IBRĀHĪM IBN YA’QŪB AṬ-ṬURTŪŠĪ IN PAVIA: THE ‘REGISOLE’ (A RE-READING)

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Ibrāhīm ibn Ya’qūb aṭ-Ṭurtūšī (fl. 960s) has long been identified as one of the, albeit indirectly used, sources of Ibn ‘Abd al-Mun‘im al-Ḥimyarī’s geographical dictionary, Kitāb ar-rawḍ al-mi’tār, compiled in 1461. Al-Ḥimyarī’s ‘Italian’ entries – without prejudice to others – present textual composites of clearly heterogeneous provenance, from which at times a noticeably factual, detail-rich strand can be described. Most recently, Giuseppe Mandalà argued for their attribution to Ibrāhīm (Mandalà 2014: 351–361). In a conference paper of 2017, written before I became aware of Mandalà’s study, I reached the same conclusion about a number of al-Ḥimyarī’s anonymous quotations concerning places in Italy.

1 Ibrāhīm’s entry on Pavia

In the hope of refining my earlier argument, I here want to return to al-Ḥimyarī’s, or rather his predecessor Ibrāhīm’s, entry on Pavia. It may not be out of order to preface the discussion to follow with al-Ḥimyarī’s text (ar-Rawḍ, 115b:-11–116a:6):

Pavia—it is the ‘principal’ of the cities of Longobardia (qā’idat mudun Lunqubardiya), a city built of stone, brick, and lime-mortar, very big, with a large population; within it water-springs gush forth. It lies on a river which joins another river half a mile below it. In this city there is a beautiful ‘castle’ (qaṣr), at the gate of which the copper image of a rider (ṣūrat fāris) stands, of exceeding bulk—in ancient times the king of Constantinople sent it to the country of Longobardia. In this town (balda), there are three hundred jurists, Muslims (faqīh min al-muslimīn), and before them the people of Longobardia argue their suits against each other; they also settle the bills of their purchases and sales for them. In [the town] live rich Muslim merchants (min al-muslimīn

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2 Richter-Bernburg 2019b (in manuscript submitted to the editor[s] in June 2017).
3 The Arabic grapheme lmbd has here been rendered in historicizing fashion in order to distance it from modern Lombardy.
the Arabic grapheme of the town’s name in al-Ṭūṭrūṣ, the damage inflicted cannot have been too bad); [Adalberti] Continuatio Reginonis, 171:11f.

Typically, Ibrāhīm takes note of the city’s prevalent building materials and water supply. The fact that a ‘beautiful castle’ (qaṣr ḥasan), which he undoubtedly took to be the seat of the town’s lord or governor, was located intra muros also drew his attention. His qualification of the structure as ‘beautiful’ does not permit any inference as to whether or not he had access to its interior. Similarly, Ibrāhīm’s apparent silence regarding the respective venues of his audiences with the eponymous Ottonian Otto (I) (r. 936–973) in Merseburg – assuming this was the place instead of Magdeburg – and Rome may just result from the vagaries of transmission. As for Pavia, he cannot serve as witness pro or con on Berengar II’s alleged demolition of the palace before his evacuation of the city in 961. However, as Mandalà has aptly emphasised, the salient point in Ibrāhīm’s otherwise fairly unexceptional account is his mention of a monumental equestrian bronze before the castle gate. The comment that Ibrāhīm adds on the statue’s provenance cannot but reproduce a local tradition. After all, his position was that of a disinterested outsider who merely passed on what he heard, and which can thus be paraphrased: in times of old, an East Roman emperor

4 However, pace Adalgisa De Simone and in her wake, by way of hypothesis, Mandalà 2014: 357, n. 141, the Arabic grapheme of the town’s name in al-Ḥīmyārī, bwnyh, cannot, considering its rasm (its undotted ‘skeleton’), simply be approximated to the rasm of the transmitted bnbn for Benevento. Textual corruption of foreign names in al-Ḥīmyārī is graphically illustrated by the two variant renditions of ‘Glemona’; in the pertinent lemma, it adequately figures as ḍlmwnh, whereas in the lemma ‘nnqwl’ḥ (Aquileia), it is distorted to ḍlmyn (ar-Rawḍ, 429a:26 and 39b:23). As for an identification of Ibrāhīm’s subject as Benevento, it founders on topographical incongruities. Also, the Beneventan equestrian statue, only vaguely localisable, was of marble instead of the Pavian bronze; Rotili 2017: 250a. Further, Mandalà or his sources blithely gloss over Benevento’s unsettled conditions in the 9th century – at that a full hundred years before Ibrāhīm’s travel – in order to accommodate his observations on the flourishing legal profession and commercial activity; cf. Richter 2012. However, in a later passage Mandalà too athetizes as pia fraus the dual qualifier mina l-muslimin of jurists and merchants; Mandalà 2014: 361.

