

## Venantius Fortunatus and his Carolingian *Fortuna*

### 1. Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 2.13

Libet quoque nos pauca de venerabili et sapientissimo viro Fortunato retexere [...] Denique hic de quo loquimur Fortunatus natus quidem in loco qui **Duplabilis** dicitur fuit [...]. Sed tamen **Ravennae nutritus et doctus**, in arte grammatica sive rethorica seu etiam metrica clarissimus extitit. Hic cum **oculorum dolorem** vehementissimum pateretur, et nihilominus Felix iste ipsius socius pari modo oculos doleret, utriusque ad basilicam Beatorum Pauli atque Iohannis, quae intra eandem urbem sita est, perrexere. In qua etiam **altarium in honorem beati Martini confessoris** constructum propinquam habet fenestram, in qua **lucerna** ad exhibendum lumen est constituta. **De cuius oleo** mox sibi isti, Fortunatus scilicet et Felix, **dolentia lumina tetigerunt**. Ilico dolore fugato sanitatem, quam optabant, adepti sunt. Qua de causa Fortunatus **in tantum beatum Martinum veneratus est, ut, relicta patria**, [...], **Toronos ad eiusdem beati viri sepulchrum properaret**. Qui sibi, ut in suis ipse carminibus refert, illuc properanti per fluenta Tiliamenti et Reunam perque Osupum et Alpem Iuliam perque Aguntum castrum Dravumque et Byrrum fluvios ac Briones et Augustam civitatem, quam Virdo et Lecha fluentant, iter fuisse describit. Qui postquam Toronos iuxta votum proprium advenit, **Pictavis pertransiens, illic habitavit**, et multorum ibidem sanctorum gesta partim prosa, partim metrali ratione conscripsit; novissimeque in eadem civitate **primum presbiter, deinde episcopus** ordinatus est, atque in eodem loco digno tumulatus honore quiescit. Hic beati **Martini vitam quattuor in libris heroico versu contexuit, et multa alia maximeque ymnos singularum festivitatum et praecipue ad singulos amicos versiculos**, nulli poetarum secundus, suavi et disserto sermone composuit. [...]

### 2) Cf. Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita S. Martini* 4.689-701

Est ubi basilicae culmen Pauli atque Iohannis,  
hic paries retinet sancti sub imagine formam: 690  
amplectenda ipso dulci pictura colore.  
Sub pedibus iusti paries habet arte fenestram:  
lychnus adest, cuius vitrea natat ignis in urna.  
Huc ego dum propero, valido torquente dolore,  
diffugiente gemens oculorum luce fenestris, 695  
quo procul ut tetigi benedicto lumen olivo,  
igneus ille vapor marcenti fronte recessit  
et praesens medicus blando fugat unguine morbos.  
Non oblita mihi mea lumina munere sancti, nam  
redit ante oculos oculorum cura fidelis 700  
et memor illud ero dum luce et corpore consto.

*Where the lofty basilica of Paul and John stands, there a wall  
retains the portrait of the saint in the shape of an icon: (690) the  
image is to be embraced with its most sweet colour. At the feet of the  
righteous man, the wall has an artfully placed window. There is a  
lamp, whose fire floats in a glassy vessel. While I hurry towards it –  
the severe pain is excruciating, (695) – groaning as the light flees  
from the windows of my eyes, as soon as I touched my eye with the  
blessed oil, that burning exhalation vanished away from my  
withering face and that (spiritually) present physician wards off  
diseases with soothing ointment. My eyes did not forget the saint's  
grace, (700) for the faithful healing of my eyes returns before my  
very eyes, and I will remember this as long as I remain in my flesh  
and sight.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> When not stated otherwise, translations are mine.

### 3. Paul the Deacon, *Historia Langobardorum* 2.13

Ingenio clarus, sensu celer, ore suavis,  
Cuius dulce melos pagina multa canit,  
Fortunatus, apex vatum, venerabilis actu,  
Ausonia genitus, hac tumulatur humo.  
Cuius ab ore sacro sanctorum gesta priorum  
Discimus: haec monstrant carpere lucis iter.  
Felix, quae tantis decoraris, Gallia, gemmis,  
Lumine de quarum nox tibi tetra fugit.  
Hos modicus prompsi plebeio carmine versus,  
Ne tuus in populis, sancte, lateret honor.  
Redde vicem misero: ne iudice spernar ab aequo,  
Eximiis meritis posce, beate, precor.

