extreme she is the pious devotee of Saint John the Baptist, while at the other she is nothing.

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more than a whore who was successfully seduced by a muleteer. Although her later fame extended to the operatic stage—La Theodelinda was produced in Parma in 1690 and Theodelinda staged in London in 1793—Theodelinda had perhaps her greatest impact in Monza, the site of her palatium and basilica. Local authors could not get enough of her history. Bonincontro Morigia in his mid-fourteenth century Chronicon Modoetiense ab origine Modoetiae usque ad a. 1349 was admiring, Zucchi and Lesmi, in the seventeenth century, wrote books devoted entirely to her, and so it went on into the eighteenth century and well beyond. The most remarkable manifestation of her cult in Monza is the spectacular fresco cycle of her life (dating to 1444) which adorns ‘La capella di Theodelinda’ in the cathedral. The initiator of all this industry was Paul the Deacon, who devoted many pages to Theodelinda in his History of the Lombards, written some 150 years after her death. In this article I want to reconsider Paul’s image of Theodelinda in the light of the contemporary and near contemporary evidence of her life. However,


4 La Theodelinda, opera nuovamente composta, e rappresentata nel Teatro del Ducale Collegio de’ Nobili di Parma, Parma, 1690; Theodelinda: A New Serious Opera in Two Acts (by G.D. Boggio), as performed at the King’s Theatre, London, 1793. I wonder if Gibbon saw the latter!

5 Lodovico Antonio Muratori, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores XII, Milan, 1728: coll. 1071-72.

6 B. Zucchi, Tre illustrissime glorie di Monza, città imperiale per la vita della Reina Theodelinda, Milan, 1613; A. Lesmi, La Theodelinda: Reina de’ Longobardi, Milan 1649.

7 A. Frisi, Memorie storiche di Monza e sua corte, Milan, 1794.


9 The only critical edition is L. Bethmann and G. Waitz (eds), Pauli Diaconi, Historia Langobardorum; Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum (hereafter MGH SRL), Hanover, 1878: 45–187. The discussion of the elaborate manuscript
this article is not intended to provide an uncontextualised case study of a famous woman, a type of historical research which can easily exaggerate the subject's significance. Instead, it explores the concept of gender to rethink Theodelinda's history. As will become apparent, the complex evidence surrounding Theodelinda has a lot to contribute to current debates about the nature of queenship and gender ideology around 600.


The Earliest Evidence

The earliest sources for Theodelinda are, in the order in which they were most probably written, five letters of Gregory the Great (written in 598 and 603) and one each of Columbanus (612–15) and King Sisebut (616–20); a diploma issued by King Adoald, Theodelinda’s son, to the monastery of Bobbio in 624; a short continuation of the Chronicle of Prosper of Aquitaine, known as the Auctarii Havniensis extrema (c. 625); a dedicatory inscription attached to the cover of a gospel book (early seventh century, perhaps one given by Gregory the Great to the queen); the Fourth book of Fredegar (c. 660); the Origo gentis Langobardorum (c. 668); and last the so-called Historia Langobardorum Codicis Gothani (also known as the Codex Gothanus), a revised version of the Origo (c. 807). There is also a small amount of archaeological evidence which might be contemporary with Theodelinda.13

Three important general points arise from this body of evidence as a whole. First, although none of these texts survive in the late sixth- or early seventh-century manuscript form—with the possible exception of the Monza inscription—Theodelinda’s life is evidenced by contemporary written sources from the start of her arrival in Italy to near the time of her death (probably in 628). Second, all the documents written between 598 and 625 are, at least potentially, connected with her personally: they were either addressed to her or commissioned by her (with the exception of the Auctarii Havniensis extrema). Third, the only identified authors are her correspondents Gregory, Columbanus and Sisebut: all the other texts are anonymous.

From the letters it is obvious that Theodelinda had written contact with three of the most powerful figures of her day, a contact prompted largely by affairs of state. Other queens, of course, had similar dealings, notably Brunhild. It should not be forgotten that, although none of

13 See below note 38 for the famous collection of objects in the treasury of Monza cathedral associated with Theodelinda. Additionally, an epitaph may once have existed (Thomas Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, Oxford, 1892–1899 in eight volumes, vol. 6: 160, n. 1) and a sarcophagus in Monza cathedral, to which Theodelinda’s remains were transferred in 1308. This was opened in 1941 (Neil Christie, The Lombards, Oxford, 1995: 129) and the scholar who analysed the jewellery it contained concluded that, as the objects could have dated to the seventh century, it probably was Theodelinda’s body (G. Haseloff, ‘Die Funde aus dem Sarkiphag der Königin Theodelinda in Monza’, Germania, vol. XXX, 1952: 368–77).
Theodelinda's own letters have survived, we may presume this from the content of those written to her that she did have letters written on her behalf. Otherwise she could easily be misrepresented as a passive recipient of letters.

'Theodelinda's relationship with Gregory the Great has received much comment. It was conditioned by the schism of the Three Chapters. Gregory urged the queen to come back to the Roman Church and to reconcile herself with Constantius, the Archbishop of Milan exiled in Genoa. When the king and queen reached a treaty with the Byzantines in 598, Gregory asked the queen not to go back on it. In the same year, Agilulf himself gave presents to Gregory, as the latter noted in a letter to him written in December: 'We have received the bearers of these presents, as being truly your servants, with proper affection: since it was right that we should give a loving greeting and farewell to wise men who announced the peace made by the favour of Almighty God.' At the same time, Gregory wrote separately to Theodelinda, again commending her role as a peacemaker. From 600 until his death, Gregory, Theodelinda and Agilulf, bonded themselves to each other through the giving and receiving of valuable presents, as part of a diplomatic process which maintained peace among them. Gregory gives the impression that he and Theodelinda shared a common interest in Catholic Christianity, a religion based on mutual giving. Gregory did indeed give Theodelinda presents. He sent several phylactery 'charms' to Adaloald with his letter of December 603, replying to Theodelinda's announcement of his Catholic baptism.

