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The Invisible Wall of St John
On Mental Centrality in Early Medieval Italy[1]

> When the city of Ticinum had sustained the siege for three years and a couple of months, it surrendered to Alboin and the besieging Lombards. As Alboin entered the city by the gate of St John, in the eastern section of the city, his horse fell down in the middle of the gate, and although the rider set spurs to his horse and it was attacked with lances from all directions, the horse could not gain its legs again. One of the Lombards said to the king: "Lord and king, remember the vow you have made. Break this cruel vow, and you may enter the town, since it is in-habited by truly Christian people." Alboin had in fact vowed to slaughter all the inhabitants, since they refused to surrender. Now that he broke his vow and prom-ised to be merciful towards the city-dwellers the horse immediately got up, and after having entered the city he kept his promise and did not harm anybody.[2]

This is, according to the Lombard monk and chronicler Paul the Deacon, writ-ing in the late eighth century at the abbey of Monte Cassino, an event which is supposed to have taken place at the dawn of Italo-Lombard history, when the first Lombard king on Italian soil occupied the city that was to become the capi-tal of Italy for several centuries to follow. That the city was defeated is a fact (in the early 570s), but the statement that the king was forcefully stopped by supernatural intervention is a tale that no sane historian will give credit to to-day. However, it was perfectly logical to Paul the Deacon, who gives several similar examples in his own work on the history of his people, the *Historia Langobardorum*. The spatial categories of this society provided the basis for the view of certain places as being associated with a sacral materiality which is foreign to modern conceptualizations. It is the aim of this study to elucidate some of these early medieval notions of space.

Material space

Spatial categories do not exist separate from the socio-cultural features of life. They are functions of the social climate and may thus reflect changes in society. Naturally, space is also socially relative — a king does not perceive his castle the way a peasant does, and a managing director and a worker do not regard the factory in the same way. Concepts of space — like concepts of time, law, religion, labour and wealth — are created in the environment of social action.

Man is naturally able to structure the world around him, but the specific spatial categories inherent in a historical epoch are products of that time.[3]

Medieval maps give interesting hints at the notions of spatial categories. There were two basic kinds of maps, the *mappaemundi* and the local maps. The *mappaemundi* were pictures of the world — but not according to our criteria of geographically precise representation. *Mappaemundi* were didactic; they presented the world of God and Christian symbolism. Mythological peoples and monsters were mentioned, and goals of pilgrimages were given great importance (particularly Jerusalem). The *mappaemundi* reflected God's space. Man's space was seldom mapped — and when this happened, the results were small maps of microregions or itineraries made for one purpose only without consideration to landscape, size and scale. The portolan charts are more accurate, but this is merely due to their nautical value — a sailor had to find his position without the aid of landmarks. The only exceptions are a few late medieval city and district maps from Italy, already forming a part of Renaissance culture.[4] This dual perspective may perhaps be partly explained as evidence of the fact that while people in one neighbourhood knew their own area, they were rather ignorant of the area occupied by a neighbouring group. Both groups, however, shared a common, though hazy, knowledge of the world as such and of their own place in the cosmos.[5] Unfortunately, it is not possible to integrate these results from cartographic research in this study, but I hope to be able to return to the subject later. The point is that although certain features are both medieval and modern, there are nevertheless qualitative differences.

In his work on the categories of medieval culture, Gurevich describes the fundamental *materiality* of space in medieval Europe. Everything, even concepts that are today perceived as belonging to a purely abstract region of thinking, was very material in early medieval Europe. Time was material — the different parts of the year were connected with sacrality and taboo. Days of feasting and religious holidays were imbued with a certain quality which set them apart from the rest of the year. The same was true of several objects: swords, rings, etc. were both sacral and material in the same way as the holiday of a saint. This culture did not differentiate between the manifest and the unmanifest or between the abstract and the concrete.[6] A good example of this spatial materiality is the concept of sanctuary. Few early medieval kings dared enter a church, particularly if it was guarded by the spirit of a buried saint, in order to attack a rebellious duke or a dangerous opponent. Gregory of Tours gives many examples of tragicomical events concerning the difficulty in getting access to criminals.[7]

This world model existed throughout Europe, in Christian as well as pagan regions. In Scandinavia space was mythological and devoid of fixed topographic identity. The realm of Evil was considered to be located in the north and in the east, but at the same time it was placed below earth. Sanctuaries, burial grounds, public assembly places, farmsteads dedicated to the gods and certain areas connected with popular religion were sacred and protected by div-

ine forces.[8] At all levels, emotional and religious sense permeated the characterization of the topography.[9] Similar features were prevalent in Celtic society.[10]

Gurevich regards these spatial concepts as parts of a cultural system where man and nature interact, thus forming the context of a world model (*Weltbild*). According to this view, man and nature were intertwined with each other more intimately before the coming of industrialism and large-scale urbanization. This structure is seen as something *per se* hostile to change. Except for a few intellectual theologians, everybody participated in it, and no real confrontation of popular mentality and Christian dogma existed before the Inquisition. The most typical aspect of this popular culture was the saint — mostly a local one, whose abilities to create miracles were greater in his own village than outside its boundaries. Saints gave help in hours of need, demanded veneration, took revenge upon wrong-doers and constituted the principal supernatural force in everyday life (in contrast to the abstract God). Saints represented the culturally determined demand for the supernatural. Most people could probably not differentiate between the specific Christian supernatural power — the mass, the miracles and the rituals — and the pagan rites that were constantly present in folklore. The Christian church tried to monopolize the expressions of this need by using the approved saints, since the miracle and the manifestations of power were too effective as means of socio-psychological influence on believers for the church to disregard them.[11] Consequently, the saints too may be regarded in a spatial context. The local sacral places were easily associated with the saint. In eighth-century Tuscany this local importance is clearly visible in Siena. Siena and Arezzo were engaged in a long struggle concerning some churches located between the cities. Each bishop, supported by his population, claimed that the churches belonged to his own diocese. Of special importance was the cult centre of St Ansano, which was situated among the disputed churches. The cult of this local saint helped unite the clergy and the people of Siena in continuous efforts to regain the area (though, one has to admit, St Ansano in the long run was only one of many concerns of the debating parties).[12]

Boundary and centre

In the conceptualization of space as a sacral-material category, two different models are usually applied: the centre model and the boundary model. The sacral aspect is not necessarily qualitatively different in the two models, but in a more narrow context the division may be of great importance, as is the case in Kirsten Hastrup's study on medieval Iceland.

The sacrality of certain places is often regarded as an expression of the need for localized communication between different planes of existence — heaven, earth and the subterranean world. Temples, churches and holy cities have often been thought of as meeting-places of these cosmic zones (*Axis mundi,* etc.). For

example, Werner Müller has constructed a picture of the city as a universal symbol where certain patterns reflect a common archetypal world model.[13] Views such as these are often expressed as parts of a cosmological system, a culture. In her brilliant study on the Icelandic Freestate, Hastrup constructs a model of two opposite semantic systems, the ego-centred and the societal, both of which represent different notions of time, space, kinship and political struc-ture. The first system is based on *centres*: the world is seen as several concen-tric circles grouped around central places (farmsteads, public assembly places). The second system is based on *boundaries*: the world is seen as regions with societal boundaries — the "quarters" in which Iceland was subdivided. This dualism, which existed in all aspects of the culture, was subject to violent change. From the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, the boundary perspective lost ground to the centre perspective, until finally Iceland consisted of centre groupings around rich landowners and wealthy bishops.[14] Using partly similar terms, Lagazzi has recently described the concepts of boundary in early medieval Italy: space within boundaries existed mentally as areas developing around a centre which defined the area in question (for example a monastery defining *terram circa monasterium positam*).[15]

Differentiation and reinterpretation

The aim of this study, however, is not to show a broad cultural system. This study focuses on one aspect of medieval mentality: the concept of space. The variety of angles in different systems analyses is *per se* evidence of the com-plexity of problems such as this. The process of reconstruction is always a mod-ern attempt by our contemporaries. The exploration of the mental universe of medieval man should not be confined only to large cosmological models. I fully acknowledge this broad, cultural perspective, but I choose to limit this particu-lar study to one single problem: the spatial notions in a remote historical society, that of seventh- and eighth-century Italy, concentrating on the areas under Lombard rule.

The material consists of several sources — charters, laws, narrative texts and poems. This variety provides a good starting point: different levels of society participated in the creation of different sources. The study will focus on eighth-century material, since written sources from this century are better preserved than seventh-century sources. With the exception of Paul the Deacon, a poem on Verona and a small chronicle (*Codex Gothanus*), the study is limited to pre-774 material, that is, to material created before the invasion of Charlemagne. My main questions are as follows (these questions, 1—3, will serve as guideli-nes and headlines in the analysis below):

> 1) When medieval man constructed his spatial notions within the mental context, certain places became natural centres of human perception. If you ask an average dweller in Western Europe about locations, you are bound to receive answers giv-

ing you directions to street names or well-defined areas in your environment. In the Middle Ages, the answers would have been different. Which spatial concepts were used by the land-selling farmer in order to define the area handed over to the merchant or the bishop? How was the spatial situation of monasteries, farms or ordinary meeting-places apprehended?

