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Paul the Deacon's understanding of identity, his attitude to barbarians, and his "strategies of distinction" in the *Historia Romana*

Paul the Deacon's *Historia Romana* is a text that has been much neglected in the study of the history of eighth-century Italy.¹ Yet, on closer examination, this text, composed around 770, reveals a great deal about the way in which the past was perceived in eighth-century Italy, and about perceptions of continuity and discontinuity between the present and the Roman past.² Paul's priorities in composing the *Historia Romana*, his selection of sources, his inclusions and omissions, the narrative strategies he deploys, and the vocabulary and terminology he employs, all provide important evidence about the ways in which the past was understood and commemorated in the eighth century. More specifically, this text also gives us some fascinating indications about Paul's understanding of his own identity, along with that of others, be they groups or individuals, and how he perceived himself in relation to them. His attitude to barbarians and his means of classifying individuals and groups also tells us a great deal about the prevalence of late-Roman ethnographical ideas. It is these aspects of Paul's *Historia Romana* which it is the purpose of this article to address.

Before proceeding with this examination, it is worthwhile briefly to outline certain details of Paul's life and the basic structure of the *Historia Romana*. Paul the Deacon is typical of most figures of the eighth century, in that we know excruciatingly little about his life and can only conjecture as to his date of birth and his whereabouts throughout most of his life. Born into a noble family sometime between 720 and 735 in the duchy of Friuli, Paul was sent to the royal court at Pavia where he appears to have been educated by a grammarian named Flavianus during the reign of King Ratchis

¹ In composing this article I have used Crivellucci's edition: Paolo Diacono, *Historia Romana* (ed. Amadeo Crivellucci, Istituto Storico Italiana, Roma 1914); or: (ed. Hans Droysen, MGH SS rer. Germ. in us. schol. [49], Berlin 1879). All translations herein are my own unless otherwise stated.

² We have no exact date for the composition of the *Historia Romana*. We do, however, have sufficient contextual information to narrow the dating somewhat. Most scholars accept that the *Historia Romana* was composed before the fall of the Lombard kingdom in 774 and several years after 763. In 763, Adalperga had one child, yet by the composition of the *Historia Romana* she had three. Walter Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History AD 550–800* (Princeton 1988) 337; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* (ed. Ludwig Bethmann/Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Langob., Hannover 1878) 14–187, at 14; Max L.W. Laistner, *Thought and Letters in Western Europe AD 500–900* (London 1957) 270; Felix Dahn, *Des Paulus Diaconus Leben und Schriften* (Leipzig 1876) 78. Only Pasquale Del Giudice, *Lo storico dei Longobardi e la critica odierna*, in: id., *Studi di Storia e Diritto* (Milano 1889) 1–43, at 22–27, prefers a date after 774, though Mommsen suggested it was not impossible; Theodor Mommsen, *Die Quellen der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus*, in: id., *Gesammelte Schriften* 6 (Berlin 1910) 484–539, at 487–488. Most scholars prefer a date before 774, as by 787, courtesy of Paul's epitaph for Duke Arichis II, we know that Adalperga had five *grown* children. For the epitaph see Karl Neff, *Die Gedichte des Paulus Diaconus. Kritische und erklärende Ausgabe* (ed. Ludwig Traube, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur lateinische Philologie des Mittelalters* 3, 4, München 1908) no. XXXI. However imprecise a dating mechanism, already with one child in 763, it seems unlikely she would have produced two more children after 774. See Goffart, *Narrators* 340; Rosamond McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon and the Franks*, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 8 (1999) 319–339, at 324. Carlo Corbato, *Paolo Diacono*, in: *Antichita Altoadriatiche* 7 (1975) 7–22, at 12, preferred a date of 766–769. Most scholars, however, accept that 770–773 is a more likely date. See Dahn, *Paulus Diaconus* 14–15, 20; Goffart, *Narrators* 337, note 33. Much of the debate revolves around interpretations of the relationship between the *Historia Romana* and the *Historia Langobardorum*, a weighty subject which requires discussion elsewhere.

(744–749).³ We know little of Paul’s exact movements until much later in his life. Most of the debate has centred around Paul’s entry into the monastery of Monte Cassino, yet the dates proposed by various scholars range from as early as 749 to as late as 781.⁴ The vast gap between these two dates is indicative of the immense difficulty in determining Paul’s movements and has produced a variety of speculation.⁵ We know Paul regularly sought the patronage of the Beneventan Duchess, Adalperga, wife of Duke Arichis II (758–787), however we cannot be certain as to exactly what his relationship was to the Beneventan court.⁶ As Goffart stated, “Paul was either a lifelong courtier who sought refuge at the Tomb of St. Benedict when already middle-aged, or a lifelong monk who often secured court patronage for his scholarship.”⁷

³ On his noble birth see the epitaph by his student, Hilderic: *Epytaphyum Pauli diaconi* (ed. Ludwig Bethmann/Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Langob., Hannover 1878) 23f.; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* IV, 37, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 130f. Paul’s nobility is supported by the fact that his brother was later exiled and his property confiscated during a rebellion of Lombard nobles against Frankish rule in 776; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 23f.; Goffart, *Narrators* 334–335; Felix Dahn, Paulus Diaconus, in: *Allgemeine deutsche Biographie* 25 (Leipzig 1887) 245–248, was not convinced about Paul’s nobility. See also Karl Heinrich Krüger, *Zur ‘beneventanischen’ Konzeption der Langobardengeschichte des Paulus Diaconus*, in: *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 15 (1981) 18–35. Paul’s date of birth is based on the fact that earlier than 720 would make him too old, considering that his death is more commonly dated to some time after 796, and much later would make him too young to have been present at the court at Pavia in the late 740s. Goffart, *Narrators* 334, prefers the second half of the 720s; Ludwig Bethmann, Paulus Diaconus *Leben und Schriften*, in: *Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde* 10 (1851) 247–334, at 255 and note 2, suggested c. 730; Del Giudice, *Storico dei Longobardi* 1–43, suggested 720–725. See also Edward Peters, introduction to the reprint of W.D. Foulke’s translation, *History of the Langobards by Paul the Deacon* (Philadelphia 1907), repr. id., *History of the Lombards* (Philadelphia 1974) XI; Evelina Menghini, *Dello stato presente degli studi intorno alla vita di Paolo Diacono*, in: *Bolletino della Società pavese di storia patria* 4 (1904) 15–100, 231–285, 313–366. On his Friulian origins see Goffart, *Narrators* 334; Dahn, Paulus Diaconus 2. On his time at the court of Pavia see Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* II, 28, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 87–89; Donald Bullough, *Ethnic history and the Carolingians: an alternative reading of Paul the Deacon’s Historia Langobardorum*, in: *The Inheritance of Historiography 350–900*, ed. Christopher Holdsworth/Timothy P. Wiseman (Exeter 1986) 85–103, at 86–87; Goffart, *Narrators* 335f. On Flavianus, see Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* VI, 7, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 167; Peters, *History of the Lombards* XI; Laistner, *Thought and Letters* 268–269. Oronzo Limone provides an excellent account of Italian scholarship on Paul the Deacon in a recent article: Oronzo Limone, *Santi ed Eroi nella storia dei longobardi di Paolo Diacono*, in: *Paolo Diacono. Uno scittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio. Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Cividale del Friuli – Udine, 6–9 maggio, 1999*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine 2000) 279–292, at 279–281, notes 1–9. Chiesa’s volume on Paul the Deacon is indispensable in general.

⁴ The terminus ante quem is arrived at through evidence in a letter to abbot Theudemar of Monte Cassino in 783, which indicates that Paul is already a member of that community. Marios Costambeys, *The monastic environment of Paul the Deacon*, in: *Paolo Diacono. Uno scittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio, Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Cividale del Friuli – Udine, 6–9 maggio, 1999*, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine 2000) 127–138, at 127.

