

THE LANDS OF SAINT AMBROSE: THE ACQUISITION, ORGANISATION
AND EXPLOITATION OF LANDED PROPERTY IN NORTH-WESTERN
LOMBARDY BY THE MONASTERY OF SANT'AMBROGIO MILAN, c.780-
1000.

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Submitted for the degree of PhD

At University College London.

1990

ABSTRACT.

This thesis is a detailed local study of the property controlled by the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio Milan in the pre-eleventh century period. Its central premise is that landowning brought the monastery a degree of material power whose nature has hitherto been poorly understood, in contrast to its spiritual importance which is well-established. Chapter One examines the authenticity and usefulness as tools for answering historical questions of three hundred and fifty charters which provide the main evidential base of the thesis. Chapter Two discusses the geographical, social and political context within which the monastery functioned, focussing not simply on the major ecclesiastical and lay jurisdictions in the region but also on the mechanics of how land itself was 'held' by a religious community with little opportunity to enforce its ownership. In Chapters Three, Four and Five it is established where the monastery had property, how and when this was acquired, within a chronological framework extending from the period before the foundation of the community (in 789) to the end of the tenth century, a chronology which is essential to an understanding of the intricate changes which occurred as the result of continuing acquisition and alienation by the monastery throughout the period. Chapter Three argues that the foundation and initial endowment of the community before c.835, by kings and archbishops, established the basic framework of monastic holdings, concentrated in the hills and lakes of the north and the plains of the south and east. Chapters Four and Five discuss how the monastery added to and coped with its properties in the south and north respectively, via studies of the relationships which existed between the monastery and existing local owners. The resulting picture suggests that the monastery was as much exploited as exploiter in some villages, and that it

had to deal with resistance which was at times very prolonged. Chapters Six and Seven provide analyses of the economic organisation of property which this accumulation necessitated, particularly the development of estates and the nature of the relationships with free peasants, tenants and dependants. An important place is assigned to Sant'Ambrogio's urban contacts, which made it part of an economy which was, within the limitations of the period, amongst the most sophisticated in Europe. The final chapter assesses to what degree and in what ways this landowning could be said to have manifested itself as 'power', especially the degree to which the abbots had or had not become great lords by the end of the period. The conclusions reached tend to suggest that controlling land and extracting surplus from it was not as easy as many studies of this and other early medieval monasteries have assumed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

In the four years during which I have been researching and writing this thesis I have been very fortunate in the help I have received from a great many individuals in both England and Italy. I should like to thank them all here. Of more particular debts I want to acknowledge collectively the librarians and archivists of University College London (in particular Lesley in Inter Library Loans), the British Library, the Institute of Historical Research and Sheffield University; and in Milan the Archivio di Stato di Milano, the Archivio Capitolare della basilica di Sant'Ambrogio, the Biblioteca Ambrosiana, and the libraries of the Università Cattolica and the Università Statale. Collectively too I want to thank the secretarial staffs of the History Departments of University College London and Sheffield University, the regulars of the Early Medieval Seminar at the Institute of Historical Research and the Early Medieval Forum in Sheffield.

My supervisors Wendy Davies and Chris Wickham have supplied endless help, encouragement and thought-provoking criticism for which a simple thankyou hardly seems adequate. I thank them both deeply in the happy knowledge that over the past four years we have become friends.

The following individuals, in England and Italy, have been kind enough to answer numerous particular queries and, although they may not always have realised it, have taught me about the early Middle Ages for which I will always remain grateful: Anna Maria Ambrosioni, David Andrews, Martin Carver, Michael Clanchy, Michael Crawford, David D'Avray, Paul Fouracre, Cristina La Rocca, Silvia Lusuardi-Siena, Bob Moore, Jinty Nelson, Susan Reynolds, Gabriella Rossetti, Julia Smith and Lizzie Ward.

I owe a particular debt to Professore Cinzio Violante for valuable advice in Pisa and especially for his kind gift of books.

My understanding of what history might be about was deepened hugely by my recent association with the Department of History at Sheffield University. I thank all my colleagues and students there very much. I owe particular debts to my fellow medievalists - Katharine Keats-Rohan, Edmund King, David Luscombe, Bob Moore, Janey Stevenson, Kath Thompson and Simon Walker - and also to Stephen Salter for long discussions about Max Weber and much else.

I could not have persevered in my research without the support of my friends Maria Bonomi, Montserrat Cabret i Pairet, Paul Heywood, Helen Johnson, Alastair Leonard, John Moreland, Michael Penry, Stephen Salter, Johnathan Scott, Lindsey Shaw, Janey Stevenson, Suzy Turner, Mary Vincent and Simon Walker. I thank them all, *con affetto e con amore*.

My family have put up with me over four years which I am sure must have seemed never-ending at times. My greatest thanks must be to them and especially to my parents for continuing support, not least financial, without which I suspect I should never have finished, or started.

Ross Balzaretti
Pyrford, August 1989.

INTRODUCTION.

The site where Saint Ambrose built a basilica and where he is buried has been called, '...one of the symbols of continuity in Christian history'.⁽¹⁾ Yet its significance as a holy place stretches back beyond Ambrose into pre-Christian and early Christian times when it was part of the most important burial site of Roman Mediolanum and close to the mausoleum of San Vittore.⁽²⁾ It had seen the burials of numerous early martyrs, notably Saints Protasius and Gervasius whose bodies, discovered by Ambrose, provided the pretext for for the construction of the Basilica Ambrosiana there. Already then, by the time our story begins in the late eighth century, the place had been holy for centuries.

However, Sant'Ambrogio, the church we see today, is not Ambrose's church but the work of the Middle Ages, when the 'Ambrosian Tradition' of worship, deliberately different in many of its customs from Roman norms, was in full cry. Those who shouted loudest in defence of these Milanese practices were the archbishops who, as senior metropolitans of northern Italy and direct descendants of bishop Ambrose, maintained the tradition in the face of ceaseless papal threats throughout the medieval period. The church of Sant'Ambrogio became the most potent symbol of archiepiscopal power and lavish embellishments were bestowed upon it to enhance the cult of the saint. This cult of Ambrose began to override those of other Milanese saints in the ninth century with the encouragement of Carolingian kings, whose advisers revered his writings. It was in this atmosphere that a monastery following the Benedictine Rule was set up at the basilica in 789/790 as a result of action by Archbishop Peter and Charlemagne. It is this community - which survived until

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its dissolution in 1798 - which forms the basis of our story.

Yet the religious history of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in the early medieval period forms no part of what follows and at the outset it is necessary to explain why. It is not meant to imply that this religious history was not important - although I myself would not endow it with the overwhelming significance that many historians do - but rather that its importance has already been established as a result of the researches of Ambrosioni, Cattaneo and Ferrari.⁽³⁾ Further, it is a contention of this thesis that Sant'Ambrogio's landholding as much as its provision of religious services, gave it its place in the complex world of Milanese and Lombardian society in the two centuries following its first appearance. This should not be pushed too far as the question of the inter-relationship between the religious (in the sense of spiritual) life of the community and its position in the world at large is a very interesting one.

Unfortunately there is not much evidence through which to approach it, at least for the ninth and tenth centuries. Certainly the phrase terra sancti Ambrosii appears in the charters almost as much as it resounds through the hagiography and there is little doubt that many people really believed that monastic land actually belonged to the saint. Pious motives surface quite often in the charters conferring land on the monks, which is hardly surprising given that such expressions of piety were commonplace in testaments and donations throughout the medieval period. However, bearing in mind that we are dealing with an ostensibly religious institution, it is more interesting to note how often such pious intentions do not come through in the records. Most of the charters we have are rather business-like in tone and do not contain much in the way of pious sentiment.

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This of course is another way of saying that we have to be very careful of inferring motives - pious or otherwise - from actions recorded in documents which are overwhelmingly composed of formulaic passages. We can only go so far in escaping the limitations of the sources, and we cannot in this instance go further than saying ' some gifts to the monastery had pious intent '. No one could write a thesis about that.

So the story which follows concerns the landholding of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in the period between 789 and 1000. The questions raised by this story are old ones and important ones for the history of the early Middle Ages. Perhaps the hardest question is ' what did "landownership" mean in the ninth and tenth centuries? ' A monastic institution is a good subject around which to centre the question, partly because this period saw a massive growth in church property, but mostly because it preserved records which concern explicitly the ownership of land, which involve not merely the monastery but other churches and above all a wide variety of laymen. Therefore we get quite a rounded picture, not merely land seen through monastic eyes. The records which the community preserved - charters - do have many failings and limitations, as we shall see in Chapter 1, but they have the overwhelming virtue of being records in the strict sense, designed to preserve the formalised memory of a property transaction in a relatively standardised form. They are not replete with literary allusions and stand alongside most medieval sources much as a government memorandum of the 1830's stands alongside The Pickwick Papers.

There have been many studies of medieval monasteries both in Italy and elsewhere, although proportionally not so many have been concerned with the early Middle Ages mostly for reasons of evidence.

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Sant'Ambrogio has the virtue of being relatively fresh ground and important ground at that. It is valuable to study the material base behind a community so religiously significant even if we cannot make many explicit connections between the two aspects. The value comes partly from the fact that quite a substantial body of material survives from an early date: in Italy only the bishops of Lucca and the monastery of Farfa have preserved substantially larger collections of earlier dates. Partly also from the fact that the monastery appeared at the end of the period when monastic foundations of importance were happening in Italy: Montecassino, Monte Amiata, Farfa, San Vincenzo al Volturno and, nearer Milan, Bobbio, Nonantola and San Salvatore di Brescia had all appeared before Sant'Ambrogio. This relatively late date of foundation makes it a good example of what could happen when a new landlord appeared in a world where tenurial patterns were already well-established.

More important than this however is the fact that Sant'Ambrogio was a suburban foundation, close to one of the largest and most sophisticated cities in early medieval Europe: Milan. Therefore it fits into a category of monastery - the semi-urban foundation - relatively little studied hitherto. Most of the monasteries recognised as important houses in the ninth, and even the tenth centuries, were rural communities. Most of the Italian examples listed above were, and so further north were St. Bertin, Prüm, St. Gall, Reichenau, Fulda, Glastonbury, Jarrow. Even communities nearer towns - St. Denis, St. Martin of Tours, St. Vincent of Macon, Christchurch Canterbury - were not near towns with an urban society as complicated as that of Milan. Therefore another of our questions is what did it mean for Sant'Ambrogio to be so close to an urban world? We are helped in coming to an answer by the fact that Milanese society is amongst the best-evidenced in Europe at this

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period, and amongst the most satisfactorily studied too.

A study which concerns itself with landholding and with urban culture must necessarily deal also with questions about the nature of the early medieval economy. The part which monasteries played in the economy is still rather poorly understood, but there can be little doubt of their importance in an economy where the exploitation of land was the fundamental economic resource which literally underlay early medieval societies wherever they were. Agricultural technology was still manually-oriented, slow to get results and very erratic in its productivity. In this respect Sant'Ambrogio was part of what was a very 'traditional' society, or in Gellner's terminology 'agro-literate'. Most men toiled, only the few had leisure to do other things, explained by the latter's ability to manage surplus. It is normally assumed that monasteries were at the forefront of the 'rationalisation' of property management in this period with their programmes for land clearance and territorial consolidation of estates. These features have been most clearly seen in the case of rural communities - Nonantola being a classic north Italian example - and it remains to be asked whether a suburban community such as Sant'Ambrogio did so too.

In northern Italy, as elsewhere in the Carolingian Empire, those who did no cultivation themselves - the oratores and bellatores of the classic tripartite model - were those who controlled agricultural surplus, and this explains, as much as religious ideology does, the reasons for the association of kings and aristocrats with monasteries, an association which was very marked in Sant'Ambrogio's case. However we have to take into account also the urban society of Milan with its merchants, judges, notaries and artisans all of whom were freed from agricultural labour and some of whom were landlords in their own right. Did the presence of this society - literate and wealthy - on Sant'Ambrogio's very

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doorstep lessen the need for the monastery to own vast tracts of land? Did it own small amounts of particularly valuable land instead? Did it buy and sell for commercial profit in the market of Milan?

The most awkward questions concern what can crudely be termed the social position of the monastery. Clearly this is a notion that cannot properly be applied to an institution and comes down to an understanding of how the abbots functioned in a complicated world. Did - as many argue - possession of great landed resources confer power on the abbots? What sort of power? And how could it be defended? Such questions concern especially the social relationships which caused the abbots to acquire land in the first place, their dealings with other owners, with kings and aristocrats, but equally with less powerful men about whom we are often just as well informed. They remind us too that, in the early medieval period, people carried out or refused to carry out orders, not machines, that methods of communication were slow and unreliable and that land could only be converted into power after a long chain of personal relationships had been constructed, a chain which could break easily and often.

None of these questions are new. Indeed there is no reason why they should be. Many of them figure at the heart of Italian concerns about the early medieval period. Italian historiography has pre-occupations of its own and what is meant by the sistema curtense, by incastellamento and by signoria fondiaria/signoria territoriale is examined elsewhere in the course of this thesis as and when the need arises. Here it needs simply to be pointed out that perhaps the greatest of these pre-occupations - that concerning the city, urban life and city/countryside relationships - has the most to contribute to what follows as a result of the famous work

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of Violante, La Società Milanese nell'età Precomunale first published in 1953.⁽⁴⁾ Much of that book was based on the evidence of the Sant'Ambrogio charters, demonstrating that neither is the subject matter of this thesis new. The charters of Sant'Ambrogio have been known and studied since the eighteenth century. However, no-one has ever written about them all as a unit from the point of view of the community's landholding. Even Violante said very little about the monastery. So it is partly because the material has never been examined in its entirety in print that this study is prefaced by an examination of the documents. Rather more it is because of a belief that history - whatever the very considerable value of archaeology in our period - is above all else the study of the documents preserved from the past and the people who figure in them.

NOTE ON THE IDENTIFICATION OF INDIVIDUALS AND PLACES.

The charters upon which this study is based contain many hundreds of personal and place names whose identification is a study in itself. In deciding when a given individual is referred to is largely a process of narrowing down the available options as far as possible. So if we come across - as we do - several references to Petrus de Colonia in different charters we are presented with two options: either it was the same man or different men. There are various ways in deciding which applies. The most useful is when an individual signs a charter as then he can be identified on subsequent occasions quite easily. But unsurprisingly this only applies to a minority of people: not everyone could write their name and documents refer to many people other than witnesses. Other ways are possible for example when an individual has a very uncommon name or when a text says that one person (say Petrus de Colonia) had sold land in another charter the year before (a charter which we still have demonstrating

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that the same Petrus appeared in both texts). Normally none of these criteria apply and we have to decide on the context presented by the text: where was it written, what property did it refer to, who witnessed it and so on.

Placenames too present many problems at such a far distant remove from when the texts were written. However, we are fortunate in having useful studies of placenames relating to our area and based largely on these charters. The most useful of these are the following: P. Boselli, Toponomi Lombardi (Milan, 1977); D. Olivieri, Dizionario di toponomastica Lombarda, 2nd. ed. (Milan, 1961); C.M. Rota, ' Paesi del Milanese scomparsi e disrutti ', Archivio Storico Lombardo, s.V., v. IV (1919); R. Sertoli Salis, I Principi Toponomi in Valtellina e Val Chiavenna (Milan, 1955); and the indices of the principal editions of the charters. All names securely identified appear in the text which follows in Italian (e.g. Colonia is referred to as Cologno Monzese). Where they remain unidentified or where I disagree with the normal identifications the Latin name appears in inverted commas (e.g. 'Mellesiate').

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION.

1. C. Brooke, in The Church in Anglo-Saxon England, CBA Research Report, 60 (London, 1986) p. 1.
2. R. Krautheimer, Three Christian Capitals (Berkley, 1983) p. 70.
3. A.M. Ambrosioni, 'Sant'Ambrogio di Milano', in Monasteri Benedettini in Lombardia, ed. G. Picasso (Milan, 1980); E. Cattaneo, ' La tradizione Ambrosiana come esperienza religiosa culturale cittadina', in Milano e I Milanesi (Spoleto, 1986) pp. 119-136; M. Ferrari, 'Manoscritti e cultura', in Milano e I Milanesi (Spoleto, 1986) pp. 241-275.
4. C. Violante, La Società Milanese nell'età Precomunale 2nd. ed. (Bari, 1974).

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>AA</u>	<u>Archivio Ambrosiano.</u>
<u>AdM</u>	<u>Archivio di Stato di Milano.</u>
<u>AHR</u>	<u>American Historical Review.</u>
<u>AM</u>	<u>Archeologia Medievale.</u>
<u>ASI</u>	<u>Archivio Storico Italiano.</u>
<u>ASL</u>	<u>Archivio Storico Lombardo.</u>
<u>BAR INT</u>	<u>British Archaeological Reports, International Series.</u>
<u>BIIM</u>	<u>Bollettino del Istituto Italiano per il Medioevo.</u>
<u>CCM</u>	<u>Cahiers de Civilisation Médiévale.</u>
<u>CDL</u>	<u>Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae, ed. G. Porro-Lambertenghi (Turin, 1878) Historia Patriae Monumenta t. 13.</u>
<u>CDLS</u>	<u>Codice Diplomatico Longobardo, ed. L. Schiaparelli (Rome, 1935).</u>
<u>CISMUC</u>	<u>Contibuiti del'Istituto di Storia Medioevale dell'Università Cattolica di Milano.</u>
<u>EHR</u>	<u>English Historical Review.</u>
<u>Econ. H R</u>	<u>Economic History Review.</u>
<u>FORC</u>	<u>V. Forcella, <u>Iscrizioni delle chiese...di Milano</u> (Milan, 1893), cited by number.</u>
<u>IGM</u>	<u>Istituto Geografico Militare.</u>
<u>Inventari</u>	
<u>Altomedievale</u>	<u>Inventari altomedievale di terre, coloni e redditi, ed. A. Castagnetti et. al. (Rome, 1979).</u>

J. Med. Hist

Journal of Medieval History.

MGH

Monumenta Germaniae Historica:

" Dipl. Karl

Diplomata Karolini Aevi, 1, ed. E. Mühlbacher (Berlin, 1906).

" Dipl. Karl. III

Diplomata Karolini III, ed. P. Kehr (Berlin, 1937).

" Dipl. Loth.

Diplomata Lothar 1 , Lothar 2, ed. T. Scheiffer (Berlin, 1966).

" PCA

Poetae Latini Carolini Aevi, ed. E. Dümmler (Berlin, 1880-1884).

" SS in folio

Scriptores in folio.

" SS RR LANG

Scriptores Rerum Langobardorum, ss. vi-ix, ed. G. Waitz (Hannover, 1878).

MSDM

Memorie Storiche del Diocesi di Milano.

NAT

Il Museo diplomatico dell' Archivio di Stato di Milano ed. A.R. Natale (Milan, c. 1970).

NRS

Nuova Rivista Storica.

PBSR

Proceedings of the British School at Rome.

PLAC 1

I Placiti del Regnum Italiae ed. C. Manaresi (Rome, 1958) vol.1.

PLAC 2

I Placiti del Regnum Italiae ed. C. Manaresi (Rome, 1958) vol. 2.

P & P

Past and Present.

QM

Quaderni Medievali.

QS

Quaderni Storici.

RILSL

Rendiconti dell'Istituto Lombardo di Scienze e Lettere.

Riv

Rivista.

<u>RR SS II</u>	<u>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</u> , ed. Muratori.
<u>RSI</u>	<u>Rivista Storica Italiana</u> .
<u>SCH</u>	<u>Studies in Church History</u> .
<u>Settimane di Spoleto</u>	<u>Settimane di Studio del centro Italiano di Studi Sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto</u> .
<u>Storia di Milano</u>	<u>Storia di Milano</u> , 16 vols. Fondazione Treccani degli Alfieri per la Storia di Milano (Milan, 1953-62).
<u>SSDM</u>	<u>Studi di Storia e Diplomatica Medievale</u> .
<u>TRHS</u>	<u>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</u> .

CHAPTER ONE.

THE SOURCES: HISTORY THROUGH CHARTERS.

The charters of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, which are given technical discussion in this chapter, form the heart of the surviving early medieval documentation for north-western Lombardy, prior to the eleventh century. Not only do they preponderate over other monastic charters for the region but they also far outway in numerical significance the surviving literary and annalistic material. These latter works comprise rather brief and often highly coloured fragments, excepting Paul the Deacon's substantial Historia Langobardorum, which was completed before the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was founded.⁽¹⁾ Narrative and literary sources are few and problematic because Italians, it seems, were loath to write history in our period. The annals and chronicles which are so common and important for the writing of Frankish history do not form more than a paltry part of the Italian evidence.⁽²⁾ The lack of some 'Annals of Sant' Ambrogio' is not odd then in the Italian context, and it serves to remind us that Sant' Ambrogio was an Italian Carolingian monastery rather than a Frankish Carolingian one, a point nicely illustrated by the fact that more references to the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio appear in Frankish annals than Italian ones.⁽³⁾ It is axiomatic of Italian concerns that the annals and chronicles which Italians produced were urban in their orientation. Milan itself is perhaps the best example of this, having an early city chronicle tradition. This is no more than we should expect of the major urban centre of the region, where literate skills were likely to be more highly developed, and where some had the leisure and the desire to examine their past. The city appears in three

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descriptions of early date, the Itinerarium Salisburgense (not produced at Milan) , the Versum de Mediolano Civitate (eighth century, written by a Milanese cleric) and the De Situ Orbis Mediolanensis (probably late ninth century, certainly pre-Twelfth century).⁽⁴⁾ The two major Milanese chronicles of the eleventh century, Arnulf's Gesta archiepiscoporum mediolanensium and Landulf Senior's Historia Mediolanensis tell us much about how the tenth century in Milan was viewed by later eyes, but they have to be treated with caution as reliable witnesses for tenth century developments.⁽⁵⁾ The Annales Mediolanenses Minores also form part of what was an episcopal, not monastic, literary tradition.⁽⁶⁾ The archbishops also commissioned a life of Ambrose in the ninth century which forms a part of the same tradition.⁽⁷⁾ Religious book production better represents the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio but it is not our concern here as it is of little use for the economic and social studies which the thesis concerns.⁽⁸⁾

It is to the charters that one has to turn if one wants to study the place of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in an economic and social context for only the charters provide suitable documentary material at this date.⁽⁹⁾ In recent decades the exploitation of charter records has taken on something of a new lease of life in many parts of western Europe as traditional politically-oriented history has declined in popularity with many historians, especially medievalists who have seen many of its assumptions as inappropriate to the medieval world. Charters have of course been used to write early medieval history in Italy for decades, but even there the more traditional legalistic approaches are going out of fashion.⁽¹⁰⁾ In a European perspective the Sant' Ambrogio documents are of a relatively standard type, primarily because our area was within the bounds of the Carolingian empire, and charters were drawn up on similar basic lines throughout the empire (although with many local

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differences). In northern Italy charters survive mostly as single sheet parchments, whose date is contemporaneous with the text recorded, not in later compilations of texts, copied and recopied into volumes over the centuries. This too is characteristic of the urban world as urban-based lay notaries wrote most of the texts. It is assumed, usually correctly, but sometimes complacently, that Italian charters have special claims to reliability in the face of such an ostensibly trustworthy recording process and that post factum alterations, fabrications and blatant forgery only rarely occurred. It is argued in this chapter that we need to be careful in assuming this too easily. Palaeographers tell us that it is necessary to examine the Sant' Ambrogio texts from this viewpoint, because some of them have been proved forgeries, and a substantial number of others were once thought to have been so. As part of any meaningful methodology from which to approach the study of early medieval texts it is always wisest to establish the authenticity of any given corpus, particularly in an age which we know was much given to copying, altering and fabricating documents, charters especially. Such a discussion has the virtue of stressing that the bulk of the Sant' Ambrogio corpus is in fact made up of reliable charters. Therefore one preoccupation of this chapter is with the technical aspects of charter criticism, and with discussion of the more dubious texts in the collection.

The reasons for this go beyond the establishment of correct, securely dated texts. The Sant' Ambrogio charters have been the subject of research which has arguably tended too much towards the antiquarian. They were much analysed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in this way, necessarily within the terms of reference of the times, terms which saw a primary value in ' genuine ' texts over ' false ' ones. Whilst this distinction is obviously very important (the history of

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the transmission of the texts, and especially the precise dating of texts or parts of texts must be an ongoing process of historical analysis), the importance of ' false ' texts for the writing of history is now much better understood by early medieval historians.⁽¹¹⁾ In so far as such understanding relates to charters it has to be remembered that alterations to texts were usually made by monasteries in order to claim greater rights to property than the existing text endowed. If there was no existing text one could be forged outright. Hence the particular preoccupation of part of this chapter with the ninth and tenth century stages in the copying of some important charters. An analysis of these can help us understand how the monastery exploited documents as a means of extending its control over land, or at least how attempts to do this were made. Such an analysis is historical rather than antiquarian and that is why this chapter addresses it. These problems (and the historical rewards of studying them) are often overlooked by historians working on early medieval Italy because of assumptions that texts are genuine, due to their ' original ' status and the supposed reliability of the Italian notarial tradition. These assumptions are in essence valid, for the survival of most north Italian charters of the early medieval period as single sheet parchments, each containing a single text or at most two texts, rather than as later copies bound into cartulary volumes is a sounder basis for assuming a reliable transmission history than a set of documents copied much later into collections. At least it is so when the production of the single sheets was in the hands of a professional class of notaries and not, for the most part, the preserve of monastic scribes as it was in many other parts of Europe in this period. However it is possible to question the competence of these notaries which can sometimes be seen to be faulty as we shall see. Further, it should not be forgotten that these early

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Italian texts have come down to us as a result of monastic preservation rather than notarial preservation, and so the hazards of later tampering are sometimes present. The Sant' Ambrogio collection therefore has the potential to reflect in the technical aspects of its transmission the history of how the monks regarded their property, how they used documentary tools to exploit it and indeed how their activities condition still the way the history of their monastery can be written.

In the discussion that follows it is not the credibility of the content of the charters which is at issue: the rest of the thesis is in a sense concerned with that. The possibility is always present that a document which has all the marks of genuineness may record events which never took place. But in some cases outright fabrication can be demonstrated, even if forgery - meaning the deliberate desire to deceive - is much harder to prove. It is these dubious texts that are the primary concern here. It is important to examine the texts in these ways largely because previous studies of the charters as documents have, in the case of Sant' Ambrogio, been littered with problematically circular arguments. There is no space to examine all the surviving texts in detail in this chapter but I have adopted throughout the policy of discussing in a footnote any technical problems which a text raises. Where no such discussion appears it is to be assumed that the text as recorded has passed the tests set for it and has been deemed a valid record for the purposes of this thesis. All the charters used in this thesis have been tabulated in Appendix 1 and full references to the various editions of each text are given there.

The chapter begins with an examination of the wider context of their production and survival, and it ends with a brief methodological discussion of how to approach them as sources for the writing of history as it

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is sensible at the outset to be clear not merely how authentic the corpus is as a relic of the early Middle Ages but above all what questions such material can and cannot answer, and to make as explicit as possible the methodology behind the historical analysis which follows.

THE EARLY MEDIEVAL CHARTER COLLECTIONS OF NORTH-WESTERN LOMBARDY.

The wider context of charter survivals in north-west Lombardy is crucial in demonstrating just where the bounds of our knowledge are, and how much of Lombardy literally remains in the ' Dark Ages ' (at least until archaeology fills the gaps). The only proper exception to a generally sorry picture is the Monza archive, which is hardly surprising given Monza's ancient status as a favoured residence of Lombard rulers, notably queen Theodolinda. The churches established here as a result of royal patronage preserved much interesting eighth-century material, and later texts compliment the Milanese materials, for Cologno Monzese in particular.⁽¹²⁾ Otherwise substantial survivals have been rare. Most of the other important monasteries with which Sant'Ambrogio had dealings have not preserved pre-eleventh century material: these include Sant' Abbondio di Como and Santa Maria di Velate, which have both preserved major later medieval collections. ⁽¹³⁾ In the south only dubious material from various Lodigiano churches remains, notably Santa Cristina di Corteolona.⁽¹⁴⁾ Of other rural monasteries thought to have been significant in this period, such as San Vittore di Meda, Santa Maria di Cairate, San Calcero di Civate and San Pietro di Civate, almost nothing early remains.⁽¹⁵⁾ It is important to note that the surviving material comes overwhelmingly from urban or suburban foundations, a pattern which has historical relevance, since it reflects the cultural

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predominance of the city over the countryside, at least in terms of levels of literacy and use of legal documentation.

The pattern for non-monastic churches is very similar. For whatever reason these churches have preserved less early material than the monasteries. This includes the archiepiscopal and episcopal archives of the area, regrettable but not unusual for Italy where large episcopal survivals, such as Lucca, are the exception. The suffragans of Milan (including the bishops of Como, Lodi, Bergamo and for a time Pavia) must have collected and indeed produced records independently of the urban monasteries, but very little survives and much of what does is very unlikely to be genuine.⁽¹⁶⁾ The archiepiscopal material of pre-thirteenth century date is mostly lost too, although some of it survives within the Sant' Ambrogio corpus, notably a group of precepta in favour of the monastery, whose authenticity has long been questioned (sometimes wrongly) and which are discussed further below.⁽¹⁷⁾

Most of the other churches with early material are also Milanese. Some of their documents are preserved now within the Sant' Ambrogio corpus, notably a handful of charters from the canons of the Sant' Ambrogio basilica, San Simpliciano, San Vincenzo in Prato and Santa Maria Wigilinda .⁽¹⁸⁾ The remaining material is tenth century, from Sant'Apollinare, Santa Margherita and San Giorgio al Palazzo and is important for developments within the city at that period.⁽¹⁹⁾ The only substantial non-Milanese corpus is the highly interesting, though little studied, group of charters of late tenth century date from the church of Sant' Eufemia, on Isola Comacina. They are almost entirely lay oriented, providing evidence of a flourishing ' land market ' on the island with virtually no ecclesiastical involvement there at all before Sant' Eufemia itself acquired rights there.⁽²⁰⁾

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All of this material, however meagre in some instances, is valuable for the incontrovertible evidence which it provides of widespread document use and preservation, primarily but not exclusively in an urban context, in the ninth and tenth centuries. From Table 2 it can be seen that numbers of texts per decade increase markedly post-950, probably best explained as an accident of survival since there is no great increase in the numbers of texts per decade in the Sant' Ambrogio corpus until the very end of that century. The absence of collections preserved by laymen is entirely predictable, since there are very few anywhere in Europe at this date.⁽²¹⁾ Yet, as we shall see in later chapters, their histories can be written too (at least in part) because the Sant' Ambrogio charters directly involved them as donors, buyers and sellers of property both amongst themselves and with churches.

CHARTER PRODUCTION IN NORTH-WESTERN LOMBARDY.

The notarial tradition and the Church.

Compared to the large quantity of work done on the production of religious texts in the early medieval period, there has been relatively little Italian writing specifically concerning the production of documentary texts, other than royal diplomata or papal bulls, which has approached the texts in their historical context. Books on the ' Notarial tradition ' trace developments over the centuries but do not relate notarial to monastic recording practices, and certainly not by thorough analysis of specific instances.⁽²²⁾ Charter production in the Milanese region has been very little studied until recently, although Sant' Ambrogio, given the interest of its collection, has been relatively less neglected. It is of course a tricky area because of the limited amount of explicit information which the charters themselves provide

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about such things. The typical charter gives the name of the scribe, his status (notarius, clericus, scriptor, iudex), the place the document was drawn up in and the date the document was written. These give clues into the physical aspects of production. Who asked the charter to be drawn up is usually implicit in the text. Sometimes it is explicit, as in the case of a placitum drawn up in 844, when we are told the count presiding over the case actually dictated the text to the scribe.⁽²³⁾ Similarly, royal diplomata usually record the commands or wishes of the kings in whose names they were written, sometimes at the request of a relative or other aristocrat. But ^{it} is only when analysed as an archive in its entirety that the real history of an individual text can be perceived.

The origin of most North Italian charters is often comparatively straightforward to pinpoint because of the notarial tradition, which was already strong in the Lombard period.⁽²⁴⁾ Unlike northern Europe, where public notaries were much rarer, this means that most of the charters in the Sant' Ambrogio corpus were not written down by monks at the monastery, but rather by trained lay scribes. Even copies and reconstructions of damaged or lost texts were made in this way. So the only texts which are probably the actual products of the monks are inventories (which being undated and unsigned cannot be notarial) and copies not made by lay notaries, usually altered in order to favour the monastery over some other claimant to property. Even though most of the abbots and monks could write, as evidenced by their signatures as witnesses, they probably did not have the technical skills necessary to draw up a charter, for that charter to be a legally valid record.

Having said that trained lay notaries drew up most of the documents does not mean that all notaries were trained to the same degree of skill. In such a sizable collection we should expect considerable variety in

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scribal practice: not simply different hands, but variations in language and diplomatic. These shed important light on the diffusion of the specialised type of literacy necessary to write a charter correctly in this part of Lombardy, at this period. Setting aside the royal and episcopal texts for the moment, we can divide the rest into two basic categories: untutored and tutored charters. The first category contains charters drawn up by comparatively untrained hands, often in an archaic script showing little ability to write in a standardised miniscule, in language containing many grammatical errors, and on occasion even dialect words.⁽²⁵⁾ Such documents were never written in Milan itself, but come from the village where the events they record took place, and often they were written in the local church, sometimes, but not always, by the village priest.⁽²⁶⁾ Most come from places more than 20kms from Milan, usually to the north of the city. The inexperienced style of the charters may indeed reflect a genuine lack of experience in writing texts and it suggests a degree of cultural isolation from urban society. This was far from the case in the second category. These charters were drawn up in more finished language, more dependent on legal formulae, as evidenced at a later period in the Cartularium Longobardicum.⁽²⁷⁾ The hands are much more practised and fluent, as one would expect from trained scribes. These men termed themselves notarius, notarius domni regis, notarius domni imperatoris and in the tenth century iudex, as marks of their professional status.⁽²⁸⁾ Most of them were laymen, although some clerics wrote charters in Lombardy at this date.⁽²⁹⁾ Recent studies of the notarial tradition in Milan and Lombardy have shown how exalted the status of these men was, how much in demand their skills were by the end of the tenth century and how their social and economic significance in the society of Milan had increased since the early ninth century.⁽³⁰⁾

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These were the men that the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio used to write up its charters in most cases. It would have been strange if they had not, for a charter had to be as accurate as possible to guard against legal challenges to its validity in court. However, we have to be careful of assuming too impartial an attitude in the relationships between these men and the monastery. This arises because one notary often wrote many charters for the monastery, which may indicate that there were comparatively few notaries active in Milan at any given time or equally that the monastery preferred to use the same ones over and over.⁽³¹⁾ The latter seems the likeliest possibility because some notaries witnessed monastic documents as well as wrote them, some accompanied the abbots/praepositi when documents were drawn up in villages outside the city, but above all because some notaries were involved in property dealings with the abbots. The social and economic overtones of these relationships is something that will be discussed in subsequent chapters. As far as this chapter is concerned the significance of these notaries concerns their position with regard to the deliberate forgery of texts, which we shall turn to later.

Royal and episcopal documents are rather grander in style than the more basic charters, and were produced by so-called writing offices, that is by notaries who did this work above all else. There is no clear evidence that there was a royal writing office of this type at Milan in this period. Most of the diplomata issued to Sant' Ambrogio were written in Pavia, or from outside Italy altogether. The archiepiscopal precepta pose more of a problem. It is not possible to be certain whether the archbishops of Milan had their own writing office or whether they employed notaries as and when necessary like Sant' Ambrogio did. The precepta which survive, problematic though they are as texts, do seem to have

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been written by episcopal scribes, for, as can be seen from Table 1, they were written by clerics not laymen, sub-deacons of the church of Milan. The one unquestionably genuine document, the 806 preceptum, was written by the subdiaconus sancte mediolanensis ecclesia.⁽³²⁾ The others claim the same authorship, but as we shall see these are texts so much altered that it is now hard to know who was responsible for what now survives.

THE SANT'AMBROGIO CHARTERS.

The three hundred texts which make up the surviving corpus of Sant ' Ambrogio charters provide as much as four-fifths of the total material for north-western Lombardy. The earliest charter to survive dates from 721 and there are nearly thirty eighth-century texts in total.⁽³³⁾ The ninth and tenth centuries have roughly equal numbers surviving but there are notable concentrations in the second halves of both periods. The detailed breakdown of decade by decade numbers is summarised in Table 2. The majority of charters concern the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, but there is an important group of texts relating to the Sant' Ambrogio canons. Most of the texts, whether monastic or canonical, survive as originals, but there is an interesting and much-discussed body of texts preserved only in copies of later dates. These copies were made between the ninth century and the thirteenth century, some of them as part of the rivalries between the canons and monks for control of the Sant' Ambrogio basilica which occurred in the twelfth century. The analysis of the collection which follows has been arranged into three parts:1) The preservation, palaeography, dating, transcription and editing of the texts is discussed in outline;2) A more detailed analysis of the medieval phases of copying to which the collection was subject, with a particular focus on the ninth and tenth century copying;3) A broad analysis of their geographical coverage, their content and type as texts.

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Preservation; medieval and modern.

The great bulk of the charters discussed here are now preserved in the Museo Diplomatico of the Archivio di Stato di Milano, where they have been since the early nineteenth century.⁽³⁴⁾ A small number of texts, preserved by the Sant' Ambrogio canons, are still kept at the Sant' Ambrogio site itself, in the present monastery's Archivio Capitolare.⁽³⁵⁾ The state of preservation of these documents is remarkably good for objects over a thousand years old. Partly this reflects careful preservation in the medieval period. It is to be assumed that most of the charters were actually kept at the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in the ninth and tenth centuries. Some charters which deal with canonical property were kept in village churches, especially some texts relating to the village of Carpiano.⁽³⁶⁾ This may have happened with monastic texts too, but we do not know for certain. As well as careful preservation, this must reflect lack of use, for most of the charters, as we shall see in Chapter 2, record the end of a process of property acquisition and once in the archive would only need to be removed for use as evidence in court, if monastic rights were challenged in that way. Some texts are damaged by cuts, ink-spillage or fire, but only in few cases does this render a transcription of the text problematic.

Transcription and edition.

These charters have been the subject of high quality palaeographic discussion since the end of the eighteenth century. Many of them (and many spurious ones too) were transcribed at that time into the Codex Diplomaticus Mediolanensis ab anno 658-1408, by G. C. Della Croce.⁽³⁷⁾ This has never been published. The eighth and ninth century Sant' Ambrogio documents have been in print since the early nineteenth century, in the Codice Diplomatico Santambrosiano, edited by A Fumagalli (one of

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the abbots) during the dissolution of the monastery in the late eighteenth century, when it was not clear what would happen to the parchments.⁽³⁸⁾ It contains a fair proportion of spurious texts, but has the benefit of accurate transcriptions and useful commentaries. The standard edition used by most historians is the late nineteenth century Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae which covers the charters for the whole of Lombardy pre-1000.⁽³⁹⁾ It contains numerous flaws in the transcription and especially the dating of texts, which more recent palaeographic work has put right. It is the only edition of the tenth century material. The best edition of the pre-900 material is the is the most recent, Il Museo Diplomatico dell' Archivio di Stato di Milano, edited by the leading expert on the medieval holdings of the Archivio di Stato, A.R. Natale.⁽⁴⁰⁾ This contains remarkable photographic reproductions of the charters, as well as authoratitive transcriptions and datings but unfortunately it stops at 900 and does not contain the Archivio Capitolare texts. Otherwise it is matchless.⁽⁴¹⁾ Although a diversity of hands is present in the collection, the majority provide few reading difficulties as they are close variations of a standardised Caroline miniscule type. The minority of pre-Caroline and Gothic hands present more difficulties, but have not proved intractable for specialists. Therefore texts are firmly established, and the actual wording of most of the charters is rarely contested in the secondary literature, either by palaeographers or historians.

Dating.

Most of the charters do not have to be dated on palaeographical grounds alone. They contain dating clauses of various types which permit the establishment of an A.D. date which can then be used to see whether the hand in which the text was written corresponds to that date, within certain margins.⁽⁴²⁾ Documents classed as

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originals, that is those actually drawn up and written out on the day they claim to date from, are dated by means of regnal year and indiction before the use of A.D. dating, which was adopted for some texts in Lombardy after 983. Sometimes the regnal year and the indiction do not correspond, due to scribal error. Work by Santoro, Natale and Zagni has corrected many of such errors which found their way into CDL.⁽⁴³⁾ There are only a few documents entirely without dating clauses, mostly inventories and damaged charters. For these only approximate dates can be proposed on the basis of the hand, and they can never be dated with absolute precision. The other dating problems may arise when the style of script does not match the purported date of the charter (so a charter of ' 784 ' is preserved in a hand of the twelfth century). Clearly this inconsistency is not the only reason for suspecting the dating of a text: such a charter will also contain garbled passages or blatant errors of sense. The question is important because some of the most interesting texts in the collection are affected in this way. The easy legibility of many of these - the result of the persistence of standardised Caroline-type hands over the mid-ninth to twelfth century period in northern Italy - makes it easy for the non-specialist to mistake a ninth for a twelfth century hand. Crucially, Natale's edition has revealed that earlier editions often made mistakes of this type.⁽⁴⁴⁾

Originals and Copies.

These problems of dating apply mostly to copied rather than original charters. The distinction between copy and original is sometimes a fine one and the ultimate criterion for the use of a particular text as evidence is its credibility, which is of course a subjective judgement. However it is important to be as clear as possible about the transmission of a given text for if credibility is subjective, alteration and even

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forgery of a text can be demonstrated more objectively.

In the Italian tradition an original is a text which has a correct dating clause, which is preserved in a hand contemporary with that date, which is written throughout in that hand, a hand which can be assigned to a particular notary and which, usually, has also the different hands of witnesses appended to it. It is preserved on a single sheet of parchment. An example of this is AdM sec IX n.55, an exchange of property between abbot Peter of Sant' Ambrogio and Tagiberta, abbess of San Vittore di Meda.⁽⁴⁵⁾ It is dated June 856 (Hludowicus magno imperator divina ordinante providentia, anni imperii eius septimo, mense junio, indictione quarta), was written in a straightforward Caroline miniscule, by the notarius Flambert at the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, where it was witnessed by seven people, two of whom, Tagiberta and a certain Autelmo, could write as they signed their own names. The text is written in accurate Latin and contains no garbled passages. Much of the status of an original depends then on the nature of the witness list as well as on the hand or date of the text. By these criteria about three quarters of the Sant' Ambrogio archive is made up of originals. Such texts are predominantly charters of gift or sale which it would have been pointless to forge at later periods for there was no need to alter such a text unless monastic rights were under threat. The only additions in later hands which such charters sometimes have are dorsal annotations relating to the way in which they were kept in the archives.⁽⁴⁶⁾ As the bulk of our texts are such originals the basic character of the archive is determined by them. There is a relatively even dispersal of originals throughout the period 721-1000 and for long stretches all our evidence comes from such charters (792-835, 855-865, most of the tenth century). Certain places are evidenced almost exclusively with originals, in particular Cologno Monzese,

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Gessate, Inzago, Gnignano and Campione and they figure a great deal in the chapters which follow.

Compared to these original texts the number of copied documents is relatively small at about a quarter of the total archive. By contrast with the originals the copies are not evenly spread across the whole period but tend to be preserved in clusters around important events in monastic history or centered on particular places. These clusters may be the result, in part, of damage sustained at particular times which has resulted in texts kept together needing to be re-copied and it does not of itself presuppose deliberate alteration to texts. Much more significant is the fact that certain types of text - diplomata, precepta, placita and testamenta - appear most often. These were the documents worth forging or altering for they conferred major rights. Copies of texts which refer to the period before 1000 were made both in that period and in the centuries that followed and it is important to establish when texts were copied in order to appreciate how the archive was managed over time by the monks. The further removed a copy is in time from the initial production of a text allows for a much greater degree of error to have crept in in the course of transmission. Sometimes we know that a text was copied several times before the version we have now. This is most explicit in the case of authenticated copies, those texts where a copy has been witnessed by notaries other than the one who wrote the text and who have certified its accuracy as a copy. Often such clauses will record the fact that the current copy was made from a previously authenticated text. Where a text is not authenticated we have less idea who copied it for we are not usually told. It is normal to suspect monastic copying in these instances, partly because it is assumed that Italian notaries usually followed the rules and did not falsify texts (a dubious assumption in view of authenticated texts in this

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collection which can be shown to be false) but also because the texts involved are often those concerning disputed claims to property where deliberate alteration in favour of the monastery is plausible because of the potential value of the text to the community. When dating clauses are wrong and text garbled the possibility of alteration is greatest. Very often these texts can be shown to contain clear interpolations, such as obvious anachronisms (a text grants property to the monastery which we know from other reliable texts that it did not receive until a century later), words appearing in inappropriate spellings or passages making no sense. The interest comes when such texts can be shown to be deliberately altered to mislead, that is when they were forged.

It is of course these questions which are of most importance to the historian trying to decide the various degrees of validity which a given text has. It is not, strictly speaking, possible to claim scientific, objective plausibility for a text for in the last instance whether one believes its contents or not is ultimately a personal decision. This does not mean that some texts cannot be inherently less plausible than others, and it is the job of this section to demonstrate which, on the basis of the critical criteria introduced so far, are most likely to fall into that category in this collection. It should be stressed at the outset that these are relatively few, and that a careful appreciation of their problems renders them usable as evidence, as long as care is taken. In some cases the realisation that a text as it now survives has been altered in the past, whether deliberately or not, can reveal much about how the monks exploited documents as a source of power, in order to gain or consolidate rights to property. It is not therefore simply an antiquarian exercise, but a genuinely historical one.

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Medieval Phases of Copying in the Collection.

To help clarify the arguments of this section details of all the charters preserved as copies have been set out in Tables 3 and 4. As can be seen the material has been divided up by period of copying into two basic stages, pre-1000 and post-1000 which could further be divided into seven more precise stages: ninth century, ninth/tenth century, tenth century, eleventh century, twelfth century, twelfth/thirteenth century and later copies. Table 5 summarises the results for all periods. In discussion they are treated as pre-1000 and post-1000 phases. In what follows, although I have relied on the palaeographic expertise of Ambrosioni, Natale and Zagni, it should be said that their category of ' Contemporary copy ' has been omitted because it really means near contemporary as it cannot be shown with precision for example that a text of 879, copied in the ninth century was actually copied out in 879, but simply in the last part of that century.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Because of this such copies are treated here simply as ninth or tenth century in date. The analysis which follows is arranged into two parts. The first discusses the copying in the chronological phases just outlined to see if at particular times deliberate alterations to texts were practised, whether by notaries or monks. The emphasis is deliberately weighted towards the pre-1000 phases as these give insights into the importance of the management of the archive for an understanding of monastic property management in the period. The post-1000 phases have been much more fully discussed in the secondary literature, largely as a result of the well-documented property disputes between monks and canons in the twelfth century. Whilst it is important to establish the usefulness or otherwise of the charters copied at that time for writing the history of the earlier period, they reveal much less of direct interest for our

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period and have therefore been given less detailed attention than is the norm when discussing the Sant' Ambrogio archive. However it should be noted that the copied texts taken as a whole are firmly focussed on three periods: the late eighth century, 835 and between 870 and 920 with a concentration on the latter.

Pre-1000 copying at Sant' Ambrogio.

Owing to the redating of many of the copied texts from periods post-1000 to these two centuries it is possible to discuss these texts as a group. Not all of them concern the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio: of the total twenty six texts, eighteen concern the monastery, the rest other Milanese churches. The latter are not of immediate interest for an analysis of whether or not deliberate alteration of texts was happening at the monastery and are not considered further in this chapter.⁽⁴⁸⁾ So there remain eighteen texts associated with the monastery preserved in pre-1000 copies.⁽⁴⁹⁾ Of these four are preserved in more than one copy, and the rest survive only as single versions. When several versions of the same text survive it is relatively straightforward to decide which preceded and which followed. When an original is preserved it is relatively easy to detect a dubious copy of it. The five texts which fall into this position are NAT 60/60a (AdM sec IX 24a/24b), a grant by Lothar I to the monastery dated May 835; NAT 62/CDL 127 (AdM sec IX 25 and Pand sec IX 2), a bequest by Hunger of Milan dated 836 to both the monastery and the canons; NAT 146/146a (AdM sec IX 104) a placitum dating to November 882; NAT 158/158a (AdM sec IX 117), a diploma of Arnulf dated 11 March 894 in favour of the monastery; and CDL 416/417 (Adm sec X 150/157), a placitum in favour of the monastery dated July 905. Of these texts two survive in original versions to which the other versions as copies can be compared. The first, Pand sec IX 2 was preserved by the

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canons and the monastic charter (AdM sec IX 25) is clearly a copy of this as it has no signatures and was authenticated by five notaries, probably soon after the canonical charter was drawn up. Textually the two versions are the same, bar very minor differences, and so provide a clear demonstration of the reliability which authenticated charters made in the ninth century can have as instances of accurate notarial copying.⁽⁵⁰⁾ The second text AdM sec X 150 is authentic by all the normal criteria: the dating clause is right, the hand fits an early tenth century date and, most importantly, it forms part of a plausible sequence of events evidenced by other authentic texts. But its copy AdM sec X 157 was not authenticated and it was in no sense an accurate copy: the dating clause is wrong, the hand appears to be late tenth or early eleventh century, certain phrases recall those of a diploma of Otto III concerning Limonta, dated 998. As a result the charter has been damned by all commentators as a deliberately altered copy of the genuine placitum.⁽⁵¹⁾ The culprit was most probably a monk for although we cannot show who produced this charter with certainty, the fact that the monastery had the genuine 905 text coupled with the non-authenticated status of the copy suggests monastic tampering, particularly since the monastery had may have already produced altered texts concerning its Limonta properties as we shall see.

These are the only two texts for which ninth/tenth century copies survive where the copied version can be properly compared with another original one. The original of the 882 placitum is so damaged (by ink spillage) that no comparison of any use can be made now. This has led some to question the authenticity of this text, claiming the copy to be a monastic forgery.⁽⁵²⁾ This seems inherently unlikely as both original and copy are written on the same parchment sheet meaning that an inaccurate copy would, even in the face of

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the damaged original, be obviously detectable. The notary was Aupald, notarius who may also have written a charter of 885 in the collection, which fact and the general style of the hand led Natale to date the copy to the late ninth/early tenth century.⁽⁵³⁾ As it stands the credibility of this text can only be understood as part of the Limonta sequence of charters, and it is discussed further from this point of view in Chapter 5.⁽⁵⁴⁾ With the remaining documents there is no possibility of comparing them to originals, for no originals are preserved. We are therefore on less certain ground with the two diplomata already noted as surviving in multiple copies of this date. The diploma of Lothar is problematic. It survives in two tenth/eleventh century copies only (AdM sec IX 24/24a) in different hands, although the texts are the same. It contains post-ninth century spellings but otherwise appears very authentic. The problem arises because it is one of several diplomata sent by Lothar to the monastery one of which concerns the Limonta estate. The latter is entirely genuine and dates to January 835.⁽⁵⁵⁾ It grants the Limonta estate to the monastery. The problems arise because the May 835 text contains clauses granting parts of the Limonta estate additional to those already granted in January. These may have been interpolated or they may indeed be copied from an original diploma now lost. From the texts themselves there is no way of telling with certainty which applies. Much the same applies to Arnulf's diploma, preserved in two tenth century copies (AdM sec IX 117) which confirms previous diplomata of Charlemagne, Lothar I and Louis II in favour of the monastery as well as granting to it the estate of Palazzolo, rights over the city wall of Milan, and rights to use a cella in Pavia.⁽⁵⁶⁾ One of the two copies preserves the Chrismon and is usually preferred on those grounds, although other differences between the two are minimal. As we shall see later this is a text which has

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come in for much criticism by virtue of anachronisms. This does not deny that it may have been based on an original diploma of Arnulf.

Summing up so far, we have five texts surviving in multiple copies of the ninth/tenth centuries in the Sant' Ambrogio collection. They relate to estates at Limonta, Palazzolo and Gnignano/Carpiano. There are clear hints in the Limonta texts, one dating to the late ninth/early tenth century the other two copied around the turn of the tenth century, that in the first case deliberate alterations may have been made to the text and, in the latter two examples, were being made. We have two diplomata, one placitum and one testamentary bequest here and it is worth noting that the majority of the remaining pre-1000 copies fall into these categories. This is unsurprising as they were the types of text easiest to forge and from which the most benefits could be gained.

The remaining pre-1000 copies are more problematic for they survive in single versions only. We have therefore to make the best of the texts we have. However, there are a sufficiently large number of connections between them, and with the texts already discussed, for us to be able to show that a certain amount of deliberate alteration of key charters was going on at the monastery in this period and that this state of affairs has historical importance, not merely antiquarian interest.

The first point to note is that only one of the remaining eleven texts is preserved in an authenticated copy. This is the so-called Second Will of Archbishop Anspert, a testament made by him on 11 November 879 in favour of his relatives, mostly nephews and nieces, and presumably therefore recording the alienation of his private properties.⁽⁵⁷⁾ The charter was written by Gervasius, notarius and was in fact copied out by him and authenticated at a time around 879 (AdM sec IX 97). The

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authenticated version was probably produced soon after the original for Gervasius wrote various documents for Sant' Ambrogio in this same period and his hand is therefore recognisable.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The authenticated text was witnessed, with signatures. The text as it stands does not favour the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in any respect and therefore it is inherently unlikely that Gervasius' copy was an altered one. All the remaining texts are not authenticated and so we have straightaway no means of putting names to the scribes. One way of getting further therefore is to ask if there are any palaeographical similarities between any of these copies and other hands preserved in the wider collection to provide parallel cases to that of Gervasius. There is in fact only one clear case of this, a vestitura of 5 April 874, which records that the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio, Peter, went to Gnignano to take formal possession of an array of properties which he had received from a family based at the village of Inzago. As it stands the charter claims to have been written by none other than Gervasius, notarius. But by some neat detective work Natale noticed that the hand is not in fact that of Gervasius but belongs to another notary much represented in the Sant' Ambrogio collection, Ambrosius, notarius scriptor. Ambrosius wrote a clutch of charters for the monastery in the 870's.⁽⁵⁹⁾ This charter is important to our arguments here because it provides a clear case of a notary known to have written charters for the monastery, copying out an important text without going through the process of having it authenticated. Thus this charter could easily have been altered if so desired. In fact circumstantial evidence from other charters relating to Gnignano property suggests that its contents are basically authentic. Other questions concerning the relationship between notary and monastery are raised by this text. Was Ambrosius a monk for example? If not, and as we have seen traditional Italian views on the notarius cling

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very much to the notariate as a lay profession, does it still not mean that Ambrosius and other notaries like him were in a position to falsify texts at the request of the monastery ?

None of the remaining texts have identifiable notaries, but two of the parchments were written in the same late- ninth/early-tenth century hand. Natale's discovery that the First Will of Archbishop Anspert and a group of three texts concerning Limonta preserved on the same parchment were written in the same hand is very important for our understanding of what the monks were doing with their texts in the late ninth/early tenth centuries. In this analysis we have to remember that there is a Second Will of this archbishop which appears perfectly genuine as a record, and which was copied either in 879 or in the years immediately after. The First Will, AdM sec IX 96, is a key text and its importance as a record has long been appreciated by scholar's because it purports to endow the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio with a great deal of important properties. Until the appearance of Natale's edition it was judged a twelfth century copy.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Even though its dating clauses are correct some rather obvious interpolations have caused most scholars to dismiss it as a forgery. Natale noticed that the hand in which it was written was the same as that on a parchment containing three other controversial Sant' Ambrogio records, an inquisitium and two inventories concerning the Limonta estate (AdM sec IX 27). Natale dates this hand categorically to the late ninth or early tenth centuries. The testamentum is clearly a copy because it was first drawn up, according to the text, by the notary Gervasius but it is not in fact in his hand. He did not write the First Will or the three Limonta texts. We therefore have the problem of deciding exactly who copied them and what the reasons were for the copying, which cannot be ascertained on palaeographic ground alone. We have to look

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at the contents of the texts.

The First Will contains some blatant anachronisms, which are clear interpolations: at the scola sancti Ambrosii which Anspert set up, masses were to be said for the soul of King Arnulf (in 879 he was not yet king let alone dead !) and the same Arnulf was supposed to have donated the estate of Palazzolo to Anspert as king.⁽⁶¹⁾ These Arnulf passages must be later interpolations if the text actually dates from 879. At this point it will be recalled that one of the other monastic texts preserved in a tenth century copy is a diploma of Arnulf which, amongst other things, grants the estate of Palazzolo to the monastery. Here we have a possible link between the First Will and the Arnulf diploma, and it is possible that whoever interpolated the First Will also interpolated the diploma. This information takes on further interest when we set alongside it the fact that Arnulf's diploma confirms both Charlemagne's and Louis II's diplomata both of which are also preserved in copies of this period. These two diplomata have immense significance in the history of the monastery. Charlemagne's text, dated April 790, confirms the foundation of the community itself and stresses the importance of the proper observance of the Benedictine Rule. It appears entirely genuine when compared with known originals and bears no resemblance to known forgeries, one of which is preserved in the Sant' Ambrogio collection.⁽⁶²⁾ Louis II's diploma is in the same position. Arnulf's diploma in confirming them does not draw explicitly on their formulae, which is clearly a point in its favour.

The three Limonta texts copied in the same hand as the First Will present different problems.⁽⁶³⁾ Unlike any of the texts discussed hitherto they are all incomplete. Indeed they look as though they were copied out as a series of extracts for each one breaks off in

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mid- sentence. They present three stages in the acquisition of the Limonta estate: a pre-Sant' Ambrogio inquisitium to settle a dispute between the king and a neighbouring church; an inventory of the estate whilst it was still in royal hands and an inventory of the estate once it had passed to Sant' Ambrogio as a result of Lothar's gift of January 835. The texts are all concerned with the way in which the estate was cultivated and in particular who should cultivate the olive groves there from harvesting to final transportation of the oil to Pavia or Milan. It is of key importance that these were exactly the points at issue in a series of court-cases held in the period 880-910 between Sant' Ambrogio, the monastery of Reichenau and various servi from the estate itself.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This period of course is that when the three texts were copied and it is very unlikely that the disputes and the copying of these texts were unconnected. These points are examined more fully in Chapter 5 but here it should be noted that the fact of these disputes should make us cautious about accepting the veracity of some of the Limonta texts: disputes provided a common pretext for the alteration of charters in the early Middle Ages, as the famous case of the Canterbury Privileges illustrates.⁽⁶⁵⁾ We have already seen that both a diploma of Lothar's and an important placitum involving Limonta were copied around the turn of the tenth century, but there is no reason to suppose that this was the first time they were copied. Indeed since the Limonta dispute had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion by the monastery by 957 it seems likely that any alteration which may have taken place happened before the mid-century. This argument applies especially to Lothar's May 835 diploma because of a passage which grants to the community an olivetula in locis Aucis et Conni and lists six families who were to work the estate for the monastery. This parallels exactly the information provided by the Sant' Ambrogio inventory,

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whereas Lothar's original gift did not mention Aucis and Conni explicitly. This may be a small point but it does serve to connect the May 835 diploma with the inventory, rather than the January 835 grant. This does not mean that these documents were forged by the monastery, although it is interesting to note that its case in the disputes hinged, for its documentary evidence, on one diploma of Lothar only: never were two mentioned. But it does suggest that at least two and maybe more charters were interpolated in parts in order to claim greater rights over Limonta than in fact the abbots were entitled to claim.

The fact that so many copies were made in this period is important for as we shall see in the last chapter this was a time when the abbots were building up their political powers at a rate faster than in the first part of the century. The uses which were made of written materials by the community were very much part of these developments. It is in this light that the numerous notaries who appear in these charters in relationships with the monastery must be seen. Their skills were valuable to the abbots in a world already very literate and very aware of the usefulness of having written records of property transactions.

Post-1000 copying at Sant' Ambrogio.

These phases of copying are rather more complex than the preceding ones because the processes of transmission stopped at a later stage, allowing a greater period for possible errors in texts to creep in. A great deal of careful work has already been done on most of these texts which makes our task rather easier. This section is therefore more in nature of a summary of already established opinions than a new departure.

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Although questions about how and why alterations were made in the post-1000 period are interesting they are not our main concern here as it would certainly be possible to write an entire thesis about them. What is important here is to determine which of the texts can be used as reliable documents for our period and which cannot, or can only be so used in part. Of texts which were copied in this period nineteen relate to the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, twelve to other Milanese churches. The latter are not discussed here as they have no direct bearing on the validity or otherwise of the monastic texts.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Of the nineteen texts at issue only three survive in eleventh century copies, none of which are authenticated. Of the rest three are non-authenticated copies and most of the rest survive now in authenticated copies made after c. 1150 by two notaries, Petrus 'Sinistrarius' and Ambrosius de Valnexio.

The most notable landmarks in the historiography/textual criticism of these charters can be summarised as follows. An article of Biscaro in 1904 constituted the start of modern discussion and was very damning of most of the copied texts in the collection.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Opinions since have been less dismissive. The principal stages have been articles by Boggetti on the foundation of the monastery (1942), Natale on forgery (1948, and especially his edition of 1970), Ambrosioni on monastic/canonical forgeries revealed in the disputes of the period 1150-1300 (1971, 1972 and 1980) and Zagni on the episcopal documents (1977, 1978).⁽⁶⁸⁾ Between them these authors have properly focussed on three related historical developments with which the copied texts are concerned:

- 1) the foundation of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, which we know about mostly from texts copied post-1000;
- 2) the relationships between the archbishops of Milan and the new community as recorded in a series of episcopal precepta of the ninth century only one of which survives

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in the original version;

3) the disputes over particular rights and properties which took place at various times post-1100 between the monks and canons of Sant' Ambrogio in the course of which alterations/forgeries were made by both sides in order to sustain their claims.

In order to discuss these texts as coherently as possible the examination which follows has been arranged as follows: first come the three eleventh century texts which do not relate to stages 1-3, then stages 1-3 (foundation, archbishops, monastic/canonical disputes) outlined above and the treatment ends with the remaining texts. As the object of the exercise is to stress the usefulness or otherwise of these charters great pains have been taken to set them firmly in the context of the entire archive and the patterns of preservation which have already been discussed above and which have been derived from documents whose authenticity is not questionable.

The Eleventh century.

We saw above that two texts copied sometime in the late tenth/early eleventh centuries concerned Limonta. Certainly copied in the eleventh century is AdM sec IX 21, a copy of a diploma of Lothar dated 24 January 835 which is preserved in the original.⁽⁶⁹⁾ As the copy is much damaged it is hard to tell whether this was an accurate copy or not. Also preserved in an eleventh century copy is a diploma of Otto I in favour of the monastery granting property in Milan. The original of this does not survive, but the copy appears accurate and its validity as a record has never been doubted.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Palaeographically it has no connection with the eleventh century copy of Lothar's diploma. The remaining eleventh century text is more problematic. AdM sec IX 35 is an eleventh century version of what purports to be a preceptum of Archbishop Angilbert II recording the ordination of Abbot Rachinbert.⁽⁷¹⁾ The text is damaged so that it can no longer be dated with

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precision. It may be based on an original for the idea of the text itself is not implausible. Certainly it contains eleventh century spellings and some interpolations. From these few remarks it is clear that the eleventh century was not a period when many Sant' Ambrogio texts were being copied. The following two centuries certainly were.
The Twelfth and Thirteenth centuries.

The documents preserved in copies of this date are amongst the most important in the collection. They are also certainly the texts most clearly retrospectively altered. For the most part this can be explained as the result of disputes between monks and canons as has been thoroughly discussed by Natale and Ambrosioni.⁽⁷²⁾ The property claims of the monks were denied by the canons and vice versa with the result that both sides altered and fabricated texts to demonstrate that their claims extended back to the eighth century. Whilst the motivations of these alterations were later medieval ones we have to decide how valid the texts involved are for the writing of early medieval history. Fortunately we have genuine texts with which to draw comparisons right back into the eighth century.

Foundation Forgeries ?

