CIVIC IDENTITY AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION IN LATE ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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AND THE MIDDLE AGES

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Civic Identity and Civic Participation in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages

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Acknowledgements

The idea of studying the transformations of citizenship and civic participation from a diachronic perspective, from the Roman imperial period down to the early Middle Ages, originally emerged during a conversation we had during our stay at Princeton in the fall of 2015, Els Rose as a Member of the Institute of Advanced Study, School of Historical Studies, and Cédric Brélaz as a Stanley J. Seeger Visiting Research Fellow in Hellenic Studies at Princeton University. It soon became clear for us that the best way to address this topic would be to invite experts of different periods and areas to contribute to a collected book whose purpose would be to deal with the changes which affected civic identities over time for the period *c.* 300–1000 CE. First drafts of chapters were discussed during a conference held on 29–30 November 2018 in Rome, at the Reale Istituto Neerlandese di Roma and at the Istituto Svizzero di Roma. We would like to thank both institutions for hosting the conference, as well as their directors and staff for their interest in our project from the outset, for their generous support, and for their help in organizing the event: Prof. Dr Harald Hendrix, Ms Kathleen van Dijk, and Ms Agnieszka Konkol at the Dutch Institute, and Mrs Joëlle Comé, Dr Adrian Brändli, and Mrs Anna Schulz Seyring at the Swiss Institute. The conference and the publication of this book were made possible thanks to generous grants from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO VICI-Rose 277-30-002 *Citizenship Discourses in the Early Middle Ages, 400–1100* and NWO Open Access grant 36.201.012), from Utrecht University, from the Swiss National Science Foundation, and from the *Fonds de recherche du Centenaire* of the University of Fribourg. We also thank Dr Megan Welton, Teun van Dijk BA, Anne Sieberichs BA, and Xavier Mabillard BA for their help in the preparation and editing of the manuscript. Finally, our acknowledgement goes to Prof. Yitzhak Hen (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) for welcoming this volume in the 'Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages' series of which he is the director and for his constant support, to the anonymous reviewer of the manuscript, to Guy Carney as editorial manager of the series, as well as the staff of Brepols Publishers for taking care of the publication of the book, as both hard copy and open access simultaneously, in the best possible way.

Abbreviations

ACO	*Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum*, ed. by Edward Schwartz and others (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1914–)
AE	*L'Année Épigraphique* (Paris, 1888–)
ANRW	*Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung*, ed. by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1972–)
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina (Turnhout: Brepols, 1953–)
CCT	Corpus Christianorum in Translation (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010–)
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin, 1863–)
CJ	*Codex Iustinianus*, ed. by Paul Krüger, vol. II of *Corpus Iuris Civilis* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1912); *The Codex of Justinian: A New Annotated Translation, with Parallel Latin and Greek Text, Based on a Translation by Justice Fred H. Blume*, trans. by Bruce W. Frier, 3 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)
CLE	*Carmina Latina Epigraphica*, ed. by Franz Bücheler and Ernst Lommatzsch, 2 vols and Supplementum (Leipzig: Teubner, 1895–1926)
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum (Vienna: Hoelder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1866–)
CTh	*Codex Theodosianus*: *Theodosiani libri XVI cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis et leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes*, ed. by Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Mayer, 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1903–1905); *The Theodosian Code and Novels, and the Sirmondian Constitutions*, trans. by Clyde Pharr (New York: Greenwood Press, 1952)
EAOR	*Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell'Occidente romano* (Rome: Quasar, 1988–)
EDCS	Epigraphik-Datenbank Clauss / Slaby, <http://db.edcs.eu/epigr/epi.php?s_sprache=de>
EDR	Epigraphic Database Roma, <http://www.edr-edr.it/default/index.php>

EI[2]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, ed. by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, 2nd edn, 12 vols (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2005)
EI[3]	*Encyclopaedia of Islam, THREE*, ed. by Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, and Everett Rowson (Leiden: Brill, online), <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/encyclopaedia-of-islam-3>
EphEp	*Ephemeris epigraphica, Corporis inscriptionum Latinarum supplementum* (Rome: Institutus archaeologicus Romanus; Berlin: G. Reimer, 1872–1913)
HEp	*Hispania epigraphica* (Madrid: Servicio de publicaciones, Universidad Complutense, 1989–)
I.Aphrodisias 2007	*Inscriptions of Aphrodisias* 2007, ed. by Joyce Reynolds, Charlotte Roueché, and Gabriel Bodard, <http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007>
I.Iasos	*Die Inschriften von Iasos*, ed. by Wolfgang Blümel (Bonn: Habelt, 1985)
I.Stratonikeia	*Die Inschriften von Stratonikeia*, ed. by Mehmet Ç. Şahin (Bonn: Habelt, 1981)
I.Tralleis	*Die Inschriften von Tralleis und Nysa I*, ed. by Fjodor B. Poljakov (Bonn: Habelt, 1989)
ICI	*Inscriptiones Christianae Italiae septimo saeculo antiquiores* (Bari: Edipuglia, 1985–)
ICUR	*Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores*, ed. by Giovanni Battista De Rossi (Rome: Libraria Pontificia / Libraria P. Cuggiani, 1857–1915)
ICUR n.s.	*Inscriptiones Christianae Urbis Romae septimo saeculo antiquiores. Nova series*, ed. by Angelo Silvagni and others (Rome: Befani; Vatican: Institutum archaeologiae christianae, 1922–)
IDR	*Inscriptiones Daciae Romanae* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Republicii Socialiste România, 1975–)
IG	*Inscriptiones Graecae* (Berlin, 1873–)
IGR	*Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes*, ed. by René Cagnat and others (Paris: Leroux, 1906–1927)
IGUR	*Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*, ed. by Luigi Moretti (Rome: G. Bardi, 1968–1990)
ILS	*Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*, ed. by Hermann Dessau (Berlin: Weidmann, 1892–1916)
ILCV	*Inscriptiones Latinae Christianae Veteres*, ed. by Ernst Diehl (Berlin: Weidmann, 1925–1967)
InscrIt	*Inscriptiones Italiae* (Rome, 1931–)
IRT	*The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, ed. by Joyce M. Reynolds and John B. Ward-Perkins (Rome: British School at Rome, 1952)

LCL		Loeb Classical Library
LSA		Last Statues of Antiquity, <http://laststatues.classics.ox.ac.uk/>
MAMA		*Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiquae*, 11 vols (Manchester: Manchester University Press; London: Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, 1928–2013)
MGH		Monumenta Germaniae historica
	AA	Auctores antiquissimi (Berlin: Weidmann, 1877–)
	CRF	Capitularia regum Francorum, ed. by Alfred Boretius and Viktor Krause, 2 vols (Hanover: Hahn, 1883–1897)
	LNG	Leges nationum Germanicarum, ed. by Karl Zeumer (Hanover: Hahn, 1876–1902)
	SRG	Scriptores rerum Germanicarum (Hanover: Hahn, 1841–)
	SRL	Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum saec. VI–IX, ed. by Georg Waitz (Hanover: Hahn, 1878)
	SRM	Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum (Hanover: Hahn, 1885–1979)
NRSV		*The Bible. New Revised Standard Version Anglicised Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995)
PG		*Patrologiae cursus completus, series Graeca*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 161 vols (Paris, 1857–1866)
PIR/*PIR*^{2}		*Prosopographia Imperii Romani. Saec. I. II. III.* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1897–1898; 2nd edn, 1933–)
PL		*Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina*, ed. by Jacques-Paul Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1841–1864)
RCEA		*Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe* (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1931–1991)
RIB		*Roman Inscriptions of Britain*, ed. by R. G. Collingwood and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965–2009)
RIU		*Die römischen Inschriften Ungarns*, ed. by László Barkóczi and others (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó; Bonn: Habelt, 1972–2005)
RKOR		T. C. Lounghis and others, *Regesten der Kaiserurkunden des oströmischen Reiches von 476 bis 565* (Nicosia: Zyprisches Forschungszentrum, 2005)
SChr		Sources chrétiennes (Paris: Cerf, 1941–)
SEG		*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* (Leiden, 1923–)
SupplIt		*Supplementa Italica*, n.s. (Rome, 1981–)
Syll.^{3}		*Sylloge inscriptionum Graecarum*, ed. by W. Dittenberger, 3rd edn (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1915–1924)
TTH		Translated Texts for Historians (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1985–)
Vulgate		*Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, 4th edn (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994)

