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3 The Structural Features of Ravenna's Socioeconomic History in Late Antiquity

Abstract: This article discusses the structural elements of Ravenna's society in Late Antiquity, through five key factors, namely: (1) environment and demography; (2) the long-lasting consequences of the establishment in the city of the imperial court; (3) its episcopate; (4) the transformations resulting from the Byzantine conquest of the city in 540; (5) the features, in Ravenna, of an economic organization that we could qualified as a late antique one. In the model of economic operation offered by Ravenna in Late Antiquity, the state played a key role. The city needed to turn to external sources of supply (Istria, Calabria, Sicily, Africa, Greece, Palestine, Syria, Egypt) due to the limited agricultural productivity of its neighbouring areas. Until the end of the 7th century, the port of Class acted as a connecting place of a productive hinterland much larger than Romagna and the Adriatic. In the 8th and 9th centuries the Ravennate episcopate inherited, for certain aspects, the role previously exercised by the state, ensuring wealth to the city thanks to its vast land patrimony. However, unlike Late Antiquity, in the early Middle Ages the economic circuit of Ravenna no longer relied on a large transmarine emporium like Class, but on small fluvial stopovers, inland waterways and land routes. This new reconfiguration formed a more restricted area of exchanges compared to Late Antiquity.

Procopius transmits to us a tradition, hostile to Honorius, which recalls how the emperor abandoned the Milanese palace in order to take refuge in Ravenna after learning the news that the Visigoths of Alaric were in Epirus and marching towards Italy.¹ The transfer certainly occurred between March and 6 December 402.² The idea that it was simply motivated by the greater protective capacity that Ravenna would have offered compared to Milan has been scaled down in recent historiography. It has been pointed out, rightly, that this transfer also matured within the context of an ideological and political competition between Milan and Rome, in which Ravenna played a complementary role to the *Urbs aeterna*.³ Moreover, the displacement of the imperial residence to Ravenna would not have really consecrated the city as capital of the West for much of the 5th century, since from the 440s until 476 almost all emperors still spent long periods of time in Rome, and some of them, like

¹ Procopius, *Bellum Vandalicum* I 2, 9 Haury -Wirth.

² See Neri 1990, 536. In late February 402 Honorius was still in Milan, but on 6 December 402 he issued in Ravenna a law preserved in *CTh* VII 13, 15.

³ Neri 1990, 537–539.

Avitus, never even set foot on Ravennate soil.⁴ It could be added that among the reasons of a non-military nature that would have pushed Honorius to move to Ravenna was the ancient vocation – at least since the age of Emperor Augustus – that the city had played as a rear for the political and military control of Illyricum.⁵ This was an area that at the beginning of the 5th century had been crossed by Gothic military groups and on which the hegemonic aims of the two sons of Theodosius I were clashing at that moment. All these considerations seem convincing arguments that the rise of Ravenna as a new imperial residence of the late Roman West was due to a series of concomitant factors. However, in a contribution that aims towards discussing the elements of the “structure” of Ravennate society in Late Antiquity, the perspective offered by Procopius is useful as it introduces the first of the aspects which I would like to dwell upon, which are as follows: (1) the environment and demography; (2) the long-term consequences of the settlement of the imperial court; (3) the episcopate; (4) the social structure of the city and its labour market; (5) the transformations resulting from the Roman-Eastern conquest of the city in 540; (6) and finally, the peculiarities of a socioeconomic organization in Ravenna that we can qualify as ‘late antique’.

The first aspect, therefore, is the environment and demography. The place chosen by the advisors of Honorius really did have all the characteristics to become a difficult stronghold to conquer. The Roman settlement had developed upon a strip of alluvial plain flanked to the east by the sea, to the west by marshes, to the north by some waterways and to the south by the large port basin which had hosted the *classis Ravennatis*.⁶ This basin in the early 5th century was filled by progressive filling and was only working alongside the original terminal stretch of the port-canal.⁷ When the core of the Roman settlement was surrounded by walls, probably in the first half of the 5th century, it could only be successfully attacked almost exclusively from the south. In fact, there existed just one great arterial road that led to Ravenna, the via Popilia, that connected Rimini to Aquileia. This road passed through Ravenna, making it accessible to an army equipped with obsidional machines and a baggage train. There was certainly also a second road that led from Faventia to Ravenna from the west (having its origin in Florence), but it must have been unsuitable for transit by a large number of soldiers and war equipment. It is significant that the funerary areas around the city which have been discovered so far are concentrated particularly northwards and southwards along the via Popilia, or eastwards along the original coastline, but not westwards.⁸ The hydrogeological history of Ravenna was characterized by three important phenomena, which have greatly influenced the evolution of

⁴ See Gillett 2001, 131–167, especially 131, 136, 146, Humphries 2012, 161–182, especially 161–162.

⁵ Reddé 2001, 43–45.

⁶ On Ravennate paleo-environment see Fabbri 1990, 7–11.

⁷ Fabbri 1990, 22–25, Fabbri 1991, 19–22.

⁸ See the contribution by D. Ferreri in the present volume.

its habitat. The first and most important, at least for geologists, is the incidence of alluvial processes caused by sediments dragged downstream by rivers and canals. It amplifies a second phenomenon, the subsidence, namely the progressive lowering of the ground due to its constipation by new depositions of debris. The latter, in turn, is made problematic by the existence of a third phenomenon of opposite dynamic, the emergence of groundwater. In brief, the natural environment of Ravenna has been characterized by a great mobility of the geological framework and by an incessant maintenance of it by human activity. Despite the strict relationship with water which constituted a major feature of the cityscape, Ravenna suffered from a lack of water suitable for drinking and social use, as pointed out by Sidonius Apollinaris in his well-known letters of 467.⁹ Emperor Trajan (98–117) is credited with the construction of an aqueduct that originated in Meldola¹⁰; it is not known whether the structure was still working when Honorius arrived, but certainly part of it was restored by Theoderic. In practice, the city's water supply was guaranteed by the excavation of wells, which were numerous inside it and drew water directly from the phreatic layer.