As a starting point we can discuss those texts which surround the foundation of the monastery in the late eighth century. We have already seen that the diploma of 790 in which Charlemagne confirmed the foundation of a Benedictine community by Archbishop Peter is authentic, even though it is preserved in a tenth century version.⁽⁷³⁾ Of the other texts involved seven are preserved in copies of the late twelfth/early thirteenth century most of them in versions authenticated by the notary Petrus 'Sinistrarius'. We are very lucky that one charter in this sequence has been preserved in the original. It is dated 20 August 765, was written in Milan by Erminald, scriptor, and records the gift by Ursus, f.q.

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Theudulf of a land parcel in ' Torriglas ' to Ambrosius, custus of the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Spellings, diplomatic and hand are all correct for a late eighth century date. Of the copied texts four purport to record the same thing: gifts/reciprocal gifts to the canons prior to the foundation of the monastery. One of these, a gift dated February 781, relates closely to the original text as it records that Ursus, f.q. Teodulf of ' Toriglas ' gave property near the basilca of Sant' Ambrogio to the canons. The text survives in a copy made by Petrus ' Sinistrarius ' at the turn of the twelfth century.⁽⁷⁵⁾ As it stands, although clearly interpolated in parts, there is no reason why it is not a genuine record of late eighth century date. The possibility remains that it could be entirely fabricated using the 765 original as a base. The remaining texts bear no such close relationship with any surviving originals. They record the following sequence of events. 1) A gift of May 742 by Theopert, f.q. Mauro of ' Brisconno ' of his residence in ' Brisconno ' to Auremundus, deacon and custus of the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio (preserved in an unauthenticated twelfth century copy AdM sec VIII 10); 2) a testamentary bequest, dated April 776, by Radoald, f.q. Modoald of ' Abiate ' of his residence there to the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio (preserved in an unauthenticated copy of the turn of the twelfth century AdM sec VIII 20); 3) an exchange, dated May 776, between Flavianus, f.q. Agnoni and Fortis, reverentissimus diaconus of properties near Milan, in Lampugnano and of properties inside the city at Colonna Orfana (preserved in an authenticated copy of the twelfth century, AdM sec VIII 21, made by Guifred of Vineate and witnessed by Petrus ' Sinistrarius ').⁽⁷⁶⁾ The remaining two texts come at the end of the sequence and both concern the newly founded monastery. The first records a gift made in 784 by Thoepertus, humilis clericus, of his house in ' Brisconno ' to Abbot Benedict of the monastery of

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Sant' Ambrogio (preserved in an authenticated copy of the twelfth century as AdM sec VIII 10/25, the same parchment and hand as the 742 text); the second the first archiepiscopal preceptum, dated 23 October 789, records that Archbishop Peter had instituted the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, ordained Benedict as abbot, and had given to Fortis, diaconus and his own son, his estate at Legnanello (preserved in a copy of the thirteenth century authenticated by Jacobo de Turre but a copy of a previous copy made by Petrus ' Sinistarius ').⁽⁷⁷⁾ Thus far we have two series of events: first, the endowment of the Sant' Ambrogio canons by small pious gifts in 742, 765 and 776 and second the setting up of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio by the archbishop which involved a gift in 784 by one of those who had already given property to the canons in 742, forty two years earlier and a gift by the archbishop made to his son who was a senior canon at the basilica. The veracity of these events as an historical record is examined further in Chapter 3.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Here we are concerned with their preservation.

This preservation is problematic for various reasons. The first problem concerns their transmission via Petrus ' Sinistrarius ', a notary active at the end of the twelfth century.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Although most of the texts survive in authenticated copies this does not automatically make them reliable. Four texts are the work of Petrus who was not especially competent at copying out eighth century texts because he could not read them easily. We know this because an important text of this period - the will of Toto of Campione made in March 777 - which is preserved in the original contains an attempt at transcription made by Petrus ' Sinistrarius ' which is very inaccurate. This was not a question of deliberate alteration but simply a matter of his incompetence for the transcription is placed between the lines of the original. Petrus misreads more words than he gets right and he leaves many gaps where he

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could not read them at all.⁽⁸⁰⁾ Such a discovery has important consequences for those texts preserved only in copies made by Petrus, and explains why some of these are very garbled or simply miss passages out. However it also demonstrates that Petrus probably was using the eighth century originals to make his copies from.

The second problem the textual relationships between the various charters. The 742 gift to the basilica is transmuted into a 784 gift to the monastery; both purport to have been made by the same man at a distance of forty two years apart which is inherently unlikely even if possible. Gifts of 765 and 784 by the same man to the basilica are more plausible. Fortis as senior canon becomes archbishop's son. However, these oddities are balanced by the fact that there is consistency between the places at issue. All the property involved was sited in the vicinity of the basilica to the west, and all of it was in places where monks and canons had rights later on.

The third problem concerns the question of forgery. Can it be shown that the alterations to which the texts were clearly subject were deliberately carried out to deceive? As we have seen some interpolations could be read in this way but it is very difficult to show that entire texts were fabricated. The best way of approaching this problem is by making comparisons between these texts and texts known to have been forged in the twelfth century. There are only a few texts which all authors agree are forgeries: a diploma of Charlemagne, and a diploma of Charles the Fat look so unlike the genuine articles as to make their forgery obvious.⁽⁸¹⁾ They are given away by faulty dating clauses, rambling sentences and anachronisms. But the key point is that these texts give the monastery every property right possible over huge lists of estates. By contrast the late eighth century texts, however garbled and altered, do not attempt to give the monastery vast tracts of property or anachronistic

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sorts of rights over it.

Archiepiscopal Precepta.

In the course of this discussion we have come across the first archiepiscopal preceptum, that dated 789. After the foundation issue these form the largest category of texts copied in the later period (see Table 1). They have been the object of an important diplomatic study by Zagni in which she demonstrates that although all these precepta are interpolated (excepting the only original dating to 806) only one is likely to be a forgery on diplomatic grounds.⁽⁸²⁾ The forgery is a supposed preceptum of Archbishop Tado, dating to 866, granting rights to the Limonta estate.⁽⁸³⁾ It is dated with an A.D. date over a century before these were first used in Lombardy. Importantly it is preserved in an authenticated copy made by Ambrosius de Valnexio and others. This notary, active in the late twelfth/early thirteenth centuries copied a variety of other texts in the Sant' Ambrogio collection as we shall see in a moment. The remaining two precepta are one of Archbishop Angilbert II, dated March 835 and preserved in a thirteenth century authenticated copy (AdM sec IX 22) and one of Archbishop Anselm, dated 893 and preserved in an unauthenticated twelfth century copy.⁽⁸⁴⁾ There is no doubt that both texts are heavily interpolated and problematic. The Angilbert text forms part of the sequence of Limonta texts dating from 835, one of which - an original of May 835 sent by Lothar to Angilbert - acknowledged Angilbert's preceptum of March. This demonstrates that Angilbert's text certainly existed and that what we have, bearing close resemblance to the terms of Lothar's text, is likely to be based on the original text. However there are problems with it. It gives jurisdiction of the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio and the golden altar to the monks not the canons whereas none of Lothar's diplomata mention this. The list of estates confirmed by Angilbert does conform to

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those in Lothar's May 835 text, although the spellings are later. The list of those who witnessed this preceptum bears too close a resemblance to that appended to the other Angilbert preceptum, that dated 843 surviving in an eleventh century copy, to be simply coincidental.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Anselm's preceptum of 893 is much more doubtful. Some authors have dismissed it as a complete fabrication largely on two counts: its plethora of very anachronistic formulae including an A.D. date and the fact that it confirms to the monastery two estates, Pasiliano and Monte, which it did not receive until 942 in a diploma of Hugh and Lothar.⁽⁸⁶⁾ However the spellings of other estates confirmed are ninth or tenth century which hints that the text we now have may be based on an earlier one.

Of the remaining texts preserved in copies of this period some were authenticated by Ambrosius de Valnexio which relate to the monastery's estates at Limonta and Campione. This could mean that those parts of the archive where such texts were stored had suffered damage necessitating recopying of lost texts or it could indicate a more dubious purpose, deliberate alteration. The most likely text to which the latter might apply, since it forms part of the Limonta sequence which, as we have seen, does contain a few doubtful texts, is a placitum of 17 May 880 held in Como.⁽⁸⁷⁾ However, since its structure and orthography are consistent with a late ninth century date, and the document contains references to people evidenced in other reliable texts at the same period there is in fact no reason to suspect it. Ambrosius authenticated three other charters all concerning the monastery's Campione estate whose authenticity is harder to question for there is no obvious purpose behind any possible deliberate forgery of any of the texts. Two concern relations with monastic dependents which could have been of no interest whatever by the twelfth century. The other, a placitum dated December 875

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recording a dispute between Sant' Ambrogio and the bishop of Como over rights to jurisdiction over the Campione churches shows greater signs of alteration, but the lists of adstantes look authentic and another charter of the following month (preserved as an original) clearly shows that such a placitum involving these two sides was plausible.(88)

Comparing these texts with those copied before 1000 suggests that the reasons behind the making of such copies may have differed between the two periods. The distinction is not especially bald but it is there nonetheless. As we have seen documents concerning the Limonta estate form the bulk of those surviving in copies pre-1000. This theme does resurface with the post-1000 copies but it does not predominate. Most of the later copies were made in order to demonstrate the precedence of canons or monks with regard to properties which were disputed between them as a result of the foundation of a monastery on the ancient Sant' Ambrogio site. However, in essence the post-1000 texts fall into the same types of texts, diplomata, and placita, although there is a notably increased proportion of basic charters which look much more interpolated and there are a group of archiepiscopal precepta which do not figure earlier.

THE CONTENT AND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE SANT'AMBROGIO COLLECTION.

At this point a brief summary of the contents of the Sant' Ambrogio collection is useful as a preliminary to discussion of the uses to which such material can be put. The first charter dates from 721, and there are more charters preserved for the ninth century than the tenth. The cut off point of 1000 is an arbitrary choice, determined primarily by the arrangement of texts in the archives rather than any historical considerations. By and large the Sant' Ambrogio collection contains documents

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of standard north Italian types, which can be characterised under three headings: 1) ' private charters ' (in Italian atti privati); 2) diplomata/precepta and 3) placita.

Atti privati, which can best be termed charters in English (to avoid the undesirable connotations suggested by private in this period), form the bulk of the collection, and are the records of property agreements between two or more parties, sometimes involving churches but not having to.⁽⁸⁹⁾ They resulted from the transfer of ownership and other rights to land or moveable property between these parties, and provided legal title for the monastery which preserved them as a result. As legal (or legal-type) texts they were drawn up according to set formats, with standard formulae, which allow them to be characterised as sales, or donations or whatever, with a particular diplomatic character which allows interpolations to be spotted fairly easily when the texts are preserved in later copies as we have seen. To a degree, the structure of these texts as records determines the sort of historical discussion to which they can be used for. So, from the variety of sales (venditio), donations (donatio and testamentum), exchanges (permutatio, reciprocal gifts, incorporating elements of sale and gift) it is possible to trace the build-up or loss of property rights by a monastic community or lay family in some detail in a particular geographical context. We should beware of taking the texts always at face value, for the formulae of the record may conceal underlying complexities of relationships between one owner and another. These occasionally surface explicitly in types of text recording less familiar types of transaction or relationship, such as the promissio, often seeming to conceal threats of violence behind its bland formulae , the vestitura, recording strange symbolic ceremonies practised at the physical moment of property transfer, and

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the ordinatio, recording the acceptance of a person into the monastic or clerical community, often accompanied by gifts or bequests of property. Other charters do not record the transfer of rights, but seek to enshrine those rights in written form. Most commonly, these come in form of livelli, the standard Italian form of contract between lord and tenant, which were also titles to property, the rent owed in kind, in money or as labour. Although these dominate in some monastic archives Sant' Ambrogio has preserved surprisingly few. The remaining texts fit into the category of property management in an explicit sense, inventories and lists of property owned and dues owed. Like many Italian monasteries Sant' Ambrogio's are few and short compared to northern Frankish polyptychs, but useful nonetheless.(90)

The second group of texts are also charters of a special type: royal, episcopal or papal charters. These diplomata and precepta are sufficiently different in diplomatic and script to form a really distinct group within the collection. This, of course, is as we should expect, given the context of their production. Quantitatively they form a smallish part of the whole corpus (the normal pattern for Italian archives) but as the rights conferred were often of great value to the community, they were often copied and recopied at later dates, sometimes showing clear evidence of retrospective tampering or (much rarer) complete fabrication as we have seen. They require careful use, but their presence within the Sant' Ambrogio corpus does not invalidate the whole. Indeed it would be odd if they were not there and quite odd if they did not appear in a somewhat altered form.

The last category is made up of placita, records of court cases, which deal, almost exclusively with disputes over rights to land. Italian monastic archives often contain more of these records than elsewhere in

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early medieval Europe because of the strength of the Italian public judicial tradition. It seems that the records were produced at the request of the victorious party in a given case, and Sant' Ambrogio has preserved over twenty of pre-eleventh century date, quite a large number even by Italian standards, and almost certainly reflecting the proximity of Milan to the legal heart of the regnum Italiae, Pavia.

Working with early charters means a willingness to accept the impossibility of knowledge about areas where charters are lacking. The substantial gaps in preserved collections as well as the losses of collection altogether mean that much of north-western Lombardy cannot be studied at all in this period, at least from documentary material. These gaps are particularly acute the late-eighth/early-ninth centuries, so that prior to c. 830 it is only possible to study villages in the immediate vicinity of Milan, and the villages of Gnignano in the south and Campione in the north. There is no way of remedying this and it has to be accepted as it stands. Subsequently, the charters cover a far wider area, primarily to the east/south-east of the city (Cologno Monzese, Gessate, Inzago and Gnignano) and to the north, centred on Lakes Lugano and Como. These are the areas which can be studied in detail, but if all the places mentioned in the texts are plotted the potential coverage is wider still. Certainly the best-evidenced places are those which were of greatest importance to the monastery as centres of its landowning, for the charters were preserved primarily as titles to land. Although the survival of such material may be in part random its preservation was not. It is quite legitimate to argue that where there are near-total gaps in documentation (for example, to the south-west of the city) were either uninhabited or, more plausibly, the preserve of other owners, lay or ecclesiastical. Indeed,

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as we shall see in Chapter 3, it is possible to suggest where the major concentrations of land owned by other churches were simply from the Sant' Ambrogio documentation.

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE SANT'AMBROGIO CORPUS AND ITS USE AS HISTORICAL EVIDENCE.

The most basic questions have been posed in this chapter concerning the origins, the production and the preservation of the material. As a collection of early medieval charters the authenticity of this corpus cannot be denied: most of the texts have remained unaltered since the day they were set down and whether what they record is deemed credible or not the processes behind their transmission to us can at least be known. All this is essential to establish before any historical questions can be asked. We should not forget though that some historical questions can be asked in the course of such an essentially antiquarian pursuit and have been asked in this chapter. We have seen how some texts were altered or amended to make them more favourable to monastic interests and although none of this activity was on the scale of famous monastic forging exercises it does emphasise that these charters were often living texts and that the rights and powers which they record could change over time and could consciously be changed. What we are seeing is the development of an important historical phenomenon: the realisation by some men that written records were worth keeping and using as a means of acquiring and holding onto material power.

At the end of this survey something should be said about the qualities which the Sant' Ambrogio material has as evidence. The validity and usefulness of such a record as an historical source is very considerable. Its importance resides partly in its early date, for there are only a few substantial earlier monastic collections

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surviving from Italy.⁽⁹¹⁾ It is fundamentally a corpus, a collection with internal coherence and it stands as a consistent body of evidence in its own right of which a particular range of historical questions can be asked. This is not to be 'source-led' in our approaches, for the body of material at issue has been chosen as a means of answering a particular set of historical problems. But it is undoubtedly useful for analysis if a given mass of evidence relates to a restricted geographical area or region and is of a type which permits systematic study to be carried out over a reasonably extended timespan. Charters, when preserved in a sufficiently large collection, have an in-built coherence because they all relate, more or less directly, to one institution, in this case the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁹²⁾ Therefore it is possible to use the monastery as a unifying element in the story. This leads into the second point. As a corpus it has the virtue of relating explicitly to a new phenomenon. There was no monastery at Sant' Ambrogio until one was founded there in the late eighth century. Its charters are essentially records of series of human relationships, relationships which cover a far wider range than might initially be supposed from a glance at the formulae which make up the documents. In this they are like many other charter collections. But the relationships they record were essentially new for no-one could relate to the monastery before it was there and once it was there old relationships with the Sant' Ambrogio church could never be the same again. Many types of relationships between the monastery and other churches, powerful and not so powerful laymen are visible but again there is a unifying element here too which derives this time from the essential character of the texts themselves as records of title to land: the historical issues which can be tackled most successfully from such documents revolve around land and the powers which individuals and institutions had over it.

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Such relationships operated at various levels and we are in the useful position of being able to examine the physical remains of rather a formalised manifestation of such a relationship, a written act from a world which was still overwhelmingly not functioning in a written mode.

It is at this point that we have to remember that these texts are very formulaic records, composed of rather standardised phrases and being set down in rather standardised forms as we have seen. Such formulae can play tricks. So it was once suggested that the formula filius bonae memoriae when applied to those living in Milan singled out the individuals to whom it applied as of some sort of socially elevated status compared to the plain filius quondam. But close analysis has shown that these formulae were used in a far more haphazard fashion with no rules applying to their use.⁽⁹³⁾ Prolonged reading of charter material such as this causes one to become aware of what is likely to be formulaic and what is not. The fact of such usage is important because it allows us to become aware of what is especially noteworthy (because not formulaic or because very formulaic) within a defined body of material

The corpus then has internal coherence, a focus on the new as well as the old and an in-built way of assessing significance at a basic level. These elements allow questions to be put to it with the expectation of reasonably coherent answers which will permit the construction of an historical narrative, of a story which can be set within a defined temporal, geographical and spatial context. The context has to be built up from the examination of results gained from other historical work both on this collection of material, on similar collections elsewhere and indeed on utterly dissimilar material (saints' lives, archaeology etc.). Once this context has been established (and clearly the study of a given body of material will lead one to modify the context

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within which it needs to be set as the work progresses) the historical issues can be addressed.

Since this type of source is preoccupied at the most basic level with the basic human resource of its period, land, from it we can approach major historical questions. By tracing the changes which occurred in tenurial patterns over time we are forced to investigate, for example, such crucial elements of western medieval society as kinship and lordship, and what part the church had in the ordering of social relations within these basic horizontal and vertical modes of social organisation. Clearly there are going to be considerable limitations to any answers we can give as a result of the limitations of the material. To construct a coherent narrative we need series of texts relating to particular families and places which cover reasonably extended periods of time. We have some of these, but not in fact very many, and so it is always hard to assess the degree to which any relationship between monastery and family, family and individual, individual and monastery, might have been ' typical '. In part this is a limitation in the quantity of material which survives. We have seen that many parts of our area cannot be studied from documents at all in the period before 1000. This is a limitation about which nothing can be done. But there is also a yet more basic limitation in the character of the material itself for although we know about some families/individuals who interacted with the monastery we will never know about the many who did not, or who interacted with other ecclesiastical bodies or who had no use for the church at all. Nor indeed those who opposed this monastery. This is to say nothing of the impossibility of discussing any spiritual dimension to relationships between monastery and men from such sources.

Taking such restrictions into account in discussing such relationships the charters still furnish valuable information at various levels. We can see that in

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859 one of the monastery's estates was confiscated by a powerful layman and the monastery had to go to court to attempt to restore its rights and control over the property.⁽⁹⁴⁾ The charters will tell us, if we are lucky, something about the history of each party in the area, how the monastery came to acquire the estate, what its economic value to the community may have been. But if we want to know the motivation behind the way people acted we are on more difficult ground. Analysis of motivation from such texts is hard because they are essentially documentary in nature rather than interpretational (in the way a saint's life or a letter might be) and any suggestions on such points will always be suggestions only. However this is to say that such suggestions can legitimately be ventured provided care is taken and indeed have to be made if real sense is to be made of the texts.

Material of this type will therefore answer ' big ' historical issues. From it we can learn something about how ownership rights and tenurial patterns changed as a result of the appearance of a new force such as a monastery in a given area at a given time. We can see how families may have responded to this (Chapter 4), how dependents may have benefited or suffered from it (Chapter 5), how an economy centered on the monastery or of which the monastery was only a tiny part may have evolved (Chapter 6) and how the power of monastic leaders, the abbots, may have come to rival that of more established potentes (Chapter 7). Before doing this we need to say more about how the charters can help to study such things and more too about the wider context into which the monastery came. These are the issues examined in Chapters 2 and 3.

The Sources

TABLE ONE

Archiepiscopal Precepta at Milan

<u>Date</u>	<u>Archbishop</u>	<u>O/C</u>	<u>Notary</u>
789	Peter I	C13APS	subdeaconSME
806	Odelbert	0	subdeaconSME
835	Angilbert II	C13A	notarySME
c843	Angilbert II	C11	notarySME
'866'	Tado	C12AAV	primiceriusSME
893	Anselm	C12	notarySME

TABLE TWO

Sant'Ambrogio charters by decade

<u>Date</u>	<u>Total Number of charters</u>	<u>Charters involving monastery directly</u>
720-730	2	0
731-740	1	0
741-750	2	0
751-760	1	0
761-770	1	0
771-780	6	0
781-790	6	4
791-800	4	0
801-810	7	2
811-820	2	1
821-830	6	3
831-840	20	9
841-850	15	11
851-860	19	9
861-870	21	17
871-880	23	14
881-890	11	6
891-900	15	7
901-910	8	5
911-920	10	7
921-930	5	1
931-940	5	4
941-950	9	4
951-960	14	9
961-970	23	7
971-980	20	5
981-990	15	4
991-1000	43	5
no date	4	2
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>328</u>	<u>136</u>

The Sources

TABLE THREE

Documents preserved in pre-1000 copies

<u>NAT</u>	<u>CDL</u>	<u>Archive no.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Date of copy & authentication</u>
31	65	Adm secVIII 28	790	10
60	125	Adm sec IX 24a	835	10-11
60a	"	"	"	"
61	126	Adm sec IX 27	pre835	Late9/beg10
61a	"	"	"	"
61b	"	"	post835	"
62	"	"	25 836	9ccA
66	136	Adm sec IX 29	840	9ccA
90	183	"	50 853	9cc
116	236	"	76 865	10
122	249	"	82 870	late9/beg10
123	255	"	83 873	9-10
125	257	"	85 874	9cc
137	287	"	96 879	late9/beg10
138	290	"	97 879	9ccA
146a	314	"	104 882	9-10
158	360	"	117 894	10twice
	371	Pand secIX 11	896/98	9-10
163	396	Adm sec X 122	901	10
	402	"	147 903	10cc
	417	"	157 905	late10/beg11
	517	"	169 926	9ccA
	649	"	214 961	10ccA
	709	Pand sec X 11	968	10ccA
	845	"	22 988	10cc
	871	"	25 993	10cc
	937	"	32 997	10ccA

The Sources

TABLE FOUR

Documents copied post-1000

<u>NAT</u>	<u>CDL</u>	<u>Archive no.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Date of copying & authentication</u>
11	10	Adm secVIII	10 742	12
22		"	20 776	12-13 Same text as CDL 998 above
23	54	"	20 776	Table Three
24	55	"	21 776	12-13
26	57	"	23 781	12APS
28	59	"	10 784	12-13APS
30	64	"	27 789	12A
57a	121	Adm sec IX	21 835	13APS
58	122	"	22 835	11
70a	145	"	33 842	13A
73	153	"	35 c843	12A
77	156	"	38½ 844	11
87	178	"	47 851	12-13AAV
	186	Palestra	1 854	12-13
118	241	Adm sec IX	78 866	12AAV
126	258	"	86 874	12AAV
134	268	"	94 876	12-13AAV
135	271	"	95 877	12A
144	296	"	103 880	12A
153		"	111 887	12-13AAV
154	351	"	112 892	12-13
157	358	"	116 893	11
159		"	118 894	12
	396	Adm sec X	2 901	12
	457	"	156 915	11
	531	"	173 929	11
	599	"	197 952	11
	715	"	241 970	11
	816	"	272 983	12
	842	"	282 988	12
	896	"	305 995	late11
	930	Pand sec X	24 997	12A
	998	Pand sec VIII	3 n.d.	12

TABLE FIVE

Copied texts pre-1300

	<u>C9</u>	<u>C9-10</u>	<u>C10</u>	<u>C11</u>	<u>C12</u>	<u>C12-13</u>	Total
Totals	5	8	23	9	20	9	74

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE.

1. The most useful of these works for Lombardy in our period is the history of Andrea of Bergamo, edited by G. Waitz in MGH SS RR Lang s. vi-ix (Hannover, 1878) pp. 220-230.
2. The absence of Italian literary production is discussed by C.J. Wickham, 'Lawyers' Time: History and Memory in Tenth and Eleventh century Italy' in Studies in Medieval History... eds. H. Mayr-Harting and R.I. Moore (London, 1985) pp. 56-60.
3. The archbishops of Milan figure in the Annales Regni Francorum (MGH SS in folio vol. 1 pp. 36, 300 and 301), the Annales Laurissenses (MGH SS in folio vol. 1 p. 160) and the Annales Fuldensis (MGH SS in folio vol. 1 A.D. 863, 875, 894 and 896).
4. Itinerarium Salisburgense, in La Roma Sotteranea Cristiana, ed. G.B. de Rossi, vol. 1 (Rome, 1864) p. 140. It is discussed by A. Colombo, 'La topografia di Milano medievale', ASL s.6.(1960) p. 334.
Versum de Mediolano Civitate, ed. G.B. Pighi (Bologna, 1960). It is discussed by A. Colombo, ' Il Versum de mediolano civitate dell'anonimo liutprandeo e l' importanza della metropoli lombarda nell'alto medioevo ' in Miscellanea di studi Lombardi in onore di E. Verga (Milan, 1931) and J.K. Hyde, ' Medieval Descriptions of cities ', Bull. J. Rylands Lib. xlviii (1966) pp. 308-340.
De Situ Orbis Mediolanensis, in RR.II.SS 2nd ed. vol.1 parte 2 fasc. 357/358 ed. A Colombo (Bologna, 1952) who dates it to the late eighth century. Violante believes it is late ninth century La Societa Milanese, p. 299 nt. 67.
5. Arnulfi, Gesta Archiepiscoporum Mediolanense, MGH Scriptores VIII, ed. W. Wattenbach (Berlin, 1848); Landulphi Senioris, Historia Mediolanensis, MGH Scriptores VIII .
6. The archiepiscopal tradition includes the Catalogus archiepiscoporum Mediolanensium and the Notae Sancte Maria as well as the Annales Mediolanenses Minores. All are later medieval productions with short, unreliable references to our period. See MGH SS in folio, vol. 18, ed. G. Pertz (Berlin, 1863).
7. This Vita Sancti Ambrosii is edited in A. Paredi, Vita e Meriti di Sant' Ambrogio, Fontes Ambrosiane 37 (Milan, 1964) and P. Courcelle, Recherches sur Saint Ambroise (Paris, 1973). These authors suggest, plausibly, that it was written in the third decade of the ninth century, most probably under the aegis of Archbishop Anspert.
8. Discussed most fully by M. Ferrari, ' Centri di Trasmissione: Monza, Pavia, Milano, Bobbio ' Settimane di Spoleto 22 (1975) and her

The Sources: notes.

- ' Manoscritti e Cultura ' in Milano e I Milanesi (Spoleto, 1986) pp. 241-275.
9. There is also a considerable corpus of valuable inscriptions of early medieval date for Milan. These are edited in V. Forcella, Iscrizioni delle Chiese...di Milano 8 vols. (Milan, 1893). Discussions include N. Gray, ' The palaeography of Latin inscriptions in the eighth, ninth and tenth centuries in Italy ', PBSR, 16 (1948) and M. Antico Gallina and T. Soldati Forcella, ' Indagine sulla topografia, sulla onomasticae sulla società nelle epigrafi Milanese ', ASL, s.10 v. 5 (1979-80) pp. 9-346. Coins too are documents of a limited type and are clearly examined in P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, Medieval European Coinage, vol. 1 The early middle ages (Cambridge, 1986) pp. 55, 210 and 282 which shows that Milan was a leading mint for most of our period. Grierson discusses the comparative symbolic qualities of charters and coins in ' Symbolism in early medieval charters and coins ' Settimane di Spoleto xxiii (1976) pp. 601-630. For discussion of the current state of Milanese archaeology see below pp. 85-87, nt. 30 p. 117.
10. The classic Italian approach is summarised in C. Violante, Atti Privati e Storia Medievale. Problemi di Metodo (Rome, 1982). C.J.Wickham, The Mountains and the City. The Tuscan Appennines in the early middle ages (Oxford, 1988) is an example of a social and economic history based on charters.
11. Forgery and falsification has been exhaustively discussed in Fälschungen im Mittelalter, MGH Schriften 33, 5 vols. (Hannover, 1988). Of particular interest in these volumes with regard to charters is W. Davies, ' Forgery in the Cartulaire de Redon ', vol 4 pp. 265-274.
12. These Monzese charters are edited as CDLS 82, 218, 231 and CDL 128, 289, 307, 340, 350, 376, 864, 870, and 995.
13. R. Perelli Cippo is undertaking the study of Sant' Abbondio di Como and has published the thirteenth century texts for the first time in I Regesti del Monastero di S. Abbondio di Como (Como, 1984). The best study of the earlier history of this monastery is provided by the collaborative volume Sant' Abbondio: Lo spazio e il Tempo. Tradizione storica e recupero Architettonica (Como, 1984). Perelli Cippo provides an initial orientation to Velate too in his, ' Ricerche sul borgo di Velate e sul santuario de S. Maria di Monte in età medioevale ', NRS lvi (1972) pp. 642-674. The first charter dates from 922 and is edited along with the remaining tenth century texts in Regesto di S. Maria di Monte Velate sino all'anno 1200, ed. C. Manaresi (Rome, 1937).
14. Twenty four charters of the eighth-tenth centuries

The Sources: notes.

- published in CDL and in the Codice Diplomatico Laudense, ed. C. Vignati (Milan, 1879). For Corteolona see CDL 132, 282 and 381 and the important tenth-century inventory of Santa Cristina di Olona in Inventari Altomedievali, pp. 29-40.
15. These are discussed in the collaborative volume Monasteri Benedettini in Lombardia, Fontes Ambrosiane, 65 (Milan, 1980). Cairate has had recent attention in Documenti per la storia del territorio di Cairate. Dalle origini all'Alto medioevo (Milan, 1984).
 16. The model criticism of the Como precepta and diplomata is E. Besta, ' I Diplomi Regi ed Imperiali per la chiesa di Como ', ASL n.s. 4 (1937). The texts are CDL 94, 101, 104, 189, 205 and 281.
 17. The best summary of this literature is provided by A.M. Ambrosioni, ' Per una storia del monastero di Sant' Ambrogio ', AA 80 (1980). See below pp. 53-54.
 18. The canonical texts appear in Appendix One listed by archive number (Pand sec IX 1 etc.). There are 49 charters for our period altogether. For S. Simpliciano, CDL 316 and the unusual testament of Guizilionis of Somma Lombardo, unusual because carved in stone and set into the wall of the basilica rather than written on parchment (FORC 4, n. 135 pp. 103-104.). For San Vincenzo, NAT 85 and CDL 867. For Santa Maria, CDL 402 and 649.
 19. Sant'Appollinare, CDL 531. Santa Margherita, CDL 556, 564, 674, 704. San Giorgio, CDL 715, 842, 926 and 936.
 20. CDL 465, 478, 560, 707, 773, 787, 789, 790, 799, 810, 813, 814, 817, 819, 858, 862, 866, 873, 881, 883, 895, 899, 949, 966, 976.
 21. Laymen clearly kept small archives in their proprietary churches; Toto of Campione and the basilica of San Zeno being a case in point (see below pp. 205).
 22. The standard work is G. Costamagna and M. Amelotti, Alle Origini del Notariato Italiano (Rome, 1975). The Milanese example has been analysed in A. Liva, Notariato e Documento notarile a Milano (Rome, 1979) but the sections on the early middle ages are coloured by the use of late evidence. A recent examination of the place of notaries within the functioning of the judicial system has been made by C.M. Radding, The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna, 850-1150 (Yale, 1988) pp. 37-67.
 23. NAT 74.
 24. Costamagna and Amelotti, Notariato Italiano, pp. 151-314.
 25. Examples include NAT 45, 48, 93, 111, 113, 124 and 127 written in ' Wattingo ', Carpiano, Gorgonzola, ' Canobio ', Mantello, Cavenago and Lugano

The Sources: notes.

- respectively. There is an interesting study of Lombard dialects based in part on the early medieval charters by H. Bosshard, Saggio di un Glossario dell'antico Lombardo (Florence, 1938).
26. NAT 111, Grasebert, clericus de Scaria, notarius.
 27. Carthularium Longobardicum, MGH Leges in folio, vol.4, ed. A. Boretio (Berlin, 1868) pp. 595-660. Although this has been recently redated by Radding to the later medieval period (The Origins of Jurisprudence, pp.59-61.) the point still stands for such notarial formularies have survived elsewhere in Europe of early medieval date.
 28. Liva, Notariato, pp. 7-38.
 29. NAT 81, 92, 111, and 127.
 30. Liva, Notariato, pp. 30-38.
 31. Examples include Ambrosius NAT 62, 65, 80, 82, 83 and 85 and Heberardus CDL 609, 611, 621, 719 and 752.
 32. NAT 38.
 33. NAT 5. See Appendix One below pp. 340-341.
 34. Archive numbers are cited as AdM sec IX no. The archive is discussed by LS. Pandolfi, ' L'archivio di Sant' Ambrogio di Milano ' in Ambrosiana (Milan, 1942).
 35. Archive numbers are cited as Pand sec IX no.
 36. NAT 44 and 48 the latter written in the oratorio sancti Martini.
 37. Now in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan, Bibl. Ambr. segn 1, 1-30. I am grateful to Dottoressa E. Occhipinti for advice concerning this collection.
 38. Codice Diplomatico Sant' Ambrosiano, ed. A Fumagalli (Milan, 1805), cited as CDA + document number.
 39. Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae, ed. G. Porro-Lambertenghi (Turin, 1873) Historia Patriae Monumenta, vol. 13; cited as CDL + document number. It has been corrected by C. Santoro, ' Rettifiche alla datazione di alcune documenti di CDL ', ASL s.8.,v.2 (1950).
 40. Il Museo Diplomatico dell'Archivio di Stato di Milano, ed. A.R. Natale (Milan, c. 1970). This appeared as volume 1, parts 1 and 2. The intended volume 2, covering the tenth century, has never appeared. There are useful reviews of it by N. Ghiglione, ' Osservazioni critiche sulla nuova edizione dei diplomi degli arcivescovi Milanesi (789-893) ', ASL, s.9., v. X (1971-73) pp. 3-18 and I. Barbiero, ' L'edizione del Museo Diplomatico dell' Archivio di Stato di Milano ', Archivi e Cultura, 14 (1980) pp. 241-249.
 41. The Capitolare texts appear in CDL transcribed by Dozio and, for the most part, his transcriptions are reliable. The tenth century charters only appear in CDL and there the transcriptions are less reliable. I have checked all the charters listed in Appendix One in the manuscript versions.

The Sources: notes.

42. C. Santoro, ' Dell'indizione e dell'era volgare nei documenti privati medioevali della Lombardia ', in Miscellanea E. Verga (Milan, 1931) pp. 285-320.
43. See notes 39 and 40 above and additionally L.F. Zagni, ' Gli atti arcivescovili milanesi dei secc. viii-ix ', SSMD II (1977) pp. 5-45 and her ' Note sulla documentazione arcivescovile milanese nel secolo x ', SSMD III (1978) pp. 5-34.
44. The most significant examples are NAT 61, 61a and 61b and 137 dated by Porro in CDL as twelfth century copies redated by Natale to the late ninth/early tenth century.
45. NAT 95. This has on the back, in a hand contemporary with that of the main text, commutatio inter Petrum abbatem et Tagipertam abbatissam. There are no later additions of any type to this charter therefore. This is normal with original texts.
46. These dorsal annotations were published in Natale's edition and are discussed by A. Bellu, ' Un prezioso contributo archivstico: le annotazioni dorsali delle pergamene del Museo Diplomatico (sec VI-a900) per la prima volta edita ', ASL s.9.,v.x (1971-73).
47. The documents to which this applies are distinguished in Appendix One.
48. The charters ignored here are NAT 66, CDL 371, 402, 517, 649, 709, 845 and 937.
49. NAT 31, 60/60a, 61, 61a, 61b, 62, 90, 116, 122, 123, 125, 137, 138, 146a, 158, 163; CDL 417, 871.
50. The differences are orthographic; Gaisperga/Guusperga, Ingildrammo/Ingilramo.
51. C. Manaresi, ' Un placito falso per il monastero di Sant' Ambrogio di Milano ', in Scritti di palaeografia e diplomatica in onore di V. Federici (Rome, 1945).
52. Porro-Lambertenghi, who edited it as CDL 314, was of this opinion.
53. NAT 152.
54. Below pp. 219-236.
55. NAT 57.
56. Discussed below Chapter Seven pp. 310.
57. NAT 138. Archbishop Anspert, a powerful political figure, was a Lombard and came from the village of Biassono, fifteen kilometres north of Milan.
58. NAT 106, 109. 124, 132.
59. See above note 31.
60. NAT 137. Assigned a twelfth century date as CDL 290.
61. The damning phrase is curte Palatiolum quam per precpetum a memorande ac venerande recordationis piisimo Arnulfo Arnulfo rege adquisivimus (plural when the rest of the passage uses the singular).
62. Dated 809, in favour of Petrus ' Oldradus ' MGH Dipl. Karl., ed. E. Muhlbacher (Hannover, 1906) n. 277.
63. NAT 61, 61a and 61b.
64. See below Chapter Five pp. 226-235.

The Sources: notes.

65. R.W. Southern, ' The Canterbury forgeries ', EHR, lxxiii (1958) amongst many others.
66. These non-monastic charters are NAT 22, 23, 24, 26, 87, 154, 159; CDL 531, 715, 842, 998.
67. G. Biscaro, ' Note e documenti santambrosiane ', ASL, xxxi (1904).
68. G.P. Bognetti, ' Introduzione alla storia della basilica Ambrosiana ' in L'età Longobarda, vol. 1 pp. 347-380 [originally published 1942]; A.R. Natale, ' Falsificazioni e cultura storica in pergamene santambrosiane ', ASL, s.8., v.1.(1948-49); A.M. Ambrosioni, ' Controversie tra il monastero e la canonica di Sant'Ambrogio alla fine del secolo xii ', Rend. Ist. Lomb., 105 (1971), (ed) Le Pergamene della canonica di Sant' Ambrogio nel secolo XII (Milan, 1974) and her ' Sant' Ambrogio di Milano ' in Monasteri Benedettini in Lombardia, ed. G. Picasso (Milan, 1980); and the articles of Zagni cited in note 43 above.
69. NAT 57a.
70. CDL 599.
71. NAT 73.
72. See citations in note 68 above.
73. See above p. 44.
74. NAT 17. This charter and all the rest concerning the foundation of the monastery are examined further in Chapter 3 pp. 124-132 below.
75. NAT 26.
76. Respectively, NAT 11, 23, 24.
77. NAT 28 and 29.
78. See below pp. 130-132.
79. Natale, Falsificazioni, pp. 31-35.
80. NAT 25, the errors can seen clearly in this edition.
81. See note 62 above. The diploma of Charles the Fat is n. 177 in MGH Dipl. Karl III, ed. P. Kehr (Berlin, 1937).
82. See note 43 above.
83. NAT 118.
84. NAT 58 and 157.
85. The 835 text is witnessed by Adroald, Penio, Ermenfred, Deusdedit and Ermenaldus. The 843 text by Androald, Penio, Hermenfred, Deusdedit, Ermenald (and eight other clerics).
86. CDL 570.
87. CDL 296.
88. NAT 126.
89. The classic Italian methodological discussion is C. Violante, Atti Privati Problemi di Metodo (Rome, 1982).
90. These are usefully collected in Inventari Altomedievali di terre, ed. A. Castagnetti (Rome, 1979).
91. The biggest is Farfa which has c. 700 charters in our period. The episcopal archive of Lucca, with c. 1800

The Sources: notes.

- texts outstrips the rest by a considerable margin
(Violante, Atti Privati, p. 33).
92. This applies much less to religious books, liturgical material or literature which tend to be the products of less localised cultures in our period.
 93. This is discussed by Violante, La Società milanese, pp. 305-307.
 94. NAT 101, discussed below Chapter 4 pp. 170.

CHAPTER TWO.

LANDSCAPE, SETTLEMENT AND SOCIETY.

Modern Lombardy is one of the most densely populated and agriculturally sophisticated regions of Europe and Milan is its largest, wealthiest and most cosmopolitan city. Arguably, this was the case in the early medieval period too. Milan, as we have already seen, is by far the best-evidenced of the Lombardian cities in the period and it is usually argued, largely on the basis of this material, that its urban character was precociously developed before 1000. If in the greater part of this thesis the emphasis is firmly on the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio the wider world of which the community was a part can hardly be ignored, particularly if this wider world was in any respect more complicated in its social structures than most other parts of Europe in the period. The fact that the monastery was a suburban foundation which literally located it both in the urban and the rural worlds makes it important for us to find out in what respects, if any, the urban and the rural were different at this time in this area, especially so as one of the purposes of this research is to discover the precise nature of the impact made by the foundation of a new monastic community at Milan in the 780's, both on the society of the city and that of the villages which surrounded it.

In this chapter Milan and the area which the Sant' Ambrogio charters cover are discussed first from the point of view of landscape, topography and settlement, so that a sense of the space within which Sant' Ambrogio existed can be arrived at and secondly of the social structures which existed in this environment and of

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which the monastery was a part. The chapter concludes with a third section discussing the nature of the rights to and powers over property in this period, in so far as these can be grasped from the charters and law codes. Although a discussion of property rights need not be linked to a discussion of landscape and settlement, it is intimately bound up with questions about the nature of the relationships between landscape and society in the early medieval period and in the context of the thesis as a whole this has seemed the best place for it. The intention of this chapter is to provide nothing more ambitious than a plausible context into which the discussions of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio which is undertaken in succeeding chapters can be fitted. The resulting pictures may be very impressionistic, for the sources will not permit sharper definition, but they are drawn in the belief that without them any analysis of Sant' Ambrogio as an historical phenomenon means little.

To study the landscape in the early medieval period we have three essential sources: the landscape itself as it is now, archaeological investigations into past landscapes and documents containing references to earlier landscape features. None of these is especially useful for our area, and therefore the characterisation which follows is necessarily and unavoidably very partial. We cannot scientifically investigate the early medieval landscape of Lombardy with great precision simply by observing the present landscape because it has certainly been very changed by modern technology in farming, in house-building and in the provision of the usual infrastructures of modern European life in all areas except the most inaccessible mountains. The north west of Lombardy in particular is amongst the most 'developed' parts of Europe, and has been so for a very long time. It is not chance that Fernand Braudel, at the beginning of

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his history of the Mediterranean where he provides an extended evocation of its landscape, wrote little about the early medieval period in his interesting discussion of Lombardy.⁽¹⁾ He was concerned, as an historian, less with the natural many-sidedness of Lombardy's landscape, which makes it one of the more varied of Europe's regions geographically-speaking, than with the effects which man had had on this landscape, and vice versa. He observed that one part of the region, the low-lying plain - the pianura Milanese - had been greatly altered in the later Middle Ages by extensive land reclamation, drainage and canalisation, bringing more and more land under arable crops, and later under the new crops of rice and maize.⁽²⁾ It was this altered landscape which Braudel thought especially characteristic of Lombardy and which he saw was intimately associated with the great physical growth of Milan at this time. The development of the city as a great commercial and population centre in the later Middle Ages was seen, rightly, as having irreversable consequences for the physical state of the countryside surrounding it. Such a relationship between town and countryside is a commonplace of analysis but nonetheless remains plausible. The fact that the country within a radius of about 30km of Milan has been so altered by man in the centuries since 1000 means that any attempt to explore the early medieval landscape by direct observation, field-walking, and even archaeology is possible now only with difficulty. At a practical level it means that many of the analytical resources available to historians of other parts of Italy in this period are not, and probably never will be, of much use for the pianura Milanese. At the level of analysis it must raise the question, which cannot be answered as yet, that such alterations to the hinterland of Milan were happening before 1000 as well.

Archaeological analysis of the area is more promising. Recently various scholars have attempted to

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give wide-ranging characterisations of the early medieval rural landscape in northern Italy. The most coherent of these is the picture provided by Brogiolo, a minimalist characterisation which seeks to show that the early medieval period was, at least up to the eighth century, rightly seen as a Dark Age: comparatively thinly populated, with ill-developed industrial production and with towns that were not truly urban places and that indeed were very like the countryside, in most respects, 'ruralised'.⁽³⁾ It should be noted that most of his evidence is drawn from eastern Lombardy for the simple reason that excavations in the west of Lombardy have been few: whereas Milan itself has been the subject of quite substantial excavations the countryside has not. There has been some work at Cairate and recently an important excavation at Trezzo d'Adda which have turned up significant early medieval information.⁽⁴⁾ But there really is not enough from which to generalise about the landscape. We shall return to Brogiolo's ideas later on and to other work which has sought to describe settlement from an archaeological perspective.

In the absence of really substantial evidence from field-surveys or archaeological sites we are forced back to the documents for the discussion and this, problematically, is undoubtedly the least satisfactory type of source from which to obtain the information sought. There is only one explicit description of the Milanese landscape in the early medieval period, the De Situ Orbis Mediolanum, which begins with a clearly formulaic description of Milan and its physical situation which says much more about medieval perceptions of landscape than it does about the real landscape of the period.⁽⁵⁾ The charter material does not yield sufficient material for an extended treatment of the early medieval landscape of north-western Lombardy either for, in common with many early medieval charters from other parts of

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Europe, the Sant' Ambrogio texts contain only incidental reference to landscape features, which even if it is sometimes extensive, only scratches the surface of what we would like to know. Most of the information which can be extracted is formulaic in character and does not permit us to be certain on very many points. Even so with all the reservations it is still important to try as the information they provide is at least adequate for us to appreciate the basic environmental context of the proprietarial activities of Sant' Ambrogio.

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT.

Complexity within a relatively small area is the overriding characteristic of the physical geography of Lombardy and this is largely the result of what can seem a very bald contrast between the great height of the principal mountain range of the region, the Alps and the lowness and flatness of the Po plain.⁽⁶⁾ The mountains can be seen in Milan on a clear day even from a relatively low building such as the Torre dei Monaci of Sant' Ambrogio, and as this suggests the mountains are not in fact very far distant from the city, something which reinforces the impression of physical diversity in a relatively defined region. This distinction between highland and lowland although it explains the contrasts in climate, hydrology, soils and vegetation, which are found in this part of Lombardy, is, if left unqualified a caricature. The bulk of the north is either very mountainous or simply hilly. The Alpine peaks, reaching over 4000m high in places, cradle Lakes Maggiore, Como and Lugano, but being geologically 'young' they are relatively un-eroded, and have remained too inhospitable for human settlement or much in the way of agriculture.⁽⁷⁾ Unsurprisingly therefore they are rather poorly evidenced in documents pre-1000, but where they are it is clear

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that it was mineral extraction rather than habitation or even agriculture that was being practised there.⁽⁸⁾ So, although these great peaks dominate the north scenically, because of the absence of human habitation there in our period they do not represent a recoverable part of the history of Lombardy before 1000.

The key to the history of the north is rather the lakes and mountain valleys, which are much better evidenced than the true mountains precisely because they were useful, inhabited and deemed important by Sant' Ambrogio whereas the mountains were not. Most human settlement is concentrated on the lakesides and in the valleys now, and it was in the past, and therefore it was in those places, which could be exploited agriculturally with relative ease, that the monastery had lands. The lakes are large enough to create a milder climate than the rest of Lombardy due to the mitigating effects of the water and this was of crucial importance in the Middle Ages because it permitted the olive to flourish here as nowhere else in northern Italy. This fact alone makes this part of northern Italy more truly Mediterranean than the rest, and may even indicate that our period was one of comparative warmth, for olives no longer flourish as they once did.⁽⁹⁾ The olive is evidenced principally alongside the three largest lakes of Maggiore, Lugano and Como/Lario.⁽¹⁰⁾ The other lakes, smaller and further south, feature less frequently in the charters: of the lakes of Varese, Pusiano, Annona and Garlate, only the first is recorded in the Sant' Ambrogio texts. The shores of the large lakes were peppered with settlements in Roman times, and this remained the case in the medieval period, but the limited amount of land available between the mountains and the water cannot have permitted anything other than tiny populations, many surviving by fishing rather than agriculture.⁽¹¹⁾

Like these lakeside sites the bulk of the

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mountain valleys do not exceed 500m above sea-level, but much of the land is less steep and more suitable for cereal cultivation. This is particularly true of the largest valley in the region, the Valtellina, formed by the river Adda draining into Lake Como. The lower part of the valley west of Sondrio has a valley floor several kilometres across and very flat, where, as we shall see later, Sant' Ambrogio had some holdings centred on the estate of Dubino.⁽¹²⁾ Other valleys, notably the Val d'Intelvi and the Val Chiavenna, are less flat and less suitable for arable perhaps.

The terrain of the north whatever its altitude was clearly more a part of a mountain environment than the plains further south. It was closer to the mountains even if not itself mountainous. The rest of Lombardy is certainly not. Immediately to the south the rivers Adda and Ticino drain, via the lakes, into the hill country of the Varesotto and Brianza. These areas are formed of a series of morainic hills known as the Prealpi, ranging between 250m and 500m above sea level. These hills were formed as a result of the deposits left by glaciers rather than volcanic activity or great earth movements.⁽¹³⁾ Furthermore, they have been eroded by the rivers Ticino and Adda, so that they are generally less steep and more rounded than the true mountains of the north. The dominant soils are the podsolis of only reasonable basic fertility, which support a basic vegetation of woods, scrub and heath.⁽¹⁴⁾ Their greatest resource in the medieval period must have been wood for building.

By contrast with these Alpine and Prealpine areas most of the modern provincia di Milano is flat and low, exceptionally so to the south of Milan and into the provincia di Pavia. The land rarely rises above 150m above sea-level, and there is virtually no gradient at all within a radius of 20 km of Milan. This plain, with Milan at its heart, is divided by geologists into the high and

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low plain (the alta and bassa pianura).⁽¹⁵⁾ It is made up of very fertile alluvial soils carried down by the alpine rivers, making it highly suitable for arable crops.⁽¹⁶⁾ It is also a favoured area for habitation, partly because of this fertility, and is the part of Lombardy most altered physically-speaking since the medieval period. Schemes of canalisation and drainage, so prominent today, may indeed have started before the twelfth century, when Braudel located their origins.⁽¹⁷⁾

What is certain is the great complexity of the hydrology engendered by these human alterations to the natural courses of the rivers.⁽¹⁸⁾ This makes it difficult to be certain with precision where rivers ran in the early medieval period. Indeed it would be impossible to reconstruct this with any certainty, particularly from the charter material which only contains incidental, though still useful, information about rivers and springs. Nonetheless we should heed Braudel's choice of water as the most essential feature of lowland Lombardy, for these resources were extensively exploited in our period and rights over their use jealously guarded, especially by religious institutions.

The pattern of rivers which we see today has not changed very radically since early medieval times: the whole area is framed by the Ticino in the west, the Adda in the east and the Po in the south. The Ticino, rising beyond Bellinzona in the far north, flows via the Val Levantina and Lago Maggiore, to the west of Milan and joins the river Po just beyond Pavia. As we shall see, parts of it may have been seen as marking the boundary between the jurisdiction of Milan, both lay and ecclesiastical, and its western neighbours.⁽¹⁹⁾ The Adda served the same purpose in the east. It rises in the high Alps beyond the Valtellina, flows via that valley and Lake Como, mid-way between Milan and Bergamo, and joins the Po just beyond Cremona. The area between these two sizable

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rivers is covered with smaller ones, especially the Olona, Lura, Seveso and Lambro, referred to with similar frequency in our material because they were of importance locally, both as an economic resource and as boundary markers. These rivers all rise in the hills around Como, and all were probably subjected to human interference in their lower reaches in the early modern period. This is particularly visible in the case of the Lambro, which seems to have had very many changes of course over the centuries, possibly even within our period, especially where it flows through the very low-lying bassa pianura bringing with it the danger of flooding.⁽²⁰⁾ This latter area is crossed by a network of minor streams, causing it to be sufficiently damp nowadays for rice-growing. Milan itself was crossed by rivers and streams in the later medieval period, some of which were canalised, including the well-known Naviglio Grande.⁽²¹⁾ In the earlier period we cannot be so certain of the courses taken by either the Seveso or the Olona both of which must have flowed through the city, as neither of them appears by name in the charters which refer to the city. Archaeology has not yet answered the question either. About the navigability of these rivers we are poorly informed. It is notable, as we shall see in a later chapter, that Sant' Ambrogio had many estates near rivers as did other local owners and other monasteries in other parts of the Po Valley. This suggests that river transport was as important as historians have traditionally argued even though there is not much explicit evidence to go on in our period.⁽²²⁾

As one might expect the richest soils are found on these alluvial plains of the south and it is likely to be no coincidence that the greatest concentration of settlement was also here. Cereals are referred to more often here.

Clearly these basic facts concerning the physical geography of the area only assume significance

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for the historian when set in an historical context. This is not easy to do with precision. Conclusions reached by others about the technological limitations of early medieval societies are certainly relevant here. Many studies have shown that difficult environments tended to be ignored in favour of more easily worked sites (which were often inhabited many centuries before the beginnings of the historic period).⁽²³⁾ This is seen in the distribution of the Sant' Ambrogio material which relates mostly to the plains, lakesides and valley floors.⁽²⁴⁾ The contrast between cultivated and uncultivated in this period sometimes provoked fear in the minds of medieval men, with the forest sometimes being singled out as an especially dreadful place. The physicality of the landscape was however only one determining element in the way men coped with life in the period, and it would be entirely un-historical to adopt a geographically deterministic approach which did not admit the crucial impact which men had had on the landscape, as well as vice versa.

SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURAL EXPLOITATION.

It is important to appreciate that whilst the charter evidence is of immense importance in the historical analysis of settlement and agricultural exploitation it is really only an adjunct to archaeological research, which can plot more accurately the physical facts of settlement. Unfortunately settlement archaeology is much less developed for the Po plain than for parts of Tuscany, Lazio and the Abbruzzi. At the moment this makes conclusions rather too tentative perhaps, but this simply has to be accepted. The broad outlines are at least clear.

Basic medieval settlement patterns appear to have been well-established by end of the Roman period.

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Certainly all the main cities in Lombardy existed by then and the basic network of villages in its likely medieval form.⁽²⁵⁾ There is not space or indeed cause to elaborate upon this Roman past here, principally because at present we have little way of telling with certainty how much of it continued into the early Middle Ages and what sorts of changes may have taken place by then. Questions of Roman/Medieval continuity are not of course unimportant in the wider historical context, and indeed they are once again becoming a topic of debate among Italian medievalists at present, in response to new theories being advanced by archaeologists, especially Brogiolo, Ward-Perkins and Hodges about the nature of urban settlement in particular.⁽²⁶⁾ But as has already been suggested what happened in Lombardy is as yet poorly understood. It is of course complicated by the whole question of the impact made by the Lombard, and even Frankish, invasions on northern Italy, which were of great concern to historians of a previous generation wishing to show the 'Germanic' nature of village settlements and which once again, given the current state of archaeological knowledge, we cannot even begin to approach.⁽²⁷⁾ What can be done, although again tentatively, is to suggest what settlement patterns may have been like in the eighth to tenth century period in our area, which is clearly that of most relevance to this study.

Urban Settlement.

The basic pattern of urban settlement is clear, by virtue of the great tradition of urban habitation found in this part of Italy, seemingly stretching back to pre-Roman times. No one denies that there was settlement of some type at Milan, Pavia, Como and Bergamo (to take only the most obvious examples in Lombardy) in the early medieval period.⁽²⁸⁾ But the continuity of this settlement and its character in the early medieval period are hotly

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debated, and increasingly so, as archaeology ironically turns up less not more material evidence of early medieval phases of urban settlement than the documents would perhaps lead us to believe there in fact was. The conclusions of some archaeologists that the poverty of the material culture found on what were ostensibly urban sites in comparison with material found from both the Roman and Later Medieval periods may show that towns such as Milan and Pavia were not especially large in absolute terms but it does not show that they were not towns in early medieval terms.⁽²⁹⁾ The 'poor' material finds are more than compensated for by the rather rich documentary survivals which provide clear evidence of an urban culture, at Milan at least.⁽³⁰⁾ Even if it can safely be stated that in comparison with the great mass of small rural settlements towns were few, it should not be forgotten that the documents indicate clearly that Lombardy was nonetheless heavily urbanised by early medieval European standards. The number and especially the character of the documents which survive from town sites are very different from those preserved from clearly rural contexts.

These charters and other documents imply that by those same standards north Italian towns were quite large. Of those relevant to this study Milan and Pavia were surely amongst the largest in western Europe in the ninth and tenth centuries. Within the area of interest to Sant' Ambrogio there were a few other urban places, Como and Bergamo being civitates, Monza and Lecco perhaps better termed proto-towns. Milan was one of the first places to see the commercial revival traditionally dated to the tenth century, and very probably exceeded Pavia as a centre of population at that time.⁽³¹⁾ It is important to devote some space here to the question of early medieval urbanisation as far as Milan was concerned at least because the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was very

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much involved with this urban world. It was it is true a sub-urban foundation but its dealings with the archbishops and other leading figures in Milanese society make it important that the urbanity of the city be established in the face of archaeological challenges to the contrary.

Both Milan and Pavia were, by all the usual criteria applied by historians, real towns in our period, distinct in appearance and functions from the rural society although undeniably ruralised in some aspects. As the principal population centre in the region Milan is likely to have dominated physically the landscape of the flat plains with its walls and towers. Parts of the Roman wall survive to a height of over 10m in places, and the ninth century tower built by the monks at Sant' Ambrogio is in excess of this. The wall was probably a continuous circuit by the third quarter of the ninth century and there is considerable reference to it thereafter.⁽³²⁾ It was both a physical fact and a symbol of urban culture. It was broken by various gates, around which there seems to have been merchant activity. The monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was outside one of these, the porta Vercellina, alongside the road to Novara and Vercelli, to the west of the city. A clear distinction is made in the charters between property inside and outside the wall: property was either infra or extra murum, even when it was prope muro or suburbanus like Sant' Ambrogio itself.⁽³³⁾

Settlement within the walls was urban in its character, in most respects unlike that of the countryside. Houses had an urban character: they were smaller, closer together and sometimes two-storied.⁽³⁴⁾ Formulaic phrases occur quite unlike those found in the extra-urban context: casa et pristina et curtecella et puteus (a house with a baker's oven, courtyard and well). There was also a far higher proportion of larger properties (domus) than found in the countryside, which are usually evidenced in connection with socially

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important people.⁽³⁵⁾ The incidence of reference to terra is far less also. Many of these residences were found in the several distinct neighbourhoods recorded in the city in our period.⁽³⁶⁾ The amount of reference to Milan as a place of residence far exceeds that for any other single place in the region. If density of settlement was greater here than in the country it is likely that population was high, maybe to be counted in thousands rather than hundreds, although this remains a guess only.

Equally peculiar was the presence of buildings of types unrecorded outside the urban context. As we should expect Milan had many churches; two cathedrals not one (winter and summer) and many others under archiepiscopal control. Some of these are known to have been large and built in brick or stone. Most houses in the city were probably built in wood like rural houses, but only the city boasted stone buildings.

All this evidence, which could be expanded greatly from the charters alone, takes on greater significance in the light of the fact that Sant' Ambrogio although it managed to acquire only a little property within the city itself at any time during the pre-1000 period, did have many dealings with Milanese residents, artizans, coiners, merchants and notaries who lived there and not in the country. It is not adequate to claim that monasteries provided the only centres of habitation, demand and culture in the city when we know that laymen of these types were buying and selling property amongst themselves. These people were part of an urban not a rural culture, of which some notable symbols have been preserved. Milan was precocious in the sense of civic culture which was developing there precisely in our period and which expressed itself in the praises of the Versus and the De Situ, and even in local hagiography.⁽³⁷⁾ The charters provide further evidence of a developing political consciousness with the appearance of an

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assemblatorium in the city in the last quarter of the ninth century.⁽³⁸⁾ Levels of literacy appear to have been high with both clerics and lay notaries very active in the city in the production of literary and legal texts as well as charters.

Rural Settlement patterns.

Recent historical work relating to a wide variety of areas within Europe in the early medieval period has shown conclusively that the basis of settlement, in country and town alike, was the household, a term which can loosely be used to describe the unit of the nuclear family resident under a single roof.⁽³⁹⁾ Excavations have tended to confirm this pattern. In the north Italian context this has most recently been studied by Galetti, who has coined the useful term nucleo abitativo to describe the house, its courtyard, kitchen garden and any land associated with it.⁽⁴⁰⁾ All these elements varied in size, but particularly the amount of land a given family had and worked.⁽⁴¹⁾ In the towns, including Milan, plots tended to be smaller than in the countryside reflecting the greater density of urban living, but the cortile and orto were still usually present.

Because the families who lived in the nucleo abitativo were usually small, four or five individuals, holdings of land were not very large, having to be worked by a small number of men. Sometimes, if brothers stayed together in a single farm, households may have been somewhat larger. In the charters the principal word used to describe these units is simply casa, or even the totally non-specific res. In the countryside a few other words appear with a similar meaning on most occasions: aplectora, a hut or barn, a very humble dwelling of very small scale cultivators; solarium, probably a two-storey dwelling of importance; and domus, in the form

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domocultilis, meaning a farmhouse at the centre of a large estate housing many more people than just one family.⁽⁴²⁾ The term sedimen is occasionally used as an equivalent to casa but usually indicates a larger farm.⁽⁴³⁾ In the country the other commonly evidenced buildings are churches: more rarely we hear of the classic symbols of lordly domination: mills, castles (in the tenth century) and royal palaces.⁽⁴⁴⁾

How these households were arranged about the physical landscape is fundamentally simple, and was a long-established fact by our period. North-west Lombardy was characterised by a multitude of hamlets and villages, which preponderated both over more isolated forms of settlement and over larger ones. Small towns were relatively few, and there were only two true cities, Milan and Pavia as we have seen. To gauge what these settlements were like in the ninth and tenth centuries is less easy than stating the fact of their existence, because the charters which refer to hundreds of settlements by name, resort to formulaic phrases when describing them, employing terminology which remains consistently unenlightening throughout the period. Most often, a casa or land parcel is located in a vicus, locus, or even castellum/castrum: that is to say some sort of consolidated settlement. The distinction between vicus and locus, if there indeed was one, is hard to assess because often the same place is called vicus and locus at the same period, sometimes in the same document.⁽⁴⁵⁾ This is complicated by two further words villa and fundus. Villa sometimes refers to a village settlement, but could, of course mean an estate. Indeed it could mean a village settlement which was an estate. Fundus is harder: the most common phrases are vicus et fundus, locus et fundus, and most probably fundus refers to the territory assigned to the settlement for administrative purposes. The question of continuity or otherwise from the late Roman period has

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been given a great deal of attention by historians, notably Bognetti, but the Sant' Ambrogio material is such that it would not help us much if this could be cleared up: we do not know enough about the topography of most settlements to be able to tell how their layouts or the extent of their territories changed within the early medieval period, with a few exceptions, such as Cologno Monzese.⁽⁴⁶⁾ It is probably correct to assume that many, perhaps a majority of those places termed vicus, had a basically nucleated layout, but it is in most instances very hard to demonstrate this from the limited evidence available.