5 This is not to imply that the unique position among geographical authors which Ibrāhīm does occupy (as I hope to show elsewhere) derived from his observations of these basic features of urban settlements; on al-Muqaddasī and Nāṣer-e Ḥosrow, to name just two representative writers, cf. Richter-Bernburg 2019a.

6 [Otto…] palatium a Berengario destructum reaedificare praecepit (as noted by others, the damage inflicted cannot have been too bad); [Adalberti] Continuatio Reginonis, 171:11f.

7 Cf. Mandalà 2014: 360: “una tradizione, una diceria più o meno locale”.

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\(tuğğar ağniyā\), whose number exceeds four hundred; they own magnificent buildings and highly profitable merchandise (matāğir qaawiyya). Therefore the merchants and pilgrims headed for Rome just cannot bypass Pavia.

The points dealt with in my previous study (Richter-Bernburg 2019b), beginning with the identification of the place as Pavia, will not be taken up again, notwithstanding some supplementary comments. Instead, my focus will be trained on the equestrian bronze.
had the statue transported to Longobardia. Regardless of the final verdict – if such can be achieved at all – on this piece of Pavian urban lore, it articulates a collective perception of the actual ‘classical’ statue.

2 Ibrāhīm on Pavia’s equestrian bronze (‘the Regisole’)

2.1 The import of his testimony

Before continuing, I may be permitted to restate the basic assumption of my earlier study: on the threshold of the Ottonian period, Ibrāhīm’s witness unequivocally attests the presence of Pavia’s latterly much-treasured Regisole. If, taking the position of devil’s advocate, the identification of ‘Ibrāhīm’s statue’ as the Regisole were rejected, that would effectively cast aside the cumulative evidence of the entire textual tradition. Also, it would mean that an unknown ‘cousin’ of the Regisole had, as it were, a cameo appearance in Ibrāhīm’s account, vanishing without a trace just before a ‘successor’, of well-nigh identical pedigree, was reported to have entered the scene. Instead of simplifying matters, the task of explanation would be gratuitously redoubled, leaving aside for the moment all consideration of historical verisimilitude once two instead of one, monumental Roman bronzes had to be accounted for. Thus the present argument will proceed on the assumption of the two statues’ identity.


9 In 1551, Girolamo Scaruffo[li], vicarius at the Pavian episcopal court, emphasises the statue’s having stood – and being accorded almost sacred honour – before the cathedral for more than five hundred years; for text and discussion see Saletti 1997: 145–147 and 25 (on the basis of Saletti, Scaruffi’s text has also been made available online through the “Census of antique works of art and architecture known in the Renaissance [CensusID: 235617]” [accessed 06 January 2020 at http://census.bbaw.de/index]). While the sources or authorities on which Scaruffi based his dating are not known, he deserves credence as witness to an urban tradition which Saletti suggestively relates to the Pavians’ destruction of the royal-imperial palatium in 1024 (Saletti 1997: 31). Up to this point, Saletti’s reasoning appears persuasive; moreover, it is not contingent on his erroneous interpretation of the oft-quoted placitum (reign of Berengar I, 906–911) that was issued in the major portico of the palace, the premises called ‘underneath Theodoric’ (Saletti 1997: 26; see Reg. Imp. I, 3, 2:221, no. 1250, and cf. Richter-Bernburg 2019b: 246 with n. 36): reference is to the mosaic recorded by Agnellus Ravennas, Liber Pontificalis (see below, fn. 12), and which decorated an upper wall of the, likely apsidal, dais in a ceremonial hall on the piano nobile. Clearly, our reading of the placitum does not agree with Mandalà’s, who localises the Regisole in the palace courtyard; Mandalà 2014: 359.
Pavian collective memory of the Regisole, as transmitted by Ibrāhīm, is a bundle of contradictions if measured against historical reality or plausibility. Admittedly, such a realistic construal of the text under discussion as a, however distorted, reference to actual history might be challenged as fundamentally mistaken. What has just been termed a bundle of contradictions, may be nothing more than a groping attempt to make sense of something wondrous and well-nigh inexplicable – which would also seem to imply the absence of epigraphic evidence; most likely no inscription on the statue base recorded its erection. The text recombines fragments from some vague historical memory into a semblance of plausibility – plausibility by period standards, not by those of contemporary readers. At any rate, it is worth scrutinising Ibrāhīm’s or his interpreter’s – the blurring effect of translation will be addressed below – rendition once again, not least because it predates all other narrative or visual attestations of the Regisole.