2) Much has been said about the sacral materiality of early medieval space — but what constituted the most central focal points of this mental attitude? Boundaries or centres? Churches or cities? Borders, like rivers, roads and mountains? And how was this apprehended in a qualitative sense? Was it perceived of as a violent and direct presence of divine forces?

3) The answers to the first question may differ from the answers to the second. If a study should reveal that natural phenomena, like rivers, were central criteria in descriptions of how to get to a church or how to parcel out a piece of land, this does not mean that these features of the environment were also connected with the strongest aspects of material space. But if it can be shown that there are connections between 1 and 2, an interesting step will have been taken towards an understanding of the spatial concepts.

It is impossible to use texts concerning the society in question if the texts themselves do not originate from Italy. The unconscious spatial concepts are not present in foreign works, for instance biographies of visitors in Italy. Everyone not writing within the chronological boundary is also excluded.

Most of the charters belonged to a world of both medium- and small-scale landowners and clergy, and the social level is textually related by the lower clergy and/or sparsely educated lay notaries. It is far from what we would call an élite culture. The *legal material* was produced at the royal court, and the world model represented here reflects the mentality of the legislators. But the texts are also parts of the normative context, which was particularly alive in Italy. The new laws were conscious attempts to change or acknowledge certain social features, such as moral behaviour, disobedience of dukes, religious practices and other problems in everyday life. This made it necessary to make the texts understandable. The *chronicles* were written by authors who were more educated than the average writer of a charter. Paul the Deacon was probably one of the most learned men in Western Europe. His *Historia Langobardorum* was written in Monte Cassino, probably in the 780s or 790s.[16] Paul did not write for a popular public. He knew his grammar and in several ways represents a new tendency in Latin literature connected with a learned, religious culture.[17] This does not *a priori* mean that his language is devoid of popular features, but there is a marked difference between didactic literature — mostly hagiography — and purely historical works. A tale about a saint is supposed to influence popular thought and must therefore be styled and conceptualized in the context of popular thinking. A History, however, may include theological disputes and reveal a chronological scheme alien to common people. Furthermore, Paul the Deacon — whose works also reflect his national-aristocratic pride — was a fervent Catholic. This attitude is reflected in his spatial concepts, at least partly regardless of the original symbolical meanings.[18]

Charters

1

The cities as such define a lot. Ecclesiastical institutions — churches, dioceses, bishops, etc. — were constantly referred to as *ecclesia civitatis*, *episcopus civitatis*, etc.[19] Coins were defined as being associated with certain cities, like Lucca, Pisa and Benevento.[20] Regions — *territoria*, *fines*, *iudicaria*, etc. — were given their names by the leading city of the area, not by some old provincial denomination. This tendency is particularly clear in northern Italy and in Tuscany,[21] where purely regional definitions (like *tuscus*) are very few.[22] This predominance of cities does not eliminate the references to proper places of origin (villages and farms), and in a few cases we can also detect villages and *castra* (settlements smaller than those associated with urban dwelling and orientated around a fort or a castle) defining the names of regions.[23] In central Italy the pattern is similar, but purely territorial definitions are more common. Most of these documents are centred around the city of Rieti, a region that in ancient times was known as Sabinian territory. The word "Sabinian" often occurs in the formulae of charters from central Italy (the duchy of Spoleto),[24] but always together with urban denominations.[25] This attitude is also reflected in the attributes of the political region of Lombard central Italy: *ducatus Spoletanus* ("the Spoletan duchy"), i.e., it was named after the ducal capital.[26] In southern Italian documents (from the duchy of Benevento) we find the same preponderance of urban denominations, mostly showing the ducal seat of Benevento itself as the focal point of attention. Other urban centres, like Nola and Isernia, are also present as spatial denominations, and the regional subdivision in political units (*actus*) was described as cities and their regions (*actus Sipontinus*, *de actione Consina*, etc.).[27] The context of descriptions of the location of property is also definitely urban: *tam in civitate Beneventana...quam et foris per singula loca* ("as well in the city of Benevento... as outside it at various places").[28] The only extraregional geographical adjective is the one referring to northern Italians — *transpadani* ("from the other side of the Po").[29]

Thus, it was easy to define peoples and places as "belonging to that particular city". Cities were used as directional points. When the location of something was to be explained, the term *prope civitatem* ("close to the city") was frequently used.[30] Naturally, village-names were used as designations of habitation, but when more covering descriptions were necessary, the city was indispensable as a mental tool. The city was a firm part of the infrastructural environment, *something you could refer to*.

If we look more closely at the components of the city itself, we immediately recognize *the wall* as a separate category. Often a place was described as being *prope murum civitatis* ("close to the wall of the city").[31] Another mental feature in the context of designation and description was constituted by *the gates* of the city. Both men and things were associated with the *portae*, which were often named after a saint (we have already encountered the gate of St John in the

story of King Alboin above), In 720, a church in Lucca was described as being situated *ad porta Beati Sancti Petri* ("at the gate of the holy St Peter"); in 739 — still in Lucca — the goldsmith Iustus described himself as being *da porta Sancti Geruasi* ("from the gate of St Gervase"); in 761 a dweller in Brescia was considered *habitator intra muros ciuitatis Brixiane prope portam Mediolanensem loco qui dicitur Pareuaret* ("living within the walls of the city of Brescia close to the Milan gate, in a place called Pareuaret").[32]

The cities are outstanding, but they were not the only tools of description available. Especially in the countryside, but also in cities, *the churches* were useful points of reference.[33] On a third level, we encounter other features of the environment. Roads could be used as denominations of boundaries (with a marked difference between the simple *via* and the official road, the *via publica*). This is very rare in cities, but in rural documents the roads could provide good points of reference. The same was true of *bridges*.[34] The most important proper features of nature were the *watercourses*, natural boundaries between areas of land.[35] Other elements — mountains, valleys — appear considerably more seldom.[36]

Things are very much the same in the royal charters: cities defining regions, dioceses and hinterlands;[37] cities acting as units defining closeness and location;[38] walls;[39] gates;[40] roads;[41] and watercourses.[42] Purely regional terms are more frequent than in the private material: *Tuscia, Neustria, Austria, Spoletium, Beneventum* and *Emilia* occur now and then, but this is a logical consequence of the nature of these charters. Large donations — where areas all over the peninsula were concerned — demanded another set of definitions than smaller donations and land-sales in a local context.[43] The most striking difference between the royal and the private material is the absence of churches as units defining location — a feature that was common in private charters *and* in ducal charters from Spoleto and Benevento. In royal charters, references to churches are absent, and the only possible explanation I can think of is the lack of need for that kind of mostly local definitions.

Another difference is the presence of a dualistic ownership pattern. While in most private charters there are no qualitatively different notions of ownership (except the *via publica*), in royal charters certain areas and *curtes* (estates) are either without attributes or specified as *nostra/regis/regalis* ("our"/"royal"). The same tendency is sometimes present in ducal charters as well — *curtis ducalis* ("ducal estate"). This demonstrates the fiscal interests and the presence of officialdom in early medieval Italy.[44]

2

In private charters, material space in an ecclesiastical context is very visible. Churches were constantly associated with saints, and if a certain church possessed a grave containing the bodily remains of a saint, this would be mentioned in the document.[45] It was a common feature in early medieval charters

to verbally prohibit others from violating the act (for instance, to take back donated property), and in order to intensify this, a supernatural threat could be inserted in the text. This is the case in a Lucchese donation by a certain Teuprando who invoked the violent aid of the archangel Michael, popular in all parts of Italy and a kind of patron saint of the Lombard monarchy.[46]

Another illuminating act was the *manumissio*, the process by which a slave was set free. There were different kinds of freedom, and the category to which a slave was to be admitted influenced the choice of place for *manumissio*. There were two such places — the altar in a church and the *quadrubium*, a cross-roads with roads parting in four directions. We have documentary evidence of both these places. There are a number of references to *manumissio* at the altar in northern Italian charters.[47] In 752, a ducal charter from Benevento tells us about the ritual *manumissio* of a woman called Cunda, her daughter Luiperga and the priest Ansprando, an old ritual according to which the patron let the unfree person be passed through four pairs of hands, after which he/she was led to a *quadrubium* and was given an arrow as a token of freedom, while the ritual formula was pronounced: *de quattuor uias, ubi uolueris ambulare, liberam habeas potestatem* ("you may choose freely between these four roads which way you want to go").[48] Both the church and the *quadrubium* were thus, in the eighth century, regarded as places of a certain quality.