*Famous in talent, quick in understanding and gentle in speech  
Many an eloquent page sings his melodious lay:  
Here in this soil Fortunatus lies buried, the first among poets, Born  
in Ausonian land, worthy of honor in deed,  
From his holy lips, we learn deeds of the saints:  
To us they show the way to the light.  
Happy art thou, o land of Gaul, with such jewels emblazoned,  
Whose resplendent fire scatters the shadows of night! Verses of  
commonplace song, in thy honor, O saint, have I written, Lest thy  
fame, holy man, lie hid, to the people.  
Render to me, who is wretched, a return, and ask through thy  
illustrious merits  
That the Eternal Judge show mercy to me too.<sup>2</sup>*

### 4. Venantius Fortunatus, *Vita S. Martini* 1.14-24;

Primus enim docili distinguens ordine carmen  
Maiestatis opus metri canit arte Iuencus. 15  
Hinc quoque conspicui radiauit lingua Seduli  
Paucaque perstrinxit florente Orientius ore,  
Martyribusque piis sacra haec donaria mittens  
Prudens prudenter Prudentius immolat actus.  
Stemmata corde fide pollens Paulinus et arte 20  
Versibus explicuit Martini dogma magistri.  
Sortis apostolicae quae gesta vocantur et actus  
Facundo eloquio sulcauit vates Arator.  
Quod sacra explicuit serie genealogus olim,  
Alcimus egregio digessit acumine praesul. 25

*For as the first, composing a poem in learned  
arrangement, (15) Juencus sings of the work of the  
divine majesty in the art of the metre. Then too the  
tongue of brilliant Sedulius won distinction and  
Orientius treated a few topics with eloquent voice,  
and, in sending his holy offerings to the pious martyrs,  
prudent Prudentius prudently offers his acts as a  
tribute. (20) Paulinus, powerful in lineage, intellect,  
faith, and art, set out the teaching of our master  
Martin in verse. The poet Arator ploughed with easy  
eloquence what are known as the deeds and acts of the  
apostolic company. And what the chronicler of Genesis  
unfolded in a sacred series of books long ago, (25)  
Bishop Alcimus set out with illustrious acumen.<sup>3</sup>*

Alcuin, *Carm.* 4 Dümmler: Full text and translation by S. Cardwell at the following link:

[https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/sites/all/modules/custom/vm/VersioningMachine/texts/Alcuin\\_CarmenIV.html](https://sourcebook.stanford.edu/sites/all/modules/custom/vm/VersioningMachine/texts/Alcuin_CarmenIV.html)

<sup>2</sup> Translation by W. D. Foulke, *Paul the Deacon: History of the Langobards* (Philadelphia, 1907), pp. 69-70, modified.

<sup>3</sup> Translation by Nigel M. Kay, *Venantius Fortunatus: Vita Sancti Martini* (Cambridge, 2020), p. 47, modified.

## 5. Aimoinus of Fleury, *De gestis Francorum* 3.16

Ingrediente autem postmodum Chilperico rege in urbem Parisiacam: sequenti die postquam rex ingressus est civitatem, paralyticus, qui in porticu basilicae sancti Vincentii (in qua beatus Germanus requiescit in corpore) residebat, dirigitur: mane autem facto, spectante populo beato antistiti gratias referebat. Quod cum regi nunciatum foret, magna cum devotione illuc adveniens et tanto gavisus miraculo eius epitaphium his distichis rhythmice composuit.

Ecclesiae speculum, patriae vigor, arra reorum,  
Et pater et medicus, pastor amorque gregis,  
Germanus, virtute, fide, corde, ore, beatus  
Carne tenet tumulum, mentis honore polum.  
Vir cui dura nihil nocuerunt fata sepulchri.  
Vivit enim: nam mors quem tulit, ipsa timet.  
Crevit adhuc potius iustus post funera: nam qui  
Fictile vas fuerat, gemma superba micat.  
Huius opem ac meritum, mutis data verba loquuntur,  
Redditus et caecis praedicat ore dies.  
Nunc vir apostolicus rapiens de carne trophaeum,  
Iure triumphali considet arce throni.

*Paragon of the church, strength of the homeland,  
pledge of the guilty, father and physician, shepherd and  
love of the his: Germanus, blessed in virtue, heart,  
voicem, with his body, he occupies his tomb, the  
heavens with the grace of his soul. For the man whom  
the fates of the grave did not harm, still lives: despite  
snatching him away, death itself fears him. The  
righteous man has risen even higher after death, for he  
who was an earth vessel, now shines as a lofty jewel.  
The faculty of speech given to the mute attest his works  
and merits, and the light given back to the blind  
proclaims it too. Now, the apostolic man made a  
victory trophy out of death and sits in heaven's citadel,  
as in a triumph.*

Factaque illi prae dictus rex oblatione solenni munificentia regali, ad propria rediit.

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