In Ibrāhīm’s single sentence three parts call for comment: the subject (‘the king of Constantinople’), the prepositional object (‘to the country of Longobardia’), and the temporal adverbial phrase (fī ḏāhri l-qadīm, ‘in ancient times’). As noted above, the proposition is counterfactual. Actual relations between the emperor in Constantinople and the Longobard kingdom (568–774) were simply not such as to render possible the transport of a monumental bronze to the Longobard royal city. If, on the other hand, the intended time-frame really was pre-Longobardian ‘antiquity’, a Longobard nomenclature would be anachronistic – but then, anachronisms abound in popular traditions.

2.2 The Regisole in focus

Although Theodoric (r. 474–526) did construct a – or, more likely, restore the existing – palatium at Ticinum (later Pavia) and attend to urban renewal, the town ceded in importance to Ravenna and Verona, if the enumeration of Theodoric’s building activities in the Theodericiana suggests an order of precedence. Should Theodoric nevertheless have placed a statue at the gate of his Pavian palace, as he did in Ravenna, in subsequent popular transmission he might have become assimilated to an ‘emperor’ although, for all his ambition, he did not assume imperial rank.

Agnellus’s – negative, i.e. silent – testimony from 837–838 is of limited import; ever the committed Ravennate, he focussed on matters Theoderician at Pavia as

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10 Theodericiana, 84f, 172–175/c. 70–72 (= Anonymus Valesianus II, 324:23–31); his building activities at Ravenna and Verona are retailed in this order, whereas, in third place, construction sites at Ticinum are reduced to a mere list; then follows a summary reference to benefices per alias civitates. For chronological reasons, the Theodericiana have here been given preference to Fredegar (differently handled by Mandalā 2014: 357f, n. 146).

11 See Wiegartz 2004: 43–45, on the vagaries of attribution of portraits, absent epigraphical identification.
well.¹² Provided that by the time of his visit the Regisole had already been in place, he might well have noticed the statue on his way to the Pavian palace and still have promptly forgotten it if it did not impress itself on him as Theoderic’s likeness. If, on the other hand, considering later narrative testimony, the Ravennate provenance of the Regisole were accepted, Agnellus’s failure to record its presence at Pavia might approximate a positive denial. Regrettably, this remains pure speculation: undeniably, and especially when confronted with acts of princely or episcopal spoliation, Agnellus displays a certain Ravennate local patriotism (Deliyannis 2004: 79 with n. 40 [ch. 113]), nor is he devoid of some broader art-historical sensibility beyond a merely ecclesiastical focus. Nevertheless, he does not in any discernible way aim at descriptive comprehensiveness (Deliyannis 2004: 66–90, pointedly 67ff).

Proceeding in time from Theoderic’s reign to the advent of the Longobards in Northern Italy, during Justinian’s protracted wars against the Ostrogoths, Pavia – being in enemy territory – could not have served as stage for a symbolic assertion of imperial authority as expressed by the equestrian bronze.

Returning to the mid-10th-century Pavian tradition recorded by Ibrāhīm, its dating of the statue’s advent to a distant, conceivably pre-Longobard past cannot, taken at face value, be categorically rejected. However, its alleged ‘antiquity’ would seem to make much better sense if taken as a reflection of the Regisole’s unmistakably ‘classical’ size and style. The oddly vague phrase ‘country of Longobardia’ for the statue’s destination, instead of naming Pavia itself,¹³ possibly reflects a similar loss of concrete historical record and a concomitant sense of bewilderment, as if adumbrating the – centuries-later – tradition that the transport of the Regisole on Charlemagne’s orders had accidentally come to an end in Pavia (Saletti 1997: 19–22; cf. Deliyannis 2004: 74ff). At first sight, the ‘Caroline’ tradition, to borrow Saletti’s term, would appear to be a mere doublet of a corresponding, yet factual, Ravennate tradition related by Agnellus (as in note 12 above); here the equestrian bronze which Theoderic put up in front of his palace in Ravenna so impresses Charlemagne that