⁵ Three dates in particular have been seen as the most likely points for Paul’s *monacazione*. Either 749, with King Ratchis, 774 after the conquest of the Lombard Kingdom, or 776 during the anti-Carolingian uprising in Friuli in 776. Goffart and Costambeys address the merits and flaws of these theories in detail. Goffart, *Narrators* 334–337; Costambeys, *Monastic environment* 127–129.

⁶ Hans Belting, *Studien zum beneventanischen Hof im 8. Jahrhundert*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 16 (1962) 143–193, at 164–169, speculated that Paul served as the tutor of Adalperga, a possibility we can neither easily accept nor entirely dismiss; Goffart, *Narrators* 336. For similar conjecture about Paul’s contacts with the royal court, see Florus van der Rhee, *Die germanischen Wörter in der Historia Langobardorum des Paulus Diaconus*, in: *Romanobarbarica* 5 (1980) 271–296, at 271; Antonio Viscardi, *Le Origini. Storia letteraria d’Italia* (Milano 1966) 41–42. Dahn, Paulus Diaconus 9–12, on the other hand, is perhaps too skeptical about Paul’s contacts with the royal court. Paul may have followed Adalperga to Benevento for her marriage to Arichis some time after 758; Janet L. Nelson, *Making a difference in eighth-century politics: the daughters of Desiderius*, in: *After Rome’s Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto 1998) 171–190, at 176; Goffart, *Narrators* 334–335; Jörg Jarnut, *Geschichte der Langobarden* (Stuttgart 1982) 116–120, 131; Corbato, *Paolo Diacono* 10. Paul’s dedication of an epitaph to Adalperga’s mother, Ansa, the wife of Desiderius, is also suggestive of a closer intimacy with the court; cf. Nelson, *Making a difference* 175–176. Yet, Paul’s literary dedications might indicate that he was uncertain of favour and wished to court approval and patronage, as Goffart, *Narrators* 339, note 38, suggests.

⁷ Goffart, *Narrators* 334. Paul may even have moved between these two spheres with ease. After all, we have numerous examples of the flexibility of monastic exile, McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon* 326.

Paul was later present at the court of Charlemagne, sometime after 776 and most likely between 781 and 784.⁸ Whilst there he not only enjoyed great recognition for his scholarship and qualities as a teacher, but was also given a significant royal commission in the request to write the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* in 784.⁹ Paul then retired to Monte Cassino around 786 or 787.¹⁰ At some point during the later years of Paul's life he composed his most famous work, the *Historia Langobardorum*, which several scholars have suggested he left unfinished on his death-bed.¹¹ The *Historia Langobardorum* has traditionally been seen as a sort of continuation of the *Historia Romana*, although there are good grounds for an alternative interpretation of the relationship between these two texts.¹² This issue is too weighty to discuss here, suffice to say that we must be extremely cautious in retrospectively interpreting the direction and purpose of the *Historia Romana* to coincide with our perceptions of the direction and purpose of the *Historia Langobardorum*, apparently written at a much later period in a much-changed context. The date of Paul's death has long been accepted as 799, although there is no evidence to support this in any early sources.¹³

⁸ McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon* 323f. It appears he was at the palace at Quierzy in 781–782, Poitiers in the summer of 782, at Thionville Palace in winter 782–783, and probably in the vicinity of Metz in 783–784. Goffart, *Narrators*, 342 with note 48.

⁹ Goffart, *Narrators* 342, 375–376. *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium* (ed. Georg Heinrich Pertz, MGH SS 2, Hannover 1829) 260–270, at 261–268. See also, Walter Goffart, *Paul the Deacon's 'Gesta Episcoporum Mettensium' and the early design of Charlemagne's succession*, in: *Traditio* 42 (1986) 59–93. See also Michel Sot, *Le Liber de episcopis Mettensibus dans l'histoire du genre 'Gesta episcoporum'*, in: Paolo Diacono. *Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Civildale del Friuli – Udine*, 6–9 maggio, 1999, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine 2000) 527–550.

¹⁰ McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon* 324.

¹¹ Goffart covers this debate in detail, *Narrators* 340–341. For alternative views see McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon* 327–334. Waitz and Bethmann originally recognised the text as complete in their edition: *Paulus Diaconus, Historia Langobardorum*, ed. Bethmann/Waitz.

¹² Mommsen, *Die Quellen* 487–488, originally saw these two texts as closely related. *Del Giudice, Storia dei Longobardi* 22–27, favoured the idea that the *Historia Langobardorum* was the long-planned continuation of the *Historia Romana*. His views were followed by Goffart, *Narrators*, 340, note 42, 363, 378f., with further qualification. For the view that the *Historia Langobardorum* was composed with a Frankish audience in mind, see, McKitterick, *Paul the Deacon* 319–339. Lars Boje Mortensen, *The diffusion of Roman histories in the middle ages. A list of Orosius, Eutropius, Paulus Diaconus and Landolfus Sagax manuscripts*, in: *Filologia Mediolatina* 6–7 (1999–2000) 101–200, at 102, has recently argued strongly against seeing the latter work as a planned sequel to the former; cf. id., *Impero Romano, Historia Romana e Historia Langobardorum*, in: Paolo Diacono. *Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Civildale del Friuli – Udine*, 6–9 maggio, 1999, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine 2000) 355–366. For further on the *Historia Langobardorum* see Hans Droysen, *Die Zusammensetzung der Historia Romana des Paulus Diaconus*, in: *Forschungen zur deutschen Geschichte* 15 (1875) 167–180; Georg Waitz, *Über die handschriftliche Überlieferung und die Sprache der Historia Langobardorum des Paulus*, in: *NA* 1 (1876) 533–566; Gustavo Vinay, *Paolo Diacono e la poesia*, nota, in: *Convivium* (1950) 97–113; Gian Piero Bognetti, *Processo logico e integrazione delle fonti nella storiografia di Paolo Diacono*, in: id., *L'Eta Longobarda* 3 (Milano 1967) 159–184; id., *L'Eta Longobarda*, 4 vol. (Milano 1966–1968). More recently see Walter Pohl, *Paolo Diacono e la costruzione dell'identità longobarda*, in: Paolo Diacono. *Uno scrittore fra tradizione longobarda e rinnovamento carolingio*, *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi Civildale del Friuli – Udine*, 6–9 maggio, 1999, ed. Paolo Chiesa (Udine 2000) 413–426; id., *Paulus Diaconus und die Historia Langobardorum: Text und Tradition*, in: *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter*, ed. Anton Scharer/Georg Scheibelreiter (*Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 32, Wien/München 1994) 375–405.

¹³ 799 has been accepted by Wilhelm Wattenbach/Wilhelm Levison/Heinz Löwe, *Deutschlands Geschichtsquellen im Mittelalter. Vorzeit und Karolinger: Die Karolinger vom Anfang des 8. Jahrhunderts bis zum Tode Karls des Großen* (Weimar 1953) 223; Felix Dahn, *Paulus Diaconus* 73. The arguments presenting this as a *terminus ante quem* principally rest upon Paul's failure to note Charlemagne's coronation in 800, and his failure to write an epitaph for abbot Theudemar of Monte Cassino, who died in 797, Menghini, *Stato presente* 366; Goffart, *Narrators* 346, with note 61. Paul, however, might have died well before this. Pohl, *Paolo Diacono* 413–414; id., *Paulus Diaconus* 375–377, argues strongly for 796 as the latest possible date for the composition of the *Historia Langobardorum* which could have been composed as early as the mid 780s. In fact, Paul's death might have taken place any time after his alleged retirement to Monte Cassino in the late 780s.