Whilst it is clear that most rural settlement was encompassed within the territory of the village/hamlet, this does not always seem to have been the case. There must always have been some properties which were too isolated to be part of nucleated settlements of any sort. We hear less about them partly because the monastery was interested in richer areas, which unsurprisingly could support bigger settlements, but also because there were not many of them in our period. Examples of more dispersed settlement patterns usually come from the north of our area, although explicit examples (like some casae which in 882 were in vico et fundo Mellesiate vel inibi circumcirca reiacentes) are hard to find.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Within the areas covered by the Sant' Ambrogio material there were considerable variations in the patterns of rural settlement. These must largely have been in existence before the beginning of our period as there is no evidence of major resettlement within the area until the tenth century. The patterns were in part determined by the physical environment. In the true mountains there is no evidence of settlement at all, but there was some in the mountain valley floors and on the shorelines of the lakes.⁽⁴⁸⁾ In Brianza and the Varesotto further south many

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of the places existing today are evidenced in our period, but not in fact a majority. Only on the southern plain are the majority of settlements now existing evidence in the early medieval period. This is important, for it suggests that basic settlement patterns were well-established, and probably this applied also to places not evidenced in this archive but in archives now lost. Settlement in the south does fit into a broader pattern, such as the one recently outlined by Fossier and Chapelot as typically early medieval:

' ...in a given region , settlement tends to be regularly distributed, so that each village has a comparable area of land attributed to it comprising as far as possible the same type of soil and vegetation; cultivable land and woodland for example. '(49)

The settlements known in this period around Gessate (one of Sant' Ambrogio's centres of property) are all about 2 km apart.(50) Yet even here there were anomalies in the generalised picture: some houses were in vico et fundo Glassiate et Anticiaco and in vico et fundo Cavannaco et Ovornaco, suggesting that some territory overlapped between settlements.(51)

If this was the basic pattern of rural settlement in the period there is some evidence that new settlements did emerge at times and old ones disappear, within the established norms of the vicus-type, but the amount of evidence is so small that this is only of limited relevance in the present context. Furthermore it would be hard to show that the activities of Sant' Ambrogio were in anyway responsible for such developments. Much more important was the emergence of what may have been entirely new forms of rural settlement, centred on the castrum. This development, known by the Italian term incastellamento, has been the object of some of the most significant historical writing about early medieval Italy

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to have appeared in recent decades.⁽⁵²⁾ Most of this writing has concentrated on places south of the Po plain, because the evidence there shows a particularly strong reordering of the rural landscape in some parts of Lazio and Tuscany. More recently Settia has provided a synthesis of the problem for the Po plain. Incastellamento covers what were a series of complex processes. It is not simply a question of the resettlement of the landscape, but reflects a whole new ethos in the way society was ordered, now that the prop of the state had largely gone. Here it can only be considered in the light of any changes which may have arisen in our area as a result.⁽⁵³⁾

The crux is that castrum did not simply mean castle, at least not in the normal understanding of that word. As far as we know there had always been castles, in the sense of large defensible buildings, in Lombardy in the historic period. Some of them, Roman and Lombard in date, survive in villages where Sant' Ambrogio acquired interests in the course of the ninth century.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Its new significance in the tenth century came about through the expansion of the area within the defended part of the castrum, the movement into it of rural inhabitants and the resulting appearance in some places of a defended village. This is usually seen as a subjection of the rural population to the seigneurial powers of lords, who wished to develop their own power bases now that kings and with it state patronage had begun to decline in importance to them. In Lombardy the reasons for incastellamento were many, with the need to respond to the threats posed by the Magyar invaders given importance by Settia as an initial catalyst.⁽⁵⁵⁾ How widespread the phenomenon was in Lombardy is not entirely clear. Certainly in the Sant' Ambrogio material castra appear in the course of the tenth century at sites where concentrations of lordly dominance were already very strong. The monastery of Sant' Ambrogio itself may have initiated some castra, especially those at

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Cologno Monzese and nearby Inzago.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The question is so important to an appreciation of the the development of seigneurial powers by the abbots that it will recur in later chapters.

Agricultural Exploitation.

The patterns of rural settlement which we have just been examining owed a lot to variations in the quality of the land for agricultural exploitation. Rich soils, of which there were many in this part of Lombardy, could support denser populations in a world where, for the majority, actual existence seems to have been a struggle. We need to be careful about this because very little material about this struggle comes through in the Sant' Ambrogio material, as we should expect given its nature. It may be that Lombardy saw less of the struggle anyway, for in early medieval terms it was rich, rich enough to support a complex society including cities of some sophistication, which freed many from a subsistence lifestyle and encouraged less direct dependence on food produced by oneself, and more dependence on food bought or perhaps bartered for in the local market. This sophisticated economy is discussed more fully in Chapter 6, but here I want to outline the basics which supported it all, Sant' Ambrogio included.

The charters do not provide an ideal source from which to approach agricultural matters at the most basic level. Documents were still very much the preserve of elites who depended less directly than the cultivators on the successes of subsistence cultivation to survive. They used the surpluses which this agriculture produced, and their charters are evidence of activities which this production supported: the acquisition of land and other property. The facts of cultivation were certainly not lost on many of the greatest landowners, especially as we shall see the monasteries, but they make their way only

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erratically into the charters. However, the problem is that there is not much other evidence in this period which illuminated these matters either, except archaeology, and this as we have seen, has a long way to go in this part of Lombardy at least, particularly pollen analysis and palaeo-botanic studies which could give insights into basic fertility and natural vegetation upon which agriculture was imposed.

Charters then dominate historical writing on the north Italian rural economy, as evidence in the work of Fumagalli and his school. This work is eloquently summed up in Massimo Montanari's major synthesis on the economic usage of land, L'alimentazione contadina nell'alto medioevo, which is based almost entirely on the evidence of charters, including those of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Quite rightly he focusses on the uses to which the landscape and its resources were put, and the result is a picture of a society that by sociological/anthropological criteria was 'traditional' but nonetheless complex.⁽⁵⁸⁾ It was traditional in the sense that the economic exploitation of the area was overwhelmingly agricultural, with even industries closely tied to the land. This was of course common across Europe at this date. This agriculture, although by modern standards technologically limited and unproductive, was in fact not that unsophisticated, producing a wide variety of crops, demanding farming skill and intensive manual exploitation. Most agricultural production was for subsistence use, and was the produce of the labour of peasant families (free or of some dependant status) living on small farms (the casae of the charters). Basic subsistence cultivation could give rise often to quite substantial surpluses, although famine was never very far away if the climate turned harsh one year because of the difficulties of food storage. In such a society the amount of surplus produced, although variable, was crucial

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as it determined what proportion of the population could be non-cultivators (aristocrats, craftsmen, tradesmen). It is important to remember therefore that, in comparison with many other parts of Europe, Lombardy was rich agriculturally, with the potential for higher levels of surplus than the norm. The soils of the plains were highly fertile and well-watered. As over most parts of Europe settled cultivation had been practised here for centuries.⁽⁵⁹⁾ A considerable proportion of production was surplus and hived off by numerous lords, such as Sant' Ambrogio. In view of Montanari's striking comparative overview a detailed examination of the Sant' Ambrogio material for these types of information is not necessary, given the fact that Montanari's conclusions tally with any which this material could add.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Here I shall attempt to give an insight into the way agricultural production was organised at the most basic level. No attempt is made to examine the sistema curtense in any detail here as it is treated more fully in Chapter 6.

Montanari correctly points out that the triangle formed by Milan-Como-Varese was dominated by cultivated as opposed to uncultivated land whereas the true bassa pianura between Milan and Pavia, and the mountain areas north of Como, saw the opposite.⁽⁶¹⁾ A mixed arable landscape was normal for the central area, of which the village of Gessate provides a typical example. Gessate is about 20kms north-east of Milan, sited fairly centrally between the rivers Lambro and Adda.⁽⁶²⁾ It was not waterlogged, but well-drained at about 150m above sea-level. Although typical in this landscape of most of the villages of the alta pianura it is exceptional in the extent of its early- medieval documentation because the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio acquired a lot of property there from the mid-ninth century on. These properties were typically formed of arable fields, yet we must assume that the landscape was dominated by trees, mostly oaks, willows

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and chestnuts.⁽⁶³⁾ These were of course economically useful trees, and it is probable that their use was managed. Certainly they were valued, for on occasion single trees (especially chestnuts) were part of property transactions. The woods were not scattered at random over the settlement, but restricted to a few sites, sometimes quite large, known by particular names, such as Taciniaca and Roboreta.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Woods form the largest recorded properties of Gessate, ranging from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 2.4 hectares in size. These sizes contrasted markedly with those of arable plots, some of which were tiny, and most of which were small. The implication is that woodland was owned in larger sizes because it was less productive economically, and more of it was needed to make its exploitation worthwhile. However, woodland seems to have been the preserve of the more powerful in society, whereas the land parcels were the very stuff of the peasants' livelihoods and we should expect it to appear in small sizes where the farming methods were organised in this way. Whether we should envisage a landscape divided up into a patchwork of regularly sized and cooperatively exploited plots (some sort of open-field system) is less clear, at least from this evidence. In the charters the bulk of plots appear as four-sided, in the sense that each plot was bounded by four plots owned by other owners. But it would be difficult to conclude from this notarial formula the patterns that men had imposed on the landscape. In a place like Gessate, cereals formed the basic crops, and the word aratoria, literally meaning ploughable, appears frequently.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Evidence from neighbouring villages (such as Inzago, Cologno Monzese and Cavenago) demonstrates that the agriculture of Gessate was typical, but that minor variations could occur, depending especially on the drainage of the soil. Cologno is fuller evidenced than any of the rest, and from this material Rossetti has been able

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to provide a detailed picture of its agriculture. Here there certainly were open fields - terra aperta aratoria - but also enclosed ones, clausurae.⁽⁶⁶⁾ At least three types of grain were grown, wheat, rye and panic, but meadows were there too, by virtue of proximity to the river Lambro which passed through the western part of the fundus.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Villages further south were wetter: in Carpiano, mid-way between Milan and Pavia, padulum, marsh was found and it is still typical of the area. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

Montanari's stress on cultivation for this part of Lombardy is not, therefore, inappropriate. It is quite apparent are dealing with a managed landscape, of ditches, enclosures, mills and coppiced trees. This management sometimes led to the use of areas new to cultivation for arable crops, as references to novellae and noviculta make clear.⁽⁶⁹⁾ But such words are not common, and the impression must be of a landscape thoroughly exploited by men in this period.

Away from this heartland our evidence is sparser, which tends to facilitate the assumption that arable agriculture was less developed on the higher and lower ground. The hills of Brianza, although covered in places with heath, do not mark a real change in the landscape. That only comes further north, around the lakes and mountains. As we have already seen, this can in part be explained by the mitigating effects of water on the climate, which allowed the olive to flourish here. Medieval farmers exploited thoroughly this climatic quirk to have a commodity, both storable and valuable. Monasteries, especially, came to own many of these oliveti Sant' Ambrogio included. ⁽⁷⁰⁾

The other key difference, partly induced by the terrain, was the existence of more developed pastoral activity here, especially on the slopes in the mountain valleys. Oddly, there is no reference at all in these charters to animals on the plains on the south, but this

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must be a quirk of the evidence, as the oak woods would have been very useful for foraging pigs, without which few peasants have ever managed. Cattle and sheep do appear explicitly in the northern material but even so there is no clear evidence of transhumance, and if Alpine transhumance existed (which is not inherently unlikely) it did not come within the concerns of charter writers, as it did further south in Italy.⁽⁷¹⁾ Yet there seem to have been large numbers of milk producing animals, for Sant' Ambrogio received large renders in cheese in the eleventh century from some of its Valtellina estates. ⁽⁷²⁾

There are pockets of more detailed evidence in this northern area, which show that there was some arable cultivation on the flatter parts of the Bellagio peninsula, which was exploited agriculturally on the flatter land near the shore (notably at Sant' Ambrogio's Limonta estate), where arable fields, meadows, olives and chestnuts are all evidenced.⁽⁷³⁾ Inland there is no evidence of developed agriculture, which would hardly be possible given the steep terrain, but instead the land was exploited for its iron ores and lime/limestone. Mineral extraction may have provided the principal economic wealth of the Alps in the early medieval period, as Menant has shown recently, with iron especially of great importance to the archbishops of Milan in the thirteenth century.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The evidence of Limonta may only be the tip of a more widespread phenomenon.

Who the cultivators were and how agricultural production was organised has already been hinted at in the discussion of settlement. Certainly, in Lombardy as in Europe as a whole the bulk of the population were cultivators who lived on small-holdings, in family units, often within the framework of a nucleated village settlement to form, in Toubert's phrase, ' ...une exploitation paysane complete...'.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Whether these units were compact or not is usually not recoverable from

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the evidence, but sometimes the worked lands were not in the immediate vicinity of the house, whether or not the lands were owned or leased. Such small-time cultivators normally produced surplus, which supported others, the non-cultivators so numerous in the cities, who collected it via rents in kind or in money. How the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio exploited these surpluses is of course a question at the heart of the thesis, and one which is treated in more detail in subsequent chapters.

The importance of large estates in the rural economy is a key theme of Italian historiography, and is encompassed by the term sistema curtense. Work by Toubert, Fumagalli, Montanari and many others has stressed how varied estates were, how fluid the structures of individual estates could be and increasingly how they definitely were not part of a 'closed' economic system.⁽⁷⁶⁾ As this important theme is examined elsewhere here it is only necessary to introduce it in outline.

Estates do not appear as frequently in this material as farms or tenant houses, which is as we should expect from monastically-sourced material as most laymen who had estates held on to them and did not alienate their major holdings to the church unless there were very good reasons for doing so. Only very great landowners could alienate estates of any size, and this was precisely what happened in the case of Sant' Ambrogio: the king, archbishop and other aristocrats were the only ones to donate whole estates to the community. Therefore it is difficult from such material to get much impression of the topography of particular estates, and how they fitted in with other estates or small-holdings nearby. In some cases we do have polyptychs which make such analyses easier, but not many for Sant' Ambrogio. To get a more precise idea of the what an estate could be like in our area it is useful to examine a particular example. The example chosen is the estate of a layman, Scaptoald of Sumirago, a few

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kilometres north-west of Castelseprio in the Varesotto (see Map 3). This estate did not end up as Sant' Ambrogio property but that of the Milanese monastery of San Vincenzo in Prato, but it has the virtue of demonstrating what a typical small layman's estate could be like and so provides with material for comparison with monastic estates later on.

We know about this estate by virtue of Scaptoald's testamentum which was drawn up in July 850, in which he bequeathed property to his sister, her sons and the monastery of San Vincenzo.⁽⁷⁷⁾ His estate, curtis victualia, was organised on classic lines: part worked as demesne (the domo coltile) and part worked by customary tenants (massarii). The demesne centre of the estate was in Sumirago, and was worked by servi, ancillae and aldii, servile workers who lived in the central farm house and were fed in return for the work they did.⁽⁷⁸⁾ There is unfortunately no clue as to the size of the estate but we do know that it was not restricted to Sumirago as some of Scaptoald's other workers, his liverti, lived in small huts, aplectorae, elsewhere in Sumirago, in nearby Montonate. The customary tenants lived there to and also further away in Bruggiate and Cardano, about 10km from Sumirago. The estate does not appear then to have been territorially compact, as we know that there were other owners in the area. Agriculture on this estate was mixed, perhaps with a concentration on the management of woodland. This estate was typical of those organised with a demesne centre, worked by this period with servile rather than (or perhaps predominating over) slave labour. Many estates lacked the demesne and were structured entirely around labour-service obligations and rents paid in kind or in money to the landlord.

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This section has sought merely to outline some basic information about settlement and agriculture in this part of Lombardy. It has avoided the question of change over the period, since this arises in the chapters that follow. It has also said nothing about the impact made by the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio on the land for the same reason. In the final part of this chapter attention is given to some of the dominant social institutions which influenced greatly the exploitation of the land by the monastery, in particular the customs which governed the alienation - and consequently the acquisition - of land in the period.

EARLY MEDIEVAL SOCIAL STRUCTURES.

Within the confines of this chapter it is necessary to be brief on what is without question a complicated and often controversial area of discussion. Society in early medieval Lombardy, particularly urban society, was complex in its institutions and the ways in which social relations were ordered and there can be little doubt that even after the well-known discussions of Violante and Keller of Milanese society a lot of work remains to be done.⁽⁷⁹⁾ What I want to do here is to introduce some general ideas about three large issues which recur throughout this thesis, kinship, the structures of community life and lordship, because in its property dealings the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio and their agents had to operate in a world of families, village communities and dependent workers, as well as powerful individuals. The landowners with whom they had contact had a variety of loyalties to kin, neighbours and

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servants, and although for some the monastic community became another concern to which land was to be given, for others it was a force to be opposed because it conflicted with kin or other interests.

Perhaps the greatest opposition to monastic landholding derived from families who felt that their social position was being threatened by a new and unwelcome force. The importance of kin relationships in early medieval societies is much discussed but it is nonetheless worth reminding ourselves of some of the salient features.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In these charters family groups rarely appear to have been very extended. There is a lot of evidence of the nuclear family unit (father, mother and children) but much less evidence of more extended groupings. Sometimes brothers lived together or more probably farmed together, and often unmarried sisters seem to have been part of the group. But if we want to construct more extended groupings we usually cannot do so. Only in a very few cases, at least in this body of material, can genealogies be traced over more than three generations. The solidarity of such kin groups is hard to assess, principally because we have to rely on documents in which such families are often dealing with family property in the face of challenges to it from outside, especially from the Church, which may have induced a sense of kin solidarity simply for the duration of the threat. These questions are important for as we shall see in later chapters the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, like most early medieval churches necessarily had to deal with family groupings when any individual decided to deal with the church over property. We shall return to the technicalities of these dealings in a moment, but here it is worth stressing that in this material there are clear instances where a particular family appear to have been deliberately exploiting the church for the benefit of the

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family and vice versa.

Historians have examined a good number of actual families for Lombardy in this period. Violante and his school have shown that these could be very solid particularly where property was concerned.⁽⁸¹⁾ Within the Sant' Ambrogio material the example of the Leopegisi family of Cologno Monzese provides a classic example of the early medieval family acting as a group (father and children) in the face of Church encroachment, even though as we shall see in Chapter 4 that its solidity may not have been as great as Rossetti has supposed. Clearly the ways in which particular families and individuals acted varied widely according to particular sets of circumstances and it seem unlikely that kin activity was in any sense determined by a series of ' rules ', beyond those of a virtually universal kind (subordination of women and children and consequent domination of adult males in property transactions, fairly standardised procedures for the inheritance of family property).

Having established that kin relationships were important there is no reason to assume that other social relationships were less important. There is considerable evidence that at certain periods it was quite possible for a degree of community feeling to be present.⁽⁸²⁾ Normally instances of this are found where there is clearly a reason for people to cooperate against some common adversary, especially in cases of challenges to established customs. In such instances the ' men of ' a village came together to object as they did against the count of Milan in 900 and against the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio between 880 and 957.⁽⁸³⁾ In both these instances individuals had in common place of residence but also common demands being made upon them. This means that that we cannot be as certain as some, notably Bognetti, that the ' village community ' was a widespread phenomenon in our period. We cannot be certain for example that the

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villagers held village property in common or that there were village mechanisms for the enforcing of justice. It is not that this could not happen in the early Middle Ages for it did so in East Brittany, but it is rather the case that we should be cautious in assuming a communality of interest between the more powerful village families and the less powerful poor peasant or serf who lived in the same place.

This introduces that other great institution of the period: lordship. This is not the place to enter into an extended discussion of vertical social relationships, but it is useful to introduce a few basic notions.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Early medieval Italian society was a society of elites who gained a lot of their power by exercising authority over other people. Aristocrats, who headed these elites, obtained power by various means: military might with its attendant vassals and clients; by office-holding with its possibilities for revenue raising licit and illicit; by associating themselves with other powerful men, notably kings and bishops, from whom they might hope to gain material rewards; and from landholding, from which surplus production could be used to reward followers of their own or sold or exchanged in other ways to maintain their non-cultivating lifestyle. Evidently all these methods were interlinked and all could be employed to gain and maintain a position of power. In our period most historians agree that there was little concept of a nobility, where status derived simply from the fact of birth and in Italy especially the composition of the aristocracy was fluid. This fluidity in social relationships may have been particularly characteristic of urban areas where increasingly aristocrats chose to live.

This brief overview has introduced some simple notions about kinship, lordship and community in our period. Within such social institutions the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio functioned. Its abbots were, as we shall

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see in the rest of the thesis, not isolated from the complex society around them. They employed land ownership to build up their own power and the power of their monastery and this brought them into contact with family groupings both great and small, village communities and great lords with resources far in excess of their own. in order to begin to understand the various levels at which landholding might operate we need to give some attention to some of the basic ' rules ' (cautiously defined) which were widely applied to it. (85)

LANDHOLDING IN THE LAWCODES AND CHARTERS.

One way in which these important questions can be approached, and often has been approached, is via the study of the prescriptive law codes surviving from the early medieval period, both Lombard and Carolingian, most of which include some useful information of relevance to questions concerning the nature of rights to property and tenure.(86) From these it is possible to derive a lot of information about penalties imposed for particular crimes but much less information about landholding and how or indeed if this was regulated by the state. Using these texts in this way has considerable disadvantages, the principal one being that we know very little of how they were used, who knew about them or even the reasons behind their production.(87) We are dealing with texts whose diffusion was very limited in the period with the consequence that people did not know what the laws said, and therefore they may have had little relevance to the way property rights functioned and developed in the world and whose provisions may have been intended as somewhat theoretical. In a place such as Milan, close as it was to Pavia the major centre of Italian legal study in the period, it seems inherently likely that access to these codes was considerable and indeed Milan was a major centre

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of legal study in its own right, probably from as early as the ninth century and possibly from the late Lombard period. But what impact written law had in a semi-literate world with inadequate methods of judicial enforcement must remain very much open to question. Added to this is the problems presented by the very notion of ' law ' at this time. In the placita, the texts which come closest to recording the practical application of legal rulings, it is often apparent that force or compromise settled disputes rather than any particular notion of ' respect for the law ', although occasionally such notions do surface in the complaints of disputants (in the phrase contra lege which appears often in court cases). At the same time it is clear that some notions of the ' personality of law ' were around: men lived and were judged in court according to the leges langobardorum or the lex romana, although much more work remains to be done on disentangling here the practical from the theoretical, whether such distinctions had any real application (did different provisions apply if you were Lombard rather than Roman in court ?) or were simply symbolic conventions of notarial practice.

Enquiries such as these into the actual understanding of law as a notion are very difficult in this period in the face of very thin evidence. We are better informed about the practicalities of landholding, practicalities which included not simply actual physical control over a given estate or land parcel but also the rights which an individual or institution had over it, by virtue of the survival of charters. How the charters related to the laws is problematic too for although most of them are peppered with legal or quasi-legal formulae, which were necessary to make them stand up in court this does not mean that the law codes say very much about how charters were to be produced, or indeed whether possession of a charter conferred a right inherently superior to a

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customary right or to possession obtained by force. Therefore, when dealing with land ' rights ' we have to be careful to appreciate what this might mean in the early medieval context, rather than applying anachronistic notions derived from the study of Roman or later Medieval usages. It may be that what really mattered to the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was who was physically in control of the land it claimed powers over, rather than abstract notions of rights but it was the charters which the community deliberately preserved, which conferred, if they were lucky, possession of a property and ensured access to its productive capacities. The charters were important as concrete evidence of past events which conferred property on the community. Their provisions reveal, as much as the law codes do, in what terms the ownership and possession of land, and its rewards, were perceived when it came to the act of writing done a record of any given transaction.

OWNERSHIP AND LESSER RIGHTS TO PROPERTY.

Since it can be misleading to extract legalistic terminology from the charters in order to propose rules whereby we might predict how any given transaction should work (formulae being all too easy to believe literally), it seems sensible to begin by referring back to a concrete example: Scaptoald of Sumirago. Like most testamenta in the Sant' Ambrogio collection, Scaptoald's will reveals quite a useful body of information about the nature of tenure. The testamentum was in a sense a theoretical expression of bequest, a record of what its author thought desirable after his death, of what should happen to his property in an explicit way. It was necessary in such a context to say what rights were being devolved and to whom in order to avoid, as far as possible, post obitum disagreements. They

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are particularly interesting as a class of text from our point of view because they often refer in explicit terms to churches in a context which does not exclude reference to family members too. In this respect Scaptoald's will is typical of many others.⁽⁸⁸⁾

Scaptoald made provision in this document for his sister Gisalberga, her children and several religious institutions: the classic pattern of female relatives and monasteries found in so many early medieval wills. In this case the bequeather included his uncle and several servants in his bequest. To produce such a will as a legally valid text required Scaptoald, at the time of the bequest, to be the owner of the property bequeathed. This may seem obvious and it is tacitly assumed in most of our charters dealing with the transfer of rights over property, but it was nonetheless vital, as the few cases where such rights are disputed between two or more parties demonstrate.⁽⁸⁹⁾ In court challenges could be brought against ostensible owners based on exactly this point.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The most considerable right which anyone could have over property was expressed in the word auctor, which conferred some sort of right to alienation, an essential element of ownership. If an accused individual was not the auctor of a property at the time of alienation/transfer, the resulting transaction would be deemed invalid. This may seem very vague: did the quality of being auctor require possession too? Or a period of residence? Could it be inherited? The fact is that, in the absence of explicit discussions in our texts it is hard to be sure, and the fact that it could be raised in court cases suggests that non-experts may have been confused too.

The major problem is that it is hard to know whether the sophisticated distinctions about types of ownership which are found in the various late Roman codes persisted intact into Lombard and Carolingian times. The property law of the period remains unclear, partly because

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of the very diverse provisions which appear in the various Barbarian codes. We may be fairly certain that the late Roman distinction between '...the right and the fact of control over a thing ...' (Levy) had become blurred in a society where mechanisms for enforcing such things were not very effective.⁽⁹¹⁾ What did it matter to be the technical owner of a property if you could occupy it or exact surplus from it by force ? This whole area is complicated by the fact that terms appearing in late Roman law, such as potestas and dominium, continue to appear in early medieval documents, particularly charters, without us being quite sure of what their meanings had become, and in particular whether any especially precise meanings were attributed to them in addition to somewhat vague notions of ' power ' or ' domination ' in the sense of being able to do what one wished with a property (quod voluerit faciendum appears a lot in charters).⁽⁹²⁾ We are on somewhat firmer ground in stating that such ' ownership ' resided primarily with legally competent adult males: women, children and servile men did not possess it.

In the case of Scaptoald his power over the properties he wants to bequeath are covered in the document by potestas, as exemplified in the power of proprietas, the right of property (over both land and movable). This circularity of argument is hard to break out of.⁽⁹³⁾ In proprietary nomine is the standard way of designating a right of ownership, where ownership means the power to alienate freely. So only Scaptoald's uncle Erminald (a presbiter) and his nephews were to get their property in proprietary, quod faciendum voluerit. Gisalberga, the liverti and the churches had an ostensibly lesser right, that of usufructus, the ability to ' enjoy ' a property in one's lifetime without the power to alienate this right or any other to anyone else.⁽⁹⁴⁾ Once the recipient of usufructus was dead the property passed elsewhere as a consequence of the

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provisions made by the original alienator or in response to what was legal practice. So Scaptoald gave property to his freedmen only for their lifetimes in usufruct. It is probably right to assume that the liverti could not provide the sum necessary for their wergilds, and so were in a disadvantaged position when it came to court even though they could act at law.

Women and Inheritance.

The testament which we have been looking at was not typical of how inheritance operated in early medieval societies, even if it was clearly in some senses a document recording inheritance practices. Scaptoald was providing for his nephews as heredes, but his sister and his servants did not properly fall into this category for they only had temporary control over the property. In fact most provision for inheritance went unrecorded in this society for there was as yet no reason for the churches (as the prime motivators behind the production of written property records) to have such provisions written down. It is to be assumed that men passed the bulk of their property to other men as a matter of custom, and we do have a few documented references to it in the form of incidental mentions of men who had inherited land from fathers, uncles or brothers. Overwhelmingly most inheritance was from father to son. Further it is likely that this society assumed that men could defend their own property whereas women would benefit from having their ' rights ' set down in a charter.

Overwhelmingly it is women who appear most in charters dealing with heritable property.⁽⁹⁵⁾ This was because they represented the easiest means by which family property could pass out of family control, either by marriage or by entry into a religious community. Documents recording formal divisions of family property at the time

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of marriage do not usually survive at this period, although the law codes are clear on what customary portions may have been. Widows could not have more than a quarter of their husbands properties. Normally then women appear only when property is being alienated to the church, as in the case of Gisalberga. Almost all references to women in this, and other early medieval charter collections, describe women not as individuals but as mothers, wives, daughters and sisters who must be provided for in their widowhood or unmarried state before provision can be made for the church concerned to take over the property.

The capacities which women had to control any property they had were not great.⁽⁹⁶⁾ As we have seen Gisalberga's rights were strictly limited. Although she held her brother's estate in jura et potestate tua, that is to say with full ownership rights, she did not have the power to alienate it without the consent of her mundwald, the person who represented her when legal business involving her took place. The key passage is very clear:

statuo presenti diae deveniat in potestates ipsius germana mea diebus vite sue abendum et usufructuandum; post vero ipsius germana mea discessum, statim deveniat in potestate de filius ipsius germana mea, si abuerit postea, proprietario faciendum quod voluerit.⁽⁹⁷⁾

So it is clear that the ecclesiastical source of our documents explains why so much of the material involves women as property holders, albeit with limited powers. Usually the provisions concerning female kin were a preliminary to the eventual alienation of the property to the church upon the woman's death, provided she was still a widow, unmarried or childless at that time. In these instances it is clear that the church was being

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endowed with property which was no longer essential to the overall well being of the kin group. Furthermore, endowing a daughter or sister with property which eventually was intended for the church provided the father or brother with a chance of protecting his female kin from the attentions of other kin-groups, and so retaining a measure of control (albeit short term) over family property which would otherwise be effectively alienated in the form of a marriage dowry. By letting the church have the property in the end but by retaining control over it for the woman's lifetime the property might remain effectively under the family's control for lengthier periods than would otherwise have been the case. In other words the church was being used as part of a network of alliances designed to keep as tight a degree of control over property as was possible in a violent world. This phenomenon has recently been observed by Chris Wickham in the cases of several families of Garfagnana villages in the ninth century and as we shall see there are some parallels to it in the Sant' Ambrogio material.⁽⁹⁸⁾

The Transmission of property rights by sale and donation.

Transmission of property rights by inheritance practices was only one of the methods by which property passed from person to person in this society. For obvious reasons the charters say little about theft and forcible confiscation, upon which the law codes dwell at length. But because the charters themselves were instruments recording such property transmissions they are an important source of material concerning the gift and sale of land in the period. The texts describe the property transfer in formulaic terms, and phrases such as dono, trado ac cedo reveal little about the actual processes of transfer. Sometimes sales or gifts were followed up with a vestitura, which recorded a ceremony on site which involved walking the bounds of the property, transfer per

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columna de casa (touching the entrance of the house) or picking up the soil, de terra atramentate.⁽⁹⁹⁾ These events represented the transfer of property rights at its most public and provide a reminder that charters alone were not always enough to ensure that a transaction gained the approbation of local worthies.

It is unclear how important these methods of transfer were in comparison with inheritance. Donation to churches was encouraged by the Carolingian state as a means of expressing piety. Alienation by such methods probably left more room for individual choice, even if it remains unlikely that family property could be alienated outside of the kin group by such means. It may be that the charters, which are hardly very numerous, were indeed recording types of alienation which were not common yet.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ But it is necessary to be cautious here for even though we have documentation which deals primarily with the church there are many instances of property being bought and sold by laymen amongst themselves. It might be the case that in places we are witnessing a real market in land, land being bought and sold as a commodity. However, we have to be cautious about this too as we know that in many transactions which appear to fall into this category other relationships between buyers and sellers may have conditioned heavily the reasons behind the alienation of the property.

The Church and property rights.

It will become clear in later chapters that the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, like most ecclesiastical bodies in the ninth and tenth centuries, acquired lands in a variety of ways. Much depended on the particular circumstances in which a given family found itself, just as a great deal depended on the political links which a given abbot was able to forge with the powerful men of his

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time. The way in which ecclesiastical institutions became involved in landholding is an important theme in what follows one to which we shall return frequently. Here I simply want to suggest some of the more visible ways in which church landowning was like and unlike that of laymen. The similarities are more noticeable than the differences in the wider perspective for the church was part of the same social world as laymen. Basically it did not hold property in ways so very different from the ways in which adult males did. Abbots and bishops could have full rights of ownership over property (proprietas) on behalf of their institutions. This applied to abbesses too, who retained control of property at a level equivalent to that of abbots, indicating that it was possible for women, if they were perceived as religious women, to take full part in property ownership.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Bishops always seem to have had great personal landed wealth and abbots and abbesses too could, in spite of the provisions of the Benedictine Rule, have rights to personal property which brought them most closely into contact with family interests.⁽¹⁰²⁾ In these respects people powerful in the church hierarchy wielded power over land much as laymen did. However there were essential differences. The most significant was the inapplicability of inheritance rules to property institutionalised as church property. Monastic property passed to the successores of the abbot not his heredes, which made any claims to property made by the family of a deceased abbot untenable. Clearly all of these theoretical provisions could be flouted by a determined lay abbot, and there is a great deal of work which shows the manipulation of monastic property by such men and by kings in the Carolingian period.⁽¹⁰³⁾

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The Limits of Landownership.

Much of the preceding discussion has an inevitably theoretical slant. The written text of the charter can easily convey a false sense of the powers which men had over land if formulae are treated too literally. This is why the placita are so important for they demonstrate that charters could very often be ignored. There were people who did not believe them, who confiscated land by force and who persisted in denying claims to ownership for long periods. Therefore it is important to remember that violence was important in this society, if not actually endemic and that the charter was limited in its force by the capacity of its holder to put its provisions into practice. And churches were liable to these difficulties as much, or even more, than any one else. In such a world, where the importance of documents in conveying ownership rights was only just beginning to make itself felt, it is important to be aware that what a text may imply may never have happened. This places a great value on texts which survive in sequences where it is possible, sometimes, to grasp what the power relationships were, how patronage and clientage networks functioned and how what the charters record may indeed have happened on the ground.

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO.

1. F. Braudel, The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the age of Philip II [English translation S. Reynolds] (London, 1972) vol. 1 pp. 25-352 ' The role of the environment '.
2. Braudel, The Mediterranean, pp. 72-75.
3. Rural settlement archaeology is only just beginning in many parts of Italy, Lombardy included. Two useful discussions are G.P. Brogiolo, ' La campagna tra antichità e altomedioevo ', in Archaeologia in Lombardia (Milan, 1980) pp. 213-224 and C. La Rocca and P. Hudson, ' Lombard immigration and its effects on north Italian rural and urban settlement ', in Papers in Italian Archaeology, part 4, BAR INT 246 (1985) pp. 225-246. Both studies use very little Milanese evidence, since there is little.
4. M. Antico Gallina, ' Cairate all'interno dell'organizzazzione territoriale Mediolanese ', in Documenti per la storia del territorio di Cairate (Milan, 1984). La Necropoli longobarda di Trezzo sull'Adda, ed. I. Roffia (Florence, 1986).
5. De Situ Orbis Mediolani, ed. A. Colombo, RR.II.SS. 2nd ed. t.1, p.2 (Bologna, 1952), Proemium de Mediolano.
6. P. Gabert, Les Plains Occidentales du Pô et leur Piedmonts (Gap, 1962) pp. 63-74, 239-251. A. Desio, ' Caratteri fisici e geologici della provincia di Milano ', Annali della Sperimentazione Agraria xxxii (1938), 1-57.
7. J.M. Houston, The Western Mediterranean World (London, 1964) p. 379.
8. See below Chapter 5 p. 235 and Chapter 6 p. 263.
9. H.H. Lamb, Climate past, present and future 2 vols. (London, 1972-77) pp. 148-177. For the close connections between climate and subsistence agriculture, M.L. Parry, Climatic change, agriculture and settlement (Folkstone, 1978) p. 73.
10. NAT 16, 19 and 25 all Campione on Lake Lugano. For Limonta see Chapter 5 below. p. 224.
11. N. Christie, The Settlement and Defence of Byzantine and Langobard Northern and Central Italy (unpublished PhD Thesis, Newcastle upon Tyne 1985) pp. 136-137. U. Monnaret de Villard, ' L'isola comacina ', Riv. Arch della Prov...di Como, (1914), and impressionistically R. Bagot, The Italian Lakes (London, 1925).
12. IGM 18 III N.O.(Morbegno) and below Chapter 5 p. 236.
13. Gabert, Les Plains, pp. 373-401.
14. Desio, Caratteri Fisici, p. 39.
15. Desio, Caratteri Fisici, p. 13.
16. Desio, Caratteri Fisici, p. 32.
17. P. Racine, ' Poteri medievali e percorsi fluviali

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- nell'Italia padana ', QS, 61 (1986) p. 30 nt. 68.
18. Desio, Caratteri Fisici, pp. 40-55.
 19. See below Appendix 2, pp. 347-348.
 20. P. Racine, Percorsi Fluviali, p. 19.
 21. A. Solmi, ' L'antico porto di Milano ', ASL liv (1927) pp. 457-474.
 22. R.S. Lopez, ' The evolution of land transport in the Middle Ages ', P & P ix (1956) p. 21.
 23. The traditional picture has been modified by A.M. Watson, ' Towards denser and more continuous settlement: new crops and farming techniques in the early middle ages ', in Pathways to Medieval peasants ed. J.A. Raftis (Toronto, 1981) pp. 65-82.
 24. See above Chapter 1 pp. 58-59.
 25. L. Ruggini, Economia e società nell'Italia Annonaria (Milan, 1961) pp. 29-35. Storia di Milano, vol 1 (Milan, 1956) pp. .
 26. G.P. Brogiolo, ' A proposito dell'organizzazzione urbana nell'medioevo ', AM 14 (1987) pp. 27-46; B. Ward-Perkins, ' La città altomedievale ', AM 10 (1983) pp. 111-124; R. Hodges, ' The rebirth of towns in the early middle ages ' (in press).
 27. The classics are G.P. Bognetti, Studi sulle origini del commune rurale (Milan, 1978), which reprints most of his work on rural communities and P. Vaccari, La territorialita come base dell'orientamento giuridico del contado nell'Italia medioevale, 2nd ed. (Milan, 1963).
 28. The local pride engendered by city history in Italy probably explains why there is no synthesis of early medieval urbanisation in Lombardy, an area crying out for such a study. The most influential study remains C. Violante, La Società Milanese nell'età precomunale, 2nd. ed. (Bari, 1974). Other important studies include the collaborative Storia di Pavia, vol. 2 (Milan, 1987), P. Racine, Plaisance du X a la fin du XIII siecle: essai d'histoire urbain (Lille/Paris, 1979), and J. Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098, Italian edition (Bergamo, 1980). Amongst archaeologically based studies C. La Rocca, ' " Dark Ages " a Verona ', AM 13 (1986) pp. 31-78 and the works cited in note 26 above. C.J. Wickham, ' L'Italia e l'altomedioevo ', AM 15 (1988) pp. 105-124 set the urbanism debate in a wider economic context.
 29. Brogiolo, Organizzazzione urbana, pp. 44-45.
 30. Milano e I Milanesi prima del mille (Spoleto, 1986), which contains the most useful attempts at a synthesis of early medieval Milanese archaeology S. Lusuardi-Siena, ' Milano:la città nei suoi edifici ' at pp. 209-240 and D. Andrews, ' Milano altomedievale sotto Piazza del Duomo ', at pp. 355-363.
 31. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 65-87.
 32. NAT 47, 71, 120, 123 for the wall and Lusuardi-Siena,

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- Milano nei suoi edifici, pp. 211-213. The jurisdictional aspects of this are discussed below Chapter 7 pp. 310.
33. NAT 24 (infra murum); NAT 120, 146, 162, CDL 402, 679 (suburbium).
34. CDL 859, 880.
35. CDL 732.
36. colonna orfana, senedo, quinque vias, calegaria, respectively NAT 24, CDL 402, 868.
37. Versum de Mediolano civitate, ed. G.B. Pighi (Bologna, 1960); De Situ. cited note 5 above; and some interesting passages in the Vita Sancti Ambrosii, ed. P. Courcelle in Recherches sur Saint Ambroise (Paris, 1973) at pp. 109, 119-120.
38. NAT 137.
39. Recent overviews of rural settlement include J. Chapelot and R. Fossier, The Village and the House in the Middle Ages (London, 1985) and D. Herlihy, Medieval Households (Philadelphia, 1985) neither saying much about northern Italy. There is a useful study by G. Tabacco, ' Problemi di insediamento e di popolamento nell'alto medioevo ', RSI lxxix (1967) pp. 67-110. Studies which pay more attention to our area include, M. Tizzoni, ' The late Iron age in Lombardy ' in Papers in Italian Archaeology 4, ed. C. Malone and S. Stoddart, BAR INT 245 (1985) pp. 37-68; the collaborative Archeologia in Lombardia (Milan, 1980); G. Aureggi, ' Pievi, villaggi e borghi nelle valli dell'Adda ', ASL s.8., v. X. (1960). Recent archaeology is given short notice in the annual Notizario of the Soprintendenza Archeologica della Lombardia. Very little of early medieval date has turned up in recent years outside of Milan itself and the famous site of Castelseprio which is discussed in Chapter 3 p. 141.
40. P. Galetti, ' Per una storia dell'abitazione rurale nell'alto medioevo: le dimensioni della casa nell'Italia padana in base alle fonti documentarie ', BIIM, 90 (1982-83) p. 149 and her ' La casa contadina nell'Italia padana deli secoli viii-x ', QM xvi (1983) pp. 6-28.
41. Galetti, Storia dell'abitazione, pp. 163-69, 172.
42. NAT 85 (aplectora); CDL 416 (solarium); NAT 25, 120 (domocoltilis).
43. Galetti, Storia dell'abitazione, p. 150.
44. NAT 69, 104, 109, and CDL 476 (mills), and the important study of L. Chiappa Mauri, ' I Mulini ad acqua nel Milanese (sec. x-xv) NRS lxxvii (1983) pp. 1-59, 259-344, 555-578; CDL 559, 573, 694 and 993 (castra); NAT 57 (Cortolona palace).
45. For example the village of Gnignano appears between 792 and 897 as in fundo et vico (NAT 32, 54 and 67), in loco et fundo (NAT 32, 49 and CDL 990), in fundo (NAT 161), in vico (NAT 62, 67, 86, 94, 96, and

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- 161), villa (NAT 53, 65) and the peculiar in ipso loco et fundo villa (NAT 62). These terminological problems and what they might have represented on the ground are discussed by Bognetti in the volume cited in note 27 above and A. Castagnetti, Le Pievi rurale nell'Italia padana (Rome, 1976) pp. 7-10 and his L'organizzazzione del territorio rurale del medioevo (Bologna, 1982).
46. Vaccari, La Territorialità, pp. 27-28 and G. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, pp. 131-132.
 47. CDL 312.
 48. Christie, Settlement and Defence, pp. 132-155.
 49. Chapelot and Fossier, Village and House, p. 32. The contention of these authors (at p. 26) that, ' It (the early medieval landscape of Europe) is a landscape still in a state of anarchy - in short the picture is of a world that man seemed unable to control of dominate ', is absurd, and bears no relation to the evidence from Lombardy or from more northerly areas such as Brittany (W. Davies, Small Worlds: The village community in Early medieval Brittany (London, 1988) pp. 28-60).
 50. See Map 8 p. 355.
 51. NAT 83, Gessate and Inzago; NAT 131, Cavernago and Osnago.
 52. P. Toubert, Les Structures du Latium Médiévale 2. vols. (Rome, 1973) pp. 303-787; C.J Wickham, The Mountains and the City (Oxford, 1988); A.A. Settia, Castelli e Villaggi nell' Italia Padana (Naples, 1984) and Vaccari, La Territorialità, pp. 159-172.
 53. See Chapter 6 below p. 300.
 54. Christie, Settlement and Defence, pp.
 55. Settia, Castelli, pp. 139-140.
 56. Settia, Castelli, p. 174 and his, ' Lo sviluppo degli abitati rurali in alta Italia: villaggi, castelli e borghi dall' alto al basso medioevo ', in Medioevo Rurale, ed. V. Fumagalli and G. Rossetti (Bologna, 1980) pp. 157-199.
 57. M. Montanari, L'alimentazione contadina nell'alto medioevo (Naples, 1979) and his collection of articles Alimentazione e Cultura nel Medioevo (Bari, 1988).
 58. Montanari, Alimentazione contadina, pp. 19-105.
 59. See Tizzoni cited above note 39 and Ruggini cited above note 25.
 60. Montanari, Alimentazione contadina, pp. 34-49, 425-427.
 61. Montanari, Alimentazione contadina, p. 62.
 62. See Map 8 and Chapter 5 below pp. 173-184.
 63. Montanari, Alimentazione contadina, p. 39 and CDL 539.
 64. NAT 99, 120 and CDL 669.
 65. CDL 473, 538, 624 and 670.
 66. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, pp. 42-51.

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67. NAT 106.
68. NAT 44.
69. NAT 104, 120 and 125.
70. A.L. Pini, ' Due colture specialistiche del medioevo: la vite e l'olivo nell'Italia padana ', in Medioevo Rurale, pp. 119-178.
71. C.J. Wickham, ' Pastoralism and underdevelopment in the early middle ages ' Settimane di Spoleto xxxi (1983) pp. 401-451.
72. A. Lucioni, ' Il monastero di Sant' Ambrogio di Milano nelle terre settentrionali della regione Lombarda. Due " Brevia de fictis " ', Aevum, lxi (1985) pp. 208-231.
73. See further Chapter 5 below pp. 222-223.
74. F. Menant, ' Pour une histoire de l'enterprise miniere en Lombardie ', Annales 42 (1987) pp. 779-796.
75. Toubert, Structures du Latium, p. 118.
76. P. Toubert, L'Italie rurale aux VIII-IX siecles. Essai de typologie domainiale ', Settimane di Spoleto, 20 (1973) pp. 95-132 and his synthesis, ' Il Sistema curtense: la produzione e lo scambio interno in Italia nei secoli VIII, IX e X ', in Storia d'Italia, Annali 6 (Turin, 1983) pp. 5-63; V. Fumagalli, ' Introduzione del feudalesimo e sviluppo dell'economia curtense nell'Italia settentrionale ', in Structures Feodales, pp. 313-323; M. Montanari and B. Andreolli, L'azienda curtense in Italia (Bologna, 1983). See below Chapter 6 pp. 256-261.
77. NAT 85.
78. See Map 3 p. 351.
79. Violante, La Societa Milanese, passim; H. Keller, Adelsherrschaft, passim.
80. M. Bloch, Feudal Society 2 vols. (London, 1961); D. Bullough, ' Early medieval social groupings: the terminology of kinship ', P & P, 45 (1969); J. Goody, The Development of the Family and Marriage in Europe (Cambridge, 1983).
81. C. Violante, ' Alcune caratteristiche delle strutture familiari in Lombardia, Emilia e Toscana durante i secoli IX-XII ', in Famiglia e parentela nell'Italia medievale, eds. G. Duby and J. Le Goff (Bologna, 1981), ibid, ' Una famiglia feudale della " Langobardia " tra il X e XI secolo: I " da Bariano " e I " da Maleo " ', in Arch. Stor. Lodig, xxii (1974) pp. 7-128; M.L. Corsi, ' Note sulla famiglia di Baggio ', Cont. Ist. Stor. Med., 1 (1968) pp. 166-204; G. Rossetti, Societa e Istituzioni, pp. 76-100.
82. S. Reynolds, Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900-1300 (Oxford, 1984) pp. 101-154; J. Blum, ' The European village as community: origins and functions ' Agric. Hist., xlv (1971) pp. 157-178; G.M. Schwartz, ' Village populations in the

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- polyptych of St. Bertin ', J. Med. Hist.(1985) pp. 31-43; and especially, W. Davies, Small Worlds: The Village Community the Early Medieval Brittany (London, 1988).
83. NAT 163 (Palazzolo) and for Limonta Chapter 5 below pp. 229-230.
84. M. Bloch, Feudal Society, pp. 173-288; P. Dockes, Medieval Slavery and Liberation (Chicago, 1984); C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 129-145; G. Tabacco, Egemonie Sociali, pp. 145-156.
85. The word rule when used in this context is not meant to imply that the powers involved were explicitly laid down but rather customary usages.
86. Codes with relevance to the Lombard area include the eighth century Lex Romana Curiensis as well as the Lombard Codes and their Frankish additions. The Lombard material can most easily be studied in the translation of K.F. Drew, The Lombard Laws (Pennsylvania, 1973) and the edition of F. Beyerle, Leges Langobardorum 643-866 (Witzenhausen, 1962). The Carolingian capitula appear in the standard MGH editions. There is a useful discussion by F.. Manacorda, Ricerche sugli inizi della dominazione dei Carolingi in Italia (Rome, 1968). C.M. Radding, The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna, 850-1150 (Yale, 1988) provides the most recent attempt to discern the extent of ninth- and tenth-century knowledge of Roman codes in our area. Justinian's codes he concludes were entirely unknown at this time (p. 110).
87. The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe eds. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (London, 1986) provides discussions of justice in practice to set alongside studies of the codes.
88. Testamenta: NAT 23, 25, 28, CDL 61, NAT 45, 65, 85, 89, 90, 120, 137, 138, CDL 312, 402, 607, 649, 768, 799, 816, 868, 880, 931, 937.
89. E. Levy, West Roman Vulgar Law. The Law of Property (Philadelphia, 1951) pp. 173-176.
90. As an example see the discussion of the dispute between Sant' Ambrogio and Teutpald of Vimercate, below pp. 210-212.
91. Levy, West Roman Vulgar Law, p. 19.
92. Levy, West Roman Vulgar Law, pp. 19-99.
93. J. W Bernhardt, ' Servitium Regis and monastic property in early medieval Germany ', Viator 18 (1987) pp. 53-87.
94. Levy, West Roman Vulgar Law, p. 36 for late Roman usufructus as ' a qualified domenium '.
95. For how women held property at this time see D. Herlihy, ' Land, family and women in continental Europe, 701-1200 ', in The Social History of Italy and W. Europe 700-1500 (London, 1978); W. Davies, ' Celtic Women in the Early Middle Ages ', in Images of

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Women in Antiquity, eds. A. Kuhrt and A. Cameron (London, 1983) and S. Wemple, Women in Frankish Society. Marriage and the Cloister, 500-900 (Philadelphia, 1981).

96. Women could not act alone at law but needed protectors, known as mundwald or aiutor: CDL 102, 531 (aiutor). Usually this was a male relative but where no close male kin remained a state official sufficed, NAT 88 Adelburga was represented by the sculdasius Simpert. Occasionally women appear to have made sales unaided, CDL 171/390 Odeverga sells property but this is a corrupt charter. In NAT 134 Giseltruda sold property to Abbot Peter but she was in the process of becoming a nun.
97. NAT 85.
98. C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City, pp. 40-67 on the Gundualdi of Campori in the Garfagnana who maintained their social position in village society by alliance with the bishops of Lucca.
99. A classic case is NAT 93 where a sale transfers the property in proprietario nomine habendum et posedendum, faciendum exinde pro suprascripto precio et per presente traditione et vistitura...cartola et coltello seo festuca notatan adque vasonem terre facimus. Sometimes even great men went from the city to a village to enact these ceremonies as in NAT 134 where Archbishop Anspert went to Cavenago accompanied by a retinue of fourteen witnesses to take possession per columna of a large estate there.
100. In a totally different context see the remarks of W. Davies, Small Worlds, pp. 77-79.
101. NAT 95, where Tagiberta abbess of S. Vittore di Meda exchanged property with the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio on equal terms.
102. The clericus could inherit as opposed to the monk who could not: NAT 50, Arifet clericus inherited property in Biandronno from his father, together with his brother Alfret who was not a cleric.
103. Bernhardt, Servitium Regis, pp. 58-59 and the references cited there.

CHAPTER THREE.

PATTERNS OF LANDOWNING IN NORTH WESTERN LOMBARDY c. 750-1000.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the ' history ' of Sant' Ambrogio (in the traditional sense - what happened and when), as a necessary preliminary to the remaining chapters of the thesis. The approach is broadly chronological, moving from the pre-monastery stage via a discussion of the setting up of the community to an outline of developments in the ninth and tenth centuries. The emphasis is firmly on the landholding of the community. Such a framework is necessary because there is no extended discussion of this type concerning Sant' Ambrogio in English, and where accounts exist in Italian (notably by Bognetti, Rossetti and Ambrosioni) their emphases are, unsurprisingly, rather different in tone and scope.⁽¹⁾

PRE-MONASTIC SANT'AMBROGIO, c. 740-790.

The appearance of a Benedictine community on the site of the ancient basilica built by Ambrose and where he himself was buried, was essentially a result of the phenomenon known, in historical shorthand, as ' the Carolingian conquest of Italy '. It was, and remained, one of the Italian foundations of greatest interest and importance to the Carolingian dynasty, as Milan was one of the key cities in the regnum Italiae which Charlemagne had to ' make Frankish ' if he was to ensure the subjection of the Lombard king, his followers and his kingdom to the Franks. However, since there is considerable evidence that certain clerics based at the Sant' Ambrogio site were already the recipients of significant patronage before the arrival of the Franks and, as the community of canons which served the basilica

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remained a potent force and attractive to benefactors throughout our period, it is important to discuss in some detail the background to the monastic foundation.

The Sant' Ambrogio site was, of course, already one of great significance to Christians by the eighth century, but its religious importance pre-dated even Ambrose, as it was the major pre-Christian cemetery for Milan.⁽²⁾ A wave of ad sanctos burials in the later fourth and fifth centuries, centering on the graves of the martyrs Nabor, Felicitas and Valeria as much as that of Ambrose, marked it out as a key holy place.⁽³⁾ Ambrose's discovery of the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius and his own burial there in the basilica he had built on top of the pre-Christian cemetery only reinforced its importance. What happened there between the fifth and the eighth centuries is very poorly evidenced, and we must await further archaeological excavation for any real insights.⁽⁴⁾

We emerge into a very dim light around 740, with the Versum de Mediolano Civitate and a few charters, which between them indicate no especial importance amongst the churches of Milan for this Ambrosian church.⁽⁵⁾ It is mentioned in the very late eighth century Itinerarium salisburgense as '...iuxta Mediolanense urbem contra orientalem plagem foris civitate...', but the author evidently had no detailed knowledge of it as he failed to realise that it was to the west rather than the east of the city!⁽⁶⁾ However it was noted that the church was dedicated to Ambrose as episcopus and confessor and Protasius and Gervasius as martyrs. It seems to have been the attraction of Ambrose that led to a spate of Carolingian burials in the church in the early ninth century. Two kings of Italy, Pippin and Bernard, were buried here, and not in nearby Pavia as might have been expected. Later aristocratic burials followed these (ad reges as well as ad sanctos) with Ugo, the son of a

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brother of Lothar I's wife Ermingard, buried '...in loco que ipse corpore humatus extitit cimiterio scilicet sancti Ambrosii...' before or in 835. And later still further royal burials : the emperor Louis II and queen Bertha, as well as the majority of the ninth century archbishops of Milan.⁽⁷⁾ In the ninth and tenth centuries the standard formula used by notaries to refer to the monastery included the fact of Ambrose's burial there and it has been argued recently, with much justification, that the foundation of a Benedictine community here in the last years of the eighth century rather than at another of the churches built by Ambrose, was due to the importance attached to the cult of this saint by the Carolingians, which a monastery could only enhance.⁽⁸⁾

What we know about the Sant' Ambrogio site in the middle years of the eighth century derives from a series of rather dubious-looking texts.⁽⁹⁾ Information is preserved in charters copied long after the events they record, and in most instances, clearly interpolated too. In spite of these hurdles a plausible sequence of events can be discerned, one that has parallels elsewhere in Italy in the period, as we should expect being in the heart of a cycle of gift-giving to churches on a wide scale.⁽¹⁰⁾ Our sequence begins in 742 with a gift by Theopert, f.q. Mauro of 'Brisconno' of his house and associated land in 'Brisconno' to the custus of the Sant' Ambrogio basilica.⁽¹¹⁾ Theopert, according to the charter, was a vir magnificus, which means, at least, that he was an important man, some sort of aristocrat. His property was in a village near Vermezzo, some 10km southwest of the basilica, on the way to Abbiategrosso. In 742 the custus of Sant' Ambrogio leased the property back to Theopert for his lifetime. A later charter tells us that Theopert became a cleric at the cellula predicte basilice sancti Ambrosii and gave his 'Brisconno' property in perpetuity with full ownership rights to the custus on his

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death.⁽¹²⁾ At the outset of the documentation then the basilica was associated with an aristocratic interest.

Further gifts followed, all of them focussed to the west of Milan. They can be summarised sequentially as follows:

1) In 765, Ursus f.q. Theodulf, vir devotus (another aristocrat ?) gave a field in ' Torriglas '(very probably Cascina Torrette, about 4 km west of Milan) to the custus of the oratorium beati Ambrosii fondatum prope civitate hac Mediolani sito in loco ubi Torriglas nominatur, which was already bounded by property belonging to the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio. Ursus made a further gift of property in ' Toriglas ' to the ecclesia of Sant' Ambrogio in 781, in return for a shirt of squirrel skins.⁽¹³⁾

2) In April 776, Radoald, f.q. Modoald of Abbiategrasso, bequeathed his house in Abbiategrasso to the ecclesia sancti Ambrosii.⁽¹⁴⁾

3) In May 776, Flavianus f.q. Agonis, gave property in Lampugnano (now a district of Milan, about 2 km north of Cascina Torrette) to Fortis, reverentissimus diaconus of the basilica. The cellola already had a field there. Fortis in return alienated to Flavianus property within Milan itself, iuxta columpna q.d. orphana, near the porta Vercellina, a kilometre or so east of the basilica.⁽¹⁵⁾

If these properties are mapped (see Map 4) it can be seen that they form quite a coherent territorial unit. The object of the gifts was variously termed basilica, ecclesia and cellola. The basilica/ecclesia was certainly the church built by Ambrose, parts of which survive today. The use of ecclesia might indicate that the church was used for baptism, and certainly priests who looked after the basilica and held services there were receiving some of these gifts. Mostly these men were diaconi. In the ninth and tenth centuries they came to be

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called presbiteri decumani and lived canonically, on site.⁽¹⁶⁾ It was they who preserved the texts we have been discussing, who altered them later in response to challenges from the monks to their rights over these properties and who maintained a continuing interest in 'Brisconno', cascina Torrette and Lampugnano up to and beyond 1000 (as well as acquiring property elsewhere). This much is straightforward, and clearly its importance to us resides in the evidence it provides that some men were giving to the church of Ambrose in the couple of decades before the appearance of the Benedictine community.

What is much less clear is the status of the cellola. This can be defined as a small monastic community (as it is for example by Niermeyer) but such a definition begs the question of what we mean by monastic at this time.⁽¹⁷⁾ Bognetti argued (though with less than persuasive evidence) that the cellola was '...something less than a monastery' on the grounds that the presence at the Sant' Ambrogio site of such a community as early as 742 would have obviated the need for foundation of the Benedictine community there later.⁽¹⁸⁾ The matter is complicated by the existence of a highly corrupt text purporting to date from 784, which suggests that the property in 'Brisconno' that Theopert had leased to the custus of the basilica was transferred from the ecclesia vel cella to the newly founded Benedictine community with the express permission of Archbishop Peter, ex hac permissione domni Petri archiepiscopi.⁽¹⁹⁾ It is in this charter that we first hear of the monasterium, headed by Abbot Benedict. The claim that property was transferred from the old to the new recurs in the foundation charter of 789, another corrupt text, where the usage (found nowhere else) of ecclesia vel cella appears again.⁽²⁰⁾ Those modern commentators who have tried to disentangle the strands have concluded that both the 784 and 789 texts

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are interpolated precisely at the points where the monasterium is explicitly associated with the property of the ecclesia.⁽²¹⁾ This seems to be correct, as later charters connecting the monastery with property in 'Brisconno' are few, whereas those connecting the canons with the property are many.⁽²²⁾

Several important points, bearing directly on the nature of the property endowment of the new monastery, arise from these events. What we can see is a process of lay endowment of an old-established sub-urban church with small gifts of properties. This much was happening all over Italy in the eighth century. However, although it does not seem likely that there was any kin relationship (at least we can no longer discern one) between the various benefactors of the church, the fact that the properties granted related to a limited area to the immediate west of the church itself suggests that something more than a simple pious endowment may have been at work here, although we really are not in a position to elaborate much further. The donors were of relatively exalted social status, but we should note a total absence of royal or archiepiscopal involvement with the Sant' Ambrogio priests at this stage. None of the benefactors seems to have been Frankish either, although there certainly were Franks in Milan at this time, and Charlemagne himself had visited the city in 781 on his way back from Rome. Where there is reference to involvement of the archbishop, it is most likely the work of later interpolators, with claims to property to prove.

The gifts to Sant' Ambrogio at this point were rather small, particularly if we set them in the context of the endowments made to other churches in north-west Lombardy at the same time. The evidence preserved concerns old and prestigious foundations, favoured by the Lombard kings, in Monza and Lodi, and the Monzese and Lodigiano in

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general. The group of documents involved have been often used as examples of extensive church patronage in the late Lombard period. In^a text of 742, Rotopert, vir magnificus (both the date and his status parallel exactly the first Sant' Ambrogio gift: a nice coincidence), of Agrate gave a great deal of sizable estates to the church of San Stefano in Vimercate.⁽²³⁾ In 769, Simplitianus of Monza gave to the church of San Giovanni in Monza, estates in Milan and oliveta on Lake Como and further south in the Comasco.⁽²⁴⁾ In 761, the churches of San Salvatore di Brescia and San Giovanni di Lodi exchanged many estates, including one in the Valtellina.⁽²⁵⁾ Unsurprisingly not all gifts were so large or so far distant from their respective communities. In 768, a priest gave a small parcel of land to Sant'Agata in Monza, and in 787 the archpresbiter Datheus endowed a xenodochium in Milan with his house nearby.⁽²⁶⁾

Unfortunately, we know far too little about most Milanese churches in the eighth century to be certain about the nature of their landholding then which is very frustrating because some of the more important churches, in particular Santa Maria d'Aurona and the Monastero Maggiore, are all thought - on the basis of later medieval evidence - to have been founded and first endowed in the later Lombard period.⁽²⁷⁾ The state of archiepiscopal property is also hardly known. In 777 Archbishop Thomas received the important gift of an estate in Campione on Lake Lugano, and the churches of San Nazaro, San Victor ad corpus, San Lorenzo and Sant' Ambrogio benefitted from the gift of an annual oil render in the same charter.⁽²⁸⁾ But of the majority of the churches mentioned in the Versum de Mediolano Civitate we can say nothing at all, until, in the majority of cases, as late as the last decades of the tenth century. We shall return to these cases later on in this chapter.

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THE FOUNDATION OF THE MONASTERY OF SANT'AMBROGIO, c. 784-790.

All the documents agree that a Benedictine monastery was set up at the Sant' Ambrogio site by Peter archbishop of Milan and Charlemagne in the 780's. As far as we know the initiative was Peter's, and it was confirmed by the king in 790. It may have been prompted by contacts which Peter had had with Alcuin in the years immediately prior to the foundation but there is no way now of being certain about this. This foundation is the only one recorded in north-western Lombardy at this time, and the particular Carolingian initiative behind it has led to a lot of discussion amongst historians of early medieval Milan as to the reasons for the foundation, which many have seen as predominantly political.⁽²⁹⁾ Anna Maria Ambrosioni has even suggested that Archbishop Peter may have used the foundation to make a political statement of the importance and independence of the city of Milan.⁽³⁰⁾

A close examination of the often difficult evidence leads one to doubt just how politically motivated the acts of Peter and Charlemagne were. Many scholars have become bogged down in the detail of the case whilst forgetting that such Benedictine foundations were appearing all over the Carolingian world in Charlemagne's day, as a direct result of the desires of the king and his advisers to create a more ordered worship of God.⁽³¹⁾ Many capitula of this period stress the need for a regular monastic life to be followed according to the framework set out in Benedict's Rule, and since we know that those clerics who were already present at the Sant' Ambrogio site were being endowed with property it is quite likely that the actions of Peter and Charlemagne were designed to regularise a process which had started some while before.⁽³²⁾ This remark is not designed to belittle the importance of the foundation of the Sant' Ambrogio

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monastery but simply to set it in the proper European context. If the matter is given such a perspective it comes as no surprise that Milan should have been chosen for such a community and that in Milan, the Sant' Ambrogio site should have been chosen. Ambrose was one of the fathers of the Church, and a favoured author amongst Frankish ecclesiastics. Piety then was probably the most important motive for the foundation.