¹³ Balad Lungubardiya; balad can – conveniently or in-, as the case may be – cover either meaning, ‘town’ and ‘country’, but here, given the contrast to qā’idat mudun Lungubardiya in the opening sentence, the context supports the meaning ‘country’. Further, unless territorial names denote the respective capitals or central places at the same time, the latter are often simply distinguished by prefixing mādīnat to the territorial name; merely by way of example, see mādīnat as-Suğd in al-Ḥā’il b. Aḥmad’s Kitāb al-‘ayn VI, 261:6 (cf. his definition of mādīna as a ‘country’s central enceinte’ [wa-kullu ardīn yūbnā bi-hā ḥišnī fu’ustummatihā fa-huwa mādīnathūhā], ibid. VIII, 53:11) and mādīnat Miṣr in Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, Mu’gam al-buldān IV, 454:1 – 455:4, 551:5f, 675:14f, 1044:15–17.
he orders it removed to his own favourite residence at Aachen. What must have felt like a void in Pavian historical memory was conveniently filled with recourse to the Ravennate Caroline tradition – up to a point, since the statue's arrival precisely at Pavia was attributed to freak chance, as also intimated by Ibrāhīm. In either version, an emperor is the primary agent, be it the Charlemagne of the contrafactual Pavian tradition or the anonymous sovereign in Ibrāhīm’s rendition. As regards the latter, the unanswerable question presents itself of whether he was already anonymous in Ibrāhīm’s oral source or only had his name suppressed in translation, possibly in order to accommodate ignorant foreigners.

2.3 ‘The king of Constantinople’

At this juncture, and especially in view of the thus-termed Caroline tradition, it is worth addressing a further doubtful point in Ibrāhīm’s report, namely the alleged seat of the mentioned emperor. Medieval Arabic authors, not just Ibrāhīm or his fellow countrymen from al-Andalus, frequently referred to the baseileus as ‘king of Constanti

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15 Generally, see at www.alwaraq.net; (not only) concerning al-Andalus, numerous passages, whether by way of direct or indirect transmission, from writers contemporaneous with or only slightly later than, Ibrāhīm, attest the variant usages. Here only a few examples will be cited, being few in chronological order by author, but without tracing the remote sources of every single secondary testimony: Ibn Ğulḡul, at-Tafsīr Arab. 7:5 (Armānīyūs [sic lege] al-malik, malik Quṣṭānšīniyya, s. a. 337/948, quoted by ’Abd ar-Rahmān Badawī in Ürūsquṣ – Ta’rikh al-ʾālam, 11:2; Ibn Ḥayyān apud al-Maqqārī, an-Naḏī I, 366:13ff: mulik ar-Rūm wa-l-Ifrāngh wa-l-Mağūs... wa-min ʾumlatīhim ʿāṣib al-Quṣṭānšīniyya al-ʾuzmā; Ibn Ğālib al-Garnāṭī [fl. c. 553/1158] apud Ibn Saʿīd, al-Maḏqīb I, 222:10: malik al-Quṣṭānšīniyya (but ʿāṣib al-Quṣṭānšīniyya, ibid. I, 48:10 [s. a. 210/825–826]; II, 57:12 [s. l(emmate) al-Ǧazāl, fl. c. 230/845]; but in the same context malik al-Quṣṭānšīniyya, apud al-Maqqārī, an-Naḏī I, 346:15]; Ibn ʿIdārī, al-Bayān I, 17:5 (Hiraql, malik al-Quṣṭānšīna [sic] al-ʿumā wa-Rūma); ibid. II, 213:5f, s. a. 334/945–946: malik ar-Rūm al-akbar Quṣṭānšīn b. ʿUyūn, ʿāṣib al-Quṣṭānšīna [sic] al-ʿumā (cf. kitāb malikīhīm [i.e. malik ar-Rūm] ʿāṣibī l-Quṣṭānšīniyya l-ʾumā Quṣṭānšīn b. ʿUyūn, apud al-Maqqārī, an-Naḏī I, 367:15f); nearly identically Ibn ʿIḏārī, al-Bayān II, 215:15, s. a. 338/949–950: malik ar-Rūm al-akbar, ʿāṣib al-Quṣṭānšīna [sic]; ibid. 231:15, s. a. 325/936–937, and 237:2f, s. a. 354/965[or later]: malik ar-Rūm; ibid. 296:3, s. a. 386/996: mulik ar-Rūm [i.e. non-Muslim Hispanic princes; similarly ibid. 299:5, s. a. 392/1002 (?): ʾumām ʿar-Rūm; cf. al-Maqqārī, al-ʾAṣḥār II, 258:14, s. a. 338/950–951: ʿāṣib al-Quṣṭānšīniyya ʾaẓīm ar-Rūm]; al-Ḥimyārī, ar-Rawḍ, 158a:16, 20f (s. l. Ǧarḡarāyā, mid-5th/11th c.), 454:18 (s. l. Qubrus, pre-587/1191[?]), 486b:10 (s. l. Qayrawān, c. 50/670) (in addition to lemma Būbīya); Ibn al-Ḵaṭīb, al-ʾAʾmāl 37:6, s. a. 327/939: malik al-Quṣṭānšīniyya al-ʾumām and 42:5, sine dato during al-Ḥakam (II) al-Mustanṣīr’s reign (961–
Bernburg 2019b: 243), the mentioned princes’ East Roman identity should not be taken for granted; for example Ibrāhīm’s account of continual imperial deference to the Aquileian patriarchs becomes entirely plausible once it is construed as referring to Western, rather than Eastern, emperors. 16