Returning to the *Historia Romana* itself, we are fortunate in having a dedicatory letter written by Paul to the Duchess Adalperga, outlining his reasons for its composition.¹⁴ Paul claims that he composed the *Historia Romana* because, having recommended Eutropius' fourth-century *Breviarium* to Adalperga, she had been disappointed about its brevity and by the lack of Christian content, and thus he had set out to rectify this situation by making additions to the text.

Paul began his project with a history of events prior to the foundation of the City of Rome that begins with Janus and segues smoothly into the first book of Eutropius. What follows is essentially an exact transcription of the ten books of Eutropius' *Breviarium* into which Paul has added a significant number of interpolations of varying length.¹⁵ These cover a variety of topics, including elements of biblical history and episodes of Roman political and military history taken from a variety of sources. Paul's interference with Eutropius' text is minimal, making no significant subtractions and only altering the phrasing in order to ensure that his interpolations were in agreement with the sentence or paragraph into which they were inserted.¹⁶ The interpolated text of the *Breviarium* is then followed by an original continuation in six books, which concludes towards the end of the reign of Justinian, in 552. Each of these books is of similar length, although the period they cover varies significantly.¹⁷ In selecting material for his interpolations and original books, Paul drew upon over forty known sources and, it would appear, a number of unknown sources. Principal amongst his sources were Orosius' *Historiarum Adversos Paganos Libri Septem*, Jordanes's *Historia Romana* and *Getica*, the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Ennodius' panegyric and *Vita Epiphani*, Gregory the Great's *Dialogues*, and the chronicles of Jerome, Prosper and Bede.¹⁸

¹⁴ The letter runs for thirty-three lines in Crivellucci's edition. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Crivellucci 3f.

¹⁵ Throughout the rest of this article all of Paul's insertions into the text of the *Breviarium* are referred to as the "interpolations."

¹⁶ There have been three editions of the *Breviarium*: *Eutropi Breviarium ab urbe condita cum versionibus Graecis et Pauli Landolfique additamentis* (ed. Hans Droysen, MGH AA 2, Berlin 1878); (ed. Franz Rühl, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*, Leipzig 1887); (ed. Carlo Santini, *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana*, Leipzig 1979). See also Nino Scivoletto, *La tradizione manoscritta di Eutropio*, in: *Giornale Italiano di filologia* 14 (1961) 129–162; *Texts and Transmission. A Survey of the Latin Classics*, ed. Leighton D. Reynolds (Oxford 1983) 159–162. For a translation of the *Breviarium*, see Harold W. Bird, *The Breviarium ab urbe condita of Eutropius* (Liverpool 1993). On the *Breviarium* in general, see Enrica Malcovati, *La traduzione greche di Eutropio*, in: *Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere* 77 (1943–1944) 280–304. For further detail on the *Breviarium*, see Harold W. Bird, *Eutropius: his life and career*, in: *Classical Views, Echos du Monde Classique* 32 (1988) 51–60; id., *Eutropius in defence of the senate*, in: *Cahiers des Études Anciennes* 20 (1988) 63–72; id., *The Roman emperors: Eutropius' perspective*, in: *Ancient History Bulletin* 1 (1987) 139–151; id., *Structure and themes in Eutropius' Breviarium*, in: *Classical Bulletin* 66 (1990) 87–92.

¹⁷ It is necessary to note that whilst the book divisions throughout the *Historia Romana* are Paul's, the chapter divisions are the work of later editors. For the sake of convenience of reference, I have used the same chapter divisions that appear in the editions of Droysen and Crivellucci. It must be understood, therefore, that where chapters are referred to, they are merely an arbitrary division of an otherwise continuous text, and should not be seen to operate as units of Paul's own devising.

¹⁸ Crivellucci's source identification is generally accurate and comprehensive, however more work is required to qualify certain of his conclusions. Crivellucci, following on from the work of Bauch, Oechsli, Waitz, Mommsen, Holder-Egger and Droysen, identified over forty sources; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Crivellucci XXXVIII–XXXIX; Amadeo Crivellucci, *Per l'edizione della Historia Romana di Paolo Diacono*, in: *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico* 40 (1921) 7–103. See also Wilhelm Oechsli, *Ueber die Historia Miscella, I. XII–XVIII und den Anonymus Valesianus II. Zwei Quellenuntersuchungen zur Geschichte des untergehenden Römerthums* (Diss. Zürich 1873); Oswald Holder-Egger, *Untersuchungen über einige annalistische Quellen zur Geschichte des fünften und sechsten Jahrhunderts*, in: *NA* 1 (Hannover 1876) 300–309. For the text of these sources, see: Paulus Orosius, *Historiarum adversum paganos libri septem* (ed. Karl Zangemeister, CSEL 5, Wien 1882); or: (ed. Marie-Pierre Arnaud-Lindet, 3 vol., 1990–91); English translation, Roy J. Deferrari, *The Seven Books of History Against the Pagans* (Washington 1964); Jordanes, *Getica* (ed. Alfred Holder, *Jordanes, De origine actibusque Getarum*, Akademische Verlagsbuchhandlung von J.C.B. Mohr, Freiburg 1882); English translation: Charles Mierow, *Gothic History* (New York 1915 [1960]); Jordanes, *Historia Romana* (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 5, 1, Berlin 1882) 1–52. For the text of the *Epitome*, see: *Epitome de Caesaribus* (ed. Franz Pichlmayr, Leipzig 1911). See also, Jörg Schlumberger, *Die 'Epitome de Caesaribus': Untersuchungen zur heidnischen Geschichtsschreibung des 4. Jahrhunderts nach Christ* (München 1974) 1–16; Timothy D. Barnes, 'The *Epitome de Caesaribus* and its sources,' *Review of Die Epitome de Caesaribus*, by Jörg Schlumberger, in: *Classical Philology* 71 (1976) 258–268. Ennodius, *Panegyricus* (ed. Christian Rohr, *Der Theodorich-Panegyricus des Ennodius*, MGH Studien

Throughout the *Historia Romana* Paul the Deacon provides a number of significant clues about his perceptions of his own identity in relation to others. There is also much that is revealed in the way he describes others, be they individuals or groups, as it provides us with some idea of how he saw himself in relation to them, and of what he perceived to be a desirable or undesirable model. Even when quoting directly from his sources, Paul reveals a great deal about his attitudes through his willingness to include such references in the first place.

Paul's own identity is never obvious; we have only a very few instances in which he refers directly to himself. In the *Historia Romana*, Paul is only really present in the first person in his dedicatory letter and in the passage in which he informs us of his decision to change his method of dating at the beginning of Book XVI. In the introduction Paul gives us precious little information about himself, although he does refer to himself as *Paulus exiguus et supplex*.¹⁹ Much has been made of this passage, and it was even suggested that this humble reference to himself indicated that he was already a monk when he wrote this.²⁰ Outside our extrapolations about Paul's personality from the content of his work, we find precious little direct indications of his perception of his own identity. There are, however, some indications.

From the eulogistic passage on Theodosius, which Paul has taken from the *Epitome de Caesaribus*, Paul follows the *Epitomator's* point of reference when he transcribes the following lines: He (Theodosius) was obviously intelligent and very keen with regard to becoming acquainted with the deeds of *our* ancestors.²¹

Though Paul is quoting directly from the *Epitome*, this is a passage from which he does make other omissions and it is interesting that he did not change the wording of this part of the passage to suit his own perspective. Indeed it is most likely that Paul felt no need whatsoever to make any alteration, for in his mind an exemplary Christian like Theodosius was, as much as any other Catholic, one of his ancestors.