All of this indicates a strong position of the church in the minds of early medieval people. In the same way as the diocese received its name after the leading city, the city was, according to several historians, intimately associated with the bishop. In the struggles between Arezzo and Siena, it was the boundaries of the dioceses, not of the political units, that provoked bloodshed and feuds. The church was mentally more powerful than the local palace or royal estate.[49]

However, we also encounter the *palatium*, the royal/ducal residence, as qualitatively differentiated space. Naturally, this tendency is particularly clear in royal charters. The greatest difficulty is whether the *palatium* mentioned is simply a common metaphor for state interests or a concrete image of the royal palace in, above all, Pavia. In several cases the second alternative is definitely the right one.[50] The most illuminating case is a document from 765 through which the kings Desiderius and Adelchis donated to the monastery of the Holy Saviour in Brescia all the possessions of a certain Cunimund who had "committed a crime in our holy palace and was killed...".[51] As will be demonstrated below, this corresponded to a legally defined crime, that of committing a crime in a royal palace. We do not know whether this sense of royal sacrality went deep in popular mentality or if it was simply an effort by the king to enhance his authority. The formula *in sacro palatio* ("in the holy palace") and *sacrum/sacratissimum palatium* ("the holy/most holy palace") often occur in ducal charters from Benevento as well, referring to the ducal residence in the capital Benevento.[52]

One of the contexts in which spatial categories may be revealed is language.

Its content and structure influence and are influenced by the cultural structure of a certain region and historical period.[53] In Lombard charters, this aspect becomes crucial when examining the spatial prepositions relating to presence in a city. The preposition *in* ("in") is used rather seldom, while *intra/infra* ("within") occurs at numerous occasions. *Intra* tells us that something happens *within* something. It may be rewarding to compare this with the significance of walls and gates that was revealed above. The city was conceived of as a unit existing *within* a clear boundary — and when something happened to exist outside the walls, this was shown by prepositions like *foris* or *extra*.[54]

3

It is easy to show notions of materially sacral space connected with churches — both urban and rural, though the charters are most illuminating in the rural context. Churches were associated with saints and were considered places of *manumissio* equal to the *quadrubium*. They were used as directional points and mental tools in the construction of the local geography. The first and second questions posed above are thus given identical answers.

The same might also be true of the cities. They were prominent directional points with the wall and its gates as leading attributes. Cities were considered *mikrokosmoi* within a boundary permanently present in the language, at least in the vulgarized Latin of Lombard charters.

Another feature which might be due to royal notions of authority is the separation of official and private property, revealed by terms like *regis* and *noster*.

Other directional points — roads, bridges, rivers, valleys, mountains — are at times quite frequent in charters (especially rivers), but we have no evidence of a corresponding sacral quality.[55] Another interesting conclusion is that people did not think in terms of provinces and regions, except as hinterlands of cities by the names of which they were defined.

Laws

1

Purely regional definitions occur a couple of times in the Lombard laws. In Rothari's Edict from 643, territorial names are absent. The more common denominations of larger regions (*fines, prouincia, terra,* etc.) are very indefinite and without closer characteristics; they can refer to anything from very small areas to whole countries. The same vague terms appear in the laws of King Liutprand (712—44), although we also encounter regional names. At times, there is a fixed distinction between the three parts Austria (east of the Adda), Neustria (west of the Adda) and Tuscia (Tuscany). The same regional distinctions can be seen in the laws of King Ratchis (744—49).[56]

The laws are difficult to use in the same way as the charters. The texts do

not reveal focal points of mental attention but rules and royal interest. The reference to space around the actions is not at all as important as the actions prohibited. Spatial terms used by Rothari are mostly rural. This means that Rothari found it natural to regulate certain kinds of behaviour that were mostly concerned with rural life, perhaps because the Lombards had most experience in these matters or because other law-codes influenced the pattern.

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The king wanted to make a clear distinction between things with and without a royal quality. *Curtis* (estate, farm, smaller palace — the term is very difficult in this context) is either *regia* (royal) or just *curtis*, i.e., non-regal. Lombard legislation is dominated by the interests of the state (as is only to be expected). The question is whether the king chose to include other centres as well or if the *curtes regis* and the *palatia* excluded everything else.[57]

If we survey the rules concerning income (fines, inheritance, guardianship — i.e., *mundium* — connected with women, children and others) and the centres for income and prosperity, a quantitative analysis of the Lombard laws reveals an increased number for ecclesiastical institutions in the eighth century in comparison with the seventh. The tendency is particularly marked in the legislation of King Aistulf (749—56). It is obvious that the church and its institutions appear more and more often as centres of income during the eighth century, perhaps because the king allowed the church to be represented in the laws or because the king himself inserted the ecclesiastical references as part of the general Catholic movement in Lombard Italy. Beside the regal quality there was now an ecclesiastical quality, confirmed in the legal texts as equipped with centres of income.

The *palatium* is often referred to as a place of a certain quality, of sacrality. It was strictly forbidden to commit a crime in the royal palace:

> Whoever commits a crime in the royal palace, in the presence of the king, shall be killed, provided that he is not able to make the king give him permission to pay for his life.[58]

There were also special rules concerning cities where the king abided:

> Each free man who commits a crime in a city where the king is present or happens to reside at the moment, that is, if he challenges somebody but does not beat him, has to pay 12 solidi to the royal palace. But if he proceeds and beats him, he will have to pay 24 solidi to the royal palace; and he must also pay for the beatings and the wounds, as is described below.[59]

The same regal sacrality is present in another chapter of the Rotharian legislation,[60] and a chapter was inserted concerning peace in cities *without* a visiting monarch: this time the culprit got away with half the fine — 6 solidi without and 12 solidi with beating the opponent.[61] If the perpetrator was a slave, the fine sank even lower — 6 or 12 solidi if the king abided within the walls and 3

or 6 solidi if he did not.[62] The walls were considered the principal attributes of the cities. Another chapter of the Edict begins with:

> If anyone, without his iudex (judge and military leader) knowing it, leaves the cas-
> trum or the city (by climbing) over the walls, or if he enters in the same way...[63]

In other words — the wall was regarded as an important boundary. Thus, it is only to be expected that we should find proper prepositions; in a chapter con-cerning the expulsion of lepers we find the words "*foris* a ciuitate aut casam suam" ("*away* from the city or from his house"),[64] and in 750 Aistulf said about himself: "residente *intra* Ticinum in palatio nostro" ("residing *within* Pavia, in our palace").[65]

Rothari stipulated that anyone committing crimes in churches would have to pay 40 solidi to the church in question. These golden coins were to be collected by the local authorities and placed on the altar of the offended church.[66] To sum up: a violent young man with a hot temper should stay out of the capital and any city visited by the king; it was cheaper to start a fight in a church (though 40 solidi might have been more than most men could afford) and even cheaper to go out and beat somebody in an ordinary city. But in any case, he would have to pay. All these areas were legally defined zones of peace.

One of the most famous features of this sacral space was the sanctuary with its right of asylum. Rothari legislated about slaves who had run away and taken refuge in a church or in the house of a priest. It was the obligation of the priest to return the slave to the owner, but obviously the clergy thought less of Lom-bard custom than of the sanctuary of the church building, and it seems that the angry owners of the runaways were too scared by the holiness of the sanctuary to break in and take their human property. Rothari therefore forced upon the clergy a law stating that the slaves had to be returned at least after the third exhortation and that the priest would have to supply the owner with a second slave as compensation for the delay. However, if the owner, after the return of the slave, decided to take revenge upon him, the owner was, according to law, considered a criminal. He had either to clear himself by oath or pay 40 solidi to the church.[67] In another chapter we encounter the church as meeting-place, the natural place where a man who has stumbled across a strange animal (in this case a horse) must proclaim the finding four or five times in the presence of everyone before he can safely keep the animal.[68]

In the eighth century the churches grew even more visible in the laws. Liut-prand, in his legislation against donations carried out without regard to proper formalities, invalidated all such gifts except the ones to churches.[69] In 735, Liut-prand *strengthened* the position of ecclesiastical buildings as sanctuaries: if a slave or an *aldius* (semi-free) fled to a church and his owner/patron violently dragged him out of there, the owner/patron had to pay his *guidrigild* (a high sum of money, considered equal to the worth of a free man's life) to the of-fended church.[70] Aistulf continued legislating about churches — ecclesiastical institutions gained more and more space in the laws.[71]

The laws also reveal the existence of non-Christian centres. In 727, Liutprand attacked pagan rituals — it was forbidden to pray to and venerate trees and springs.[72] Unfortunately, these places are never described in detail. Liutprand — just like the anonymous biographer of St Barbatus, who wrote about Beneventan Lombard rituals from a ninth-century angle — belonged to the enemies of this popular religion.[73] The only major ecclesiastical centre actually mentioned by name in the laws (as a goal for pilgrimages) is Christian: Rome.[74]

The different laws concerning *manumissio* corresponded to different kinds of *manumissio* and special places where the process could be enacted through rituals. Lombard society consisted of three legal classes: free men, *aldii* and slaves. The free men could be both *fulfreal* (free) and *amund* (without guardianship under a patron), or they could be *fulfreal* and still placed under a *mundium* (guardianship). The famous ritual at a cross-roads described above could make the slave both *fulfreal* and *amund*, without any obligations. Another way to become *fulfreal* was if the king demanded it of the owner/patron. A man that was *amund* had nothing, at least in theory, to do with his former owner/patron, and if this freedman died without legal heirs, his property was claimed by the king. It was, however, perfectly possible to make the freedman *fulfreal* and still retain him under a *mundium* by using the same ritual at the *quadrubium*. A man that was not *amund* and left no legal heirs automatically left his property to his patron. If the slave was to be neither *amund* nor *fulfreal*, but simply raised to the semi-free status of an *aldius*, then this ritual could *not* be used.[75]