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16 Reg. Ep. IX. 68; Markus, Gregory the Great: 105.
17 Reg. Ep. IX. 42; Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 5: 419. He addressed the king as excellentissimus.
18 Reg. Ep. IX. 43; Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 5: 420. He addressed the queen as excellentissima.
19 For Gregory’s views on sharing (what giving and receiving amounts to) see David Ganz, 'The Ideology of Sharing: Apostolic Community and Ecclesiastical Property in the Early Middle Ages', in Wendy Davies and Paul Fouracre (eds), Property and Power in the Early Middle Ages, Cambridge, 1995: 17-30, at 18-20; for the context see Markus, Gregory the Great: 125-42.
20 Reg. Ep. XIV. 12; Markus, Gregory the Great: 138. There is a translation of parts of this letter in Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 5: 447-48.
Holy Cross, and a Gospel in an embroidered case (crucem cum ligno sanctae crucis Domini et lectionem sancti Evangelii theca Persica). To Theodelinda herself he sent three rings, two set with jacinth and one with onyx, and explained that these gifts were to foster love for the pope in her children, and to solidify the peace made recently between him and the Lombard people. These gifts constituted the most obviously Christian of symbols—cross, book and ring—and must have been intended by Gregory to reinforce the new Catholicism of Theodelinda’s son. They were also, of course, likely to have been objects of immense material value and quality, and hence fitting presents for royalty. These famous gifts were not an aberration but were rather part of a mutual sequence of giving. Theodelinda acted, it would seem, as a political intermediary between Agilulf and Gregory. She did not, as far as we know, herself actually give presents to Gregory. Finally, Gregory’s behaviour towards Theodelinda and Agilulf, although provoked by a particularly awkward political and theological situation, was by no means unique to them. Gregory was known for his liberality, and also addressed letters in a similar vein to the Frankish queens Brunhild and Bertha.21

Despite this personal reconciliation, the schism continued. Columbanus, on arriving in Italy in c. 612, wrote to Pope Boniface IV, asking him to resolve it with a council: ‘Thus the king asks, the queen asks, all ask you that as soon as may be, all should be made over, that as peace comes to the country peace should quickly come to the Faith, that everyone may in turn become one Flesh in Christ.’22 It did not happen but this evidence at least implies that the king and queen wanted to settle things. Sisebut’s letter is perhaps the most interesting of all those received by Theodelinda, simply because it deals with her (otherwise poorly documented) joint-reign with Adaloald.23 It was addressed to her young son Adaloald and urged him to give up Arianism.24 Sisebut gives us a portrait of a highly educated queen, but given that he did not

23 Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 6: 149–73 is still a very helpful sketch which also explores the life of Gundeperga.
know of Adaloald's Catholicism, he could not have known her. The image of the queen is therefore mere flattery.

The next piece of evidence to survive is a diploma ostensibly issued in 624 in favour of the monastery of Bobbio.\(^\text{25}\) This records a grant made by King Adaloald to Abbot Attala and his monks, confirming the initial grant made by Agilulf to Columbanus in 613 and adding land at *alpecella Pennice* at the request of Theodelinda (*domna et genitrix nostra Theodelinda, gloriosissima regina*). However, like all the diplomas of Lombard kings, this document survives only as a late copy (mid-ninth century, made at Bobbio). Diplomatically, this document is among the most problematic. Little weight can be placed on it as an authentic seventh-century text. Nonetheless it remains interesting, if only because it shows that someone at Bobbio in the middle of the ninth century thought of Theodelinda as a benefactress and as 'a most glorious queen'. Historically speaking, the role of the queen as intercessor in charters is well established, and this event certainly could have happened. Theodelinda does not have a role in either of the remaining two charters issued to Bobbio during her lifetime (in 613 and 625-26).\(^\text{26}\) Nor does she appear in Jonas' account of the foundation of Bobbio in his account of the *Life of Columbanus*.\(^\text{27}\)

The so called *Auctarii Havniensis extrema*, the last continuation of Prosper of Aquitaine's chronicle was written around 625, probably in Milan (or possibly in Pavia).\(^\text{28}\) Who wrote it is unknown, but given its likely date, place of production and content, there is a possibility that


\(^\text{28}\) T. Mommsen (ed.), *Proserpi continuatio Havniensis, MGH Auctores Antiquissimi 9*, Berlin, 1891: 266–71, 298–339, especially the so called *Auctarii Havniensis extrema* at 337–39. Mommsen argued (266–67) that this was written in Milan or Pavia in 625 because this is the date of its final entry (Chapter 24, Adaloald's death). The date and location were accepted by Donald Bullough, 'Ethnic History and the Carolingians': 94; and by Roberto Cessi, 'Studi sulle fonti dell' età gotica e longobarda. II "Proserpi continuatio Havniensis"', *Archivio Muratoriano*, vol. 2, 1913–22: 585–64, at 624 argued for a later date of 641 but this has not found general acceptance. Riché quite plausibly suggested that it was written by a Roman notary (*Education and Culture*: 341, n. 207). The earliest manuscripts are eleventh century.
its author was in some way associated with the royal court. It is the first history (if we may dignify it thus) to comment on Theodelinda. She is noticed in Chapters 9, 15 and 24 in the following way.

9. Qui[i.e. Authari] etiam amicitia post cum Francis inita coniugem de Baioariis abductam gloriosissimam Theudelindam reginam, quae non regali tantum iure quantum pietatis affectu Longobardorum gentem enutrivit, sibi matrimonio copulavit.29

15. Agilulfus gloriosissimam Theudelindam reginam sibi matrimonio copulavit.30

24. Mortuo apud Mediolanum Agilulfo Adaluual filius eius cum matre Theudelinda regni curam suscepit regnavitque cum matre annis decem.31

The barest facts of Theodelinda’s life as a wife and mother are recorded here in the terse style typical of the period.32 We are told of her two marriages: the first to Authari being clearly a ‘political’ one arranged by ‘abduction’ (and seemingly a consequence of the amicitia agreement),33 and the second to Agilulf, which is barely commented upon.34 Then we are told of her young son Adaloald with whom she ruled, presumably as queen mother, although it is notable that in Chapter 24, after Agilulf has died, Theodelinda is not addressed as ‘queen’ but simply as Adaloald’s mother. This raises the possibility that, once her husband was dead, Theodelinda was treated with less respect. Otherwise, the author of these entries gives a positive appraisal, alluding to her piety,
her royalty and her title of ‘most glorious queen’ (gloriosissima regina). Roberto Cessi argued that this term was copied by the author, whoever that was, from the now lost Historiola of Secundus of Trento. There is no authentic reason for this assumption, especially as Paul the Deacon who claims to have used Secundus, never applied this adjective to the queen. The title is important partly because it contrasts with the simple use of rex for Authari and Agilulf, but particularly because it establishes clearly that Theodelinda was not simply the king’s wife but a legitimate, respected queen, albeit one who became so by marriage. She was also, if the adjective regalis and the verb regnare are taken literally, a queen who actually ruled. Taking all these points together, it seems likely to me that only an author close to the royal court, which Agilulf and Theodelinda had established in Milan, would have known about the amicitia agreement and called the queen gloriosissima.