Paul uses the term *maior* with similar effect on just one other occasion in the *Historia Romana*. Also writing on Theodosius, yet this time quoting from Orosius, Paul, speaking of the Scythians, refers to them as being, "feared by all *our* ancestors, and avoided even by Alexander the Great."²²

This is not the only occasion on which Paul made reference to a shared collective identity. The most obvious example can be found in his dedicatory letter in which he informs us that Adalperga had noted of the *Breviarium* that: "in no place is there mention of divine history and *our* religion."²³

This is one of the few occasions on which Paul clearly places himself within the context of a collective identity. The usage is all the more rare in this text for it is one of the few instances in which we know for certain that Paul is not merely copying the language directly from a source. It is inter-

und Texte 12, Hannover 1995); (ed. Friedrich Vogel, MGH AA 7, Berlin 1885) 203–214. Ennodius, *Vita Epiphani* (ed. Maria Cesa, Ennodio, *Vita del beatissimo Epifanio, vescovo della chiesa pavese*, Como 1988); English translation, Genevieve Marie Cook, *The Life of Saint Epiphanius* (Washington 1942); Gregory the Great, *Dialogorum libri IV de miraculis patrum italicorum* (ed. Georg Waitz, MGH SS rer. Langob., Hannover 1878) 525–540; (ed. Umberto Moricca, *Gregorii Magni Dialogi*, Roma 1924); English translation: Odo John Zimmerman, *Saint Gregory the Great, Dialogues* (New York 1959). Jerome, *Chronicon* (ed. Rudolph Helm, Eusebius Werke, Siebenter Band. *Die Chronik des Hieronymus, Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten Jahrhunderte*, Berlin 1956). Prosper of Aquitaine, *Epitoma chronicon edita primum a. CCCXXXIII continuata ad a. CCCCLV* (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 9, Berlin 1892) 341–499. Bede's *Chronicle* forms chapter 66 of his *De temporum ratione*, and hereafter will simply be referred to as *Bede's chronicle*. For the text see, *Bede, Chronica maiora ad a. DCCXXV* (ed. Theodor Mommsen, MGH AA 13, Berlin 1892) 223–354. English translation in Faith Wallis, *Bede: The Reckoning of Time* (Liverpool 1999); the *chronicle* is at 157–237.

¹⁹ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Crivellucci 3, line 3.

²⁰ Goffart, *Narrators* 337.

²¹ My italics. *Epitome de Caesaribus* 48, 11; Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XII, 5: *sagax plane multumque diligens ad noscenda maiorum gesta*.

²² Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XI, 15: *maximas illas Scithias gentes formidatasque cunctis maioribus, Alexandro quoque illi Magno evitatas*.

²³ My italics. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Crivellucci 3f., lines 13–1 (4): *in nullo divinae historiae cultusque nostri fecerit mentionem*.

esting that he notes the shared participation in a Catholic Christian identity with Adalperga; something which seems more fundamental as a cultural focal point for him than Lombard origins. Indeed, we might consider here the interesting example of the various Lombard words included in the *Historia Langobardorum*, of which Paul felt the need to explain the meaning in a way that isolated them as part of a foreign language. When Paul writes “which they call ‘sculdahis’ in their own language,” at VI, 24, he refers to those who use this language in the third-person plural.²⁴ Paul also translated the term *marpahis* into the Latin *strator* on two occasions, even though *marpahis* was an office still extant in Benevento in the late eighth century.²⁵ Paul displays a willingness to incorporate himself into a Latin and Catholic identity and he holds the Lombard language at arm’s length, which also raises questions about his intended audience.²⁶

There are also a few rare examples of Paul’s use of first-person genitive plural personal pronouns throughout the *Historia Romana*. The term *noster* – *nostrī* appears six times in the whole of the *Historia Romana*. Three of these are within the dedicatory letter, where the other two references than the one mentioned above are to Paul’s and Adalperga’s current context: *nostra aetate* and *nostram...aetatem*. The three other examples are more widely dispersed. One, derived from the *Epitoma*, merely quotes Diocletian in the first person discussing the cabbages he has raised *nostris manibus*.²⁷ The other two, however, are more interesting.

At XIII, 12, there is another example that assumes an association between the author and audience in a collective Catholic identity. Quoting directly from the entry in Prosper’s *Chronicle* from the year 437, Paul notes that in Africa, the Vandal King Geiseric “persecuted some of *our* bishops to the extent that he deprived them of their right to their churches and even drove them from their cities.”²⁸

This, much like the example above from the *Epitome* is clouded somewhat by the fact that Paul is directly quoting from his source. The fact remains, however, that he did not see the need to paraphrase the passage or change the terminology, for the point of reference was appropriate. The passage, after all, is in perfect accord with his statement in the dedicatory letter. The bishops, *Nostrorum episcopi*, are clearly a part of *divinae historiae... nostrī*, and any Catholic reader is expected to feel a distinct association with and sympathy for these persecuted bishops.²⁹

The other example of *noster-nostrī* appears towards the end of Paul’s extended introduction. Paul, following Jerome, writes that Acca Larentia, who raised Romulus and Remus, was known as the She-Wolf of the region on account of the “profitability of her body”: from whence, all the way up to *our own memory* the little rooms of whores are called ‘lupanaria.’³⁰ This is quoted verbatim from Jerome and therefore we are once more not really dealing with Paul’s own words. Yet the passage is still of genuine interest in that it suggests a common bond of language, culture and historical memory, which Paul clearly felt was still valid in the time in which he was writing. Whether or not Adalperga or others of the text’s audience were familiar with the term *lupanaria*, the deployment of this passage within the context of eighth-century Italy acts to remind us of the potency of the Latin language as a means of defining a common identity.

Sadly there are no other instances in the *Historia Romana* in which Paul refers to himself directly or indirectly. In order therefore to understand Paul’s personality, along with his interpretation

²⁴ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* VI, 24, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 172: *quem ‘sculdahis’ lingua propria dicunt.*

²⁵ Nick Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774* (PhD University of Cambridge 1997) 85–86. On the use of Lombard terms in the *Historia Langobardorum*, see: Van der Rhee, *Die germanischen Wörter* 271–296; Emilia Saracco Previdi, *Lo ‘sculdahis’ nel territorio longobardo di Rieti (Secolo VIII e IX). Dall’amministrazione longobarda a quella franca*, in: *Studi Medievali*, ser. 3, 14 (1973) 627–679; Hansjörg Krug, *Untersuchungen zum Amt des ‘centenarius-Schultheiss’*, part 1, in: *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germ. Abt.* 87 (1970) 27–31.

²⁶ On the question of audience, see Everett, *Literacy* 85f.

²⁷ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* IX, 28.

²⁸ My italics. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XIII, 12: *quosdam nostrorum episcopos eatenus persecutus est, ut eos privatos iure basilicarum suarum etiam civitatibus pelleret.*

²⁹ See note 23.

³⁰ My italics. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana*, ed. Crivellucci 1, introduction 10, 1–2: *ob... corporis quaestuosi... unde et ad nostram usque memoriam meretricum cellulae lupanaria dicuntur.*

of the past and his context further, we must turn to an examination of his attitudes to different peoples or collective identities and the terminology he employs in describing them. The evidence in the *Historia Romana*, and indeed, certain passages from the *Historia Langobardorum*, not only reflects Paul's specific attitudes to different peoples, but his overall understanding of the past and how this relates to his perception of continuity and change with regard to his own context.