GIANMARCO DE ANGELIS

Elites and Urban Communities in Early Medieval Italy

Identities, Political Initiatives, and Ways of (Self-) Representation

No *fodrum*, We Are Citizens! Introductory Observations on the Building of a Shared Sense of Identity

At an unknown location close to the River Rižana in northern Istria in the year 804, 172 *homines capitanei* acting on behalf of Istria's major and minor urban centres (*civitates* and *castella*) appeared before a court held by a priest and two counts, which was directly appointed by Charlemagne and his son Pippin.[1] As representatives of the new rulers, the public officials were called to seek justice for the alleged misdeeds of the Patriarch Fortunatus and Duke John. The remarkably detailed complaints of the *capitanei* were supported by

This essay is part of the works of PRIN 2017 *Ruling in Hard Times: Patterns of Power and Practices of Government in the Making of Carolingian Italy*, PI Giuseppe Albertoni (University of Trento), carried out in the research unit of the University of Padua (coordinator Gianmarco De Angelis).

1 *I Placiti del 'Regnum Italiae'*, ed. by Manaresi, no 17, is the standard, though not very accurate, edition. A better edition is (with translation into Slovenian and German) Krahwinkler, *… in loco qui dicitur Riziano…* , pp. 67–81; a more recent, digital edition is now available on *Placiti veneti*, ed. by Provesi: Veneto 1, <http://saame.it/fonte/placiti-veneti-veneto-1/>. The fact that the terms *civitas* and *castrum* were perceived in the Northern Adriatic area as interchangeable and used as synonyms is well documented by a later source, the *Istoria Veneticorum* of John the Deacon. *De administrando imperio* of Constantine Porphirogenitus always uses 'castron' for both cities and other major centres, without distinction, the qualification of 'civitas' being reserved to the *polis* par excellence, Constantinople (see also Castagnetti, 'Insediamenti e "populi"', pp. 584–86). For a brilliant framing of the plea of Rižana, with particular regard to the newly imposed Carolingian administration and disciplining of royal agents in Italian border regions, see Davis, *Charlemagne's Practice of Empire*, pp. 102–04 (with selected bibliography about this important document).

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written documentation (*breves*), which the actors had gathered in every town ('*per singulas civitates vel castella*') and had unanimously corroborated ('*omnis populus unanimiter*'). These *breves* substantially focused on a general process of dismantling the customary rights of the Istrian people (the '*consuetudo populi terrę istius*'). Among these rights, the Istrian political and social elite claimed the old privilege of exemption from payment of the *fodrum* (a form of requisitioning of horses' fodder) that seems to have been entirely unknown during the previous Byzantine government ('*Grecorum tempore* [...] *fodere numquam dedimus*').

This remarkable document raises important questions. Is the statement of the *capitanei* valid? Is it reasonable to think that the populations of Istria were not required before the Carolingian conquest to contribute in any way to the payment of the military annona?[2] On whose behalf are the *capitanei* here specifically speaking? Are they simply defending a traditional *status* of the laity, and therefore proceeding similarly to those political actors who in the same years demanded and obtained that the '*servientes ecclesiae*', monks and priests, were expressly exempt from the compulsory supply of fodder and victuals for the king's host?[3] Or does the expression '*de violentia vel consuetudine populi terrę istius*' allude to a more general abuse perpetrated by the duke even against the ecclesiastics? A final question presents a particularly interesting conundrum for the present chapter: Is the introduction of the *fodrum* perceived as unbearable because it represents a subversion of general ancient privileges, equally held by cities and rural territories, or only because the city-dwellers (the inhabitants of *civitates* and *castra*) are required for the first time to pay it? In other words, is it possible to consider the exemption proudly claimed here by the Istrian *homines capitanei* as a distinctive feature of urban communities?

About three centuries later, one of the most acute intellectuals of the early communal age, the jurist, consul, and chronicler Otto Morena from Lodi,

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2 The conceptual equivalence between *annona* and *fodrum* clearly emerges in those same years in both normative sources and narrative texts: examples in *Capitula Episcoporum*, ed. by Pokorny and Stratmann, p. 88 ([*Ne*] *quasi per precationem caballos vestros* [...] *ad pastum presbyteris commendare praesumatis neque annoniam vel fodrum ab eis exigatis*), and in the *vita* of Louis the Pious by the Astronomer (*inhibuit a plebeis ulterius annonas militares, quas vulgo foderum vocant, dari*: Astronomus, *Vita Hludowici imperatoris*, ed. by Tremp, p. 304). On the exaction of this public tribute within a broader framework concerning the itinerant system of government of the early and high Middle Ages, see (still fundamental) Brühl, *Fodrum, gistum, servitium regis*.

3 Of the many possible examples, two instances serve to demonstrate this point: *Super servientes ecclesiae mansionaticos vel foderum nullus audeat prendere*, as Charlemagne's diploma of AD 792 to the Church of Aquileia states (*Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. by Mühlbacher, no. 174, pp. 233–34). Charlemagne's diploma is echoed about forty years later by a privilege granted by Louis the Pious to the monastery of Saint Bertin, whose dependants and tributaries were exempted from the payment of *fodrum* (*Familia monasterii nullis quibuslibet hominibus foderum daret*: *Die Urkunden Ludwigs des Frommen*, ed. by Kölzer, no. 284, pp. 706–09).

had no doubts about the validity of this point.[4] The profound differences between the two contexts discourages simple comparison. However, the twelfth-century evidence of Morena's chronicle holds insights into our theme, especially in the context of the openly conflictual setting from which it emerges. Crisis situations can function as the ideal breeding ground for the strongest expressions of identity, as numerous scholars in history and political science alike have shown.[5] In the case of Morena's *Historia*, indignation was directed towards the intolerable arrogance ('*perfidia*') of the hegemonic city-commune of the region, namely Milan. The Milanese, according to the account of Otto Morena, were not satisfied even after they destroyed Lodi (in 1111), not for having forced its noble and free inhabitants ('*gentiles cives*') to emigrate to the villages around the old walls, nor for having limited their economic and political liberties. Indeed, Milan also demanded from the citizens of Lodi the payment of the *fodrum*, as if they were coarse inhabitants of the countryside ('*sicut pessimi villani*').[6] The social process of identification, alongside the simultaneous process of exclusion, could not be formulated in clearer terms.

Otto Morena's voice is manifestly partisan and strongly committed to defending the ancient prerogatives of his fellow citizens, who thought of themselves as ancient and noble citizens of Lombardy ('*veteres et nobiles Lombardiae cives se existimabant*'). As stated above, the political and institutional context of this complaint is totally different from the context in which the *placitum* of Rižana was composed. The subject of both disputes — direct taxation — has evidently transformed and expanded in the intervening centuries, which witnessed the progressive erosion of the taxation's public origins and of the royal and imperial monopoly through new forms of levy imposed by communal (and even earlier seigneurial) powers.[7] In the mid-twelfth century, indeed, the urban landscape of central and northern Italy had undergone such institutional and political changes that it appeared to be substantially unrecognizable even compared to fifty years before the running-in period — the 'sleepwalking into a New World', to use a powerful expression of Chris Wickham — was at that time fully accomplished. Shortly thereafter, the new communal regimes would give birth to stringent regulations concerning the definition of citizenship (and on the pertinent mechanisms

4 For a short biography of the judge and chronicler, see Capo, 'Morena, Ottone', with selected bibliography.

5 See, for example, the discussion of Delpeuch, 'À propos de Chevallier', in particular pp. 681–83.

6 *Illi autem, qui steterunt, quamvis nolentes, dolentes tamen pernimium quod cum gentiles fuerant cives, ipsum fodrum sicut pessimi villani timore Mediolanesium ipsis tribuerunt* (Those <of Lodi> who remained, albeit reluctantly, and indeed regretting very much the time when they were free men, paid the fodder, as if they were coarse inhabitants of the countryside, to the Milanese, because they were afraid of that people). Ottonis Morena, *Historia Frederici I*, ed. by Güterbock, p. 36. On this passage (and for a broader view on the entire event), see now De Angelis, 'Fra Milano e l'Impero', pp. 239–41.