The population density within the 166 hectares enclosed by the city walls is not known.¹¹ Considering that Ravenna was crossed by at least three streams (the Padenna, Flumisello and Lamisa), by different canals, and that the particular fragility of its soil did not allow the construction of large multi-family edifices such as those attested to in Ostia, Rome and Constantinople, this meant the building areas had to be considerably smaller than the space enclosed within the walls. As with the Flemish cities of the early Middle Ages, which developed in a physical environment similar in many respects to that of Ravenna, a population density of less than 100 people per hectare was suggested by Edith Ennen.¹² One can conclude that the living capacity of Ravenna between the 5th and the 6th centuries was around 8,500 people, assuming that at least half of the walled city was urbanised, and using the above-mentioned estimates drawn from the Flemish cities. This order of magnitude is compatible with other demographic estimates elaborated by using other parameters, according to which the conurbation Ravenna – Caesarea – Classe in the Justinianic age had a resident population of about 12,000 people, while at the beginning of the 8th century it would have dropped to around 7,000 people.¹³ Towards 1371, Ravenna

⁹ Sidonius visited Ravenna in 467, leaving us a vivid memory of his stay in two letters addressed respectively to Herennius and Candidianus: see Sidonii Apollinaris *Epistulae*. I 5, 5–6 and I 8, 2–3. On Sidonius' letters see the observations by Mazza 2005, 7–8.

¹⁰ See Maioli 2018, 338–340.

¹¹ Extension of Ravenna in Late Antiquity: Gelichi 2005, 821–840: 830 (the whole walled circuit measured approximately 4.5 km and enclosed an area of about 166 ha); Augenti 2010a, 343–369: 344.

¹² Ennen 1975, 211.

¹³ See Cosentino 2005, 405–435, especially 411–412.

(excluding its suburbs) had 6,100 inhabitants.¹⁴ Based upon the registers of the city parishes dating back to 1585, Dante Bolognesi has estimated that at the end of the 16th century the city was populated by 9,750 people.¹⁵ Adam Smith (1723–1790), in his famous *Inquiry* on how to evaluate the wealth of nations, pointed out as an important parameter the percentage of productive workers out of the total population.¹⁶ If we look at Ravenna under this viewpoint, we realize that it had a very peculiar character compared to other late antique cities. In contrast with Rome, Constantinople or Alexandria, it did not have a numerous urban populace to feed, nor did it host important sanctuaries attracting a huge flow of pilgrims. In late antique Ravenna, the relationship between the residential population and productive population must have been much different from that described by the Dominican theologian Tommaso Campanella (1561–1639) regarding sixteenth-century Naples, in which out of 300,000 inhabitants only 50,000 were active workers.¹⁷ For Ravenna, this percentage must have been much higher in Late Antiquity: instead of 1/6, possibly about 1/3 of its residential population was employed in different segments of the productive cycle. This figure, as we will see later, had repercussions on the overall economic tenor of the city during this period, in particular on its ability to attract capital and on the structure of its labour market as well.

The court settled in an area east of the core of the Roman city. During the first half of the 5th century, Ravenna acquired the aspect of a tetrarchic capital and was endowed with all the buildings and infrastructures that characterized the *sedes regia*: an imperial palace consisting of at least two separate pavilions erected by Honorius and Valentinian III.¹⁸ It was surrounded by walls which according to some scholars were erected between 425 and 455,¹⁹ and it was endowed with a mint and a hippodrome.²⁰ In parallel to the new public monumentalization of the city, there was the first season of great ecclesiastical building with the construction of the Basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista, the church of Santa Croce (both Placidian

¹⁴ Cosentino 2005, 412, fn. 20.

¹⁵ See Bolognesi 1994, 639–640.

¹⁶ Smith 1976, 10–24, 330–349. The *Inquiry* was published in 1776.

¹⁷ Campanella 1944, 39.

¹⁸ Cosentino 2015b, 55–56, with former bibliography on the topic; see also Herrin 2015, 53–62.

¹⁹ This chronology has been proposed by Christie/Gibson 1988, 157–196, esp. 194 followed by Gelichi 2005, 821–840, who, however, thinks that the walls were built with reuse materials (837). Cirelli 2008, 54–67 sides Gelichi's analysis, while Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 54 is inclined to think that the walls existed by the very early 5th century. This is the same position held by Fabbri 2004, 34–41, who maintains that Ravenna had an expanded circuit of fortifications since the 4th century – and this would be the reason why Honorius chose the city as a residence.

²⁰ Studies on Ravennate mint in late antique and early Byzantine period: Gorini 1992, 209–238; Arslan 2005, 191–229; Morrison/Callegher 2014, especially 254–258; Prigent 2016, 151–161. Hippodrome: Vespignani 2005, II, 1133–1142. Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010 is skeptical about the existence of a circus in Ravenna.

foundations), the Basilica Ursiana, and the Orthodox baptistery.²¹ The presence of the palatine administration had as a consequence the revitalization of the port of Classe, which became the commercial hub of the northern Adriatic. The port infrastructures were built substantially along a large waterway that from the open sea penetrated toward the mainland, forming a large port-canal in the middle of which there was an island.²² Storehouses, in many cases with porticoes, stood on each side of that waterway, and were probably also present on both sides of the island located in the middle of it.²³ Towards the beginning of the 5th century, Classe was encircled with walls and had a circuit that still now remains undefined. Within these walls the Basilica Petriana was built, the largest Christian edifice of the whole settlement.²⁴ A paved road connected Classe to Ravenna, passing through the suburb of Caesarea, whose functional vocation and residential area are still little known.

While some of the emperors between 450 and 476 were not even crowned in Ravenna (like Petronius Maximus, Anthemius, Olybrius, Julius Nepos and Avitus), there seems to be no doubt that most of the *scrinia* of the central bureaucracy were established in Ravenna.²⁵ The African Praetorian prefecture at the time of its reconstitution in 534 had a staff of 396 persons.²⁶ It is not imprudent to suppose that, at least from the late 5th to mid-6th century, the employees of the Ravennate administration, along with their families, totalled about 1,500 people. Throughout Late Antiquity we do not know how many soldiers formed the units *in praesenti*; probably not many, since from the late 6th to early 7th century – a phase of particularly harsh pressure by the Lombards against the Byzantine lands – the regiments quoted in Ravenna are not more than 3, for a total that may have ranged from 600 to 1,200 soldiers.²⁷ Both the civil officers and the military received (apart from rations in kind) remunerations in money, the former in the form of annual salaries, the latter in irregular donations.²⁸

The political rise of Ravenna to the rank of imperial residence had significant repercussions also upon its bishopric. Little is known about the Church of Ravenna before the 5th century, apart from some rare epigraphs and the testimony of Andreas Agnellus writing in the early 9th century.²⁹ Among the northern-Italian episcopates, the rank of Ravenna began to emerge in the second quarter of the 5th

²¹ Overview in Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 60–105.