Paul's attitude to barbarians throughout the *Historia Romana* displays much of the hostility of his late Roman sources. Throughout the interpolations and into the early chapters of Book XIII, Paul included a number of strongly worded condemnations of barbarians as peoples and individuals, all of which are drawn from Orosius and all of which reflect the late Roman tendency to generalise and simplify any conception or definition of ethnicity or difference.³¹ Orosius, who provided Paul with the vast majority of his material in the early books of his continuation, did not pull any punches in accounting for barbarian perfidiousness. Thus, drawing upon Orosius, Paul writes of the late-Roman generalissimo, Stilicho, that he was "descended by birth from the deceitful and perfidious race of the Vandals."³² When the Emperor Valens is trapped and burned to death after defeat at Hadrianople, Orosius noted how appropriate it was that he was burned by those "who will themselves burn because of their perfidy."³³ Paul noted unsympathetically that when 10,000 Gothic auxiliaries were annihilated, it was "of more profit than detriment for Theodosius."³⁴ He later remarked that the Goths were "by far the most savage of all the ancient and present enemies."³⁵ Paul later wrote, drawing upon Ennodius, of the perfidy of Ricimer, *Ricimeris perfidia*.³⁶ When Ricimer broke the treaty established by Epiphanius between himself and the Emperor Anthemius, it was through "barbarian perfidy," which, it is noted, was hardly surprising for "he was, after all of Gothic lineage."³⁷ There are many other derogatory ways in which barbarians are described; adjectives such as *sordissimus*, *saevissimus*, and *ferocissimam*. At XIII, 6 the Vandals and Alans are described as "infesting Spain."³⁸

Scholars have previously suggested that we might have expected Paul to display some sympathy towards the barbarians in his history, either because of their being "Germanic" or because of their also having invaded Italy as a people. Whilst Sestan and Goffart are both correct in pointing to the absence of any such sympathies, such an expectation, in the first place, imposes rather too strong a preconception on our understanding of Paul's self-perception and sympathies.³⁹ Goffart noted that rather than ascribing heroism to any barbarian figures, Paul instead favoured those "churchmen whose moral force tamed the invaders' fury."⁴⁰ Ernesto Sestan rightly noted that Paul showed no obvious sympathy towards any of the "Germanic" protagonists throughout his history, following instead the imperial Roman point of view.⁴¹ It is important to note, however, that whilst Paul displays no obvious sympathy for individual barbarian protagonists throughout the *Historia Romana*, he is

³¹ See for instance, Gerhard Ladner, On Roman attitudes towards barbarians in late antiquity, in: *Viator* 7 (1976) 1–25; William N. Bayless, Anti-Germanism in the age of Stilicho, in: *Byzantine Studies* 3 (1976) 70–76; L.R. Scott, Antibarbarian sentiment and the 'barbarian' general in Roman service: the case of Ricimer, in: *Proceedings of the VIIth Congress of the International Federation of the Societies of Classical Studies* 2, ed. János Harmatta (Akademiai Kiado 1984) 23–33; Walter Goffart, The theme of 'the barbarian invasions' in late antique and modern historiography, in: *Rome's Fall and After*, ed. Walter Goffart (London 1989) 111–132; Walter Pohl, The empire and the integration of barbarians, in: *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Walter Pohl (The Transformation of the Roman World 1, Leiden/New York/Köln 1997) 1–12; Peter Heather, Foedera and foederati of the fourth century, in: *Kingdoms of the Empire. The Integration of Barbarians in Late Antiquity*, ed. Walter Pohl (The Transformation of the Roman World 1, Leiden/New York/Köln 1997) 57–74.

³² Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XII, 16: *Wandalorum perfidae et dolosae gentis genere editus*.

³³ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XI, 11: *quos ipse perfidiae succenderat igni*.

³⁴ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XII, 4: *quos utique Theodosio perdidisse magis lucrum quam detrimentum fuit*.

³⁵ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XII, 12: *omnium antiquorum praesentiumque hostium longe inmanissimus*.

³⁶ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 3.

³⁷ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 3: *barbarica perfidia... erat enim Gothus prosapia*.

³⁸ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XIII, 6: *Wandalis Alanisque Hispanias infestarent*.

³⁹ Sestan, *Qualche aspetto* 75; Goffart, *Narrators* 369.

⁴⁰ Goffart, *Narrators* 369.

⁴¹ Sestan, *Qualche aspetto* 75.

by no means always hostile to them. Indeed, some figures, such as Alaric for example, are treated with a degree of ambivalence. Paul recognised that often the barbarians were the tools of other forces and they could be used for good as well as for bad.

It was noted above that in the *Historia Romana* Paul basically reflects the views of his late antique sources. This raises a particularly interesting problem, for while Paul certainly transmitted the terminology and conclusions of those authors upon whom he drew, and appears to have agreed with them, his own personal experience was likely to have been significantly different from that of someone in the late Empire, when many of the prevalent prejudices against barbarians were strengthened. The often strongly worded and unremitting condemnation of barbarians found in Orosius for instance, was coloured as much by deeply rooted ideas of social, cultural and educational differences and by the fear generated by a sense of clear and present danger, as it was by the heretical beliefs of the barbarians. We cannot be certain about any aspect of Paul's perception of his context, and can only speculate as to whether or not Paul felt a similar civilised isolation from what he understood to be, or might have witnessed as "barbaric" behaviour. As will be shown however, the evidence from his *Historia Romana* seems to suggest that he did in fact see himself in a similar relation to the "barbaric" as his predecessors, and was keen to assert himself as civilised by rejection of the "barbaric" and through the continual promotion of civilised values and virtues.

We might also expect that Paul would have interpreted the "perfidiousness" of the barbarians and the destruction and persecution they brought upon Catholics primarily in the light of their unorthodox beliefs. Yet Paul seems to have had a very traditional late-Roman view of barbarism that extended beyond heresy. In the *Historia Langobardorum*, his condemnation of the early Lombards showed that he felt no genuine sympathy for their violent and sacrilegious behaviour and he himself makes clear the contrast between the later, civilised Catholic Lombards and their barbaric predecessors.

The *Historia Romana* gives us a number of other clues about Paul's attitudes to barbarians. The term *barbarus* appears, in its nominal or adjectival form, on no less than twenty-seven occasions throughout Paul's interpolations and his original books. The first eighteen instances of this word's appearance, between IV, 8 and XIII, 2, are derived from Orosius, who used it frequently throughout his work.⁴² The nine remaining occasions on which Paul used the term have more diverse origins, being derived from the chronicles of Bede and Prosper, the Dialogues of Gregory the Great and Ennodius's *Vita Epiphani*.⁴³ What is most interesting is that on three of these occasions, at XIV, 2, 3 and 12, Paul appears to have introduced the term without any prompting from his source. Paul's source for his entry at XIV, 2 was Jordanes, who wrote *diversasque alias nationes*, which Paul paraphrased as *aliaeque...barbarae nationes*. For his entry at XIV, 3, in which Paul describes Attila's diplomatic attempts to set the Romans and Visigoths against each other, Paul drew upon Jordanes and Prosper, neither of whom used the word *barbarus*. Paul, however, describes Attila's actions as *versuta barbaries* – "barbarian trickery." At XIV, 12, where Paul describes Attila's encounter with Pope Leo, something he appears to have drawn from an unknown source or local tradition, Paul uses *barbarus* to describe Attila. In fact, it is worth noting that in the *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, Paul's assessment of Attila is even more frank. Paul describes the period of Attila's invasion as "that time when not only Gaul, but also the entire West endured the savagery of savage barbarians."⁴⁴ Attila is described as "more cruel than all beasts."⁴⁵ Paul's use of the term *barbarus* in all instances noted above certainly conforms to its typical application by late Roman authors.