7 Fiore, *Il mutamento signorile*, pp. 58–59.

of inclusion and exclusion), overcoming the informality of certain initial developments and subsequently stimulating the incessant intellectual work of the jurists active inside and outside the civic institutions.[8]

Given these premises, it would be wrong to trace the origins or antecedents of the communal organizations in early medieval sources. This approach was the main limit of a long historiographical tradition, which characterized the communal age as the core of a Great National Narrative, and which has generally classified the period between the ninth and the eleventh centuries from a teleological perspective, in which this era functions as a substantially linear phase of preparation for the triumphant future developments.[9] In order to combat this grand narrative, Giuseppe Sergi argued more than thirty years ago that the study of the early medieval Italian urban phenomenon should strive to underline the cities 'nella loro specifica poliedricità', given by 'un'originale combinazione di fattori dominanti e di fattori recessivi'. Cities should be studied as historical subjects, indeed, with unordered developments, whose common denominator — namely, their nature of 'luoghi di continuità di nozioni pubbliche del potere' — is determined by varied social and political actors in a constant negotiation of relations.[10] In this perspective, the evidence of the *placitum* of Rižana acquires further heuristic value, and the comparison (even with their varying contexts) with similar situations in future centuries seems to be less problematic. A case like this casts citizenship not as a legally defined entity, but one that is nevertheless practised, or at least claimed. As in the cited passage of Morena's *Historia*, this case simultaneously portrays the feeling of otherness and a project of shared identity. In twelfth-century Lodi, this takes the form of claiming the same condition of the 'noble' Lombard citizens, while at the beginning of the Carolingian age, the Istrians recalled an old, close relationship with the rest of the northern Adriatic populations, the Venetians and Dalmatians. The latter are presented as 'neighbours and relatives', who mock the Istrians because of the new social conditions in which they were forced to live after the Frankish conquest, with a loss of prestige, impoverishment, and constant humiliation.[11] The Istrians' reference to

8 Wickham, *Sleepwalking into a New World*; see also Ascheri, 'Nella città medievale italiana' and, for the definitive institutionalization of city-communes on the basis of a juridically defined citizenship, Vallerani, 'Diritti di cittadinanza'.

9 Historiographical framework presented (and criticized) in Wickham, *Sleepwalking into a New World*, pp. 3–5; the traditional perspective has also conditioned archaeological studies related to Italian urbanism in the early Middle Ages (characterized by a constant dialectic between verification of continuity with Roman structures and revival of ancient models in the communal age), as underlined by La Rocca, 'Dark ages a Verona', p. 33.

10 Sergi, 'Le città come luoghi di continuità', pp. 7–9.

11 *Unde omnes devenimus in paupertatem, et derident nostros parentes et convicini nostri Venetias et Dalmatias, etiam Greci, sub cuius antea fuimus potestate* ('We have all fallen into poverty and we are mocked by our neighbours and relatives from the territories of Venice, Dalmatia, and even Byzantium, of which we were formerly subjects'). *I Placiti del 'Regnum Italiae'*, ed. by Manaresi, no 17, p. 55.

this Northern Adriatic koiné represents a very interesting statement that built on a shared sense of identity by making use of a common history as a fundamental resource to influence the present.[12] By turning to the judges and invoking a direct intervention of the new master, the Istrian *homines capitanei* openly aim at restoring that past. 'If Charlemagne will help them, they will survive; otherwise, it would be much more honourable to die' (*Si nobis succurrit domnus Carolus imperator possumus evadere, sin autem melius est nobis mori, quam vivere*).[13]

Rhetorically elaborate passages like this last sentence are uncommon in the judicial depositions we encounter reading the *placita* of that time. Indeed, the Rižana charter is extraordinary in many respects. The discussion of specific aspects of this remarkable charter conceptually frames the possibilities arising from research into early medieval Italian concepts of citizenship, while also underlining certain difficulties. As noted above, these problems primarily result from the complexities imbedded within the language of written sources and the impossibility of defining univocally, from a lexical point of view, the image of citizenship transmitted by early medieval texts. We could extend to the citizenship of the pre-communal age a consideration already formulated with regard to other forms of individual and collective belonging of that time, and in particular in regards to the nobility, for as previous scholars have argued, 'belonging to the elite in the early Middle Ages appears to have been less a question of definition than of perception'.[14] For our purposes, the importance of situating the distinctive vocabulary of citizenship — and its many declinations — in a dynamic ensemble of practices leads to a 'behavioural' definition of social and political civic belonging. Although formulated in a different field, there are significant correlations with 'strategies of distinction' as developed by Walter Pohl with its emphasis on conflictual contexts and political markers within the relational process of identification and recognition.[15] What spaces and occasions were available to urban communities in this process of dynamic interaction with other political actors for them to show a common consciousness of identity? What role did lay elites and communities play in urban contexts that recent scholarship has classified as significant spaces of cultural aggregation and sites of political and institutional centrality?

The continuity of 'public notions of power' preserved by cities even during the Lombard age is now unquestionable, even as the city itself remains almost totally absent in the oldest legislation, that is, the *Edictus* of King Rothari (643). This absence does not come as a surprise, if we consider the peculiar context

12 See Borri, 'Neighbors and Relatives'. On the perception (and reuse) of the Byzantine past in the political identity of the Northern Adriatic area, see Borri, 'L'Adriatico fra Bizantini, Longobardi e Franchi', and Borri, 'The Waterfront of Istria'.

13 *I Placiti del 'Regnum Italiae'*, ed. by Manaresi, no 17, p. 55.

14 Bougard, Bührer-Thierry, and Le Jean, 'Elites in the Early Middle Ages', p. 740.

15 Pohl, 'Introduction – Strategies of Distinction'.

of this text. The information gap, moreover, is quite easily filled by narrative sources (including Paul the Deacon's insistence on the city as the pivot *ab origine* of a ducal administration) and archaeological data, which testify to the continued vitality of economic exchanges in cities. From the beginning of the eighth century, the renewed legislation (especially the laws issued by King Liutprand) and the increased survival of documentary evidence show cities as seats of a very active judicial staff, as places where consensus could be arranged with the king, and, potentially, as dangerous hotbeds of dissent if not of open sedition. Furthermore, cities functioned as a privileged space for the activity of merchants and, importantly, as the fulcrum of an ecclesiastical system based on the bishop's church that increasingly extended its influence to the entire diocesan territory, thereby representing a solid, necessary reference also for the rural populations.[16] From the late Lombard age and especially with the Carolingian age, the bishop also becomes a political figure as the representative figure of the urban space.[17] Within the episcopal *scriptoria*, cultural strategies are elaborated and texts are produced in order not only to provide models and tools of political engagement of episcopal authority (e.g. through homilies, funeral orations, and letters), but also to favour the polarization of cults and rituals towards the city.[18] As a result, early medieval Italian cities generally developed a stronger sense of political identity under the bishops, and even the city's lay elites from the height of the Carolingian age enter into close relations with the episcopal environment to share their ideological orientations and to become familiar with the management of power. They work in 'institutional symbiosis', as Tabacco maintained,[19] with the bishop's church; indeed, the citizens would emancipate from its 'shadow' only in the late eleventh century, on the eve of the emergence of city-communes. At times, these citizens also carve out certain autonomous spaces through their interactions with documentary culture.