²² Maioli 1990, 377–383; Maioli 2018, 337–338; Augenti 2010, 44–45.

²³ Augenti 2011, 15–44: 26–28.

²⁴ Augenti 2010a, 44.

²⁵ Cosentino 2015b, 55.

²⁶ *CJ I* 27, 1–2.

²⁷ They are the *numerus Ravennatis* (quoted in 591); the *numerus felicum Theodosiacum* (quoted around 600), and the *numerus Armeniorum* (quoted in 639): see Brown 1984, 90.

²⁸ Brown 1984, 86.

²⁹ See Orselli 1991, 405–422; Zangara 2000, 265–304; Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 84–85; Deliyannis 2016, 41–42.

century when, according to Agnellus, the Ravennate see received metropolitan jurisdiction over 14 bishops.³⁰ Since at least the pontificate of Exuperantius (ca. 473–477) the Ravennate church began to be endowed with estates in Sicily.³¹ At the time of Pope Felix (526–530) it can be estimated that its land patrimony yielded about 16,000 / 17,000 *solidi* yearly.³² This amount grew considerably by virtue of two donations made by Justinian to Bishops Victor (ca. 537–ca. 544) and Agnellus (557–570).³³ The increase had to be especially relevant thanks to the second grant, which seems to have concerned all the assets of the Arian church located within the Ravennate ecclesiastical province.

Between the mid-5th to the mid-7th century, the Church of Ravenna came to amass a land patrimony distributed across Istria, Veneto, Emilia, Romagna, Marche, Umbria, Calabria, Campania, and of course Sicily.³⁴ The documentary dossier concerning the Sicilian possessions has recently been enriched by the discovery of a lead seal in Catania pertaining to a *rector* who was formerly unknown. His *bulla* was found during excavations made in 2015 in the area of the so-called Rotunda, a large thermal Roman structure dating to sometime between the 1st and 2nd centuries AD which was later transformed into a church devoted to the Mother of God. The seal bears on the obverse the legenda [B]arbat(i) rect(or)is s(an)c(t)ae ec(c)l(esiae) Ra(vennatis), while on the reverse an eagle stands with a Greek cruciform monogramme reading Θεοτόκε βοήθει.³⁵ Under Bishop Maurus (ca 649–671) the see of St. Apollinaris had more than quintupled its income compared to the early 6th century, making it possible to estimate its yearly revenue to the order of 70,000 *solidi* – which is a conservative estimate.³⁶ Historians are used to giving great emphasis to the privilege of autocephaly granted by Constans II (641–668) to the same Bishop Maurus on a date before March 666.³⁷ Some passages of the privilege, which was handed down to us in a Latin transcription from the 14th century, seem to imply that it also contained economic clauses.³⁸ If they are the same as those mentioned in another privilege bestowed by Constantine IV (668–685) upon Bishop Reparatus (about 671–678), they were not at all unimportant. As a matter of fact, the latter exempted the Ravennate bishop and its clergy from declaring publicly their own possessions for

³⁰ *LPRa*, 40 (Deliyannis, 198). But on the disputed origins of the metropolitan status of Ravenna see: *ivi*, pp. 102–107.

³¹ *LPRa* 31, 8 (Deliyannis, 184).

³² Cosentino 2005, 427, fn. 86.

³³ Cosentino 2005, 427, fn. 84.

³⁴ On the patrimony and the economic aspects of its functioning see: Fasoli 1979b, 69–96, Fasoli 1979a, 87–140 Fasoli 1991, 389–400; Brown 1979, 1–28; Cosentino 2012b, 417–439.

³⁵ The seal has been published by Guzzetta 2015, 573–589: 577–578, fig. n. 114.

³⁶ Cosentino 2012, 419.

³⁷ Edition and translation by Cosentino 2014, 153–169 (text: edition: 167–168). At p. 168, line 33, the group of letters in legature has to be solved as “legi”, not as “fiat”, as I wrongly did in my article.

³⁸ Cosentino 2014, 158, 162.

taxation and freed them from a series of indirect taxes (the *ripaticum*, *portaticum*, *siliquaticum* and *teloneum*).³⁹ In the course of the 5th and 6th centuries the bishopric became one of the most important economic powers of the city by managing an organization that included merchant ships, granaries, storehouses, traders and probably artisanal workshops.

Important political power, low demography and a high level of monetization made Ravenna a very peculiar urban society. The senatorial aristocracy did not care to reside in Ravenna, nor did it move there.⁴⁰ Rather, the city hosted a ruling class of civil servants tied to court activities, whose upper echelons were represented by people like the *cubicularius* Lauricius, who served under Emperor Honorius and was the patron of the church of San Lorenzo in Caesarea.⁴¹ In the early 6th century the local curia was still active.⁴² At that time, the main functions of its members consisted of the registration in the municipal archives of all juridical acts accomplished in the *territorium civitatis*, as well as taking part in the tax collection procedures of their district.⁴³ Those belonging to such class normally bore the honorific appellation of *virī laudabiles*. In written evidence concerning them, it still used a technical vocabulary that expressed the hierarchical distinction within the decurionate, so that we hear about *magistratus*, *decemprimi* and *principales*. Even the characteristic onomastic system of this social class is marked by strong conservatism, making regular use of the practice of the *duo nomina*, the gentilice (Aelius, Aurelius, Flavius, Firmilianus, Hernilius, Melminius, Pompilius, Tremodius) and the cognomen, as it happens in the municipal register of Timgad of 363.⁴⁴ With reference to Ravenna, our sources do not report huge phenomena of urban pauperism, nor did the local church seem to promote foundations for the support of the weak and needy, which instead characterized places such as Rome or Naples.

Another very well documented class in Ravenna is that of the *virī honesti*. The qualification of *honestus* in the social vocabulary of the Principate had designated a generic expression of respectability, but starting from the Constantinian age it began to characterize legally all those who were admitted to testify within the courts.⁴⁵ Socially, it connotes membership to the wealthiest stratum of craftsmen, traders and other individuals exercising 'specialized' professions, such as *tabelliones* (public writers),

³⁹ *LPRa* 115, 10–20 (Deliyannis, 286–287).

⁴⁰ See Pietri 1991.

⁴¹ On the Sicilian estates of Lauricius, three *massae* and several *fundi*, see Tjäder I, pap. 1 = *ChLA* XX, no. 705; about his career and activity see *PLRE* II, pp. 659–600; Pietri 1991, 288; Caliri 2003, 429–468. Another *grand commis* of the Ravennate court was the *vir inlustris* Pierius, *comes sacrarum largitionum* under Odovacar, on whom see Tjäder I, pap. 10–11 = *ChLA*, no. 703; *PLRE* II, p. 885.