Another written text which may be contemporary to Theodelinda’s lifetime is the inscription on a small gilded and enamelled metal strip fixed to the jewelled cover of a gospel book generally believed to be the one sent to the queen by Pope Gregory the Great. Most scholars date this to the early seventh century. It reads: DE DONIS DI OFFERIT/ THEODELENDA REG/GLORIOSISSIMA SCO IOHANNI BAPT/IN BASELECA/QUAM IPSA FVND/IN MODICIA/PROPE PALSVVM. This is an important document in the sequence because, if it was made

35 Cessi, ‘Studi sulle fonti’: 619.
36 Gardiner, ‘Paul the Deacon and Secundus of Trento’.
37 Stafford, Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: 127–30; Nelson, ‘Early medieval rites of queen-making’.
38 An excellent photograph of the cover, with the inscription clearly legible, is found in Paolo Delogu, I Barbari in Italia, Novara, 1985: 44–45 (also reproduced in Capo, Storia dei Longobardi, Plate 12 and Martindale, ‘Theodelinda’: 214). The various precious objects associated with the queen (the famous hen and chicks, the crown and the ampullae) are discussed by Christie, Lombards: 185–86; and Martindale, Theodelinda: 213–18. The inscription is normally dated to Theodelinda’s lifetime without quibble (e.g. R. Conti, Il Tesoro. Guida alla conoscenza del Tesoro del Duomo di Monza, Monza, 1983: 38–39 where it is suggested that the inscription was attached to the cover shortly after this was made—applicato in epoca di poco posteriore, and dated to the turn of the sixth and seventh centuries because of the style of the lettering and the subject matter. Margaret Frazer, ‘Oreficerie altomedievali’, in A. Mombelli [ed.], Il Duomo di Monza, I tesori, Milan, 1989 argues similarly).
39 ‘Concerning the gift which the most glorious queen Theodelinda offered to the basilica of St. John the Baptist which she herself founded in Monza near her palace.’ The transcription given by Martindale, ‘Theodelinda’: 216–18, is not quite accurate.
before Theodelinda died, it is the first record to link her to Monza, as founder of the church of Saint John the Baptist. It also uses the same title for the queen as the Auctarii Havniensis extrema and the Bobbio diploma of 624, gloriosissima, a point to which I shall return.

Theodelinda duly takes her place in the earliest written version of the legend about the origin of the Lombards, the Origo gentis Langobardorum.  

After this they elevated as king Awtarini, the son of Claff, and Authari had as wife Theodelinda, the daughter of Garibald and Walderata of Bavaria. And with Theodelinda came her brother Gundoald, and king Authari made him duke in the civitas of Asti. And Authari ruled seven years. And Acquo [Agilulf] duke of the Thuringians came from Turin; and himself married Queen Theodelinda and he was made king by the Langobardi; and he killed his rebellious dukes, Zangrulf of Verona, Mimolf of the island of St. Julian and Giadulf of Bergamo and many others who had rebelled; and Acquo had a daughter called Gundeperga by Theodelinda. And Acquo ruled 6 years. And after him Aroal ruled twelve years.  

Her appearance is brief and not glorious. The anonymous author records her successive marriages, her family connections and her children. Apart from ignoring Theodelinda's regency for her son (an important omission), this text records essentially the same information as the Continuator of Prosper, in a little more detail. Once again there is no mention of Monza. However, the tone adopted towards Theodelinda is much less positive than the Continuator. For the author of the Origo, Theodelinda is not powerful and does not have any authority, except what is implied by the title regina. In the much later version of the Origo which goes

40 Origo gentis Langobardorum, MGH SRL: 1–6 (reprinted in Claudio Azzara and Stefano Gasparri, Le leggi del Langobardi. Storia, memoria e diritto di un popolo Germanico, Milan, 1992: 1–7 with translation into Italian and commentary on xxiv). It is preserved in three manuscripts only, none earlier than the tenth century. Most scholars agree that this text was written in Grimoald's reign (662–71, laws issued in c. 668), although some would place it slightly later under Perctarit (672–88). Where and by whom it was written is unknown, but its existence in all manuscripts before Rothari's edict makes Pavia a likely place. There are important discussions of the genre by Herwig Wolfram, 'Le genre de l'origo gentis', Reuue Belge de philologie et d'histoire, vol. 68, 1990: 789–801 and 'Origo et religio: Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts', Early Medieval Europe (hereafter EME),3 (1) (1994), pp. 19–38.

41 Origo 6.
under the name *Codex Gothanus*, the story is identical to that presented by the *Origo*, except for the important addition of Adaloald:

‘And King Arioald had a daughter called Gundeperga and a son called Adaloald by Theodelinda. And Agilwald ruled 25 years; Adaloald his son ruled 10 years. Arioald ruled 10 years.’

The main point arising from the *Codex Gothanus*, assuming that it was written in the early ninth century, is that its author did not use Paul the Deacon’s *Historia Langobardorum* to elaborate his picture of Theodelinda but preferred to stick to his model, the *Origo*. Thus, Theodelinda’s image is very low key in the earliest histories written from a Lombard perspective.