More than two decades of scholarship on this subject have highlighted the existence of widespread literate practices among laypeople, describing a society 'largely dependent on the written word for its religion, law, government and learning'.[20] When taking into account the surviving sources' archival legacy and

16 For a general overview of urban problems in the corpus of Lombard laws, see Gasparri, 'Introduzione', pp. x–xii.

17 On this development, see the chapter by Marco Mostert in the present volume.

18 The performative dimension of (especially hagiographic) writings in episcopal contexts between Lombards and Carolingians represents a core interest in many studies of Giorgia Vocino; see, in particular, Vocino, 'Hagiography as an Instrument for Political Claims', and Vocino, 'Framing Ambrose in the Resources of the Past'.

19 Tabacco, 'The Institutional Synthesis of Bishop and City in Italy and the Succeeding Communal res publica', in Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy*, p. 321.

20 McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word*, p. 2. See also the essays collected in Mostert and Adamska, eds, *Writing and the Administration of Medieval Towns* and in Mostert and Adamska, eds, *Uses of the Written Word in Medieval Towns* (vols 27 and 28 of the Utrecht Studies in Medieval Literacy series); useful also is Brown and others, eds, *Documentary Culture and the Laity*.

by considering the particular structure of the early medieval documentation, few sources survive outside of ecclesiastical channels of transmission, and these sources are generally only accessible through indirect means. One exception remains the charter evidence, but one must question the levels of competence of those who subscribed charters in their own hand,[21] and remember that such legal means were restricted to individuals (or small groups) from the upper strata of society. The Italian case, from this point of view, does not seem to represent an exception. Nonetheless, a couple of intricate examples discussed below might suggest that they represented only the tip of the iceberg that the surviving sources allow us to grasp. In any case, they are notable for the precociousness with which urban communities (or at least large sectors of them) were able to relate to royal power through the mediation of their representatives and, consequently, gain documentary visibility.

Political Initiative and Literacy of Urban Communities

In 715 the Lombard King Liutprand concluded a treaty with the men of Comacchio (*cuncti habitatores Comaclo*), a Byzantine outpost near the mouth of the River Po. This treaty sought to regulate toll payments by Comacchiese ships that plied their way up the river and entered the Lombard kingdom at Mantua. These ships transported both local goods (such as salt and oil) and goods imported from the East (including pepper and the spice called *garum*).[22] This treaty most likely dealt with ongoing trade (the treaty is said to confirm an *antiqua consuetudo*) and it was not released directly in the hands of the men of Comacchio, but in those of '*Lupicino viro venerabili presbitero similiterque Bertarene magistro militi, Mauro et Stephano comitibus, et per vobis cunctis habitatoribus Comaclo*' (the priest Lupicinus, venerable man, as well as in those of Bertarene, master of the soldiers, and of counts Maurus and Stephen, acting on behalf of all inhabitants of Comacchio). It was not addressed to the whole population, but instead only to the merchants of this important emporium on the Adriatic coast. Nonetheless, it is the earliest written evidence of this trade, later confirmed by Charlemagne.[23] It cannot be overlooked that in the *inscriptio* of the document, the beneficiaries of the agreement are identified as all those who reside in Comacchio, even as in the rest of the text the actual protagonists of the commercial activities are defined as *milites*, a term that typically designated the inhabitants of Byzantine Italy by underlining their military aptitude. If the overlap is not accidental, we face

21 The studies of Armando Petrucci that have been translated into English and collected by Charles Radding remain fundamental. See Petrucci, *Writers and Readers in Medieval Italy*, in particular pp. 59–76.

22 Edition in *Zur Wirtschaftsgeschichte Italiens im fruehen Mittelalter*, ed. by Hartmann, p. 123.

23 *Capitularia regum Francorum*, ed. by Boretius and Krause, 95.15 (p. 201) (787–788).

an interesting definition of collective identity on an economic basis, shaped by the extension to an entire population of the honours (and burdens) of a decidedly urban activity.

It is uncertain whether a copy of the treaty was ever given to (and kept by) the inhabitants, merchants, or *milites* of Comacchio.[24] Contextual issues remain problematic in the second example that has the potential to illustrate the correlation between literacy and the political initiatives of urban communities. This example is taken from a capitulary of King Pippin of Italy issued in 787–788, which states that '*non est nostra voluntas ut homines Placentini per eorum praeceptum de curte palatii nostri illos aldiones recipiant*' (It is not our will that the men of Piacenza, by means of a solemn disposition, should welcome those half-free coming from the court of our palace). The underlying sentiment is quite clear, as it states Pippin's intent to forbid the people of Piacenza to welcome the half-free men dependent on the fisc in the city. However, the written form adopted in this initiative is unspecified and indeterminable.

A *preceptum*, strictly speaking, is the most solemn written document issued by the royal chancery. Drawn up in distinctive scripts, it is composed of precise formularies and is validated with specific signs of authority, including monograms and seals. At this time, municipal chanceries are neither attested nor conceivable; indeed, a city with strong Roman traditions like Piacenza, which was very rich because it was situated at the crossroads of a crucial river and land routes, could boast only a cultured notarial staff that includes in the eighth century some *exceptores civitatis*.[25] Under these conditions, we must ask: What kind of *preceptum* was the one mentioned in the Capitulary of Pippin? In which environment was it composed and formulated, on whose initiative, and for what purposes? Was it really a written concession or just an oral deliberation given in a public assembly? These questions have no certain answer but, nevertheless, testify to an undoubted, very precocious initiative of an urban community. In this charter, the collectivity was defined in an extremely generic way through the union of the word *homines* (free individuals, in all probability) and the adjective identifier of the residence (*Placentini*). This is a widespread method of designation in early medieval sources at least until the middle of the eleventh century. From then on, certain documentary evidences pay more attention to specifying the contents (and limits) of citizenship.

On the basis of a diploma issued by Emperor Henry III in 1055, there should be no ambiguity in the definition of pre-communal citizenship. The beneficiaries of the privilege were granted immunity on both banks of the River Mincio at the same time as they were also exempted from public tributes ('*ripaticum and theloneum*') in their travels towards Ravenna, Argenta, Ferrara, and *Summolacu*

24 We even do not know whether the text had the form of a royal diploma or, rather, of a legal provision — a *Constitutio*, as a late, thirteenth-century copy has at its opening.

25 Santoni, 'Notarius civitatis', p. 207.

for commercial purposes. These beneficiaries were clearly identified: they are 'the citizens, that is, all free men residing in the city of Mantua' (*cives videlicet eremanos in Mantua civitate habitantes*).[26] The statement is interesting for two reasons. First of all, it reused the expression *erimani*, which is a mere — and widespread — lexical variant for *arimanni* that is typical of the Lombard legal tradition. This term is generally reserved to rural dwellers and alluded to all free male adults without distinction of wealth and social class, who are able to fight and therefore admitted to participate in assemblies.[27] Secondly, the correlation between military and civil dignity was expressly linked to residence within the urban walls. According to the text (and cross-referencing this evidence with other contemporary sources), we could say that not all the *arimanni* were *cives*, but certainly all the *cives* were *arimanni*.[28] But what exactly shapes their citizenship beyond this political freedom? Is it sufficient to live inside a *civitas*? Is this condition enough to enjoy certain rights and to participate in the associated life of an urban community? For another early medieval royal diploma it would seem so, as the following example will demonstrate.

In June 904, King Berengar I granted Adalbertus, Bishop of Bergamo, 'an unusually far-reaching privilege' that conceded to him the public power of command and coercion of the city together with rights to fiscal revenues: '*districta vero ipsius civitatis omnia que ad rei publice pertinent potestatem sub eiusdem ecclesiae tuitionis defensione predestinamus permanere*' (we establish that all the public powers related to the government of the city have to remain for the future under episcopal authority).[29] Nonetheless, a specific feature of this broad power had to be shared by the bishop with his fellow citizens and — what is particularly notable — with everyone who would take refuge in the city. The walls and the towers of the city, which had been destroyed by the Hungarians, had to be restored '*labore et studio prefati episcopi suorumque civium et ibi confugientium*' (with labour and zeal of the bishop, of his fellow citizens, and of those who took refuge in the city). All these parties together, acting by mutual agreement, would have had the right of rebuilding the fortifications (and maintaining them in perpetuity — '*perpetuis temporibus*') wherever necessary ('*ubicumque predictus episcopus et concives necessarium duxerint*').[30]

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26 *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III.*, ed. by Bresslau and Kehr, no. 356 (pp. 483–84). Out of the vast bibliography about this diploma, it could be enough to mention here Castagnetti, *Arimanni in 'Langobardia' e in 'Romania'*, pp. 117–26, where previous studies are quoted and widely discussed.