⁴² Between 474 and 572, 48 decurions are quoted in Ravenna: see the list in Ausbüttel 1987, 207–214: 213–214.

⁴³ See Cosentino 2018.

⁴⁴ See Chastagnol 1978, 49.

⁴⁵ See Cosentino 1999, 13–50: 16–20.

jewellers or bankers. On the one hand, they generated profits from their professional activities, on the other, they invested their revenue in small lots of lands and were also small landowners.⁴⁶ Even if most of them were probably unable to patronise precious artifacts such as Maximianus's *cathedra*, they nevertheless played an important role in supporting economic demand and buying craft products or foodstuffs of a certain quality, such as expensive wines from the East. The group of the *argentarii* was especially important among them; they were private entrepreneurs who worked in the sphere of finance and were involved with all that concerned the management of metallic wealth.⁴⁷ Bankers are quoted in the Ravennate sources of the 6th century in a higher percentage in comparison with the attestations of Rome, although the latter had a population much larger than that of Ravenna.⁴⁸ The most famous among them, Julian, earned enough money to be able to finance the building of at least three important churches, including San Vitale, San Michele in Africisco and Sant' Apollinare in Classe.⁴⁹ It is not an exaggeration to claim that Ravenna, along with Constantinople and Alexandria, was one of the centres of Mediterranean financial capitalism in the Justinianic age. Ravennate bankers had the opportunity to exploit a social milieu in which several social groups (dignitaries, soldiers, merchants, artisans, priests) could easily dispose of cash due to the presence of a mint. The circulation of money was concretely stimulated thanks to the buying and selling of artifacts and merchandise, as well as by financial loans. In this process, forms of public and private wealth strictly interplayed. It is in this fertile ground that the banking community of Ravenna flourished, having the opportunity to operate in an economic context characterized on the one hand by a small population, and on the other by several social groups possessing cash and other economic resources. As a matter of fact, both written and archaeological sources testify to an articulated organization of the labour market in late antique Ravenna. Our evidence quotes *architecti* (engineers), *argentarii* (bankers), *bracarii* (producers of trousers), *ceraearii* (producers of wax), *chrysokatallaktai* (moneychangers), *forenses* (public writers), *gunnarii* (producers of cloth), (*h*)*orrearii* (keepers of granaries), *libripendes* or *libripenses* (people responsible for weighing), *marmorarii* (marble merchants), *medici* (physicians), *monitarii* (money engravers), *navicularii* (shipowners), *negotiatores* (tradesmen), *olosiricopratae* (silk merchants), *pistores* (bakers) and *sapunarii* (soapmakers).⁵⁰ Workshops existed in

46 Ibid., 32–35.

47 Cosentino 2015, 243–254; on banking activity in Late Antiquity, *ibid.* 245, fn. 1 (with bibliography).

48 Ibid., 247–248.

49 On Julianus see Deichmann 1951, 5–26; Deichmann 1976, 21–27; Susini 1959–1960, 153–158; Bovini 1970, 125–150; Brown 1983, 39–46; Barnish 1985, 3–38; Cosentino 2006, 43–48.

50 *Argentarii*: *PIB* II, 223 (Iulianus), III, (s. v. Vitalis); *architecti*: *PIB* I, 126 (Aloisus); *bracarii*: *PIB* I, 254 (Bonus); *ceraearii*: *PIB* III (s. v. Vitalis); *chrysokatallaktai*: *PIB* I, 334 (Marinus); *forenses*: *PIB* III (s. v. Fl. Vitalis); *gunnarii*: *PIB* II, 262 (Laurentius); (*h*)*orrearii*: *PIB* II, 250 (Iovinus), 260 (Laurentius), III (s. v. Quiriacus); *libripendes*: *PIB* III (s. v. Serapio); *medici*: *PIB* II, 284 (Leontius); *monitarii*: *PIB* II, 263 (Laurentius), *PIB* III (s. v. Paschalis, Vitalis); *navicularii*: *PIB* II, 269 (Leo); *negotiatores*: *PIB* II, 346

which manuscripts were copied in Latin, Greek and Gothic languages; there were lapidaries able to cut and engrave metal, marble and stone using Latin and Greek alphabets. The structures of the harbour of Classe brought to light by archaeologists (warehouses, docks, kilns, glassmakers, taverns)⁵¹ implied the existence of porters, boatmen, ceramicists, glazers and publicans at the least.

The great season of urban ecclesiastic building occurred from the mid-5th to mid-6th century and was the making of Ravenna as a court centre. Such an important construction activity was economically supported by financiers who, to a large extent, came from all the economic groups active in the city during this period: the imperial court (San Giovanni Evangelista and Santa Croce)⁵²; the Orthodox episcopate (Basilica Ursiana, Basilica Apostolorum, Sant'Agata, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santo Stefano Maggiore, Santissimi Giovanni e Paolo built at the end of the 6th century)⁵³; the royal Ostrogoth power and the Arian episcopate (modern Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, originally the palatine church serving Theoderic's palace intitled to the Saviour; the Arian cathedral Santo Spirito, the Arian baptistery, the *ecclesia Gothorum* as well as Sant'Eusebio)⁵⁴; the imperial bureaucracy (San Lorenzo in Caesarea and Santissimi Giovanni e Paolo, in which an ambo was donated by Adeodatus *primicerius stratorum*)⁵⁵; and bankers (San Vitale, San Michele in Afrisco, Sant'Apollinare in Classe).⁵⁶ On the whole, it can be suggested that the character of Christian evergetism in the city was marked by the action of influential and socially structured groups. It was less dependent upon modest offerings from the middle class to support the erection of churches than was seen in several other places along the northern Adriatic rim (Aquileia, Grado, Trieste, Pula, Poreč).⁵⁷ It is true that the more ancient monumental legacy of Ravenna has been subjected to restructuration, reuse, spoliation and destruction, to the extent that it might show a distorted image of the economic forces that made its edification possible. However, one also has to consider that the pavements of churches like San Vitale or Sant'Apollinare in Classe come to us with no excessive

(Martinus); *olorisicopratai*: PIB II, 37 (Georgius), III (s. v. Theodolus); *pistores*: PIB I, 465 (Florentinus); *sapunarii*: PIB II, 224 (Isacius).