The most likely cause of the slippage is the mistranslation of a vernacular term for ‘emperor’; caesar would seem to suggest itself, in Arabic as well as in contemporaneous Latin and possibly proto-Italian. In Arabic, qaysar was of venerable age as the title or quasi-name of Roman and subsequently East Roman emperors. If Ibn Ḫurdaḏbih (d. 300/911?) be trusted, it remained in popular use even after being replaced by basileus in imperial style. 17 In 10th-century Italy, caesar, in Latin or ver-


16 Without aiming for completeness, the following references will make the point: MGH, DD Lo I/DD Lo II, 70–73, no. 9 (Pavia 832: confirmation of earlier diplomata by Charlemagne and Louis the Pious), 192f, no. 76 (Gondreville 843); DD L II, 98f, no. 17 (Pavia 855); DD LD/DD Kn/DD LJ, 316–318 (Karlmann no. 22, Otting 879); Reg. Imp. I, 3, 2, 151f, no. 1116 (Trieste 900, Nov 10), 184f, no. 1178 [904 before Sept], 185, no. 1179 (Pavia 904 [before Sept]), 276, no. 1370 (Pavia 921, Oct 3), 282f, no. 1377 (Verona 922, Mar 25); MGH, DD K I/DD H I/DD O I, 563–565, no. 413 (Pavia 972: confirmation of earlier royal and imperial privileges). Later grants, which also included confirmations of earlier benefits, have not been included here.

17 Well-informed civil servant that Ibn Ḫurdaḏbih was, he was able to distinguish between popular usage and official styles; Kīsrā and Qaysar were the popular designations of the – pre-Islamic – rulers of al-‘Irāq and the ‘kings of the Romans’, whereas their actual titles
nacular form, enjoyed some currency as imperial title, although – certainly in chancery usage –, *imperator*, alone, alternating or combined with *augustus*, took precedence. In the contemporaneous Pavian tradition, the attribution of the transportation and *a fortiori*, the erection, of the Regisole to an ‘emperor’ suggests that only a

(alqāḥ) were šāhānsāh and basīlī (*BGA* IV, 16:5–7; the chronological differential between the Sasanians and contemporaneous emperors need not concern us here). Regardless of the *terminus ad quem* of his work – extending nearly half a century after 232/847 –, his information tallies well with that of al-Qalqašandi (*as-Šubh* [<28 Šawwal 814/12 February 1412] V, 483:8f [cf. ibid. 401:10f]); according to him, the last emperor to be styled *qaysar* was Staurakios (*Istabraq* [sic lege] *Qaysar malik al-Quṣṭanṭiyya*; deposed on 2 October 811).

18 Again, no exhaustive listing is intended here; an illustrative sample in roughly chronological order, from the late ninth century to (after) the end of Otto I’s reign, will have to do. The *Libellus de imperatoria potestate in urbe Roma* uses *caesar* for ancient emperors (*Constantino magno Caesare*, [post-Constantinian] *Caesares*, 191:9, 14) as well as for recent and contemporaneous ones (always in the – generic or individual – singular, 192:21 [*caesaris eleemosyna*], 199:16, 22 [*caesaris ... clementiae*], 200:5 [*intimantes caesari*], 15), although *imperator* (192:8, 24, 195:6, 197:9, 199:3, 12, 15, 23, 200:1, 6, 203:14, 18, 205:3, 207:5) and in adjectival constructions, *imperialis* (191:1.6, 192:3.23, 196:4.9.14, 197:7f, 199:1, 205:5f) by far predominate (cf. *imperium*, 193:4f). Derivatives of *reg-* are nearly synonymous (199:19, 201:6, 12, 205:2); perhaps most telling is *nemo imperatorum, nemo regum acquisivit; quia aut virtus defuit aut scientia pro multis regni contentionibus* (210:1f).