27 On the 'arimannia' in the political language after the fall of the Lombard kingdom, see Gasparri, '*Nobiles et credentes omines liberi arimanni*'.

28 Many examples in Tabacco, *I liberi del re*.

29 *I diplomi di Berengario I*, ed. by Schiaparelli, no. 47 (pp. 134–39); detailed analysis in Rosenwein, 'The Family Politics of Berengar I', pp. 270–72, from which the quotation (p. 270) is taken.

30 For other evidence of armed defences of the walls (and, more in general, on military duties and initiatives) by the urban communities in the early Middle Ages, see Majocchi, 'L'esercito del re e le città'.

A broad notion of 'citizenship' emerges from another royal privilege of the tenth century. In 958, the kings Berengar II and Adalbertus confirmed 'for the inhabitants of Genua' (*habitatoribus in civitate Ianuensi*) all the properties they held according to their customary rights and exempting them from public interference. This document conflated the enjoyment of specific rights with residence in the city. The privilege was considered so important by the Genoese that centuries later they copied it as a *magna charta* of their autonomy at the beginning of the first communal *liber iurium*, whereas the text of the Treaty of Constance between Frederick Barbarossa and the Italian city-states more usually opens such communal cartularies.[31]

These charters, and that of Genua in particular, are important. The delimitation of the physical 'boundaries' of citizenship within these documents has a noble tradition, ideally expressed by a famous image of the *civitas* coinciding with the urban collectivity itself.[32] On the other hand, the formula *habitator de/habitator in* (or the equivalent expression *commanens/commanentes*), which is generic enough to be used for rural dwellers too, is not the only terminological possibility available for early medieval scribes and notaries to shape a 'residential' belonging covered with socio-political intent. While such terminology is by far prevalent in private charters, for both small groups and individuals, a wide variety of terminology is displayed by literary sources, legislative texts, and royal/imperial diplomas.[33] The charged Roman term of *civis/cives* is prevalent, especially from the mid-eleventh century, but even earlier in the work of the ninth-century author Agnellus of Ravenna.[34] It is certainly significant that it is chosen and even preferred to more generic terms such as *homines* in performative and strongly political contexts. One such context was the assembly of citizens ('*conventus civium*') of Mantua, Brescia, and Verona which, according to a provision of King Lothar II of 945, should have decided on the fineness of struck coin minted by the Bishop of Mantua.[35] Moreover, it is worth remembering that at least in one case this term was used for a collective identification without internal social hierarchies and, therefore, with a meaning that seems very close to the example of Mantua seen above.

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31 Ascheri, 'Un'altra cittadinanza', p. 316. Edition of the privilege: *I diplomi di Ugo e Lotario, di Berengario II e Adalberto*, ed. by Schiaparelli, no. 11. See also Rovere, 'La tradizione del diploma di Berengario II e Adalberto del 958'.

32 One only has to refer to the famous statement of Isidore of Seville: *Urbs ipsa moenia sunt, civitas autem non saxa sed habitatores vocantur*: Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. by Lindsay, 15. 2.

33 For an overview for the Lombard region, see De Angelis, 'Cittadini prima della cittadinanza'; on the ways of describing rural communities, Lazzari, 'Comunità rurali nell'alto medioevo', pp. 415–16.

34 Especially when the inhabitants of Ravenna are described as a political community capable of undertaking military initiatives: see Agnellus of Ravenna, *Liber pontificalis*, ed. by Holder-Egger, pp. 344, 366–70, 387.

35 *I diplomi di Ugo e Lotario, di Berengario II e Adalberto*, ed. by Schiaparelli, no. 1 (pp. 252–53); on this diploma, see Tabacco, *The Struggle for Power in Medieval Italy*, pp. 172–73.

This particular case stems from a diploma of Otto III issued in May 996, which refers to 'all free citizens of Cremona, both rich and poor' (*omnes cives Cremonenses liberos, divites ac pauperes*).[36] Elsewhere, there were more generic, nuanced expressions, from '*homines civitatis Tergetis*' (of Trieste) to '*universo populo Ferrariensi*' to — and very often, ever since the Lombard laws and the Carolingian capitularies — collective entities only defined with reference to the name of the city they belong to (*Mediolanenses, Papienses, Placentini*).[37]

Beyond these different terminological indications, the salient feature to underscore is the uninterrupted political and economic vitality of these urban communities for the entire early medieval period. Since the Lombard period, civic identity emerges through a dialectical relationship with the 'outside' as seen in the elite charters and treaties with the royal or imperial power. However, this identity was also shaped by a multifaceted interaction with the local hegemonies, generally represented by the bishops. The citizens' autonomy is demonstrated by a precocious use, and constant request, for written documentation, but can also take the form of a strong opposition to royal and episcopal authorities, not infrequently culminating in violent expulsions of the bishop or his officials from the city, such as Rather in Verona in 968 and Landulph in Cremona at the beginning of the eleventh century as well as in their destruction of material symbols of episcopal power.[38] Apart from some isolated cases,[39] these political dynamics clearly show cohesive urban communities without any form of internal social hierarchy. The isolated mention of the '*conventus civium*' of 945 was, as far as we know, invested with deliberative and not merely consultative functions. Unfortunately, this single reference does not allow us to go beyond a minimal and yet homogeneous presentation of the forum.[40]

Other kinds of sources construct a slightly different image, reflecting a certain internal structure of the urban society, in which alongside the

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36 *Die Urkunden Otto des III.*, ed. by Sickel, no. 198 (pp. 606–07).

37 The privilege for the men of Trieste, AD 948, is published in *I diplomi di Ugo e Lotario, di Berengario II e Adalberto*, ed. by Schiaparelli, no. 12; that issued on 24 August 1055 to the people of Ferrara in *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III.*, ed. by Bresslau and Kehr, no. 351.

38 For an overview and sources on these armed revolts of citizens, see Majocchi, 'L'esercito del re e le città', pp. 128–31 (cases of Ravenna, Verona, Bologna, Rome, Parma, Cremona, from the seventh century up to the destruction of the royal palace of Pavia in 1024).

39 The most significant exception is again Cremona, whose citizens, both major and minor, were warned in 1043, alongside the *milites*, the valvassors, and all the people resident within the diocese, to appear before the plea whenever the bishop of the city requested it (*Adalgerius, cancellarius et missus gloriosissimi et piissimi regis Henrici, omnibus militibus, vavassoribus omnique populo in episcopatu Cremonensi seu in comitatu habitantibus nec non cunctis civibus tam maioribus quam minoribus ex parte senioris nostri*): *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III.*, ed. by Bresslau and Kehr, no. 382 (pp. 524–25).

40 Coleman, 'Representative Assemblies in Communal Italy', overestimates and links to an urban dimension the *conventus ante ecclesiam* of a well-known chapter of Rothari's laws, which is instead quite clearly referred to in a rural context: see Gasparri, 'Il Regno longobardo in Italia', pp. 290–92; see also Chavarría Arnau, '*Ante ecclesia* in *conventu*'.