51 See above, fn. 23.

52 Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 61–83 with former bibliography.

53 Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 84–105, 220 (Sts John and Paul).

54 Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 139–187, with former bibliography.

55 S. Lorenzo in Caesarea was built by the *cubicularius* Laurentius: see above, fn. 41; the donation by the *primicerius* Adeodatus is remembered in an epigraph, that I would read as follows: *De donis D(ei) et s(an)c(t)orum Iohannis et Pauli Adeodatus prim(icerius) strator(um) in(l)ustris p(raefecturae) temp(ori)b(us) d(o)m(in)i v(ene)r(a)bilis Marinian(i) arc(hi)ep(iscopi) fec(it) ind(ictione) XV: PIB I, 97. The correct technical qualification of Adeodatus was not, as often affirmed in scholarship, *primus strator*, but *primicerius stratorum* of the Praetorian Praefecture.*

56 See above, fn. 47.

57 See some examples in Caillet 1993, 142–346.

alterations, nor do they convey a strongly communitarian image as characterized by the donors of mosaic pavements at Santa Maria delle Grazie or Sant'Eufemia in Grado.

In 540 Ravenna was occupied by the troops of Belisarius after almost fifty years of Gothic regime. Did this change entail transformations under the social and economic standpoint? I think it is possible to answer positively to this question by pointing out at least three fields in which the passage from one regime to another implied some evident changes. The first is the fate of the Gothic community after the conquest of Ravenna, and even more after the end of the Graeco-Gothic war. Historiography did not reach a clear consensus about the identity of the barbaric peoples and their degree of integration within the Roman world.⁵⁸ The Ravennate situation does not seem to leave room for doubts about the fact that the Gothic community interacted with the socioeconomic fabric of the city, but at the same time it always preserved its own identity and limited its integration with local groups. During the Ostrogothic period, the northeastern sector of Ravenna became a culturally Arian area by hosting the Arian cathedral with the episcopal palace and baptistery, as well as the churches of Sant'Anastasia, and that of the Theoderician palace (San Salvatore, then S. Martino in Ciel d'Oro and finally Sant'Apollinare Nuovo).⁵⁹ Sant'Eusebio and San Giorgio (later Catholic dedications) were always situated in this neighbourhood, but outside of the walls. In Classe there existed the church of San Sergio (later Catholic dedication), which perhaps was built under the Odovacar's regime; in Caesarea, that of San Zenone (also with a later Catholic dedication). I do not see evident reasons for not concluding that the northeastern sector of the city was characterized by a strong presence of the Gothic settlement, despite some scholars denying this.⁶⁰ Actually, it appears quite natural that the Gothic component, being Arian for the most part, wanted to settle near its own places of worship. Some might argue that until the age of Theodosius I, and perhaps still little beyond, Arianism was a religious profession spread throughout the whole Roman *oikoumene* and that not all the Goths were Arians.⁶¹ Nevertheless, at the beginning of the 6th century several sources bore testimony to a new wave of intolerance against Arianism which arose in

58 On this topic much has been written. Historiography knows sharp differences of opinion about barbarian identity; see, with regards to this, the essays collected by Gillett 2002; Goffart 2006; Halsall 2007, esp. 37–62; Heather 2010, 1–35 (an approach that I share). A balanced overview of historiographical trends is proposed by Pohl 2008, 93–101.

59 About the location of the mentioned churches and on their rite: Cirelli 2008, 98–100; Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 143–187.

60 Cfr. Sotinel 2008, 383–384 (with some minor inconsistencies as the affirmation according to which the Byzantine conquest of Ravenna would have occurred in 536 or about dating to 553 the donation with which Justinian granted to the Catholic church all the properties of the Arian church; optimistically, for the author, the wall mosaics of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo were substituted by the Catholics “con facilità”); Augenti 2010a, 357–358.

61 The same mother of Theoderic, ‘Erelieva (or Ereriliva) qui et Eusebia’, was Catholic: *PLRE* II, p. 400. The exact spelling of her name should be ‘Ereleuva’: see Francovich/Onesti 2007, no. 90,

Constantinople, a wave that had repercussions upon the Gothic community across the entire Mediterranean world.⁶² The comparison between the figurative cycles of the Orthodox and Arian baptistery, as well as some images adorning the most important Ravennate churches, such as San Vitale or Sant'Apollinare Nuovo, do not seem to show a marked difference in the representation of the Divine between the two religious professions, Arianism (which for the most part coincided with 'Omeian' Christianity) and Catholicism (namely Nicene and Chalcedonian Christianity).⁶³ Perhaps these differences were more evident in the cult of saints. On the other hand, it has been noted that the Byzantine reconquest of Ravenna left clear traces of a Catholic intervention in some of the ecclesiastic edifices of the city. The precision by which, in the first half of the 9th century, Agnellus hands down the ceremonies of the *reconsecratio* – namely the reconsecration to Catholicism of formerly Arian churches – occurred in 550s and 560s seems to support this idea.⁶⁴ The Theoderician palatine church devoted to the Saviour was re-intitulated to St. Martin, a saint who was thought to be a fierce persecutor of the Arians.⁶⁵ The substitution of long bands of mosaics along the northern and southern walls of the central nave testifies to the obstinacy with which, during the Justinianic age, the new regime cancelled the religious and political memory of the Gothic presence.⁶⁶ San Michele in Africisco was consecrated in 554 under Bishop Maximianus; the decoration of its apse – no longer extant today, but known to us from reproductions drawn before the mosaics were detached from the wall and sent to King Friderich Wilhelm IV of Prussia in 1842⁶⁷ – depicted a young Christ standing between the archangels Michael and Gabriel, while holding a crown in his right hand and an open Gospel in his left. The faithful could clearly read in the open pages of the Book the two following sentences: *qui vidit me vidit et Patrem* (Io. 14, 9); *ego et Pater unum*

no. 45, fn. 90. This situation changed beginning with the 5th century: Gwynn 2010, 229–263, especially 257–260; Petrini 2011, 339–357.

62 Cosentino 2016, 133–149: 137.

63 See Ward-Perkins 2010, 265–281. See also the prudent considerations by Brown 2007, 417–426 and discussion 427–441. The approach by Amory 1997, 236–276 to the relationship between Arianism and Gothic community tries to demonstrate that there was no relation between religious profession and ethnic-cultural identity.