An interesting comparison can be made between the *Origo* and *Fredegar* (Book IV, Chapter 34) which is probably slightly earlier than the *Origo*:

*De Agone regi, eius reginam Teudelinde. Ago rex Langobardorum accepit uxorem Grimoaldi et Gundoaldi germanam nomen Teudelindae ex genere Francorum, quem Childebertus habuerat dispensata. Cum eam consilium Brunechilde postposisset, Gundoaldus cum omnibus rebus se cum germanam Teudelende in Aetallam transtulit et Teudelindae matrimonium Agonem tradedit. Gundoaldus de gente nobile Langobardorum accepit uxorem, de qua duos filius habuit his nominibus: Gundeberto et Chairiberto. Ago rex, filius Authario rege, de Theudelindem habuit filium nomen Adoaldo et filiam nomen Gundoberga. Dum Gundoald a Langobardis nimium dilegeretur, factione Agone regi et Teudelindae, eum ipsum iam zelum tenerint, ubi ad ventrem purgandum in faldaone sedebat, sagitta saucius moritur.’

42 Historia Langobardorum Codicis Gothani, MGH SRL: 7-11 (Azzara and Gasparri, *Le leggi dei Longobardi*: 281-89). These authors (p. xxxv), in common with the great majority of scholars, attribute the text to an anonymous Frankish ecclesiast writing around A.D. 810. There is a single eleventh-century manuscript from Mainz.

43 Codex Gothanus 6.

44 Roger Collins, *Fredegar*, London, 1996, suggests that the parameters are 659-714. Most scholars opt for the latter part of the seventh century.

45 Bruno Krusch (ed.), *Chronicarum quae dicuntur Fredegarii scholarstici Libri IV cum continuationibus*, MGH SRM II, Hanover, 1888: 133-34. About King Ago, (and) his queen Theodelinda: ‘Ago King of the Lombards took as wife a sister of Grimoald and Gundoald by the name of Theodelinda of the Frankish people, whom Childebert had been betrothed to. When he had put her aside with the advice of Brunechild, Gundoald transferred to Italy with all his things and his sister Theodelinda and married Theodelinda to Ago. Gundoald took as wife [a woman] of the noble Lombard people, and by her he had two sons with these names: Gundebert and Chairibert. King Ago, son of King Authari [a mistake], had by Theodelinda a son called Adoald and a daughter named Gundoberga. Since Gundoald was too popular with the Lombards, Ago and Theodelinda, already suspicious, caused him to be shot with an arrow while he was relieving nature. Thus he died.’ (my translation, based on J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of Fredegar*, Oxford, 1960: 22). Discussed by Collins, *Fredegar*: 89 n. 48.
Fredegar's account is interesting as an early sustained narrative about Theodelinda which was not written for a Lombard audience. Scholars have commented chiefly on the author's muddled facts and his unique reference to Brunhild breaking off Theodelinda's engagement to Childebert. His representation of Theodelinda is equally interesting. In contrast to the Auctarii Havniensis extrema she does not rule actively, although she is again designated as queen. Further, from her conspiracy to murder Gundoald (also a claim unique to Fredegar), she does not 'do' anything apart from marrying and giving birth. Perhaps Fredegar could not think of Theodelinda as an independent agent?

What of other Lombard women recorded in these three historical texts? There are few others in the Continuation of Prosper, apart from a brief notice of Rosemund who poisoned her husband, King Alboin. The Origo/Codex Gothanus has rather more to say about other Lombard women. Gambara, a legendary figure, appears right at the start of the Lombard 'saga' both as a ruler and as a prophetess. Waccho, Theodelinda's ancestor had three wives from three different ethnic groups: Ranegunda (Thuringian), Austrigusa (Gepid) and Salinga (Heruli). Their marital histories are examined briefly. In Chapter 5 there is the famous story of Rosemund. The version in the Codex Gothanus is rather more elaborate than the Origo's, and may possibly show the influence of Paul the...
Deacon's version. This author adds a new character, Queen Suffia (Suffia regina, the Byzantine empress Sophia, wife of Justin II), who is the only woman besides Theodelinda to be called a queen in any of these texts. This is important because it highlights the fact that Theodelinda, a Bavarian, was the first woman to be accepted in all our sources as queen of the Lombards (although she is only termed regina not regina Longobardorum). Is the author of the Codex Gothanus making an indirect comparison between Theodelinda's 'queenship' and that of Sophia? Did he see Theodelinda as a Byzantine figure?

This is an avenue worth exploring in the light of the Byzantine (or Roman) customs adopted at Agilulf and Theodelinda's court. During Agilulf's rule, a period of peace with the Byzantine empire allowed the Lombard monarchy to consolidate itself. Contact with the Roman Empire seems to have encouraged Lombard rulers to imitate them. Adaloald, Agilulf's son, was elevated to the kingship not in a church but in a circus at Milan, in a version of the imperial adventus ceremony in front of Frankish ambassadors. McCormick has detected Roman imperial imagery on the so-called 'Visor of Agilulf'. There is also


Chris Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, Basingstoke, 1981: 31-35.

Michael McCormick (Eternal Victory: 292) argues that the lamina (illustrated in Capo, Storia del Longobardi, Figs. 10-11) is the visor of a helmet and that the scene represents the king's victory, set in the Roman/Byzantine tradition. It is the earliest known portrait of a Germanic king seated on a throne. The inscription on it reads: DN/AG/IL/VT/L/F. REGI. VICTVRIA.
Aglulf's adoption of Roman titles such as *Flavius* and *rex gloriosissimus*.\(^{58}\) The diplomatic dealings with the papacy were also framed by Roman tradition. Once set in this context, it is no longer surprising that texts in the quintessentially Roman genres of the annal, inscription and the charter term Theodelinda as *regina gloriosissima*. Furthermore, in Byzantium at the very same period, empresses regularly exercised decisive choice in the matter of the succession, by selecting another consort to share the throne . . . .\(^{59}\) It will be noticed that Theodelinda does not in fact choose Agilulf as her husband in any of these texts; if anything he chooses her. As we shall see, it is only with Paul the Deacon that this interpretation of their marriage appears.