The period of rivalry between Guido (II of Spoleto, emperor 891–894) and his son Lambert ([co-]emperor 892–98) on the one hand and Berengar I (king from 888, emperor 915–24) on the other is represented by chancery and poetic usage; from among Guido’s charters one stands out for its use of *caesar in intitulatio*: *Vuido caesar imperator augustus*, signum formula: ...*Vuidonis caesaris et imperatoris augusti*, and date: ...*Vuidonis serenisissimi caesaris augusti*, see Schiaparelli, *I diplomi di Guido*, 54ff, no. XXI (AD 894). In his son’s, Lambert’s, altogether first precept, ibid., 71ff (January [895]), the *intitulatio* corresponds exactly to the just-quoted formula, *signum* adds *serenisissimi*, and the date omits *caesar* and *augustus*. Lambert’s second diploma (February 895) reduces the *intitulatio* to *imperator augustus*, but in *signum* and date has the identical formula *serenisissimi caesaris et imperatoris augusti* (ibid., 73–76). In the following, third, deed (6 December 895), *caesar* only occurs in the context: *nostram caesarem flagitavit clementiam* (ibid., 77:7). As for this and corresponding adjectives, Lambert’s first diploma appears not to differentiate between *augustal-, caesare-, and imperial-;* the first qualifies *auctoritat-, clementia, magnificientia-, the second *sublicitatis-* (cf. *clementiam* as just quoted), the third *auctoritatis-* and *largitatis-* (71:3, 7, 72:3, 23, 28, 73:2). Posthumously, Lambert was titled *caesar* in his epitaph (*MGH, Poetae* IV, 1:402, no. II). For Berengar, the only witness to *caesar* appears to be the so-called *Gesta*, an epic panegyrical evidently governed by different rules than chancery documents (*MGH, Poetae* IV, 1:357-401). Without underestimating the author’s resources – cf. *induperatorem*, I 8 – nor yet metric constraints, in the very title, in Greek he proclaims Berengar as Καῖσαρ, which might be echoed by *solus in hoc ciduo caesar vocitandus in orbe*, IV 99 – but here the question will have to be left open (cf. *caesars-, IV 177, 190, with *augusts-, I 6, IV 165, 188, and *imperis-, I 22, IV 84, 98, 164). Liutprand of Cremona clearly avoids *caesar* altogether in *Antapodosis* (writing begun in 958), in contrast to *imperator-,* which on occasion, he employs
in the ancient meaning ‘commander in chief’ (I 1/Chiesa I:100ff, II 49/Chiesa II:807f, and cf. Berengarius et Wido imperatores ob regnum Italicum conflictabantur, I 5/Chiesa I:177f [=Cavallero 10:2f]). In Antapodosis I–V, imperator- exclusively refers to the Greek emperors (cf. imperator glossing βασιλεύο[ς], I 12/Chiesa I:386 and app.), whereas Western rulers in the period covered, since 880, are mere reges, including Charles (III) the Fat (wrongly called calvus, I 5/Chiesa I:174 [=Cavallero 7:9]). Only in the later, incomplete conclusion (VI 4/Chiesa 57f: domini nostri, tunc regis, nunc imperatoris) is Otto’s elevation to imperial dignity reflected in Antapodosis. In Legatio (after 968), Liutprand, articulating Ottonian ambitions vis-à-vis Byzantine claims to exclusivity, spells out the equivalence of imperator and βασιλεύος in contrast to rex vs. ῥῆξ (2/Chiesa 36–40); again, he avoids caesar. The title caesar exceptionally appears in Liber de rebus gestis Ottonis (964–65), in highly marked contexts; of the four occurrences, three, of identical formulation, figure in the account of the papal ‘invitation’ to Otto in 961, and the fourth in a solemn oath the Roman citizenry swore to Otto in late 963 (ed. Chiesa 159:9f: ... tunc regi, nunc augusto caesari Ottoni; ibid., line 18f: Ottonis tunc regis nunc caesaris augusti; p. 160:3f: Ottone, tunc rege nunc augusto caesare; p. 164:29: domni imperatoris Ottonis caesaris augusti filiique ipsius regis Ottonis). Elsewhere in Res gestae, Liutprand maintains his regular use of imperator. In Otto’s diplomas caesar- only appears in some Italian eschatocols between 2 December 966 and 22 April 972, and moreover, less often in the signum line than in the datum (MGH, DD K I/II 1/Chiesa I:100ff, and cf. his classical predecessors, ibid. 5:10f, 11:7f, 17, 12:2, 5f, 13:6). Overall, in his references to Otto, he wavers between imperator- and reg- (ibid. 174:7f, 176:4, 5, 7f, 178:2, 4, 183:5, 8f), before, in his final lamentation over the decline of Rome, he reverts to ‘Saxon king’ (ibid. 186).