Another interesting aspect of Paul's usage of *barbarus* is that the term does not occur after XV, 9, and is thus never applied to the Ostrogoths. Jordanes had used the term very sparingly – it only occurs on eight occasions throughout the entire *Getica*. The last occasion on which *barbarus* occurs

⁴² Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* IV, 8, 20; *ibid.* XI, 15, 16 (twice); *ibid.* XII, 3 (twice); *ibid.* X, 11 (twice); *ibid.* XII, 17 (six times); *ibid.* XIII, 2.

⁴³ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XIII, 5, 14; *ibid.* XIV, 2, 3, 12, 18; *ibid.* XV, 3, 9.

⁴⁴ The translation is Goffart's; Goffart, Paul 71. Paulus Diaconus, *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, ed. Pertz 262, lines 24–25: *ea tempestate, quando non solum Gallia sed universus pene occidentis barbarorum saevitiam est perpessus saevitiam.*

⁴⁵ Paulus Diaconus, *Gesta episcoporum Mettensium*, ed. Pertz 262, line 28: *omnibus belluis crudelior.*

in Paul's *Historia Romana* is in describing Odovacar's conquest of Italy. Curiously enough, on the occasions when we might most expect to find *barbarus* used, namely, in reference to the Vandals, we find instead that in three of the five entries concerning them after XV, 9, the term *perfidia*, or *perfidus* is instead applied.⁴⁶ It is also interesting to note that in the last two entries in which the Vandals are mentioned we do not encounter *perfidia* or *perfidus* or any other derogatory adjectives. Both of these, at XVI, 14 and 19, are after the Vandals have converted to Catholicism.

We have noted throughout the course of this discussion some occasions on which the term *perfidus* or *perfidia* appears in the *Historia Romana*. In total, it is used twelve times throughout the entire text and, with the exception of one occasion, relates to Arians or Arianism – five times – or to barbarians or individuals of barbarian background – six times.⁴⁷ This is in a sense unsurprising when we consider its late Roman usage. Even Salvian of Marseilles, whose attitudes to the various barbarian peoples who had entered or threatened the Empire were more generous than most of his contemporaries, used the term frequently.⁴⁸ The close relation between the use of this derogatory adjective for both heretics and barbarians appears to have helped perpetuate the perception of these two ways of being as somehow linked and equally worthy of condemnation. Neither of them conformed to what was defined as correct belief or behaviour within the Roman-Christian matrix of discourse.

That Paul, as an historian, operated very much within the Roman-Christian matrix of discourse becomes immediately obvious when we examine the way in which he distinguished between, for instance, the "Romans" or, essentially, established inhabitants of the Empire, and those others who arrived from outside, namely, the barbarians. The questions we must now consider are the following: To what degree does Paul's use of terminology in the *Historia Romana* reveal continuity with classical and late Roman ethnographical ideas? Is this terminology consistent, and what does it reveal about his attitude to the Roman Empire, both classical and contemporary, and what can it tell us about his understanding of his own position within the context of the terminological definitions he deploys? We might begin by borrowing a phrase from Walter Pohl, and inquiring: what "strategies of distinction" are evident within the *Historia Romana*?⁴⁹

In order to answer this, we must first establish the terminology that Paul has employed in reference to different peoples throughout the *Historia Romana* and see how this relates to his sources and the context of ancient ethnography, beginning with the terms *gens*, *natio*, and *populus*.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 19; *ibid.* XVI, 3, 7.

⁴⁷ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XI, 11, 13; *ibid.* XII, 5, 10, 11, 16; *ibid.* XV, 3 (twice), 4, 19; *ibid.* XVI, 3, 7.

⁴⁸ See for instance, Salvian of Marseilles, *De gubernatione Dei* VII, 15 (ed. Charles Halm, *Salviani presbyteri Massiliensis libri qui supersunt*, MGH AA 1, Berlin 1961) 1–108, at 64: *Gothorum gens perfida, sed pudica est, Alanorum impudica, sed minus perfida, Franci mendaces, sed hospitales, Saxones crudelitate efferi, sed castitate mirandi: omnes denique gentes habent, sicut pecularia mala, ita etiam quaedam bona*. English translation: Jeremiah F. O'Sullivan, *The Writings of Salvian the Presbyter* (Washington 1947). See also, Michael Maas, *Ethnicity, orthodoxy and community in Salvian of Marseilles*, in: *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity*, ed. John Drinkwater/Hugh Elton (Cambridge 1992) 275–284.

⁴⁹ See Walter Pohl, introduction, in: *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities*, 300–800, ed. Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (*The Transformation of the Roman World* 2, Leiden/New York/Köln 1998) 1–17.

⁵⁰ The literature addressing classical ethnography, ethnicity and ethnogenesis in late antiquity and the early middle ages is extensive. See for instance, Reinhard Wenskus, *Stammesbildung und Verfassung. Das Werden der frühmittelalterlichen gentes* (Köln 1961); Walter Pohl, *Tradition, Ethnogenese und literarische Gestaltung: eine Zwischenbilanz*, in: *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner/Brigitte Merz (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 31, Wien/München 1994) 9–26; Stefano Gasparri, *Prima delle nazioni. Popoli, etnie e regni fra Antichità e Medioevo* (Roma 1997); Patrick Amory, *People and Identity in Ostrogothic Italy, 489–554* (Cambridge 1997); *id.*, *The meaning and purpose of ethnic terminology in the Burgundian laws*, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994) 1–28; *id.*, *Ethnographic rhetoric, aristocratic attitudes and political allegiance in post-Roman Gaul*, in: *KLIO* 76 (1994) 438–453; Peter Heather, *The Goths* (Oxford 1996); Herwig Wolfram, *Origo et religio. Ethnic traditions and literature in early medieval texts*, in: *Early Medieval Europe* 3 (1994) 19–38. See also, John A. Armstrong, *Nations Before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill 1982); Thomas H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives* (London 1993); *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organisation of Cultural Difference*, ed. Fredrik Barth (London 1969).

The term *gens, gentis* occurs thirty-five times in both the interpolations and Paul's original continuation in its various forms.⁵¹ Amongst these there are only two examples of the term being used in reference to the Romans. The first example we find is an indirect metaphorical ascription with broader applications and should be understood as a somewhat different usage of the term. This occurs at VII, 8 where the Romans are included in a general ascription of good fortune to the "people of Christ", *gentibus Christi*. The second usage occurs in Book XV where Paul has drawn his entry along with the usage of the term from Bede's chronicle in noting that Ambrosius Aurelianus was the only survivor of the "mighty Roman people."⁵² It must be noted that there has been some dispute over how the term *gens, gentis* should be translated. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, the term was traditionally rendered as "race", or even "tribe" or "nation."⁵³ For its less biological connotations, the term "people" is generally a preferable alternative, although, as is the case in the following paragraph, in certain constructions where the term appears to have a biological association, "race" seems the most appropriate translation.

We also encounter the term *genus, -eris* in reference to the Romans on two occasions, both derived from Orosius. At XII, 12, Radagaisus is described as desiring the "blood of the entire Roman race," *omnem Romani generis sanguinem*, whereas the reference at XII, 16 is less direct, referring to Stilicho's willingness to sacrifice the "blood of the entire human race;" *totius generis humani sanguinem*.

The term *gens* is, therefore, reserved almost exclusively throughout the *Historia Romana* for use in reference to barbarian groups or people other than the Romans. Hence we commonly find expressions such as *barbarorum gentibus, Germanorum gentibus, gentis Wandalorum, gentes copiis, fortissimorum gentium, gens Langobardorum*, and so on. As is pointed out below, this mirrors the usage of the term in Paul's *Historia Langobardorum*.