The amount of information which these various texts present about Theodelinda is obviously very limited. Even so I would suggest that there seem to have been two slightly different versions of her 'story' in circulation. The first was the very basic, unelaborated one represented by the *Origo*, Fredegar and the *Codex Gothanus* which concentrates simply on her marriages, her blood relations and her children. It is sufficient to allow us to construct her family tree without much difficulty.\(^{60}\) These writers did not romanticise Theodelinda, although the treatment of Gambara and Rosemund demonstrates that they were capable of such an approach. The second version, evident in the *Auctarii Havniensis extrema*, the Bobbio diploma of 624 and the Monza inscription, was slightly more expansive and more positive in its assessment of the *regina gloriosissima*. It also represented the development of a genuinely local tradition at Milan and Monza, what we might regard as a textual community in miniature.\(^{61}\) However, these two hypothetical 'traditions' may be nothing more than a historian's fanciful construction because the *Auctarii Havniensis extrema*, although very probably written in Milan, surprisingly does not associate Theodelinda with


\(^{59}\) Judith Herrin, 'In Search of Byzantine Women', in Averil Cameron and Amelie Kurht (eds), *In Search of Byzantine Women*, London, 1983: 167–89 at 184 (where the comparison with Theodelinda is made).

\(^{60}\) Hodgkin, *Italy and Her Invaders*, vol. 5: 282 and Wood, *The Merovingian Kingdoms*: 166.

Monza. Only the inscription makes this association before Paul the Deacon does. More interesting perhaps are the silences, the most obvious of which is religion. There is nothing in the histories about Theodelinda's relations with popes and bishops, or the 'exile' in Genoa, or her missionary efforts at conversion, precisely those parts of her story which later writers picked up on. Therefore, they present a very different view of Theodelinda to that of Pope Gregory's, whose letters must have been unknown to our various authors, one which supports Wickham's argument that the Lombards developed a 'resolutely secular political system'.

Paul the Deacon

The work of Paul the Deacon, whose mother was also called Theodelinda, is the main written source of information about our queen. His Historia Langobardorum, rather than the texts just examined, became the work most used by later writers when they wanted to find out about her. Although many royal women figure in Paul's text, as in the histories of Gregory of Tours and Bede, Theodelinda easily dominates over all the others, both in the amount of space devoted to her and in the importance attributed to her actions. She first appears in Book III.30 where Paul reproduces the basic facts concerning Theodelinda's flight to Italy and her arranged marriage to Authari as reported in the Auctarii Havniensis extrema 9 and Origo 6. However, he greatly elaborates these basic facts, moulding them into a dramatic episode. He begins with a romantic story of the couple's first meeting. Authari travels in disguise to the Bavarian king, where he meets Theodelinda, who is very beautiful (eleganti forma). She offers wine to the Lombard guests and Authari, still in disguise, touches her on the nose and lips. Theodelinda, blushing, tells her nurse who realises that the man who dared to touch her in this way must be the king. In this section Paul brings out Theodelinda's physicality (her beauty and ability to blush) and her passivity (her

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63 Wickham, Early Medieval Italy: 36 arguing against Bognetti.
64 HL IV. 37 (Theodelinda was not a very common Lombard name, although another appears in a charter of A.D. 714 married to Senator of Pavia: CDL III 18). For the Historia Langobardorum see n. 9.
66 Stafford, Queens, Concubines, Dowagers: 33 on the wooing of kings.
marriage is arranged by her father). In the second part of the chapter, Theodelinda and her brother flee to Italy as the result of a Frankish attack on the Bavarians. They meet Authari near Verona and spend the 15th of May celebrating the marriage on the field of Sardi. Finally, Paul has a servant prophesise that Theodelinda will eventually marry Agilulf. Where Paul got his information from for this important chapter has been much discussed. In my view it is so different from the sources already examined that he probably created it from the terse sources he had at his disposal.

A few chapters later Authari is dead (poisoned by someone unknown, Paul says slyly). Theodelinda remarries:

Regina vero Theodelinda quia satis placebat Langobardis, permiserunt eam in regia consistere dignitatem, suadentes et, ut sibi quen ipsa voluisset ex omnibus Langobardis virum eligeret, talem scilicet qui regnum regere utiliter possit. Illa vero consilium cum prudentibus habens, Agilulfum ducem Taurinatum et sibi virum et Langobardorum genti regem elegit.

Theodelinda therefore chooses the new king Agilulf, Duke of Turin, although she takes advice from the wise before doing so. Then, in a story which is the reverse of Authari's encounter with the queen, Theodelinda summons Agilulf to a meeting at Lomello. Again she offers wine, but this time the recipient behaves with honour and the queen takes the initiative, shamelessly inviting Agilulf to kiss her on the lips. Waitz pointed out disapprovingly that this whole section was an invention.

67 Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 5: 239.
68 Capo (Storia del Longobardi: 484–85) argues convincingly that Paul could not have taken the story of their meeting from Secundus, but less convincingly that it does have a genuine core in 'una tradizione dell'ambiente regio'.
69 HL III. 35, veneno, ut tradunt. Paul may be implicitly comparing Theodelinda with Rosemund's actions in Book II.
70 Indeed the Lombards allowed Queen Theodelinda, since she pleased them a great deal, to remain in the royal dignity, and they invited her to choose from all the Lombards whoever she wanted to marry, and whoever it was, was able to rule the kingdom. She, having taken advice from the wise, took as husband Agilulf, Duke of Turin, and the Lombard people elected him king.
71 This interpretation was taken over by Andrew of Bergamo, writing a continuation of HL around 877 (MGH SRL): 'The Langobards by common consent allowed Theodelinda to remain as their queen, to take whoever she wished as husband that they might raise him as king'. Stafford, Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: 49 argues that Theodelinda was merely imitating Merovingian practice.
of Paul’s. Hodgkin took him to task, arguing that the story could be true. Waitz was surely right as the story is not in any of Paul’s known sources and the fact that the second encounter is an exact reversal of the first suggests that Paul, as Walter Goffart has argued, knew precisely what he was doing in literary terms.

Large parts of Book IV are devoted to Theodelinda. According to Paul, Gregory the Great sent a copy of his Dialogues to the queen. Once more this is a statement unique to Paul, but if Gregory really did this, the queen must have been shocked at the extremely negative tone that Gregory took towards the Lombards in his book. As a result of Theodelinda’s links with Gregory, she managed to convert Agilulf to Catholicism and to persuade him to make generous donations to the church. At least this is Paul’s account. All other sources suggest that Agilulf remained Arian. Paul presents Theodelinda as having a great deal of influence over her husband, who makes peace with the Romans because of her. This section concludes with the direct quotation of two of Gregory’s (surviving) letters, one to Theodelinda, the other to Agilulf. Book IV 5–9 is thus very important in establishing the historical importance of Theodelinda’s relationship with Gregory the Great which the earlier historical texts completely ignore. Yet this is surely done to praise Gregory as much as Theodelinda.