The timing of the move is less easy to pin down with absolute precision. As we have seen the first record of the monasterium is dated 784. Interestingly this text also provides the first evidence of Peter as archbishop of Milan and this coincidence may be significant as it opens up the possibility that Peter founded the community as a gesture to mark the beginning of his episcopate. This is in fact quite likely as Peter's predecessor as archbishop, Thomas, who had baptised Charlemagne's daughter Gisela at Milan in 781, died in 783, according to his funeral stone preserved in the church of San Calimero in Milan.⁽³³⁾ According to Alcuin in letters he wrote in the 790's Peter was known as a man of especial piety and it is clear from them that Alcuin had a lot of respect for him.⁽³⁴⁾ The matter is complicated somewhat by the existence of the so-called ' Foundation Charter ' dated 789, which, as we saw in Chapter 1, is another interpolated text (as is the wont of monastic foundation charters). In essence it records the institution of the monastery in 789 by Archbishop Peter, who made Benedict, presbiter, the new abbot giving him and his successors rights over the basilica and its properties and the right to hold services there. The community was to follow the Benedictine Rule and to pray for the Carolingian royal family, pro regnum nostrorum felicitate et totius ipsorum populi sospitate and pro statu Sancte Mediolanensis Ecclesie. In compensation for the loss of property which the basilica priests had to suffer the archbishop gave his son Fortis,

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deacon there, his own estate, inherited from his family in Legnanello.⁽³⁵⁾ In a diploma dated April 790 Charlemagne confirmed the foundation of the community by Peter and added that the monks had the right to elect a new abbot upon the death of the previous one in accord with the provision in the Benedictine Rule.⁽³⁶⁾ After this there is no further reference to the monastery in any reliable source until 806.

As we saw in Chapter 1 these three texts of 784, 789 and 790 are all preserved in copies made long after the events they record.⁽³⁷⁾ Of these copies the diploma of Charlemagne is by far the most trustworthy. The other two texts much less so and as a result the events of the foundation have been examined at exhaustive length by generations of scholars. Most of them have missed the point that in actual fact it does not matter very much whether the community was founded in 784 or 789 since we have no other evidence with which to discuss the activities of the monastery at this time anyway. As Anna Maria Ambrosioni has rightly concluded there is no reason to doubt that the monastery was in existence by 790, that Archbishop Peter was responsible for its foundation, that Charlemagne confirmed it and that the community was Benedictine.⁽³⁸⁾ It should be added to this that we have no clear evidence of what property the monastery was endowed with, that Charlemagne, as was his wont, did not grant the new community any land and that altogether the community was a small one and as we shall see remained so for half a century.

A CHRONOLOGY OF LANDHOLDING IN NORTH WEST LOMBARDY: THE NINTH AND TENTH CENTURIES.

The purpose of this section is to give a rapid overview of the wider context of the development of Sant' Ambrogio's landholding over the whole period before

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analysing more closely the monastery's position in the ninth and tenth centuries . It begins with a section outlining where the property of other Lombardian churches was to be found in this period, both Milanese and non-Milanese. There is also some attempt to reach some conclusions about the extent of lay aristocratic landholding, although the evidence is less helpful here.

Ecclesiastical Property.

Although we may have grave difficulties in saying much that is detailed about ecclesiastical landholding in north-west Lombardy in the early middle ages it is at least possible to map what we know about the location of it (Map 5). Some interesting patterns emerge from this exercise, especially with regard to Milanese churches. As can be seen clearly from Map 5 there were particular concentrations of such owning in Milan itself, to the immediate west of the city, to the north-west and the south-west, and to a lesser extent in the Lodigiano. That said we have to remember that this information has been deduced from a small amount of documentation preserved within the archive of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio rather than from quantities of charters surviving for the institutions concerned. It is possible to look at these churches in turn, with particular attention possible for the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio and the monastery of San Vincenzo.

The properties of the Sant' Ambrogio presbiteri already showed a distinctively west/south-west orientation in the eighth century for, as we have seen, the basilica was then endowed with land in 'Brisconno', 'Torrighlas', Parabiago, Abbiategrasso, Lampugnano and Milan itself.⁽³⁹⁾ In addition there was a small oil render from the estate of Toto in Campione. Throughout the rest of our period the west remained a basic area of interest for the community, and we know, from the research of Ambrosioni

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into the later medieval holdings of these presbiteri that this was the case in the twelfth century also.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Their property was not confined absolutely to there, but it is notable that most of its ninth- and tenth-century acquisitions were also close to the city being found within fifteen kilometres of Milan itself. In order of their first appearance in the record they were Carpiano (823), Novate (852), ' Veniacum ' (864), Trenno (877), Paderno (877), ' Mellesiate ' (882), ' Cremellina ' (887), Cornaredo (894), Bustes (922) and Assiano (992).⁽⁴¹⁾

The monastery of San Vincenzo had a similar orientation, although somewhat further away from Milan. Its property was found in Sumirago (850), ' Veniacum ' (864), ' Maciacum ' (870), Quarzano/Bellagio (885), Quinto Romano (992), Bollate (992) and Nesso (992). In this case then a basic westward orientation was present but with some properties further north on Lake Como.⁽⁴²⁾

Both of these institutions had property in places where the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio did not have land, with of course some exceptions. This basic pattern is borne out if we look at the remaining Milanese churches. These are listed in alphabetical order:

Monastery of San Celso: ' Octavo ' and ' Bladinello ' (both 997). Senedochium of Datheus: Milan (787). San Dionigi: Milan (968), Bolgiano (968) and Nesso (992). Ecclesia estiva (SS. Pelagius and Tecla): Baranziate (994). San Giorgio al Palazzo: Lampugnano (926), Triulzo (964), Rossiate and others in the Lodigiano (970), Biscono (988), Vertemate and ' Cugino ' (988), near Cologno Monzese (995) and Milan (997). San Giovanni 'quatru facie': Comazzo (975) and Cambiagio (762). San Lorenzo: Rossate (992) and Milan (997). San Martino 'in compodo ': Osnago (950). Santa Maria ' Berterade ': Bolgiano (972) and Milan (993). Santa Maria ' Gisonis ': 'Valede' (912), Novate (912) and Milan (941). Santa Maria ' Hiemalis ': Trezzano (915), Rossate (992) and Milan

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(997). Monastero Maggiore: Carpiano (812), Octavo (848) and Novate (967) . Santa Maria ' Podonis ': Milan (871) and Lampugnano (974). Santa Maria ' Wigilinde ': Lecco (903), Milan (903) and Tavazzano (961). San Nabor: 'Veniacum' (864). San Nazaro: Milan (993). SS. Protasius and Gervasius: ' Boaria ' (870). San Simpliciano: Rho (late ninth century). San Vittore al Corpo: ' Veniacum ' (864), Milan (992), Nesso (992) and Assiano (1000).⁽⁴³⁾

As can be seen from Maps 4 and 5 the locations of the possessions of these churches correspond with those of the Sant' Ambrogio presbiteri and the monastery of San Vincenzo quite closely, leading to the conclusion that at this point Milanese churches had property largely in and around the city of Milan, with particular concentrations to the west and to a lesser degree to the south east between Milan and Lodi. We should note that this picture is reinforced when we remember Violante's discussions which have shown how men from the villages surrounding Milan were moving into the city in the second part of the tenth century and endowing the churches there with village lands in the process.⁽⁴⁴⁾

We have ignored in all of this archiepiscopal landholding, which is what we should really like to know most about. In fact we know very little with certainty: it is mapped in Map 6. However, we may plausibly assume that there was a great deal of it, and we may assume also that much of it was focussed on Milan and its immediate vicinity. This can be stated for the straightforward reason that most of the churches just discussed were endowed at some point with what was probably archiepiscopal land. We should remember too that these churches were under the direct ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the archbishop, sub regimine et potestate and that their priests were termed members of the sancte mediolanensis ecclesia. Where we do have explicit evidence of archiepiscopal landholding it is only with regard to

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the personal property of particular archbishops. This was very much focussed in the Brianza to the north of Milan. Archbishop Anspert had lands in Biassono, the village where he was born, and in its vicinity, but he also had considerable property within the city of Milan and at Lecco on Lake Como.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Archbishop Andrea had a similar dispersal.⁽⁴⁶⁾ However we know that archiepiscopal landholding was more extensive than this for, as we shall see, the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio received many important estates on the lakes in the north, where we know too that the archbishops had a villa at Bellano and property in Sorico.⁽⁴⁷⁾

If we turn now to non-Milanese churches some predictable patterns can be seen. There was far less owning by these churches in Milan itself, although there was some by churches from Monza, Lodi and even the monastery of San Silvestro di Nonantola.⁽⁴⁸⁾ There is no evidence that any church from Como had property in Milan. In essence the urban churches of Pavia, Lodi, Monza, Como, and Bergamo had, like Milanese churches, property within their respective cities and in the immediate vicinity of them. We do not know much beyond this about most of them. Of the exceptions the best evidenced is Sant'Abbondio di Como which, from the tenth century onwards, began to acquire a great deal of property in the Valtellina and around Lakes Como and Lugano.⁽⁴⁹⁾ This was important to Sant' Ambrogio because Sant' Ambrogio was trying to make inroads there too, as we shall see in Chapter 5. It is likely that the backing for Sant'Abbondio came from the bishops of Como in much the same way as the backing for the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio came from the archbishops of Milan. The two monasteries were caught up in a power struggle between the archbishops and the bishops of Como for jurisdiction over the Valtellina, about which more is said in Appendix 2 below. Here it should be noted that we

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do not know very much about the landowning of Como bishops, except to say that it may have been substantial and that it seems to have been focussed on Como, the Sottoceneri and the Valtellina.⁽⁵⁰⁾ A similar pattern has been found by Jarnut for the churches of Bergamo, which dominated Bergamo and its immediate vicinity, and held extensively throughout much of the diocese.⁽⁵¹⁾

Of important rural churches within our area we know comparatively less than for the urban churches, except of course where archives have survived. This means that for the churches of Civate, of Meda and Cairate we know little beyond the fact that what property they had, seems to have been relatively near the community.⁽⁵²⁾ The case of Santa Maria di Velate, which is better evidenced, supports this patterning entirely.⁽⁵³⁾ The Velate church had land in Velate, and in the Varesotto with a fair proportion around the lakes too which, as we saw in Chapter 1, were a key focus for much ecclesiastical landholding in the period. Santa Cristina di Olona, by virtue of its royal associations, had a wider spread of properties, including some on the lakes, but the core remained near the community in the Lodigiano and Pavese.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Of entirely extra-Lombardian churches we know simply that Nonantola ('Canonicum' and 'Pegusini'), Farfa (Rossate), the bishop of Novara (Valtellina) and San Denis (of Paris, rights to the entire Valtellina) owned some property within our area, but probably not much, and in the case of San Denis especially in little more than a token sense.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Lay landholding.

To discuss the property of laymen is not easy in this period for the simple reason that although there were many more laymen than churches, and, at least at the start of our period, probably far more involvement of laymen in landowning than churchmen, our evidence remains very much

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ecclesiastically-oriented. In spite of the fact that laymen did not for the most part keep records we are not left without evidence of lay activities, for it is in the very nature of the build-up of church property in these centuries that most of it came from lay sources, and that these lay sources will appear in the texts recording grants or purchases. It is even the case with the Sant' Ambrogio collection that about 20% of the documents record transactions between laymen with no overt church involvement at all. These are especially important for they indicate a society in which laymen were using documents to record their property rights. There are even a few places, such as Isola Comacina, a famous island fortress in Lake Como, where churches were little involved in the transfer of property rights, the majority of charters dealing with lay/lay transactions.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Therefore, as Violante and Keller have shown, it is possible to build up a detailed picture of the landholding of some laymen in the Milanese, above all in the second half of the tenth century when the documents in which laymen appear increase in numbers.⁽⁵⁷⁾ However, because the Sant' Ambrogio documents do focus primarily on Sant' Ambrogio we have the same problem as we have for the other churches: we often know where properties were and who owned them but we usually can see little in detail. Even so we have a sufficiently wide spread of documentation for an analysis of the property of laymen of widely differing social positions to be undertaken.

We can begin with royal landowning and work down. Royal property holding in early medieval Lombardy was thoroughly examined by Darmstaedter in the late nineteenth century, and his basic picture remains valid with a few, largely minor, modifications.⁽⁵⁸⁾ He was able to show that both Lombard and Frankish kings had sizable concentrations of fiscal property in and around the city of Pavia, the capital of the regnum Italiae. In the area

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which concerns us most directly - that between Pavia and Milan - royal land dominated, probably throughout our period. We know for certain that there were royal estates at Locate, Corteolona, Inverno and royal property scattered elsewhere, including the village of Carpiano.⁽⁵⁹⁾ It is no surprise that such a concentration should appear between these two cities, and it may be that Milan was more important to kings than has often been thought. As far as Milan itself was concerned we are less well informed than for Pavia. Archaeologists are certain that the imperial palace of Roman times ceased to be used in the early medieval period, probably being replaced by Sant' Ambrogio itself as the chief royal stopping off point.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Of explicit instances of royal owning within the city we have only the case of some royal land near the mint in the tenth century.⁽⁶¹⁾ There must have been more which has gone unrecorded. Further north we know from the Sant' Ambrogio documentation that there was royal land in Monza, Cologno Monzese, Palazzolo, Cornaredo, Limonta, the Valtellina, and a clutch of other unidentified estates, many of them lakeside properties.⁽⁶²⁾

At the level of the great aristocrat we are also quite well informed. The property of Count Atto of Lecco has been discussed by Violante and Martinelli, and it amounted, in the latter part of the tenth century, to many thousands of acres scattered throughout the diocese of Bergamo/comitatus of Lecco.⁽⁶³⁾ Some of his estates were individually very large and most of them seem to have been well sited beside rivers, roads or lakes to make surplus produce easily transportable. Atto had little to do with Sant' Ambrogio but his holdings give a good idea of how extended the lands of a great man could be. Unfortunately we know far more about him than the counts of Milan or the counts of Seprio who are obviously of more immediate interest to us. The reason for these gaps must be that these counts too had few property dealings with the

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monastery of Sant' Ambrogio. Some information about their properties is preserved within the Sant' Ambrogio corpus but it amounts to very little. The counts of Milan had property in Palazzolo, in Milan itself (the curte ducatis) and in the village of Balerna near Como.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Sigeratus, royal vassus and member of this family gave the latter to Sant' Ambrogio in 865, a gift which was followed up by a gift of property in Albiolo nearby, and Gropello d'Adda by Amalricus, viscount of Milan and probably a member of the same family as Sigeratus in 870.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The counts of Seprio had property in Seprio (presumably), in Cairate nearby and in Casterno.⁽⁶⁶⁾ There must have been more - very probably scattered throughout the comitatus of Seprio - but we know nothing about it. At a guess it is likely that a lot of it was located in Brianza and the Comasco, for these two areas are largely blank on any of the maps we can construct of ecclesiastical landowning, but this remains a guess and nothing more.

To add to this picture we have snatches of information concerning men who, although not city counts seem very likely to have moved in the same circles and owned quite extensively. Many of them were, predictably, royal vassals or officials, Franks or Alemans and probably gained their Italian properties via their royal connections or via military activities.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Into this category can be put Ernost, royal vassus and his brother Hunger of Milan active between 810 and 840, who between them had properties in Gnignano, Carpiano and Faino (in ~~the~~ area between Milan and Pavia), and in Ello, Mariano and Settimo in Brianza, as well as 10 manses in unknown locations in Italy;⁽⁶⁸⁾ Gerulfus ministerialis of the emperor in 864 and Godiprand, imperial vassus who had property in the Valtellina, and near Pombia in the Novarese;⁽⁶⁹⁾ Count Alpicharius, an Alemannic count and baiolus of Adelaide daughter of King Pippin, made a sizable donation to Sant' Ambrogio of properties

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scattered over the Comasco and Varesotto in 842, properties which he had purchased from Draco of Lovernaco (in the Bresciano) in 807.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Other men, such as Atto of ' Canimalo ', who had connections with the bishops of Bergamo and Archbishop Anspert of Milan, may have fallen into this category but we simply do not have enough material to be certain of this. What is notable about such men is that their property spread over more than one comitatus/diocese in most cases, providing evidence of wide-ranging social contacts.

Lesser men, medium-sized landowners, are sometimes quite well evidenced, largely because these men had more to gain from a more prolonged association with churches like Sant' Ambrogio and so appear more frequently than great aristocrats in the charters. Their landowning was less extensive than that of the great men, often confined principally to one village with some owning in the immediate vicinity. Into this category fall families such as the da Campione, the Leopegisi of Cologno, the Anselmi of Inzago, and men such as Adelgisus of Schianno and Scaptoald of Sumirago who all appear elsewhere in this thesis, and the families from Triulzi, Bolgiano, Baggio and Novate, studied by Violante, who were moving into Milan in the course of the tenth century and who in the process of becoming Milan residents were recorded in charters through which they acquired their urban property.⁽⁷¹⁾ Men of this type formed the elites of village society, but disappeared quickly once urbanised.

Of smaller owners we know least of all. There were likely to have been many of them, for the charters are witnessed by hundreds of individuals about whom we know nothing but their names, places of origin and sometimes that they could sign their names. Most of these men probably owned some land, mostly in villages rather than in the cities: some certainly did for they appear in transactions with the monastery or other churches. The

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distinction between them and the medium-owners may sometimes have been very fine, and their fortunes could change, causing them to lose out to churches, sometimes entirely. They never appear in a context which suggests anything more than small-scale owning: land parcels were small, property restricted to one place, purchases made with small amounts of coin. As owners at all they probably remained above the level of the bulk of the rural population, who are likely to have been servile tenants, and at village level they may have been considerable men.

From the discussion so far it can be seen that patterns of landowning in north-west Lombardy were complicated before the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio existed and continued to be complicated throughout our period. Complex tenorial patterns are likely to have been particularly characteristic of Milan itself, above all in the tenth century with the increasing movement of men into the city from the surrounding villages. But it was certainly not a case of Milanese men owning land in Milan and nowhere else, for many of them did buy land in surrounding villages, although it is notable that there were few Milanese owners, especially laymen, who had property in the Valtellina or further north, and equally few whose holdings extended beyond the boundaries of the diocese of Milan. It was also probably not chance that the old-established urban churches and the archbishops had the bulk of their lands closest to the city as the networks of property rights of which these lands formed a part resulted from centuries of church (as opposed to simply monastic) presence. The eighth century, with the influx of a new politically dominant group of Franks and Alemans, complicated further existing relationships. There were always very many possibilities for competing claims to arise, but there can be little doubt that the particular circumstances of the Frankish conquest increased these

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opportunities as did the presence of a new institution such as the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, which, as we shall see, encountered some challenges. Even more certain was the need which the monastery had of patronage if it was to have any chance of making inroads into a world where tenurial patterns were already well-established, particularly in the early years of its existence. The rest of the chapter traces the acquisition of property by the monastery in outline, with the purpose of showing how the community became an owner, as well as when and where.

SANT'AMBROGIO PROPERTY, c.800-c.1000.

If we wanted to characterise the developments discussed here in terms used by an old, but still well regarded, economic theory we could say that the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio only reached 'take off' in the second half of the ninth century. Before then its property acquisition was a slow process, and very one-sided: people gave the monastery land which the community, represented by its abbot and praepositi, made very few efforts to organise territorially. During the decade 845-855 changes began to become very clear: the abbots were buying/selling/exchanging land with other churches and especially with a multitude of laymen, which it will be argued later, was 'rationalising' activity. The early period - c.800 to c. 845 - was nonetheless very important for during that time the monastery was endowed with properties over which it retained control throughout our period and beyond, properties which were so valuable economically that the abbots simply could not afford to let them go. Equally important was the fact that the grantors of these estates were kings, archbishops and other great aristocrats, so this formative time saw the beginning of relationships with the most powerful men in the land which were to endure throughout the period also, almost (but not quite) regardless of who happened to be king or

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archbishop at any given point. Since the rest of the thesis is primarily concerned with periods post-835/845 it is essential to consider here the events of the earlier period.

It was noted above that after the foundation of the community in 789/790 further reference to it ceases until 806. Apparently there were no small pious gifts to the community in the immediate aftermath of its appearance. It maybe that gift-giving to churches was going out of fashion here as in other parts of Italy, although the usual reason given for this development - that churches were so rich after the great gifts of the eighth century as to no longer seem worthy of donations - hardly applies in the case of Sant' Ambrogio, so recently founded and so obviously poor. And anyway of the six charters we have for the period 792-804 one is a gift to a church (San Zeno di Campione).⁽⁷³⁾ What we are seeing here is a situation prophetic of what was to come: small pious gifts never figured substantially in the endowment of Sant' Ambrogio. Instead the donations which the community did receive (which as can be seen from Table were at some periods quite numerous) came from important men and comprised important property.

The 806 gift epitomised this.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Significantly it was made by the archbishop, now Odelbert, as Peter had died at the beginning of that year. To the abbot, Gaudentius, for Benedict was also dead, he gave the oratory of San Vincenzo and his own estate there of ' Prata ' . San Vincenzo was about 1 km to the south-west of Sant' Ambrogio, and like it was outside the city wall (see Map 1 p. 349). The gift was deliberately made to the abbot for the period of his lifetime only with usufruct rights not to the community as a whole. The association persisted though as another Gaudentius was abbot both of Sant' Ambrogio and San Vincenzo in 835.

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This gift was followed up by one of property only a kilometre west of San Vincenzo, even nearer to Sant' Ambrogio. In March 814 Rotfrend, fbn Sichemarius, qui et vocatur Prando, of ' Wattingo ' in the Valtellina, gave the monastery property near the bridge of Sant' Eustorgio in Milan.⁽⁷⁵⁾ The gift, which was a provision of his testament bequeathing Valtellina properties to churches in Vercurago and Dervio, was conditional: first it was offered to a certain Punno who, if he wanted it had to pay 2 pounds of silver to Abbot Deusdedit of Sant' Ambrogio for it. Otherwise the property was to pass to the monastery. Presumably the monastery did get it as it preserved the charter. Clearly what we have here is a gift made by a man with wide-ranging property interests, one of the few to own in both Milan and the Valtellina. He may have been regarded as an aristocrat, we cannot tell, but it is interesting that already someone living far away in a mountain valley wanted to give property to Sant' Ambrogio. The property too was quite valuable and it may be significant that it was near one of the bridges providing entry to the city (there may have been associated toll rights).

These two charters record the only two gifts made to the community between 790 and 835. The fact that both properties were Milanese (even though suburban) is important, as is the fact of their proximity to each other, to Sant' Ambrogio and their location to the south of the city, near the road to Pavia. The importance resides in the fact that in the next quarter century Sant' Ambrogio acquired a series of properties in villages a little further south along the road to Pavia, and so what we have in this early period may mark the beginnings of an economically coherent unit of properties focussed on the road between two markets, Milan and Pavia. The other important point about the gifts^{is} who made them: an archbishop and an aristocrat (in all probability).

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Important though these gifts must have been to the community in terms of revenue it would be unwise to leave the first quarter of the ninth century without pointing out that they were isolated events. The overriding characterisation of the period must be as one in which Sant' Ambrogio remained remarkably property-less. This lack of property is hard to explain, particularly so in view of the fact that it was during this period that kings Pippin and Bernard were buried in the basilica, beyond the fact that neither king was especially generous to followers. The oddity derives from the fact that the archbishop of Milan was certainly a key supporter of Bernard: the chroniclers claim indeed that he was one of the instigators of Bernard's rebellion against Louis in 817.⁽⁷⁶⁾ In view of the way the rebellion ended there must have been a political import to the fact that Bernard was buried at Sant' Ambrogio. It may be that Sant' Ambrogio's fortunes were not helped by association with these kings, or even that any gifts they had made were retracted by Louis and documents destroyed.

Continuing with the ' early period ' we find that for the most part the Sant' Ambrogio corpus contains charters in the 820's and 830's which do not directly involve the community in property transactions but which are part of longer sequences of events which eventually did result in monastic ownership. As we shall see in later chapters these charters are of a character which does not permit us to know if the abbots of the period (or for that matter anyone else) was consciously embarking upon transactions with a view to this eventual endowment. They concern villages of the plains which were to form one of the cores of Sant' Ambrogio interests in the rest of the period. What we have recorded here are not straightforward gifts to the community but groups of charters recording buying, selling and exchanging of property - mostly parcels of land rather than whole estates - between laymen

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or between laymen and representatives of the church of Milan, notably the vicedominus of the archbishop, his senior lay official, in the villages of Gnignano, Carpiano and Cologno Monzese (see Map 8 p. 355). The Gnignano/Carpiano sequence begins in 792 but it was not until the 830's that Sant' Ambrogio became heavily involved.⁽⁷⁷⁾ The Cologno sequence begins in 830, when Abbot Deusdedit exchanged properties in Fresorio for land in Cologno with a local lay owner, a member of the Leopegisi family whose relations with the monastery make up in large part the ninth century history of Cologno.⁽⁷⁸⁾

The community was also involved somewhat more directly on several occasions in this period in places for which long sequences of charters have not survived. In 822 the monastery was involved in its first explicitly recorded court case, concerning the personal status of Luba, a servant from Cercino in the Valtellina.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The monastery was represented in the case by Nonio, monk and praepositus which is the first reference to such an official in the Sant' Ambrogio texts. The charter does not make it clear whether Luba lived on monastic property in Cercino, although that was clearly possible. She may have been attached to the monastery's curtis at nearby Dubino, which is recorded for the first time in 837, although it may not have been a new monastic possession at that date.⁽⁸⁰⁾ This charter is important because it serves to modify the somewhat crude picture just outlined of the monastery as passive recipient of gifts. Another charter of 826 - the first recorded purchase of property by the monastery - gives a similar impression of the beginnings of deliberately acquisitive practices by the monastery. It was a fairly small scale transaction in which Sunderarius, presbiter and prepositus at Sant' Ambrogio paid 10 ounces of silver to Arifret clericus and his brother Alfret form Mornago, for land in Biandaronno, on the shore of Lake Varese.⁽⁸¹⁾ Although the motives behind the transaction

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are lost to us now as we can no longer tell upon whose initiative it was undertaken, the one thing it was not was a simple gift to the monastery.

To conclude thus far: the early history of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was not dominated by small pious donations. There were none of these at this time. Instead the foundation was followed by two important but nonetheless isolated gifts in 806 and 814. By the 820's the monastery was becoming involved in disputes and in buying land, both of which were to remain important activities in the centuries that followed. Royal interest in the community seems to have waned in the early ninth century, and certainly there was never any early royal endowment that we know about. In the 820' and 830's there are clear signs that, in a few places, the monastery was beginning to make an impact of sorts. By 835, when the next phase of monastic history begins Sant' Ambrogio was still a relatively property-less foundation.

In 835 all this changed. The community suddenly became very much richer, or at least it acquired estates which gave it the opportunity to be richer if they could be exploited effectively. In 835 itself Sant' Ambrogio was given eight curtes, as a result of combined royal and archiepiscopal patronage.⁽⁸²⁾ In the ten years that followed other estates were granted by Frankish and Alemannic aristocrats, probably in response to the royal lead of 835. This meant that by 845 the monastery was in the position to embark upon a much more aggressive policy of property acquisition which lasted until the end of the century.

The charters which record the events of 835 are in most cases interpolated, as we have seen in Chapter 1, but there is no reason to doubt the gifts themselves.⁽⁸³⁾ Events moved rapidly so that whereas the community, as far as we know, had only one property which was territorially

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consolidated (curtis) at the beginning of the year by May it had a further eight. On the 24th January the emperor Lothar gave Sant' Ambrogio the fiscal estate of Limonta on the western shore of Lake Como (Lario).⁽⁸⁴⁾ In March Archbishop Angilbert II gave the community curtes in Campione, Agrate, Capiate, ' Oleoductus ', ' Ceresiolla ', ' Lucum Sinterani ', and ' Gattunadum '.⁽⁸⁵⁾ This was confirmed in May by Lothar. These gifts gave Sant' Ambrogio a network of properties which stretched over much of north western Lombardy, which were economically both valuable and viable as a single unit as we shall see later. They provided much of the basic framework of its patrimony which persisted throughout the ninth and tenth centuries and form much of the discussion of subsequent chapters.

We are left with the question of why these grants were made to a community which was not particularly favoured by kings or archbishops hitherto. Part of the answer rests in Carolingian politics which saw Lothar trying to reinforce his position in Italy at this time by buying support of those who mattered.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Archbishop Angilbert certainly mattered if we are to believe Andrea of Bergamo for it was he who brought about the reconciliation of Lothar with his father Louis the Pious very probably at exactly this time, possibly even in 835 itself.⁽⁸⁷⁾ This particular archbishop was to be one of the monastery's great benefactors and defenders, undoing the work of Archbishop Angilbert I his immediate predecessor whom the monastery accused of leasing out its estate in Cologno Monzese to a vassal either in 822 or 823.⁽⁸⁸⁾ Neither Louis nor Lothar seem to have had much support at Milan in the early 820's, which was perhaps not surprising as Archbishop Anselm - Bernard's supporter - did not die until 822. Both kings were probably endowing the church of Como at this period (if we can believe a set of rather dubious-looking diplomata), with Louis

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granting an estate on the shores of Lake Lugano in 818 and Lothar granting market rights at Chiavenna and Valtellina property in 823 and 824.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Seen in this light the events of 835 mark not simply a major donation to Sant' Ambrogio but the very rehabilitation of Milan within the Carolingian scheme of things.

This interpretation - which is conjectural rather than demonstrable - is reinforced by what happened to Sant' Ambrogio in the years immediately following 835. In the following year, 836, Hunger of Milan, brother of Ernst royal vassus bequeathed to the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio properties in Gnignano, which he had been acquiring with the aid of Gunzo, vicedominus of Milan over the previous few years.⁽⁹⁰⁾ In 842 the Alemannic count Alpicharius, brother of another royal vassus Authecarius gave to Sant' Ambrogio (in usufruct until his death and then with full property rights) a substantial number of tenant houses in the Varesotto, centered on the villa at Sumirago.⁽⁹¹⁾ Both of these gifts were framed in terms of pious bequests, which recalls Lothar's gift of Limonta which was made for soul of a young relative of his wife's, but they may nonetheless have had political motives too.

From the 840's until the end of the century the monastery entered on a dynamic period of acquisition and reorganisation of property which is discussed at much greater length in Chapters 4 and 5. One aspect of this was to consolidate the holdings already acquired by this time, of which the most notable were the estates at Limonta, Campione and Dubino in the north and properties in the villages of Cologno, Gnignano, and Carpiano further south. This involved the community, and especially Abbot Peter II in purchases of new property in these places, management and reorganisation of existing property which involved the community in a large number of court cases to fend off challenges to its actions. Gifts of land in these places

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no longer happened. Alongside this there was the acquisition of land in new places altogether, sometimes as the result of purchases made either with land or money but more commonly as the result of gifts which continued to be made to the community until the last decade of the ninth century. The details of these new acquisitions are perhaps tedious but are set out here in full for the sake of completeness (they are mapped in Map 7 p. 354).

Property was given to the community in this period in Gudo Gambaredo (844), San Cristoforo Occhiate (853), Canobio (863), Balerna (865), Gessate (870), Albiolo/Gropello/Canobio (870), Cavenago/Lecco/Milan (879), Ouarzano/Bellagio (885) and Palazzolo (894). Property was purchased by the community in Mendrisio (847), Gessate/Inzago (848), Lamone (854), Bladino (876), Rossate (885) and Concorezzo (892).⁽⁹²⁾ It must be remembered that this activity took place in addition to that involving places where the monastery already had land by 845, and that the latter activity was far more extensive, which is why Chapters 4 and 5 are devoted to it. If we glance once more at the map of Sant' Ambrogio's properties as recorded by the end of the ninth century and compare it with the situation pre-835 the great increase in potential resources is readily apparent. To appreciate the rate at which these changes happened we should not forget either that the period 789-835 (forty six years) is not so very much less in duration than the period 835-894 (fifty nine years). It was in the later ninth century therefore that the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio emerged as a powerful landlord, on an aristocratic scale. Some of this activity resulted in the establishment of a sizable monastic presence, notably in the villages of Gessate, Inzago and Cavenago and to a lesser though still important degree in the area to the south-east of Como, in the villages of Mendrisio, Balerna and Albiolo.

The essential points which emerge from the ninth

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century then are these. A slow beginning to acquisition, followed by a rather rapid build-up of property after 835, which was notably rapid in the 850's and 860's. By the end of the century Sant' Ambrogio was a major landowner in a variety of places, focussed especially on Cologno Monzese, Gessate, Inzago, Cavenago and surrounding settlements to the north east of Milan, the villages of Gnignano and Carpiano to the south east of the city, Campione and a series of villages in the Comasco, some villages in the Varesotto, Limonta on the Bellagio peninsula, and Dubino in the Valtellina. As we might have expected the community had little if any property to the west/south west of the city or much in the Lodigiano - where as we have seen other churches, many of them intra-urban Milanese, owned. Less expected perhaps was its rather paltry showing in Milan itself considering that the latter part of the ninth century it was increasingly the object of archiepiscopal patronage. But as has already been suggested tenurial patterns in Milan are liable to have been the most complex of all.

In many respects the tenth century saw little change in these processes. The monastery's interests continued to be in those places where it had established its rights by the end of the ninth century. So what we see in the tenth century is rather more of the consolidatory activity which had begun in the latter decades of the ninth, especially in Cologno, Gessate, Inzago.⁽⁹³⁾ There was apparently much less activity in Gnignano, although there the monastery began to acquire rights in the nearby village of Arcagnano. Further acquisitions were made too on northern sites, notably Cressogno, Arogno, Vepra and Castiglione d'Intelvi.⁽⁹⁴⁾ However, these activities are recorded in documents which have changed in character: we are now faced with reams of ' exchanges ' permuti rather than straightforward sales or gifts (see Table 7). The change may have been largely one of recording practices,

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as in essence the exchange was simply a sale with land as the medium of exchange rather than money.⁽⁹⁵⁾

Gifts to the community tailed off markedly in the tenth century until they began to revive again at the turn of the century. Nonetheless there were some, largely still archiepiscopal and royal. The 903 Archbishop Andrea gave the abbots land in Milan, in 942 kings Hugh and Lothar gave them three estates in Basiano, Felizzano (now in the province of Alessandria) and ' Monte ', in 951 further Milanese property from Otto I and in 998 Otto III added some inland properties on the Bellagio peninsula to Sant' Ambrogio's Limonta estate.⁽⁹⁶⁾ There were no gifts from small or medium owners, and none either it should be said from great aristocrats, some of whom were under-going difficulties in holding onto their own properties in the later part of the century. The absence of a strong Carolingian interest in northern Italy the latter half of the century also helps to explain this waning of aristocratic gifts. Of purchases made with money it appears that Sant' Ambrogio did not make even one in the tenth century, although other Milanese churches did.

The style of discussion in this chapter has been kept deliberately schematic: its purpose has simply been to introduce the subject matter with which the rest of the thesis is concerned. No attempt has been made here to examine what sorts of rights the monastery had over all this property, how they may have varied from place to place or what measures the community was able to employ to defend these rights as these are all questions for later chapters. What has been done is to introduce some key themes - royal/archiepiscopal support for the monastery, gift-giving by other aristocrats - mostly Frankish or Alemannic - following in its wake, the necessity of relations with owners of medium status ('village elites') - and the chronological and spatial context within which such relationships took place.

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TABLE 5.
Number of Gifts per decade to MSA.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
781-790											
791-800											
801-810											
811-820											
821-830											
831-840											
841-850											
851-860											
861-870											
871-880											
881-890											
891-900											
901-910											
911-920											
921-930											
931-940											
941-950											
951-960											
961-970											
971-980											
981-990											
991-1000											

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TABLE 6.
 Number of Sales/Exchanges per decade involving MSA

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
781-790											
791-800											
801-810											
811-820											
821-830											
831-840											
841-850											
851-860											
861-870											
871-880											
881-900											
901-910											
911-920											
921-930											
931-940											
941-950											
951-960											
961-970											
971-980											
981-990											
991-1000											

>>>=Sales
 |||=Exchanges

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NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE.

1. G.P. Bognetti in Storia di Milano, vol. 2 (Milan, 1953) pp. 303-342 and 717-803. G. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni nel Contado Lombardo durante il Medioevo. Cologno Monzese secoli VIII-X (Milan, 1968). A.M. Ambrosioni, ' Per una storia del monastero di Sant' Ambrogio ', AA, 40 (Milan, 1980) and ' Sant' Ambrogio di Milano ', in Monasteri Benedettini in Lombardia, ed. G. Picasso (Milan, 1980). Bognetti is very much preoccupied with culture and high politics, Rossetti with the defined space of Cologno and Ambrosioni with the religious history of the community. All three consider the landholding of the community (especially Rossetti) but none treats it in its entirety.
2. R. Krautheimer, Three Christian Capitals: topography and politics (Berkley, 1983) pp. 68-92. M. Sordi, 'Milano ai tempi di Ambrogio', in 1600 anni della Basilica Ambrosiana [atti del convegno di studi 31 Maggio 1986] (Milan, 1986) pp. 5-14. M. Mirabella Roberti, Milano Romana (Milan, 1984) pp. 120-124 discusses the Roman archaeology of the corpi santi. A. Palestra, ' I cimiteri paleocristiani Milanesi ', AA 28 (1975) pp. 23-47; ibid ' Tombe paleocristiane e altomedievale a Milano ' in Archaeologia e storia a Milano e nella Lombardia orientale (Como, 1980) pp. 305-315.
3. D. Bullough, ' Burial, Community and Belief in the early medieval West ' in Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon society, ed. P. Wormald (Oxford, 1983) pp. 85-105.
4. S. Lusuardi-Siena, ' Milano nei suoi edifici. Alcuni problemi ', in Milano e I Milanesi, pp. 209-240.
5. Versum de Mediolano Civitate, ed. G.B. Pighi (Bologna, 1986) and MGH Poetae Latini Aevi Carolini, vol 1 ed. E. Dummler (Berlin, 1880-84).
6. G.B. De Rossi, La Roma Sotterana Cristiana, vol. 1 no. 136 (Rome, 1864).
7. FORC 3, n.265 (Pippin), FORC 3, n. 266 (Bernard), FORC 3, n. 267 (Lothar II), FORC 3, n. 271 (Bertha). NAT 57 (Ugo). For the archbishops see the comprehensive volume by J.C. Picard, Le Souvenir des Evêques. Sépultures, listes épiscopales et culte des eveques en Italie du Nord des origines au X siecles (Rome, 1988) pp. 17-108, 604-632.
8. E. Cattaneo, ' La tradizione Ambrosiana come esperienza religiosa culturale cittadina ', in Milano e I Milanesi, pp. 119-136.
9. See above Chapter 1 pp. 49-53.
10. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy (London, 1981) p. 43.
11. NAT 11, above pp. 50. ' Brisconno ' was near the

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- village of Vermezzo (Boselli, p. 54).
12. NAT 28, above pp. 51.
 13. NAT 17, above pp. 50. The identification of Cascina Torrette (IGM Milan ovest 45 III NE) makes more sense than those given in CDL (Torrette near Lodi) and in Olivieri (Torriggio, near Locate) because of the reference to a cassina in ' Torriglas ', and more importantly because of the build-up of other Sant' Ambrogio property in the area. The Latin implies that ' Torriglas ' was near Sant' Ambrogio. For discussion see G.P. Bognetti, ' Introduzione alla storia medievale della basilica Ambrosiana ', L'età Longbarda, vol.1 (Milan, 1963) pp. 349-380, at pp. 367 and 372 [originally published 1942].
 14. NAT 23, above pp. 50. For the identification of 'Abiate' as Abbiategrasso Olivieri, p. 45 and Boselli, p. 17-18.
 15. NAT 24, above pp. 51.
 16. The decumani/canons at Sant' Ambrogio are discussed by A.M. Ambrosioni in Le Pergamene della Canonica, pp. xiii-xiv.
 17. J.E. Niermeyer, Mediae latinitatis Lexicon Minus, pp, 163-64.
 18. Bognetti, Basilica Ambrosiana, p. 370. Also useful for these events is P. Bondioli, La Fondazione del monastero di Sant' Ambrogio nei documenti del secolo VIII (Milan, 1931).
 19. NAT 26, above pp. 50.
 20. NAT 29, above pp. 51.
 21. Bognetti, Basilica Ambrosiana, pp. 366-73; Bondioli, Fondazione di Sant' Ambrogio, pp. 18-35; Ambrosioni, Storia di Sant' Ambrogio, pp. 291-294.
 22. CDL 845, 965 and many more in the twelfth century.
 23. CDLS 82.
 24. CDLS 231.
 25. CDLS 155.
 26. CDLS 218 and CDL 61.
 27. E. Occhipinti, ' Appunti per la storia del Monastero Maggiore di Milano in eta medioevale. Il problema delle origini e la configurazione giuridico-patrimoniale ', SSDM 2 (1977) pp. 47-96; E. Cattaneo, ' Il Monachesimo a Milano dalle origini all'eta postcarolingia ', AA 40 (1980) pp. 7-29; A Capitani d'Arzago, ' La chiesa romanica di S. Maria d'Aurona ' ASL ix (1944). By the twelfth century Santa Maria had property in Brianza, about 15km north of Milan centered on Binzago and Cesano Maderno [Le Pergamene del secolo XII del Santa Maria d'Aurona di Milano, ed. M.F. Baroni (Milan, 1984)].
 28. NAT 25, see below Chapter 5 pp. 206
 29. This discussion is summarised by Bognetti, Storia di Milano, pp. 327-335.
 30. A.M. Ambrosioni, ' Gli arcivescovi nella vita di Milano dai Carolingi ai Ottoni ', in Milano e I

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- Milanesi, p. 97.
31. R. Mckitterick, The Carolingian Church and the Frankish Reforms (London, 1978).
 32. The most notable Italian capitula of this period which deal with monastic life are those enacted under Pippin precisely in the 780's, MGH Leges II, Capitularia Regni Francorum vol. 1 (Hannover, 1881) n. 89, 90 and 91. This legislation is discussed by F. Manacorda, Ricerche sugli inizi della dominazione dei Carolingi in Italia (Rome, 1968) pp. 43-139 ' I documenti legislativi del Regno Longobardo '.
 33. FORC 1, n. 505.
 34. MGH Epist. Carl. Aevi, II, n. 126, 312 and 317. Archbishop Peter attended the council of Frankfurt in 794 (Annales Laureshamenses, MGH SS in folio vol. 1). He is discussed by Savio, Antici Vescovi, pp. 306-312.
 35. The Legnanello passage is clearly an interpolation, see above pp. 51.
 36. NAT 30, discussed below Chapter 7 pp. 306 .
 37. Chapter 1 pp. 49-53.
 38. Ambrosioni, Storia di Sant' Ambrogio, pp. 291-292.
 39. NAT 11 and 28 (Brisconno); NAT 17, 26, CDL 1001 (Torriglas); NAT 22 (Parabiago); NAT 23 (Abbiategrasso); NAT 24 (Lampugnano and Milan).
 40. Ambrosioni, Le Pergamene della Canonica, map on p. xli.
 41. NAT 48, 62 and CDL 1003 (Carpiano); NAT 87, CDL 269 (Novate); CDL 233 and 244 (Veniacum); CDL 269, 429 (Trenno); NAT 135, CDL 931 (Paderno); CDL 312, 684 (Mellesiate); NAT 153 (Cremellina); NAT 159 (Cornaredo); CDL 498 (Bustes); CDL 371, 868, 974 (Assiano); CDL 766 (Milan).
 42. NAT 85, CDL 614 (Sumirago); CDL 233, 244 (Veniacum); NAT 120 (Maciago); NAT 152 (Quarzano/Bellagio); CDL 867 (Quinto Romano and Bollate); CDL 868 (Nesso).
 43. The charters are respectively: CDL 937; CDL 61; CDL 709, 868; CDL 884; CDL 517, 682, 683, 715, 845, 894, 926, 971; CDL 762; CDL 868, 932; CDL 592; CDL 741, 880; CDL 447, 556, 564, 674, 704; CDL 457, 868, 936; NAT 48, 90 and CDL 704; CDL 252, 752; CDL 403, 649; CDL 233 and 244; CDL 880; NAT 120; FORC 4, n. 135; CDL 233, 244, 868, 974;
 44. For example the transactions involving Bolgiano and Triulzio south of Milan, Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 126-127, 153-156.
 45. NAT 124, 131, 132(Cavenago property); NAT 137 and 138 (Biassono, Lecco, Milan).
 46. CDL 403, Milan, Cucciago, Bazzana, Cermenate, Macconago, Quinto Sole, Lecco i.e. mostly in Brianza.
 47. CDL 416/417 (Bellano); CDL 465 (Sorico).
 48. For Monza and Lodi see notes 23-26 above. Nonantola, NAT 137 (Milan).
 49. CDL 259, 475, 542, 679, 799, 810. Sant'Abbondio. Lo

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- spazio e il tempo. Tradizione storica e recupero architettonica (Como, 1984) contains important articles.
50. Como charters: CDL 94, 101, 104, 189, 205, 281. G. Orsini, ' La giurisdizione spirituale e temporale del vescovo di Como ', ASL v.5 (1955) pp. 131-191.
51. J. Jarnut, Bergamo 568-1098 (Bergamo, 1980) pp. 19-50.
52. G.P. Bognetti and C. Marcora, L'abbazia benedettina di Civate (Civate, 1957); NAT 95 (Meda); A. Deiana, ' Cairate e il suo territorio nell'alto medioevo ', in Documenti per la storia del territorio di Cairate (Milan, 1984) pp. 91-96.
53. R. Perelli Cippo, ' Ricerche sul borgo di Velate e sul santuario di S. Maria di Monte in eta medioevo ', NRS lvi (1972) pp. 642-674. Inventari Altomedievali, pp. 13-16.
54. Inventari Altomedievali, pp. 29-40.
55. Nonantola: CDL 182 (Canonicum finibus Laudense) and CDL 333 (Pegusini finibus Mediolanensis); Farfa; Il Regesto di Farfa, vol. 2 , n.163; Novara: Le piu antiche carte dell'Archivio di s. Gaudenzio di Novara, ed. C. Salsotto (BSSS, 1937), doc. 2 (property in Traona). S. Denis: MGH Dipl. Karl. Lothar 1 , ed. T. Scheiffer, (Berlin, 1966) n. 13, Oct. 833.
56. See above p. 25.
57. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 123-167. Keller, Adelsherrschaft, pp. 167-253.
58. P. Darmstaedter, Das Reichsgüt in der Lombardei und Piemont (568-1250), (Strassburg, 1896) pp. 80-82, 162-175.
59. Darmstaedter, Das Reichsgüt, pp. 167-9, 189, 191-3. CDL 136 (Locate), CDL 132, 282, 353, 381 (Corteolona).
60. S. Lusuardi-Siena, Milano nei suoi edifici, pp. 216-222. C.R. Bruhl, ' The town as a political centre: general survey ', in European Towns, ed. M. Barley (London, 1976) pp. 419-429, especially p. 426 for Sant' Ambrogio as a ' monastery-palace ' of a type outlined by Bruhl in his Palatium und Civitas, vol. 1 Frankia (Koln, 1975). As a point of evidence it needs to be noted that there is no explicit reference in any text of the ninth or tenth century to Sant' Ambrogio as a palatium, and it is unlikely that it ever acted as a palace in the way the building at Corteolona clearly did.
62. See note 58 above.
63. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 190-191. L. Martinelli, ' Note sui beni fondiari di un grande proprietario del secolo X: il conte Attone di Lecco ', SSDM, 1 (1976) pp. 1-15.
64. NAT 101, 115, 163.
65. NAT 115, 121. D. Bullough, ' Leo qui apud Hlothario

- magni habebatur ', Le Moyen Age, 67 (1961) pp. 219-245.
66. NAT 142. The activities of the counts of Seprio are still rather mysterious despite the research of Bullough (see note 65 above) and Bognetti, Storia di Milano vol. 2, pp. 578-602. In the first part of the ninth century, as Bullough has shown, the Seprio counts were of the same family as the counts of Milan. In the second part of the century this was not the case. In the tenth century Nantelmo count of Seprio fought with Atto count of Lecco against Otto I in the 960's. The site of Castelseprio, perhaps the best known early medieval archaeological site in Lombardy, remains controversial with a multiplicity of datings of the famous frescos in the church of Santa Maria foras portas, ranging from the seventh to the eleventh century. Recent excavators findings are reported in the annual Notiziario of the Soprintendenza Archaeologia della Lombardia. See also G.P. Brogiolo and S. Lusuardi-Siena, ' Nuove indagini archeologiche a Castelseprio ', in Atti del IV Congresso Internazionale II (Spoleto, 1980) pp. 475-500 and N. Christie, Settlement and Defence, pp. 132-145 which is currently the best discussion in English. There is very little certain evidence deriving from the excavations which links anything at the site with the ninth-century counts, although it has recently been argued (C. Bertelli, 'Castelseprio e Milano', Settimane di Spoleto, (1988) pp. 869-906.) that the richness of the decorations in Santa Maria and at the tower at Torba, with their notable Byzantine influences, may be sufficient to link them with aristocratic patronage, namely the counts of Seprio. This is interesting but the link is at best tenuous.
67. The best summary is E. Hlawitschka, Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder in Oberitalien (774-962) (Freiburg, 1960).
68. See below Chapter 4 pp. 186-189.
69. See below Chapter 5 p. 362.
70. NAT 40, 68, 70a and 71. From this small dossier of texts the following story emerges. In 807 Alpicharius paid 8 lbs of silver to Draco of Lovernato, in the territory of Brescia, for properties scattered across a large part of northern Lombardy. Not all the properties can be identified now but of those that can four - Vergiate, Sumirago, Cislago and Germignana - were all in territorio civitatis sebriense (Seprio), two Locarno and Somma Lombardo in the comitatus of Stazzona/Angera (on Lago Maggiore). 'Florasse' was beyond the river Po, that is over 100 km away at the least. At some point between 823 and 840 Alpicharius went to court in Milan (before Leo count of Seprio) to defend his right to these lands

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- which had been challenged, whilst he was away in Frankia on royal business, by Ragipert and Melfrit, brothers from ' Rezano '. The latter conceded the case because, although they had entered the property with a charter whilst Alpicharius was away, they felt they could not endure a case which looked like being lengthy. Both these charters clearly came into the possession of Sant' Ambrogio when Alpicharius gave the properties to the monastery in 842. It is argued below that this gift was one of several made to Sant' Ambrogio by royal vassi in the wake of Lothar's gifts of 835. That is to say it had a basically political motivation, as part of the emphatic attempts of kings to endow the monastery in the mid-ninth century.
71. See above note 57.
 72. W. Rostow, The Process of Economic Growth (Oxford, 1953).
 73. NAT 37.
 74. NAT 38. Odelbert has traditionally been regarded as an especially pro-Carolingian archbishop by virtue of his supposed authorship of a letter to Charlemagne supporting the Roman style of baptism. His authorship has been entirely disproved recently by S.A. Keefe, 'The claim of authorship in Carolingian Baptismal expositions: the case of Odilbert of Milan ', in Fälschungen im Mittelalter, vol. 5 pp. 385-402.
 75. NAT 45.
 76. The politics of early Carolingian Italy can be studied in C.J.Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 47-63; G. Tabacco, Egemonie Sociali, pp. 145-156; and T.E.X. Noble, ' The revolt of king Bernard of Italy in 817: its causes and consequences ', SM 15 (1974) pp. 315-326. Andrea of Bergamo, Historia, chs. 5 and 6 on Anselm's involvement in Bernard's revolt.
 77. See below Chapter 4 p. 187.
 78. See below Chapter 4 pp. 167-169.
 79. NAT 47. For the wider context of this case see below Chapter 5 pp. 237.
 80. NAT 63.
 81. NAT 50.
 82. NAT 57, 58, 59, 60.
 83. See above pp. 53-54.
 84. NAT 57, discussed below Chapter 5 pp. 220-221.
 85. NAT 58, discussed further pp. 54 and pp. 149.
 86. See citations in note 76 above.
 87. Andrea of Bergamo, Historia, ch. 7 told by Andreas with some style, for example the dialogue (Louis) 'Sic contenis te, quasi sanctus Ambrosius sis!' (Angilbert) 'Nec ego sanctus Ambrosius, nec tu dominus Deus.'
 88. NAT 114, discussed below pp 169.
 89. CDL 94, 101 and 104.
 90. Below Chapter 4 pp. 186-189.
 91. Above note 70.

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92. NAT 75/76; 90; 109/110; 115; 120; 121; 138; 150; and 158. NAT 81; 82/83; 92; 133; 151; 155.
93. See below Chapter 4 pp. 172-173, 181-183, 192-193.
94. CDL 542, 834.
95. C. Violante, ' Per lo studio dei prestiti dissimulati in territorio milanese ', in Studi in onore di A. Fanfani, vol. 1 (Milan, 1962) pp. 643-735.
96. CDL 402, 570, 599, 939.

CHAPTER FOUR.

LOWLAND ELITES AND THE MONASTERY: COLOGNO, INZAGO AND GNIGNANO.

The preceding chapter was concerned with the broad overview. In this one it is time to begin the more detailed consideration of the processes of acquisition and possession in which the monastic community, led by its abbots, increasingly became involved in the course of the ninth century. To understand these processes it is vital to examine the gradually evolving social relationships which developed between Sant' Ambrogio and the men of the wider world. As we saw in the last chapter these men were of diverse social origins and position, ranging from kings to, some might argue, peasants. Some may have acted as individuals, but most behaved as members of family or kin groups, at least when encountering churchmen. Others, of course, were churchmen themselves, part of church communities other than Sant' Ambrogio. Given the basic characteristics of the charter material we should expect to be able to follow the dealings of these people with the monastery (or other monasteries) only in a very fragmentary way, if at all. Most are just names, and therefore have no place in a study such as this. However, we are fortunate that pockets of material have survived which do enable us to follow in some depth the history of particular individuals and their families over a longish period of time and so to trace the vicissitudes of their relationships with the monastery and vice versa.

The best known of such pockets of material concerns the village of Cologno Monzese, mid-way between Milan and Monza on the road to Bergamo. The history of those who lived there in the early Middle Ages has preoccupied Italian historians for many years , with the

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consequence that interaction between Cologno society and the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio has already been much discussed, most notably by Rossetti, but also by Bognetti and Violante.⁽¹⁾ As a result Cologno has become a standard north Italian example of monastic penetration into village society, and is even quoted in textbooks.⁽²⁾ Therefore, it has seemed sensible - since Cologno can hardly be ignored in a work such as this - to discuss at the beginning of this chapter this secondary work and the ideas expressed by it. It is not intended to redo work already done, but rather to employ the 'Cologno model' as a point of departure for the study of other places and other types of relationships, less well-known in the secondary literature.

SANT' AMBROGIO AND THE SOCIETY OF COLOGNO MONZESE

At the outset it must be pointed out that much of the work done on Cologno does not have as its major concern the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio. Bognetti and Violante were both much more concerned with the nature of Milanese society, with the impact of the urban on the rural world. In the case of Bognetti this gave rise to the study of the developing village community, the commune rurale; with Violante the focus was more on the degree of 'social movement' between Milan and Cologno (and other villages near the city) and what this revealed about la società Milanese.⁽³⁾ Although both devoted some attention to Sant' Ambrogio, this line of enquiry was only systematically carried out by Gabriella Rossetti, in her book on Società e istituzioni in early medieval Cologno where she has a whole chapter concerning the penetration of Sant' Ambrogio into Cologno and the surrounding area.⁽⁴⁾ Essentially it is that chapter which forms the basis of the discussion of Cologno in this chapter. It must be remembered that in her book it is only one part of

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the whole, and that she devotes considerable attention to the society of the village and its relationships with Monzese, as well as Milanese, society (5).

The reason for all this historical attention is simple: Cologno is well-documented by north Italian standards, having thirty-seven charters which relate to it more or less directly.⁽⁶⁾ This quantity of material enabled Rossetti to construct a detailed narrative of events, sticking closely to the literal content of the texts, over a sufficiently extended timespan to provide a clear impression of the changes which took place in the village between the early ninth century and the late tenth century. Before considering the validity of some of her assessments, I want first to give a rapid overview of the sweep of Rossetti's arguments.

What Rossetti found (and to a degree Bognetti and Violante before her) was a relatively slow and sustained process of acquisition by the monastery of land parcels in the village and its vicinity , which was at its most intense in the second part of the ninth century but which continued into the first half of the tenth century before easing off, and indeed being in part reversed in the later tenth/early eleventh centuries. Monastic intrusion had begun some time prior to 830 (the date of the first surviving Cologno charter, an exchange of land parcels in Cologno and nearby Freserio between the abbot and a member of the Leopegisi family, where existing monastic land appears in the boundary clause).⁽⁷⁾ Rossetti argued, on the basis of considerable though not cast-iron evidence, that this early presence was the result of a gift of a curtis regia to the community by the royal gasind Aribert sometime in the late eighth or early ninth centuries.⁽⁸⁾ Not unreasonably this has been presumed to have been fiscal property of some sort at some time before Aribert made the gift, but this is no reason to postulate any close connection between royal and

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monastic activities in the village at this date.⁽⁹⁾

After 830 the monastery entered into a series of transactions (mostly sales and exchanges) with the Leopegisi and some other Cologno families, which brought it numerous land parcels to add to the curtis which it already had. Rossetti argues forcefully that these activities reflected a conscious, very deliberate policy of property management undertaken by successive abbots, particularly abbot Peter II between the 850's and 890's.⁽¹⁰⁾ The overriding motive , she argues, was to establish a large monastic patrimony in a village with strategic as well as agricultural importance to the monastic community. This ' economic activity ' was pursued with the encouragement of the archbishops of Milan and at the expense of the leading local family, the Leopegisi, whose economic and social position in the village went into sharp decline, ' a serious family economic crisis ' as Violante put it.⁽¹¹⁾ Their decline was paralleled by that of the only other reasonably well documented local family, the de Sertole.⁽¹²⁾ The upshot was that the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio controlled, according to Rossetti, ' vast landed wealth ' by the end of the ninth century, centred on the Cologno curtis, which had thus been enlarged, even incorporating properties in neighbouring settlements.⁽¹³⁾ The monastery had acquired rights over the village mill, that potent symbol of lordly domination, by this date too.⁽¹⁴⁾ The key event of the first part of the tenth century was the building of a castellum by the monastery near the village, in the 920's, which represented, according to Rossetti, the development of political powers by the abbots (powers of dominium) over a significant part of the territory of the village as a direct result of its already strong economic presence.⁽¹⁵⁾ However, these powers did not affect the entire village community: parts of Cologno society remained outside the abbots' political jurisdiction, and

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possibly their economic control too.

Rossetti's conspectus ends in the late tenth/early eleventh century with the increasing presence in the village of new property holders, almost exclusively from Milan, who began to buy up land in the wake of the monastery. This development was first noticed by Violante who demonstrated that these acquisitions of, '...numerosa proprietà allodiali di privati ' were dominated by purchases made by negotiatores.⁽¹⁶⁾

After this swift outline of the basic events it is necessary to return to the more problematic parts of Rossetti's argument in order to examine more closely how the monastery actually made the inroads that it did into the holdings of the Leopegisi and other families. Rossetti's discussion covers four generations of the Leopegisi family, for whom it is possible to construct a fairly elaborate family tree (see p.195).⁽¹⁷⁾ She concentrates very much on her perceptions of the activities of Benedict and his son Walpert arguing that they were concerned to maintain the integrity of their family holdings in the village, as evidenced by cautious provisions to safeguard the interests of female members of the family in order to avoid family property passing out of the family's control.⁽¹⁸⁾ However, because of partible inheritance (Benedict had four children, Walpert three) the block of Leopegisi lands was broken up, and the monastery was the beneficiary. It had the inbuilt advantage of not being subject to the ' rules ' of inheritance which governed the way family land was dispersed upon a father's death.⁽¹⁹⁾

One reviewer of Rossetti's book came to the conclusion that her study gave the impression of, '...an all-conquering monastery gobbling up the lands of a depressed peasantry '. As an overall assessment of the

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book this is not entirely fair (as she herself pointed out in a reply she had written a great deal about other churches/laymen who were involved in the village alongside Sant' Ambrogio) but it does raise useful questions concerning Rossetti's assessment of the social and economic status of the Leopegisi family.⁽²⁰⁾ She does not at all give the impression that they were peasants at the beginning of their involvement with the monastery, since, as we have seen she terms them, ' proprietari di vaste estensioni di terre '.⁽²¹⁾ This is really pushing the evidence too far: their properties were confined to Cologno and its immediate vicinity, and we know too little about the extent of them (recorded sizes are few) to say that they were anything more than village notables. Even if they were possessores of importance in Cologno, we do not have sufficient information about their pre-830 position to assess as confidently as Rossetti does the true nature of the impact the monastery made on them. Many of these reservations can, of course, be attributed to the inadequacies of the evidence, which it is impossible to do anything about, but we should be careful also of attributing too unique a position to this family since we know so little about other Cologno families, who however, we know were there and owning land.⁽²²⁾ Rossetti's charting of the ' decline ' of this family may therefore be somewhat overstated. This does not deny that its essence is true for the Leopegisi did surrender lands to Sant'Ambrogio and certainly found themselves in reduced circumstances. In 876 the surviving family members (two children) were reduced to begging the viscount of Milan to ensure that they received a fair price from their purchaser for the last properties which remained under their control.⁽²³⁾ By this time they were reduced to the status of tenants, and may indeed have been peasants.

However, it is possible to query Rossetti's picture of family solidarity in the face of monastic

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threats. There is evidence that Walpert, son of Benedict, was unhappy about his father's alienation of property to the abbot, even though he himself had witnessed one of the charters recording this in 861.⁽²⁴⁾ In 865 he appeared in court against the abbot. ⁽²⁵⁾ The latter was claiming that Walpert had occupied part of the Cologno curtis, had cut down part of the monastery's woodland there and terra nostri monasterii aravit. Walpert disputed the monastic claim - that the community had acquired the property from Petrus, clericus of ' Albairate ', who had got it from Walpert's father Benedict - and claimed instead to have received the property from his uncle Antzevert. The monastery demonstrated the validity of its case by producing the charters in which Benedict had agreed to the transfers of his property: a gift to Peter in 842 of property near the molino de heredes Nazarii de Tenebiaco; a sale of 861 in which Benedict sold the mill itself to Peter for 40 solidi and the donatio of 863 in which Peter gave the mill to the monastery. Walpert, who had no charters to support his case, conceded and the monastery won. This text clearly illustrates that Walpert was unhappy with his father's actions and had decided to do something practical about it: he occupied the land and exploited it as his own. But the tactic failed and in the following decade Walpert's brother Gaidulf, his widow Rachiberga and his sons Andreas, Agiulf and Dragulf succumbed to monastic pressure.⁽²⁶⁾

This observation raises important questions about the extent of the monastery's practical control over a property, which has major repercussions for our understanding of the efficiency of the exploitation which the charters seem to indicate was very effective. The economic side of this question will be discussed further in Chapter Six, but we should not forget the social side of such problems (in actuality the two were not of course distinguished).⁽²⁷⁾ Walpert's action is evidence of

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resistance to monastic encroachment, resistance which Rossetti devotes too little space to , given the fact that there are three surviving placita for Cologno, a high number for one village in this corpus. The matter can be best illustrated by examining another court case concerning Cologno in a little more detail.