64 See Urbano 2005, 71–110

65 See Van Dam 1993, 17–18; Baldini 2012, 383–397, esp. 387, argued convincingly, on the base of the witness provided in 1586 by the Franciscan father Gianfrancesco Malezzappi, that the male procession was led not by St. Martin, but by St. Stephen the Protomartyr.

66 Urbano 2005, 71–110; Mauskopf Deliyannis 2010, 164–174; Baldini 2012, pp. 383–397; Carile 2012, 127–132; Jäggi, 2013, 180–182 and 184–185, publishes a useful synoptic scheme where it is possible to visualize the mosaic cycles of the Theoderician phase in comparison with those dated after 561.

67 Jäggi 2013, 284.

sumus (Io. 10, 30). As has been noted by B. Ward-Perkins, they conveyed a message that unambiguously had an evident Catholic and anti-Arian content.⁶⁸

Moreover, one has to consider that the Gothic population was decimated by the change of regime and became socially insignificant. Throughout northern and central Italy, but in Ravenna in particular, we have examples of men and women of the Gothic community who, in the second half of the 6th century, converted themselves to Catholicism and donated all, or portions, of their patrimonies to ecclesiastic institutions in exchange for protection. Such is the case, for instance, of Ranilo *sublimis femina* who, in 557, along with her husband, donated both movable and immovable goods to the Church of Ravenna.⁶⁹ In Rieti, also in this same year, Gundihild, widow of the *vir industris* Gudahals, appointed legal tutors for her sons, Lendarit and Landarit.⁷⁰ In the late 6th century, Wililiwa, who styled herself as *donatrix guta*, bequeathed her entire patrimony to the Church of Ravenna.⁷¹ Beginning with this period, names with Gothic origins tend to disappear from the onomastic record of Ravennate documents. The members of the Gothic community who survived the war were obliged to convert to Catholicism if they wanted to keep their goods. The dedication of Arian churches underwent a radical process of new intitution at every shrine. In short, the eastern Romans systematically dismantled the social organisation of the defeated, deprived them of their goods and obliterated their religious memory.

The long-lasting consequences of the collapse of the Ostrogothic rule also affected the rural landscape. Since the end of the 6th century, in a revival of conflicts in the Italian scenario due to the Lombard invasion, the military began to increase their role as landowners. Based upon a few extant documents of sale from the 7th century – 28 pieces of evidence – the percentage of land held by them in this period can be estimated at 25%.⁷² In the 8th century, when our sample of documentation is much more abundant, reaching up to about 78 documents, this percentage increases considerably. By combining senior officers of the army with simple soldiers, it can be inferred that about 64% of the land of the Exarchate and Pentapolis was exploited by possessors of military condition.⁷³ I spoke of possessors and not owners,

68 Ward-Perkins 2010, 285–286. Contrary to Ward-Perkins, *ibid.*, p. 279, it seems to me difficult not to consider as explicitly anti-Arian the sentence written in the Gospel held by the Christ who is depicted in the Cappella Arcivescovile: *Ego sum via, veritas et vita* (Io 14, 6–9). As the same Ward-Perkins clarifies, the sentence is quoted from a passage whose sense was that of explaining that who knows the Son knows also the Father; on the other hand, it is always from this passage that it was selected the quotation ‘qui vidit me vidit et Patrem’ depicted in the apse of S. Michele in Africisco. The Cappella Arcivescovile, as is well-known, was built by Bishop Peter II (494–519).

69 Tjäder I, pap. 13 = *ChLA* XXIX, n. 880. *PLRE* III, 1077–1078.

70 Tjäder I, pap. 7 = *ChLA* XX, n. 712. *PLRE* III, 364.

71 Tjäder II, pap. 28, 56 = *ChLA* IV, no. 232; *ChLA* IX; no. 400.

72 Cosentino 1999, 36–37.

73 Cosentino 1999, 38–41.

because the amount of land belonging to the Ravenna church allocated in emphyteusis to the military is remarkable. As far as rural landscape is concerned, the transition from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages thus marks a noteworthy strengthening of groups belonging to the military tradition. The latter increased their land patrimony by managing assets belonging to the Church of Ravenna, becoming in the 8th and 9th century a true armed *clientela* of the archbishops.⁷⁴

Did the Byzantine conquest entail a major presence of people and traditions coming from the East in the social and economic life of the city? With regards to this, scholarly debate has mainly focused on demography and the Greek language as mirrored in the onomastic patrimony of the Ravennate region.⁷⁵ Such a debate did not achieve unambiguous results, however, since very ordinary names as 'Iohannes', 'Stephanus' or 'Georgius' were spread both in the Greek and Latin cultural milieu, making it difficult to reach persuasive conclusions according to this perspective.⁷⁶ Our increase of data concerning the port of Classe, which is today more numerous than in the 1980s, allows us to approach this topic under the viewpoint of material culture. There seems to be no doubt, according to the analysis proposed by archaeologists, that until the first half of the 6th century the majority of transport containers and tableware came from Africa. However, beginning with the second half of the same century there was a strong diversification of the areas of import of the amphorae, with an increase of those coming from Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Greece (Samos and Chios) and Anatolia (Sardis).⁷⁷ The centre of gravity of imports of certain staple items, such as olive oil and wine, moves decisively eastwards and will continue to remain as such until the end of the 7th century, when Classe ceased to be a major international hub. Of course, there is no mechanical correlation between goods and human groups, since the eastern products could have been very well distributed to Ravenna by local operators. Nevertheless, it is hard to think that the entire process of acquisition and distribution of foodstuffs, spices, textiles and pottery did not have repercussions on the Greek or Syriac speaking communities of Ravenna in a period when the axis of imports was decidedly unbalanced towards the eastern Mediterranean. In the second half of the 6th century, the papyri of Ravenna

⁷⁴ On this aspect: Carile 1985, 81–94; Vespignani 2001; Schoolman 2016, 211–238, esp. 224–238.

⁷⁵ Before the Byzantine conquest of Ravenna, according to Ruggini 1959, 186–308 (esp. 267–269) the demographic composition of the northern Italian cities was as follows: 70% of Latins, 16% of Easterners and 14% of Goths. Guillou 1969, 78–80 argued that between 584 and the early 8th century the Greek speaking element in the Exarchate would have increased from 16% to 43% (see also Guillou 1991, 101–108). The figures of Guillou, however, have been criticized by Brown 1984, 67–69; Brown 1988, 27–160 (especially 134); Id., 1991, 135–149. Important studies on the onomastics of the Exarchate and Pentapolis are also those by Lazard 1973, 7–38; Lazard 1978, 1–15; Lazard 1985, 33–61; see also Haubrichs 2016, 253–295.