From the period around Otto’s death, Benedict of S. Andrea (writing in 972) offers additional testimony, although he also reflects his sources’ usage. Julian the Apostate is the only caesar- mentioned (ed. Zucchetti 4:3), while ancient and modern emperors figure as imperator- or august-. Notwithstanding Benedict’s open aversion to Saxon rule, he does note Otto’s investiture as Augustus (ibid., 175:14ff; cf., for his classical predecessors, ibid. 5:10f, 11:7f, 17, 12:2, 5f, 13:6). Overall, in his references to Otto, he wavers between imperator- and reg- (ibid. 174:7f, 176:4, 5, 7f, 178:2, 4, 183:5, 8f), before, in his final lamentation over the decline of Rome, he reverts to ‘Saxon king’ (ibid. 186).

For comparison, a few ‘transalpine’ attestations may also be cited. Hrotsvit pointedly contrasts reg- with august- to mark the difference between royal and imperial rank (Opera 273, 296, 304, 328: Gesta Ottonis, prol. I:2–4, vv. 593f, 1477–1480/1483–1486; Primordia coenobii Gandeshemensis, v. 566f). August- generally takes precedence (ibid. 274, 305, 309: Gesta, prol. 2, v. 1507/1513, Primordia, v. 71); caesar- only occurs, coupled with august-, in the prose preface to Gesta, but is once, in the Pelagius drama, also applied to the Saracen ‘king’ (rex) (ibid. 71, v. 224f). Possibly for metric problems, imperator appears only in prose (p. 274 – other than imperium, e. g. ibid. 273, 274, 277). In adjectival form, all three terms are used, in the present context, most saliently perhaps in urbs cesariana and imperii... cesariani (ibid. x and 273: prefatio to entire collection and Gesta, prologus I:1). In Ruotger’s Vita Brunonis (c. 969) caesar-, august-, or caesar- august- denote imperial rank in contrast to the less restricted imperator-; ibid. xv (introd.), 3:34 (cap. 2), 11, n. 1 (cap. 10), 43:13 (cap. 41), 45:5 (cap. 42). Once more the difference between more and less formal levels of diction appears to be reflected in a speech by bishop Arnulf of Orléans at the synod of Verzy in 991 – as recorded by Gerbert of Aurillac, Acta concilii Remensis; Ottonem, quem Augustum creaverat is, in the following narrative, immediately replaced by (Otto[n-]) caesar(-) (ibid. 672:26–33).
powerful ruler could be credited with such an ambitious undertaking. Moreover, notwithstanding Ibrāhīm’s vague wording, the action can be assumed to have been prompted by a strong motive.

Here the caesar Berengar (emperor 915–924) comes to mind, rather than his rivals Guido and Lambert (r. 891–898), since he is known to have had a special bond with Pavia as his capital. Right after winning the city back from Louis III (subsequently ‘the Blind’) in 902, he called it caput regni nostri. In the autumn of 911, in order to bolster Pavia’s status as regni sedes, he requested – and obtained – ceremonial privileges for its bishop from Pope Anastasius III.19 In 915 he finally succeeded in garnering a papal ‘invitation’ to Rome in order to be crowned emperor.20 In Rome, on his way to the pope’s palace at the Lateran, the venue of the coronation banquet,21 he must have noticed the subsequently famous caballus, the equestrian bronze of Marcus Aurelius.22 It would not stretch credulity to have the apparent ensemble of palace and statue impress itself on Berengar as an appropriate visualization of sovereign power, to be emulated as soon as an opportunity arose.

To continue a bit further along the path of speculation, it may indeed have been Ravenna, as the later tradition would have it, that furnished Berengar the coveted object.23

The cumulative evidence appears to indicate a limited vernacular currency of caesar, largely excluding its integration into imperial style.


20 Reg. Imp. I, 3, 2, 242f, no. 1298f; earlier, in 911, Pope Sergius III had conducted negotiations about Berengar’s elevation to the imperial dignity, see ibid. 215, no. 1238f.


22 Admittedly, the earliest attestation of the supposed Constantine at the Lateran only dates from the pontificate of John XIII (965–972); Liber pontificalis II, 252, 254b, n. 8 (cf. ibid. 259, regarding John XIV, 972–974); Falkenstein 1966: 61, n. 63f. However, to have it transported there from an unknown earlier location would raise more questions than it would answer.