In May 859 Abbot Peter went in person to Archbishop Angilbert of Milan to accuse Lupus of Schianno, the son of Adelgisus.⁽²⁸⁾ He claimed that Lupus had illegally taken possession of the monastery' s curtis and senodochium in Cologno, which were, by the fact of a gift made to the monastery by the royal gasind Aribert, monastic property. The archbishop immediately instructed his senior lay official Giso (his vicedominus) to summon the aggrieved parties to a court hearing in the city. At the hearing Lupus claimed to be the archbishop' s own vassal by virtue of an arrangement that he had made with Angilbert' s predecessor, Angilbert I, and that by this arrangement he held the Cologno estate from the archbishop as a benefice. The monastery produced documents to support its case (Aribert' s charter of donation and a libellus describing the returns owed by two tenants to the monastery who worked the estate in Cologno). Lupus was unable to produce any documentation to back up his claims (because the archbishop would have had them, if they had existed) and he lost the case.

Lupus, was not it seems very interested in the Cologno property, and did a deal with Sant' Ambrogio regarding properties nearer to his home which he was interested in. Indeed that was probably his reason for challenging the monastery in Cologno in the first place.⁽²⁹⁾ The monastery seems to have challenged Lupus not simply over the question of ownership. What seems to have mattered in a case of this sort, for the monastery, was the loss of income which resulted.

Both these challenges to the monastery' s

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hegemony over its Cologno estate were of course resisted by the monastery, with the backing of the archbishop, and this Rossetti quite properly emphasises: the monastery needed powerful backers if it was to have any practical control over its properties wherever they were and whoever had given or sold them to the community.⁽³⁰⁾ At this stage the monastery defended its property on the basis of its powers as landlord rather than with any claims to a wider-ranging jurisdiction over the population of the village as a whole. What was most essential was the maintenance of a careful balance with those who were locally powerful but also it was vital to be able to call upon the help of backers more powerful than the abbots were at this period, when this balance broke down.

In view of these remarks it is possible that Rossetti's model is a little unbalanced, a fact probably to be explained by the isolation of Cologno from the wider context of monastic properties. In particular her overstatement of the social position of the Leopegisi needs to be toned down. They were never as significant as landowners as she suggests. They did not have - at least as recorded - anything to do with other aristocrats or bishops as did other owners in nearby villages. They were not it seems a village family of the first order. Indeed there is strong evidence to suggest that they may have been cultivators. Therefore Rossetti, in overestimating how far the Leopegisi fell gives too much weight to the domination of Cologno society by Sant'Ambrogio.

This discussion has intentionally been kept short to leave space for treatment of less well known and often contrasting material to set Cologno in its proper context. But within its limits it has provided enough material upon which to draw for these comparisons. In order to clarify the comparative possibilities it is useful to sum up at this point. The 'Cologno model' indicates one sequence of events by which it was possible

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for Sant' Ambrogio to become the dominant landlord in a village some distance from the city. Building upon an early aristocratic gift of consolidated property the abbots increased their holdings in dealings with local families, and one in particular, the Leopegisi, whose lands (and supposedly dominant position in Cologno society) it took over in the middle decades of the ninth century. Its relationship with the Leopegisi was not one-sided, for there is evidence of resistance by some members of the family.

In the last decades of the ninth century, when the Leopegisi were no longer important in the village, the monastery entered into a group of transactions with the church of San Giuliano di Monza, the result of which was control for Sant'Ambrogio of the Cologno church of San Giorgio (an oratorium previously under the dominium of the Monza church) and associated properties, in return for ceding to Monza the basilica of Sant'Eugenio di Concorezzo, a village 2km east of Monza and about 7km north of Cologno. (31) This meant that by the end of the ninth century Sant'Ambrogio had succeeded in replacing the two previously dominant landlords in the village to become, in Rossetti's words ' the only lord ' .(32) Rossetti does point out that it is hard to be certain of the extent of this domination in the late ninth century, because there are hints in the material that others still owned land in the village. But we simply cannot know if these rights rivalled those of Sant'Ambrogio.(33)

As we saw above, the first half of the tenth century saw a consolidation of the monastic position with the building of a castrum near the village by the monastery. It is first referred to in a charter of 943 (in a boundary clause) but Rossetti argued (and this is accepted by Settia in his major monograph on incastellamento in the Po Plain) that it was constructed

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sometime in the 920's.⁽³⁴⁾ In this instance there is no evidence that the monastery had received any royal grant to do this (as many others, lay and ecclesiastical, did at the same period) and it is therefore argued, with wide acceptance by historians, that this castrum represented a crystallisation of the monastery's economic domination into political powers over a dependent population. In the case of Cologno it is not clear if these powers extended over the whole village community, but it seems unlikely because the monastery appears to have built it in san Giuliano, near, not in, Cologno, with the result that at no time was the whole village fortified. In fact there is clear evidence that people continued to live in Cologno outside the castle as well as inside the fortifications.⁽³⁵⁾ This was a common north Italian pattern. In the latter part of the tenth century other ' outsiders ' did begin to buy their way into Cologno ownership, as Violante demonstrated thirty-five years ago. Yet it should not be forgotten that these transactions were made either with Sant'Ambrogio or the church of Monza, no-one else.

INZAGO, THE ANSELMI AND SANT'AMBROGIO.

About ten kilometres north-east of Cologno are the villages of Gessate and Inzago. Both have a terrain similar to that of Cologno' s, and can be shown to have had very similar agriculture in the early Middle Ages.⁽³⁶⁾ Although neither quite possesses an early medieval documentation as detailed as Cologno' s, with twenty-seven charters between them they are still well evidenced for the period.⁽³⁷⁾ In a general sense this documentation has a similar character to the Cologno charters: it illustrates increasing monastic presence in the mid- to late-ninth century as the result of dealings with one

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local family, the Anselmi of Inzago, with a wider range of contacts visible in Gessate involving many more local families in the tenth century. It makes sense to treat the two villages together partly because Inzago is better evidenced for the ninth century, Gessate for the tenth century, but also because the villages are in such close proximity to each other that even small landowners had property in both.

Sant'Ambrogio is first recorded with land in the villages in 848, that is about two decades after its property is first mentioned in Cologno. We know very little of the pre-848 tenurial patterns in the villages, although some guesses are possible as we shall see. The monastery made its first recorded impact as landlord here as the result of a transaction with a Gessate man, Gunzo son of Izeni, in March 848.^(37a) Gunzo sold a sizable amount of property (land parcels and tenant houses) in both Gessate and Inzago to the abbot for the large sum of 30 pounds of coined silver. The abbot gave it back to Gunzo in usufruct for his lifetime in return for an annual payment of a few solidi , Gunzo thereby becoming the abbot' s tenant for this property. Although we can only guess at Gunzo' s motivation, most probably he needed the cash, for he had no family to protect with bequests of land (he was childless and had no other legitimate heirs) and he therefore had no apparently obvious reason for integrating himself into the abbot's patronage networks. He had little to lose by becoming the abbot's tenant for this property and everything to gain from a large monetary payment such as this. It seems that he had not in fact alienated all his property to the abbot for the text says that the lands only formed part of his inherited or acquired holdings in the two villages. The property involved was not, as far as we can tell, yet a consolidated holding - organisationally-speaking - , for

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it is not termed curtis at this point. So, the Gunzo transaction, whilst it provided the monastery with an important position in the community as a major landlord, meant that there was plenty of scope for further consolidation later.

To carry out this consolidation the abbot and his agents were likely to come up against other parties interested in acquiring (or indeed having already acquired) property in Gessate and/or Inzago. As in the 'Cologno model' there were other churches paying attention to these villages, but it was a churchman with a ' private ' interest who was the most prominent: Garibald, the bishop of Bergamo. Bishop Garibald became involved in the villages via dealings with an important local force: Anselm of Inzago, son of Agemund and head of the family whom I am choosing to call the Anselmi (see the genealogy on p.). Anselm is first recorded in 840 witnessing a donatio in Ghisalba, some twenty kilometres north-east of Inzago, and only ten kilometres from Bergamo itself.⁽³⁸⁾ The transaction involved the church of Bergamo as recipient, and provided clear evidence both of Anselm's capacity to range beyond the confines of his village to forge useful social contacts and of his Bergamasque political interests.

In the course of the next thirty years Anselm succeeded in amassing a substantial landed base to add to the property he must have inherited from his father in Inzago (to make him suitable to act as a witness). These property transactions can be examined in some detail because Sant' Ambrogio preserved his charters (see Map 8).⁽³⁹⁾ As can be seen from the map they indicate that Anselm' s interests (as recorded) concerned an area alongside the western bank of the river Adda and were more wide-ranging than those recorded for the Leopegisi. If the transactions themselves are examined in detail it becomes clear that Anselm was, in terms of the society of Inzago

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at least, an important man, having connections with the bishop of Bergamo and the Milanese churches.

In 855 Anselm bought some tenant houses in Inzago from Garibald of ' Criberiago ' (most probably nearby Cambiago) and his son Anselm.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Garibald was Anselm's father-in-law by this time as his daughter Gottenia is recorded as Anselm's wife in this charter, because she had her usufruct rights over tenant houses in Bellinzago confirmed by Garibald here too. Anselm paid Garibald 120 solidi for these Inzago properties, a considerable sum reflecting Anselm's status as a medium-sized owner.

Garibald had acquired the property he sold to Anselm from a local man, Wago of Gessate, son of Tauto, and three years later Anselm had dealings with Wago too, when he purchased a wood in Gessate (silva Tacianica , about 2.4 hectares) and also a vineyard there (terra vitata at Sorbalo).⁽⁴¹⁾ The following year Anselm continued his buying in Comazzo, ten kilometres south on the Adda, where he bought a few tenant plots and another vineyard.⁽⁴²⁾

These activities show Anselm to have been an important man in local society. He had money, some of which he used to widen the scope of his holdings beyond those which he had inherited in Inzago itself. It is true that up to this point we see him dealing with other local men who may well have been as rich as he was. The events of the next few years came to distinguish Anselm from them, as he began to deal with the bishop of Bergamo and the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁴³⁾

Anselm and his family figure prominently in the testamentum of Garibald, bishop of Bergamo, which was drawn up in 870.⁽⁴⁴⁾ With it it seems that Garibald was making provision for his family property. Anselm's presence is likely to be because the bishop seems to have had some sort of kin relationship to Anselm, for the

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testament refers at one point to their mutual relations (parentes nostri). We do not have enough material to say how they were related: bishop Garibald's father was Isoni and he had a brother, Auprand who was a royal vassus but since we know that Anselm's father was Agemund it seems most likely, if he had been a brother of Garibald that the text would have mentioned that fact. A more likely possibility is that Garibald was related to Anselm's wife Gottenia as the bishop makes provision for her too in his testament.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Whatever the case, the fact of a kin relationship between bishop Garibald and Anselm is very important as it provides a very likely reason for Anselm's dealings with the bishop, helping to explain Anselm's concern to ease himself into the bishop's patronage networks.

The document is very enlightening on Anselm's property and it confirms the impression that Anselm was an important man locally. Indeed, by this date he was probably the owner of as much property in Inzago and its vicinity as the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio had in Cologno at a similar period. We are told that Anselm had sold his estate (curtis) in Inzago to Bishop Garibald, probably in March 870, a month before the testamentum was drawn up.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This estate appears to have been organised on the classic bi-partite systema curtense model: a demesne at the centre (represented here by Anselm's residence - sala - and the area of directly supervised cultivation, the domo coltilis) with numerous tenant houses around it. The estate was near the village church of Sant' Apollinare. Anselm's sale to the bishop did not constitute a total alienation of all his rights over the estate however, for the bishop wanted to set up a xenodochium there, under the control (domenium) first of Anselm himself and then of his son Gundelassius, clericus.

Anselm's female kin were provided for too, in this arrangement. His wife Gottenia received the usufruct

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of the sala in Inzago and some vines there, a farm in Gessate and some tenant plots in Bellinzago. Upon her death all were to revert to the xenodochium, under the control of her son. Garibergera, Anselm's daughter, who was a nun at the monastery of Santa Maria ' Wigilinde ' in Milan, had similar rights over tenant houses in Inzago, Masciago, Boaria and Noviculta (some of which were properties the bishop may not have received from Anselm) (47) . After her death the rights were to pass, in the first instance to Gundelassius her brother, but upon his death they were to be split between the xenodochium and the Milanese monasteries of SS. Protasius and Gervasius and San Vincenzo. Bishop Garibald, with the explicit consent of his brother Auprand, retained ultimate control over the property which he had received from Anselm, and, most importantly, although the Anselmi were to remain lords of the xenodochium until the death of Gundelassius, in the end the property was to pass to the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, Milan.

For all that the charter reveals about Anselm and his family its overriding message is what it tells us about Bishop Garibald' s power. The bishop was deciding what to do with the property, seemingly with Anselm' s consent. If, as seems probable, the latter had married into the episcopal family via Gottenia, his activities in the 850's, his property purchases and subsequent alienation to the bishop may be seen as an attempt to maintain cordial relations with the bishop and his powerful brother too. This may have involved his children entering the church, both in Bergamo and Milan. This Milan angle may seem odd at first sight, but it becomes less odd if it is recalled that not only were the bishops of Bergamo ecclesiastically subordinate to the archbishops of Milan but that Bishop Garibald in particular was to cooperate, in 875, with Archbishop Anspert in the latter's daring retrieval of the body of the dead emperor Louis

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II.(48) Anspert was himself a considerable patron of Sant' Ambrogio, as we saw in Chapter Three, and indeed was doing things similar to Garibald with his large estate in the nearby village of Cavernago.(49) Garibald, by patronising the archbishop's favoured monastic foundation, may also have been aiming to integrate himself into a patronage network: that of the archbishop of Milan. The Anselmi then may have been caught up in politics at the highest level.

The fact that this sequence of Inzago charters survives in the archive of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio shows us that the monastery did indeed benefit from the bishop's will as intended: the monastery took over control of the xenodochium and curtis in Inzago. How it happened is interesting, because it sheds further light on the Anselmi. An important notitia of 874 demonstrates clearly that this had happened by then.(50) The document is principally concerned with property in another of our well-evidenced villages, Gnignano, where we learn Anselm of Inzago had controlled various properties, which he had sold to Bishop Garibald in March 870 along with his Inzago/Gessate properties. The bishop, having made no reference to them in his testament of April 870, had given them back to Anselm's son Gundelassius in October of that year, together with other property in Castello di Liscate, which he had also obtained via Anselm. By 874 Anselm was dead, and his widow Gottenia had sold her property in Gnignano (which had made up part of Anselm's bridal gift to her) to their son Gundelassius. A month later Gundelassius promised his property to Sant' Ambrogio for his soul. It was not an unconditional gift however, for Gundelassius received in return lifetime leases on properties in Gessate, Inzago, Noviculta and Nesso (on Lake Como).(51) In doing this Gundelassius had the consent of Bishop Garibald and his brother Auprand, indicating that the bishop's interest in his xenodochium and its dominus had not waned: Gundelassius was in a sense

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the bishop' s agent.

Unfortunately, we cannot know for certain what became of the Anselmi after this for they disappear from the record. The likeliest suggestion is that the family died out when Anselm's children, nun and cleric, died. So, their story ends up frustratingly incomplete, and if we try, as we must, to explain why Anselm pursued the course he did, more or less plausible hypotheses can be the only result. Anselm evidently had a considerable spread of property when he married Gottenia sometime before 855: he did not owe his position to his connections (as recorded with the bishop). In terms of social status then, he was already among the élite of the village when he came to the attention of the bishop of Bergamo, and their patron/client relationship developed. The bishop was certainly more powerful than Anselm, who, as we have seen, was no more than a medium-sized owner. Probably, his episcopal connection enhanced Anselm' s status in the village, and by placing himself and his family under the protection of the bishop and his brother, this position may have been secured from local challenges. We should not of course be too hasty to attribute the activities of these people to material concerns. There was an overtly religious aspect to Anselm' s family and piety may have been an important motivating factor. However, this does not adequately explain why a simple donation to the relevant church would not have been sufficient. The complicating element is the involvement of Sant' Ambrogio. There can be little doubt that the Anselmi had been the monastery's principal route to substantial landlordship in the village of Inzago, and to a lesser extent Gessate too. The fact of Sant' Ambrogio's presence in the villages as early as 848, should not be ignored, especially so given the, admittedly remote, possibility that its donor then, Gunzo, may have been a distant member of Bishop Garibald's family.⁽⁵²⁾ It is possible that dealings - now unrecorded

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- with other Inzago owners had provided the monastery with its initial means of entry into Inzago society as landlord, but whether the monastery would have become so involved in the villages without the bishop is now impossible to tell (given the limitations of the evidence).

Whatever the plausibility of the reasoning behind these events, the outcome as far as the monastery was concerned was clear. By the end of the ninth century it had a valuable estate in Inzago, a consolidated property, and numerous properties in Gessate and neighbouring villages. The monastery had simply taken over an already dominant position. The Inzago charters for the ninth century do not reveal the presence of many other 'outsiders' in the village, beyond a few local Gessate owners. In the tenth century the pattern continued: apart from Sant' Ambrogio, we hear only of the local priests (descendants of the Anselmi ?), one Gessate man and the church of San Vittorio di Meda as Inzago owners.⁽⁵³⁾ Inzago had become a monastic base from which to expand into the surrounding area, which was what happened in the tenth century.

The way in which this ' expansion ' was accomplished was different from the schema just outlined for the ninth century. In the first place there is virtually no evidence at all for Inzago in the tenth century: this is , arguably, not the result of later losses of once existing charters, but because monastic attention had shifted to Gessate.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Gessate is quite well-evidenced in the tenth century, and the documentation shows that the monastery had dealings there with a wide variety of local men and churches rather than with a single family.⁽⁵⁵⁾ None of the property acquired appears to have been consolidated: it was all small land parcels and tenant plots, which very probably returned renders to the main curtis in nearby Inzago. There is no reason to

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construct a narrative from these charters: all it would show was a very piecemeal build-up of monastic property.

This basic characterisation - consolidation in Inzago in the ninth century followed by piecemeal acquisition in Gessate in the tenth century - is complicated by the fact that castra existed in both Inzago and Gessate by 960. Too little is known about them to make much of their presence. The first recorded reference to the Inzago castrum dates from 941, where it appears in a boundary clause referring to a farm prope puteo de castro, a farm which the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio was exchanging with a field elsewhere in the village.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The manner of its reference suggests that it had been built before 941, but we cannot know when.⁽⁵⁷⁾ Indeed the reference is so brief that we do not know where it was in relation to the village. A reference of 1015 to property in vico Anticiaco (Inzago) nec infra castro de eodem loco, nec infra villa suggests that it was not in the heart of the settlement but outside it.⁽⁵⁸⁾ The problem of who built it is even more awkward: it may have been Sant' Ambrogio, but there is slim possibility that it was the count of Bergamo. Certainly the comital family had interests in the area because in 985 the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio secured a promise from William, son of Aupo (who had been count of Bergamo, presumably in the 960's) not to interfere with the monastery's lands and tenants here.⁽⁵⁹⁾ If it is tempting to argue that the Inzago curtis was superseded by a monastic castrum it can only be hypothetical.⁽⁶⁰⁾

There may be some significance in the fact that the Inzago castrum appears in the record before the Gessate castrum, given the evidently more consolidated nature of the monastery's Inzago holdings, but the Gessate evidence is as open to speculation as that for Inzago: the castrum is first referred to in 957, but was probably in

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existence before then.⁽⁶¹⁾ Again the mode of reference is not particularly enlightening; sedimen...juris basilice sancti Petri scita vico Glassiate, qui rejacet in suprascripta vico et fundo Glassiate, non longe da castro ipsius vico. And again it is not clear who built it, although Sant' Ambrogio would seem to be the leading candidate. There is, however, a yet more basic problem with these castra: why should there be two in such close proximity to each other? If they were built by different lords then the problem disappears but if, as seems likely, Sant' Ambrogio built both, we need to ask why. We saw in Chapter Two that incastellamento is a well worn theme of Italian historiography, and the consensus about monastic castles in the north of Italy is that they represented economic power translated into political power over the village community.⁽⁶²⁾ However, it is a notable feature of both these instances that in neither village does the monastery seem to have become sole lord by the date when the castra are known to have been in existence, and in Gessate it is unlikely to have happened at all, before the eleventh century. The most plausible explanation is that the castra had reference only to the monastery's direct dependants as opposed to the entire village population. Possibly, they were attempts to increase domination over the villages which failed, as happened in the 'Cologno model' as we have seen. Possibly defensive reasons were paramount, both Gessate and Inzago are very flat and open, and near roads which were important to the monastery, as we shall see in Chapter Six.⁽⁶³⁾

URBAN ELITES IN GNIGNANO.

Gnignano, a village mid-way between Milan and Pavia, provides our third example. It is somewhat lower-lying than the others and for that reason rather damper,

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but otherwise its terrain and early medieval land uses show very many similarities to the other three villages: same crops, same methods of exploitation, and at the level of the cultivator, similar tenurial patterns.⁽⁶⁴⁾ Yet the history of monastic involvement is rather different. Fundamentally, this resulted from the fact that the people who owned land in and around Gnignano before the monastery appeared on the scene were different: there were many more aristocrats involved here than in either Cologno or Gessate/Inzago, and many of them lived in the cities, especially Milan. This was due to the long-established presence of kings at Pavia, and the consequent numerous royal estates in the area, which, when they were alienated or given out as benefices, were necessarily received by those favoured by the kings. In our period, this meant Frankish or Alemannic vassi rather than Lombard. But these aristocrats were by no means simply landowners: some of them were part of an urban society, which meant, amongst many other things, that they had access to money which, I shall suggest, some of them used commercially or, if that is too strong, semi-commercially.⁽⁶⁵⁾ It was with these aristocrats that the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio interacted, and, as one might expect, the history of these relationships is somewhat removed from those involving small and medium-sized landlords like the Leopegisi or Anselmi.

Although there is no explicit record of royal property in Gnignano in our period, the king is recorded as an owner at the nearby village of Carpiano in 823 (see Map 9).⁽⁶⁶⁾ To the north of Gnignano, indeed probably bordering on the fundus of Gnignano itself, was the fiscal estate of Locate di Triulzi, which was given by the emperor Lothar to his retainer Ugo (optimatis nostri) in 836.⁽⁶⁷⁾ To the south the area between Gnignano and Pavia seems to have been dominated by fiscal property, the best known of which, in our period, was the estate at

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Corteolona, where the Carolingians often stayed in the first half of the ninth century.⁽⁶⁸⁾ As we shall see in a moment, laymen (a high proportion of them from Milan) of high social status dominated landowning in Gnignano before Sant' Ambrogio was ever involved. But it needs to be stressed here that the area was the site of important ecclesiastical estates too, also the result of royal magnanimity: the most interesting perhaps being that of the monastery of San Salvatore di Farfa (far away in Lazio) at the nearby village of Rozzano, first recorded in 799.⁽⁶⁹⁾

In contrast to the records for both Cologno and Gessate/Inzago, it is possible to know something of the ' pre-Sant' Ambrogio ' period in Gnignano. Charters kept by laymen recording their property transactions in Gnignano in the late eighth/early ninth centuries, before the property was alienated to Sant' Ambrogio, have survived.⁽⁷⁰⁾ These stretch back as far as 792, only a few years after the monastery was founded. In that year a local man, Walpert son of Theodepert, gave a clausura in the village to Arifus, a goldsmith from Pavia.⁽⁷¹⁾ The language of the charter suggests a close relationship between their respective families, a relationship which was continued in 824 by a further gift to Arifus of two fields in the village made by Walpert's son, Leo, who lived in the village of Siziano, nearby.⁽⁷²⁾ Boundary clauses show that Arifus had other Gnignano properties by this date. Importantly. Arifus was by no means the only ' outsider ' with rights in the village at this time: the churches of San Stefano di Decimo and San Vittore di Meda both some distance away, already had property there. In 833 the actions of Arifus drew in another: the Milanese cleric Gunzo, who was both a deacon and the vicedominus of the archbishop.⁽⁷³⁾ Arifus and his wife Vigilinda went to Milan in August of that year where, in the presence of the locopositus of Milan and a group of boni homines,

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Vigilinda sold to Gunzo a farm in Gnignano, which had been a quarter part of her husband's marriage gift to her.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Gunzo paid 40 solidi for it. By October Gunzo had given it, with full ownership rights, to Hunger of Milan, son of Hunoarch, a Frankish aristocrat, whose brother Ernst was a vassal of the king.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Gunzo is not the first recorded Milanese owner in Gnignano, for in the year before, 832, Rachinpert, a presbiter in the church of Milan, rented three prati in Gnignano, close to the banks of the river Lambro, from two Gnignano brothers in return for an annual payment to them of 12 libras of oil.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Clearly, Rachinpert was not the owner of this property, but it was bounded by properties that were owned by another 'outsider': Sant' Ambrogio. We do not know if this was the property of the Sant' Ambrogio monks or of the canons, though, in the light of later records, we may suspect that it was monastic. Nor do we know where the property came from or when. It is only in the decades following this beginning that a narrative can be constructed around Sant' Ambrogio in Gnignano. It is to this narrative that we turn next.

Gunzo's gift to Hunger in 833, marks the beginning of a fairly rapid series of transactions involving Gunzo, Hunger and the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, which resulted in monastic control being established over a considerable amount of Gnignano property by the end of the 850's, that is to say at the same time as the monastery was being challenged by Lupus of Schianno over its Cologno estate and when Anselm of Inzago was buying up property along the Adda.⁽⁷⁷⁾ At first the initiative seems to have remained with Hunger. In 835 he paid 17 pounds of coined silver (a considerable sum) to the Pavese notary Paul for a large property (19 iuges, about 15.1 hectares) in Gnignano, comprising several farms, arable and woodland.⁽⁷⁸⁾ The following year he made a testament, appointing four Milanese executors,

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one of whom was Gunzo.⁽⁷⁹⁾ This document tells us a good deal about Hunger's position in Gnignano. In it he provided for relatives and retainers as well as churches. His sister Theotilda was given rights over some tenant farms in Gnignano for the period of her lifetime, which were to pass upon her death to her son Rotcarius and his legitimate sons, if he had any. If he died childless, the property was to pass to the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. Similarly, Hunger's cousin, Gaisperga, got usufruct rights over Gnignano tenant plots (which Hunger had got from Gunzo) with the provision that if she became a nun her monastery would benefit from the property, but if she did not or if she married, Sant' Ambrogio was to get it. His other property, in Brianza not Gnignano (in Ello, Mariano and Settimo) went to his vassal Ingildrammo, the senodochium of santa Maria in Melegnano and his freedman Willari respectively. His largest property, a curtis in nearby Carpiano, he entrusted to his executors to sell, so that the resulting cash could be given to the church to pay for masses and for the aid of the poor (clear evidence of an occasion when money was more useful than land). We know that some of these provisions were carried out, since a charter of 839 records that Hunger's executors (including Gunzo) sold a tenant house for 3 pounds of coined silver to the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio, with full ownership rights.⁽⁸⁰⁾ A year later Rodepert (a tenant of Theotilda) promised Gunzo that neither he nor any of his heirs would act against the interests of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in Gnignano or elsewhere regarding the property there which the monastery had received from Hunger.⁽⁸¹⁾

So, by 840 Hunger was dead and the property which he had acquired in the preceding seven years had passed into the control of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. Why this had happened is not straightforwardly explained. Certainly Hunger had no children to inherit this property,

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and his purpose in acquiring it seems to have been to ensure the future of those relatives he did have, his sister and cousin. After they had died it was safest to give it to the church for the sake of all their souls. Gunzo's position as the medium through which the property passed to the monastery is more difficult to explain on the basis of the available evidence. He may have been a friend whom Hunger could trust to ensure that his wishes were carried out after his death: both were settled in Milan. There can be little doubt also that Gunzo, as the archbishop's senior representative, was in a position to conduct business-like relations with the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio if necessary. It would be wrong to ignore his position as vicedominus, as we shall see in a moment.

Further insights into Hunger's actions can be gained if we look at what his brother, Ernst, had been doing some years earlier in the neighbouring village of Carpiano. This can be traced back to 812, when he had exchanged a small farm he had in Faino (near Melegnano) with a similar farm held by Bruning, a negotians from Milan, in Carpiano.⁽⁸²⁾ In 823 Ernst exchanged another piece of Carpiano land with land elsewhere in the village, which belonged to two Carpiano brothers, Walpert and Teudepert.⁽⁸³⁾ In July of the same year Ernst made an agreement with his wife Weltruda, whereby he transferred rights over his Italian properties to her for her lifetime, properties which were anteposito tantum modo pertinente meo nomine cellolo. After her death they were to become the property of those loca illa venerabilia, ubi nos pariter consensueremus aut constitueremus. For her part Weltruda gave to Ernst full property rights over ten mansi in Italy and Alemannia, but which after his death were to endow the cellola. The latter was most probably the cellola run by the Sant'Ambrogio canons. This assertion can be explained in the following way. All the Carpiano documents (including the 823 text) were once in

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the canonical archive, and referred to the property rights of the canons in Carpiano.⁽⁸⁴⁾ These included a pre-eleventh century Breve de rebus de presbiteriis officiales basilice sancti Ambrosii in vico Carpiano, which recorded a total of 42 iuges (about 33.5 hectares) held by the priests in Carpiano at (probably) the end of the tenth century.⁽⁸⁵⁾ This presence seems to have started as early as 823, when terra sancti Ambrosii bordering on Ernost's land in Carpiano was recorded.⁽⁸⁶⁾ It would appear to be the case that Hunger too was endowing the canons with Carpiano property: the Carpiano estate, which he had acquired from the notary Paul, and which was to be sold to benefit ' the church ' (as we saw above) in fact was to be disposed to obtain funds for priests not monks.

The pre-840 Gnignano material demonstrates clearly that both the monks and the presbiteri of Sant'Ambrogio were the recipients of gifts made by this aristocratic family of Franks, of whom one at least was living in Milan. We should not forget that the archbishop of Milan at this time was the Frankish Angilbert II, who had indeed become archbishop, in succession to Angilbert I, precisely in 823, the date of Ernost's bequest to the Sant'Ambrogio canons.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Angilbert II was, as we saw in Chapter Three , one of the community's major benefactors at just this period.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The gifts of Hunger and Ernost, mediated as they were through Angilbert's vicedominus, were perhaps part of an attempt to maintain or increase favour with the emperor Lothar, who was trying, with the backing of his archbishop, to rebuild the Carolingian position in the city after the revolt of Bernard and Archbishop Anselm in 817. It may also be no coincidence that Hunger's bequest of 836 came only a few months after the spate of gifts and confirmations of estates made to the community by the emperor and his archbishop in 835. If village élites, such as the Anselmi of Inzago, could try to ingratiate themselves with great men by endowing

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churches, so too could great men themselves try to maintain relations with the greatest man of all, the king/emperor, in the same fashion.

At this point it is worth looking briefly (the evidence will not permit any extended treatment) at the relations between the monastery and the local families of the village. The fact that we know so little about them compared to the great deal which we know about Cologno and Inzago families is, of course, significant in itself: in Gnignano the monastery was dealing with aristocrats not village notables. As we have seen some of the latter sold property to Pavesi, others Milanese interests. Of the latter we know most about Teutpald son of Adroald. In 832 his uncles, Rachinfrit and Melfrit, leased, as we have seen, 3 prati to the Milanese presbiter, Rachinpert.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Teutpald took part in this transaction for the meadows were part of his inheritance. In 839 he made over half of all his Gnignano property to Rachinpert, by now archpresbiter (and soon to be abbot of Sant'Ambrogio) and Rumoald, a Milanese priest.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The rest went to his wife Alperga in usufruct, to return the priest upon her death. Presumably it passed to Sant'Ambrogio when Rachinpert became abbot.⁽⁹¹⁾ This local family disappeared (they were childless) not as a direct result of monastic action but that of another church, but they disappeared nonetheless. Another local family encountered the monastery as a result of contact with Gunzo, the vicedominus in the 850's when Gunzo reappears in the Gnignano record, in a further spell of monastic patronage. In 851 he exchanged a large field in Gnignano with the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio in return for a slightly smaller sedimencellum nearer his existing property in the village.^(91a) Five years later we hear that he had become a monk himself, and as a result had given his Gnignano property to the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio.⁽⁹²⁾ When the

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abbot went to take formal possession of the properties he met Bavo, son of Rotharene, who lived in Gnignano and who told him that part of one of Gunzo's fields was in fact his (Bavo's). Later in the same year the abbot exchanged property in the village of Gudo Gambaredo for Bavo's house in Gnignano with the abbatissa of the monastery of San Vittore di Meda, whose tenant Bavo had been.⁽⁹³⁾ Six months later, in December, Bavo and the abbot exchanged a few bits of land themselves, probably to tie up loose ends after the Gunzo gift.⁽⁹⁴⁾

Summing up the monastery's position in the village before moving onto the much less well evidenced tenth century, it can be seen that, in the space of twenty years the monastery had acquired a large number of tenant plots and land parcels in Gnignano without ever consolidating them into an estate: there is no mention here of a curtis, xenodochium and associated basilica on the lines of Cologno or Inzago. The reason for this non-consolidated aspect to its properties in the village was the persistent presence of other interests there. By the 850's most of those other interests were churches: San Stefano, San Benedetto, San Vittorio. But there were still some laymen: Bavo of Gnignano, an unidentified Aloardus and, of course, Anselm of Inzago. Bavo did succumb to Sant'Ambrogio and so in the end did Anselm of Inzago. As we saw earlier in this chapter Anselm had property in the village by 870: indeed he was a witness to the exchange of Gnignano property between the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio and the church of San Vittorio in 856, which might just be the date of his entry into Gnignano ownership, as he was, as we have seen, buying up property elsewhere at about this date.⁽⁹⁵⁾ The surrender of these properties to the monastery by Gundelassius in 874 put an end to their Gnignano interests.

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The tenth century in Gnignano is less well covered by charter documentation but there is sufficient material to suggest that some consolidation of Gnignano property had in fact been achieved around a curtis by 912. In a libellus of that date in which a local man rented a chestnut wood from Sant'Ambrogio in the village, the wood was de curte sita Noniano, et est non longe ab ipsa curte, et nominatim Montesellis.⁽⁹⁶⁾ Presumably the estate functioned smoothly without many problems for we hear nothing further of it. There are indications that the monastery attempted to expand it by adding property in the nearby village of Arcagnano. In 920 the abbot exchanged Arcagnano property with Petrus, a Milanese iudex whose father had lived in the village. Part of the property, a chestnut wood, was in the fundus of Gnignano and it seems likely that Sant'Ambrogio's estate centre was in fact between Gnignano and Arcagnano. This was reinforced with a further acquisition in 970, also from a Milanese.⁽⁹⁷⁾ Indeed the strong Milanese interest in the area which we observed in the first part of the ninth century had continued into the tenth century. In 897 Giselbert of Milan exchanged Gnignano property with the abbot, then came the two Arcagnano transactions, and then a libellus agreement involving Gnignano, with Bertericus 'Amizo' of Milan.⁽⁹⁸⁾ This continuing presence in the village of 'outside' interests besides that of the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, may help to explain why Gnignano, unlike Cologno, Gessate and Inzago, does not seem to have had a castellum in this period, at least not one controlled by the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. So, although the economic position of the monastery in the village was very strong (maybe just as strong as in Cologno or Inzago or Gessate, where there were castra) it did not in this instance get transformed into political power (at least not into power which is any longer visible to us). This can be explained by the continuing presence of other church interests, and

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the evident lack of effective resistance from the local population to penetration from ' outsiders ': Gnignano was already at this date very Milano-centric, and there were other churches and laymen in Milan just as powerful as Sant'Ambrogio.

The histories outlined in this chapter of four early medieval Lombard villages are of course very incomplete. There is a huge amount that can never be known about them. Yet even the few records which have survived indicate that these histories were all subtly different from one another. The ' Cologno model ' of Rossetti and others, outlined at the beginning of the chapter puts the emphasis firmly on conscious actions (even policies) on the part of important men (royal servants, archbishops and especially abbots) to explain the acquisition by Sant'Ambrogio of such a dominant position in Cologno by the end of the ninth century. Rossetti sees the monastery very much as the initiator and exploiter of events. This impression is tempered by the evidence afforded by the Inzago, Gessate and Gnignano documentation which, in differing ways, illustrates that the monastery and its abbots often had to take what property they were given and respond to these gifts, making the best of them where they could. Indeed at times the monastery had to struggle to retain control over its property (ironically particularly so in Cologno), in the face of challenges from other, sometimes more powerful, men.

A vital part was played in all these villages by men from the city of Milan (and Pavia and Bergamo too). The monastery, as we have seen in earlier chapters, was only a small part of complex urban world, a world which, as Violante showed, was rich and attractive to outsiders. Proximity to the city was important: Inzago, furthest away of our three examples, was least affected by Milanese

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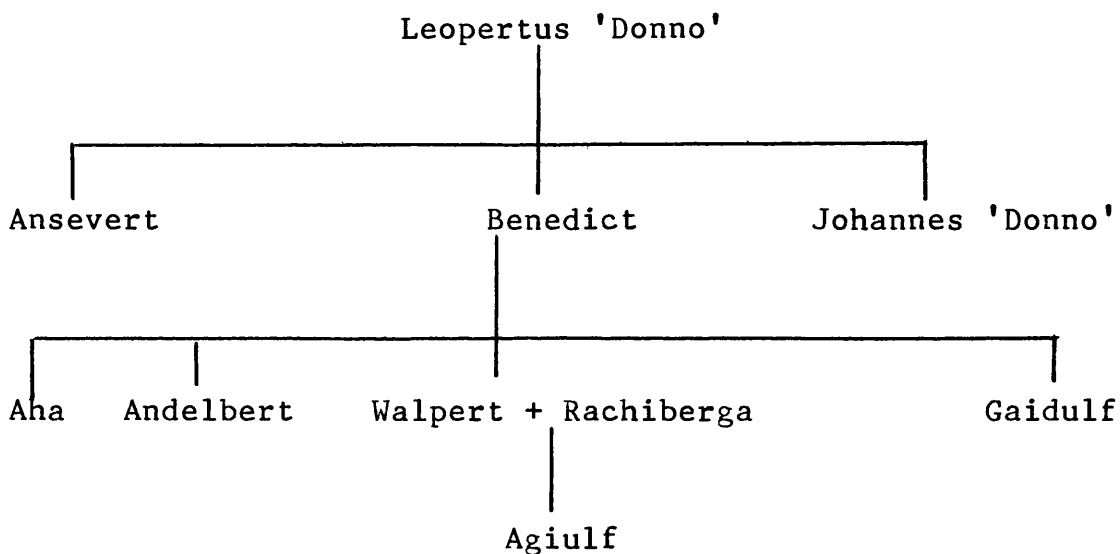
influences, whereas Cologno and especially Gnignano were heavily infiltrated by Milanese owners besides the monastery. Gnignano in particular was subject to a wide range of urban influences: Milanese and Pavese men wanted land there, and they were willing to pay large sums of money for it. Indeed it can be suggested that here it is possible that what we are seeing is the formation of a market in land: Gnignano land was a valuable commodity, which men may have traded as if it were a commodity like any other. Obviously, in the light of our knowledge of the social relationships between some of the participants in these Gnignano dealings, it would be unwise to push this line of argument too far.

In a sense, then, the ' Cologno model ' can be taken as a ' lowland model ' of how the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio interacted with village societies, in spite of the not insignificant differences between the villages considered and between these villages and those villages in which the monastery did not become so powerful, because they were all places affected by their proximity to urban centres. In this regard we should not forget that Sant'Ambrogio too was a Milanese church. But the ' lowland model ' only becomes truly plausible when it is compared with the histories of places much further away from the urban orbit, those northern properties which are the focus of attention in the next chapter.

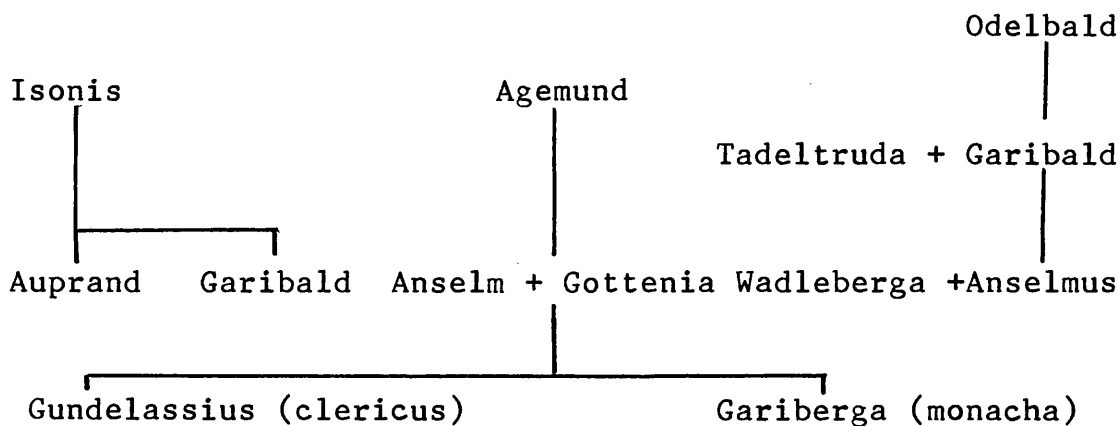
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GENEALOGIES.

1. The LEOPEGISI of Cologno.



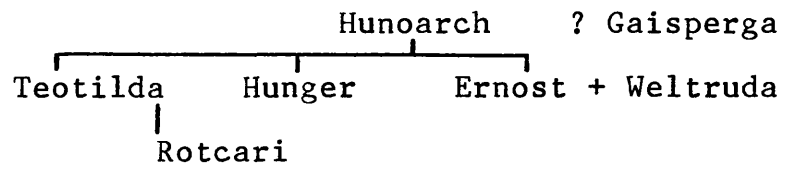
2. The ANSELMI of Inzago



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3.

The family of HUNGER of Milan



NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. G. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni nel contado Lombardo durante il Medioevo. Cologno Monzese. Secoli VIII-X (Milan, 1968). G.P. Bognetti, Studi sulle origini del Commune Rurale (Milan, 1978) pp. 213, 376 and 379. G.P. Bognetti, in Storia di Milano, vol.2, pp. 756-766. C. Violante, La società Milanese nel età precomunale, 2nd. ed. (Naples, 1974) pp. 81-82, 141-142 and 147-149.
2. G. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali e strutture del potere nel medioevo Italiano (Turin, 1979) pp. 196-197, 200. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy (London, 1981) pp. 9, 128.
3. See in addition to the works of Bognetti cited in note 1 above, his ' I Beni Comunali e l'organizzazione del villaggio nell'Italia superiore fino al Mille ', RSI 77 (1965) pp. 469-499.
4. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, Chapter 4 'Penetrazione del monastero Milanese di Sant'Ambrogio in Cologno e nel territorio circostante' pp. 76-100.
5. For Monza see Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, pp.51-75.
6. NAT 52, 69, 89, 101, 102, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 117, 128, 130, 129, 130, 133, 147, 149, 151, 156. CDL 476, 502, 573, 611, 637, 694, 748, 753, 832, 846, 860, 894, 896, 930, 993. For discussion of their preservation see above Chapter 1, pp. 24, 58.
7. NAT 52. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, pp.76-77.
8. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, pp. 81-88 ' La donazione del gasindio Ariberto '. The reference to Aribert comes in placitum of 859 (NAT 101). The text does not say when Aribert made the gift to Sant'Ambrogio. Rossetti postulates a late eighth century date because of a presumed connection between the Cologno curtis regia and the royal (Lombard) presence at the nearby palatium of Monza.
9. Bognetti argued that the transfer of the royal estate to the monastery also meant the transfer of the particular royal rights of districtus and honor over the village community too (Studi...commune rurale, p. 184 nt. 8) but Rossetti, rightly, points out that this cannot be concluded from the available evidence (Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, p. 85).
10. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, pp. 96-100.
11. Violante, Società milanese, p. 146. Rossetti, Società e Istituzioni, pp. 100-127.
12. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, pp. 128-134.
13. For a summary of these developments see the map in Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 177 and the passages cited in notes 7-10 above.
14. NAT 104 and 109.

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15. CDL 573, 694 and 993 make reference to the castrum. For further discussion see below p. 172-173.
16. Violante, Società milanese, pp. 146-148.
17. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 122 and Violante, Società milanese, p. 145.
18. As evidenced in NAT 104 where, in a transaction between Benedict, his son Walpert and Odo and Agio of Vignate, provision was made for Benedict's daughter Aha to continue living in a house rented from her brothers Gaido and Andelbert, even though the property had been sold to the brothers from Vignate.
19. For discussion of these 'rules' see Chapter 2 above pp. 108-113 and, in a near-contemporary though otherwise dissimilar context (Eastern Brittany), the discussion in W. Davies, Small Worlds: the village community in early medieval Brittany (London, 1988) p. 70-76.
20. See the review of T.W.Blomquist in AHR, (1972) p. 766 and Rossetti's cogent reply, ' Ancora sui " loca sanctorum " . Reprendendo il tema della penetrazione in Cologno del monastero milanese di Sant'Ambrogio ', NRS 8 (1973) pp. 439-447.
21. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 101.
22. One only has to think of the many men de Colonia who were witnessing charters in the ninth century, who must have owned some land to be eligible to stand as a witness.
23. NAT 133, which records that Agiulf and Dragulf, two of Walpert's sons went to Amalricus, the vicecomes in Milan ,who send a representative of his to Cologno to inspect the boys' property. It was found that they had no movable goods at all. The properties (80 tavole, about 2370 sq.m., less than a third of a hectare) were sold to Bonus of ' Pariana ' for 8 solidi.
24. NAT 105, recording an exchange of land parcels between the abbot and the Leopegisi, where the latter gave the abbot double the land they received in return.
25. NAT 114, held in the laubia of the curtis ducatis in Milan.
26. As recorded in NAT 117, 128, 129, 130, 133, 147, and 149 covering the period 865 to 885.
27. See below p. 273.
28. NAT 101, discussed by Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 94.
29. NAT 102. Discussed below in Chapter 5 p.
30. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, pp. 88-95.
31. NAT 149, 151, 155 and 156.
32. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 48.
33. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 128.
34. CDL 573, campo una infra castro. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 134; A.A.Settia, Castelli e villaggi nell'Italia Padana (Naples, 1984) p. 140 drawing

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- on his earlier discussion, 'Lo sviluppo degli abitati rurali in alta Italia: villaggi, castelli e borghi dall'alto al basso Medioevo' in Medioevo Rurale, eds. V. Fumagalli and G. Rossetti (Bologna, 1980) pp. 157-187, especially pp. 159-160 (the castellum at Monza) and pp. 165-168 for Cologno.
35. Rossetti, Società e istituzioni, p. 128-129.
36. See above Chapter 2 pp. 80-81, 97.
37. Inzago: NAT 66, 82, 83, 93, 99, 103, 120, 125, 156, 157; CDL 451, 473, 475, 539, 559, 826, 930. Gessate: NAT 82, 83, 93, 99, 120, 125; CDL 473, 538, 539, 559, 602, 609, 621, 624, 669, 670, 671.
- 37a NAT 82 and 83.
38. NAT 66, recording a gift made by Sighelberga of finis Bergomense to Garibald, archpresbiter and his brother Laudebert, of Lorianò, of several properties in the Bergamasco. One of the witnesses was 'Anselmo de Anticiaco' signed in his own hand, which enables a secure identification to be made with our Anselm of Inzago, who also signed charters. The fact that Anselm was at least able to write his own name is probably a comment on his relatively elevated social position.
39. NAT 93, 99, 103, 120, 125.
40. NAT 93. The identification of 'Criberiago' as Cambiago is Porro-Lambertenghi's in CDL col. 1928, and was contested, on reasonable linguistic grounds by D. Olivieri in his Dizionario di Toponomastica Lombarda 2nd. ed. (Milan, 1961), but in view of the family connection between Garibald and Anselm, the proximity of Cambiago and Inzago and especially the fact that Garibald had property in Gessate, Inzago and Bellinzago-all close to Cambiago-Porro's identification is probably correct.
41. NAT 99.
42. NAT 103.
43. Clearly, from the available documentation we cannot know if Wago and his brother, for example, had a spread of property as wide as Anselm's.
44. NAT 120.
45. This can be argued from the fact that it was, in this corpus of material, normal practice to arrange bequests of property to female relations by having a testamentum drawn up to provide for wives, sisters, daughters and, more rarely, cousins. Male relatives seem to have inherited without the need of documentation. (It is not impossible that Garibald, archpresbiter, son of 'Saloni' (as transcribed by Natale) in NAT 66 was in fact the future bishop Garibald, son of Isoni, in NAT 120, for one could read Isoni instead of 'Saloni', especially since the latter is preserved in a copied rather than an original text).
46. NAT 125, discussed below p. 179, records this fact.
47. Anselm is not recorded elsewhere with property in

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- Masciago or Boaria. This suggests that the bishop was not simply redistributing to Anselm's female kin, property that had once been Anselm's. if this was the case it is further reason to think that Garibald and Gottenia were related.
48. As recorded in Chapter 18 of the Historia of Andreas of Bergamo, MGH SS.RR.LANG. s VI-IX ed. G. Waitz (Hannover, 1878) p. 229.
49. See above p. 135 and below p. 269. What Anspert did in Cavernago is worth summarising here. The information is recorded in NAT 124, 131, 132, and 137. In 873 Anspert visited his Cavernago properties which he had purchased recently from Atto of 'Carimate' (whose nephew was to be bishop of Bergamo after Garibald) and Adeltruda and Grelinda of Saronno. Three years later Anspert received a very sizable gift of land there from Charles the Bald (50 juges, about 40 hectares) stretched out between Cavenago and nearby Ornago. In 879 the archbishop donated the property to his senodochium, newly founded by him near the chapel dedicated to San Satyrus which he had built in Milan. This senodochium was to be under the dominium of the abbot of sant'Ambrogio, to whom control of the Cavenago estate passed as a result. The estate was mentioned again in 897, by which time it was clearly being worked for the monastery. In that year Dominus of Bozzolo (100km. away in the Modenese) contracted a libellus with abbot which involved him transporting various renders in kind to the monastery's dispentium there. By 1002 a castellum had appeared there. The similarities to Bishop Garibald's actions are self-evident. See below Chapter 6 pp.
50. NAT 125. This document has been the subject of some controversy because it is not entirely clear whether it refers to Gnignano or not. The problem is that the mode of reference is not the usual Noniano, Nuniano, Junniano, or, (tenth century) Gnoniano but in vico et fundo Scosse et Villa, qui dicitur Noniani (with some minor variations). This phrase is not found in any other document associated with Gnignano. The identification of Scosse et Villa with Gnignano was denied most forcibly by C.M. Rota in his useful article (unfinished) on the place-names of the Milanese, 'Paesi del Milanese scomparsi e distrutti', ASL s.5,v.IV (1919) and s.5,v.V (1920). He argued that they were near Gnignano but not to be equated with it. He noted too that villa Noniani appears in the 832 libellus, and tried to argue that this also did not refer to Gnignano. As we shall see below (p. 191) this cannot be sustained, as those referred to in the 832 text appear in other charters in the Gnignano sequence, which definitely refer to Gnignano itself. It should be added that the 874 charter is a

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- copy (of roughly contemporary date i.e. mid- to late-ninth century, and it is possible that the scribe had an idiosyncratic way of describing Gnignano: some of his other spellings are odd. There can be little doubt that wherever Scosse et villa Noniani was it was very close to Gnignano, and that, in the context of the argument about the Anselmi is what matters most.
51. The Nesso property is interesting. This is the only reference to it , but clearly it was another of Sant'Ambrogio's lakeside olive-producing estates.
 52. This possibility is admittedly slim and rests solely on the fact that Gunzo was the son of Izoni or Ironi, whereas Bishop Garibald was the son of Isoni.
 53. CDL 451 and 559.
 54. Many Inzago documents are preserved in the later Middle Ages and beyond. See R.Beretta, ' Precetti intimati dall'abate Archeagno Visconti agli uomini di Inzago l'8 dicembre del 1232 ', ASL s.4.,v.19 (1913) pp. 473-475.
 55. There are nine Gessate men certainly recorded dealing in Gessate property in the course of the tenth century. Of churches the most notable was San Protasius di Gorgonzola, the pieve of Gessate. for the charters see note 37 above.
 56. CDL 559.
 57. Settia, Castelli e villaggi, p. 174.
 58. Settia, Castelli e villaggi, p. 337.
 59. CDL 826.
 60. Settia, Castelli e villaggi, p. 174 is rightly cautious here, '... un castello-forse fondato dallo stesso monastero (Sant'Ambrogio) -vi esisteva almeno dal 941, soltanto ora pero il dominio del potente ente monastico si consolida, probabilmente come conseguenza dello sfaldarsi di ogni superstite potere pubblico rappresentato dal conte.'
 61. CDL 621. Settia, Castelli e villaggi, p. 104 and 269.
 62. Above pp. 92-93.
 63. Below p. 274.
 64. Above Chapter Two p. 97.
 65. See the more extensive discussion of the importance of money to the economy of the early Middle ages in Chapter Six (below p. 262) and the secondary works cited there.
 66. NAT 48.
 67. CDL 128 (August 836) preserved in the cathedral archive at Monza. Porro-Lambertenghi identified a reference of 771 (NAT 20) to an actor domni regis de villa Lauchade, with this Locate but it seems more likely that this refers to Locate Varesino (CDLS 252, in the opinion of the editor Schiaparelli).
 68. P. Darmstadter, Das Reichsgüt in der Lombardei und Piemont (Strasburg, 1896) pp. 14, 25, 189. The 836 gift to Ugo was, for example, written at the Olonna

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- palatium.
69. Il Regesto di Farfa, eds. I. Giorgio and U. Balzini (Rome, 1878) doc. 163 p. 136 (799, Milan).
 70. NAT 44, 49, 53 and CDL 102.
 71. NAT 44.
 72. NAT 49.
 73. NAT 54.
 74. NAT 54. The event took place cum publica notitia because Vigilinda did not have any surviving relatives other than Arifus, who acted as her mundualdus. See above Chapter 2 pp.00.
 75. NAT 55. Hunger was said to be the dilectissimus amicus of Gunzo, possibly formulaic but then again possibly not.
 76. NAT 53. The render of oil is highly interesting since it cannot mean that the Gnignano property was producing oil, rather that the Milanese clerics were using oil renders from the north to rent land elsewhere.
 77. See above pp. 170-171, 176.
 78. NAT 56.
 79. NAT 62 (a contemporary copy of the original which survives as CDL 127), was preserved by the Sant'Ambrogio monks but differs little from the canonical text. We are most probably dealing with two originals, as both parties were interested in the provisions of Hunger's testament.
 80. NAT 64.
 81. NAT 67, non habeam licentia ego Rodepertus nec meis heretis agere nec causare contra parte sancti Ambrosii. This charter is interestingly paralleled by NAT 128 of 875 in which Andreas, son of Walpert of Cologno promised the monastery that he would not dispose of any property in Cologno except by selling it the the abbot for a justa precium.
 82. NAT 44.
 83. NAT 48.
 84. CDL 102, dated July 833.
 85. CDL 1003, dated by Porro-Lambertenghi, on paleographical grounds, as pre-eleventh century. It shows the presence of other churches in Carpiano (Santa Maria di Melegnano, San Martino di Carpiano and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio) as well as a few laymen.
 86. NAT 48.
 87. F. Savio, Gli antichi vescovi d'Italia dalle origini al 1300. La Lombardia, parte 1, Milano (Florence, 1913) p. 318.
 88. Above p. 149.
 89. Above p. 186.
 90. NAT 65.
 91. NAT 73, purports to be his charter of ordination but is now preserved in a much interpolated copy. See Chapter 1 p. 49, and below p. 305.

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- 91a NAT 86.
- 92. NAT 94.
- 93. NAT 95.
- 94. NAT 96.
- 95. NAT 95, the charter was witnessed at Sant'Ambrogio.
- 96. CDL 446.
- 97. CDL 488 and 719.
- 98. CDL 162 (897) and CDL 990 (1000).

CHAPTER FIVE.

UPLAND ESTATES: COOPERATION AND RESISTANCE.

The themes of this chapter are similar to those of the last: the acquisition of property rights by the monastic community, and the various relationships between Sant'Ambrogio and other landowners which brought this about in the course of the ninth century. But the context is an upland rather than a lowland landscape. As we shall see this difference had some interesting consequences for the degree of success (or otherwise) with which the monastery managed to penetrate existing tenurial networks, consequences sufficiently particular for us to be able to characterise them as an ' upland model '.

These upland areas all come within the compass of the term ' Pre-alpi '; that is not truly mountainous places, but hills, lakesides and mountain valleys, which were a very different natural environment from the flatlands of the plain, where Cologno and the other villages of the last chapter were. For the monastery a simpler, more fundamental fact than environmental difference was important: distance. The communities of the Sottoceneri and the Valtellina were much further away from Milan than Gnignano or Inzago, and this seems to have had a considerable impact on the nature of their societies. From a Milan perspective, these areas were marginal: fewer Milanese owned or dealt in lands there, and the Milanese monastery was therefore something of a pioneer. This marginality was seen, for example, in the production of charter texts, which were written by local clerics more frequently here than in places nearer Milan, as Milanese notaries simply did not travel this far away from their city. The charters thus produced are more amateurish in

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script and linguistic style, showing less evidence of an urban schooling, based on different formulae.⁽¹⁾ As we might expect then, the history that can be written from these upland charters is in some essentials different from that just outlined in the last chapter. Particularly significant here is the comparative absence of series of texts relating to one place which focus on the dealings of particular families with the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio: only one place, Campione on the banks of Lake Lugano, is evidenced in any detail in this way. Otherwise we are left with fragments of ' family histories '. Campione then, provides the evidence for the first part of this chapter. The rest concerns the monastery's other northern property: around Lake Como and in the Valtellina, which, as we shall see has to be approached in a different way: this is not, however, a disadvantage, for it is the contrast which is instructive.

CAMPIONE AND THE DA CAMPIONE, c. 720-835.

Campione is evidenced from as early as the 720's and is the only place in the Sant'Ambrogio corpus to have a sizable dossier of charters from the eighth century.⁽²⁾ This early date has made it the subject of considerable discussion amongst historians, and has perhaps caused the attribution of especial importance to the material, which would not otherwise be justified. This work has ranged from treatment of individual texts (Mor) to examination of the da Campione family (Rossetti).⁽³⁾ Certain dominant concerns which have arisen (particularly the peculiar position of Campione within the competing jurisdictions of Milan, Como and Seprio and the economic structure of the Campione curtis) are considered in more detail in other parts of this thesis, but here it is worth outlining, albeit briefly, the work that has already been done on the da Campione and their last survivor, Toto II.⁽⁴⁾ The history of this family encompasses the period 721 to 807, and several authors have traced it in detail.

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There is general accord that they had a lot of property (vasti beni, first coined by Mor, recurs often) both in the Sottoceneri and further afield in the Piacentino.⁽⁵⁾ This has caused considerable significance to be attached to the social status of the family in the eighth century, when certain members of the group had dealings with men of importance in the government of Milan. The latter has been stressed recently by Rossetti, who argues that the summation of this process was the gift by Toto II of all his property to the church of Milan in 777, when Toto was consciously placing himself under the protection of the archbishop of Milan.⁽⁶⁾ Although this family has been given very thorough treatment by Rossetti there is room for further discussion here, both as an essential preliminary to an examination of what Sant'Ambrogio did with Toto's Campione curtis, when it came into possession of it in the early ninth century, and by way of comparison with the activities of the various élites discussed in the last chapter.

Between the early eighth century and the gift of the Campione curtis to the archbishops of Milan in 777, Campione was dominated by one family, the da Campione (in Rossetti's phrase). This domination seems to have been total, as we do not hear at any point of any other owners in the vicus, a fact in complete contrast to the tenurial patterns of the lowland villages. The fact may be deceptive and could be due to recording practices amongst those who wrote up the charters, invariably in local villages, which were different from those of the scribes of Milan, and its nearby villages, and included much less notice of neighbouring owners. However, where boundary clauses are preserved the property recorded in them all belonged to this one family (see genealogy p.). What happened before Toto II appeared has been admirably discussed by Rossetti, and there is no need to go into it in such detail here.⁽⁷⁾ The basic points are these. The

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family's property was centred on the family church of San Zeno, built sometime before 769, which was, in Rossetti's phrase,

'...collocata nel cuore del patrimonio originario come simbolo del vincolo non solo di sangue ma spirituale che univa la famiglia...'.(8)

She is right to place some emphasis on piety, for the basilica was the object of gifts from female family members (in 756 and 769) one of whom, Magnerata the daughter of Sigirad and cousin of Toto II, entered the church as ancilla Dei.⁽⁸⁾

After this the record is dominated by Toto II, until c. 810 when he died. Toto had appeared in the 769 text with some property in Campione bordering Magnerata's olivetalum de Gunduald. In 774 he purchased further property there from his cousin Peresendus of ' Rogialo ', as well as other properties in ' Pauliano ', ' Volano ', 'Primosolemo' and Cadro.⁽⁹⁾ In 777 he bequeathed his entire inheritance to Thomas, the archbishop of Milan and the baselica of Sant'Ambrogio in perpetuity, to be a xenodochium. His property in Campione was a consolidated estate, domo coltiles based on olive oil production.⁽¹⁰⁾ Toto lived on into the first decade of the ninth century , continuing to acquire property in the vicinity of Campione (Bédéro in 793, ' Mellano ' in 799, Castiglione d'Intelvi in 804) until then.⁽¹¹⁾ Most of these texts were written in local villages rather than Milan and, therefore, it is very likely that the estate remained under Toto's direct control, as the dominus of San Zeno, rather than that of the archbishop or Sant'Ambrogio until c. 810 when it finally passed into episcopal hands. It remained with the archbishops until 835, when archbishop Angilbert gave it, with the consent of the emperor Lothar, to the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio.⁽¹²⁾

The estate was Toto's power base and, although

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he had a considerable number of other properties, none of these appear to have been consolidated into estate units. These properties were mostly tenant houses in villages in the vicinity of Campione, probably so that the tenants could join in the olive harvest when necessary. The fact that Toto resided at Campione is explicit in the 777 charter, his domus habitationis was there, and this part of the estate was worked by resident dependants (servi, ancillae, and aldii). Some men did labour-service for him: illi homines meis, qui consueti sunt cum suas anonas operas mihi facendi, which must have been necessary at harvest time.⁽¹³⁾ All of this clearly shows Toto to have been no more than a medium-sized landowner, hardly the holder of vasti beni (see the map of his properties p.) He was certainly not a great aristocrat, like the royal vassi discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. Once this is understood there is no need for all the grandiose theories involving the conquest of Italy, the newfound power of the archbishops of Milan and the rest to explain his gift to the Milanese church. We should not forget that such pious gifts were happening all over northern Italy at this time, and that Toto was childless.

This is not to deny the importance of the estate to the archbishops of Milan, which can be seen from the fact that it remained in the archbishop's hands until 835. Campione was totally outside the public jurisdiction of the city of Milan, as discussed in Appendix 2: its count was the count of Seprio, its bishop the bishop of Como.⁽¹⁴⁾ In view of this the argument that Toto's gift was an event of considerable political importance , and well appreciated by the archbishops, is not without merit: the importance of the control of the Alpine passes in the dispute between Bernard and Lothar, was sufficient reason for Archbishop Anselm to have held on to Campione.

To the monastery the estate was primarily an entity of economic significance. It was structured on

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classic lines: demesne at its heart (the domocultilis), and tenant plots away from the centre which provided some renders and some labour-service to the central estate at certain parts of the year. Importantly, the estate was centred on the production of a commodity precious this far north in Italy, even in the ninth century when the climate is thought to have been warmer than for centuries: olive oil. The first reference to an olivatum there dates from 756.⁽¹⁵⁾ Although it had but six trees we should not underestimate the productive capacity of the whole estate for this grove-de Gunduald-was bounded on all sides by others, as well as by vines. In 769 further olives are evidenced together with vines and woodland.⁽¹⁶⁾ Toto's bequest gives us some clues as to concrete amounts: 200 libras (about 100 litres) annually to the village church, San Zeno, 20 libras to the basilica of Sant'ambrogio in Milan, and 10 libras apiece to the Milanese churches of San Nazaro, San Lorenzo and San Vittorio ad Corpus. In all about 125 litres per annum, not a vast quantity but significant, especially as this was oleum pro luminaria and feast days.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is probable that the remaining oil was treated as a cash crop.