In 717, Liutprand introduced a new way to make slaves *fulfreal* and *amund*. If a slave was handed over to the king, and if the king then freed him *per manos sacerdotis circa sacrum altarem* ("by the hands of a priest at the holy altar"), the slave was a free man without obligations to anyone.[76] In 721 and 724, new laws clearly show this ritual being performed not in the presence of the king but simply by a priest and the former owner/patron.[77] However, there were certain rules about the *manumissio circa altarem*. The church only gave full freedom. It was strictly forbidden to keep the power of *mundium* or only make the slave into an *aldius*.[78]

In 755, Aistulf said that several freedmen who were regarded as more or less morally indebted to their former master (though being both *fulfreal* and *amund*) had left him and treated him in a bad manner. This had made the slaveowners reluctant to free more men. Aistulf decided that the owner/patron had the right to keep the freedman in his service until his own death. But this did not apply to *manumissio* in churches: "Then if he frees someone in a church by the hands of a priest, freedom will remain with the freedman, as is described in the older law."[79]

This legislative development shows that the altar was gradually elevated above the *quadrubium*. The kings regarded the church as a holy place whose rights could not be diminished as easily as the rights of a *quadrubium*. But how common was this attitude? The first documentary text about church *manumissio* was written between 721 and 744. This rudimentary record of judicial

proceedings concerns a certain Lucius who claimed to have been freed by the
parents of Toto from Campione (near Como) by the ecclesiastical ritual. Toto
protested and won the case, since the document exhibited by Lucius dated from
the time of King Cunincpert (680—700), prior to the laws of 717 and 721.[80]
Thus, the practice of ecclesiastical *manumissio* might have been common on a
local level before the legislation. The growing power of the state and its new
laws made Toto interested in reverting the process, since it was now possible
to use the expanded Edict as a chronological boundary.

<p align="center">*3*</p>

Apart from the references to some regional names, there are no answers to the
first question. But the study of the laws has been quite fruitful in the context
of material, sacral space. We have seen the growing importance of ecclesiastical
buildings in many respects (*manumissio*, sanctuary, peace, income, pilgrima-
ges). The royal quality is present as well — the laws show the king surrounded
by an area of peace.

We have also found some indications of the mental significance of cities —
the walls, the prepositions *intra* and *foris* and the existence of a zone of peace
within the walls.

Chronicles

It is unnecessary to bore the reader with descriptions of studies of smaller
chronicles, since the tendency here is exactly the same as in the great *Historia
Langobardorum* by Paul the Deacon. The chronicles that have been examined,
aside from Paul the Deacon, are *Origo gentis Langobardorum* (written in the
middle of the seventh century), *Historia Langobardorum codicis Gothani* (in the
first years of the ninth century), *Prosperi Continuatio Havniensis* (c. 625), *Vita
Paldonis, Tatonis et Tasonis Vulturnensium* (in the middle of the eighth cen-
tury) and *Vita Columbani* (in the middle of the seventh century).

<p align="center">*1*</p>

The cities dominated the mentality of the chronicler to a great extent. I have
excluded all references to Rome, since this city had a special status as ecclesi-
astical capital. Rome is mentioned very often, and if these places were to be
included, the cities would dominate even more completely than is the case now.
The terms may differ — *civitas, urbs, oppidum,* the single name of a city, the
name of the city transformed into an adjective of the people inhabiting the city
and its hinterland (*Spoletini*, etc.) — but they all centre around the city. Taken
together, words for cities appear about 370—380 times in the chronicle of Paul
the Deacon. Dukes, armies and people were defined by their central city,[81] and,

excluding the few large monasteries (like Bobbio and Monte Cassino), the majority of churches mentioned were situated in cities. Just as in the charters, the diocese receives its name from the city. All the wars — with very few exceptions — were based upon the siege of cities.[82] The prime military targets were the walls, which were broken down by the victor[83] or simply appear in the text as pure defence fortifications.[84]

Regions were often named after their leading city.[85] This sense of cities took precedence even when the place was not urban: in Lago di Como there is an island, *insula Comacina*, where people could fight off attackers for years — there was no city on the island, but Paul the Deacon nevertheless called the central place of the island *oppidum*.[86] Paul further placed the cities in a strong position with regard to descriptions of the world around him: "close to the city"[87], "close to the city wall"[88], "outside the city wall"[89], "outside the gate"[90], "within the city" ("*intra* civitatem").[91]

The *castra* and *castella* are mentioned 50—60 times in the text, mostly in a military context.[92] The terms could also be used as a denominations of other features — Monte Cassino is once described as *castrum*.[93] With one single exception,[94] references to *castra* do not indicate closeness and location. There is one example of the preposition *intra* used together with the word *castrum*, but this applies to Forum Julii (Cividale del Friuli), a place that is sometimes referred to as a *castrum* and sometimes as a city.[95]

Roads are seldom mentioned in the chronicle.[96] Common geographical features are mentioned now and then, mostly due to narrative demands (mountains, rivers, islands, lakes).[97]

Churches almost always appear connected with cities. Other cultural creations mentioned in the text are the royal palace (*palatium*) in Pavia (29 references)[98], city gates[99], *forum* and *plateae* (city squares and streets)[100]. The *palatium* also appears together with the prepositions *intra* (within) and *prope* (close to).[101]

It is thus obvious that Paul, at least in his function as historian, viewed the world as a world of cities. A few times, however, we encounter typical regional terms. *Regio* appears 4—5 times[102], as is the case with *provincia* (province, region), not counting the provincial catalogue discussed below.[103] Proper names are used most regularly by Paul when dealing with Byzantine territories (Istria, Campania, Sicily, etc.).[104] As far as Lombard Italy is concerned, Venetia is mentioned 9—10 times (including the adjective *venetica*) and Tuscia 6 times (including *tuscus*). To this can be added various versions of these regional terms, like *fines Venetiae* (Venetian region).[105] Only in exceptional cases do we encounter Austria, Apulia, Aemilia and Liguria. A special case is Benevento — Paul assigned the title *Samnitum ductor* ("leader of the Samnites") to its leader. The pre-Roman people replaces the more common *Beneventanus* a couple of times; we do not know whether stylistic reasons were responsible for this.[106]

In the middle of his second book, Paul suddenly made an excursion on the provinces of Italy.[107] Just for once, the term *provincia* dominates the world of

spatial denominations. How deep-rooted was this sudden contextual difference? For some reasons, Paul chose the provinces as spatial categories, but his description is very hazy — and this obvious uncertainty leads us to believe that the catalogue is in fact nothing more than a writing-desk experiment from the intellectual milieu of Monte Cassino. Sometimes Paul was explicitly hesitating, like in the case of the ancient land of the Marsi (it was hard to decide what was a province and what was simply a region within the province). He refers to older Roman sources, never to his own contemporaries. When *describing* the provinces, the cities immediately took over. The province was defined by its cities. A wealthy province was a province with many cities. So it is said about Emilia: *locupletibus urbibus decoratur* ("it is decorated by rich cities").

<div align="center">

2

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The preposition *intra* is present here as well, together with cities, *castra* and palaces. The cities appear as central places for important acts — for example, the proclamation of a new king (from the 620s in Pavia).[108]

We may now turn our attention to the churches. With the exception of Alboin (the first Lombard king in Italy, who died in 572), it seems that all kings were buried in churches (actually in a sort of mausoleum, as was the custom in late antiquity). These buildings often became dynastical places of burial.[109] Naturally, saints too were buried in churches, and when this is the case, Paul the Deacon relates it.[110]

Churches often appear as sanctuaries in the work of Paul the Deacon, just as in the works of Gregory of Tours. Once, it is said, King Grimoald (662—71) was faced with the problem of a certain Unulf being safely protected in the church of St Michael in Pavia. Unulf had helped Grimoald's chief rival to the throne, the once and future king Perctarit (661—62, 672—88), to seek refuge in Gaul. The king did not dare to force Unulf out of the sanctuary of the powerful archangel, and, consequently, Unulf was promised safe conduct and security in order to get him out of the church.[111] Paul the Deacon also relates the tale of how King Cunincpert (680—700) failed to kill Aldo and Grauso — two Lombard aristocrats who had been dangerous enemies and uncertain allies in a recently concluded civil war — since these were told by a demon (who, disguised as a big fly, had overheard the king planning the assassination) about the imminent danger. Aldo and Grauso found shelter in the church of St Romanus and were eventually pardoned.[112] In the early eighth century, King Liutprand secured control of the important duchy of Friuli, thereby causing many Friulian noblemen to be killed or imprisoned. The only one to escape was a good swordsman called Herfemar who fought his way to the church of St Michael.[113] I am not saying that Paul relates what actually happened. The kings may have killed their enemies, or they might have had some *other* reason for letting them go. But their acts were later conceived of as acts determined by the idea of sacral space, of sanctuary.

