

mans by Pope Leo III: with the endorsement of the papacy, the semi-barbarian Carolingians had revived the Roman empire in western Europe, at least in name.

The Lombard kingdom was quickly incorporated into this empire. Responding to yet another papal appeal for help, in 773 Charlemagne launched the final invasion of Italy that put an end to Lombard rule. His main army crossed the Alps by the Great St Bernard pass, while he himself led a smaller detachment over the Mont-Cénis and down the valley of Susa towards Turin. The Lombards tried to bar the bottom end of the pass with fortifications, close to where the abbey of San Michele della Chiusa now towers above the entry to the plain, but Charlemagne's forces outflanked these defenses – perhaps using mountain paths pointed out to them by one of the monks of Novalesa – and quickly overwhelmed the Lombard army. In all probability Turin would have been the first city to fall to the Franks. Within a year Charlemagne had captured Pavia, the Lombards' capital, and deposed their last king. Charlemagne now assumed the title of "King of the Franks and Lombards", demonstrating his intention to rule his Italian kingdom as one of the provinces of his Frankish empire. It retained its separate identity, and was still known as either the Kingdom of Italy, the *Regnum Italiae*, or the Kingdom of the Lombards, the *Regnum Langobardorum*. Pavia remained its capital, the place where its kings were proclaimed. But Charlemagne did not rule this realm in person; his capital was far to the north of the Alps, at Aachen, and he ruled as an itinerant monarch, fighting wars across the length and breadth of his empire, and issuing edicts from wherever he halted in his travels. In 781 he installed his son Pepin the Younger as king of his Italian domains, and had him crowned by the pope. But Pepin died young, and the royal title temporarily reverted to his father. Locally, authority was exercised in the emperor's name by Frankish officials, or counts, whom he appointed to govern the Italian territories. Several times Charlemagne passed through Turin, notably in the year 800, on the way to his coronation in Rome, but his presence there, as in all of Italy, was fleeting.

Charlemagne's government in Italy built on the structure created by the Lombards, but modified it in significant ways. In certain respects there was obvious continuity: Carolingian counts merely replaced the Lombard dukes in key cities like Turin. Frankish local administration was probably more effective than that of the Lombards. The Carolingian counts were more numerous than the Lombard dukes had been, and governed smaller areas. Furthermore, the emperor dispatched itinerant officials – the *missi dominici* – to investigate abuses, administer