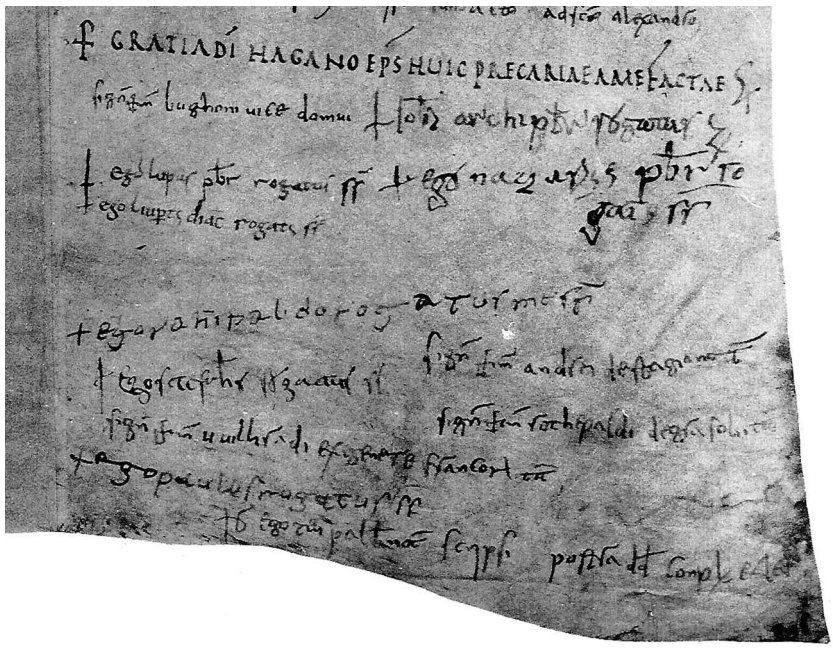

Figure 15.1. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Bergamo, Pergamene dell'Archivio Capitolare, no. 333, July 856. Particular of the eschatocol with subscriptions and Tironian notes used by the bishop Hagano and archpriest John. Reproduced with the permission of the Diocesan Archive of Bergamo.

merchants ('*negotiatores*'), who were always so active in requesting written protections and confirmations of their commercial privileges, an elite of citizens undoubtedly played key political roles. Here, the synodal documents are particularly relevant, as they are introduced by detailed descriptions of the assembly surrounding and supporting the bishop. By the year 1000, the episcopal archive of Bergamo kept two charters of this type. Both present a similar situation, in which some noble men or a representation of lay and noble men are seated in the choir of the cathedral next to the bishop and the rest of the urban clergy 'to discuss the state of the church' (*tractans cum eis de statu et soliditate ipsius ecclesie*).[41] Their names have been lost; up to the end of the eleventh century the eschatocols of such documents only have subscriptions of the ecclesiastical members of the synods. In all probability, they coincided with the same lay urban elite that since the mid-ninth century

41 *Le pergamene degli archivi di Bergamo*, ed. by Cortesi, no. 34 (May 897) (pp. 54–55), and no. 186 (September 1000) (pp. 306–08). Analysis of these two synodal documents (both of their texts and from a palaeographical perspective) in De Angelis, *Poteri cittadini e intellettuali di potere*, pp. 153–85.

was widely documented conducting business with the bishop's curia as they exchanged and granted lands, while also requesting and receiving possessions as leases. They almost systematically occur in episcopal charters, in which they subscribed these documents by using a typical graphic mark of chancery writings. This is the Tironian note for *subscripsi*, introduced in Bergamo in the mid-ninth century by the learned and politically influential Frankish Bishop Hagano (837–867) (Figure 15.1).[42]

The first one who seems to have used this specific note is the archpriest John, albeit in a far less refined and spontaneous execution than Hagano. From its origin in the cathedral school, this note was evidently considered a performative distinctive marking by the local ecclesiastics. It spread quickly among urban elites, who had close relationships with the episcopal seat. Many surviving charters from the last quarter of the ninth century show how the document itself was shared by a large number of active clerics and lay people, who resided in the city: notaries, minor public officials like the *scabini*, rich individuals without any qualification. The years of Adalbertus (888–935) show a peak in its use, during a period that we have already considered as a real turning-point in the process of civic identity building (examples in Figures 15.2–15.4).[43]

Considering the structural uniformity of this widely used sign, and given the fact that it had no specific legal value at the time in that specific documentary context, it seems reasonable to underline its meaning as a particular way of self-representation and distinction of the urban elites, alongside other resources of identity. In the next section, I will discuss one of these tools of distinction and focus on topographical and microtopographical definitions through which city-dwellers identified themselves or, from another perspective, the way in which they together with their properties and the urban space more generally were perceived and represented by the scribes of charters.

Topographical Identity of Urban Elites: Some General Considerations and the Case of Verona, *Sedes Regia*

To start with the self-representations of the literate citizens, I will restrict the geographical area of this brief analysis to northern Italy. In the first place, we should point out that autograph subscriptions of early medieval charters show a general indifference on the part of the individuals towards the declaration of their own city of origin or residence. This is the case especially when the place of origin or residence of the subscribers coincides with the location

42 De Angelis, 'Aganone vescovo e la scrittura carolina a Bergamo'. For a broader and comparative view on central and northern Italy, see Fissore, 'Segni di identità e forme di autenticazione'. On the origins of Tironian notes and their uses in Merovingian and Carolingian chanceries, see Worm, *Karolingische Rekognitionszeichen*, passim.

43 De Angelis, *Poteri cittadini e intellettuali di potere*, in particular pp. 93–117.

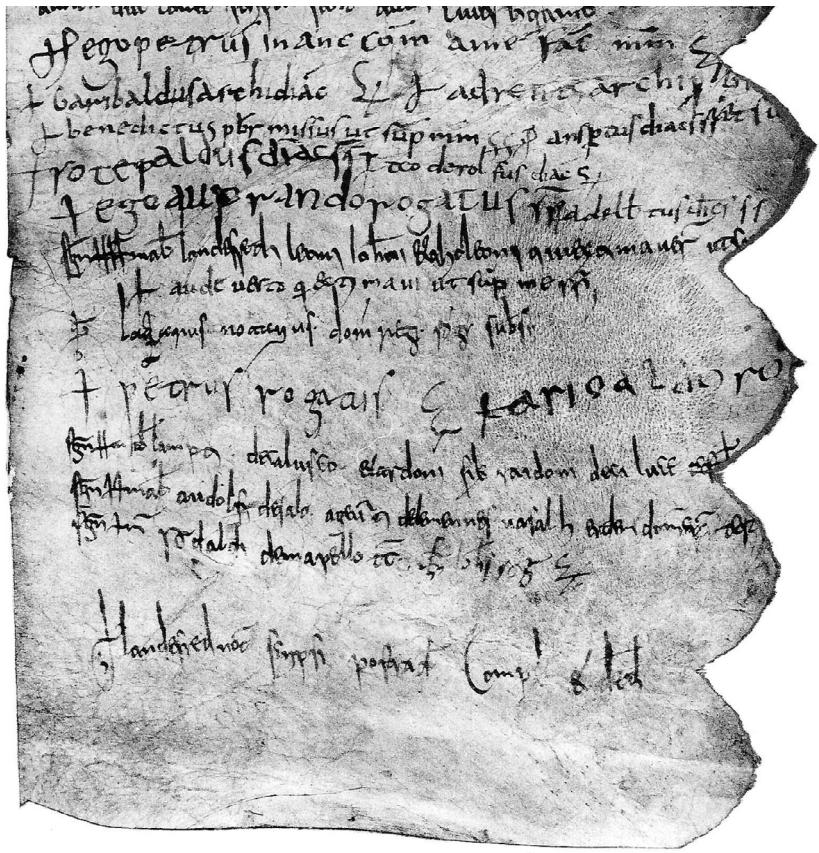

Figure 15.2. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Bergamo, Pergamene dell'Archivio Capitolare, no. 538, July 886. Particular of the eschatocol with subscriptions and Tironian notes used by members of the diocesan clergy and lay witnesses. Reproduced with the permission of the Diocesan Archive of Bergamo.

of redaction of the charter itself.[44] Significantly, however, subscribers do express their provenance when they are called to witness charters outside their district or birthplace, as shown by some Lombard cases.[45] On the other hand, even when such information is provided by notaries, the formula is almost always generic (*Nomen X de civitate Y*), at least for the Lombard and

44 On the case of early medieval Milan, see now Balzaretti, *The Lands of Saint Ambrose*, p. 155: 'Witness lists only sometimes designated people "of Milan" but we may reasonably presume that witnesses to charters written in Milan either lived there too or had meaningful association with the city'.