Toto had created an estate which, whilst focussed on Campione, drew part of its workforce from villages elsewhere. The relationships which Toto entered into in the years after the 777 gift were in fact continued by the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, but have received less attention from historians. What they reveal above all is the tension that existed between certain lay families and the monastic community, and the fine line which existed between agreement and resistance, a line which was drawn, for the most part by the laymen rather than the monastery.

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SANT'AMBROGIO AND CAMPIONE, 835-875

After the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio came into possession of the Campione curtis in 835 Campione disappears from the record until 854. This did not mean that the community had lost interest in it however, for there is clear evidence that the monastery entered into a phase of property acquisition in the neighbouring villages, similar in character to that which Toto had been engaged in the the first decade of the century. Similar in most respects but not all: the monastery certainly encountered resistance whereas Toto seems not to have done so.

The first evidence of this resistance comes from 844, and is recorded in a placitum held in the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio itself in April of that year.⁽¹⁸⁾ The monastery was in dispute with Teutpert of Vimercate and his son Adelbert, over their respective rights to some tenant properties in Balerna, a village some 10kms south of Campione on the road to Como. Toto himself had had dealings with Balerna in 789, and may indeed have had property there.⁽¹⁹⁾ It has been argued recently (on the basis of archaeological evidence) that the village had strategic importance in the Late Roman/Lombard periods: a sizable watchtower survives here from those times.⁽²⁰⁾ This may explain the basic reason for the 844 court case, for the property at issue seems to have been of relatively little significance.

By 844 the argument between the monastery and Teutpert had already been going on for some time, as the monastic side produced a charter written sometime between 806 and 835 as its first piece of evidence. This recorded that the community had purchased the properties from a certain Bruning of Magliaso (about 5kms west of Campione) at that time. Teutpert countered that he had a charter from Bruning too, recording that Bruning had given the

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property to Teutpert's daughter-in-law Walpergis. It was judged that the monastery's charter was earlier than Teutpert's and that therefore the property was monastic. But Teutpert did not give up: indeed this marked just the start of the case. He stated that Bruning had given a pledge that he was the auctor of the Balerna properties at the time of his gift to Walpergi and therefore he could not legally have alienated them in perpetuity to the monastery. For this to be decided the case was heard again at the oratorium of Santa Maria in Ligornetto, just a few kilometres from Balerna itself, where the scabinus Ansof had presided. Bruning turned up and was asked if he had made the pledge to Teutpert: he said no, and that he had ceded his rights as auctor to the monastery and had only usufruct rights over the Balerna properties at that time. Teutpert must have remained intransigent as the case progressed to Milan, where it was heard before Archbishop Angilbert, sometime after 823. He decreed (along with the other judges) that the monastery should have the ultimate rights, and that these should be enforced by Ansof, the scabinus, who was himself a resident of Ligornetto. Both Ansof and Bruning appeared in the course of the case, and they repeated their testimonies as before. Teutpert and Adelbert were unwilling to give up the property. Thus the case ended up before the count of Seprio and the Milanese judicial hierarchy in 844. At this point the testimonies of local witnesses were heard (two men from Ligornetto and two from ' Lucernate ') who all corroborated the monastic case. It was decided that the testimony of Teutpert's son, Adelbert should be heard, and so the case was adjourned with Teutpert making a pledge to the sant'Ambrogio advocate that his son would appear before the court. The text we have leaves the case in the air, and we have no other explicit record of what the eventual outcome was.

Setting this aside for a moment, the interest of

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the dispute for our theme is clear. Sant'Ambrogio was not evidently unconcerned with this area in the earlier part of the ninth century and this interest is likely to be connected with its Campione estate, as we shall see in a moment. Monastic activity had prompted complaint from one layman and his son who felt wronged, before 835. Complaints, we shall see, were very characteristic of this area. Unfortunately, we know nothing more about Teutpert or Adelbert, but they may have been reasonably important landowners: Vimercate, possibly a market of some size in this period (although the evidence is not strong), and was not exactly near Balerna or Magliaso (the home of Adelbert's father-in-law) so they moved around a bit in their property dealings. Certainly there must have been some dispute within the family over the Balerna holdings, paralleling the intra-familial disputes of the Leopegisi of Cologno Monzese, prompted too by relations with the monastery.

As we follow through the history of the Balerna property after 844, it soon becomes clear that Sant'Ambrogio did win control over it rather than Teutpert and his family. The process was not straightforward though. In 852 there is notice that another significant lay owner had rights over tenant houses in Balerna. In a divisium between Adelburga, the widow of Adelgisus of Schianno (10kms south-west of Balerna) and Baldric of 'Lemote' we hear that Adelgisus had had tenant properties in Balerna.⁽²¹⁾ This in itself has little bearing on the 844 dispute: we know that there were other owners in Balerna besides the monastery at this period. But it takes on more significance a few years later, when Adelgisus' son Lupus turns up in a court case with Sant'Ambrogio, over Cologno Monzese property in 859 (discussed in chapter 4).⁽²²⁾ As part of Lupus' compromise agreement with the monastery over Cologno he received property in Ligornetto and Balerna, tenant houses in fact. This is a

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clear indication that the monastery had tenant houses in Balerna at this time, and some historians have argued that these were the same ones at issue in the Balerna dispute. This may have been so, but another piece of evidence suggests that it may not have been. In 865 a tenant house in Balerna was given to the monastery by Sigeratus, vassus of the emperor, son of count Leo and brother of count John of Seprio, who had chaired the 844 case.⁽²³⁾ This property had been de jura Brunigi et Walpergi. Possibly, it was Sigeratus who had finally extracted the property from Teutpert and Adelbert, and restored it to the monastery. Whatever the case, Sant'Ambrogio got its rights in Balerna in the end.

In following the Balerna case through we have jumped ahead of the rest of the evidence for the Sottoceneri in the 840's and 850's. This provides important clues regarding monastic activity in villages other than Campione and Balerna, but is not sufficiently detailed for us to be able to construct a narrative as we can for Cologno or Gnignano at the same period. This does not mean that the relationships being forged at the time were not similar in general character; the lack of detail is simply, as we have seen, a characteristic of the recording process. In fact monastic activity here was easily on a par with that in the lowland villages. Interaction with powerful lay families was as important here, but much of it was via gifts to the monastery rather than by means of sales/purchases (another comment on distance from the urban centre).⁽²⁴⁾

In the same year as the Balerna case was held, 844, another charter survives which relates to the pre-835 period; indeed it goes back to Toto himself. It records that two men from Cadempino (6 or 7 kms to the north of Campione) who had been dependants of Toto (possibly servi) and who had been given over to the monastery as a result of his testamentum wanted now to place themselves

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under the legal protection of the abbot as aldii because they had been threatened by various parties.⁽²⁵⁾ That they wanted to be aldii is interesting for this was a claim made by other monastic dependants in this northern area in the course of the ninth century (notably at Limonta). The charter provides too further evidence of the extent of the area encompassed by Toto's estate. It stands at the beginning of a sequence of texts recording the acquisition of rights over men and land, which marks the history of the monastery here over the succeeding two decades. In May 847 the abbot purchased property in the village of Mendrisio and ' Mellano ' (nearby) from a local man.⁽²⁶⁾ When formal possession was taken of it in August it was termed curtis et casa. As we have seen Toto had property in ' Mellano ' too, and this monastic purchase can be seen as consolidation of this. Sant'Ambrogio kept hold of these properties until 963 when they were exchanged with the monastery of San Pietro di Lodi for properties closer to the Campione estate centre in 'Matis'.⁽²⁷⁾ In 854 a similar sequence of events (purchase followed by vestitura) acquired for the monastery property in Lamone, just to the north of Cadempino.⁽²⁸⁾

On the latter occasion possession was taken of the Lamone property by the prepositus of the cella of San Zeno di Campione who appears in the record for the first time. A few months later the same man reached a libellus agreement with Lorenzo, son of Wido of Cadro, regarding his tenure of a casa which the monastery had in Cadro, another of the places where Toto had had property.⁽²⁹⁾ The lease, discussed further in chapter 6, is the only one surviving for the area of ninth-century date, and shows how far the monastery was going in its efforts to formalise its relations with tenants.

Within the next decade the community extended the operations of its Campione estate to Canobbio, as the result of a gift made by Angelbert, presbiter of Canobbio,

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of his curtis in Canobbio on his becoming a monk based at the Campione cella.⁽³⁰⁾ This, like most of the property just discussed, is only referred to by non-specific formulae which reveal little about the size and physical character of the lands. Angelbert had in fact probably purchased his Canobbio property in 857 from another cleric for the sum of 200 solidi, so the property may have been quite big. ⁽³¹⁾

What we are seeing here is the gradual expansion of monastic property in the vicinity of the Campione estate. In the years between 844 and 863, the abbots acquired land and tenants in the villages of Cadempino, Mendrisio, ' Mellano ', Lamone, Cadro, Canobbio and Balerna. In the latter case a dispute had been provoked. In the others the usual combination of purchase and gift had provided the property. Notably, none of the acquisitions were of consolidated property, and none of it was demonstrably very large. It was, therefore, designed to build upon the base provided by Toto. Indeed Toto had had property in four of these places (Cadro, Cadempino, ' Mellano ' and Balerna) backing up the impression that the monastery was consolidating an already established position.

The monastery was dealing with what were by all appearances fairly lowly men in most of these transactions. It was not, however, the only landowner of major significance in many of these villages. Fortunately a divisium of properties concerning one of these survives in the Sant'Ambrogio corpus dating from 852.⁽³²⁾ We have already seen how part of it relates to the Balerna property of Adelgisus of Schianno (5kms south of Varese). He was already dead when the 852 charter was drawn up, and it records an agreement reached between his widow, Adelburga and Baldric of ' Lemote ' at that time. Both of these men must have been major landowners. Adelgisus, on the evidence of this text, had property spread throughout

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the whole Sottoceneri, and if, as seems likely this property was left to his wife, it could not have been more than a fourth of his total lands. Baldric too on the evidence of this text had a lot of land, and we know, as we shall see, that he was an associate of Adalgisus before this. Interestingly, he appears as a witness to the sale of land in Inzago between Anselm of Inzago and his father-in-law in 855, and this providing as it does evidence of his capacity to move around, adds further weight to the characterisation of him as removed from the ordinary. (33)

The first significance of the 852 text resides in the fact that Adalgisus was dead by that time. This means that he may have held the properties in the 830's and 840's when Sant'Ambrogio was beginning to make inroads in the area for the first time. Schianno was his power base, and most of his property was found in an arc to the north-east up into the Val d'Intelvi. A lot of it overlapped with Toto's sphere of influence. The divisium, so it tells us, was the result of a convenientia made at Pavia, probably between Adalgisus and Baldric. It has nothing to do directly with the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. The properties are all tenant holdings of one sort or another and have been mapped for convenience of reference (see Map 11). Unfortunately some remain unidentified, but the basic pattern of their distribution seems clear enough.

Not unexpectedly therefore there is evidence of some interaction between this family and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. Interestingly, as recorded, it all takes the form of conflict. We have already seen how Sant'Ambrogio was manipulated by Adalgisus' son Lupus in the 859 court cases, with the result that he acquired tenants in Ligornetto, Balerna, ' Lucernate ' and 'Arbegiate'. In 864 the monastery took part in a court case involving tenants in Bissone (1km south of Campione).⁽³⁴⁾ The text is very difficult to use owing to its very damaged condition and so the resulting discussion

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of it is only one possible interpretation. In March 864 the monastery came to court in Milan against three young brothers from Bissone, Baroncius, Amelbert and Todo, the sons of Dominicus, claiming that they were not fulfilling their duties as tenants (labour-service and renders), which were presumably owed to the adjacent curtis of Campione. The brothers' advocate claimed that these dues (including renders in wine) had been owed by their father to Baldric and Adelgisus. A series of witnesses appeared for the monastery from Mendrisio, ' Mellano ', ' Mellede ' and Scaria and testified in its favour. The brothers produced in response two libelli which showed that their father had owed 2 anforas of wine to Baldric and Adelgisus, and also to Fulkerius of Albiolo, qui post mortem Fulkerius res eius in potestate Balderici et Adelgi pervenit. Much of the rest of the text is simply too fragmentary to make much sense of. The outcome was a victory for the monastery. We can fill in a few details from other charters. The 852 divisium records wine renders from Bissone and tenant property in Albiolo, both belonging to Adelgisus.⁽³⁵⁾ But it is another awkward text which adds the key information. It is an undated divisium between the cella of San Zeno di Campione and Fulkerius, of property in Bissone, Verna and ' Albutiae '.⁽³⁶⁾ Significantly, the text is heavily damaged like the 864 placitum. Given the Bissone connection this Fulkerius must be that referred to the 864 case, and this in turn means that the divisium must date from before 864 (because Fulkerius was dead by then). If indeed we believe what the placitum tells us Fulkerius died before Adelgisus, who was dead in 852. So, the undated divisium must date from before then. This is important because it takes the events referred to in the court case of 864 back to the period when Sant'Ambrogio was expanding its interests in the area around Campione in the 840's and 850's , and adds Bissone property to the list outlined above. It does not solve the

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problem of what exactly was going on between Sant'Ambrogio, Fulkerius, Adelgisus and Baldric. That simply cannot be known any longer.

From the mid-860's on the fullness of the Campione records tails off markedly. The implication of this is that the monastery was by now in a strong position in the area, and capable of dealing with powerful men on its own terms. This was due in part to the support from some of these powerful men, particularly those from Milan itself. As we have seen, the presence of Milanese owners in the area of the Sottoceneri in the first half of the ninth century was far less than it was in villages like Gnignano or Cologno, closer to the city. It is therefore not without significance that the monastery should have been the recipient of gifts of property in this area by members of the comital and vicecomital families of Milan. We have already seen how Sigeratus gave the community property in Balerna in 865. This was followed up in 870 by the gift of tenant properties in Albiolo, Canobbio and 'Cropello' from Amalricus, son of Waldericus, vicecomes of Milan. (37) We have here then yet another example of patronage of the monastery by aristocratic interests.

The principal theme of this discussion has been the varying nature of the interaction between the community of Sant'Ambrogio and laymen of varying status but before leaving the Campione material something should be said about its relationships with other churches. This arises from yet another dispute in which Sant'Ambrogio was involved in 874, involving the bishop of Como. It is an important text for it records that Sant'Ambrogio was challenged over ownership of the Campione curtis by the bishop of Como. (38) The monastic side claimed that the bishop had sent in homines liberi and sacerdotes to Campione who had expelled the Sant'Ambrogio monks whilst they were officiating. When the bishop of Como was asked to produce evidence of his supposed rights over the place

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he backed down. A month later the community came to grief with the Como monastery of Sant'Abbondio over its property in Verna (in the Val d'Intelvi) which it had acquired from Fulkerius of Albiolo.⁽³⁹⁾ In the church of San Lorenzo in Lugano, a representative of Sant'Abbondio pledged to an advocate of Sant'Ambrogio that neither he nor the men of San Lorenzo of Lugano would interfere with Sant'Ambrogio's Verna property.

So, by the end of the ninth century Sant'Ambrogio was entrenched at the curtis of Campione, surrounded by a mass of tenant properties which were focussed on the Campione estate (see Map 10 p.). Such challenges as it had had, were fended off, but with notable difficulty. This pattern of events can be compared with those recorded for another major curtis, Limonta, a comparison which reveals greater similarities between Campione and Limonta than between Campione and any of the monastery's lowland properties.

THE LIMONTA DISPUTES, 835-1000.

Campione was only one of a string of estates which Lothar confirmed to Sant'Ambrogio in May 835.⁽⁴⁰⁾ In addition to these he had given to the community the fiscal estate at Limonta, on the eastern side of the Bellagio peninsula, in January of that year (see Map 12). Like Campione it too figured in court cases, and indeed we know much more about these disputes than any others recorded in the Sant'Ambrogio corpus. Limonta has been much discussed by historians of early medieval Italy, which is not surprising as Limonta provides one of the most illuminating dispute sequences to survive for pre-eleventh century Europe.⁽⁴¹⁾ The Limonta example documents much better than Campione (or any other place) the difficulties which Sant'Ambrogio encountered as a

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result of trying to enforce and develop its property rights. It is an important, although perhaps atypical, example of the limits of monastic power in this period. Its usefulness is enhanced by the fact that it is possible (albeit in the face of meagre and somewhat difficult evidence) to discuss the pre-monastic background of the estate and the presence of owners other than Sant'Ambrogio in the vicinity of Limonta.

The curtis which Lothar gave to the monastery in 835 was organised on the classic bi-partite sistema curtense model, but this does not mean that it was ' typical ' of most such estates. Although we have no way of knowing for certain exactly when it became fiscal property, it had been a royal estate as far back as our records go. In this respect it was unlike the majority of Sant'Ambrogio's other estates which had no such background. If we look in more detail at the texts recording the royal gift, why this particular background was important becomes clear.

The sequence begins in 835 with a diploma, dated 24th January, in which the emperor Lothar donated the estate to the monastery with rights of full ownership over it:

curtem nomine Lemunta cum casa indominicata et capellam ad se adspicientem dictam videlicet in honore sancti Genesii, nec non oliveta vel mansa sex cum mancipiis ibidem commanentibus vel aspicientes triginta quatuor.

The document survives in the original, which is unquestionably an entirely authentic Lotharingian diploma.⁽⁴²⁾ Its existence is very important because it was constantly referred to in the subsequent disputes and provided the lynchpin of the monastic case. It was confirmed (and supplemented) by Charles the Fat in 880, Otto I in 951 and Otto III in 998.⁽⁴³⁾ The other key

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point to note is that the estate and its workforce were inextricably joined in the text at the outset, but that no mention was made of obligations owed by them to it.

However, matters are complicated by another text, purporting to be a diploma of Lothar's, dated May 835, preserved in an unauthenticated copy of late tenth/early eleventh century date, which having noted the fact of the previous donation, added to it the names of six men who worked the estate, and an olivetula in locis Aucis et Conni. Whilst some have argued for complete falsity or complete authenticity of this text there is agreement that both of these additions are late interpolations, which probably arose as part of the dispute process.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Neither of these diplomata gives any specific details about other renders or olive cultivation which were major elements in the disputes.

The documentary situation is further complicated by three texts, an inquisitium, a notitia relating to it, and a monastic inventory, all concerning the estate. The inquisitium and the notitia relate to the period before the gift of January 835, the inventory to sometime after it. All three texts survive on the same parchment written by a single scribe sometime in the late ninth/early tenth centuries, at precisely the date of the dispute cases, which renders them problematic, but very interesting too.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Problematic also is the fact that all three texts are incomplete and follow each other in the manuscript without a break. These facts, coupled with the particular focus of the texts on details about renders and olive cultivation on the estate (precisely what is missing in the diplomata) make it seem probable that the copy was made to provide a group of extracts, a dossier, relevant to the winning of the dispute cases, in which the community was challenged over precisely these issues.

The information which these texts provide about the pre-monastic estate is not as full as the evidence for

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pre-monastic Campione but nonetheless furnishes some useful parallels with it. The first text of the three records an inquisitium carried out by three royal officials to clarify whether the men of a casale at 'Conni', which, according to the archpresbiter of the ecclesia in Missaglia (Brianza) pertained to his church, owed labour service provisions to the royal estate of Limonta or not.⁽⁴⁶⁾ The royal missi questioned nine men from Bellagio, who all testified in favour of the crown, saying that the men of ' Conni ' had grown, harvested and pressed olives there and subsequently taken the oil by boat to a royal estate in Pavia for the last forty years. The king may therefore have won the case on long possession referring to the thirty-year rule.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Assuming that this inquisitium refers to a time very near 835 it can be argued from it that the royal estate had been in existence since the end of the eighth century, that is the period when Toto II was actively expanding his Campione estate to include a workforce from neighbouring villages. Possibly the same thing was happening at Limonta, but we cannot be sure because of the absence of a plausible identity for ' Conni '. It is interesting though that it was the royal estate that was the subject of dispute, a fact which gains in significance in view of the troubles the monastery had with it later.

The second document is apparently a record of what the royal missi found at Limonta, and is usually associated with the inquisitium.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It divides the villa Lemunta into two parts. First, the demesne with the chapel dedicated to San Genesio and its five manentes, which returned 36 modia of rye, 12 anforas of wine, 12 pigs each worth 20 denarii, 18 rams worth 5 denarii each, 60 chickens and 300 eggs annually. Second, the terra absens outside the demesne, where some servi worked, who paid an annual amount of 5 solidi and two aldii who paid 4 solidi. Here there were also oliveta which returned 60 libras of

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oil, overseen by the royal scarus Domnus. Oddly, the text does not refer at all to ' Conni ', a fact which may be explained by its fragmentary nature. Parts of the estate were held as a beneficium by Madericus, but the text ends before telling us which parts.

The third document, also incomplete, is another inventory but it outlines the possessions and rights of Sant'Ambrogio in Limonta, rather than the emperor's, and was probably drawn up by the monastery in the late ninth century.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The estate was still bi-partite at this point. The demesne had six families of famuli who worked it, with an olivatum at ' Cornula ' worked by an unspecified number of men who provided no returns as such but cultivated the olives in return for food and shelter. The non-demesne comprised cortis diversis (oddly non-specific), olivata in ' Aucis ' and ' Conni ' and tenant plots elsewhere. Then the text breaks off.

So, the evidence for the early history of Limonta, comprises five texts, two pre-835, two of 835 and one post-835 from which we can definitely state that the Limonta estate was divided into demesne and non-demesne and centred around the production of olive oil. Before 835, possibly long before, the estate was royal property, parts of which were held in benefice by a royal follower Madericus. In 835 the curtis of Limonta was given to Sant'Ambrogio by the emperor. In this year he may have given also rights over ' Aucis ' (Uccio, just to the north of Limonta itself) and ' Conni ' (unidentified). Another olivatum was sited at ' Cornula ' (Gorla), but it appears not to have derived from the royal gift. All these olivata were worked by dependants in various states of unfreedom, termed in the texts mancipia, servi, aldii and famuli. Most significantly of all, the nature of the activities of some of these dependants had already been disputed before 835, with the result that their labour-service requirements concerning the production of olive

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oil, and even its transportation to far-off Pavia, were clearly established when the monastery was given the estate.

In the course of these texts we learn very little about whether other owners were present in or near Limonta other than the church of Missaglia. This is not unexpected given the particular nature of these five texts, but it is nonetheless frustrating because it may have been the case that already one owner (the king) dominated the area in the way the family of Toto dominated Campione. The remaining twenty or so Limonta charters shed more light, all later in date but useful nonetheless. The first such text, of 854, relates not to Limonta but to Uccio, and records a sale/purchase between two laymen, one of whom, Lupus son of Gundio, lived in the vicus of Uccio and was selling land which he owned in Lierna, across the lake from Limonta.⁽⁵⁰⁾ This is an important reference for it shows that Uccio at least was not at this point bereft of small lay proprietors. After this there is a gap in the record until 879, when the main sequence of charters relating to the disputes begins. Much more important material comes to light in the next decade. The most valuable of these is a charter of 884 which has received little comment elsewhere because of its unassuming nature.⁽⁵¹⁾ It records that in December 884 at Isola Comacina, the island mid-way between the Bellagio peninsula and Tremezzo, Lupus, son of Dominicione from Madronino sito Lemunta sold a field and a piece of pasture in the vicus of Limonta (in fundo in munte Lemonti vico) to Leonasus son of Leo from Cantonico, also sito Lemunta. The property was bounded by other properties owned by men from Madronino, Cantonico and even villa Lemunta. What the text clearly shows therefore is that Limonta was not just an estate dominated entirely by Sant'Ambrogio, but also a vicus where freemen lived and owned and sold property. By the tenth century it becomes clear that the

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church of Santa Cristina di Olona, a church also much patronised by the Carolingians, had tenant properties in Uccio too.⁽⁵²⁾ So it seems unlikely that Limonta was dominated by Sant'Ambrogio in the way that Campione seems to have been. That the monastery was not the sole owner of land, even in Limonta itself, is one of the keys to understanding the disputes in which it became involved at the end of the ninth century.

Since no fewer than twenty three documents refer to these disputes more or less directly we have a context for them which most early medieval cases simply do not have. At the outset we should not forget that the estate had been subject to a dispute before 835 which had involved not ownership rights but tenant obligations. This was at the root of one of the Limonta dispute sequences, that in which Sant'Ambrogio's claims over its own 'servi' were resisted by them, a case paralleled in essentials by the 864 Bissone case. The other challenge came from the monastery of Reichenau and concerned Sant'Ambrogio's actual ownership of the Limonta curtis, a case similar to the 844 Balerna or 859 Cologno cases, except that the challenge was ecclesiastical rather than lay. The fact that Sant'Ambrogio, as we shall see, dealt more effectively with Reichenau than the 'servi', challenges the usual notions that low status men suffered the oppression of local magnates in silence without opposition in the early Middle Ages.

What happened to the estate in the period between 835 and 879 is not known for certain, in contrast to Campione, Cologno or Gnignano for example. It seems that, for part of the time at least, it was held as a benefice by Appo, recorded as a vassal of King Charles the Fat in 879. This information appears in a charter (a breve securitatis) of November 879 when two missi/vassalli of Appo went to Limonta (precisely to the casam et curte in Lemunta justa laco Comense ad Ucto, in

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fact Uccio) .(53) At the gathering the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio produced a preceptum of Lothar and a diploma of Charles the Fat (which no longer survives) which were shown to those present and then read out. Then the six mansi and inhabitants to which the texts referred were transferred, by a symbolic ceremony per columna de eadem casa et limite ostii, from the control of Appo into that of the abbot. Appo had in fact held the estate in benefice (either from the king or the abbot, the text is unclear). Normally when such documents (symbolic vestiturae) appear in our material they come at the end of a sequence of events resulting in the acquisition of the property by the monastery without any trouble.(54) This time, probably because Limonta was of some strategic importance in the struggle for the control of northern Italy which was involving Charles the Fat at this time, trouble did ensue.(55) Consequently, Charles issued a diploma in favour of Sant'Ambrogio in March 880, which confirmed monastic possession of the Limonta estate by direct reference to Lothar's gift of 835.(56)

Two months later Sant'Ambrogio and the powerful Alemannic monastery of Reichenau came to court over Limonta before Charles in the cathedral of Como.(57) The six mansi were the object of the dispute and, not surprisingly, Sant'Ambrogio claimed possession on the basis of Lothar's preceptum, arguing that therefore the mansi were part of the curte Lemunta. Reichenau believed that the properties were an integral part of its curte Tremecia, that is Tremezzo on the northern bank of Lake Como, a few kilometres across the water from Limonta. The evidence upon which this claim was based is not recorded. To decide the issue the king ordered that an inquisitium of local men be carried out, an action clearly demonstrating the political sensitivity of the case if it is recalled that Charles had himself confirmed the mansi to Sant'Ambrogio only months before. The witnesses (locals

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from Bellagio, Pescallo, Auregia and Visgnola) testified for Sant'Ambrogio on the basis of Lothar's preceptum in favour of the monastery, which they knew because they had been present at the events of 879.

Reichenau did not give up in the face of an adverse decision but continued to cause problems for Sant'Ambrogio over Limonta. This may be explained by the possibility that Charles the Fat confirmed the Tremezzo estate to Reichenau in 881.⁽⁵⁸⁾ Certainly between 894 and 896, Reichenau took its case to Pavia before two missi of King Arnulf. This time Reichenau won, and was invested with possession of the six mansi, in loco et fundo Lemonte. This case is reported within a text recording a subsequent case of October 896 in which Sant'Ambrogio was involved once more.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Sant'Ambrogio's representative claimed then that the Pavia case had been so biased that Arnolf had prevented any of the monastery's advocates from attending it: pro ideo quia pro persecutione ostili ipsius Arnulfi ad eorum placitum venire ausi non fuimus. Reichenau's 'victory' was very short-lived indeed for Sant'Ambrogio won the 896 case by default: the Reichenau advocate did not come to Milan, presumably because the case was heard before King Lambert, Arnolf's rival, and sometime persecutor of Reichenau!

One of the most striking facts of these cases, given the earlier interest of Archbishop Angilbert of Milan in Sant'Ambrogio and Limonta, is the absence of any obvious pressure from the archbishop of Milan in favour of Sant'Ambrogio (pressure which was very evident in cases concerning Cologno Monzese as we saw in Chapter 4). The reason for this absence is however straightforward: between 883 and 896 the archbishop was Anselm, whose name appears in the Reichenau Confraternity Book, indicating that he had clear associations with that community.⁽⁶⁰⁾ His lack of sympathy with Sant'Ambrogio is evidenced further by the fact that the Sant'Ambrogio monks had to

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forge a preceptum from Anselm confirming the Limonta estate (and Campione, Capiate, Inzago. ' Oleoductus ', Pasilano and ' Monte '), since he evidently had no desire to give it to them.⁽⁶¹⁾ This points up the significance which should be attached to personal relationships in the endowment and protection of a monastic patrimony at this period, for although Anselm was archbishop of Milan he was not as a consequence necessarily well-disposed towards the interests of the most significant community within his diocese.

This important dispute thrust the Limonta estate, essentially a small concern, into the political limelight, putting Sant'Ambrogio into the sphere of high politics in a way which never happened with its other estates. In a sense this was explained by the long-standing royal interest in the estate rather than the role of the emperor as judge in any public capacity, for the latter was becoming increasingly ineffective as a result of the political weaknesses of all the contenders for the throne of northern Italy in the later ninth century.⁽⁶²⁾ For monasteries which sought to establish their rights in this fashion the problems must have been great. The image of Charles the Fat in particular, aiding as he did both sides, shows how far politics could disrupt the running of a monastic estate. For there can be little doubt that the functioning of the estate was disrupted at this time because the abbot had to deal with yet another quarrel over the estate, which surfaced mid-way between the two Reichenau hearings in 882 and which proved even more difficult to handle, in spite of (or perhaps because of) the fact that the adversaries were several dozen of its own ' servi ' instead of a powerful monastic foundation with royal support. This dispute was necessarily crucial for the monastery to win because it involved the actual working of the estate, that is it struck at its whole *raison d'etre*.

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Although it is highly likely that the 'servi' took their chance with Sant'Ambrogio as a direct result of the involvement with Reichenau, the cases initially operated at different levels. The first case involving the 'servi' was held, in November 882, at the villa Lemunta, that is to say at the very heart of the Limonta estate, rather than in the more usual urban context (Milan, Como or Pavia).⁽⁶³⁾ It was heard not by royal missi, but by Milanese ecclesiastics, the vicedominus of the archbishop of Milan (the newly installed Anselm, who was not averse to aiding Sant'Ambrogio against dependants it would seem) and the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio, Peter II. They were accompanied by eleven named men, the adstantes, two of whom were abbatial vassi. Royal interest, and therefore in some sense 'the state', was absent: servi seem to have been of no concern to the king.

These servi homines, forty-seven of whom are named in the text, all lived in settlements reasonably close to Limonta, rather than scattered over the Bellagio peninsula (twenty from Civenna and Cantoligo, fourteen from 'Selvaniaco' and thirteen from 'Madronino').⁽⁶⁴⁾ The monastery's argument was that these men and their families pertained to the Limonta estate as servi (that is to say with unfree status) who did labour-service for the estate , comprising the growing, harvesting and pressing of olives and the transportation of the oil to the curte domni regis Deusdedit (possibly Desio in Brianza).⁽⁶⁵⁾ These were exactly those provisions in dispute before the monastery took over the estate (but which applied on that occasion to men from 'Conni'). In support of this the monastic side once more produced Lothar's diploma (and that of Charles) and reinforced them by claiming that it was an established custom of the area that the servi did these things, established a lungo tempore. The servi acknowledged a requirement to make some return to the monastery but this did not involve and had

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never involved, even when the estate had been in royal hands, olive cultivation. This was made quite plain:

vere hoc negare non querimus, quia cum lege non possumus, quod aldiones imperiales non fuisset; et verum est quod ad ipsi augusti in ipsum sanctum locum dati fuimus, et censum reddimus, et reddere debemus annue de personis et rebus pro aldiarica in ipso monasterio, sicut nos antea fecimus, et ceteri nostri fecerunt parentes; nam hoc verum non est, quod nos aut nostros parentes vel consortes olivas de prenomatas olivetas coligere aut premere vel evegere debuissent aut debeamus.

That is to say they owed no labour-service for the estate's principal crop.

In the normal way the two sides were asked to produce evidence of their respective claims. The servi could not produce a document, so witnesses were called to testify to customary practices under oath. Five nobiles et credentes homines liberi arimanni from Bellagio appeared and testified in favour of Sant'Ambrogio on the basis of Lothar's diploma.⁽⁶⁶⁾ These men were none other than those who witnessed the 879 vestitura and testified for the monastery in the 880 Como case. Their presence won the day for Sant'Ambrogio this time, but, as we shall see, the dispute resurfaced again in 905. But, before continuing with the history of these disputes, it is useful to remind ourselves that there were men from the very places the monastery was claiming were part of the estate buying and selling property in Limonta.

We saw above that this is evidenced in a charter dating from 884, two years after the placitum just discussed had taken place.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Limonta was clearly inhabited by some freemen. More interestingly still, the individuals named in this 884 charter from 'Madronico' and 'Cantonico' may very well have been some of the

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supposed ' servi ' whom the monastery was in dispute with. From Madronico there were men called Lupus, Dominicione, Bonus and Dognolinus. All these names appear in the lists of servi in the placita of 882 (and 905) and whilst the first three names are common in other charters from the Sant'Ambrogio collection and may therefore not necessarily be the same people as those referred to in 884, Dognolinus is extremely uncommon, occurring only in these three texts in the whole Sant'Ambrogio corpus and therefore it very probably represents the same man each time. From Cantonico in 884 there were Leonasi, Leo and Bonus: four Leo's appear as servi in the placita. Therefore it would be hard not to come to the conclusion that the 884 text is providing evidence of at least some of Sant'Ambrogio's ' servi ' having property rights in Limonta and its vicinity, and therefore not being servi at all. If this is the case it at once becomes clear why these servi were in dispute: the monastery was trying to increase its domination over them rather than simply maintaining a long-established status quo.

The 884 text suggests then that the position of Sant'Ambrogio in Limonta was far less secure than the court cases would lead us to believe. It introduces another problem too. Why, if these men were selling property in Limonta itself did they not testify to Limonta customs in the court cases rather than the men from Bellagio, a village some distance away, who did testify? The answer is suggested by another neglected charter, one dated 885 (that is to say virtually contemporaneous with the court cases), in which Ambrosius, son of Ado and significantly a coiner from Milan, gave a chestnut wood in Bellagio (and an olivetum in Quarzano) to Abbot Peter of Sant'Ambrogio for the sake of his soul, and Peter's, whom he terms amicus.⁽⁶⁸⁾ This is the first evidence we have of Sant'Ambrogio property in Bellagio,

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and it cannot be without significance that it comes at this time. The monastery appears to have been trying to establish itself in Bellagio as well as Limonta, with the consequence that it acquired ' friends ' there who could and did testify in court cases for the community.

As with the Reichenau dispute the issue of the 'servi ' did not go away. The two sides went to court again over the issue in July 905, once again locally (in the villa Bellano 10km. north on the eastern bank of Lake Como, an estate of the archbishops of Milan) .⁽⁶⁹⁾ This time the case was heard by the archbishop himself (Andreas, as Anselm was now dead) with twenty seven adstantes. The archbishop's presence indicated that the monastery was having trouble getting the ' servi ' to comply with the decision of the 882 case. The 905 case proceeded much as it had in 882 with the addition of the claim by the monastery that the servi had to transport the abbot and his retainers on the Lakes when required, and increased renders owed to the monastery (including 100 libras of iron and a money render of 70 solidi). The case was, as before, decided for the monastery. Soon after the dispute progressed to the central court at Pavia, where it was heard at last by the king, Berengar I and a host of the highest nobility, lay and ecclesiastical, sometime between 906 and 910.⁽⁷⁰⁾ The case appears (as we should expect) to have been decided in favour of the monastery again, but the fragmentary nature of the surviving text inhibits certainty on this point.

So, by 910 at the latest, the dispute between monastery and 'servi ' had moved from being virtually a private matter (private in the sense that ecclesiastical authorities of Milan had tried to deal with it themselves) to the grandest court in the Italian kingdom, at Pavia. For the remainder of the tenth century the evidence concerning Limonta is much sparser, due largely to the eventual resolution of the dispute. Between 910 and 951

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there is no mention of the estate: yet this seems to have been the period when the ' servi ' lost their ground at last. Limonta reappears in a diploma of Otto I, dated October 951, addressed to Abbot Aupald, with which the king confirmed to Sant'Ambrogio the royal mundiburzum and immunitas, as we shall see in Chapter 7.⁽⁷¹⁾ He confirmed also the Limonta estate, including oliveta and six mansi in Villa, ' Selvaniaco ', ' Medranio ', ' Cantaniaco ', Uccio and Civenna together with all the dependants who pertained to it, servi, aldii and ancillae. This seems to have been a preliminary to the final resolution of the dispute by Abbot Aupald in 957, as recorded in a grand charta concordiae.⁽⁷²⁾

Significantly, given its date, this resolution was made outside the framework of public justice. A large group of servi, termed famuli in this text, went before the abbot and his assembled monks in the abbot's first floor chamber at Sant'Ambrogio, imploring him (so the document claims) for a document setting out the customary renders which they owed the monastery for the Limonta estate. The abbot agreed but the terms were harsh: high money rents, and an obligation upon the servi to cultivate, harvest and process olives at the expensa domnica, and take the resulting oil to Milan. They had to promise to ferry the abbot and his fideles on the lakes, and provide fish for feast days four times a year. Those who were tied to the villa only harvested the olives without pressing them.

In some respects the tenacity of the ' servi ' paid off, for at last the agreed details of their relationship to the Limonta estate were written down. Not surprisingly there are no further disputes recorded involving them. Further, the men still lived in their own settlements on the peninsula and had land to cultivate for their own uses. In these senses perhaps they had achieved the status of aldii rather than servi. But in all other

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respects the events of 957 represented a defeat for the servi: heavy labour service demands, increased renders and awkward transport obligations.⁽⁷³⁾ Why this should have happened is difficult to answer, because of unbridgeable gaps in the documentation. It is known, from documents preserved outside the context of Sant'Ambrogio, that the monastery of Santa Cristina di Olona acquired properties in Bellagio and even Uccio sometime around the middle of the tenth century.⁽⁷⁴⁾ The presence of such an owner at Uccio might suggest that Sant'Ambrogio had alienated its property there by then (it is a very small place) were it not for the fact that its Uccio lands appear in an eleventh century Breve concerning the area.⁽⁷⁵⁾ At least it demonstrates that Sant'Ambrogio was not yet the sole owner of land in the immediate vicinity of Limonta at the time of the agreement with the servi. We have seen above how the monastery was attempting to increase the extent of its territorial domination at Campione at this time, and it was probably happening at Limonta too.

Certainly, there are parallels from elsewhere in Italy to such monastic activities resulting in resistance by marginal communities. Recently, the case of the Valle Trita in the Abruzzi has been discussed from a similar viewpoint.⁽⁷⁶⁾ There, between 779 and 872, on the evidence of a series of court cases between the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno and the inhabitants of the village of Carapelle, it has been concluded that resistance by locals to monastic aggression in this marginal area resulted in the establishment of ' un controllo feudale ' over previously free peasants. ⁽⁷⁷⁾ The communities of the Bellagio peninsula were less marginal than those of the Abruzzi. Lake Como had been an important routeway for centuries, and the provision to transport oil to Pavia even before Sant'Ambrogio had anything to do with the area is evidence of its relative accessibility. The involvement of so many men from these

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hamlets in court-cases held in urban places may also have decreased the isolation of the place, encouraging the locals to demand for themselves such urban practices as the recording of customary arrangements in documentary forms (e.g. the Charta concordiae itself). Yet, in spite of all this, the sense of community in the hamlets which Sant'Ambrogio was trying to bring within the orbit of the Limonta curtis remained strong. By 957 the monastery had certainly won its case with regard to the niceties of oil production at Limonta, which, as Castagnetti has rightly stressed, was the monastery's major concern at this point, but it does not appear that the homines ended up as servi prebendari living at the estate centre. They stayed in their hamlets as servi casati. There was no forced resettlement here.⁽⁷⁸⁾

Between 957 and the end of the tenth century the economic exploitation of Limonta and the Bellagio peninsula by Sant'Ambrogio became more intense. The clearest evidence for this comes in a diploma of Otto III, dated January 998, which confirmed once again the Limonta curtis but added four adjacent curtes: 'Grasegallae', 'Lencili' (both unidentified), Nesso (where the community had had land in the mid-ninth century), Barni and also the montem compascuum q.d. Belasinus.⁽⁷⁹⁾ These estates extended over much of the peninsula into the mountains of the interior. Importantly, they stress again royal presence in the Bellagio peninsula, which may therefore have remained important throughout the ninth and tenth centuries. The primary motive for these gains seems to have been the the extraction of iron: an iron render had been required from the servi as early as 905, and now it was accompanied by a requirement to produce lime, essential in an iron manufacturing process.⁽⁸⁰⁾ In 998 this was made more explicit still as the famuli of Limonta and Civenna were required to do everything necessary for the extraction of iron ore and the

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production of the metal itself (et videlicet ratione, ut famuli eiusdem monasterii sancti Ambrosii de Lemonta et Civenna potestatem per huis nostri mundibundi paginam deinceps habeant in suprascripto monte per iam dicitas supra coherentes ferum faciendi, ligna incidenti et cetera quae illis sunt necessaria.). Further evidence of this increased exploitation is provided by a copy of the 905 placitum made at the end of the tenth century, which refers to the late tenth-century situation rather than the early tenth-century one.⁽⁸¹⁾ It records heavy obligations, including a high money rent, the planting and pruning of vines at the monastery's estate at Capiate, the extraction of lime, the killing of cattle, the threshing of grain and even the submission to tonsure, in addition to all the provisions concerning olives. All this was to be done by those same servi from the various hamlets, and not simply Limonta and Civenna as in Otto III's diploma.

The Limonta evidence has been treated here mainly from the viewpoint of disputes. It provides a crucial example of the monastery using the dispute settlement processes available to it (and the documents which played an important part in winning its cause) to extend its rights over an important estate, and even enlarge upon these rights. If such activity is not unparalleled elsewhere in Italy, it is not common, and was certainly not commonly used by the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio. Many of its difficulties here derived from the value of the estate's products, a value which may have provided local inhabitants with income rather higher than the norm for most peasants. This played a part in their resistance, as did their particular community bonds.

SANT'AMBROGIO IN THE VALTELLINA.

The history of Sant'Ambrogio in the Valtellina cannot be covered in the same depth as that of the

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Sottoceneri or the Bellagio peninsula. This reflects its lesser importance to Sant'Ambrogio: its property here was in most senses marginal to its major concerns further south, at least in the pre-eleventh century period. But it is worth studying as the place furthest away from Milan where the community acquired property, and made the monastery, in some senses, a Milanese pioneer in the area. To a far greater extent than any of the areas so far mentioned the Valtellina was dominated by landowners who lived there, or in Como, and by royal property-owning. None of these groups had much reason to give to the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio, or indeed to have dealings with it at all. At the start of our period Carolingian kings seem to have had an especially high regard for the strategic importance of this valley, and therefore entrusted much of it to Franks and Frankish churches.⁽⁸²⁾ At the opposite end of the period, in the latter part of the tenth century, property dealings in the Valtellina which are well-evidenced in the fortunate survival of a substantial archive from the church of Sant'Eufemia di Isola Comacina concerned the monastery of Sant'Abbondio di Como and locals: the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio appears hardly at all, even though some of them refer to places where Sant'Ambrogio did have property in the eleventh century.⁽⁸³⁾ Sant'Abbondio not Sant'Ambrogio dominated this valley, at least amongst churches. Indeed Milanese owners of any sort were few and far between in the ninth and tenth centuries; a fact which need not necessarily have resulted in a weak Sant'Ambrogio presence, as the instances of Campione and Limonta show clearly, but which certainly contributed to it. Therefore the Valtellina appears here very much as a postscript to the rest of the chapter, but an important one, showing as it does the monastery at the very furthest margins of its influence.

The first point to stress is that the location of Sant'Ambrogio's interests at this date was

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very much the lower Valtellina, between Lake Como and Chiuro (some 40 kms up the valley, see Map 14). One could go further to say that for most of the time its estate at Dubino was the dominant concern. Therefore it could be argued that these developments were a natural progression for the monastery building on its possessions in Campione and Limonta, and all the other lakeside sites. But it should not be forgotten that the monastery's interest in the Valtellina began comparatively early. Indeed as early as 814 (before Sant'Ambrogio had any presence in Limonta, or Cologno or Gnignano) the abbot, Deusdedit, was dealing with a Valtellina owner, Rotfrend of ' Wattingo '.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that Rotfrend was dealing with the abbot, for he made provision for the abbot to have property of his in Milan after his death. Rotfrend's Valtellina properties (in Dervio, Dorio, Gagino, Pioda and Vercurago) went elsewhere. A few years later, in 822, the monastery went to court over the status of the wife of one of its dependants, who lived in Cercino, in the Valtellina.⁽⁸⁵⁾ This is the first recorded dispute involving the monastery and it is interesting that it focusses on the Valtellina.

Cercino is but a few kilometres from Dubino, where the first certain reference to property under monastic control is found, in 837. This fact is significant because when and how the monastery came by the Dubino curtis is not entirely clear. Dubino is first recorded in March 835, in the list of estates confirmed to the monastery by Archbishop Angilbert II.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Angilbert may have retained control over it: excepta curte Dublini, quam nos juxta comutationem comutare volumus. Yet in Lothar's confirmation of this text two months later no mention is made of this special provision. Neither text gives any clues as to who held Dubino before. The situation is complicated by a charter of 837 which records an agreement between the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio and a man

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from Delebio (2 kms south, over the river Adda from Dubino see Map 15) who was to be the monastery's manager, scarius, for its Dubino estate.⁽⁸⁷⁾ No reference is made here to the origin of monastic ownership either. Given these facts it may be the case that Dubino came into monastic possession before 835, and that the family of dependants recorded at Cercino in 822, were in fact dependant on the Dubino estate. This is especially likely as the events of 822 were in the nature of a dispute about personal status, pre-figuring the Limonta cases in this respect.⁽⁸⁸⁾

We can be certain that the monastery had the Dubino curtis by 837, and retained rights over it throughout, and well beyond, our period. The entire place was, it seems dominated by church owning. Only one layman is recorded with Dubino property (in 998).⁽⁸⁹⁾ Otherwise, Sant'Ambrogio was rivalled only by Sant'Abbondio and Santa Maria di Velate.⁽⁹⁰⁾ The economic structure of this estate, about which we are quite well-informed, is given discussion in Chapter 6, but it is worth noting in this context that olives and oil production were associated with it, as with Campione and Limonta. From the start monastic property appears as a consolidated unit, as a curtis. As in the cases of Campione and Limonta the monastery built upon this, drawing its workforce from neighbouring villages especially Cercino, Delebio and Cosio, (but possibly from villages across Lake Como too, especially Dogno) with similar results: disputes. The 822 dispute has already been noted. Another took place in 865 (a few months after the Bissone dispute discussed above) over the possession of property in Dogno and Gravedona, on the western bank of Lake Como, but less than 10 kms from Dubino.⁽⁹¹⁾ It was, like the Bissone case, a second generation case, and probably had been going on since the 850's. The monastery won. In 870, it was in court again,

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for a case involving Delebio and the monastery's dependants there.⁽⁹²⁾ The case was heard in the monastery in Milan, but did not involve the possession of land, but rather a murder. The monastery accused its dependant (pertinens) Magnefred of Delebio of killing Melesone, an aldius who worked for the monastery too, at Delebio. The killing was admitted by Magnefred, and he was fined. The case was heard in an atmosphere that came close to making it a private court: only two iudices were present and the case was chaired by the abbot himself. This might suggest that over Delebio (and necessarily Dubino) the abbot had a degree of control unmatched in other estates. The history of the area in the eleventh and twelfth centuries may bear this out.⁽⁹³⁾

This chapter has examined what can be termed the ' upland model ' of monastic property acquisition, a model which differed in significant respects from the ' lowland model ' outlined in the last chapter. In these uplands the influence felt as a result of the presence of Milan some 50 to 60 kms south was far less than in the villages only 10 or 20 kms away from the city. Resistance to monastic penetration was stronger, evidenced by the disproportionate number of disputes the monastery had involving property here. The character of these quarrels was significantly different too. Most involved the community's dependants, and the precise nature of the work they carried out or were supposed to carry out for a far-distant landlord. Yet the fact of these disputes does not necessarily mean that the community was weak here. After all it won these cases, in court, backed up by king or archbishop. The latter were notable patrons in this region, granting the community much of its property here. The property itself was overwhelmingly estate-like in nature, that is to say, it was organised as curtes. What this meant, how monastic property was organised and what

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impact this had on the wider economy of the area are the subjects of the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE.

1. Above Chapter 1 p. 28.
2. NAT 8,15,16,21,33,35,37,39,58,59,91,110,126 and CDL 186, 679,930.
3. C.G. Mor, ' Per la datazione di un documento Campionese del secolo VIII ' Archivio storico della Svizzera Italiana, III (1928) [reprinted in C.G. Mor, Scritti di Storia giuridica altomedievale (Pisa, 1979) pp. 699-709] . G. Rossetti, ' I ceti proprietari e professionali : status sociale, funzioni e prestigio a Milano nei secoli VIII-X. L'età Longobarda ' in Milano e i Milanesi, pp. 165-207.
4. Rossetti coined the term ' da Campione ' in I Ceti proprietari, p. 182. For jurisdictional matters see below pp. 347-348.
5. Mor, La datazione, p. 705. L.M. Belloni Zechinelli, 'Campione terra Italiana', ASL 59, v. III (1963) pp. 94-147, at p. 99. P. Schaeffer, Il Sottoceneri nel Medioevo (Lugano, 1954) p. 52 and again pp. 98-103. Rossetti, I Ceti proprietari, p. 171.
6. Rossetti, I Ceti proprietari, pp. 205-206.
7. Rossetti, I Ceti proprietari, pp. 182-203.
8. Rossetti, I Ceti proprietari, p. 204.
- 8a. NAT 16 and 19.
9. NAT 21. ' Rogialo ' was identified as Rogolo in the Valtellina by Porro-Lambertenghi, and most authors have followed him. Rossetti (I Ceti Proprietari, p. 204 nt. 79) has suggested Roggiaro Valtravaglia as nearer to Campione. Neither identification is demonstrable with certainty. The other names also remain unidentified. Peresendus is termed consuprinus of Toto in NAT 29 (789).
10. NAT 25, 8th March 777. The document [AdM sec. VIII n. 22] is physically imposing (510 512 mm).
11. NAT 33, 35 (' Mellano ' was near Mendrisio, but remains unidentified) and 37 (the identification of ' Antellaco ' with Castiglione d'Intelvi was demonstrated by U. Monneret de Villard, ' L' isola Comacina ' Rivista Archaeologica...di Como, v. (1914) pp. 28-31. Toto is last mentioned in NAT 43 of c. 810 buying a slave girl.
12. NAT 58, March 835 and NAT 59, May 835. The historiography of Campione is replete with the notion that Toto gave his property directly to the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio: this is impossible. In 777 the monastery had not yet been founded and Toto's testament is very clear: the gift was to the archbishop. Even Rossetti continues this myth (I Ceti proprietari, p. 182 describing Toto II as, '...devolutore finale il 777 di tutti i suoi beni al monastero di Sant'Ambrogio...'). The preceptum of

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835 is preserved in a problematic copy of the thirteenth century (see above Chapter 1, pp. 53-54) and may record either the initial gift or a later confirmation by Angilbert. If an episcopal gift had been made before 835 it is unlikely that no record of it would remain in the archive. However, it should be noted that some later charters referring to the area suggest monastic involvement before 835 of a limited type (below pp. 210-211), so the possibility of monastic involvement at Campione between the foundation of the community in 784 and 835 may remain, although it seems unlikely to me.

13. NAT 25.
14. Below, Appendix 2 pp. 347-348.
15. NAT 16.
16. NAT 19.
17. NAT 25.
18. NAT 74/PLAC 1, n. 48.
19. NAT 29, recording that Toto's cousin Peresendus had a tenant house there which he had sold (? to Toto).
20. N.J. Christie, The Settlement and Defence of Byzantine and Langobard North and Central Italy (PhD thesis, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985) p. 136.
21. NAT 88. ' Lemote'/'Lemode' remains unidentified. Porro-Lambertenghi suggested Limonta (!) but this is improbable.
22. NAT 101 and 102. Above, pp. 170-171.
23. NAT 115. Count John, Sigeratus and their family are discussed by D. Bullough, ' Leo, qui apud Hlotharium...', Le Moyen Age, 4 s. 16 (1961) pp. 219-245. See above, Chapter 3 pp. 141.
24. For further discussion of this point see above pp. 140-142.
25. NAT 77, an authenticated copy of the late twelfth/early thirteenth century, whose diplomatic accords with a ninth century date.
26. NAT 80 and 81.
27. CDL 679.
28. NAT 91. The prepositus of San Zeno carried out the vestitura, per columna.
29. CDL 186, now, by some mystery, in the archiepiscopal archive not Sant'Ambrogio's.
30. NAT 110.
31. NAT 97.
32. NAT 88. See p. 212 above.
33. NAT 93, Baderic commanente Lemode ex genere alammanorum. He was not, on this evidence, able to write his name, whereas Anselm of Inzago was.
34. NAT 112/PLAC 1, n. 66. The damage is probably fire damage.
35. NAT 88, 10 congia of vion de Gellone from Bissone.
36. CDL 1000 (pp. 1768-1771) is the only edition. Fire damage seems probable again.
37. NAT 121.

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38. NAT 126/PLAC 1, 78; a copy of the twelfth/thirteenth centuries. The text as it now survives has been altered (especially spellings) and the presence of three churches in Campione is not attested elsewhere for this period, and may be an interpolation. But the essence of the text is certainly plausible.
39. NAT 127. This charter is clearly associated with the 874 placitum as it was witnessed by three missi of the bishop of Como.
40. NAT 59; see above p. 149.
41. Classic discussions are provided by C. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 106-108; A. Castagnetti, ' Dominico e massaricio a Limonta nei secoli nono e decimo ', Rivista di storia dell'agricoltura, VII, I (1968) pp. 3-20 and P. Toubert, ' Il Sistema Curtense: la produzione e lo scambio interno in Italia nei secoli VIII, IX e X ' in Storia d'Italia (Einaudi) Annali 6 (Turin, 1985) pp. 5-63 at p. 32 and p. 52.
42. NAT 57/MGH Dipl. Loth. I n. 23. Several later copies of this survive, of which NAT 57a is eleventh century, and a faithful rendering of NAT 57.
43. NAT 141 granting the royal mundiburdum and immunitas; CDL 596/MGH Dipl. Otto I, n. 138. and CDL 939.
44. NAT 60, who dates the copy to the late tenth/early eleventh centuries and does not doubt its content. As he points out there are in fact two almost identical copies of this of the same date in the Milan archive [AdM sec IX 24a and 24b] in different hands. Natale prefers 24a because it has the imperial chrismon drawn on it. But the two texts differ little in what they record. MGH Dipl. Loth., n. 27. regards it as genuine too. Manaresi (PLAC 1, p. 365) believed it a forgery because of the in Auci et Conni passage and this was accepted by Castagnetti, Dominico, pp. 9-10 and p. 19 nt. 52. The interpolation of this phrase does not render the whole text unusable, even if it casts doubt on an early date for monastic possession of Uccio and ' Conni '.
45. AdM sec IX 27. Edited as NAT 61/61a and 61b; Inventari, III pp. 19-25. Dated by these to the late ninth/early tenth centuries. Porro-Lambertenghi (CDL 126) dated it to the twelfth century.
46. NAT 61.
47. For discussion of this see C.J. Wickham, ' Land disputes and their social framework in Lombard-Carolingian Italy ', in The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe eds. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1986) pp. 105-124.
48. NAT 61a. Castagnetti, Dominico, p. 4.
49. NAT 61b. Castagnetti, Dominico, p. 4. E. Hlawitschka, Franken, Alemannen, Bayern und Burgunder im Oberitalien (Friburg, 1960) p. 179 nt. 6 points out that the Ermenulf referred to in this text (

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- Reliquas vero possessiones eiusdem cortis diversis in locis constitutas, quas dudum per missum Ermenulfi ad partem predictae ecclesiae abbreviate fuerunt...) could be the count of that name active in northern Italy in the 860's and 870's and appearing later in a diploma of Berengar I in favour of Sant'Ambrogio dated 894 (L. Schiaparelli, I Diplomi di Berengario I, n. XIII). If so it may date the inventory to the latter part of the ninth century, a time when we know that the monastery was concerned with the Limonta estate.
50. NAT 92. The charter was witnessed by Lundoald, a vassal of Bernard, a count of Lothar's (Hlawitschka, Franken, pp. 146-151).
 51. NAT 148.
 52. Inventari, p. 38, recorded in the tenth century Breviarium de abatia Sancte Christine que nominatur Ollona.
 53. NAT 139. Castagnetti, Dominico, p. 5.
 54. A. Visconti, ' Su alcune " notitiae investitura " contenute nel Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae ' Annali della Università di Macerata, 6 (1930).
 55. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, (London, 1981) p. 169.
 56. NAT 141. Also NAT 143, a further diploma of March 30th, and the twelfth-century forgery, confirming to Sant'Ambrogio over fifty estates, MGH Dipl. Karl III, n. 177.
 57. NAT 144, discussed by Hlawitschka, Franken, p. 115.
 58. MGH Dipl. Karl III, n. 178, a twelfth-century forgery (like Sant'Ambrogio's diploma cited nt. 56 above) but possibly based on an original text, in view of its ninth-century-looking diplomatic.
 59. NAT 160. Discussed by C.J. Wickham, Land Disputes, p. 119 nt. 27.
 60. MGH Liber Memorialis Confraternitatem S. Galli, Augiensis, Fabarensis ed. P. Piper (Hannover, 1884).
 61. NAT 157.
 62. H. Keller, ' Der gerichtsort in Oberitalienischen und toskanischen städten ', QF, xlix (1969) pp. 1-71.
 63. NAT 146a.
 64. For Civenna see Map 12. All the other sites remain unidentified.
 65. The identification is Darmstadter's, Das Reichsgüt, p. 330.
 66. G. Tabacco, I Liberi del Re nell'Italia Carolingia e Postcarolingia, (Spoleto, 1966) p. 94. nt. 296.
 67. NAT 148.
 68. NAT 152.
 69. CDL 416/PLAC 1, n. 117. There is a late forgery of the same case, CDL 417 (see below p. 235).
 70. CDL 427/PLAC 1, n. 122. Violante, La Società Milanese, p. 107.
 71. CDL 596/MGH Dipl. Otto I, n. 138. Below, p. 304.

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72. CDL 625.
73. See below Chapter 6 pp. 268-271. Castagnetti, Dominico, pp. 8, 10 and 13.
74. See note 52 above.
75. A. Lucioni, ' Il monastero di Sant'Ambrogio di Milano nelle terre settentrionali della regione Lombarda. Due " Brevia de Fictis " dei secoli XI-XIII ' Aevum, LIX, (1985) pp. 208-231 at p. 229. Discussed below in Chapter 6 p. 268.
76. C.J. Wickham, Studi sulla società degli Appennini nel'alto medioevo: contadini, signori e insediamento nel territorio di Valva (Sulmona) (Bologna, 1982) pp. 20-29.
77. Wickham, Studi...di Valva, pp. 25-26.
78. Violante, La Società Milanese, p. 108. In this respect Limonta was different from marginal communities in Lazio, for example, where incastellamento did reorganise dispersed communities into more nucleated, and thus controllable, hilltop villages. See above pp. 92-93.
79. CDL 939.
80. The earlier demand comes in CDL 416/417.
81. CDL 417. Most authors term this a forgery . Thus Manaresi in PLAC 2, p. 605 and his ' Un placito falso per il monastero di Sant'Ambrogio di Milano ', in Scritti di paleografia e diplomatica in onore di Vincenzo Federica (Rome, 1945). Castagnetti, Dominico, p. 19 nt. 46 follows him. Violante (La Società Milanese, p. 107 and nt. 64 ' Il falso placito attesta senza dubbio la reale esistenza delle pretese del monastero, che si volevano appunto impugnare per mezzo della falsificazione. ') argues that this placitum whilst undoubtedly a forgery reveals the intentions of the community in 905, and from that he constructs an argument showing that the servi were better off in 957 than they had been in 905. This is invalidated if the recent new dating for the copy (by Zagni) to the late tenth/early eleventh century is accepted. See for this L.F. Zagni, ' Note sulla documentazione arcivescovile milanese nel secolo X ', SSMD, II (1978) pp. 5-34. This dating is plausible in view of the references to lime production in the diploma of Otto III just cited.
82. See above Chapter 3 pp. 137.
83. See above Chapter 1 pp. 25.
84. NAT 45. ' Wattingo ' remains unidentified.
85. NAT 47/PLAC 1, n. 34. Dominicus and his wife Luba appeared in Milan before the panel chaired by Nonio, a prepositus of Sant'Ambrogio. At issue was the personal status of Luba and her family, which the monastery claimed was servile. In the absence of documents to the contrary, the monastery won the case.

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86. NAT 58.
87. NAT 63.
88. See note 85 above.
89. CDL 949.
90. Inventari, pp. 13-16, the Breve memorationis of Santa Maria dating from pre-859, At p. 16 the community had oil renders from Dubino.
91. NAT 116/PLAC 1, n. 76.
92. NAT 122. Discussed by Wickham, Land Disputes, p. 188 nt. 25.
93. See , for example, the discussion of G.P. Bognetti, Studi sulle origini del commune rurali, (Milan, 1978) p. 257. and Lucioni, Due " Brevia de Fictis ", p. 219 nt. 65.

CHAPTER SIX.

THE MONASTIC ECONOMY.

How to characterise the place of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio within the economy of early medieval Lombardy is the object of this chapter. It is a theme which, in a generalised form, has been much discussed by scholars, particularly in the later medieval period in the case of interventionist monastic orders like the Cistercians, whose economic dominance in parts of Europe was so complete, and so capitalistic in character.⁽¹⁾ In the period before 1000, where there were no such monastic orders, a generalised picture of ' the monastery ' in the economy of the time is more difficult to achieve, and perhaps a concentration on an individual monastic community for study is more valid. The principal difficulty is that the nature of the early medieval economy is very much disputed, largely between those who think it was very different from modern economies in the way it worked and those who think the opposite.⁽²⁾ Partly this may be a question of evidence, which for the early period is thin, and incapable of statistical analysis in most cases. But largely it is a question of the degree to which Europe at this date was a ' traditional ' society incapable of conceiving the economy in a capitalistic way or how far it was already possible to adopt capitalist modes of thought (the work ethic, the profit motive and so on). It was argued by Max Weber, in his famous book The Protestant Ethic and the Rise of Capitalism, that the medieval monastery was a major force in the development of Western ideas about the importance of work (as a service to God) and, in the way it came to systematise agricultural production, in the emergence of the

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capitalist ethic, which distinguished Europe from the rest of the world by the end of the medieval period.⁽³⁾ Whatever historians of the early medieval period think of this suggestion, few would deny that monasteries had an economic as well as a religious importance in the period.