Dick Harrison

The churches are presented as strong institutions of *protection*, supernatural edificies personifying the fates of countries. The Lombard kingdom is, in the text of Paul, closely connected with the church of St John the Baptist in Monza. Before leaving with his army for Italy in the 660s, the Byzantine emperor Constans II is said to have asked a hermit to predict the outcome of the war. The hermit said that the Lombards were invincible, since a queen from a foreign country had erected a church on Lombard soil dedicated to St John the Baptist. Since then, the Baptist protected the Lombards and continuously prayed for them. However, a time would come when the temple would be neglected, and in those days the Lombards would perish. Paul adds that the prophesy turned out true, since that particular church (erected in Monza by the Bavarian princess Theudelinda, queen of Lombard Italy in the late sixth and early seventh centuries) was controlled by morally depraved men when northern Italy was conquered by Charlemagne (773—74).[114] Churches and saints were also crucial when fighting plagues and other disasters. During a seventh-century plague in Pavia, someone predicted that it would not cease until an altar was consecrated to St Sebastian in the church of St Peter. Relics of St Sebastian were fetched from Rome, an altar was consecrated and the plague disappeared.[115]

It may now be fruitful to recall the story told in the beginning of this study, that of King Alboin being stopped by an invisible force connected with the gate of St John in the city wall of Pavia. This sense of invisible yet material protection was associated with the saint and was tangible at the gate. There are more examples in *Historia Langobardorum*. King Rothari (636—52) was buried in an annexe to the church of St John the Baptist in Pavia, but the grave was secretly opened by a grave-robber. An angry St John suddenly appeared in front of the desecrator and for ever banished him from the church. Even if Rothari had not been Catholic but Arian, he had still committed himself to the charge of the Baptist, and that was reason enough for the saint. Every time the grave-robber tried to enter the church, it was as if a strong boxer had grasped at his throat, and he was suddenly pushed back to the ground (*velut a validissimo pugili guttur eius feriretur, sic subito retro ruebat inpulsus*).[116] The same kind of sacral materiality is reported by Paul the Deacon on two other occasions (outside Italy), not in connection with gates and churches, but in con nection with holy men as such.[117]

3

The cities appear both as central places in the mentality of the chronicler and as places connected with notions of sacrality. We have also encountered the same linguistic features as in the charters and the laws (*intra, prope*). There is, however, the problem of genre — chronicles only relate certain things, like wars, plagues and various other disasters. In a context of war, it is inevitable that cities, and on a second level the *castra*, become focal points of attention. The normal kind of warfare consisted of raids and sieges, and walled cities were

the goals of any attacker.[118] It is also natural that we should find references to the royal *palatium*: in texts chiefly concerned with — apart from ecclesiastical matters — the world of kings, references to the royal palace are bound to appear. Still — the cities *are* a lot more dominating as geographical denominations than, for example, rivers. This might not only be due to the literary genre. Proper regional names are comparatively few. In the provincial catalogue we face a clearly learned construction.

The most important graves (of kings and saints) were situated in churches, thus generating ideological power which might have been used by the dynasties. This power in its pure physical form is most clearly demonstrated by *the invisible wall* which surrounds holy places and keeps the wicked out. We see this happening at city gates and at the entrances to churches — i.e., this feature of the mentality is *visualized* in those areas, since these were connected with holiness through the intervention of a saint. This intervention could take place anywhere, but let us keep in mind the city gates and the church entrance; the fact that saints *could* act anywhere does not mean that they usually did so. Certain zones may have been more attractive to power.[119] The churches were furthermore important as sanctuaries and general protectors. The events related by Paul the Deacon were probably understood by the common people in partly the same way as he understood them himself, as parts of a common culture.

Poetry

Carmen de synodo Ticinensi ("A Song about the Synod in Pavia") was anonymously written in 698 or 699, after the synod in Pavia concerning the ending of the schism of the Three Chapters.[120] The other two anonymous poems analysed here — *Versum de Mediolano civitate* and *Versus de Verona* — are examples of the literary genre called *laudes civitatum* ("eulogies of cities"). It can be traced from classical antiquity to the end of the twelfth century and may possibly be explained by the attraction of civic life that was inherent even in the most ruralized medieval centuries. The poem on Milan was written at the end of the 730s, the poem on Verona at some time between 796 and 805. In the *laudes civitatum*, the descriptions of cities are often idealized and difficult to use as historical sources. The structure might, however, vary to some degree, as is the case in the poem on Verona, where traditional elements (market places, streets and other buildings) are referred to only briefly.[121] Many features in these poems are clearly parts of the social atmosphere of the eighth century as well as traditional elements; it might be dangerous to emphasize the pure traditionalism of these elements as such, since the constant repetition and the clear place that these poems occupied in contemporary society is significant *per se*. The poets too formed a part of the cultural pattern, and traditionalism in elements may be nothing more than traditionalism in culture.[122]

1

In all three poems cities are the main objects. When the poet of *Carmen de synodo Ticinensi* views the world outside the synod, he perceives it as a world of cities. The adherents of the schism are called *aquiligenses* (from — the city of — Aquileia), even if they were spread out over a wide area and Aquileia had ceased to be the ecclesiastical centre.

First of all, the author of *Versum de Mediolano civitate* mentions the walls and the towers, and, together with these attributes, the square, the aqueduct, the streets, etc. The same tendency is clear in *Versus de Verona*. This contributed to the image of the city as a centre, but it was *not* what made the city important. As soon as these features were dealt with, the authors hurried on to what they perceived as the important issue: the ecclesiastical buildings and the cultural features belonging to the church. It is commonly thought, therefore, that the poets belonged to the clergy. However, this does not mean that the notions of the poets were separated from the notions of the people.

2

Certain qualities were associated with ecclesiastical features of the environment. The cities were traditionally described as ideological centres. In *Versum de Mediolano civitate* this is, apart from the church of St Lawrence, revealed in a careful enumeration of graves of saints around the city wall. These saints formed a supernatural wall complementary to the man-made walls. They defended the city against its enemies. The same wall personified by the saints was described more carefully by the author of *Versus de Verona*. From east to west the poet describes the wall, telling the reader exactly what part of the city is defended by what saint. The poet is filled with pride in Verona:

O felicem te Verona	ditata et inclita
qualis es circumuallata	custodes sanctissimi
qui te defendet et expugna	ab hoste iniquissimo.
Oh, fortunate Verona,	enriched and famous,
walled around by	very holy guards
who defend you and subdue	the most unrighteous enemy.

3

These three poems contribute in an important way to the understanding of spatial concepts. The sacral symbolism of cities, gates and walls are just as obvious here as in other sources, but the invisible wall that we have encountered more than once before is here described in close detail as constructed by the graves of protecting saints. It is tempting to assume that this was the case whenever something — a wall, a church, a grave — was dedicated to a particular saint.

Mental centrality

The following conclusion is an interpretation where the spatial concepts have been consciously taken from a broader cultural context. This breaking out of a single aspect may, while the broader contexts remain within the range of perception, be regarded as a means of enlarging the conceptual reach of knowledge. The method makes it easier to pursue otherwise difficult topics, particularly the problem of change.

It must be emphasized that the sources studied here are mostly from an earlier period than most sources used by Gurevich, Hastrup and others. It is clear that the structures examined by Gurevich are meant to have existed in the early medieval period as well as in the high Middle Ages, but most of his sources originated in a later period. It may be argued that the influence of the church was greater in this later period — and there is also the fact that many conclusions are based on Scandinavian sources. Thus, it is not self-evident that a study on earlier texts from Southern Europe will give the same results.

The power of saints was constantly connected with notions of physical manifestations of power. Since saints could be found anywhere, there is no *a priori* location. We have, however, found them revealed most clearly in certain areas. We have also found cultural and linguistic features that support the idea of these particular places as central in the minds of the people. The same places that were central to people in the context of description and denomination of distance and location were also central in the context of sacral space. The places most often thought of as spatial units fundamental to everyday life were also thought of as being imbued with sacrality. This is explained by the association with saints, but it went deeper than that.

Cultural features are more visible in this respect than natural features of the environment. Natural features might have possessed certain mental qualities as well, but this is not revealed in this study.[123]

In the texts closely connected with the monarchy, there is a clear tendency to regard certain zones as regally sacral. This is often associated with the presence of the king: a city is not defined as possessing this kind of space unless the king visits it. Apart from this royal material, however, we have no indications that regally defined space existed as a mental category. The king wanted to strengthen his position by inserting himself in the context of materially sacral space. Whether he succeeded or not is an entirely different matter, but his actions show him thinking in the same categories as the people.

The leading mental centres were *churches* and *cities*. In the church, we must focus our attention not only on the altar but on the entrance as well. In the cities, the wall and its gates are the focal points of attention. In these areas we encounter the invisible wall, the invisible but tangible power inherent in medieval notions of sacral space.

The dominating perspective includes the concept of *centrality*. People identified themselves as belonging to a particular city, village and/or church. These

centres became mental focal points. The most important aspects of the centres, however, revealed themselves at *the border* between centre and non-centre (*intra*, *extra*, *foris*, walls, gates, entrances, invisible walls). These boundaries were filled with sacral and material space. The boundary was *eo ipso* defined as belonging in close association to the centre. We see the society of Lombard Italy as roughly concentric circles, where the circles are the central concepts of popular thinking but where particularly the borders between circles and surroundings are charged with tangible power.[124]

The concept I would like to use to describe this is *mental centrality*. A mental centre is the focal point of spatial thinking. A mental centre is during the Middle Ages permeated with the supernatural — but this quality is historically relative and connected with popular culture.