In the second part of Book IV, Paul clearly establishes Theodelinda’s connection with the church of Monza, a link which had been completely

72 MGH SRL 114, n. 1.
73 Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 5: 283: ‘So runs the Saga of Theudelinda and Agilulf in the pages of Paulus. Modern criticism, which would rob history of every touch of poetry, suggests doubts as to the accuracy of the story; but there seems no reason why it should not be strictly true’.
74 HL IV. 5, Hos igitur libros praefatus papa Theudelindae reginae direxit, quam sciebat utique et Christi fidei deditam et in bonis actibus esse praecipuam (‘The same pope sent these books to Queen Theodelinda, whom he knew to be fully dedicated to the faith of Christ and most assiduous in doing good works’). Valerie Flint in The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe, Oxford, 1991: 377 suggests that this was a phylacterium for Theodelinda.
75 Markus comments on this aspect of the Dialogues (Gregory the Great: 99).
76 HL IV. 6. Goffart, Narrators of Barbarian History: 399 refers to ‘Theodelinda’s entreaties’.
77 HL IV. 8.
78 Reg. Ep. IX 43.
79 Reg. Ep. IX 42.
80 Goffart, Narrators of Barbarian History: 400.
ignored by earlier writers (with the exception of the author of the inscription on the gospel cover). Paul writes that the queen founded and endowed a basilica dedicated to John the Baptist and then built a palace there (where Theodoric had once done the same). Paul claims that Theodelinda gave her church many gold and silver objects and generous donations of land: *multisque ornamentis auri argentique decoravit praediisque sufficienter ditavit* ('she endowed it with many gold and silver ornaments and she gave it much land'). In several manuscripts (F2, F*2 and F2* all written at Monza or Milan) there are two later additions which give evidence of strong local interest in Theodelinda. The reference to Theodelinda as *regina gloriosissima* in the second of these additions suggests a possible link with the inscription on the gospel cover (as does the phrase *de dono Dei*). Paul's attribution of the construction of a *palatium* to Theodelinda is another piece of information for which the inscription provides the only parallel.

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83 *MGH SRL*: 123–24 (and reprinted by Capo, *Storia dei Longobardi*: 198–99 with discussion at 500–1). Discussed by Rossetti, *Cologno Monzese*: 58 n. 76 and Pohl, *'Paulus Diaconus'*: 391. The three manuscripts were all written in Monza in the eleventh century (although they appear to derive from earlier examples probably from before the tenth century). The first addition reads: [Theodelinda built the basilica of John the Baptist in Monza] for herself, for her husband, for her sons, daughters, and for all the Lombards in Italy, so that the same Saint John should intercede for all the Lombards with the Lord, and they made gifts, in complete agreement, all the great Lombards, together with their king and Queen Theodelinda, and they said: 'If Saint John intercedes for us with our Lord Jesus Christ, we all unanimously promise to him that every year, on the day of his birth, that is the twenty fourth of June, we shall send to his oratory honorable offerings from our own possessions, so that by his intercession we shall obtain the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, in war as in whatever place we go to.' And from that day in all of their acts they invoked Saint John, because he helped them in respect of our Lord Jesus Christ, and so they remained and were victors over all their opponents. The second reads as follows: "she placed many families and possessions under the charge of this church, in honour of Saint John the Baptist." Here is the text of the document recording Theodelinda's gift: 'The most glorious queen Theodelinda (*gloriosissima Theodelinda regina*) together with her son, King Adaloald, made an offering to Saint John, her patron, from her possessions given by God (*de dono Dei*) and from her dotal lands by this charter of donation, written in the presence of her relatives. If anyone at any time should alter this donation made freely by her, he should be damned on the Day of Judgement together with Judas the traitor". The disposition was like this: 'No one, in any way, should interfere with the properties of Saint John, excepting the priests who serve there day and night, like male and female domestics, subject to the church. They must live in common.'
He implies that he had visited the building as he describes the pictures he saw on the walls (de Langobardorum gestis) in some detail. The fact that Paul took the trouble to go to Monza to see these images is important evidence of his methods of research (unless, of course, he was copying Secundus here as many scholars think). However, even more interesting, in the light of recent work about royal women as commissioners of history, is the fact that Theodelinda may have decorated her palace (if Paul’s account is true) with scenes from the Lombard past. Further, as the scenes represented clothed figures very precisely it may be that their closest parallels are Byzantine mosaics, such as the famous ones of Justinian and Theodora at Ravenna. Was Theodelinda once again behaving in a Roman manner? Paul also notes at the end of this section that Theodelinda’s son Adaloald was born in this palace (in 602) and baptised as a Catholic, in the church of Saint John the Baptist, by Secundus of Trento on 7 April 603.

Paul makes much less of Theodelinda in the remainder of his history. After Agilulf had died, Theodelinda ruled the kingdom jointly with their son Adaloald: relicto in regno filio suo Adaloald admodum puerum cum Teudelinda matre (he left in [charge of] the kingdom his son Adaloald just a boy with his mother Theodelinda).

Paul has just two sentences more in this chapter about their joint rule: Sub his ecclesiae restauratae sunt et multae dationes per loca venerabilia largitae. Sed dum Adaloald eversa mente insaniret, postquam cum matre decem regnaverat annis, de regno eiectus est, et a Longobardis in eius loco Arioald substitutus est ('Under them churches were restored and many gifts made to holy places. But when Adaloald went insane, after he had ruled ten years with his mother, was again by Longobards in his place Arioald substituted')

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84 Perhaps he even saw the gospel cover with its inscription on this occasion?
86 Christie, The Lombards: 42-43 argues that these pictures were commissioned c. 600.
88 HL IV. 25 and 27; Stafford, Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: 89.
89 In November 615 or May 616.
90 HL IV. 41 (very similar to Auctarii Havniensis extrema 24).
he was ejected from the kingdom, and Arloald was substituted by the Lombards in his place'). Then there follows a brief notice of Columbanus and his foundation at Bobbio, connected vaguely (and wrongly) to Adaloald’s time.