The economic importance of monastic communities certainly increased in the course of the eighth to tenth centuries, as so many of them were the beneficiaries of grants of land, some of them sizable. It has long been recognized that this land made the Church rich in the Carolingian period, because land was usually a secure source of income once initial threats from disgruntled families had been overcome.⁽⁴⁾ In addition many monasteries were involved in toll taking and some had rights to hold markets from early dates, which involved them more in the world than any of the monastic rules had foreseen.⁽⁵⁾ The picture was much more complicated than this for, if land and tolls are the sources of ecclesiastical wealth which we know most about, and which as a result made some monasteries, but by no means all, very powerful indeed, this, of course, presupposed that everything was going well. Wealth and power could disappear rapidly if lands were confiscated, rents went unpaid or marketplaces declined as a result of raiding, which is in part why the church needed the support of kings in order to flourish.⁽⁶⁾ Fortunes could change very quickly in a world that was not static, with the possible exception of its geographical and social margins.⁽⁷⁾

So, to characterise the entire early medieval economy as monastically-dominated would be too simple. It is necessary to look at it again and again from the local point of view, for here monasteries could dominate an area very successfully, although such domination would be more difficult in a socially complex world such as Lombardy, full of great aristocrats and church interests, than it would in the less complex,

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perhaps more black and white world of the Abruzzi or Brittany, where a monastery was often the only major lord in an area, for long periods.⁽⁸⁾ As we have seen Lombardy was a world containing very many rich men and we should be surprised if a comparative upstart like Sant'Ambrogio could have dominated tenurial patterns over a wide area, as, for example the monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno did in the Valle Trita.⁽⁹⁾ By the standards of the king and the greatest lay families the wealth of most monastic communities was small beer, although the greatest ones, like St. Denis or St. Germain-des-Pres, or S. Salvatore of Farfa, were not, and as a consequence their abbots were great men. But the importance of them all lay first in their landowning, something which they needed to acquire power and which laymen, who could make more use of plunder, treasure and office-holding did not.

Historians have seen a great variety of consequences flowing from this great landed wealth. A favourite one is the 'self-sufficient monastic community', which for a long time symbolised the 'closed' economic world of the Dark Ages.⁽¹⁰⁾ These monasteries had no need of trading contacts for their vast estates produced all they needed. Whilst this characterisation is a possibility with some communities, especially the more remote, for most it is not, for communities often had lands confiscated, many had small patrimonies, some desired goods which their estates could not produce. The attractiveness of 'the monastic economy' as a general characterisation was, to some historians of the past, more than simple 'self-sufficiency' for many saw them as 'rationalisers' of a previously un-ordered landscape, as, in a now old-fashioned line of argument, 'civilising influences' in the proverbial 'Dark Age' (as Weber did).⁽¹¹⁾ But the production of beautiful manuscripts in a generally non-literate age did not make all monasteries havens of sweetness and light and such anachronistic

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approaches should be condemned as unhistorical. More recently, other approaches to monasteries have come to the fore, with abbots (who were often laymen) seen as exploiters and enslavers, of poor free peasants and even their own monks or as leaders of quasi-urban communities which functioned as important markets in their own right.⁽¹²⁾ The validity of such generalisations must rest in the first instance on detailed study of individual communities across the whole expanse of Europe. The second part of this chapter attempts this for Sant' Ambrogio. Given the large number of early medieval monastic archives which survive, such an approach is slow, and in many countries, including Italy, still has a long way to go. When comparisons are made between the results of research into this or that monastery it becomes clear that one of the difficulties in assessing the overall relevance of 'the monastery' to early medieval economic life derives from the fact that for many monasteries the anticipated archetypal characteristics are not there.

Yet it would be all too easy in adopting an approach so narrowly focussed to give a false impression of the early medieval economy of north western Lombardy, and, without any attempt to discuss Sant' Ambrogio in the widest economic context possible, the result might tend to reinforce the old-style ' self-sufficiency ' arguments, which are exactly the opposite conclusions from those this evidence leads to. In the preceding chapters it has been argued that, for people of widely differing backgrounds, Sant' Ambrogio was a centre of significant political and social activity in the Milanese region. To what extent such importance was reproduced in a more overtly economic sphere, is the basic question of this chapter and necessarily it leads us into a whole series of controversial problems about the nature of the early medieval economy and how best to grasp its essentially pre-modern and rather alien

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characteristics. Therefore, this chapter begins with some suggestions as to what these characteristics might be, particularly in Lombardy in the ninth and tenth centuries.

Much of what has been already been discussed in the last two chapters can legitimately be seen as economic in character, at least in terms of the early medieval period. The ninth and tenth centuries, for all the efforts of some, do not lend themselves to proper statistical approaches, and so the more sophisticated analyses of economic ' trends ' (population changes, inflation and the rest) which are possible for more recent periods of European history must be left aside.⁽¹³⁾ This does not mean that a cogent picture of ' Dark Age Economics ' is impossible: several major overviews have been proposed, by archaeologists as well as historians, the most successful being those which have breached more traditional notions of what ' economic history ' means. Recently Toubert, in a characteristically perceptive discussion of the early medieval Italian economy, has spoken of the early medieval economy as above all an 'economy of relationships', which catches the mood of the period much more truly than such economists abstractions as ' market forces '.⁽¹⁴⁾ To assess when some action is best characterised as politically or economically motivated is not, in this way of approaching the early medieval world, necessary, for it was quite possible, indeed it was normal, for relationships between abbots and kings (for example) to be both. Therefore the separate discussion of ' the economy ' in this chapter is to be read alongside those discussions of Chapters 4 and 5 , as something leading out of them, additional and related, not essentially so different. Clearly this applies most of all to the activities which resulted in the acquisition and transfer of various rights over land, which as we have seen, often

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involved relationships far removed from the baldly economic, in the commercial sense. This is not the same as saying that commercial relationships were not possible in this period; clearly they were, and in a thriving urban society like that of Milan possibly they were more common than in many other parts of Italy, but it is saying that the idea that all economic relationships must be commercial is simply wrong.

One of the most fruitful ways of approaching the pre-modern economy is an old one: the interaction between the urban and the rural, upon whose conflict Marx placed so much weight, and which many historians of the Middle Ages have deemed essential to an understanding of the great contrasts in levels of development which can be seen between, for example, Italy and Scandinavia at this period.⁽¹⁵⁾ Pirenne, in his famous studies of the early medieval economy, made much of the dynamism of the urban in the economic life of the medieval period, particularly the revival of the tenth century.⁽¹⁶⁾ In this he was followed by many Italian scholars, notably Violante, who proposes a precociously dynamic Milan at this period. This dynamism was closely linked to changes in the countryside, some of them the direct result of the activities of Sant' Ambrogio. So, if the conclusion is arrived at (as many archaeologists are now doing in Italy) that early medieval urbanism was much less developed in northern Italy than many historians have argued, and that both rural production and long-distance trade were much more significant in economic terms, this will necessarily have major repercussions for our understanding of the place of Sant' Ambrogio in the society of Milan.⁽¹⁷⁾ We could even envisage (as Brogiolo has done) the monastery as the dominant element in the early medieval urban economy, as, in a meaningful sense, the only centre of consumption and production left in an otherwise derelict landscape.⁽¹⁸⁾

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Almost a city in itself. If however, we adopt a more 'optimistic' line of argument, we might see Sant' Ambrogio as only a small part of a thriving mercantile society, as sophisticated in its economic life as any place in the early medieval West.

Although a concern with cities marks out much writing on early medieval Italy it is often more preoccupied with changing social structures as much as economic developments. This particularly applies to the urban monasteries which have received rather less attention from this aspect than the great rurally-based communities. Monasteries, we seem to be told, were interested above all in their rural estates and were the institutions chiefly involved in the sistema curtense. In the classic forms of this theory the way monasteries managed their estates was not so different from the so-called villa or manorial systems of more northerly parts of Europe. Pirenne was influential here too as he chose to concentrate above all on the self-sufficient monastic estate in his famous characterisation of the Carolingian economy as 'closed', with an almost total absence of long-distance trading.⁽¹⁹⁾ In such a vision, rural production, subsistence and surplus alike, became the key object of study, for Pirenne and many others, with each monastery or great aristocrat providing for their own needs so that even exchange of goods at a local level was hardly present. Regional and inter-regional exchange were no longer necessary either. The key part of this argument was the dominance of classic estates (bi-partite, split between a demesne worked by tied serfs, and non-demesne tenants who performed heavy labour-service for the lord at the demesne centre). In this characterisation little space was left for independent peasant farmers who were either not subject to a lord at all (other than the king) or who were only required to perform minor amounts of

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labour-service. His ' pessimistic ' characterisation was based largely on the evidence available for Frankia (and northern Frankia at that), and took little account of any diversity in estate organisation which might have existed elsewhere. His overall approach has continued to interest some French historians, such as Duby, who still perceive the rural economy as dominated by such estates, and do not allow much place for areas where classic estates were not dominant or not to be found at all.⁽²⁰⁾ For them lordly domination of the rural population by economic means is still the key to the early medieval economy before the revival of towns and commercial life in the tenth and especially the eleventh centuries. Important challenges to these views have been made by some historians, for example Devroey who has tackled Pirenne's ideas and those of his followers concerning the area right at the heart of their thesis: northern Frankia.⁽²¹⁾ He has sought to emphasise the flexible nature of the old villa system:

' Cette evidence doit nous conduire a considerer un terme comme " systeme domanial classique " comme un concept et non comme une structure concrete, a étudier le haut moyen age comme un terrain mouvent de contradictions qu'il importe de determine avec precision. '⁽²²⁾

The key element of his arguments is that exchange of all sorts (local, regional and inter-regional as well as international) was much more prevalent in the ninth century than many have seen. In part this was due to the fact that urban centres were not dead, but it was due even more to the way monasteries such as St. Germain- des- Pres and Prum managed their estates. These were not ' self-sufficient ' but, via demands made on peasants for money rents and transport obligations, were responsible for maintaining exchange networks over much of the countryside.⁽²³⁾ As we should expect, these views have not found universal acceptance, but as we shall see, when

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applied to an Italian context they provide interesting parallels.

However much the old theories and the new of these historians may seem inappropriate to an Italian context it is important to consider them because the ideas about the structure of the rural economy which they contain (based as they are on the evidence of polyptychs of a quality not available for Italy) have been influential on much important Italian writing on the early medieval economy. This writing too is preoccupied with estate systems, expressed here in the notion of the 'sistema curtense', which in its most classic form parallels closely the ' villa system '. It should not be forgotten that classic Italian studies of the sistema curtense pre-date Pirenne's work, stretching back to the latter part of the nineteenth century. There is not space here to give a full account of what has become a huge historiography, (and anyway much of it now seems old-fashioned, in the light of more recent work which has drawn on anthropological and archaeological material), so I shall concentrate only on the leading figures whose work has most relevance to the Lombard context.⁽²⁴⁾

THE SISTEMA CURTENSE.

Without wishing to do any injustice to the many historians who have written on this subject it can be fairly stated, at least for the north of Italy, that the work of Violante, Fumagalli and Toubert has dominated recent discussions of the sistema curtense. The approaches of all these are very sophisticated and fully aware of the problems (and advantages too) of generalising from the wide diversity of material that is available here. Violante's discussion, in the course of his work on Milan, is the oldest of the three and has in itself become classic.⁽²⁵⁾ In outline he argues that,

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although the sistema curtense was not introduced into Italy by the Carolingians (as already in the later Lombard period there is clear evidence that estates of 'classic' bi-partite type were in existence), the ninth century saw the period of their greatest extent and importance as the dominant mode of agricultural organisation in the countryside. Small tenant farmers still existed but gradually they were absorbed into the network of these estates by labour-service demands. Always there were exceptions to this pattern. It was especially prevalent among churches which, favoured by the Carolingians, built up large patrimonies of landed holdings. In the course of this century the largest landowners began to rationalise their holdings by buying, selling and exchanging land parcels to make them into more coherent agricultural units. In the tenth century, in the face of an increasingly powerful and threatening lay aristocracy, the church lost property and the sistema curtense, in its classic form collapsed. Money rents came to predominate over labour-services (because churches needed cash to take part in the increasingly monetised urban economy), demesne centres disappeared and, towards the end of the century, churches began to lose property to powerful laymen, many of them from the towns. Perhaps the essential point about Violante's treatment is that it does not assume that agricultural production happened in some sort of vacuum, but discusses it together with the nature of exchange, markets and the use of money. His Milan book is about the society of the city above everything else, but a society which was at one with the countryside economically- speaking. Milan was the major market of the region, and fully part of the exchange networks based on the river Po. It provided the money with which property was bought and sold and with which tenants paid their rents. The high degree to which rents were paid in money was a direct reflection of the inter-relationship between

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town and countryside. Violante's work was thus seminal in breaking through the urban/rural barrier, and this is why it has led to so many new lines of research.⁽²⁶⁾

As far as the rural economy of the north is concerned the work of Fumagalli (and his pupils) stands out.⁽²⁷⁾ He has in part developed some of Violante's arguments, notably with regard to the pre-Carolingian estates and the processes by which the casales of that period (often very large estates) became divided into smaller curtes on the more familiar pattern.⁽²⁸⁾ However, it is his work on the monasteries of the lower Po plain which has most added to the standard account. In particular he has shown the importance of the pioneering efforts, in the first half of the ninth century, of the monasteries of Nonantola and Bobbio in opening up areas for cultivation, by deforestation and other types of clearance on the lower Po plain.⁽²⁹⁾ Here the classic bi-partite estate pattern was only rarely found, and was replaced by an economy thriving on the close direct links between tenants and monastery. The abbots of these communities pursued this activity very deliberately, a fact which can be seen in the special types of libelli, with favourable terms, which were granted to its tenants. Out of these researches has come important work by Montanari and Andreolli, which has examined in great detail the actual products of agriculture in the period, the uses to which they were put and the diversity of types of estate and non-estate organisation which, in part, was determined by the different requirements of cereal, pastoral and more specialised types of agriculture.⁽³⁰⁾

Perhaps the most wide-ranging of recent synthetic treatments of the sistema curtense has come from Toubert, who has set his work firmly in the French tradition.⁽³¹⁾ His typology of estates has become the standard framework for analysing agricultural organisation in the period.⁽³²⁾ He proposes (as a guide not a dogma)

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a three-fold division of estates into:

- 1) pioneer estates, largely pastorally-oriented and without a demesne centre;
- 2) more structured units, specialising in crops such as olives and wine;
- 3) classic estates, based on cereal cultivation, on rich soils with a strong demesne centre.

In Italy, tenants often had few formal links with the estate, sometimes doing only a few days labour-service per annum, and their numbers were swelled in the course of the ninth century by numerous manumissions of previously tied slaves. Toubert stresses the importance of monasteries in rural organisation, but points out that their holdings were often very fragmented indeed. This necessitated a well-established system of exchange, through which surplus produce could be brought to the monastery for use by the community or for sale. Markets were of crucial importance therefore to the functioning of the sistema curtense, as the transfer of goods and the maintenance of relationships for the disposal of these goods were so essential, when monasteries were dealing with surpluses far beyond those needed by the community for simple subsistence. Money, therefore played a crucial role as medium of exchange, and was widely available in northern Italy, even down to peasant level.

Important and coherent though much of this work is it could be argued that a lot of it is trapped within the old categories of analysis reaching back to Pirenne and beyond.⁽³³⁾ None of these approaches takes much account of classic work, much of it by English historians such as Grierson and Reuter, which has sought to show that forms of exchange far removed from those often presumed to be characteristic of stable arable agricultural societies (marketing, commerce exchange using money) were important to the early economies of England, Scandinavia

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and Frankia alike.⁽³⁴⁾ This work argues for an ethos of gift-exchange, theft, tribute and raiding which produced the movement of wealth from less powerful to more powerful men within these societies. The aristocracies of England and Frankia, and above all the kings, owed a great deal to the prestige gained by conquest, with its ensuing tributes taken and gifts given. At times the north of Italy was of course subject to invasion (first by Franks, then Hungarians) and violence may have been as endemic to it as it was to Frankia. As we have seen the spate of royal gifts to Sant' Ambrogio in 835 was partly the result of the attempts of Lothar to settle his supporters in the north of Italy. In such circumstances the possibility of disruption to the seemingly settled world of the peasant agriculturalist and the monasteries that were dependent on their productivity must not be overlooked.⁽³⁵⁾

The recent discoveries of archaeology and the theories about the early medieval economy which have been derived from them have also yet to make much of an impact upon Italian discussions of the north Italian economy. It is true that most of this work has focussed on northern Europe, where the economy, with its emporia (in the Rhineland and the Paris basin), its vast quantities of coin (at least in tenth-century Wessex), its sophisticated shipping and industrial production, its long-distance trade and commerce, now seems a very different world than it did thirty years ago and one possibly not so unlike Italy as has often been believed.⁽³⁶⁾ The work of Hodges, which has caused such controversy amongst British historians, has yet to make an impact in Italy, outside of the archaeological world, even though some of his conclusions may have great importance for an appreciation of the Italian economy which does not take for granted the way markets functioned in pre-capitalist societies and does not ignore the possibilities (even if we think them remote) of

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'economically aware' kings, aristocrats and abbots. An example of how different his archaeologically-based theories might make monasteries seem is provided by his work on San Vincenzo al Volturno which he claims, ' ... like many monasteries, promoted regional (my underlining) development through the creation of surplus '.⁽³⁷⁾ In the classic discussions of the position of monasteries in the economy, few would claim so much. More acceptable perhaps is the notion that monasteries were major centres of consumption, related by some simply to the demands of an explicitly religious nature (products used in the liturgy, sustenance for the community and no more) but by others to demands of a less religious nature, to support vassals for example. For later periods in the Middle Ages it is possible to follow the development of the details of monastic economic organisation in greater detail than for the ninth and tenth centuries, but the possibility remains that in some parts of Europe, especially those remote from town society, monasteries could dominate the economy more than any other single institution or individual.

THE ECONOMY OF LOMBARDY.

Before discussing Sant' Ambrogio in detail it is important to describe something of the economic context (traditionally viewed) into which the community came . Most importantly, the exchange networks of the Po plain were well developed by the ninth century, the dominant artery being the Po river itself, certainly used since Lombard times to transport salt and spices from Comacchio and Venice, inland to Cremona and on to Pavia.⁽³⁸⁾ Cremona and some of the other riverside towns developed into considerable inland ports, with churches taking some of the richest tolls (notably the episcopal churches of Cremona, Piacenza and Verona) and acquiring important rights of freedom of navigation in the process.⁽³⁹⁾

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Although explicit evidence of the connection of Milan with this network is not easy to find at this date it is usually assumed that it too was a centre of flourishing trade.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Certainly, merchants appear in the charters quite frequently. Within the region of Milan itself there were probably local markets, at Como, Lecco, Chiavenna and Sesto Mercato (all lakeside settlements, perhaps serving an Alpine trade well-evidenced from the eleventh century) and probably at Vimercate and Monza too.⁽⁴¹⁾ Transportation within the region of agricultural products was not difficult, given the superabundance of navigable rivers (the favoured form of early medieval transport, in the absence of quality roads), and Sant' Ambrogio, as we shall see, made full use of these. Milan was the major centre of consumption in the area and, Violante has argued, was getting larger in the tenth century, when suburbs appeared on its outskirts.⁽⁴²⁾

Much of this exchange must have been facilitated by the use of money, the dominant medium of exchange in economic transactions in those parts of early medieval Europe where it was available. In our charters money appears often as the means by which the purchase of land was effected. It is very probable that it was indeed available - perhaps even readily available - for this purpose because the mint of Milan, is recognised by numismatists as perhaps the leading mint of northern Italy in Carolingian times, rivalling even Pavia in its output.⁽⁴³⁾ It continued to function even though the Italian state was in decline after Louis II. It would seem rash therefore to imagine that the money which appears in our documents was unreal money in the way that it may have been in more central parts of Italy. The position of money within the economy was complex, of that there can be little doubt; sometimes it had value simply as bullion (people bought land with so many pounds of coined silver rather than 1000 solidi), sometimes coin was minted for

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symbolic purposes. Although the possibility remains that at times money may have been used as a means of measuring wealth without being actually used in a transaction, this possibility does not seem a probability in this region and should not lead us to be over-cautious about attributing to money commercial uses.⁽⁴⁴⁾ We should remember too that whatever the uses to which it was put, those who made it, the coiners, were important men in urban society and had dealings with Sant' Ambrogio with some frequency.

Lombardy was rich in specialised agriculture and industry at this period. As is frequently remarked olive-growing was given especial attention by churches around all the major lakes of the north and silk was produced at Como.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Parts of Lombardy were at this time very rich in minerals, and there is clear evidence of their exploitation. Gold was panned in the river Po, and iron and silver ores were extracted in quantity from parts of Alps, stretching from Lake Como to Lake Garda. Much of this exploitation was controlled by churches, and indeed they had been the prime force in its development.⁽⁴⁶⁾

THE ECONOMY OF SANT' AMBROGIO.

In spite of the strictures voiced above about traditional approaches to the economy of the period, the most sensible departure point for our discussion of the place of Sant' Ambrogio in economic life remains the estate. Partly this is a question of evidence: the community has preserved documents which provide more material for this than any other aspect of its economic involvement. Partly it is a question of moving from the known to the unknown: this form of agricultural organisation has preoccupied historians of the early medieval Italian economy to such an extent that it would

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be odd to begin analysis anywhere else. It is necessary to heed well Toubert's warnings, about the diversity of such estates at this period, and the significance of the other forms of exploitation, especially the resources of the largely independent peasant household. We have to remember too the bias of the Sant'Ambrogio evidence towards particular estates, but, having stated these reservations, it remains true that if we want to find active monastic attempts to manage both men and landscape, the estate provides the most graspable means of so doing. This of course is no surprise given the arguments of the preceding chapters. There we saw how some of these properties came into monastic hands, and how the degree of actual monastic control over them fluctuated, for political and social rather than what are usually thought of as 'economic' reasons. Here by way of amplification, I want to examine whether this build up of the monastic patrimony may have had more explicitly economic motivations behind it than has been suggested hitherto (for, example, was it deliberately managed as a single unit ?) and if any consolidating as opposed to fragmenting tendencies can be seen as a result of the deliberate monastic management of the properties which was clearly happening, as such texts as the inventories make clear.

In the previous chapters little attempt was made to link together the various properties which Sant'Ambrogio acquired over the course of the period between 784 and 1000, so that the impression may be of a piecemeal collection of properties, each slowly enlarged by the abbots, but remaining essentially separate entities, archetypal 'self-sufficient' estates. That this was not the case is crucial to an understanding of how Sant'Ambrogio became a powerful lord, with what was a comparatively small patrimony by the standards of the greatest monasteries of the age.⁽⁴⁷⁾

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To begin this first we have to know, as thoroughly as is possible, where all the estates were. This information has been mapped (see Map 13), and from this it immediately becomes clear that the distribution of them was rather distinctive: instead of being scattered over the whole area they are noticeably clustered, around the northern lakes (Campione, Limonta and its associates, Capiate and Dubino) and in a rough circle some 10 to 15 kms from Milan to the south (Gnignano, Cologno and its associates, Palazzolo, Sedriano and Gudo). The majority of these estates were on what can only be termed, in an economic sense, prime sites. This does not simply mean highly suitable for agriculture of whatever type, but also accessible by road or water transport, a key requisite if any effective use were to be made of agricultural surplus. This accessibility made them important economic resources, at the least admitting the possibility of organising the totality of monastic holdings as a single unit, or a series of units, rendering the whole compact rather than irredeemably fragmented and giving the abbots the opportunity to exploit to the full the maximum useful surplus from their possessions.⁽⁴⁸⁾ This arrangement may simply have been fortuitous but the evidence tends to suggest that, in part, it was not. It would be difficult to argue that it was as a result of chance alone that virtually every important monastery in the north of Italy had lakeside estates where olive oil was a key product. With Sant' Ambrogio the initial pattern was the result of gifts, as we saw in Chapter 3, mostly royal gifts, and this could easily have resulted in the establishment of a very fragmentary patrimony, but as the gifts were in part made in response to the requests of the archbishop of Milan the possibility that the result was deliberately designed as a coherent holding, in economic terms, can at least be suggested.⁽⁴⁹⁾ It would be unwise to press this

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type of argument too far, at least early on in the community's history, because much of the coherence of the network can be explained by later reorganisations, and it is introduced here as an interesting possibility rather than a certainty.

Whether these possibilities were realised or not and how successful any such realisations were at different periods are not especially well evidenced in the case of Sant' Ambrogio because the type of evidence which might give the greatest insight into deliberate manipulation of landed property for the purposes of extracting greater surpluses, and therefore realising greater wealth from estates, is of course that provided by polyptychs, of which far better examples survive for other monasteries in Italy, and numerous others in Frankia, at least in the ninth/tenth-century period.⁽⁵⁰⁾ However, just enough of these most classic types of medieval evidence of monastic estate management, have been preserved to enable some assessment of the efficacy of the community's attempts at overall organisation to be made.⁽⁵¹⁾

The first evidence of relatively sophisticated economic activity beyond the simply ' self-sufficient ' concerns the existence of central collection points to which surplus produce was brought for further processing, storage or sale (i.e. for exchange), places indicated in the charters by terms such as cella and dispentium. If these are mapped, it can be seen straightaway that there were fewer of these recorded than the simple estates, which suggests that they performed a different, probably more specialised function than these. The true economic significance of this role is made clear if we look at where these dispentia were.

Two were urban, one in Milan and one in Pavia. The latter was already in monastic possession by 873, and was not out of the ordinary for as we have already seen many other monasteries had similar facilities in Pavia,

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not simply because it was the capital of the kingdom but because it was the economic centre of the Po valley trading networks in this part of Lombardy.⁽⁵²⁾ The cella in Milan was clearly something similar. It was originally in the possession of archbishop Anspert, who gave it to the monastery in 879.⁽⁵³⁾ From the archbishop's ' First Will ' we learn that the cella was near the capella dedicated to San Satyro which Anspert had built near the centre of the city, only 500m south-east of the old forum/mint, the commercial heart of Milan (see Map 1).⁽⁵⁴⁾ Nearby were houses which the archbishop had purchased from the monastery of San Silvestro of Nonantola, which it is very likely formed part of the curtis of that monastery in the city, first evidenced in 885.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The fact that Nonantola, a very non-Milanese monastery, had this type of property in this part of the city reinforces the impression that Milan was of central economic importance in the area. Why else should Nonantola have had property of this type here as well as in Pavia ?

At the same time as Sant' Ambrogio's Milan cella was given to the community by Anspert he gave another curtis/cella/dispenium at Cavenago, east of the city.⁽⁵⁶⁾ This estate was a large one and seems to have become another centralising point partly by virtue of this but also by virtue of its position, close to the river Adda. This is clear from an interesting charter of 897, a libellus, for property which the monastery held in Bozzolo, in the Modenese, in which the tenant agreed to transport an annual food render from Bozzolo to Sant' Ambrogio's dispenium in ripa fluvio Addua, in loco qui dicitur Cavanago (a trip of about 100kms up the Adda).⁽⁵⁷⁾

If these three centres are the only ones explicitly evidenced as central points in the ninth and tenth centuries, it can plausibly be suggested (on the basis of what we know about them from contemporary evidence, as well as more explicit eleventh-century

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documentation) that other places fulfilled similar functions, notably Campione, Limonta, Dubino and Capiate. Indeed, an examination of the few surviving inventories clarifies further the distribution of these collection points. The list of this type of text is not long: Breve de Corte Lemunta (post-835. ? late ninth century);⁽⁵⁸⁾ De rebus monasteri Sancti Ambrosii in Dublini (? tenth century);⁽⁵⁹⁾ In Varano fictis (eleventh-thirteenth century);⁽⁶⁰⁾ Breve recordationis de ficto de Valtellina (eleventh century).⁽⁶¹⁾ The Varano text shows that the monastery's property in the Varesotto (discussed briefly in Chapter Three) had been centralised around Varano perhaps by the eleventh century, but because we have no record of a Sant' Ambrogio presence in Varano before then it would be unwise to read this back into the earlier period.⁽⁶²⁾ The other texts do not present this problem: Limonta and Dubino are well-evidenced in our period.

The most lengthy and important of the four documents is the Valtellina inventory, which indicates food and money renders owed to the monastery from the Valtellina of very substantial proportions, which came from places which, in the majority of cases, are evidenced with Sant' Ambrogio connections in the ninth or tenth centuries.⁽⁶³⁾ The inventory divides up the returns by place, but not at random. The three key places to which returns from all the monastery's other Valtellina property was brought were Dubino, Campione and Capiate.⁽⁶⁴⁾ By this time Limonta appears to have returned to Dubino, although it may still have acted as the central place for the Bellagio peninsula. That operations at Dubino were considerable can be seen by the fact that annually the estate dealt with nearly 2500 lbs. of cheese alone, clearly surplus to normal requirements. Dubino probably had this centralised function in the tenth century or before as we saw in the last chapter.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Campione and Capiate were also important then, Campione as the key

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estate of the Val d'Intelvi/Comasco for the monastery. Capiate presents a more enigmatic example, but one of potentially the most importance it may have been the site of a toll station.⁽⁶⁶⁾ It is in this context the notably high money rents exacted from here by the monastery may best be understood.

Without wanting to labour the point of suitability of site, it needs to be pointed out again just how well positioned these places were if one's intention were to establish a network of estates to which produce could be brought with the least difficulty. But further than this, the sites form a coherent network in themselves, if what was required was the easy or relatively easy transportation of surplus crops to a marketplace for sale, or to a central point for consumption. Dubino, Limonta, Capiate and Cavenago are all near the Adda, with its easy access to significant marketplaces such as Lodi and Cremona further downstream.

To make full sense of this evidence we need to add to it information about what was grown, whether any substantial surpluses seem to be indicated in our sources, and what demands were made by the abbots for transportation of produce by the monastery's tenants to either these estate centres or directly to the marketplace: that is to say products and services which could have fuelled exchange activity by the monastery in the important markets of Milan and Pavia, and have necessitated the establishment of a coherent network of estates geared to commercial or semi-commercial production. Unfortunately we cannot discuss in any detail whether any local markets might have absorbed this production instead of the cities and of whether the monastery's tenants used markets for their own purposes as well as those of the monastery.

The nature of agricultural productivity at this period has been very fully discussed in recent years in

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the work of Montanari, who has shown that surpluses, sometimes considerable in comparison to other parts of Italy and certainly to more northerly parts of Europe, were possible all over Lombardy in this period, but especially at favoured sites, as we should expect.⁽⁶⁷⁾ What was produced on monastic property depended very considerably, in a technologically limited age, on the physical characteristics of the site in question. So, cereals tended to be produced on the richest soils on the alluvial plains around Milan, but also on the valley floors of the north.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Information as to types and amounts for Sant' Ambrogio property is not especially extensive but indicates that the monastery obtained surpluses from cereal harvests which were normal for the area. What happened to the grain once it arrived at the estates is not documented, and in view of our information we cannot say with certainty if it was all absorbed in direct monastic consumption or if it was sold, although it is interesting to note that several bakeries are evidenced in the close vicinity of Sant' Ambrogio's Milan cella at this time.⁽⁶⁹⁾ The monastery obtained renders of other common products of the time including animal by-products, particularly cheese, and wine. By the eleventh century the Valtellina was producing cheese in large quantity for the monastery, but of what types we do not know for certain.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Wine was a common agricultural product, and was traded, so Devroey tells us, in Paris in considerable amounts in the mid- to late ninth century.⁽⁷¹⁾ It was not only the amount that was significant but also the quality, and we should note that Valtellina wine was famous in antiquity as far back as Augustus.⁽⁷²⁾ Having said all of this there is no very firm evidence that Sant' Ambrogio was trading in wine.

If these were some of the standard products, which Sant' Ambrogio could have traded, much rarer in the north of Italy were olives and their oil, only being

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found, as we have already noted on lakeside estates, which also produced desirable ores, such as iron. If as a whole Sant' Ambrogio property was dominated by the classic crops of mixed arable farming, such as was practised by free peasants/small landowner-cultivators over most of Europe in the period, the presence of such specialised products as oil and iron was vital in a world which needed these for a variety of uses.⁽⁷³⁾ How far the exploitation of these things was encouraged by the monastery becomes an important question in the context of exchange, for if the abbots demanded and got large quantities of oil or iron, which were evidently not essential to everyday living, can these demands have been 'economically-aware' ones? This is bound up with the question of the degree to which the monastery determined or indeed could determine what commodities were produced on its properties, which is at the heart of those theories that want to see 'the monastery' as the major force in re-shaping the early medieval landscape and organising it for surplus production. The question is quite a complex one and raises the further one of whether how many 'independent' peasant cultivators there were, free of any dependence relationship with a monastery or any other lord, who determined for themselves what they grew, and whether they took part in local marketing or not.⁽⁷⁴⁾ These issues are made problematic in the case of Sant' Ambrogio by the lack of much explicit evidence of such things as land clearance projects and other indicators of monastic desire to increase the area under production, which Fumagalli has shown preoccupied monasteries such as Bobbio and Nonantola.⁽⁷⁵⁾ But before examining why this should be we first need to look at what evidence there is, for monastic manipulation of production down to the very level of the cultivator.

In previous chapters we have seen clear evidence of Sant' Ambrogio absorbing neighbouring

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properties and workers into its existing estate framework, notably in the north at Campione and Limonta. This was one way of increasing monastic revenues. Opening up uncultivated land to the plough was another, but this was more difficult in this part of Lombardy than further eastwards, for the area was already heavily exploited and had been for millenia.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Circumstantial evidence does exist that some new land came under cultivation in areas where the monastery was involved. There are passing references to novelli, and one to a place called noviculta near Gnignano, but the impulse for these clearances/reclamations cannot be attributed with certainty to Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Probably it was as much the initiative of local men.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Explicit evidence of monastic concern with these matters does appear in some, but not all, of the surviving libelli for the area. In Cadro in 854 the tenant was required to plant new vines and in Gnignano in 912 the tenant was made to promise to improve the land, both suggestive of concern to develop new resources but nonetheless very small scale when compared to Bobbio for example.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The exploitation of the Bellagio peninsula for iron, may have been opened up by the monastery for, as we saw in the last chapter, Limonta was the focus of iron production in the tenth century which seems to have resulted in a movement towards the more mountainous interior in order to extract the ore and associated lime there.⁽⁸⁰⁾ It is, of course no coincidence that such developments should be most visible at Limonta, which was, after the failure of the servi to stem increasing monastic demands, very probably one of Sant' Ambrogio's most tightly managed estates, for only in a place like that could the abbots force new demands upon the inhabitants.

The question of the ' on-site ' management of monastic estates is a vexed one at this period, but it is evidently very important if we want to grasp the

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difficulties which a monastery such as Sant' Ambrogio had in maintaining any real control over its estates and other properties, through which it could determine what was grown there. Clearly the centralised estates were run with the help of estate managers (scariones or actores) who were responsible to the relevant praepositus.⁽⁸¹⁾ The latter were based at the estate centres and must have managed the estate at crucial periods such as harvest time, when they or their missi, sometimes went to tenant properties to collect produce (wine especially) or to oversee the collection of the monastery's portion of the harvest.⁽⁸²⁾ What links there were between these estates and the complex of Sant' Ambrogio itself are never made very explicit in our texts, but isolated references (such as the requirement of the Limonta servi to transport the abbot and his vassi/missi on the Lakes) suggest periods of active involvement in actual estate management by the abbots, even though these would have surely been rare. The abbots were much more interested, as far as property was concerned, with the acquisition and legal defence of it, rather than the daily running of it.

Crucial in the overall organisation of monastic property were the arrangements made for the transportation of surplus to the estate centres and from these centres to the urban marketplaces of Milan and Pavia. The evidence which we have of this demonstrates the vital importance to the monastic community of the sale of its produce, that is to say the exchange of surplus in kind for cash. Toubert has, as we have seen, devoted work to the place of exchange in the sistema curtense which has demonstrated how wrong is the idea that the early medieval economy was dominated by ' self-sufficiency '. This is particularly visible, as we might expect, in the countryside surrounding important cities, such as Milan, and especially so in the case of a monastery such as Sant' Ambrogio with its close urban links. We have already

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established that the majority of Sant' Ambrogio's estates were near to lakes, rivers or roads, which made them prime sites. The charters contain some reference to transport obligations, mainly in libelli, as is commonly the case in other monastic collections.⁽⁸³⁾ These varied in degree from transport over a few kilometres to transport over many, but the result was always the same: the movement of goods from outlying to more central places. Most of the Sant' Ambrogio libelli specify that the monastic share of the harvest should be taken by the tenant to the relevant estate. So, in the 854 Cadro libellus the tenant was expected to take most of the render to the cella at Campione, a trip of about 5 kms including transportation over the lake itself, but special provision was made for the wine which was to be taken only to the banks of Lake Lugano where it was to be met by the prepositus or his missus. Similar provisions were made by lay owners too.⁽⁸⁴⁾ Much longer distances could be covered, especially when the crop was a valuable one. In these charters the clearest case is that of the Limonta oil, which went from Limonta itself by river to Pavia (when the recipient was the king) and to Milan (when the recipient was the monastery). Interestingly, the oil was to be taken to Sant' Ambrogio itself rather than its intra-mural cella, which may point to its especial value or its liturgical use.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Other instances of reasonably long distance transportation concern the monastery of Nonantola, two of whose libelli concern the Milanese.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Other Milanese monasteries also demanded transport of renders to the monastery itself in Milan.⁽⁸⁷⁾ None of this activity was inherently odd: the Po river was at this time a major routeway, upon which a multiplicity of goods were transported, as we have seen. Monasteries throughout the Frankish world practised similar methods of transportation, as for example the well-evidenced case of Prüm.⁽⁸⁸⁾

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Concluding thus far it can be said with a reasonable degree of certainty that the patrimony of Sant' Ambrogio formed in itself, already by the end of the ninth century, a coherent exchange network, whereby surplus agricultural produce was moved around within a limited region. It can be assumed, with less certainty, that most of this surplus found its way to Milan. How far the products which were the object of this circulation were determined by the will of the abbots is impossible to tell, even though we do know that certain rarer (and more valuable products) were the object of especial monastic attention. But we do know that deliberate demands were made upon both servi and more independent tenants to transport goods around, demands which, in the case of Limonta, had been fiercely resisted, ultimately without success. (89)

In making these demands the monastery was drawing into Milan an agricultural society which may have been without such links before. Proximity to Milan was important in all sorts of ways, as we have seen in previous chapters, but one of the most important was its position as a market and a centre of consumption. It seems to me very significant that the only explicit evidence we have of significant local markets within north-western Lombardy at this period (i.e. those places where a mercatum was held which might have happened regularly) comes entirely from the north of the area: Como, Chiavenna, Lecco, Sexto Mercato. (90) Otherwise one went to Milan to buy and sell, whatever the commodity, even land itself. Milan was evidently a complex market for no one individual or ecclesiastical institution gained rights to hold a mercatum there as was common in smaller towns. (91) Certainly, Sant' Ambrogio could have no hope of controlling the Milanese market, but it did make use of it. We know this from the important diploma granted to the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio in 952 by Otto 1. (92) At the

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request of his wife Adelheid and his brother Bruno, he gave to the monastery properties in Milan, next to publicum mercatum, which were described as stationes et banculas, that is to say permanent market stalls. Interestingly, the monastery already had property here along with others, including a negotiator, which in this context probably means a shop-keeper. How the monastery had established its earlier presence is not clear. Clearly this market was no temporary affair if the king had stalls there, but how it functioned is open to debate.⁽⁹³⁾ As we saw in Chapter 3 Milan by the tenth century was a complex city topographically-speaking, with areas set aside for specialised tasks.⁽⁹⁴⁾ One of these was where some sort of formalised exchange (taking this to be the import of the phrase public market) probably subject to royal/state control, took place. How far this market was a truly commercial one is therefore another difficult question, raising as it does problems concerning the use of money as a medium of exchange at this period. But it is an important one for it is arguably in this that the wider significance of Sant' Ambrogio lies for, as a monastery in a city where money was readily available, its contact with moneyers and merchants could have been commercially oriented.⁽⁹⁵⁾

That the abbots used money is not open to doubt. The charters are packed with references to purchases of land made by them, often for very large sums indeed.⁽⁹⁶⁾ That this money was real, and not simply a means of accounting, seems likelier here than not, because numismatists agree that Milan was one of the senior mints of northern Italy, and did produce sizable amounts of coin continuously in the ninth and tenth centuries even in periods of political unrest. If the circulation of coin is reasonably well-evidenced the realities of its uses are much less clear. Much of this coin found its way back to Hungary, as a result of plunder one assumes, in the way

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that some Anglo-Saxon coin found its way to Scandinavia. As far as the monastery was concerned money was used to buy land and to extract rent from many of its tenants, particularly in the tenth century. How these people got this money is therefore a key question, as it seems to suggest that relatively humble peasants had access to sometimes quite sizable amounts of coin. Did they get it from selling their own agricultural surplus? The answer is that we do not know, but some historians have argued that this must have happened in areas where many money rents from peasants were required. To set alongside this there is the problem that small denomination coins were not minted, and that for a peasant to possess coin in large quantities is a contradiction in terms.⁽⁹⁷⁾ The matter really has to be left open at this period.

It would be hard to deny then that in the ninth and tenth centuries the economy of Lombardy was a complex one, and the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio was only a part of it. It could not possibly have dominated large blocs of land, as communities further south could, because of this complexity. However the agricultural richness of the area made it possible for a powerful community to develop with a seemingly small landed base because that land was capable of producing high-value crops, which could be exchanged in the urban markets of Milan and Pavia. The wealth which could be built up from such sources was substantial and was converted, not simply into cash, but also into the buildings and art-works which the community patronised in the course of the later ninth century.⁽⁹⁸⁾ This wealth was not static, for this economy was in a state of flux, usually for characteristically medieval reasons: plunder, confiscation and disorder, which was to contribute to the monastic need for clientage, and especially, vassalage networks, which attempted to shield the existing possessions of the monastery and build-up new

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ones, which contributed to the power of the community just as much as the money which could be gained from buying and selling surpluses. It is the power of the abbots, which partly derived from these networks which forms the subject of the next chapter.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX.

1. J. Gimpel, The Medieval Machine (London, 1977) pp. 56-57, 209-210. M. Postan, The Medieval Economy and Society (London, 1972) p. 102.
2. The classic statement of the ' different ' position is represented by K. Polanyi, ' The economy as instituted process ', in Trade and Market in Early Empires, eds. K. Polanyi et. al. (Glencoe, 1957) pp. 243-270. Typical of the opposite line is A.R. Bridbury, ' The Dark Ages ', Econ. H.R. 22 (1969) pp. 526-537.
3. M. Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism (New York, 1958) pp. 118-119. Some of Weber's ideas on these points are examined, rather narrowly, by G. Ovitt, ' Manual labour and early medieval monasticism ', Viator, 17 (1986) pp. 1-18. Weber discussed monasteries again in Economy and Society, An outline of Interpretative Sociology (2 vols. New York, 1968) eds. G. Roth and C. Wittich in vol. 2 pp. 1181-1183. For some discussion of his views on this issue see R. Bendix, Max Weber, an Intellectual Portrait (London, 1966) pp. 318-328.
4. J. Nelson, ' Making Ends Meet: wealth and poverty in the Carolingian church ' in SCH, 24 (1987) pp. 25-35.
5. For these developments in the Po valley see P. Vaccari, ' I Diritti concessi alle città lombarde sulle acque e sui fiumi ' ASL, s.8., VIII (1958) pp. 204-212. P. Duparc, ' Les cluses et la frontiere des Alpes ', Biblio. de l'Ecole des Chartes 109 (1951) pp. 5-31 discusses toll-taking in the Alps.
6. E. James, The Origins of France (London, 1982) pp. 202-203.
7. Braudel's views on the remoteness and social isolation of mountain societies in Europe can be found in his The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II (London, 1972) pp. 25-52. It is a view challenged by C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City (Oxford, 1988).
8. Abruzzese society has been studied by C.J. Wickham, Studi sulla società Appennini nell'alto medioevo: contadini, signori e insediamento nel territorio di Valva (Bologna, 1982); Breton society by W. Davies, Small Worlds: the Village community in Early Medieval Brittany (London, 1988). The monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno came to dominate the Valle Trita, the monastery of S. Salvatore of Redon a clutch of villages in Eastern Brittany. In both cases the absence of a major urban settlement seems to have aided monastic expansion.
9. Wickham, Studi ...di Valva, pp. 25-26.
10. Most baldly expressed by H. Pirenne, Economic and

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- Social History of Medieval Europe (London, 1936) p. 9.
11. For example, J.A.Raftis, ' Western monasticism and economic organisation ', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 3 (1961) pp. 452-469, at p. 468 speaks of the monastery which, ' As a microcosm...developed and brought to bear directly upon the economic organisation of a people emerging from tribal ways the notions of order and higher motivations. ' .
 12. P. Dockes, Medieval Slavery and Liberation (Chicago, 1984) pp. 90-114 (as exploiters); R. Hodges, Primitive and Peasant Markets (Oxford, 1988) p. 57 (as possible markets).
 13. Examples of the problems of producing viable statistics for the early middle ages can be seen in D. Herlihy, ' Church property on the European continent, 701-1200 ', in The Social history of Italy and Western Europe, 700-1500 (London, 1978) [originally published in 1961]. The techniques are favoured (with more reason) by the French school of polyptych scholars. The early medieval population 'evidence' used by J.C. Russell, ' Population in Europe, 500-1500 ', Fontana Economic History of Europe vol. 1 (London, 1969) pp. 5-59 is very thin.
 14. P. Toubert, ' Il Sistema Curtense ', in Storia d'Italia, Annali 6 (Turin, 1983) p. 63, citing the work of R. Passow (1919) which I have been unable to see.
 15. Marx: ' The foundation of every division of labour which has attained a certain degree of development and has been brought about by exchange of commodities, is the separation of town and countryside. One might well say that the whole economic history of society is summed up in this antithesis ', cited in R. Hodges, Primitive Markets, p. 63.
 16. H. Pirenne, Medieval Cities (Princeton, 1925).
 17. The recent archaeological approaches to ' urbanism ' are examined by G. La Rocca, ' Città altomedievali. Storia e Archeologia ', Studi Storici 3 (1986) pp. 725-735 and C.J. Wickham, ' L'Italia e l'altomedioevo ' AM, xv (1988) pp. 105-124, 649-651.
 18. G.P. Brogiolo, ' A proposito dell' organizzazione urbana nell' medioevo ', AM xiv (1987) pp. 27-46.
 19. See note 10 above.
 20. G. Duby, The Early Growth of the European Economy (London, 1974) pp. 71-111. The rarity of classical estates in the south of France is examined by J-P Poly, ' Regime domanial et rapports de production " Feodalistes " dans le Midi de la France (VIIIe-Xe siecles) ', in Structures Feodales..., (CNRS. Paris, 1980) pp. 57-84, a very important discussion.
 21. J-P. Devroey, ' Les services de transport a l'abbaye

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- de Prüm au IX^e siècle ', Revue du Nord, LXI (1979) pp. 543-569; ibid., ' Un Monastère dans l'économie d'échanges: les services de transport à l'abbaye de S. Germain-dés-Près au IX^e siècle ' Annales, 39 (1984) pp. 570-589.
22. Devroey, ' Les services...de Prüm ', Revue du Nord, LXI (1979) p. 555.
23. See the works of Dockes (cited note 12 above) and Devroey (notes 21 and 22 above).
24. The most classic being S. Pivano, ' Il Sistema Curtense ', BISI, 30 (1909), and P.S. Leicht, ' I tipi d'azienda agraria in Italia nell'altomedioevo ', in his Scritti Vari di Storia del Diritto Italiano, 2 vols. (Pisa, 1943-49) [originally published 1935]. However, P. J. Jones, ' Il Crollo e la ripresa: il primo Medioevo (500-1050) ', in Storia d'Italia, 2 (Turin, 1974) pp. 1590-1681, does provide a wider European context for the Italian economy.
25. C. Violante, La Società Milanese nell'età precomunale (2nd. ed. Naples, 1974) pp. 93-120. See also his, ' Storia e economia dell'Italia medioevale ', RSI, lxxiii (1961) pp. 513-535.
26. See the review of G-P. Bognetti, ASL, s.8., 80 (1953) pp. 335-343.
27. V. Fumagalli, Terra e Società nell'Italia Padana (Turin, 1976); Le Prestazioni d'opera nelle campagne italiane del medioevo, ed. V. Fumagalli (Bologna, 1987).
28. V. Fumagalli, ' Introduzione del feudalesimo e sviluppo dell'economia curtense nell'Italia settentrionale ', in Structures Feodales, pp. 313-323.
29. His articles on this are collected in Coloni e Signori nell' Italia settentrionale, secoli 6-11 (Bologna, 1978).
30. M. Montanari, L' Alimentazione contadina nell'alto medioevo (Naples, 1979); ibid. Alimentazione e Cultura nel Medioevo (Bari, 1988). M. Montanari and B. Andreolli, L' Azienda curtense in Italia (Bologna, 1983).
31. See note 14 above.
32. First developed in his, ' L'Italie rurale aux VIII-IX^e siècles . Essai de typologie domaniale ', Settimane di Spoleto, 20 (1973) pp. 95-132.
33. C.J. Wickham, ' Pastoralism and underdevelopment in the early middle ages ', Settimane di Spoleto, XXXI (1983) pp. 401-451 shows that non-estate dominated agriculture was possible at this period.
34. P. Grierson, ' Commerce in the Dark Ages: a critique of the evidence ', TRHS, ix (1959) pp.123-140. T. Reuter, ' Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire ', TRHS, 35 (1985) pp. 75-94.
35. The disruption was clearest in the case of the Vikings in southern England and northern Frankia as

- discussed by P. Sawyer, Kings and Vikings (London, 1982) pp. 78-97.
36. R. Hodges, Dark Age Economics (London, 1982). R. Hodges and D. Whitehouse, Mohammed, Charlemagne and the Origins of Europe (London, 1983). Many criticisms can be levelled against these works, particularly their use of historical documentary evidence, which is often very naive, and their over-concentration on the theories of Pirenne, now long out-dated for most early medieval historians in England at least. However, the wealth of archaeological material which they discuss is crucial for understanding the economies of the early medieval period. A recent attempt to create an 'economically-aware' king (though without much reference to Hodges) is J.R. Maddicott, 'Trade, Industry and the Wealth of King Alfred', P & P, 123 (1989) pp. 3-51.
37. R. Hodges, Primitive and Peasant Markets (London, 1988) p. 57.
38. The best discussions of these developments are Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 3-48, Vaccari (note 5 above), G. Fasoli, 'Navigazione fluviale, Porti a navi sul Po', Settimane di Studio, XXV (1978) pp. 565-607 and especially P. Racine, 'Poteri medievali e percorsi fluviali nell'Italia padana', Quaderni Storici, 61 (1986) pp. 9-32. The key texts are 1) the (so-called) capitulary of Liutprand of 715/730, which is concerned especially with the Commachiesi merchants. It is thoroughly discussed by Montanari in Alimentazione e Cultura, pp. 147-163; and 2) the Honorantiae Civitatis Papie, a complex document, recently re-edited in C-R. Bruhl and C. Violante, Die Honorantie Civitatis Papie, Transkription, Edition, Kommentar (Cologne-Vienna, 1983) [reviewed by G. Andenna, in CCM, XXXII (1989) pp. 64-67]. Parts of it may refer to the tenth century.
39. P. Vaccari, ASL, s.8., viii (1958), p. 207. The only concessions to a monastery which he cites were, not unexpectedly, to the community of S. Maria 'Theodota' of Pavia (CDL 119).
40. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 3-48. G. Tabacco, 'Milano in età Longobarda', in Milano e I Milanesi, p. 42.
41. Como is usually termed civitas in the charters (e.g. NAT 39, 100, 116, CDL 409, 599, 787). However, CDL 729/790, a fragmentary text dated 971, was drawn up in Cumo mercatum. In CDL 104 and 281, the bishop of Como supposedly received rights to tolls in markets held in Chiavenna and Lugano, but both texts (copied in the fifteenth century Codex Privilegionem cumanae ecclesie, Bibl. Ambrosiana, f. s. v 24) are very dubious. The market at Sesto Calende (Sexto mercado)

- is recorded in CDL 357. Vimercate (vico mercato) and Monza are just guesses. That there was a considerable trade over the Alps is discussed by R.S. Lopez, ' The evolution of land transport in the Middle Ages ', P & P, ix (1956) pp. 17-29, at p. 27.
42. Violante, La Società Milanese, pp. 123-167.
43. La Zecca di Milano (Milan, 1984). P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, Medieval European Coinage (Cambridge, 1986) pp. 219-225, 249-259. There is some dispute about the relative sizes of the outputs of the Milan and Pavia mints, primarily because Italian coins of this period usually omit the place of minting, requiring a location to be worked out from die forms. Grierson and Blackburn suggest (p. 249) that traditional attributions of most ninth/tenth-century Italian coins to Milan may be wrong. Quite a lot of the coins found their way to Hungary (p. 252), probably as a result of the raiding parties of the Magyars in the first half of the tenth century.
44. The case for non-commercial uses is put by C.J. Wickham, ' Economic and social institutions in the northern Tuscany in the 8th century ', in Istituzioni Ecclesiastiche della Toscana medievale, eds. C.D. Fonseca and C. Violante, (Pisa, 1980) pp. 3-39 at pp. 27-39 ' The use of money in Lombard Tuscany and the Monetary reforms of Charlemagne '. His strictures whilst valid for this part of Italy in the late eighth/early ninth century, may not apply to the north at the same period, and certainly not later. Coiners are examined by R.S. Lopez, ' Moneta e monetieri nell' Italia barbarica ', Settimane di Spoleto 8 (1961) pp. 57-88. A recent, important study of the place of coin in the early medieval economy as a whole is M.F. Hendy, ' From public to Private: the western barbarian coinages as a mirror of the disintegration of Later Roman state structures' Viator, xix (1988) pp. 29-78 which is complemented by Hodge's treatment ' Money and Primitive markets ' pp. 96-124 in his Primitive and Peasant Markets.
45. G. Pasquali, ' La distribuzione geografica delle cappelle e delle aziende rurali descritte nell'inventario altomedievale del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia ', in San Salvatore di Brescia, vol. 2 (Brescia, 1978).
46. F. Menant, ' Pour une histoire médiévale de l'entreprise minière en Lombardie ', Annales, 42 (1987) pp. 779-796. In the Valtorta the prime motivators were the archbishops of Milan.
47. Sant' Ambrogio did not have property stretching over hundreds of kilometres, as did S. Denis for example, which, as we saw in Chapter 3, had rights in the Valtellina. However, the extent of its practical

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- control over such property must have been minimal. Sant' Ambrogio by contrast had, in our period at least, all its property within 100kms of the basilica (the furthest distant being an estate at Felizzano, near Alessandria, and tenant plots at Sondrio in the Valtellina, and Bozzolo in the Modenese).
48. This is not to suggest that Sant' Ambrogio property was a compact bloc (as that of San Vincenzo al Volturno was) but simply that none of its holdings were remote.
 49. See above pp. 148-149. We should not forget that the gifts/confirmations of 835 totalled eight estates altogether.
 50. The famous Italian examples are from San Colombano di Bobbio, 862 and 883, and Santa Giulia di Brescia of 905/906. The latter covers 73 estates. See G. Pasquali, ' La distribuzione geografica delle cappelle e delle aziende rurali descritte nell'inventario altomedievale del monastero di S. Giulia di Brescia ', in San Salvatore di Brescia, vol. 2 (Brescia, 1978). I am very grateful to Richard Keyser, of the John Hopkins University, for allowing me to see in typescript his article 'Movement and Exchange in the Manorial Economy: The example of Bobbio, Italy, 862'.
 51. See below p. 268.
 52. The Pavia cella was confirmed to the monastery by Louis II in 873 (NAT 123). For the best recent discussion of these cellae see the collaborative Storia di Pavia, vol. 2. (Milan, 1987) pp. 69-159 (by A.A. Settia).
 53. NAT 137, a controversial document discussed above p. 43.
 54. See above pp. 85-88, and Map 1 p. 349.
 55. CDL 333, a precarial arrangement between Nonantola and Simplicianus, a negotiator from Milan, cited by Violante, La Società Milanese, p. 47 nt. 163 (but wrongly as a Sant' Ambrogio not a Nonantola text).
 56. NAT 137. Cavenago is a few kilometres east of Cologno Monzese, and this gift is discussed further at p. 200 above.
 57. NAT 162, in addition to renders of wheat, rye, millet and wine, there was a money rent too.
 58. NAT 61b/Inventari p. 25. See above p. 223.
 59. CDL 1002, the dating is Porro-Lambertenghi's and is accepted by A. Lucioni, ' Due Brevia de Fictis ' Aevum, lix (1985) p. 219 nt. 65.
 60. Edited in Lucioni, ' Due brevia de fictis ' pp. 224-226.
 61. Edited in Lucioni, ' Due brevia de fictis ' pp. 227-231.
 62. See above pp. 141, 147, 150.
 63. The inventory refers to Cercino, Cino, Cosio, Delebio, Dongo, Dubino, Regoledo, Tirano and Sondrio,

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- where the monastery had property before the eleventh century as well as numerous (presumably) eleventh-century acquisitions. See Maps 14 and 15.
64. The text is divided up as, In primis ad Dubino, Fictum in Campellione, and Summa de Capiate.
 65. Above pp. 238-239.
 66. Above p. 148. Capiate is one of the few Sant' Ambrogio sites to have been given some archaeological attention in recent times. Parts of a late Roman watch tower remain. Of the later period only the church of San Nazaro could be Carolingian. These findings are discussed in A. Borghi and O. Zastrow, 'La corte di Sant ' Ambrogio a Capiate di Olginate: straificazioni romane e insediamenti altomedievali' in Studi in onore di F. Rittatore Vonwiller, vol.2., (Como, 1980) pp. 89-117.
 67. M. Montanari, L' alimentazione contadina, especially pp. 19-70. See above Chapter Two pp. 96-97.
 68. Exhaustively discussed by Montanari, L' alimentazione contadina, pp. 109-150.
 69. NAT 137, refers to pistrina here, confirmed by CDL 880 (for November 993) casa, solariata et sala qui et pristinum ...prope cella sancti Satiri.
 70. Cheese, including the Dubino material, is examined by Montanari, L' alimentazione contadina, pp. 248-250. Cheeses were also a requirement from Limonta.
 71. J-P. Devroey, ' Un monastere dans l'economie d'echanges ', p. 578.
 72. There is a large Italian historiography on medieval viticulture, well-summarised (again !) by Montanari, L' alimentazione contadina, pp. 373-384. As he points out (p. 378) very few holdings appear in charters without vines on them. D. Seward, Monks and Wine (London, 1979) provides a useful account of the subject.
 73. R.F. Tylecote, The Early History of Metallurgy in Europe (London, 1987) pp. 47-53, 151-178.
 74. See Montanari, L' alimentazione contadina, pp. 439-446 with the references he cites there.
 75. See note 27 above.
 76. See above p. 95.
 77. CDL 446.
 78. The vitality of such smallholders is stressed by P. Dockes, Medieval Slavery, pp. 97-100 and W. Davies, Small Worlds, pp. 63-85.
 79. CDL 186, 446.
 80. Above pp. 235.
 81. ' Managers ' are evidenced at Limonta (NAT 61a) and Dubino (NAT 63). The classic case of a prepositus in a management capacity is CDL 186.
 82. CDL 182, 186 and NAT 162. Those texts specifying renders in the entire corpus are: NAT 34 (wine, Saronno); NAT 42 (rye/panic, wine, money, Saronno); NAT 61a (oil, rye, wine, pigs, rams, chickens, eggs

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- and money, Limonta); NAT 63 (grain, wine, sheep, cheese, Dubino); NAT 88 (wine, Bissone); NAT 90 (grain, wine, vegetables 'Octavo'); CDL 186 (wheat, rye, panic, wine, chickens, money, Cadro); NAT 112 (wine, Bissone); NAT 162 (rye/millet, oats, wheat, chickens, eggs, wine, 'sancto Mandrollum'); CDL 417/417 (as NAT 61a and iron, Limonta); CDL 446 (money, Gnignano); CDL 476 (rye and wine, Cologno); CDL 732 (money, Milan); CDL 856 (rye, panic, wine, chicken, eggs, money, Novate); CDL 625 (Limonta); CDL 990 (money, Gnignano). Most of these were for periods of between 5 and 30 years.
83. NAT 42, 61, 162. CDL 182, 186, 333, 416, 417, 556, 625.
84. This is evidenced in a charter as early as 809 when two brothers from Saronno took renders to two brothers from Bregnano about 5 kms apart from each other: et ipso trebudo [tributo] cum nostro evegio per tempore suo perducamus usque in Beroniano ad casa vestra, et vovis consignare promitto, et super vendemias aut grano battere vus aut messo vestro ad nostro dispentio recipiamus (NAT 42).
85. CDL 625.
86. CDL 182 and 333.
87. CDL 556, the monastery of Santa Maria ' Giso ' demanded renders from Novate, 10 kms north of Milan.
88. See note 21 above.
89. See p. 262 above.
90. See p. 262 above.
91. See pp. 261-262 above.
92. CDL 599/MGH Dipl. Reg. Imp. Germ. 1 (Hannover, 1879-1884) n. 145.
93. See works of Hodges and Maddicott cited note 37 above.
94. See above. p. 87.
95. Commercial in the sense of buying and selling for its own sake (and therefore not of other sorts of relationship).
96. See above p. 151.
97. C.M. Cipolla, Money, prices and civilisation in the Mediterranean world. (Princeton, 1956).
98. For example, the monastic buildings were enlarged in 880 (NAT 141) and in the course of the late ninth/early tenth centuries Persian silks (some of which were embroidered at the community in gold thread with scenes of the imperial coronations held in the basilica) of high quality arrived at the monastery, where they remain in the museum today.

CHAPTER SEVEN.

ABBOTS AS LORDS: POWER AND ITS LIMITS AT SANT'AMBROGIO.

The nature of the power which any individual or institution may have had in the past is perhaps more difficult to define with regard to the early medieval period than most. Normally the sources are relatively spare, and where they refer to power as such (with the term potestas for example) only rarely are the concepts behind the words explicitly defined. Therefore treatments which leave ' power ' undefined or discuss it vaguely with regard to the early medieval period can easily fall into anachronistic characterisations of what made some men powerful and others not. (1) At the outset of this study it was suggested that the society being investigated was in essence ' traditional ', in the sense of pre-modern: technologically limited, mostly non-literate, economically pre-capitalist but nevertheless very complicated in its social structures.(2) Kinship and lordship were the two dominant forms of social organisation. The State and its officials were important but increasingly marginalised, even in Italy, with the challenges faced by the Carolingian family in the later ninth century. Therefore, it should be expected that power structures within which individuals functioned were unlike those observed in modern societies and it is wise therefore to attempt to define the ways in which power may have been possible.

In the context of this thesis, the discussion of power has been left to last, partly because of the difficulty of it and the consequent need to draw on the widest range of evidence in discussing it, but also because the analyses of the previous chapters place us in a better position to attempt it. It has been shown how the community, as represented by its abbots, amassed a large body of rights over land in the course of the two

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hundred year period after its foundation, and how this acquisition involved the monks, and especially the abbots, in a wide variety of power relationships, relationships which can be characterised in a general fashion as dependent, equal or superior depending on the nature of other party or parties involved.

Land has been at the centre of the discussion largely because that is what this monastery, like many in the period, was most visibly involved with, in the material sense at least. It is a commonplace of historical analysis that land conferred power in the early Middle Ages.⁽³⁾ Put crudely, the importance of land to those who did not cultivate it directly, rested largely in their ability as lords to persuade or coerce others to produce surplus for them or to take it forcibly from those who were producing such surplus: those lords who were most successful in this - that is those who could command the greatest material wealth - were the most powerful in a society where the ability to reward followers with land or cash was essential if an armed following was to be built up.

Abbots, who often had potential control of vast tracts of land, had as a result the potential to have power of great proportions too. However, a great deal hinged on the ability to make use of this potential wealth, and to prevent those hostile to abbot or monastery from exploiting it for their own ends. Previous chapters have already shown that this ability could often fail the abbots: even recalcitrant servi could deny an effective exploitation of key estates to the community at times. The vicissitudes of power relations at the level of particular individuals or localities could be so complex that they may seem to militate against any attempt to generalise about power at all, especially as it is all too easy in the face of charter documentation to believe the formulae and to be convinced that the monastery was always firmly

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in control of lands which it had acquired by a charter granting rights in perpetuity. We have then to be careful about applying a blanket 'land equals power' notion however appropriate it seems at times, without attempting to define how land conferred power.