It must be emphasized that the concepts of centre and boundary may be misinterpreted if placed in a dichotomous situation. At least for this particular culture, they must be viewed *together*, as closely connected with each other, in order to grasp the real spatial significance. It must also be remembered that these views formed a part of the general context of popular culture and mentality: in the analysis above, similar notions have been shown in the works of Paul the Deacon, royal legislators, ecclesiastical poets and common notaries. Obviously they — despite differences in age, education and social level — all participated in the same discourse of spatial conceptualization.

The problem of change

The fact that spatial conceptualization and mental centrality are historically and culturally relative leads on to the question of historical change. To simplify, I would like to regard this change as being of two sorts:

> 1) *Superficial change* — the context remains the same but the expressions change. If two cultures meet and interact, some concepts might be identical but lacking a common code of expression. Borrowings and changes of these expressions are thus only superficial changes.
>
> 2) *Contextual change* — the context itself is replaced by new mental categories, culturally different with regard to the original context. For instance: no historian would today accept the spatial notions of Paul the Deacon in the beginning of this study.

These two types may be difficult to differentiate between. Another problem is to find out what actually sets the process in motion.

A basic problem in most analyses of mentalities is the implicit synchronity. The era is *per se* defined as a system, and changes within receive only secondary interest from the historian or sociologist. A good example of this, where the attitude is conscious, is Gurevich's *Categories of Medieval Culture* (1985).[125] When discussing the change of the system, Gurevich emphasizes the development of a new urban population with a rationalistic way of thinking. As man

was alienated from nature, nature was also desacralized. In Western Europe, this process was initiated in a more advanced stage of the Middle Ages and took shape during the transition to the early modern period.[126]

Hastrup places the centre model in opposition to the boundary model, and, in her study on Iceland, the centre model gains ascendancy over the boundary model. This is explained by several factors: ecological, commercial, demographical, religious and a change in the notions of ownership. There is no separate discussion of the change of spatial concepts.[127]

Leaving these attempts at understanding change in entire systems and focusing our attention on the spatial categories revealed by this study, we may examine whether corresponding changes took place in the mentality *and* in the socio-economic context. Since the two most interesting features revealed here are churches and cities, these features of society will be surveyed.

The cities of Lombard Italy

The study of cities has always been one of the main features of Italian historiography, and the literature on the subject is immense. This is not the place to delve into the problem,[128] but it may be interesting to note the polarization which entered the debate during the 1980s. Historians studying Emilian cities found stronger elements of continuity in Byzantine than in Lombard ones. Together with results from analyses on territorial organization and the general socio-economic situation, these results were thought to prove a large-scale ruralization of Lombard Italy.[129] Others maintained that the Lombard cities remained important. It could easily be shown how many buildings and public works continued to be looked after, and the written sources were used to show how the cities occupied an important part of the political scene in Lombard Italy.[130] Some archaeologists, on the other hand, approved of the idea of Lombard ruralization.[131] Their conclusions are only interpretations, and the same archaeological evidence can be interpreted differently. What some regard as elements of decay and depopulation may simply be reflections of changes in production and building. The fact that no Roman city-planning schemes were used and that new materials (wood) were used does not necessarily mean that the urban structure of the cities died. They might have received new functions and still kept their socio-economic strength.[132] Even if no conclusion can be reached, it may be supposed that the period from antiquity to the tenth century was a shadowy period with a possible urban impoverishment but with sharp regional contrasts both in Byzantine and Lombard Italy. A clearer picture can only emerge once more excavations have been carried out.

There was a topographical change in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages. In Roman times, the city was perceived as a geometric unit divided by two main streets — the *cardo maximus* and the *decumanus maximus*. This plan was changed in late antiquity. Different zones emerged: the Roman network was

replaced by centres (like the *palatium* and churches) that changed the general direction of streets. The cathedral gradually became the leading central place.[133] Church and city became associated with each other. Some have discussed the holy wall mentioned above in this context.[134] Other central areas were the walls and the gates — a logical outcome considering the importance of walls as defences against sieges. This was clearly reflected in popular mentality; the walls influenced the psychological climate within the city, and gates (*portae*) provided whole quarters with their names and sometimes defined the new intra-urban divisions. A painting of a city during the Middle Ages overemphasized the walls and the towers. These topographical elements occupied an important part of the world model of a medieval city-dweller.[135]

How, then, was a city perceived in the probably unmanifest notions of this age? Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century, defined a city as *urbs ipsa moenia sunt, civitas autem non saxa sed habitatores vocantur* ("*urbs* is this very fortification, but *civitas* is what the inhabitants, not the stones, are called").[136] This is an old way of describing the difference between *urbs* and *civitas*. When Paul the Deacon uses words like *urbs*, *civitas* and *oppidum*, he does so without distinguishing between the terms. The cities were thus thought to consist of both buildings and people. In Greece, a similar problem concerns the concepts of *polis* and *asty*. When used by Homer and the archaic poets, *polis* and *asty* are more or less identical concepts. Later (Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle), *asty* referred to the central urban area of the *polis* which in its turn referred to the city-state in its entirety. *Polis* could, however, also be equivalent to *demos* (the people of a *polis*), both in classical antiquity and in the world of Homer.[137] It has recently been shown that *asty* might have had a similar dual meaning even in Mycenaean times, referring to the city as well as to the people inhabiting it.[138] The difficulty is probably nothing more than conceptualized anachronism. It is natural for us to distinguish between people and buildings, but that is not necessarily the case in other cultures. The word *civitas* originally meant "citizenship" but was transformed into "city" during antiquity and the early Middle Ages, thus becoming the origin of words like "city", "ciudad", "città", and "cité".[139] In a study on mostly Carolingian concepts, it has been shown that *civitas* in that period was the equivalent of the Germanic *burg* — the fundamental feature of which was the wall.[140] A way out of this, in my opinion, false dichotomy is to acknowledge both implications and regard the city, the *civitas*, as a collective within boundaries: a union of citizens with a common wall, a unit where men and materia coexist in a common mental sphere.

The churches of Lombard Italy

One of the most striking aspects of Lombard Italy in the eighth century is the boom of church building.[141] Religious piety probably played a part, but other

reasons were just as important. The churches could be fitted into a large net-work of politics and economy. The church could be a status symbol, a monu-ment to victory and a place for burials.[142]

The bishops were attached to their cities and often more or less identified with them.[143] The power of the bishops grew considerably as the Lombards be-came Catholics during the seventh century. However, many dioceses suffered from wars and structural changes (new villages, abandonment and reconstruc-tion).[144] The most glorious period of episcopal power occurred in Carolingian and, especially, post-Carolingian Italy. The civic strength later to come was during the Lombard era only attached to the bishop in his role as leading priest.[145] It is often seen — particularly in fights between cities — how the dio-cese meant more to the city-dwellers than did the jurisdictional area.[145]

The territorial emergence of the *pievi* (local ecclesiastical units) was a final phase of the evangelization of the countryside from the fifth century. Many *pievi* did not emerge until the tenth century or later.[147] Furthermore, the extra-religious functions of the churches were not developed. The legal right to tithes came late in Italy: a consequence of the Carolingian victory in 774.[148] It was also difficult for the church to appropriate the burial rights. Many preferred burying their dead in open country or at private churches. Perhaps the central church in the *pieve* acquired the monopoly of burials in the ninth century, but certainly not earlier.[149]

Many churches were private, i.e., outside the *pieve* organization. In the litera-ture, these churches are mostly referred to as *Eigenkirchen*. In late antiquity, it became a habit among Italian aristocrats to found their own churches, and the practice boomed when the Lombards were converted to Christianity. A pri-vate church could be owned by anyone — farmers, kings, bishops, etc. In the eighth century, the *Eigenkirchen* formed a substantial part of the ecclesiastical world. Furthermore, the baptismal churches (the central churches of a *pieve*) themselves only gradually began to control the smaller non-private churches (*oratoria, tituli*, etc.). Sacramental and liturgical functions had to be defined, both with regard to the relation between the baptismal church and the bishop and to the relation between the baptismal church and its *oratoria*.[150]

The cultural context of mental
centrality — continuity and interaction

How does this correspond to the results of this study? The concept of *civitas* and the new topographical pattern are easy to integrate in the same cultural context as the results above. Men who regarded themselves as parts of a collec-tive within boundaries and who saw walls and gates as focal points fit perfectly in a world of mental centres and boundaries. However, the historical and arch-aeological research has not been able to show a strong socio-economic position for the cities comparable to the high Middle Ages and to antiquity. There was

no mass-ruralization, but even within a context of urban survival and functional continuity, there were great variations. Many cities were poorer than before and after. In spite of this, we can clearly see the cities and their walls and gates as leading criteria in the context of mental centrality — in the charters, in the laws, in the *Historia Langobardorum* and in other texts from the period. This tells a lot about the mentality; if we look only at the concrete evidence of socio-economic survival, we miss half the picture. The cities were more than just buildings and streets. They consisted of people and of the concepts of these men and women. The idea of the city as a unit of both people and buildings, of mental centrality and sacrality attached to churches and walls, continuously interacted with practice. The visible socio-economic situation may be seemingly alien to this. Whether the cities continued to function or not, however, is a question that cannot be answered simply by archaeology and traditional history, since this excludes the mental world.