⁷⁶ See the observations made in Cosentino 2012a, 173–185: 174–177.

⁷⁷ Augenti 2005, 238–240; Cirelli 2007, 45–50; Cirelli, 2008, 131–137; Augenti/Cirelli 2010, 605–615. See also the contribution by C. Guarnieri in this volume.

describe silk merchants of probable Antiochene origin; perhaps the same family that Julian came from in Syria.⁷⁸ We can reasonably conclude, therefore, that if on the one hand the inclusion of Ravenna in the Eastern Roman Empire did not involve a massive phenomenon of ‘Hellenization’ of the city, on the other, the functioning mechanisms of its economic life were deeply influenced by this event. The new political condition probably also implied an increase of the Greek-speaking component that resided in it.

What economic model does Ravenna offer for Late Antiquity? A key role in supporting production, distribution and demand is provided by the public apparatus. However, this stimulus is not put into action through the centrality that assumes the cycle of taxation in spreading money throughout the economic circuit. The ‘circular’ model of late antique economy proposed in the 1980s by a brilliant numismatist and economic historian like Michael Hendy – according to which, in essence, the main channel of monetization of society would have been the coinage of money for the needs of the *publicum* (army and bureaucracy), its reacquisition by the state thanks to its fiscal organization, and the new introduction of money in the productive system by means of payments destined to bureaucracy and army – displays in Ravenna evident limits of functionality.⁷⁹ Within the Adriatic city it is actually very doubtful that, for instance, one of the most important actors of economic performance, the episcopate, was able to give a return to the state in the form of taxation the same quantity of money that it was able to acquire on the productive circuit. Likewise, it is very doubtful that the commercial demand was largely generated by the movements of the *annona* promoted by state administration. The estimates elaborated by Enrico Cirelli for the volumetric capacity of building 17 of the port of Classe, namely 9,360 kg of grain, were sufficient to potentially feed around 6,000 people in one day. Taking this datum as a starting point, Cirelli comes to hypothesize that the late antique harbour area had a storage capacity that could potentially feed 300,000 inhabitants in one month.⁸⁰ If compared to the reconstructive hypotheses of the demography of 5th-6th century Ravenna, these figures raise doubts as to whether the granary supply was destined entirely to the public apparatus or even to the city itself. It is not clear at the current state of research what could have been its destination, probably it was meant for a much larger area than Ravenna. Although we do not yet have clear archaeological evidence, we can assume that a portion of the staples arriving in the port of Classe were distributed in the Po Valley through the Po river. If so, since Classe remained a large emporium in which products from the East arrived until the late 7th century, trade networks were probably not restricted solely to the Byzantine Italian regions, but they also involved Lombard territories.

78 Cosentino 2015, 250–251.

79 Hendy 1985, 395–404, 619–626, 662–667; Hendy 1989; Hendy 2002, 1307–370.

80 Augenti/Cirelli 2010, 609–610.

More than through the exercise of taxation, the role of the state appears fundamental in the economy of Ravenna for its own institutional presence, which guaranteed the functioning of the mint, involved the presence of officials, attracted investments, and promoted policies of spending within the territory. These characteristics in Ravenna are enhanced by the modest size of its population and by the environmental landscape in which the city rose up. The need that it had to make recourse to external sources for its own supply activated connections between itself and regions far from the city, given the limited agricultural productivity in the area surrounding the urban centre. Wheat came from Istria, Sicily and Tunisia; olive oil from Istria, Syria and Tunisia; wine from Romagna, Calabria, Chios, Palestine, Samos, and Alexandria.⁸¹ As far as fabrics are concerned, it can be assumed that they came from the Po Valley, the Balkans (raw wool), and Apulia (finest wool and purple),⁸² while certainly some silk qualities arrived from Syria. The port of Classe, which was maintained in efficiency by the Byzantine government until the end of the 7th century, was the focal point that connected Ravenna with a productive hinterland much larger than the area around the city. The vicissitudes of this great emporium parallel the history of the late antique Mediterranean. As Andrea Augenti has pointed out, it declined at the end of the 7th century in coincidence with the transformation of the long-distance system of exchanges inherited from Antiquity.⁸³

This chronology is also significant in relation to the capacity that the Byzantine government had to keep the port of Classe efficient. In Late Antiquity, the management of ports as a whole seems to have been a task assigned to city authorities, with the exception of those cities that were seats of imperial residences, such as Constantinople, Antioch and Ravenna, where imperial authority took direct control over this.⁸⁴ The maintenance of harbour infrastructures involved a high economic investment, and it is not by chance that our sources provide general information almost exclusively for the interventions financed by the emperors, such as Constantius II in Antioch, or Justinian in Constantinople.⁸⁵ Towards the end of the 7th century the exarchal office, to which presumably the maintenance of the port basin of Classe was entrusted, seems to experience a crisis of its political authority over the whole peninsula. The crisis of authority by the exarch probably also coincided with a diminution of his financial resources for supporting large-scale military policies, which may have affected his ability to provide for dredging the seabed, maintenance of the docks and repaving of the roads in the area of Classe.

The decline of the harbour leads us to wonder to what extent this event corresponded with an economic crisis in Ravenna. At the current state of research, it

81 Cosentino 2005, 427–428; Cosentino 2017, 345.

82 Cosentino 2017, 345.

83 Augenti 2010b, 49–50.

84 See Cosentino 2019, forthcoming.

85 Cosentino 2019, forthcoming

seems possible to argue that the progressive abandonment of Classe did not impede merchandise from reaching Ravenna via transmarine trade. Since the 8th century the importance of smaller emporia, such as those of Comacchio, Venice, and Rimini increased throughout the whole northern Adriatic basin.⁸⁶ In Ravenna, a minor port located not far from the Mausoleum of Theoderic continued to be in function, probably the *portus Lachernus* mentioned by Agnellus.⁸⁷ Even in a reduced scale, goods coming from Apulia, the Aegean and the Black Sea continued to be imported. Written evidence documents the presence of traders in Ravenna throughout the 8th and 9th century.⁸⁸ Taken as a whole, the economic picture of Ravenna in this period does not seem to be that of a city adrift. In essence, it remained a prosperous centre, albeit in a Mediterranean context that was consistently changed in comparison to its situation during Late Antiquity. Ravenna remained integrated to an area, the northern Adriatic, where regional, interregional and, to a certain extent, international maritime exchanges continued to be practiced during the transition between Byzantine, Lombard and Carolingian rule.⁸⁹