45 De Angelis, 'Cittadini prima della cittadinanza', pp. 182–83.

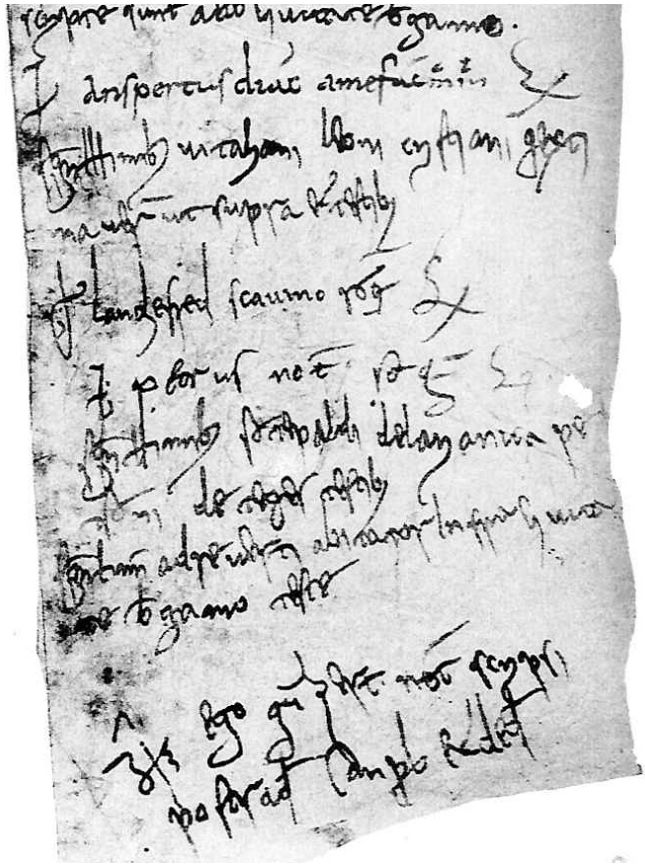

Figure 15.3. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Bergamo, Pergamene dell'Archivio Capitolare, no. 1903, March 905. Particular of the eschatocol with subscriptions and Tironian notes used by members of the diocesan clergy and lay witnesses. Reproduced with the permission of the Diocesan Archive of Bergamo.

Carolingian ages (and except for some cases below). This seems to suggest that the perception of a unitary urban space is devoid of distinctive and functional structures within it. This would suggest to me at the same time and in a seemingly contradictory way that this both confirms and refutes those processes of ruralization of towns identified and described by a large number of archaeological studies, as I will try to explain in the next two paragraphs.[46]

46 For a historiographical framework on the debate about decay (or continuity) of ancient Roman urbanism in the early Middle Ages, see Ward-Perkins, 'Continuists, Catastrophists, and the Towns'. Balanced considerations on features (and limits) of the ruralization of early

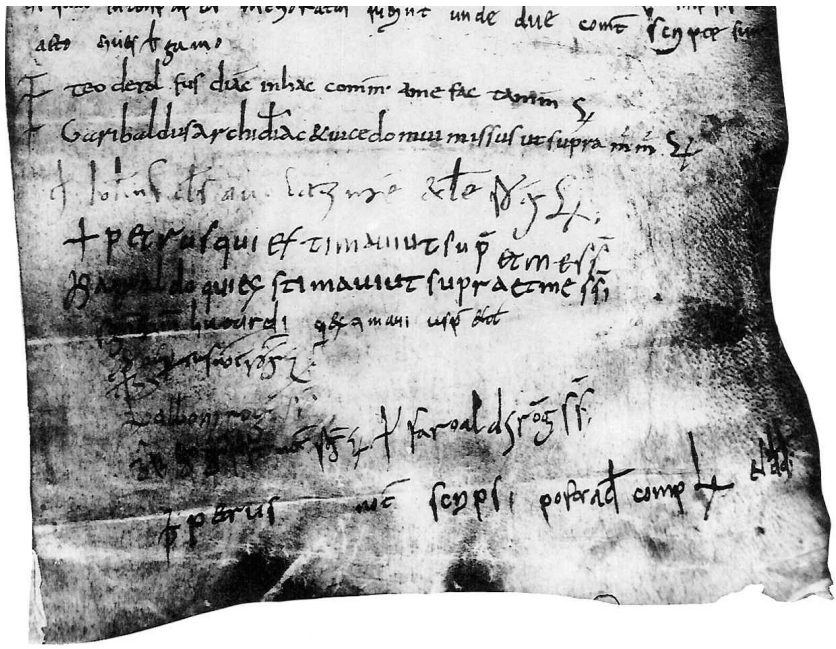

Figure 15.4. Archivio Storico Diocesano di Bergamo, Pergamene dell'Archivio Capitolare, no. 96, March 909. Particular of the eschatocol with subscriptions and Tironian notes used by members of the diocesan clergy and lay witnesses. Reproduced with the permission of the Diocesan Archive of Bergamo.

The simplification of the topographical references used in early medieval anthroponymy is, indeed, a common feature of both urban and rural contexts.[47] However, when used to locate estates and other kinds of properties inside the towns (*infra civitate*, without any further detail), the vagueness is precisely an indication of the unity of the urban space, and not of its fragmentation. Indeed, this indicates its density, and not its (dis)organization in dispersed settlements, as opposed to what we find in the case of rural sites and villages, in which lands are generally located with references to microtoponyms (*in vico X, in loco ubi dicitur Y*).[48]

There is, above all, another element that seems to underline a functional and highly symbolic definition of the urban space. In sharp contrast with the vagueness observed for the properties generically located *infra civitate*, the lands next to the urban walls and near the city gates are always specified and

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medieval towns are expressed in many studies of Sauro Gelichi, since his 'The Cities in Italy in the Early Middle Ages'; see also Gelichi, 'La città in Italia tra VI e VIII secolo'.

47 Lazzari, 'Città e territori', p. 348.

48 La Rocca, 'Residenze urbane ed élites urbane', p. 59.

described in detail.[49] Most importantly, the charters' scribes devote equal attention to identifying all the individuals who live in those 'border areas' by adding precise references to the gates that framed the neighbourhood of residence to their proper names. Expressions like *de porta* are very common. Until the eleventh century, when a growing population and the increased density of the urban settlement made it necessary to find more analytical ways of naming, they substantially represented the main topographical sign of distinction. There are a few exceptions for the earlier period. The most relevant among them, as shown by some works of Cristina La Rocca, is certainly represented by the case of Verona.[50]

La Rocca rightly pointed out that 'during the Carolingian and post-Carolingian periods, Verona city-dwellers identified themselves not simply as *de civitate Verona*, but specifically as belonging to different parts of the city': the names of witnesses are indeed generally accompanied by spatial references such as *de porta pontis*, *de fontana*, *de Arcu*, *de subtus Arena*, *de antevolto*.[51] What seems particularly interesting to underline is that 'none of these locations refer to any juridical or administrative division of the city' and that only 'very seldom do these topographical details refer to ecclesiastical buildings, as we might have expected': therefore they have to be considered as 'purely topographical indications', highly significative for 'showing the formation of neighbourhood groups within the city' that are shaped by the physical proximity to Roman architectural remains.[52]

As far as I know, the only cases in northern Italy that can be compared to Verona from this point of view are Milan and Brescia, although the latter shows a different, later chronology with most evidence dating from the mid-tenth century. The evidence from these cities occurs on a smaller scale, with the topographical nicknames used only by individuals linked to the female monastery of St Salvatore/St Giulia, and for a more limited number of Roman remains such as the *forum* and the aqueduct.[53] With regard to Milan, which

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49 Thanks to the documentation published in the first and second series of the *Chartae Latinae antiquiores*, the contrast is verifiable for the most important cities of northern and central Italy, but it is particularly evident (and significant, considering the number of original charters that are preserved in the local Diocesan Archive, the richest of Europe for the early Middle Ages) in Lucca, as shown by De Conno, 'L'insediamento longobardo a Lucca'. Several examples are collected and discussed in La Rocca, 'Residenze urbane ed élites urbane', pp. 59–60.