This conclusion is even more obvious as we turn our attention to the churches. These were exponents of popular mentality, of everyday belief systems. The church was a firm part of the environment and of the mentality. This is reflected in the great importance of the bishop. While this might correspond to the mental centrality of church buildings described in the analysis above (for example the concept of sanctuary), it does not correspond to the visible state of things with regard to the larger ecclesiastical network and the degree of evangelization. We have seen that the network of *pievi* was still very unstable and undeveloped and that important functions had not yet been appropriated by the church. The interaction between mental categories and practice is not necessarily visible in what *we* regard as material remnants and manifest organizations. A study of churches as well as of cities, must therefore include the hidden concepts of the people — concepts that were as material to them as the stones of an erected church.

It is impossible to solve the problem of change simply by looking at the socio-economic trend. The interaction between spatial concepts and manifest reality is flexible and connected with a slowly changing cultural context. Practice could be influenced by spatial attitudes — for instance by strengthening habitational patterns and by favouring cities as focal points of civic and military life. At the same time, everyday practice was reflected in the thought process within the common cultural system.

What, then, was sufficiently important in order to change the contextual pattern? It has been demonstrated, for example by Jean-Claude Schmitt in his study on the dog saint St Guinefort, that deep-rooted features of popular culture may have existed until the twentieth century (when industrialism, new demographical and habitational patterns and other features of the modern era finished it). The superficial pattern changed, but not the basic concepts nor the mentality.[151] According to Peter Brown, we may expect to find a marked difference between cities and hinterland on the one hand and remote rural areas on the other. The cult of the saints could only function in its original way, with its

original social connotations, within the framework of the late Roman social milieu. Wide rural regions were different and showed a *rusticitas* completely alien to the urban world — even if the saints, on the superficial level, could have had the same names in the country shrine as in the cathedral.[152]

This study has covered only 200 years. To find a solution to the problem of contextual change, it may be necessary to cover 2000 years and relate the results to the ideas of the long duration of the Middle Ages that are common in works of the *Annales* school. In some regions we may very possibly have to trace a continuity all the way to the changes of our own time. Space was and is a part of a whole, and the characteristics of a defined spatial notion must be interpreted with regard to society as a whole: time, kinship, law, wealth, labour, etc. The social meaning of spatial categories cannot be reached without a broader and more time-consuming analysis.

Notes

1. I want to thank the people who have unselfishly helped me with good advice during the work of this study: Sverre Bagge (Bergen), Jerker Blomqvist (Lund, who supplied me with material concerning the notions of the Greek *polis* and *asty*), Aaron Gurevich (Moscow), Maxwell Olmstead, Yvonne Werner (Lund), Chris Wickham (Birmingham), Eva Österberg (Lund) and the theory seminar of the Institution of History at the University of Lund.
2. PD II:27.
3. Gurevich 1985, p. 27; Hallowell 1955, p. 184—202; Hastrup 1985, p. 50; Le Goff 1988; Tuan 1974; 1977.
4. Harley/Woodward 1987; Tuan 1974, p. 41.
5. Tuan 1974, p. 34—35; Tuan 1977, p. 88.
6. Gurevich 1985, p. 25—91; Gurevich 1988, p. 137—38; Grønbech 1912, III. See also Eliade 1957:1, who discusses the sharp difference between profane and sacral space. Eliade strongly influenced Bollnow 1963 (p. 65—69, 139—48) and Ray 1977.
7. Greg. of Tours, for example IV:49; VII:4, 21—22, 29; IX:8, 12. See also Gurevich 1985, p. 76.
8. Grønbech 1912, II, p. 1—11; Gurevich 1969.
9. This is particularly true for place-names. See Gurevich 1969; Hastrup 1985, p. 50—51, 59.
10. Rees/Rees 1961, p. 94. According to them, the concept of boundary was particularly important in Ireland: the supernatural was thought to intrude along rivers, and boundaries had to be redefined ritually every year.
11. Gurevich 1988, p. 39—97; see also Brown 1981; Graus 1989; Lagazzi 1991, p. 70—79; Prinz 1989; Wilson 1983.
12. On the conflict between Siena and Arezzo: Lusini 1900, p. 59—62; more generally, Lagazzi 1991, p. 70—79. On patron saints of cities, see Orselli 1978; 1981. See Peter Brown's explanation of the link between the community and its saints in Turin (Brown 1981, p. 61—62) and the famous example of St Eulalia in Mérida (Collins 1983, p. 51—52, 95—100). On Constantinople, see Baynes 1949.
13. Müller 1961; also Eliade 1957:2; Hofmeister 1980, p. 9—13.
14. Hastrup 1985. This can be compared with the Celtic culture of Ireland described by Rees/Rees 1961, p. 89—94, 186—87, 344—49, where both centres and boundaries were regarded as regions where supernatural symbols were concentrated. Compare with studies of views of the Otherworld: Dinzelbacher 1981, p. 121—40; Gurevich 1988, p. 104—52.
15. Lagazzi 1991, p. 31—43, 87—88.
16. Goffart 1988, p. 333—435, particularly p. 414, 423—24.
17. Goffart 1988; Norberg 1958.
18. Gurevich 1988, p. 1—38.
19. CDL I—II Schiap. — for example 12, 48, 127, 158, 165, 175, 181, 194, 204, 293; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 63; Troya 903. See also Dupré Theseider 1964.
20. CDL I—II Schiap. 45, 46, 69, 88, 99, 177, 242, 283, 286, 295.
21. CDL I—II Schiap. 20, 34, 71, 84, 87, 104, 116, 119, 130, 155, 161, 162, 163, 199, 254, 261, 271, 286, 287, 293.
22. CDL I—II Schiap. 34, 48, 162.
23. CDL I—II Schiap. 82, 142, 198, 203, 212, 223, 226, 266, 284.
24. CDL IV:1 Brühl, for example 14; CDL V Ziel. (spol), for example 51, 52.
25. CDL IV:1 Brühl, for example 20 (*cum iumentis publicis Reatinis*). Urban denominations are present in most charters, above all denoting territory ruled by the gastald under whose jurisdiction the document was written.
26. CDL V Ziel. (spol), for example 32.

27. CDL V Ziel. (ben) 1, 7; Troya 529, 559, 601, 780.
28. CDL V Ziel. (ben) 9.
29. CDL V Ziel. (spol) 42, 52; Troya 382, 384, 578.
30. CDL I—II Schiap. 24, 28, 73, 155, 187, 190, 276; CDL V Ziel. (ben) 7, 9.
31. CDL I—II Schiap. 48, 113, 114, 127, 136, 152, 153, 170, 178, 180, 195, 203, 217, 219, 220, 229, 257, 271, 293; CDL IV:1 Brühl 13; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 55; Troya 388.
32. CDL I—II Schiap. 24, 25, 69, 80, 83, 153, 278. See also 187, 214, 269; Troya 668 (Benevento).
33. CDL I—II Schiap. 65, 91, 113, 127, 149, 161, 180, 181, 187, 198, 207, 210, 220, 221, 229, 237, 246, 259, 266, 267, 275, 280; CDL IV:1 Brühl, for example 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 16; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 1, 8, 10, 11, 12, 22, 31, 32, 44, 45, 50, 52, 56, 57; (ben) 7; Troya 380, 382, 384, 388, 639, 668.
34. CDL I—II Schiap. 38, 45, 46, 48, 64, 68, 69, 82, 88, 125, 126, 129, 135, 161, 177, 179, 185, 190, 195, 205, 210, 211, 227, 229, 236, 250, 254, 275, 277, 286 (in a city), 289, 290; CDL IV:1 Brühl 8 (including bridges); CDL V Ziel. (spol) 8, 55; (ben) 7, 8; Troya 568 (a bridge), 583, 639, 670 (a bridge).
35. CDL I—II Schiap. 34, 38, 50, 52, 59, 64, 77, 79, 80, 95, 97, 106, 113, 116, 127, 129, (137 — a harbour), 142, 143, 154, 155, 162, 179, 180, 188, 189, 195, 212, 213, 214, 223 (trade routes), 225, 228, 234, 241, 249, 257, 263, 264, 271, 276, 279, 293; CDL IV:1 Brühl 4, 5, 10; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 8, 23, 34, 46, 51, 62; (ben) 5, 7; Troya 378, 384, 385, 388, 548, 578.
36. Mountains: CDL IV:1 Brühl 18, 20; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 46; Troya 384. Valleys: CDL V Ziel. (spol) 33; Troya 548, 703.
37. CDL III Brühl 6, 13, 18, 19, 24, 33, 37, 41, 42, 43, 44.
38. CDL III Brühl 4, 7, 18, 19, 36.
39. CDL III Brühl 18, 19, 27, 39, 40.
40. CDL III Brühl 39.
41. CDL III Brühl 4, 22, 41, 43.
42. CDL III Brühl 2, 3, 4, 6, 18, 19, 22, 24, 33, 38, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44.
43. CDL III Brühl 13, 38, 40, 44.
44. For example CDL III Brühl 33, 39, 44; CDL IV:1 Brühl 2, 4, 8, 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23; Troya 388, 639, 670, 779. Sometimes even in private charters: CDL V Ziel. (spol) 8.
45. CDL I—II Schiap. 114, 116, 235, 239, 240, 268, 293; CDL IV:1 Brühl 1.
46. Petrucci 1963; 1971; CDL II Schiap. 178.
47. CDL I—II Schiap. 81, 109, 214, 293.
48. Troya 669; Ro 224.
49. Dupré Theseider 1964; Sestan 1961.
50. CDL III Brühl 18, 19, 33, 36, 41, 42, 44; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 8.
51. CDL III Brühl 36.
52. CDL V Ziel. (ben) 4; Troya 388, 558, 568, 569, 578, 592, 601, 604, 639, 690, 903; Brühl 1968; 1974.
53. Whorf 1956, especially p. 158—59.
54. CDL I—II Schiap. 14, 23, 37, 65, 113, 135, 137, 148, 151, 152, 153, 155, 156, 175, 178, 183, 218, 225, 226, 231, 293; CDL III Brühl 31, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 44; CDL V Ziel. (spol) 45; (ben) 4; Troya 384, 578, 642, 668, 708, 779.
55. Lagazzi 1991, p. 19—31, 86. According to Lagazzi, the frequent use of rivers, roads and other features of the environment was due to practical needs resulting from the socio-economic situation. Writers of charters used the local geographical features that corresponded to the landscape: in rural districts dominated by a silvo-pastoral economy, boundaries were often defined by certain marked trees, while in districts dominated by agriculture it was more natural to use rivers, roads and hedges and other kinds of fences.