Theodelinda’s last named appearance in Paul’s history comes in Book IV.47 where he notes that her daughter Gundeperga, following the example of her mother, built a church in Pavia dedicated to Saint John the Baptist. Paul tells us that Gundeperga was buried in this church (together with her husband Rodoald). But there is no such notice for Theodelinda, and no eulogy to remember her by. Historians have alighted on this fact and used it to suggest that Paul regarded her and her Bavarian family coolly. There is no doubt some truth in this but it would be wrong to overlook the fact that the Bavarian Theodelinda is undoubtedly the most dominant woman in Paul’s entire text. He does mention other women. In Book I he tells much the same story as the Origo, with Gambara appearing as the prudent mother of the Lombard people and the three wives of Waccho turning up again, although he does elaborate the early history of his people to include encounters with Amazons and with Rumetruda, one of several female regicides in his work. The book ends with the marriage of Alboin and Rosemund. She is the only woman to find a place in Book II and is presented very negatively. Paul leaves us in no doubt that this vengeful woman, who used sex to lure several men to their deaths, was wicked. There is a long story about the horrific rape of the treacherous Romilda, wife of Duke Gisulf of Friuli, and of her virtuous daughters. Gisa,

91 Wickham, Early Medieval Italy: 36 points out that it is possible that Adaloald really did go mad; Stafford, Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: 161–62.
92 Goffart, Narrators of Barbarian History: 403.
93 J-C. Picard, Le Souvenir des Évêques. Sépultures, listes épiscopales et culte des évêques en Italie du Nord des origines au Xe siècle, Rome, 1988: 204 on the possible location of this church (and on the possibility that it may not have existed at all).
95 As pointed out by Goffart, The Narrators of Barbarian History: 404 and Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders, vol. 6: 166–67.
96 Goffart, Narrators of Barbarian History: 404; Christie, The Lombards: 187.
97 HL I. 3, I. 7, I. 8 (Gambara) and I.21 (Waccho’s wives).
99 Ibid., I. 27.
100 Ibid., II. 27, II. 28.
101 Ibid., IV. 37. Paul approves of Romilda’s fate.
daughter of Romuald is taken hostage in V.8. Rodelinda builds a church in Pavia. The beautiful Theodota is banished to a nunnery after an affair with King Cuninopert. Theuderata builds a convent in Benevento. Others include Theodorada and Aurora, Ratperga, wife of King Liutprand, and Gumperga and Ranigunda, wives of Romaal. Yet each of these is a shadowy figure, paling before Theodelinda. Even though Paul never uses gloriosissima with reference to Theodelinda, simply designating her regina without any complimentary adjective, it is quite clear that he regarded her as a model queen. The question we now have to answer is why.

Regina Gloriosissima

Casting our minds back to earlier accounts of Theodelinda’s history we can now appreciate the extent to which Paul was able to use his literary talents to elaborate the basic story. In these circumstances it may be unwise to accept ‘his’ Theodelinda unthinkingly as a real figure, as so many historians have done. However, I would not wish to dismiss Paul without making some attempt to verify his picture of the queen. I begin with one of his most startling statements: that Theodelinda, rather than her husband King Agilulf, built a palace at Monza. It startles because there was no tradition in Italy, as far as I can tell, of women building palaces. Nor did any later Lombard queen build a palace. Aristocratic women in the Roman West and East alike did commission buildings, mostly churches and other public monuments. Gallia Placidia’s well known activities in Ravenna in the earlier fifth century demonstrate how impressive such buildings could

102 Ibid., V. 34.
103 Ibid., V. 37.
104 Ibid., VI. 1.
105 Ibid., VI. 22.
106 Ibid., VI. 26.
107 Ibid., VI. 43. Paul comments that they had only one daughter.
108 Ibid., VI. 50.
109 A point noted by Pizarro, Writing Ravenna: 131.
111 Ward-Perkins, From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages: 157–78.
112 Leslie Brubaker, ‘Memories of Helena: Patterns in Imperial Female Matronage in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries’, in James, Women, Men and Eunuchs: 52–75, at 53.
be, and there is plenty of evidence from Rome at the same period to show that she was not alone.\textsuperscript{113} Often husbands and wives made joint endowments. When contextualised in this way, Paul's attribution of the Monza palace to Theodelinda is quite plausible and once again seems to be an act inspired by Roman practice.

Several early sources hint at Theodelinda's patronage of churches as we have seen. She appears to have been the first Lombard queen to do this, and to have started something akin to a trend.\textsuperscript{114} Although her most important project was the church at Monza, there are a host of other churches credited to Theodelinda's initiative in sources that come much later, what many scholars term as 'traditional' attributions. A typical example is the church of San Guilliano in Cologno Monzese, a village near Monza.\textsuperscript{115} As late as 1567 when Carlo Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, made a pastoral visit to the church, the locals told him, '... that the aforementioned church was built by Queen Theodoina [sic] who endowed it with a great territory and many valuables'.\textsuperscript{116} Other attributions arising from late evidence are Sant Anna in Asti, San Pietro in Cremella (both nunneries), San Dalmazzo in Pedona,\textsuperscript{117} San Simpliciano in Milan, the baptistry of Santa Maria in Brescia and the parish church of Pontirolo.\textsuperscript{118} There is also some suggestion that she may have been involved with a fortification at Venzone.\textsuperscript{119} The evidence for these attributions is so late that the compromise position adopted by Gisella Cantino-Wataghin—that these 'legends' may transmit some 'authentic' information—is not convincing because we simply cannot know the

\textsuperscript{113} Ward-Perkins, \textit{From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages}: 239-40.

\textsuperscript{114} Gundeperga (San Giovanni Battista, Pavia); Rodelinda (Santa Maria ad Perticas in Pavia, c. 672); Santa Maria Theodota in Pavia; Ansa (San Salvatore, Brescia); Manigonda (Santa Maria, Cairate).

\textsuperscript{115} There was also a church dedicated to Saint Gregory here, the only such dedication in the diocese of Milan, which depended on San Giuliano (G. Vigotti, \textit{La diocesi di Milano alla fine del secolo XIII. Chiese cittadine e pievi forensi nel 'Liber sanctorum' di Goffredo da Bussero}, Rome, 1974: 265). This is interesting in light of the correspondence between Gregory the Great and Theodelinda.