Paul uses the term *natio* on just four occasions, always in reference to peoples other than the Romans, and twice in the same construction, *barbarae nationes*, derived from Orosius and Jordanes respectively.⁵⁴ In late antiquity, *natio* typically had the same meaning as the word *gens*.⁵⁵

The term *populus* occurs frequently throughout the *Historia Romana* and has a much broader application than its definition in the *Etymologiae*, and than the terms *gens* and *natio*. *Populus* is used both for reference to an individual people or a group of peoples. Thus the Visigoths under Euric are called, *Wisigothorum populi*, whilst the various nations under the rule of Bleba, Attila's brother, are referred to as *populos*. The term is also found describing the inhabitants of a region. This provides some very interesting examples, for at XV, 16 and XVI, 8, we find the constructions *Italiae populi* and *Italiae populos*. The force with which Aetius confronts Attila in 451 is said to consist of *totius populi Occidentis*.⁵⁶ The term is also used in reference to people under the rule of a particular individual, thus at XII, 12 we find the phrase *in eius populos*, in reference to the army of Radagaisus.

Populus is only applied to the Romans specifically on three occasions. At XIV, 16, the inhabitants of Rome are referred to as *popularibus*; at XV, 14, when the Ostrogothic King, Theodoric is given leave to invade Italy, he is commended, in a very classical construction, to *Senatus... populusque Romanum*, and at XVI, 20, where we are informed that the Lombards were friends of the Roman people, *populi Romani*. The use of the term in Paul's late-Roman sources displays its flexibility to be applied specifically and non-specifically, and throughout the *Historia Romana* it operates with the same flexibility.

⁵¹ The term occurs at Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* IV, 2, 8; *ibid.* VI, 10, 17; *ibid.* VII, 8, 10; *ibid.* XI, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16; *ibid.* XII, 2, 16, 17; *ibid.* XIII, 10, 16; *ibid.* XIV, 2, 7, 13, 16, 18; *ibid.* XV, 12, 14, 19; *ibid.* XVI, 20.

⁵² Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 17: *forte Historia Romanae gentis*.

⁵³ Susan Reynolds, *Our forefathers? Tribes, peoples, and nations in the historiography of the age of migrations*, in: *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History*, ed. Alexander Callander Murray (Toronto 1998) 17–36, at 26.

⁵⁴ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XI, 15; *ibid.* XIV, 2.

⁵⁵ Walter Pohl, *Conceptions of ethnicity in early medieval studies*, in: *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. Lester K. Little/Barbara H. Rosenwein (Oxford 1998) 15–24, at 16.

⁵⁶ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XIV, 4.

Paul's use of these three terms conforms precisely to the ways in which the term is deployed in other late Roman and early medieval texts. *Gens* and *natio* effectively acted as synonyms throughout classical and late Roman literature, a tendency which continued throughout the early and high middle ages and on into the Renaissance. Both terms had traditionally been applied to peoples who had not as yet achieved a settled statehood of some kind, and this application was not only retained throughout late antiquity, but came increasingly to relate exclusively to barbarians.⁵⁷ In the context of Roman-Christian ethnographical discourse, the terms *gens*, *natio* and *ethne* came to imply a stage of development for a people before they achieved the ideal goal of a settled, civilised and orthodox existence, for which Catholic *Romanitas* was the benchmark. The continuity of these ideas into early medieval thought meant that, to quote Walter Pohl, "even authors who actively propagated ethnic traditions, like Cassiodorus or Paul the Deacon, saw it as a stage, however necessary, that should eventually be overcome, be it on the road to Romanness or to a universal Christian community."⁵⁸

That Paul did not see the Romans as a *gens* is hardly surprising considering that almost none of his predecessors had done so. Isidore certainly did not consider the Romans to be a *gens*, rather he acknowledged that there was a plurality of peoples within the Roman Empire which, to a certain degree, constituted a single *populus*.⁵⁹ Neither *Romanitas* nor Christianity erased ethnic distinctions. Romans were also Africans, Italians, Thracians, Tuscans, Sicilians, and so on. Rather than removing the distinction between *gentes* and *nationes*, the Empire had instead provided a uniform discourse, context and language as a means by which an overarching universality might be achieved.⁶⁰

Whereas *gens* and *natio* effectively remained synonymous and retained their meaning and application, the meaning and use of the term *populus*, underwent a significant transformation under the Empire and into the early medieval period. Whilst for Cicero, in his *De re publica*, *populus* implied a social and political group as distinct from the Senatorial class, and as distinct from the term *plebs*, under the Empire the term came increasingly to be used in reference to "tribes" or "peoples" outside the Empire.⁶¹ In his *Etymologiae*, Isidore of Seville followed the Ciceronian meaning of the term, even though our sources indicate clearly that in practice throughout the fifth and sixth centuries the term was used in the same way as it was under the late Empire. The application of *populus* often depended upon the style of the author and did not have the same strength of distinction as *gens* or *natio*.⁶²

In the *Historia Langobardorum*, Paul never uses the term *gens* in reference to the Romans, although he does use the term *genus*, *-eris* on one occasion, when referring to the most noble "stock" of Theodote, a Roman girl whom King Cunincpert desired.⁶³ Nor does Paul use *gens* when he chooses to refer to easterners as "Greek," although we also find a single usage of the term *genus*, *-eris* in reference to the Greeks, at III, 15, regarding the Emperor Maurice who is said to be the first emperor "from the race of the Greeks," *ex Graecorum genere*. Curiously enough, in the same chapter, Maurice is initially described as "a Cappadocian by race."⁶⁴ Whilst not applied to the Romans, *gens* is very commonly used in reference to the Lombards and other groups of people such as the Franks, Saracens, Bulgars, and Slavs.

On the other hand, in the *Historia Langobardorum*, Paul once again uses the term *populus* in a much broader sense. It is regularly applied to the people of the city of Rome, the general non-Lom-

⁵⁷ Benedykt Zientara, *Populus – Gens – Natio. Einige Probleme aus dem Bereich der ethnischen Terminologie des frühen Mittelalters*, in: *Nationalismus in vorindustrieller Zeit*, ed. Otto Dann (München 1986) 11–20, at 14; Walter Pohl, *Telling the difference: signs of ethnic identity*, in: *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (The Transformation of the Roman World 2, Leiden/New York/Köln 1998) 17–70, at 68.

⁵⁸ Pohl, *Telling the difference* 68.

⁵⁹ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive originum libri XX*, IX, 4, 5 (ed. Wallace M. Lindsay, Oxford 1910) s.p.

⁶⁰ Pohl, *Telling the difference* 24–25.

⁶¹ Cicero, *De re publica* I, 39; Zientara, *Populus – Gens – Natio* 14.

⁶² Isidore, *Etymologiae* IX, 4, 5, ed. Lindsay s.p.; Zientara, *Populus – Gens – Natio* 16–18; Pohl, *Telling the difference* 23.

⁶³ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* V, 37, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 157.

⁶⁴ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* III, 15, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 100: *genere Cappadocem*.

bard population of Italy or the citizens of the Empire, along with the people of specific rulers or those composing a designated group such as the Franks, Beneventines, and only very rarely, the Lombards themselves. As was noted above with regard to the *Historia Romana*, it would seem that for Paul, *populus* was a much less specific term, whereas *gens* applied only to a group identifiable as something more akin to a “race.”

There are a number of other means by which groups of people are distinguished in the *Historia Romana*. The most frequent means of reference is simply to supply the group name. This applies for both Roman and non-Roman people. Hence, for example, we find *Romanorum*, *Romani*, *Romanis*, *Burgundionem*, *Sarmatae*, and *Quadorum*. The term *Catholici* also occurs in a number of places, used in almost every instance as a means of distinguishing between Catholics and Arians or other heretics.