In a well-known passage by Andreas Agnellus concerning Sergius, bishop of Ravenna (ca. 748–ca. 769), the latter is depicted as follows: «he from the borders of Persicetus and all across the Pentapolis until Tuscia and the *Po di Volano*, like an exarch, governed everything as the Romans were used to do».⁹⁰ It is exemplary that, in the early Middle Ages, the bishop of Ravenna assumes the role as heir of the state in conditioning socioeconomic process. Since the second half of the 6th century, had become the second-largest owner of the entire peninsula (after the titular of the Church of Rome) and he administered a vast land domain that extended across several regions. It is no coincidence that the Ravennate bishopric had resources to continue to support the ecclesiastic building activity in the 7th and even in the 8th century, when the curve of investments in the city reached its lowest level.⁹¹ Particularly important for the economy of Ravenna was the relationship with Sicily, certainly one of the most prosperous regions of the Mediterranean in the 7th and 8th century. This was especially true if, as it has been suggested, the Sicilian land patrimony of the Church of Ravenna was not seized by the iconoclast emperors and continued to operate until the Muslim invasion.⁹² There is no positive evidence about it and the question, as it has been noted, is destined to remain open until the

86 Comacchio: see Gelichi 2012, 219–233 (with former bibliography); Comacchio and Venice: Gelichi 2012, 31–38; Venice: Gelichi/Negrelli/Ferri/Cadamuro/Cianciosi/Grandi 2017, 23–113; Rimini: Negrelli 2008, 10–29.

87 *LPRa*, 140 Deliyannis (318).

88 Cosentino 2012b, 431, fn. 52, 53.

89 Cirelli 2015, 101–132.

90 *LPRa*, 159, 180–183 (Deliyannis, 337). Interesting considerations on the role played by the Ravennate episcopate in the 9th and 10th century are in Ortenberg West-Harling 2015.

91 Cirelli 2008, 146–147.

92 Cosentino 2012b, 424, fn. 27.

discovery of new archaeological evidence.⁹³ However, I would like to point out that, if there is no indisputable evidence supporting this view, we have a number of hints that make it probable. First, one would not understand why the iconoclast emperors should have punished the Church of Ravenna by seizing its Sicilian estates, when during the diplomatic crisis that broke out between Rome and Constantinople regarding the cult of images, the Church of Ravenna kept a very low profile and was not openly hostile towards the Byzantine emperors. Second, after the conquest of Ravenna by the Lombards, the attitude of the *basileis* towards the see of St. Apollinaris remained extremely prudent until at least the first half of the 9th century, as a reconquest of the city by the Byzantine forces was among the political options. Third, if the *mancus* was really the Sicilian light *solidus* (as has been argued in recent scholarship),⁹⁴ its initial diffusion in the Venetic and Exarchal region would be justified, in part at least, by the arrival in Ravenna of the revenues of the Sicilian estates. Fourth, on the site of the Basilica Petriana (Classe), globular amphorae have been found with Arabic graffiti, which might indicate their original marketing in a Muslim milieu.⁹⁵ Lastly, the excavations of the monastery of St. Severus (Classe) have brought to light fragments of glazed pottery from Islamic importation (even an enamelled plate of Iraqi production) dating back to the 9th–10th centuries.⁹⁶ These findings seem compatible with the idea that the possessions of the Ravennate church in Sicily may have been the places where this material passed before reaching Classe.⁹⁷ In any case, written evidence confirms that in the second half of the 8th and in the 9th century the area of Ravenna and Pentapolis experienced a use of gold coins in transactions that finds no comparison in other northern Italian regions falling under Carolingian rule.⁹⁸

During the post-exarchal period the land patrimony of the Church of Ravenna became the main economic lung of the city. In the early Middle Ages, it was an economic space that ceased to use a large transmarine emporium, like Classe, choosing instead to enhance rather small river ports, inland waterways and terrestrial itineraries. Even the network of exchanges had a narrower geographical horizon compared to Late Antiquity. An aristocratic class of military tradition, originating from the high ranks of the Byzantine army, cemented its loyalty around the archbishop. Such a class increased its own allodial patrimony by acquiring estates in emphyteusis from

⁹³ See Delogu 2010, 140, n. 125. Vivien Prigent is skeptical about the possibility that the Church of Ravenna kept its estates in Sicily after the middle of the 8th century (personal communication of the Author).

⁹⁴ Cosentino 2012b, 431–439; Prigent 2014, 701–728.

⁹⁵ Cirelli 2015, 112. These graffiti have been already reported by Fiaccadori in 1983

⁹⁶ Augenti/Cirelli 2016, 297–321: 315–316.

⁹⁷ Last contribution about the relationship between Ravenna and Sicily: Bondi/Cavalazzi 2015, 465–470.

⁹⁸ Cosentino 2012b, 423–424; Brown 2016, 335–344: 340–341.

the Church of Ravenna. This bond created a strong solidarity between the episcopate and the Ravenna aristocracy, forming a closed social bloc that governed the city and the area of the Exarchate and Pentapolis until the second half of the 9th century.⁹⁹ Only in this period did the wedding between Martinus *dux* and the *comitissa* Ingelrada or Angelrada (celebrated between 870 and 899) mark the presence of components of Carolingian origin in the ruling class of our region. The former was the son of the Ravennate *dux* Gregorius and nephew of Archbishop John VII, while the latter was the daughter of Hucpaldus *comes palatii* and *signifer*, possibly a descendant of Hucpaldus, count of Verona between 809 and 820.¹⁰⁰ Such a union brought forward the formation of a large seigneurial dominion, which included estates spread across the territories of Ferrara, Comacchio, Ravenna, Rimini, Faenza and Forlì. It sanctioned a social interplay between major families of Byzantine and Carolingian traditions. On the other hand, the documents of Ravenna dating to the 9th and 10th century testify to a considerable number of *negotiatores*.¹⁰¹ However, unlike those of Comacchio or Venice, they are not engaged in an intermediary trade across the Po Valley, northern Adriatic and Eastern Mediterranean, but in small segments of exchanges in Emilia, Romagna, and Marche, namely the regions that in the 10th century constituted the core of the land patrimony of the Church of Ravenna.

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⁹⁹ See above, fn. 74.

¹⁰⁰ See Rinaldi 1996, 211–240; Schoolman 2016, 224–225.

¹⁰¹ Cosentino 2017, 354–356 for the quotation of the relevant sources.

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