\textsuperscript{116} \textit{Hominis Coloniae dixerunt dictam ecclesiam fuisset edificatum a Regina Theodoina quae eam dotavit cum magno território et multis praedis} (Rossetti, \textit{Cologno Monzese}: 56 n. 29).


\textsuperscript{118} Vigotti, \textit{La diocesi di Milano}: 294.

\textsuperscript{119} Christie, \textit{The Lombards}: 229.
truth. All these attributions do for Theodelinda is to reiterate the extent of her posthumous repute.

Theodelinda's involvement in building churches can be compared with the activities of Radegund at Poitiers, Clotild and Ingitrude at Tours (and Caesaria at Arles). The motivation for Theodelinda's actions may have been different from those of these Merovingian queens, who founded nunneries and then retired into them. Theodelinda did not, as far as we can know given the poor documentation for the years 616–28, retire into a nunnery after Agilulf died, or even after her son Adaloald died, and no source ever hints that she did or indeed should have done so. This may come as a surprise, given her supposed religious sympathies, but I would suggest that we should be careful in attributing abnormal piety to her, as the evidence for this attitude comes solely from clerical writers. The image of a pious Theodelinda is essentially a construction of Gregory the Great's, paralleled by the similar cases of Berta and Brunhild. Gregory had everything to gain from flattering the queen, who nevertheless retained her schismatic position until the end of her life. Paul the Deacon, biographer of Gregory, simply took over this image and embellished it with some images of his own.

Other sources, as we have seen, ignored or played down her religious activities.

The evidence which has survived about women's lives in sixth- and seventh-century Italy is very limited. Scholars have concentrated overwhelmingly, and understandably, on the relatively rich and largely hagiographical Frankish material. Lombard women, even queens, have

122 Andrew of Begamo, one of Paul's later readers, began his historiola with an extended summary of the Historia Langobardorum. He duly reports three facts about Theodelinda: her marriage to Authari; her building of Saint John the Baptist's in Monza; and her marriage to Agilulf. But it is his offhand remark that she was 'a holy and most noble woman' (sancta et nobilissima), a phrase of his own rather than Paul's that sticks in my mind because it raises the possibility that Theodelinda might have become a saint like so many of her Merovingian contemporaries.
been relatively neglected.\textsuperscript{124} I have argued that the Lombard state was a highly oppressive one, especially in its dealings with women: by the end of the seventh century the evidence of Rothari's and Grimoald's laws suggests that a lot of constraint was placed on the freedom of action possessed by women, seen most explicitly in their total exclusion from all law-making processes.\textsuperscript{125} This subordinate position for women was based on very old attitudes about their sinfulness, especially in sexual matters.\textsuperscript{126} In his recounting of Rosemund's tale, the clerical author of the \textit{Codex Gothanus} made this explicit: \textit{ut per femineum primum exordium accidit mala suasio peccati, inde usque ad presentem diem feminalis tenet consuetudo peccandi} ('just as the first introduction of sin was brought about by the evil persuasion of woman and so up to the present day it is customary for women to sin').\textsuperscript{127} The sexual behaviour of other, perhaps even a majority of Lombard queens, was criticised heavily in the surviving narrative sources which mention queens and princesses. Theodelinda's sexual morality was never brought into question in any source before Boccaccio (as far as I know). It is a fact which supports the main argument advanced here that the view of Theodelinda which has prevailed even into modern times is a clerical one constructed by Paul the Deacon at the end of the eighth century using Gregory's letters and Secundus' lost \textit{historiola}. In many respects this carefully worked out and highly gendered image of the pious, missionary queen says more about Paul as a writer than it does about Theodelinda as a real historical figure, and in this respect my research may seem merely to support Goffart's view of the \textit{Historia Langobardorum} as being more of a narrative than record.\textsuperscript{128} However, although Paul certainly added material from sources we are ignorant of, he seems, in the

\textsuperscript{124} For example, Gabriele Zanella's discussion of royal power in Paul the Deacon 'La legittimazione del potere regale nelle 'storie' di Gregorio di Tours e Paolo Diacono', \textit{Studi Medievali}, vol. 31/1, 1990) has only a single paragraph on queenship (at 75–76). R. Schneider, \textit{Königswahl und Königserhebung Frühmittelalter: Untersuchungen zur Herrschaftsnachfolge bei den Langobarden und Merowingen}, Stuttgart, 1972, is an important exception.

\textsuperscript{125} Ross Balzaretti, 'These are Things that Men Do, Not Women'.

\textsuperscript{126} Clark, \textit{Women in Late Antiquity, passim}; and most recently Smith, 'Gender and Ideology'.

\textsuperscript{127} \textit{Codex Gothanus} 5.

case of Theodelinda, to have reported the most important facts from earlier accounts quite fairly.

Taking all the early medieval evidence together can we say that Theodelinda really was 'a most glorious queen'? She did not manage to control the transmission of her image to posterity even though she may have been well educated. Nevertheless, she is certainly the woman who is documented by the widest range of textual types from the entire Lombard period, which suggests that her importance was quite widely recognised by her contemporaries. She achieved a position of real authority in a world almost entirely controlled by men. It has become common to suggest that women achieved positions of power at this period by 'transcending' their sex. I would argue that Theodelinda did not do this because she could not have gained authority by acting as a man. Kings did not behave like queens and vice versa. Kings were never regents for their sons for obvious reasons; they were warriors rather than peacemakers and seventh-century Lombard kings were not exactly staunch Christians. Theodelinda was queen of the Lombards for 38 years (590–628).\(^{129}\) She had outlived three kings, her two husbands and her son; only her daughter Gundeperga survived her to continue the 'Bavarian' dynasty and imitate her as a builder. This long reign inevitably makes Theodelinda seem like an atypical seventh-century queen, and simple longevity did contribute a lot to her success. Yet we must not exaggerate her power to shape events. Certain spheres of rule were entirely closed to her because she was female, particularly law-making and the issuing of charters, both as yet undeveloped in the Lombard state but soon to be the preserve of kings and their male advisers. These, however, were things for the future. Theodelinda's life may not have been quite as glorious as later writers would have liked it to be and it may not have been as thoroughly pious as Gregory and Paul thought it was, but it was about as glorious as was possible in Lombard Italy around 600.

\(^{129}\) Various dates have been advanced for her death, the most commonly accepted being 22 February 628 (or 627).