The *Historia Romana* also contains a number of less specific terms such as *cives*, which is almost exclusively reserved for describing the inhabitants of a particular city or those from a group of cities that have been mentioned. There is also a single usage of the term *habitoribus*.⁶⁵ The term *plebs* occurs twice, once with reference to the citizens of Constantinople, and once with reference to the people of Africa under the Vandals.⁶⁶ We also encounter terms such as *hostium*, *captivorum*, or *suos*, the last being used in reference to the people of a particular ruler, although never in reference to the Romans.

As was noted above, one of the most common means by which the Romans are identified throughout the *Historia Romana*, is simply through use of the adjective “Roman”, as a collective term. This term, in its various forms, is introduced by Paul into the *Historia Romana* on 110 occasions, with a relatively even distribution. It occurs 54 times in his interpolations, and 56 times in his original continuation; 11 times in Book XI, 10 in XII, 7 in XIII, 11 in XIV, 7 in XV, and 10 times in XVI. Throughout the *Historia Romana*, as might be expected, the adjective is applied to people, institutions, troops, territory, and essentially anything that can be recognised as belonging to or within the territory of the Roman Empire.

As might also be expected, the *Historia Romana* presents a certain complexity of definition that was inevitable with the collapse of centralised Roman rule over the West; the problem being that of distinguishing, if it was felt necessary, between the people of the city of Rome and the Romans more broadly. Throughout the *Historia Romana* no direct attempt is made to distinguish between these two applications of the adjective “Roman,” although there are certainly instances where it is clear which group of people is implied by the usage. For instance, during Theodoric’s conquest of Italy, we are informed that: “having proceeded to Rome he was received by the Romans with great praise, to whom he conceded an annual subsidy of 120,000 modii of wheat.”⁶⁷ In this instance, it is clear that it is the population of the City of Rome who are being referred to. Indeed, throughout Book XVI, in describing the Gothic wars, the term is more commonly applied to the inhabitants of Rome itself. Yet whilst we can recognise the specific application of the adjective in this instance, it is never set in opposition to the broader use of the term. It is interesting to note that with the capture of Rome by Belisarius during the conflict with the Goths, any possible ambiguity or paradox inherent in the fact that the term “Romans” had previously had to apply to both the inhabitants of Rome, and the inhabitants of the Eastern Empire has in a sense been removed. Thus, when the Gothic counter-attack takes place, the inhabitants of Rome and “Roman” imperial forces can be conveniently contained under the same label.

In the *Historia Langobardorum*, the term “Roman” is applied broadly and specifically; to the Empire itself;⁶⁸ to personnel of the Eastern Empire;⁶⁹ to the inhabitants of Italy as opposed to the

⁶⁵ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 9.

⁶⁶ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XI, 11; *ibid.* XV, 19.

⁶⁷ Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Romana* XV, 18: *nec multo post Romam profectus a Romanis magno gaudio susceptus est, quibus ille singulis tritici ad subsidium annis CXX milia modiorum concessit.*

⁶⁸ E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* I, 25, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 62.

⁶⁹ E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* IV, 36, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 128.

Lombards;⁷⁰ to any towns or cities in Italy holding allegiance to either the Eastern Empire, Rome, Ravenna, or effectively independent from a Lombard king or duke;⁷¹ to certain styles and manners;⁷² and specifically to anyone associated with the City of Rome itself.⁷³ The adjective "Roman" seems effectively applicable to anything associated with either the Empire or the City of Rome, which, in fact, mirrors the range in which this term is applied throughout eighth-century Italy.⁷⁴

In both the *Historia Romana* and the *Historia Langobardorum*, the term also quite clearly operates to provide a much broader identity, which allows a variety of other identities to co-exist within it. As we noted above in the *Historia Romana*, the Romans are almost never referred to as a *gens*, and hence "Roman" never has the same indivisible attachment to established identity that a term such as "Lombard" does.

There are a number of important conclusions that might be drawn from the above discussion. In many ways what is most interesting about Paul's attitude to barbarians and his strategies of distinction with regard to different *gentes*, *nationes*, or *populus*, is the degree to which he was willing to endorse the definitions and distinctions, along with the prejudices, that he found in his late Roman sources. In so doing, Paul makes clear that these terms of reference and the conclusions of classical and late Roman ethnography were still current within eighth-century Italy and still formed an active and perhaps intrinsic conceptual framework. As Walter Pohl wrote: The relative ease with which the Goth Jordanes, the Frank Fredegar or the Lombard Paul the Deacon applied Roman ethnography to their own peoples demonstrates that it was basically seen as an open system. It represented a dialogue between Rome and the *gentes*...⁷⁵

The dialogue between Rome and the *gentes* becomes clear in the terminology of the *Historia Langobardorum* in reference to the Lombards. Even though they have achieved a certain *Romanitas* and converted to Catholicism, their position as external to and often in opposition to the Empire meant that they retained their status as a *gens*.

Paul could equally deploy Roman ethnography in relation to the Romans themselves. In the *Historia Romana* we also have a clear dialogue between Catholic *Romanitas* and the *gentes*, and it is clear on which side of this dialogue Paul sees himself as standing. Through the values it promotes, the *Historia Romana* makes clear the continued existence of the ideal of a universality based on *Romanitas* and orthodoxy, and in many ways this helps us to understand Paul's ability to see institutional continuity between the Republic of Eutropius and that of his own time.

The aegis of the position of emperor included rule over a diverse group of peoples and was not restricted to ruling a single *gens*. Nor was the diversity of the identity of those under the rule of the emperor diminished. Hence the "Roman" emperor could be both a Cappadocian, and a Greek. Identity, particularly within the Republic, was multifaceted. The number of people under the banner of the Republic and thus the number of people who could be called "Roman" could expand or contract, and this is something that the *Historia Romana* in many ways makes clear. In a sense, the imperial idea was oddly commemorated in the lingering inability to define the inhabitants of the Empire as a single distinct *gens*. Whether understood consciously or unconsciously, the *Imperium Romanum* still had about it an intrinsic air of universality.

Paul's willingness to transmit strongly negative and heavily prejudiced views of barbarians also make clear his belief in a civilised Catholic ideal which exists as an identity in itself and which is to be asserted against barbarism and paganism or heretical belief. Walter Pohl stated that: "in the long-

⁷⁰ E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* II, 4, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 74.

⁷¹ E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* IV, 45; VI, 1, 27, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 135, 164, 175.

⁷² E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* IV, 22, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 124.

⁷³ E.g. Paulus Diaconus, *Historia Langobardorum* V, 11, ed. Bethmann/Waitz 149f.

⁷⁴ Brigitte Pohl-Reisl, Legal practice and ethnic identity in Lombard Italy, in: *Strategies of Distinction: The Construction of Ethnic Communities, 300–800*, ed. Walter Pohl/Helmut Reimitz (*The Transformation of the Roman World 2*, Leiden/New York/Köln 1998) 205–219. See also, ead., *Ethnische Bezeichnungen und Rechtsbekenntnisse in langobardischen Urkunden*, in: *Ethnogenese und Überlieferung. Angewandte Methoden der Frühmittelalterforschung*, ed. Karl Brunner/Brigitte Merta (*Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 31*, Wien/München 1994) 163–171.

⁷⁵ Pohl, *Telling the difference* 66f.

run, none of the ethnic communities could survive without relying on the Roman-Christian discourse and the forms of cohesion it could offer.”⁷⁶ This is true both with regard to the survival of a group as a group, and with the evolution of that group away from barbarism. *Romanitas* was in a sense, the inevitable goal in the evolution of a *gens*. The strength of the Roman-Christian discourse was such that the equation of this civilised ideal of Catholic *Romanitas* with the imperial idea of universality retained a clear potency in the eighth century.

⁷⁶ Pohl, *Telling the difference* 67.