23 In or after 1318 Ricobaldus Ferrariensis (‘Riccobaldo Ferrarese’), who first came to Ravenna in 1296, wrote about Charlemagne’s removal of the Pavian bronze from its original place in Ravenna: Ereum quoque equum aureatum quem ponte austrui/Ravenne locavit [sc. Theodericus], quem ut legi in libro Pontificali ecclesie Raven-/fatis] Karolus rex Francorum et augustus inde substulit ut /transferet in Franciam, sed Papie nunc visitur; Compendium 647:12ff. Evidently, this does not represent Agnellus’s wording as preserved, but Ricobaldus might still have derived his reference from a Ravennate source – as his contemporary Bencius Alexandrinus (‘Benzo d’Alessandria’) may have done. The exact filiation of their concordant testimony as to the Ravennate provenance cannot be examined here; see Berrigan 1967: 168f and Piccinini 1992: 47–49, 73 (generally on Benzo see Ragni 1966). Cf. another, slightly later (<1334) version of Charlemagne’s transport of Theoderic’s Ravennate equestrian bronze in Iacobinus de Aquis (‘Iacopo da Acqui’), Cronica, col. 1429f (see Saletti 1997: 17, n. 9, 19, and generally on Iacopo, Chiesa 2004).
An opportunity arose during his sojourn there in June 916;24 all he needed to do was to requisition the bronze reported to have stood at *pons austri*.25 Actually, whether or not the tradition about this statue be accepted, Ravenna apparently is still considered the most likely provenance of the Regisole.26

3 Conclusion

The interpretation just outlined is contingent upon a somewhat loose construal of the temporal marker ‘in ancient times’ in Ibrāhīm’s report27 – unless, as suggested earlier, the phrase referred to the statue’s size and style. This would resolve the apparent anachronism implicit in situating Berengar’s age, just over half a century past, in ancient times. Coincidentally, attributing the erection of the Regisole to Berengar would agree with the post-Charlemagne date proposed by Bernardo Sacco in 1565.28 Trecentist authors presented the seizure from Ravenna of the Regisole and – perhaps concomitantly – of the relics of St. Eleucadius for Pavia in terms of the continual feuds between *comuni* and *signorie* in their own time. If they thus retrojected familiar conditions into the period before the turn of the second millennium, the disguise might still not completely conceal the reality of the period of the ‘national’ kings.29

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24 He granted privileges to the diocese of Arezzo on 22 June; see *Reg. Imp.* I, 3, 2, 252, no. 1320: *in civitate Ravenna.*

25 Saletti 1997: 17, n. 8, suggests an emendation to the better attested *augusti*, following Fantuzzi, *Monumenti Ravennati* I, 190, no. 51: *iuxta pontem Augusti* (9 November 975), and 395, no. 74: *prope Pontem Augusti* (15 July 1103); a *Cruce Pontis Austri* occurs in a document from the latter 14th century (1370?); see *ibid.* II, 403, no. 22. *Pons Augusti* also agrees with Iacopo da Acqui’s alternative localization *iuxta forum platee*, *Cronica*, col. 1429.


27 Al-Ḥimyarī, or rather his unnamed source on Tarragona, al-Īdrīsī, applies the phrase ‘in ancient time’ (*fī qadīmi z-zamān*) to the 9th–10th centuries, when the area was continually fought over by Muslims and Christians (*ar-Rawḍ, 392a:18f = al-Īdrīsī, *an-Nuzha*, 734:9f); thus the antiquity alluded to was not limited to the pre-Islamic period.

28 Bernardo Sacco, *De Italicarum rerum varietate ... X*, cap. v [sic for vi], fols. 105v–106r [sic for 105r–v], esp. “106r:” 3ff: *quoniam post Caroli Magni tempora contentione exorta inter Papienses, & Ravennates exportata à Papiensibus Ravennam ingressis* *Statua fuit*; see Saletti 1997: 21, 23f, and A22. In view of Sacco’s fictitious historical reconstruction, the plausibility of his dating can hardly be considered more than fortuitous.

29 Saletti 1997: 21f, 23f, 26–30; for source texts, cf. *ibid.* 102 (Benzo of Alessandria) and 153 (Opicino de Canistris).
A. Primary sources


Agnellus Ravennas, Liber pontificalis. See Deliyannis under B.


Anonymus Valesianus. See: König.


Excerpta Valesiana. See: König.


Guido [king, emperor]. See: Schiaparelli.


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Theodericana. See: König.


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