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## **Bishops, Relics and Multi-Directional Pressures in Carolingian Northern Italy: The Cases of Verona and Milan**

**Abstract:** In the aftermath of the conquest of the Lombard kingdom by Charlemagne (774), a number of figures coming from different regions of the Carolingian world were appointed as counts and bishops in Italy. They were called to act as intermediaries between local contexts and the new royal power, and to foster the integration of the kingdom's élites in the broader horizon of the Carolingian polity. In order to achieve that, they had first to negotiate their own integration within their new contexts of political, social, and cultural action. The cult of local saints and relics was one of the key issues they addressed to boost their own self-inclusion. A renewed care for the memory, celebration, and monumental settings of the special dead and their remains was one of the key elements in their struggle to establish channels of communication and cooperation with local élites and societies. Saints and relics were also the object of disputes and sometimes conflicts, and were used to support competing claims for ecclesiastical primacy. My paper will focus on two case-studies, the Carolingian bishops of Verona and Milan, highlighting their uses of saints, relics, and hagiography as tools to cope with the pressures, demands, and disputes resulting from their unsteady position as non-local figures holding authority over contexts they were initially unfamiliar with.

### **1 Stranger Things (and Bishops) in Carolingian Italy**

The manuscript Saint Gall, Stiftsbibliothek, 733, most probably produced in Alamannia (Saint Gall itself?) in the first quarter of the 9th century, contains a collection of capitularies issued by Charlemagne and his son Pippin of Italy.<sup>1</sup> The collection opens with the capitulary of Herstal of 779 followed by the *Capitulare cum*

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<sup>1</sup> The manuscript is available for online consultation at <https://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/it/searchresult/list/one/csg/0733> (accessed 30.10.2022). – Research for this paper has been undertaken in the context of the PRIN 2017 project *Ruling in hard times. Patterns of power and practices of government in the making of Carolingian Italy*, P.I. Giuseppe Albertoni (University of Trento), research unit of Padova.