50 For all that follows here, the main reference is La Rocca, 'Dark ages a Verona', in particular pp. 53–63, reprised in La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', pp. 504–07. For bibliographical updates, especially with regard to more recent and accurate editions of charters, see *Chartae Latinae antiquiores*, LIX, ed. by Santoni, and *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, LX, ed. by Santoni.

51 La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', p. 506.

52 La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', p. 506.

53 Here are just a few examples: an *Ingelbert, filio quondam Rodemperti, de prope foro publico*, is mentioned in a donation of November 942 to the monastery (*Le carte del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia*, I, ed. by Barbieri, Cossandi, and Rapisarda, no. 50, <http://www.

has been extensively studied by Ross Balzaretti, charters dating from the late eighth century, through the entire early Middle Ages, and with an increase from the mid-tenth century show 'a pattern of clustering near six […] gates in the city walls', as well as 'significant residential clusters in the city centre around the Roman forum and the early medieval mint […], the cathedral […] and the main road going south from there'.[54]

As stated above, this practice was also documented in Verona from the early Carolingian period. Indeed, it does not seem coincidental that its use started when the city was the residence of Pippin (Charlemagne's son and sub-king of Italy), becoming widespread and reaching its peak among the urban elites during the reign of King Berengar I (888–924). At this moment, Verona acquired a new, special importance as *sedes regia* (royal seat), and we witness a large collective awareness associated with a group identity defined through physical proximity to ancient remains.[55] In that period, relevant symbolic functions and a great prestige are evidently linked to some of these ancient Roman monuments: it was in the Arena *maior* (i.e. the well-known amphitheatre, in the city centre) that the traitor of King Berengar I was judged and executed and his goods were confiscated. Furthermore, the same king used to donate large portions of land inside the Arena *minor* to his *fideles*, such as the deacon Audo in 905 and the chancellor John, who would become the future Bishop of Verona in 913.[56] These ancient buildings were fully part of the urban landscape and represented the stage for the public power to show 'its material and monumental force'.[57] A further element that contributed to shape an ideal urban image, whose space was perceived as a multiplicity of prestigious areas inside the walls, were the ecclesiastical buildings, including a series of ancient churches preserving the relics of local martyrs and thus guaranteeing the divine protection of the royal town (see Figure 15.5).

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lombardiabeniculturali.it/cdlm/edizioni/bs/brescia-sgiulia1/carte/sgiulia0942-11-10>); same reference to the *forum* in a charter of sale of August 980, both for the vendor (the Lombard archpriest *Lumpert, de infra civitate Brixia, de prope foro publico*) and for many witnesses of Roman law qualified as *abitatores infrascripta civitate Brixia prope iamdicto foro publico* (*Le carte del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia*, I, ed. by Barbieri, Cossandi, and Rapisarda, no. 57, <http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/cdlm/edizioni/bs/brescia-sgiulia1/carte/sgiulia0980-08-25>). The aqueduct is mentioned as a reference point in the nickname of Grasempert (*habitator prope fistula Limpheus*), witnessed in a charter of 964 (*Le carte del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia*, I, ed. by Barbieri, Cossandi, and Rapisarda, no. 55, <http://www.lombardiabeniculturali.it/cdlm/edizioni/bs/brescia-sgiulia1/carte/sgiulia0964-02-06>).

54 Balzaretti, *The Lands of Saint Ambrose*, p. 248.

55 On the political and institutional role of Verona as royal seat in the early tenth century, see Rosenwein, *Negotiating Space*, pp. 145–47.

56 Respectively, *Gesta Berengarii*, ed. by Stella, Liber IV, 66–69, and *I diplomi di Berengario I*, ed. by Schiaparelli, no. 57 and no. 89.

57 La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', p. 507.

Figure 15.5. Civitas Veronensis Depicta (*Iconografia Rateriana*), copy of the eighteenth century, Biblioteca Capitolare di Verona, CXIV (106).

This is precisely the image portrayed by the famous *Versus de Verona civitate*, 'c'est-à-dire dans le genre littéraire qui exprime a priori le mieux une identité urbaine'.[58] In this work, composed by a member of the cathedral clergy at the beginning of the ninth century, 'the city's topography is articulated as a list of the prestigious Roman public monuments: the theatre, the amphitheatre, the forum with its seven temples, the city gates, the city walls, which are the witnesses of continuous public concern for the classical past'.[59] A proudly claimed tradition is interwoven in the present with the special dignity of royal residence.[60]

Conclusion

The *Versus de Verona* — a poetic work commissioned by the bishop and elaborated in the episcopal palace at the beginning of the ninth century, aimed at celebrating the royal dignity of the city along an uninterrupted continuity between past and present — is a precious testimony to the multifaceted idea

58 Bougard, Bührer-Thierry, and Le Jean, 'Les Francs à Venise', p. 227.

59 La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', p. 507.

60 *Magnus habitat in te rex Pipinus piissimus | non oblitus pietatem aut rectum iudicium, | qui bonis agens semper cunctis facit prospera* ('In you <Verona> dwells a great king, the most pious Pippin, not forgetful of compassion and justice, who acting well for the right people always does prosperous things for everyone'): 'Versus de Verona', ed. by Pighi, p. 154; see also *Laudes Veronensis civitatis*, ed. by Dümmler, p. 122.

of urban identity and the complex interweaving of relationships between its different ecclesiastical, institutional, and social actors. At the same time, the images of a 'polyfocal town',[61] and the boundaries they implied, 'were used to distinguish the people who lived inside or next to the city walls from the others who did not',[62] so long before the formal juridical definition of the citizenship and the affirmation of the triumphant model of the communal city-state were established and institutionally defined.

From *c.* 950 onwards, an increasing number of 'civic' (self-)identifications and, more generally, of charters involving laypeople, has been traditionally read as a sign of a new sort of urban society and interpreted teleologically with reference to the later city-commune.[63] The survival of many more charters, as Balzaretti maintains with regards to the Milanese case, may be indeed 'caused by some rather sudden profound social change (as Violante implied)', although it is always worth pointing out that 'changes in documentary culture and record-keeping practices may be as likely an explanation'.[64] The emergence of the Italian commune, in any case, arose from a specific historical context and reflected in its institutional patterns specific social hegemonies. It was such an original break with previous forms of government of the *res publica* that it is hard to indicate precise moments of caesurae or acceleration of dynamics in its antecedents.

In this chapter, I have tried to show an uninterrupted vitality of Italian towns in the early Middle Ages from both political and material perspectives. This vitality was reflected in a certain degree of involvement of their elites and communities. These elites often figured as protagonists, in public and military affairs, even though the forms and contents of some of the most relevant initiatives, such as participation and deliberation in assemblies, are rather obscure or totally unspecified. Above all, I think there is enough evidence to demonstrate an ongoing capacity of urban elites and communities to interact with institutions and powers at all levels, as they gained an awareness of literacy for the claim of their rights and for significant ways of (self-)representation. Even before the development of a real institutional consistency as a political collectivity, I would argue that a civic ideology — a 'cityness', as Chris Wickham says[65] — arose from it. This 'cityness' functioned as a shared sense of belonging to a unitary space, although articulated in patterns of neighbourhoods shaped by physical and symbolic elements: a walled space, first of all, since the walls were certainly the most significant point of material and mental demarcation.[66] Together with a certain confidence with political participation experimented and expressed by its inhabitants, that was probably the main legacy that early medieval cities handed over to the communal age.

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61 Hodges, 'The Idea of the Polyfocal Town?'.
62 La Rocca, 'Perceptions of an Early Medieval Urban Landscape', p. 507.
63 Paradigmatic is the famous book of Violante, *La società milanese nell'età precomunale*.
64 Balzaretti, *The Lands of Saint Ambrose*, p. 287.
65 Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, p. 595.
66 Balzaretti, *The Lands of Saint Ambrose*, p. 282.

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