56. Lpr prologue to I, II, III, VIII, XI; Lpr 44, 61, 88, 108, 109; on *provincia*, see Gasparri 1978, p. 31. Ra prologue II; Ra 9.
57. All the pre—774 laws have been studied, but I have excluded *Memoratorium de mercedibus magistri commacinorum* and *Notitia de actoribus regis*, since these laws are too closely associated with particular situations and people to be of any use in this study.
58. Ro 36.
59. Ro 37.
60. Ro 38.
61. Ro 39.
62. Ro 38, 40.
63. Ro 244.
64. Ro 176.
65. Ai prologue to the laws of 750.
66. Ro 35.
67. Ro 272.
68. Ro 343.
69. Lpr 73.
70. Lpr 143.
71. Ai 12, 17, 18, 19.
72. Lpr 84.
73. Vita Barbati episcopi Beneventani (MGH SS rer langob); Martin 1974.
74. Ra 13.
75. Ro 224.
76. Lpr 9 — see also 140.
77. Lpr 23, 55.
78. Lpr 23.
79. Ai 11.
80. CDL I Schiap. 81; see also Barni 1938; Hauptfeld 1983, p. 44; Mor 1979.
81. For example PD V:1 (*exercitus*).
82. PD III:17, 31; IV:27—28; V:7.
83. PD III:18; IV:28.
84. PD IV:37.
85. For example PD V:16, 28—29.
86. PD VI:21.
87. PD II:13; III:9, 30; IV:16, 21, 41, 44—45; V:7, 11, 17, 22—23, 38—39.
88. PD V:5.
89. PD III:23; V:8, 34; VI:1, 55, 58.
90. PD IV:48.
91. PD V:33, 37—38, 40.
92. For example PD III:31; IV:1, 27—28; V:20.
93. PD VI:40.
94. PD II:13.
95. PD VI:51. See also — concerning the different denominations of Forum Julii — II:9, 37.
96. PD II:23 (*via*); V:17 (*strata*).
97. PD II:10; V:7; VI:1, 24.
98. For example PD V:33, 36, 38—39.
99. See especially PD IV:48; V:36.
100. PD VI:5.
101. PD VI:6, 58.
102. For example PD IV:51.
103. For example PD V:16 — but in this chapter it is also demonstrated how cities conquer even these mental areas (*Beneventanis provinciis*).

104. For example PD V:11—13.
105. For example PD II:9, 14; IV:51.
106. For example PD IV:44, 46.
107. PD II:15—24.
108. PD II:31; III:35; IV:30; V:1; VI:55.
109. For example PD VI:17. See also Krüger 1971.
110. PD IV:6; VI:2, 40, 48.
111. PD V:3.
112. PD VI:6.
113. PD VI:51.
114. PD V:6.
115. PD VI:5.
116. PD IV:47; Krüger 1971, p. 378 — not only the church itself, but also the royal an-
     nexe, lay within the sacral boundaries.
117. PD I:4 (a variant of the legend of the seven sleepers, here associated with northern
     Scandinavia); III:1—2 (concerning the saint Hospitius in southern Gaul).
118. Bachrach 1970; 1985; Schmiedt 1968; Vetters 1968; Warner 1968.
119. Compare this with Lagazzi 1991, p. 70—79. In my opinion, Lagazzi overstresses the
     importance of boundaries when analysing the protection offered by saints. Saints
     could intervene anywhere to protect almost everything, not necessarily in connection
     with boundaries. It is doubtful whether the concept of boundary *per se* is sufficient
     if we are to understand the spatial significance of the supernatural.
120. Carmen de synodo Ticinensi, in MGH SS rer langob.
121. Classen 1980; Hyde 1966; de Matteis 1981 — *laudes civitatum* as exponents of the
     cities as Christian communities (*societates*).
122. The edition used is Pighi 1960.
123. See above, reference n. 55.
124. It is thus not surprising that we possess a number of documents relating to bound-
     ary conflicts in seventh- and eighth-century Lombard Italy — for example CDL I
     Schiap. 17, 19, 20 (concerning the conflict between Siena and Arezzo); 12, 21 (be-
     tween Lucca and Pistoia); CDL III Brühl 4, 6 (between Parma and Piacenza); 12, 13
     (between Siena and Arezzo).
125. Gurevich 1985, p. 15. According to Gurevich, practice and mentality are linked
     together in a complex way: experience both reflect practice *and* influence behaviour.
126. Gurevich 1985, p. 90—91.
127. Hastrup 1985, p. 230.
128. See the discussions and surveys in my forthcoming dissertation (Harrison 1992 or
     1993 (in print).
129. Fumagalli 1976; 1985; Galetti 1985.
130. Belli Barsali 1973; Ward-Perkins 1983; 1984; 1988; Wickham 1981; 1988:1.
131. Brogiolo 1987; Hodges/Whitehouse 1983; Hudson 1985; Whitehouse 1988.
132. La Rocca Hudson 1986; Wickham 1988:2.
133. Bullough 1974; Cagiano de Azevedo 1969; Février 1974; Testini/Cantino Wataghin/
     Pani Ermini 1989; Ward-Perkins 1984.
134. Bocchi 1977; Bognetti 1954, p. 274; Fasoli 1974:2, p. 29—33; Mor 1964, p. 32—39.
135. Bullough 1974; Conti 1968; Fasoli 1974:1; Mor 1964; 1974; 1976; Peroni 1974. On the
     porta division, see Müller 1961, p. 10—114, particularly p. 81—89.
136. Isidorus Hispalensis, Etym. XV:2. See also M. T. Cicero, Pro Sestio 42: *tum conven-
     ticula hominum, quae postea civitates nominatae sunt tum domicilia coniuncta, quas
     urbes dicimus.*
137. Koerner 1981; Lonis 1983; Musiolek 1981:1; 1981:2; see also Cadell 1984: in this study
     it is demonstrated how the concept of *polis* changed considerably after having been
     introduced in a new environment (Hellenistic Egypt).
138. Blomqvist 1987.

139. Battisti 1959; Pellegrini 1974.
140. Köbler 1973.
141. See, for instance, Cagiano de Azevedo 1980 (Milan); Krüger 1971; Mor 1964 (Verona); Rossetti 1986 (Milan); Schwarzmaier 1972 (Lucca); Tabacco 1986 (Milan).
142. Settia 1982; Ward-Perkins 1984; Wickham 1981; 1988:3.
143. Bertini 1972; Bognetti 1959 (1968); Dupré Theseider 1959; Jarnut 1979, p. 112—25; Mochi Onory 1930; Tabacco 1986.
144. The situation in the beginning of the Lombard period has been surveyed by Duchesne 1903—05. He has, however, been justly criticized: see Wickham 1981, p. 148—49.
145. Martini 1971.
146. Ferrali 1966; Sestan 1961 — fights between Tuscan dioceses.
147. See, with bibliographical references, Castagnetti 1976; 1979; Violante 1977; 1982. On southern Italy: Fonseca 1982; Iannelli 1984; Ruggiero 1973; 1975.
148. Boyd 1952.
149. Settia 1982.
150. The best recent study on local ecclesiastical organization is Violante 1982.
151. Schmitt 1979.
152. Brown 1981, p. 123—24.

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Abbreviations

AM	Archeologia medievale (Florence)
Atti	Atti del... congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo (CISAM)
CBA	The Council for British Archaeology
CISAM	Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo
Sett	Settimane di studio (del CISAM)