In this chapter the specific discussion of Sant' Ambrogio is arranged into three parts. In order to guard against giving a misleadingly simplistic explanation the first part takes up possibilities first broached in Chapter 2 and re-examines what legal powers (in the sense of 'rights') abbots had over their land.⁽⁴⁾ This involves discussion of jurisdictional powers granted by kings to the abbots, rights of immunity and rights to royal protection, in addition to the more basic aspects of ownership introduced in Chapter 2. These powers must not be studied simply, as is often the case, in a theoretical way, as though powers conveyed through the technical terminology of the charters were automatically converted into real power over others; but also in terms of what consequences they had for abbots trying to ensure the continued possession of land by the monastery in the face of challenges to its potestas, particularly those challenges - backed up with force - which came from those as or more powerful.⁽⁵⁾

In such a discussion of 'rights' granted to the abbots by kings (and an example of a dependent power relationship) we should not forget that the 'power' which individual abbots had (and through them the community as a whole) was in a continual flux as disputes arose over ownership and possession.⁽⁶⁾ Kings were not often around to protect the abbots and their communities, which could cause problems in a period when royal agents often were oppressors as much as protectors of churches. Therefore abbots needed to provide protection of their own by establishing relationships with

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men whom they could trust, relationships of equality or of superiority which led to the formation of retinues and clientage networks around the abbots and the monastery. These ' feudal ' aspects of abbatial powers are discussed in the second part.

The final part of the chapter draws on the evidence discussed in the two prior sections to discover whether the abbots could be said to have achieved seigneurial powers at any time before 1000 and it focusses particularly on the judicial powers of the abbots. It may be that these wider powers did not evolve at all in the case of Sant' Ambrogio or that they were present with some abbots and not others. This three-fold breakdown of the discussion serves the purpose of highlighting the major changes in the sources of abbatial power in roughly the chronological sequence in which they happened, although in an analytical discussion of this type chronology is not the dominant concern: theoretical ' rights ', the development of clientage networks and the creation or evolution of seigneurial power did not have to take place in that order as the relationships were sufficiently complex to deny a strict sequential development. For the discussion of the Sant' Ambrogio evidence to have more than a narrow meaning the three-fold discussion is prefaced by some suggestions about power as a concept and a brief look at how the historiography has approached the issues.

POWER IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES.

In the previous chapters of this thesis power relationships have only been touched upon in an implicit way, and no sustained attempt was made to analyse directly the capacity of the abbots to be powerful. If, in this chapter, it is intended to examine to what degree the complexities of property ownership and possession

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coalesced into a body of wider rights and powers of lordship from which the abbot emerged powerful in his own right, it is important to be clear at the outset what sorts of power we might expect to find in this society. Much of the evidence and arguments of earlier chapters have close bearing on the question of abbatial power but our concerns can be simplified if we pause for a moment to consider what this power might entail regardless of our specific evidence, as the possibilities (and the assumptions behind them) might as well be made explicit at the beginning. This is worth doing, for ' power ' is one of those qualities which often remains undefined in historical scholarship, it being assumed that everyone already knows what it is.

First of all it has to be made clear what is not being discussed in this chapter. No attempt is made to examine power insofar as it applied to the monks of Sant' Ambrogio, because we know too little about the monks or even the prepositi to sustain more than summary comment. Recently it has been stressed that divisions of property between abbot and monks were a crucial aspect of monastic life in the Frankish world in the ninth and especially the tenth centuries, and that the power of such communities may often have been challenged by a build-up of abbatial power, which was used for personal rather than institutional ends.⁽⁷⁾ As we shall see there are some hints that similar divisions were occurring at Sant' Ambrogio but never is there any clear sense that abbatial power was threatening the stability of the community. So, it is primarily the abbots who are under discussion.

It is possible, though not always easy, to approach their power in terms of the power they had as individuals and in terms of the power which accrued, in some rather amorphous way, to the office of abbot. The power which individuals can have is perhaps similar, in

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vague ways, from one ' traditional ' society to another, when expressed, for example, in terms of relationships between people, understood in terms of the degree to which a particular person can influence, command or exploit others, or be so affected by others.⁽⁸⁾ Power deriving from the possession of valuable commodities, say the agricultural produce of the land, is interrelated with the more explicitly human power relationships at many levels, and is, again in a vague sense, common to most ' pre-modern ' or ' traditional ' societies.⁽⁹⁾ One of the types of power most commonly attributed to such societies is spiritual or religious power.⁽¹⁰⁾ At the outset it should be made clear that this chapter, like the rest of the thesis, is not concerned with any spiritual power which may or may not have resided in individual abbots or the monastic community as an institution by virtue of its explicit connection with Saint Ambrose, and which may have provided for many the key quality in which the power of an abbot was expressed. It is an aspect which should not, perhaps, be ignored, but it has to be in this instance in the absence of usable evidence with which to approach the questions: we do not have for this community the saints' lives which might make such a discussion possible.⁽¹¹⁾ This gap has to be borne in mind, for it is clear, even from the charters, that holiness, sanctity and the powers which might derive from association with these qualities were important to some. There is no reason to assume that such qualities resided in all abbots in this period, but, sometimes, explicit reference is made to them: so Abbot Peter I appears in one text as vir venerabilis religiosus, and it would be unhistorical to ignore the fact that monastic property was often termed terra sancti Ambrosii, as if the saint were ruling the community still (which of course it was believed he was).⁽¹²⁾ Our emphasis, in the face of this absence of evidence, has to be on material power.

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What was this material power then and how can it be defined? In a society where the state - in a Weberian sense - had few effective bureaucratic means through which to enforce orders, law, judicial decisions and so on, such power was fundamentally rested in the quality of command, of force and coercion whereby intentions could be physically carried through. It was essentially then military power, based on armies or warbands. Certainly this is a wide definition but at least it is one that medieval men recognised. If force then was power we can examine various types and manifestations of it in so far as may have applied to the Sant' Ambrogio abbots.

Given the tendency of the early medieval evidence to point to societies which were in so many respects very different from Late Roman and later Medieval ones (to take only the most immediately appropriate of historical comparisons) it is likely that power in an early medieval context was expressed in different ways too: to be a powerful abbot in the ninth and tenth centuries was not the same as being so in the sixth or the fourteenth. But being an abbot certainly entailed, in all these periods, being in possession of an office, as head of a community of religious, and we need to think first about which abbatial powers derived from the office of abbot. It is from the Benedictine Rule that we get information of most relevance to Sant' Ambrogio, where, as in the majority of early medieval examples, the abbot was, from the very moment of foundation, head of an ostensibly Benedictine community, following Benedict's rule.⁽¹³⁾ This document (of the sixth century) says a lot about the duties of the abbot, but whether these provisions were put into practice or not at the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio we have, in most respects, no way of telling, and in its more religious aspects it is anyway not our concern here. Sant' Ambrogio was certainly regarded as Benedictine by the Carolingian kings who

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patronised it, and in view of the reforming efforts of some mid-ninth-century churchmen, some consideration of what the Rule says about the powers of abbots is not out of place even if, as will become apparent later, this ninth-century Benedictine monastery was not, by the standards of the Rule itself, authentically Benedictine.⁽¹⁴⁾ From the Rule we get clear information about the power of the abbatial office which, above all resided in personal authority over monks who were in his charge, a type of charismatic power over men, power which was devolved from Godly power (which could be termed lordship).⁽¹⁵⁾ The fact of this power is beyond doubt in our period. But another implication of the Rule was that the abbot, as a result of his office, would also be involved in dealings with the outside world, with property-dealings in particular and in relationships with bishops and other abbots: in short with the roles in which abbots have already appeared in previous chapters.⁽¹⁶⁾

However complex dealings between abbot and community could be, dealings between abbot and the outside world were evidently much more involved than a document the length of the Rule of Benedict could possibly encompass, as so many more possible types of relationship could occur. So any theory of abbatial power which can be derived from analysis of Rules, whilst useful as a guide, must not be over-emphasised because research into the nature of early medieval office-holding demonstrates frequently that such powers as derived from, let us say, the office of count, were always balanced by other powers which the officer possessed by virtue of landownership or participation in clientele networks at a local level.⁽¹⁷⁾ The powers which might theoretically seem to derive from the quality of being abbot could be altered by a myriad of other relations into which the individual abbot became involved in the course of his abbacy. In the wider world the relationship between individual and office was

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complicated and it is not always easy, or indeed valuable, to attempt to separate the two for analysis. Any abbot could be as much an individual as the holder of abbatial office, and could be involved in a wide variety of power relationships by virtue of family connections or his own property ownership.

We can classify these relationships, as has already been suggested, as those of a predominantly dependent nature, those of equality and those of superiority. In the world of the ninth and tenth centuries abbots were often dependent on kings or bishops for their arrival in the office of abbot in the first place. ' Election ' to the office by the community of monks, whilst a requirement of the Benedictine Rule, often came down to a question of appointment.⁽¹⁸⁾ Royal and episcopal patronage of monastic communities was developed by the Carolingians, in Italy as in Frankia, and it focussed very firmly on the abbot (or abbess), to the point where some abbots acted as royal advisers (Alcuin as abbot of Tours for example).⁽¹⁹⁾ Such relationships could be those between virtual equals but more often were relationships of dependence. Abbots owed a great deal of their institutionalised power to kings, in the form of devolved kingly rather than devolved Godly power: grants of a variety of regalian rights did occur, immunities from standardised royal exactions were allowed and gifts of especially valuable property were made. These powers did not entirely depend on who happened to be abbot at the time, although that was important when, at the end of the ninth century, royal power began to lessen in the face of challenges to the Carolingians from outside the immediate family.⁽²⁰⁾ At all but the highest levels this was a relationship of dependence of abbot on king or queen, a power relationship of a patron/client type. One of the questions we have to ask is how far, in the case of the Sant' Ambrogio abbots, it became possible to escape these

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dependencies, as the material wealth of the community grew. There can be little doubt that abbots of wealthy communities had, as in the case of the wealthy in most societies, more opportunity to act powerfully. It is the abbots of Tours, St. Denis, Fulda and St. Gall who appear in Frankish annals, whilst those of less wealthy foundations do not figure anything like as much. We hear less in north-central Italy of such abbots but this is largely because of the paucity of narrative accounts of the period.⁽²¹⁾ The relationships which some abbots had with kings and bishops shows clearly that one of the ways in which power was defined was in the forging of relationships with those already powerful. Yet abbots could often have a more equal or even a dominant role in a power relationship, particularly those abbots who were favoured by high-level patrons, who had more to offer to those looking themselves for support or looking to escape the exactions of the state and its more unreliable servants.

If abbots could not often rival the powers of kings or bishops, they could often match those of other abbots or members of the lay aristocracy. Sometimes of course abbots were members of the lay aristocracy. The fact that lay abbots were not rare at this period reminds us to take account of the key relationships which could exist between the abbot and his family, which in certain circumstances could determine the running of the monastery, depending on the power of the family involved.⁽²²⁾ As we have seen in previous chapters the Church in this period was often subject to manipulation by laymen, and abbots were the prime target because they controlled the community's property. The interrelationship of kinship and lordship as determinants of power structures was always present in a complex web of alliances and counter-alliances.⁽²³⁾ For the less powerful the abbot could also appear in the role of patron as the

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superior in a power relationship, as sharer of royal immunities with men whom he chose to 'protect' or as lord over dependants. Such power often was juridical in nature: the abbot as judge over his dependants or even over the populace at large. But it could also be economic, when the abbot leased out property to a lowly cultivator for example. Economic power was in part a result of relationships which enabled abbots to exact surplus from the land and exploit it as a resource. The material wealth which this conferred was a crucial aspect of the power of the abbot, in a world where surplus production was desirable for the freedom from cultivation which it made possible. Wealth, in the form of land or goods or money, was transmuted into power when it was used to secure support from followers, or to defeat enemies, that is when it was used to build up a military clientele, something which abbots did just as much as laymen.

These remarks have been made in order to outline some of the means to access to power which Sant' Ambrogio abbots may have become involved with. General discussions of the power of abbots and monasteries are rare in the work of historians of early medieval Italy, but implicitly much of the most important writing is preoccupied with power relations involving the church.⁽²⁴⁾ The classic exponent of the questions which this chapter confronts is Tabacco.⁽²⁵⁾ His very sophisticated discussions of the interaction of public and private power in the context of the Carolingian impact on Italy and the subsequent breakdown of Carolingian control, and with it many of the powers of the State, form the best general analysis of early medieval Italian developments yet written, particularly in his appreciations of what constituted royal and state power, and how lordly power came to supersede it. His basic starting points are the products of government, the Carolingian capitularies and diplomata,

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which reveal, theoretically at least, how kings wanted society to work. Tabacco focusses especially on two key aspects of them: what they say about the public obligations of free men, and what they say about the church.⁽²⁶⁾ The Carolingians tried very hard to maintain a legal relationship between the state and the mass of free men, the arimanni.⁽²⁷⁾ These had obligations to the state of military service, bridge work and attendance at court. These obligations appear in Carolingian documents throughout the ninth century, but it is clear that at its end few arimanni were in a position to fulfil them any longer. They had been subjected to pressures from lords other than the king, who forced them into their own military retinues. The classic Frankish vassalage relationships became an important part of the organisation of Italian society as a result: vassi and benefices both made appearances.⁽²⁸⁾ These developments had crucial implications for the power of the state and the power of aristocrats who were increasingly ignoring the state.

Tabacco's other crucial discussion concerns the Church. The developments of military clientele and vassalage relationships may have owed a lot to the Lombard period, and may have been well advanced before the Carolingians arrived in Italy.⁽²⁹⁾ Certainly it is hard to tell from the formalised governmental texts how diffused it all was. Tabacco stresses that we have to be very careful on these points. The extensive landowning of the Church by contrast was a demonstrably new element, and it was explicitly encouraged by the Carolingians. This was done partly to provide a counter-weight to the developments in the lay world, as a balance to increasing comital power and partly from pious motives.⁽³⁰⁾ The means of the encouragement were grants of immunity (immunitas), from royal exactions such as tax and the need to provide soldiers for the army, but also the deliberate prevention of intervention by royal officials on immune lands, and of

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protection (mundiburdum), which conferred perpetual immunity and meant that those attacking the church were liable to the king as if they had been attacking him too. (31) Tabacco shows that the combination of grants of land to the Church and immunitas/mundiburdum exemptions was new and designed to give the Church the great power it was meant to have by God. The combination gave the bishops in particular the ability to by-pass comital power altogether, by making leasing from churches especially attractive to those arimanni under threat from powerful laymen, who could, by surrendering their ownership of land to the Church in return for getting it back in leasehold, enjoy the advantages of immunity and protection accorded to the Church. The bishops and abbots as a consequence began to build up retinues of their own, most often made up of Franks or Alemans at least in the ninth century. (32) Tabacco's analyses give a full place to the variations which could be found at local levels and he is fully aware that violence and extortion could disrupt these apparently smooth-running relationships.

Power derived therefore, at least at the more exalted level, from a combination of landholding, officeholding and the web of personal relationships which linked the two. Although vassalage and other formal relationships of patronage and dependence in no sense dominated society they increased in importance when, in the later ninth century, the balance began to shift decisively away from the state and towards the development of powers of seigneurial lordship. The struggle between Carolingians and non-Carolingians for the kingship in Italy removed the protection accorded to the Church in any practical sense, which had to create its own methods of protection to ensure the continuance of its powerful position in society. These problems were increasingly worked out at the local level, especially as the collapse of a single royal authority also made things difficult for

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royal officials, who increasingly looked to localise their positions, by building up clientele locally.⁽³³⁾ This development had major repercussions at village level with the fact of the the phenomenon of incastellamento which began to appear in the early tenth century.⁽³⁴⁾ These castles and fortified villages were a physical expression of the seigneurial power of aristocrats over people whether they were resident on their properties or not. Increasingly the right to build castles was being granted away by kings (particularly Berengar I). With it came the right of districtus and judicial power over local inhabitants, which could be enforced militarily if necessary.⁽³⁵⁾ Such powers were conceded to churches by the Ottonians, drawing bishops and abbots alongside the lay aristocracy into seigneurial developments.⁽³⁶⁾ Increasingly bishops acquired such rights over their cities, with permission granted to maintain the walls being especially significant.⁽³⁷⁾

Since the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio could not, in the face of this complexity of jurisdictions, remain in a cosy spiritual vacuum, for our purposes it is important to see how Milanese society was affected by these developments, and this has to be done via an analysis of the seminal work of Violante.

LA SOCIETA' MILANESE: VIOLANTE'S CHARACTERISATION OF ARCHIEPISCOPAL POWER IN THE TENTH CENTURY.

Violante (whose portrayal of Milan is still very much regarded as the current orthodoxy; Keller called it a Modellstudie for example) sees Milan as a classic, if precocious case, of the build-up of clientele at the local level, in the face of the collapse of royal power, but one which also prefigured later communal developments in its urbanistic orientation.⁽³⁸⁾ His discussion of the 'feudalisation' of Milanese society focusses on the tenth

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and early eleventh centuries, which he sees as a period of feudalita ecclesiastica dominated by the creation of a group of vassals by the archbishops with the purpose of maintaining their authority in the city. The result was a complicated interaction between king (first Otto I then Otto II), archbishop, great nobles, lesser nobles and the ' new society ' of artizans, judges and merchants which had come to the fore in the city in the course of the ninth century. It can only be baldly summarised here. One of his crucial arguments is that the archiepiscopal clientele were drawn from the old-established urban groups, known as capitanei, who were first formally granted church lands by Archbishop Landulf after the latter had been forced to flee the city in 983 in the face of a revolt against him and his family by the cives of Milan, the new society of merchants and the other newly rich, what would once have been called the bourgeoisie.

To discuss these crucial events (crucial because they imply that the once firm power of the archbishops was crumbling in the face of an increasingly complicated world) Violante was in the fortunate position of being able to draw on those rarities of early medieval Italian history, narrative histories, as well as charters. The histories of Milan written by Arnulf and Landulf Senior, both of the Milanese church and very partisan accounts of the tenth- and early- eleventh century power struggles in the city, focus overwhelmingly on the archbishops.⁽³⁹⁾ It is from them that we learn - which would not have been the case had we been forced to rely on the charters - that the archbishop granted property to the capitanei: Quambrobrem ecclesiae facultates et multa clericorum distribuit militibus beneficia. As a result they gave him military help in re-establishing his position in Milan. ⁽⁴⁰⁾ Even the support of Otto II (ignored by Arnulf, stressed by Landulf Senior) could not help him we are told. The capitanei were significant

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enough to have developed their own vassals, valvassores, but they remained of the lesser aristocracy.⁽⁴¹⁾ Violante argued that the initiative for these events may have in fact come from the capitanei. The result was a dispersal of church lands which the archbishops could do nothing to prevent. Milanese society was now too complex for even the archbishops to have power over it.⁽⁴²⁾ The local great nobility was in a parallel crisis, with the example of Atto of Lecco, a very major landowner, selling off huge estates, being classic.⁽⁴³⁾

Some important criticisms can be made of this picture. The most problematic is the nature of the evidence employed. Both Arnulf and Landulf have points to put, and much of their work is clearly tinged with hindsight. In particular the seeming homogeneity of the capitanei and valvassores as groups which these sources project is rather too easily accepted by Violante, which Keller's book Adelsherrschaft succeeded in showing was nothing of the sort. He may also overestimate the unity of the 'Milanese Church' for, as we shall see later, he ignores the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio almost entirely and it can be argued that the monastery had become, during the tenth century a focus of interest for precisely those Milanese cives who challenged the authority of Archbishop Landulf. Very importantly, he ignores the fact that the archbishops seem to have lost interest almost entirely in the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio after the first decade of the tenth century.

What happened to the lands of the monastery in the tenth century therefore becomes very important, as the archbishops may have ceased to patronise the abbot and monks fearing that the abbot was becoming too powerful. It is in this context that Violante's neglect of the evidence for the build-up of abbatial clientele in the later part of the ninth century and throughout the tenth century has to be seen. It is important to remember that Violante,

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when discussing the build-up of archiepiscopal clientele in the tenth century, says nothing at all about the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio, whom he seems to regard as an insignificant part of Milanese society at this time. Partly this is because they do not appear at all in the narrative accounts: Arnulf and Landulf are only interested in the archbishops. The implication is that the archbishops totally overshadowed them. For Violante this is completely coherent because most of the support upon which the archbishops based their clientele came from the villages surrounding Milan, and we do not know if they had any contact with the monastery.

Even so he is very certain that ' church property ' (monastic as well as archiepiscopal) was very much dispersed (in the sense of lost) in the later part of the tenth century. Yet this was not entirely the case with Sant' Ambrogio : somehow the abbots held onto most of the estates they had acquired in the ninth century. They reorganised their lands trying in the tenth century, through a series of exchanges, to consolidate them around various sites. In the case of Limonta, they extended their activities over much of the Bellagio peninsula, precisely in this late tenth-century phase. They did not, as we shall see, lease out huge amounts of land: there is only one surviving Grosslibell for Sant' Ambrogio in this period, and it dates from 1000. So we need to ask what happened between Sant' Ambrogio and the archbishops in the tenth century.

As we saw in Chapter 3 archiepiscopal patronage helped to make the community powerful in the ninth century, as several archbishops (but admittedly not all) cooperated with kings to endow the monastery, which was very much the focus for archiepiscopal gift-giving: other Milanese churches seem to have received much less. (44) In the tenth century this activity seems to have disappeared. The shift is nicely illustrated by a simple

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observation concerning the burial-places of the archbishops. Of the eleven men who held the see in the ninth century, nine were buried at Sant' Ambrogio; whereas of the twelve tenth-century archbishops not one was interred there.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Furthermore, half of the tenth-century archbishops do not appear in any charters at all and the rest only do so in contexts not concerning the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This can partly be explained by the struggles which overtook the see in the first half of the tenth century. In particular there was a dual election in 948.⁽⁴⁷⁾ However, where we do have charter material it is very clear that archiepiscopal attention had switched from Sant' Ambrogio to other Milanese monasteries: S. Maria Gisonis, S. Maria Wigilinda and S. Celso, and even to the canons at Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁴⁸⁾ There are no tenth-century precepta for Sant' Ambrogio either. However, as we shall see in a moment, royal interest did not wane. In this light the lack of archiepiscopal involvement seems odd. Sant' Ambrogio was a landowner of consequence by this time, and it seems peculiar that the archbishops appear to have made no attempt to exploit it at all. We do know that the archbishops leased a lot of property to followers, but evidently it was not Sant' Ambrogio property. Perhaps the implication of all this is that the abbots had worked themselves free of the position of dependence on the archbishops which had been the case in the first half of the ninth century. The rest of the chapter looks at how this might have happened.

THE ABBOTS OF SANT'AMBROGIO: THEIR ORIGINS AND PROPERTY.

In line with the remarks made above about the importance of not assuming too much continuity between the concerns of one abbot to another, not placing too much faith in the fact of the abbatial office (' the abbot ') but instead looking at the individuals who were abbots, something ought to be said about the origins and

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backgrounds of these men in the case of Sant' Ambrogio. Oddly, it is not possible. We know nothing at all about the personal background of any Sant' Ambrogio abbot in this period. We know their names and, for the most part, when they held office, but we do not know anything at all about the families of any of them.⁽⁴⁹⁾ This may suggest that they did indeed stick to the 'no personal property' provisions of the Benedictine Rule. If most are completely colourless figures, it is possible to speculate a little more about some of them, and particularly their involvement with property. A quick chronological run through gives a flavour of the limitations of the evidence.

Abbot Arigausus (806-814) seems to have leased the oratorium dedicated to San Vincenzo and the curtis called Prata associated with it from Archbishop Odelpert in 806.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Certainly it was designated for his and not the monks' use for control over it was to revert to the archbishops upon the abbot's death. Abbot Gaudentius (835-839) was probably abbot both of Sant' Ambrogio and the monasterium of San Vincenzo in Prato, but this link too seems to have died with him.⁽⁵¹⁾ Abbot Rachinpert (839-844) is interesting as he may have risen through the ranks of the church of Milan under the patronage of Archbishop Angilbert II, who ordained him.⁽⁵²⁾ But none of the abbots 'evidenced' prior to 855 appears to have been more than an archiepiscopal dependent. After this three abbots appear as more active at least in the field of property-management. Abbot Peter I (851-897) is evidenced in 28 charters in the course of an extremely long abbacy.⁽⁵³⁾ The royal diplomata refer to him with respect, and he may have been an important political figure although we cannot be sure because of the lack of narrative sources. The other two abbots evidenced in

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anything like this way are Abbot Aupald (936-963) who presided over the final stages of the Limonta disputes and Abbot Gaidoald (985-998) who had dealings with Otto III.(54)

How far the archbishops intervened to promote particular individuals is not really knowable. There are hints in the royal diplomata that more than the regulation election by the monks was taking place sometimes. Charlemagne's 790 diploma is very insistent on this point:

Et quandoquidem divina vocatione abbas ex ipso monasterio de hac ab luce ad Dominum migraveris, licentia habitat monachi de ipso monasterio sancte Dei ecclesie mediolanensium vobisque per omnia fidelium super se secundum ordinem sanctum et regulam sancti Benedicti eligendi abbatem.(55)

Yet by 835 Lothar had granted, at the request of Archbishop Angilbert II:

Et si qui quando quidem abbas ex eodem monasterio decesserit, secundum suam institutione licentiam habeant per consensum archiepiscoporum, qui tunc per temporum fecerint, de ipsa congregatione elegendi talem abbatem, qui eis secundum regulam et iustitiam praeesse prodesse possit.(56)

And as we have seen, with Angilbert's probable imposition of his archpresbiter Rachimpald on the community, this is exactly what happened.

As far as property was concerned we have little indication about whether these abbots had any personal property or if any supposedly monastic property was expropriated for their own uses. Certainly documents often record gifts to or exchanges with the abbots, but hardly ever is it made explicit if these were gifts meant for the monastery or for the abbot himself. Normally gifts were to the abbot and his successores, that is to the abbatial

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office not the individual.⁽⁵⁷⁾ How property was divided up between the abbot and the monks is another point on which we are ill-informed. Kings certainly seem to have regarded it as important to safeguard the interests of the monks, which is of course why they were supposed to elect the abbots. Of the royal diplomata which we have for Sant' Ambrogio most are addressed explicitly to particular men, either the abbot or the archbishop. Some were directed at ' the monastery ' (Charlemagne, Lothar - both at the request of the archbishop - and Hugh/Lothar, and Otto I - this latter at the request of Adelaide and Otto's brother Bruno).⁽⁵⁸⁾ Some were addressed to abbots (Louis II, Charles the Fat and Arnulf to Abbot Peter I , and Otto I to Abbot Aupald).⁽⁵⁹⁾ Some were sent to the monks (Charles the Fat and Otto III).⁽⁶⁰⁾ But whether the monks really did retain control over any property we cannot know for certain.

So our information about the lives of individual abbots is fragmentary, which is unsurprising in the absence of chronicles or saints' lives which might illuminate such things. We are better informed about the theoretical powers and rights of the abbots granted by the kings in diplomata. These were powers commonly recorded in the Frankish world as well as in northern Italy, where they were introduced by the Carolingians in their efforts to promote the church. When looked at in the wider context then the actual powers were ordinary, something which important churches were meant to have. Importantly, the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio, and especially its abbot, was a late starter in this particular power game.

IMMUNITAS AND MUNDIBURDUM AT SANT'AMBROGIO.

It was not until 873, nearly a century after the establishment of the monastery, that Sant' Ambrogio received from the emperor Louis II the grant of immunitas and mundiburдум.⁽⁶¹⁾ Prior to this time there had been no

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hint of it in the grants of either Charlemagne or Lothar. By the latter part of the ninth century many Italian monasteries had received such grants, some like the monastery of Novalesa (founded in 726 and granted immunity by Carloman in 770 and Charlemagne in 773, less than fifty years later) had been immune before Sant' Ambrogio was even founded.⁽⁶²⁾ As we have already seen the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio were very much dominated by the archbishops in the first part of the ninth century, and this probably explains the late appearance of these rights in the Sant' Ambrogio case. It was not coincidental that Abbot Peter I was the recipient of the grant, nor that it came from Louis II, at the request of his wife, the empress Angilberga. As we have seen elsewhere, Louis was supported by Archbishop Ansper of Milan at this time, who was himself greatly involved in supporting the cult of Ambrose and endowing Sant' Ambrogio.⁽⁶³⁾ The diploma provided that the monastery should be sub imperialis mundiburdi tutelam nostraeque providentione immunitalem perpetuam, and the freedom from exactions and bar to entry on the part of all royal officials applied to all the monastery's properties. The charter made precise provision over the legal status of monastic dependants, against whom it was not possible to take action without the abbot's consent (... at verso ipsorum commenditos, libellarios sive cartularios sine abbatis aut prepositi conscientia pignorare aut distingere nemini permittimus...).⁽⁶⁴⁾ It should be noted that these exemptions did not simply apply to those whose relationships with the abbot/prepositus were documented but also his commenditos, his vassals. Only one place was not covered by these provisions, the monastic cellula in Pavia, presumably too profitable to the king to be granted exemption. Both the immunitas and the mundiburdum were confirmed by Charles the Fat, by Arnulf, by Otto I and by Otto III, reminding us that however much documents reiterated the perpetual nature of

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the grant, circumstances were such (with such shifting alliances around so many kings/emperors) that confirmations from new monarchs were always wise.⁽⁶⁵⁾ The immunity and royal protection were only effective if royal officials and the lay aristocracy (or for that matter other bishops and abbots) abided by them, and of course it is clear that often they did not. The monastery was part of a violent world and the abbots needed more than documents to protect the community.

It is in this light that the important information surrounding the fortification of the Sant' Ambrogio site must be seen. Subsequent to the 873 diploma Abbot Peter received another, from Charles the Fat, in March 880.⁽⁶⁶⁾ This confirmed the immunity, and also granted to the abbot (sub potestate et regimine) the monastery of S. Maria Aurune in Milan, a community of nuns which had been linked with the Empress Angilberga.⁽⁶⁷⁾ This is important for this monastery was actually built into the city wall, and therefore had a strategically significant position. But the key part of Charles' grant was the following;

Confirmamus etiam semitam illam, pro qua supradictus Petrus abbas a venerabile antistites Anspertum seu comite Alberico seu cuncto clero et populo devotissime petiit, quia pro ipsa semita minime monasterium ipsum munitium habere potuerat. Unde pariter considerantes congruitatem ipsius monasterii et civitatis salvationem, et quod monachi ibidem commorantes quieti manere non valebant, per ipsius omnium consensu Petro abbati a parte ipsius monasterii infra clausura ipsius monasterii claudere licentiam dederunt. ⁽⁶⁸⁾

This stands in marked contrast to the standardised formulae of immunity: it is very particular and clearly refers to problems which had been experienced (or were

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perhaps forseen) concerning the safety of the Sant' Ambrogio community. The year 880 is not one in which any particular hazards are recorded, and clearly the threat did not come from the archbishop or the count. The importance with which the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio was regarded in Milanese society is also quite clear. This should not be overdone, as it is equally clear that Archbishop Anspert was behind it. It was he who had had Louis II buried at Sant' Ambrogio, he who made provision, a few months before Charles' diploma for significant property transfers in favour of the monastery in his testament and he who at this very period was challenging the pope over his right to control the Church in northern Italy. However, Abbot Peter 's power over the Sant' Ambrogio site itself is further apparent in the grant made to him by Arnulf in 894 of further land near Sant' Ambrogio:

Concedimus quoque et confirmamus supra taxato abbati et successoribus eius omnem integritatem ipsius monasteri usque ad murum eiusdem mediolanensis civitatis sicut modo parietibus circumdata esse videtur, ut nullus comes vel quelibet persona publicum ambulandi ingressum exigere presumat.⁽⁶⁹⁾

The implication here is that the fortification of the community had been put into practice. As most bishops in the north of Italy had acquired or were about to acquire powers over their city walls, these notifications of the appearance on the scene of a fortified community probably attached to the walls of Milan are very significant if we are trying to gauge how dependent the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio still was on the archbishops.⁽⁷⁰⁾ It is no coincidence that it is the late ninth-century period that these transformations were happening as it was the period when, as we saw above, the power of kings in Italy was waning. One of Tabacco's explanations for this

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transformation in Italian power structures is the further development of military clienteles, by the church as much as the lay aristocracy. As we shall see Sant' Ambrogio was no exception.

VASSI, FIDELES AND THE FORMATION OF ABBATIAL CLIENTELES.

The second major way in which the abbots acquired practical power over their properties was by surrounding themselves with followers, who could, if necessary, use military force to ensure monastic possession.⁽⁷¹⁾ The study of these men can be approached firstly by looking at the explicit references to vassi and vassalli of the abbots which are contained in the charters. As a method this has pitfalls. Charters record vassi only in a piecemeal way. Sometimes a man is given the designation of vassus by a notary, when another notary does not so qualify the same man.⁽⁷²⁾ So, in addition to collecting up the explicit references to vassals, it is necessary to try to piece together other information which may indicate that a given individual was the ' man ' of a particular abbot. Both these approaches involve an analysis centred, for the most part, on witness lists. It is typical of Italian charter documentation that although vassi are referred to in this capacity we hardly ever have preserved any leases or benefice arrangements which may have taken place between the abbot and a given individual.⁽⁷³⁾ This is extremely important for it may mean that the abbots rewarded followers not with land but with more movable forms of wealth (a possibility reinforced by the fact, as we shall see in a moment that many vassi, especially in the tenth century were from Milan itself).

The limited amount of reference to vassals does not permit systematic statistical analysis in any meaningful way. We have to be content therefore with

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observations based on somewhat unsatisfactory material. The first reference to a vassus of a Sant' Ambrogio abbot dates to 830 and the last to 990.⁽⁷⁴⁾ Between these dates references do not occur in an even dispersion over the period but are focussed around particular abbots. This is the first important observation. Of all the abbots only two, Peter I (851-897) and Aupald (936-963) are associated with more than five vassals. In the case of Peter fifteen individuals are termed his vassalli, but interestingly none appear in the first fifteen years of his abbacy: most appear between 879 and 897. In the case of Aupald there are twelve men named: all appear in the last six years of his abbacy. Sergi has made the interesting suggestion that this implies a period when the abbots were feeling their way before being able to command formalised support in the last years of their rule.⁽⁷⁵⁾ If we turn to look at where these vassalli were from another interesting and important pattern emerges. In the tenth century they were, with few exceptions, explicitly from Milan itself. In the ninth century some came from villages surrounding the city (Confienza, Rovegnasco and Sormanno interestingly none of them places where Sant' Ambrogio had recorded property interests). Most other ninth-century vassalli are not located in the charters. This is odd, for it was the practice of ninth-century notaries to record a man's place of residence.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Only rarely do witnesses get recorded without it. So the absence of such information in the case of the ninth-century vassalli could mean that they were sufficiently well-known within the city for this information to be deemed unimportant to record. If we try to gauge the social position of these men, we encounter difficulties. Most are only evidenced in this context and therefore we know nothing else about them at all. Some (luckily) are recorded as iudices in the tenth century, indicating a relatively elevated position within city society, but certainly not a truly

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aristocratic one.⁽⁷⁷⁾ As far as we can tell abbatial vassals were, as we should expect, men who could benefit from association with the abbots as well as being in a position to aid the abbot when needed. There is sufficient evidence of men who were the vassalli of more than one abbot to be able to say that, although some men seem to have been the fideles of one abbot only, some transferred their allegiance from one abbot to the next.⁽⁷⁸⁾ Amongst the lists there is a notably high proportion of Frankish-looking names, and a low one of Lombard names, but, as none of the vassalli is ever explicitly termed a Frank or an Aleman or a Lombard it is not possible to be certain that, as most historians argue, such vassi were normally Frankish. Certainly, as Tabacco shows, vassalage in Italy as a status formalised in the documents seems to have been basically associated with Franks, but as we have already noted the Lombards had types of vassals known as gasindii.

What these vassals did for the abbot is not well-evidenced either. As we have seen it is clear that they witnessed documents for the abbot, usually charters which were written up at Sant' Ambrogio itself.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Presumably they were men that the abbot could trust, and further readily available in the monastery. The probability that they formed a military retinue for the abbot is high, but not demonstrable with certainty.⁽⁸⁰⁾ That they formed a retinue is. If we look at the manner in which they appear in the charters, two points are striking. Firstly, they usually appear in groups. More often than not two or more vassalli witness a text. Secondly they are only ever recorded witnessing documents in which the abbot was directly involved. This is important as it suggests that they followed the abbot around as a group. This is paralleled in other cases, where for example archiepiscopal vassals do the same thing with the archbishops.⁽⁸¹⁾ On occasion there is explicit evidence that the vassals followed the abbot from Milan to

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a particular village when the abbot was involved in a vestitura, the symbolic ceremony of taking possession. This happened as early as 844 when Abbot Rachinpert went to Gudo to deal with property received from a priest there, and was accompanied by his vassal Nithard.⁽⁸²⁾ It happened again in 879 when Abbot Peter went to Limonta to deal with Appo and the servi.⁽⁸³⁾ We should not forget either that one of the obligations forced on the servi was the transportation of the abbot and his fideles on the lakes.⁽⁸⁴⁾ The latter case strongly suggests that the vassalli were acting as a sort of bodyguard for the abbot. But most importantly of all they accompanied the abbots to court cases, not only to those held in Milan, but especially to those held away from the city, notably those concerning the Limonta case. This is very clear in the case of the vassals of Abbot Peter who appeared as adstantes in the 882 and 896 Limonta cases. Two abbatial vassi also appeared in 870, in the dispute case held at Sant' Ambrogio and chaired by the abbot himself.⁽⁸⁵⁾ Beyond these few suggestions we cannot go, but they provide a base from which to attack the problem of identifying possible vassals who are not so called in the texts.

By studying the witness lists closely we can find men who did the same things as vassals without being so named. Several examples are worth citing to make the point. Cristianus, a negotians from Milan, witnessed four charters all involving Abbot Peter between 863 and 875.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Odelbert of Lampugnano, was an adstans at the 864 Bissone court case, at the 870 case and acted as advocatus for the monastery in 875.⁽⁸⁷⁾ Leo ' qui et Azo ', f.q. Leo of Bornago and a negotians, witnessed five charters involving Abbot Aupald between 943 and 963.⁽⁸⁸⁾ The best example is provided by Leoprand, f.q. Paul, of ' Cuginco ' who witnessed eleven charters directly involving Sant' Ambrogio between 862 and 876 (six involving Abbot Peter,

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one his prepositus Sisebert). He may have been the Leoprand vassallus of Abbot Peter recorded in 885.⁽⁸⁹⁾ All of these men may or may not have actually been vassals in the technical sense, but it is very likely that they were not appearing in these charters at random, but were part of the abbot's patronage networks.

How the abbots supported these men is not clear from these texts. A multitude of other work has shown that although abbots did grant benefices to vassals on typically Frankish lines, more usually they were supported by lands held on lease.⁽⁹⁰⁾ It is perhaps odd in an area where an unusually high number of Franks appear to have been active, at least in the ninth century, that so few references to beneficia should appear in the Sant' Ambrogio charters. Occasionally there are hints. Madericus held part of the Limonta estate as a benefice but from the king not the abbot. Appo, vassus of Charles the Fat, had apparently held the Limonta estate as a benefice. Lupus of Schianno claimed to have held the Cologno estate as a benefice from the archbishop.⁽⁹¹⁾ There is one explicit case connecting any abbot with such a relationship, for Peter, a clericus from Tiolo in the Valtellina claimed in the course of dispute with Abbot Peter in 863 that he held a small amount of property in Milan as a benefice from the abbot.⁽⁹²⁾ It is unlikely that it did not happen more frequently than this. Of lands held by lease it is not always easy to tell if such leases (libelli) were to lowly cultivators or to more elevated men. Most of the (few) Sant' Ambrogio examples were clearly cultivator leases as discussed in the last chapter.⁽⁹³⁾ If any landholding by abbatial vassals is not well recorded we should hardly expect any other means of rewarding them to appear in the texts. It can only be suggested then that they may have been paid with money by the abbots who, as we saw in the last chapter, do not appear to have lacked

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access to cash, and in this light the urban origins of most of their vassals should not be forgotten.⁽⁹⁴⁾

THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUDICIAL POWERS BY THE ABBOTS OF SANT'AMBROGIO.

At this point we have to approach one of the more important and difficult of questions confronting the historian of the ninth and tenth centuries: how far powerful men were able to develop seigneurial powers beyond those characteristic of simple landlordship. It is a question which has pre-occupied scholars all over Europe and Italians (led by Tabacco and Violante) have evolved their own interpretative frameworks.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Up to now we have been considering those powers which the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio sometimes had which fall into the categories of landlordship and vassalage (in the sense of a relationship between lord and man). We have seen that the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio slowly developed their powers as landlords (in Italian signoria fondiaria) in the course of the ninth century. Such powers, as discussed by Violante in particular, were those which related only to a man's own land and the tenants who held it, and the cultivators who worked it.⁽⁹⁶⁾ These powers were reinforced substantially in the period after c. 870 by royal grants of immunity and protection, which applied to their own tenants/dependants. For these and other reasons the abbots attracted followers in the form of vassals, particularly Abbot Peter. The latter was able to fortify the Sant' Ambrogio site, and may have acquired powers over part of city wall in the 880's. Already then, in this latter gesture, the abbot had achieved a power which begins to look rather different from that of simple landlordship. He had in no sense though acted privately in fortifying the monastery, as he had asked for and got the permission of the king, and it seems all those who

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mattered in Milanese society. It is the ability to act privately, without needing sanction from any other power which is usually regarded as one key characteristic of seigneurial power. The other essential element is the ability to enforce this power over those other than one's own own tenants. These two powers combined formed the signoria territoriale, which when centred on a defined locality comprised the so-called districtus.⁽⁹⁷⁾ Italian historians have sought to be very precise over these issues, and have discussed them very much in a legalistic fashion, although always taking close account of the local circumstances in which the powers developed. They see (rightly) that powers of justice were crucial to the development of truly private jurisdiction, as judicial powers were some of those held longest and most completely by the State, especially in Italy where notions of public obligations persisted into the communal period. Therefore, in order to discuss whether the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio acquired any such private powers we have to look at the question of abbatial involvement in justice. This is fraught with evidential problems as those texts which provide most information about courts (the placita) fade out of the Sant' Ambrogio records in the second part of the tenth century, exactly the period when we might expect to see private justice developing.⁽⁹⁸⁾ Furthermore we know very little indeed about what the counts or archbishops of Milan were doing about justice in this period either, which makes it difficult to assess the wider import of any developments which we might be able to see for the abbots. However tentative the results it is important to try, as any information at all which suggests a private slant to abbatial powers is significant in the wider European as well as the Milanese context.⁽⁹⁹⁾

The processes by which formal justice was carried out in Milan are fairly well-evidenced between c. 820 and c. 970 by the survival of a reasonably large

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number of placita.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ From these it is possible to discern where courts were held, who held them and who judged at them. As we should expect the main court was the count's court, at which the count himself usually presided either alone or aided by other officials. In the ninth century most Milanese cases were held in the comital residence (in laubia curte ducatis).⁽¹⁰¹⁾ In accord with the normal pattern for such cases in the Frankish world, the count was aided by the viscount, the gastald, the locopositus and scabini, and the whole procedure was carried out publicly, that is to say in the presence of witnesses of free status legally recognised, known as adstantes.⁽¹⁰²⁾ In the case of Milan there were often considerable numbers of these men present, and some of them were aristocrats reflecting the importance of the city's court. Representatives of the church often took part in these cases in an official capacity, a practice in accord with the desires of Carolingian kings as expressed in their legislation.⁽¹⁰³⁾ So, sometimes the archbishop presided or even his senior official the vicedominus, but never alone: they were always accompanied by some lay official, increasingly in the latter part of the ninth century referred to as iudex.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ It comes as no surprise then that some cases were held in city churches, San Nazaro, the cathedral of Santa Maria and especially the basilica of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ The use of the latter was perhaps rather odd for it was not even within the city walls. It is important to note that all cases held in Sant' Ambrogio had the archbishop as president.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

The import of this type of information might be thought to indicate that the supposedly un-biassed court system of the Carolingians was flourishing at Milan, and that cases were in some way 'fair'. This should not be seen as the whole truth. It has been pointed out recently that Carolingians as much as anyone else may have seen political relationships very much in terms of city

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politics, even in the first part of the ninth century.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Certainly, it would be wrong to see that period as one of particular judicial fairness, for courts could easily be biased in favour of one of the participants. As we have seen in previous chapters there is clear evidence that the archbishop was on occasion clearly biased in favour of the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ As we approach the end of the ninth century such instances increase. So, as an example, in May 900, the count of Milan acted as president over his own dispute with the men of the village of Cusago about the nature of the returns they had to make to the count's estate at Palatiolo.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ However, such instances also demonstrate the force of the legal tradition in Italy, for Count Sigifred at least went through court procedures in the city rather than settling the matter by force, as he surely must have been in a position to do.

By this latter ninth-century period the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio appears to have been in a similar position. He had his vassals who, as we have seen, accompanied him to court, and he must have been in a position to intimidate those of his dependants whom he disagreed with. Yet, as we saw in the case of the Limonta servi there were considerable limits to his ability to force a settlement in the late ninth century. However, by the middle of the tenth century Abbot Aupald did exactly that, enforced a stringent settlement on his servi. Whatever that had to do with the changing economic circumstance of the servi, it also makes a comment on the increasing strength of the abbot's judicial powers. Therefore it is the period after c.870 that we need to look at. Did the abbots begin to acquire private judicial powers then or not? And if so how and why?

We have already seen how the immunity granted by Louis II meant that the abbot or his prepositus had to consent before any dependent (including a vassal) could

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appear before a court held by a royal official. This gave the abbot powers of justice over his own men, and this power is indeed evidenced amongst the placita. On two occasions the abbot acted as judge. In 870, as we saw in Chapter 5) he chaired a case at the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio (not the basilica) involving a dependent cultivator of his from Delebio in the Valtellina.⁽¹¹⁰⁾ It came very close to private jurisdiction, because, although ostensibly conforming to normal public practice (there was, as recorded, a dialogue between accuser, a Sant' Ambrogio monk, and accused, and there were adstantes) if we look closely at who was involved it can hardly be said that the abbot was really standing in for the state. Admittedly there were two iudices who accompanied the abbot, presumably acting in their judicial capacity as advisers on points of law. But the remaining adstantes included two abbatial vassalli, Odelbert of Lampugnano, Bonus of Bariano, Odelfred of Concorezzo, all of who witnessed other abbatial charters. But most important of all was the fact that the case was held in the monastery not the basilica. This case has parallels with the case held at villa Limonta in November 882, and specifically concerned the curtis proprietatis there).⁽¹¹¹⁾ The abbot was judge alongside Aripbrand, vicedominus of archbishop Anspert, and the adstantes were again followers of the abbot: two abbatial vassalli, Hilderatus a notary who wrote many Sant' Ambrogio charters and Garimund of Milan.⁽¹¹²⁾ But again there were two iudices.

These two cases suggest that the abbot of Sant' Ambrogio (or perhaps this particular abbot, Peter) was now in a position to act as a judge, and it seems to me very improbable that it was simply coincidence that he was presiding over cases directly relating to his property. Of course this was not jurisdiction over entire communities, not signoria territoriale the power over the local population, which Violante (and Keller) have shown did

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not develop in Lombardy until the latter part of the tenth century.⁽¹¹³⁾ It was argued in the previous chapter that even where there is evidence of the castle appearing on Sant' Ambrogio property this was for economic reasons, and at this stage apparently had little to do with seigneurial justice.⁽¹¹⁴⁾ In the world of the courts the abbot was usually the one with a complaint to air rather than the one doing the judging and the fact that the abbots took their disputes to court provides clear evidence that they did not have the ability to settle them more favourably any other way.

The reasons for this bring us back to the complexity of Milanese society in the ninth and tenth centuries and the place of the Sant' Ambrogio abbots in it. For most of the ninth century they were very much dominated by the archbishops' power. This began to change in the later ninth century with the acquisition of immunity, protection, vassals and a fortified monastery. The fortification of the monastery is unusual and important for it provides, in a way, a parallel in the city of later incastellamento fortifications in the rural villages. It raises the possibility that like those village castra Sant' Ambrogio was becoming a stronghold, with concomitant seigneurial powers held by its lord, the abbot. Although the possible parallel breaks down if we approach it via an analysis of 'rights', for the abbots did not acquire those seigneurial 'rights' which some castellani had by 1000, the abbots may have been a powerful force in Milanese society nonetheless by the end of the tenth century without having acquired a wide-ranging signoria in the more technical, legalistic senses. Why this failed to happen is certainly important, for some abbots in other parts of Europe did develop such powers at this time. However, most of these were abbots of communities not part of a complicated urban society such as Milan. Power could operate in many ways within such

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complexity, and did not always follow legal rules. Abbots could be powerful but could never be independent in such a place.

NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN.

1. It is all too easy to argue back from later periods to earlier. The problems which this can entail can be seen in a recent article concerning King Alfred of Wessex, where a method deliberately drawing on tenth- to twelfth-century evidence to argue that Alfred was a king well aware of the possibilities of Cornish tin mining because later kings were creates the false impression ' of a king ' ahead of his time ' (J.R. Maddicott, ' Trade, industry and the wealth of King Alfred ', P & P, 23 (1989) pp. 3-51.
2. See above, Introduction, p. 12.
3. For a discussion of an area where land very clearly dominated over other forms of wealth see W. Davies, ' Land and power in early medieval Wales ', P & P lxxxix (1978) pp. 3-23.
4. See above Chapter 2 pp. 105-115.
5. Some studies of Sant' Ambrogio seem to me to have assumed too much from the charter formulae. This applies particularly to G. Bertoni, ' L'inizio della giurisdizione dell'abate di Sant' Ambrogio di Milano sulla corte di Limonta e Civenna ', MSDM, xiii (1966) pp.167-320, who presumes too easily that documents conferring rights and powers were put into practice, and A. Ambrosioni, ' Per una storia del monastero di Sant' Ambrogio ', AA, 40 (1980) who overestimates the importance of the community in the late eighth-century/early ninth-century stage.
6. See above Chapter 4 pp. 169-171 and Chapter 5 pp. 210-212, 216, 227-235.
7. J.W. Bernhardt, ' Servitium regis and monastic property in early medieval Germany ' Viator 18 (1987) pp. 53-87, at pp. 60-68.
8. This is not to imply that all ' traditional ' societies were the same, but simply that certain limitations were imposed on an individual's freedom of action by, for example kin ties. For an interesting discussion of the ways in which political authority could be circumscribed by community and kin see E. Sagan, At the Dawn of Tyranny. The Origins of Individualism, Political Oppression and the State (London, 1985) pp. 236-239.
9. In the Far East rent extraction in basically agrarian societies could operate in a diversity of ways, see C.J. Wickham, ' The Uniqueness of the East ', J. Peasant Studies, 12 (1985) pp. 166-196. E. Gellner, Nations and Nationalism (Oxford, 1983) pp. 8-14 discusses the diversity of cultures which emerged in economically similar ' agro-literate ' societies.
10. A famous discussion of this power-type is provided by P. Brown ' The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity ', J. Roman Studies LXI (1971) pp.

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- 80-101.
11. The ninth-century Vita Sancti Ambrosii was an archiepiscopal production (see above pp. 20).
 12. NAT 125 (Peter).
 13. Charlemagne's diploma of 790 is very clear on this point (NAT 31).
 14. R. Mckitterick, The Frankish Church and the Carolingian Reforms (London, 1978) and summarised in her The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians (Cambridge, 1983) pp. 106-136.
 15. Chapter 2 of the Rule begins, ' The abbot who is worthy to rule over a monastery should always remember what he is called and suit his actions to his high calling. For he is believed to take the place of Christ in the monastery...'. Charismatic power is discussed by Max Weber ' The Nature of Charismatic domination ' pp. 226-250 in Weber, selections in Translation, ed. W. G. Runciman (Cambridge, 1978) [first published 1922]. Such power was of course widely attributed to dead saints in this period (P.J. Geary, Furta Sacra (Princeton, 1978) pp. 33-34, 45-46.
 16. Chapter 64 of the Rule of Benedict envisages the possibility of episcopal intervention in monastic affairs.
 17. G. Ovitt ' Manual labour and early medieval monasticism ', Viator 17 (1986) pp. 1-18 demonstrates how a narrow appreciation of the monastery can result from too great a concentration on the analysis of Rules.
 18. On the widespread appointment of lay abbots see R. Mckitterick, The Frankish Kingdoms, pp. 115-116.
 19. Notker's Life of Charlemagne, chapter 2 refers to this appointment. Alcuin may have played some part in the foundation of the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio (see above pp.).
 20. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy (London, 1981) pp. 169-171.
 21. Some Italian abbots did have more politicised roles. For examples see C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, p. 47 and p. 54 , and T. Hodgkin, Italy and Her Invaders vol. 8 (Oxford, 1889) pp. 56-58.
 22. G. Dameron, ' The cult of St. Minias and the struggle for power in the diocese of Florence, 1011-1018 ', J. Med. Hist. 13 (1987) pp. 125-141. Bernhardt, Servitium Regis, pp. 57-59.
 23. See above Chapter 4 pp. 174-180 for the Anselmi of Inzago and Chapter 3 pp. 141, 150 for Alcharius, who may have made grants to Sant' Ambrogio for family reasons or because he was a vassus of the king.
 24. A recent explicit example is G. Sergi, Potere e territorio lungo la strada di Francia (Naples, 1981) pp. 95-112 ' I Monasteri: autonomie e schieramenti nei conflitti di potere '. But discussions concerning

- bishops are much more common.
25. Of Tabacco's many writings the following discuss church power frequently. G. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali e strutture del potere nel Medioevo Italiano (Turin, 1979) especially pp. 145-170 and pp. 189-218, and I Liberi del Re dell' Italia Carolingia (Spoleto, 1966). Of other discussions the most useful are, C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. pp. 129-145, H. Keller, Adelsherrschaft und stadtische Gesellschaft in Oberitalien 9 bis 12 Jahrhundert (Tubingen, 1979) [and Tabacco's review of the latter in RSI, xciii (1981) pp. 852-855].
 26. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 156-159.
 27. Tabacco, Liberi del Re, pp. 89-103.
 28. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 145-150. S. Gasparri, ' Strutture militari a legami di dipendenza in Italia in eta Longobarda e Carolingia ' RSI, 98 (1986) pp. 664-726. C.J.Wickham, The Mountains and the City (Oxford, 1988) pp. xix-xxiii.
 29. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 131-136; S. Gasparri, Strutture militari, pp. 676-681.
 30. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 156-170.
 31. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 158-160.
 32. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 206-218.
 33. C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City, p. xvii 'It is likely that even the Carolingian political elites often saw the state in terms of a local, city-centred politics , rather than as a hierarchy stretching up to the capital at Pavia...'
 34. A.A.Settia, Castelli e villaggi nell'Italia padana (Naples, 1984), C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City (Oxford, 1988) and P. Toubert, Les Structures du Latium Medievale, 2. vols (Rome , 1973) are the key large scale discussions of incastellamento.
 35. Tabacco, Egemonie sociali, pp. 161-162 and G. Sergi, ' La feudalizzazione delle circoscrizioni pubbliche nel regno Italico ' in Structures Feodales et Feodalisme dans l'occident Mediterranee (Paris, 1980) pp. 251-261.
 36. Sergi, La Feudalizzazione, p. 257.
 37. G. Rossetti ' Formazione e caratteri della signoria di castello a dei poteri territoriali dei vescovi sulle citta` nella Langobardia del secolo X ', Aevum, xlix (1975) pp. 244-307.
 38. C. Violante, La Societa` Milanese in eta` precomunale (2nd. Ed. Naples, 1974) [originally published 1953]. His discussion of the tenth century is concentrated at pp. 178-207. H.Keller, Adelsherrschaft, p. 10. Recently Tabacco has entered the discussion on Milan in ' Vassalli, nobili a cavalieri nell'Italia precomunale ', RSI, 100 (1988) pp. 247-268, at pp. 258-267.
 39. Arnulphi, Gesta archiepiscoporum Mediolanensium, in MGH Scriptores VIII, ed. W. Wattenbach (Berlin,

- 1848); Landulphi Senioris, Historia Mediolanensis, in MGH Scriptores, VIII. See Violante's discussion cited note 39 above. Arnulf was writing in the mid-eleventh century, Landulf at the very end of that century. Both authors wanted to eulogise their native city, and their accounts, it seems to me, should be treated with more caution than they are usually given. Liutprand of Cremona had condemnatory things to say about several Milanese archbishops, notably Manasse, in his Historia Ottonis (discussed by J.N. Sutherland, Liudprand of Cremona, bishop, diplomat and historian (Spoleto, 1988) p. 40.
40. Arnulphi, Book 1, Chapter 10. Violante, La Societa Milanese, p. 183. Tabacco, Vassalli, Nobili e Cavallieri, p. 265.
41. Violante, La Societa Milanese, pp. 186-187.
42. Violante, La Societa Milanese, p. 195. The archbishops recovered their position in the early decades of the eleventh century (Violante, La Societa Milanese, pp. 267-302.).
43. Violante, La Societa Milanese, pp. 189-191. L. Martinelli analyses this in detail in her, ' Note sui beni fondiari di un grande proprietario del secolo X: il conte Attone di Lecco ', SSMD, 1 (1976). Despite his alienations in the decade 965-975 he left over 4000 jugera (c. 3200 hectares) of property at his death.
44. Above, Chapter 3, pp. 138-139.
45. The information comes from the Catalogus Archiepiscoporum Mediolanensis, which, for these sections, was probably composed about 1075 (MGH Scriptores, VIII), a source of somewhat questionable authority. However, the information on the burials is verifiable in some cases by surviving burial inscriptions (for these , see above Chapter 1 pp.00). The pattern was first noted, as far as I can tell, by Violante in his, ' Le origini del monastero di S. Dionigi di Milano ', in Studi Storici in onore di O. Bertolini, vol. II (Pisa, 1972) p. 790. It has been elaborated upon recently by J-C. Picard, Les Souvenirs des Evêques. Sépultures, listes épiscopals et culte des eveques en Italie du Nord des origines au X siecle (Rome, 1988), who discusses Milan at pp. 17-108, 604-632. He shows that the pattern found in Milan is common to the whole of northern Italy in this period.
46. The complete list of Milanese archbishops who could have been associated with the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in our period is as follows: (in the late eighth/ninth centuries) Thomas, Peter, Odelbert, Anselm I, Bonus, Angilbert I, Angilbert II, Tado, Anspert, Anselm II, Landolf I; (in the tenth century) Andreas, Aicho, Warimbert, Lambert, Hilduin, Arderic, Adelman/Manasse [the see was in schism], Walpert,

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Arnulf I, Gottefred, Landulf II, Arnulf II . Of these only Anselm I, Bonus and Angilbert I do not appear in any charters in any relationship with the monastery of Sant' Ambrogio in the ninth century (in the period 813-824). As we saw in Chapter 3, p. 149, this may have a political explanation. All the other ninth-century archbishops had close links with the monastery. In the tenth century, Warimbert, Hilduin, Arderic, Adelman/Manasse and Gottefred do not appear in any charters at all (but they are evidenced in the chronicles of Arnulf and Landulf Senior where they were clearly ' active ' archbishops). Of the rest, Andreas made a testamentum in 903 in favour of the monastery of S. Maria Gisonis, which shows he had some property dealings with Abbot Gaidulf of Sant' Ambrogio, and in 905 he chaired the placitum held at villa Bellano, concerning the Limonta dispute with the servi. He was buried at Sant' Ambrogio. Aicho appeared in two of the Limonta placita but not apparently in a dominating role. Lambert, Walpert, both Arnulfs and Landulf II appear in charters preserved by Milanese churches other than Sant' Ambrogio. The pattern is thus extremely clear.

47. Arnulphi, Book 1, Chapter 5.
48. CDL 402 (archbishop Andreas and S. Maria Gisonis), CDL 649 (Walpert and S. Maria Wigilinda), CDL 937 (Landulf II and S. Celso). Walpert in fact founded the monastery of S. Celso (Arnulphi, Book 1 Chapter 10). In the 1020's the trend was continued by Archbishop Aribert who founded a monastery at the ancient church of S. Dionigi [discussed by C. Violante, ' Le origini del monastero di S. Dionigi di Milano ', in Studi Storici in onore di O. Bertolini, vol. 2 (Pisa, 1972). In this important article Violante shows how Aribert's foundation and endowment, with his family properties in Brianza, was motivated by political circumstances in the city. Notably, Aribert too had nothing to do with Sant' Ambrogio.
49. The full list of the Sant' Ambrogio abbots in our period is: Benedict (784-806), Arigausus (806-814), Deusdedit (814-835), Gaudentius (835-839), Rachinpert (839-844), Andreas (847-851), Peter I (851-897), Gaidulf (897-908), Sigifred (908-912), Rachibert (915-923), Anselbert (923-932), Aupald (932-963), Peter II (966-974), Gaidoald (974-998), Odelricus (1000). The dates of office are the traditional ones.
50. NAT 38.
51. NAT 58. In NAT 152, a grant to Sant' Ambrogio made by Ambrosius, f.q. Ado, a monetarius of Milan, pro anima mea et anima Petri vir venerabili abbas monasteri sancti Ambrosii amico meo, Ambrosius states that if the terms of the grant were not carried out fully the property was to go to the monastery of San

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- Vincenzo. I am not certain if this implies that the link between the two communities had been broken or not. Certainly this had happened by 956, for in that year (when Aupald was abbot of Sant' Ambrogio) Benedict was abbot of San Vincenzo (CDL 614).
52. This is only a possibility. NAT 73, a preceptum of Angilbert II probably dating to c. 843, but definitely interpolated in the eleventh century, purports to record the ordination of Rachinpert as abbot by Angilbert per consensum sacerdotum nostrum. If this is the case and Rachinpert was chosen without the consent of the monks, it is possible that he was the Rachinpert, archpresbiter sancte mediolanensis ecclesia who was the recipient of property in Gnignano as a result of a testamentum made in his favour by Teutpald in 839.
 53. NAT 94, 95, 96, 101, 102, 105, 107, 109, 110, 111, 112, 117, 122, 123, 125, 128, 129, 134, 139, 141, 143, 146a, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 155, 160, 161.
 54. Aupald: CDL 547, 559, 573, 578, 596, 599, 602, 608, 609, 611, 621, 624, 625, 637, 642, 669, 670, 671, 679.
Gaidoald: CDL 826, 832, 834, 845, 846, 859, 860.
 55. NAT 31.
 56. NAT 59.
 57. For example, all those texts referring to Abbot Peter relate to him and his successores.
 58. NAT 31, NAT 59, CDL 570, CDL 599.
 59. NAT 123, NAT 141, NAT 158, CDL 596.
 60. NAT 143, CDL 992 (addressed to the monks in their fame et infortunia), CDL 928, CDL 939.
 61. NAT 123. Louis II is discussed by P. Delogu, 'Strutture politiche e ideologia nel regno di Lodovico II ', BIIM 80 (1968) pp. 137-189 and in C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 60-63 and S. Gasparri, Strutture militari, pp. 716-720.
 62. Novalesa is discussed by G. Sergi, Potere e Territorio, pp. 96-98, S. Gasparri, Strutture militari, pp. 715-716.
 63. See above pp. 124.
 64. NAT 123.
 65. NAT 141, NAT 158, CDL 599, CDL 939.
 66. NAT 141.
 67. NAT 141 records the link with the empress. S. Maria d'Aurona is discussed by G.P. Bognetti, in Storia di Milano, vol. ii, p. 775.
 68. Bognetti, Storia di Milano, ii, pp. 778-779. Oddly, Violante does not discuss it in La Società Milanese.
 69. NAT 158. This diploma survives in two tenth-century copies. Its authenticity has been doubted (notably by Bognetti, Storia di Milano, ii, p. 827, who claimed it was a forgery of the monks seeking to demonstrate their ownership of the estate of Palatiolo. Since this was still in the possession of the count of Milan in 900, Bognetti saw the text as

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doubtful.). Whilst the diploma as it now is may be interpolated, it is probably based on a genuine original. It is not doubted in the MGH edition [MGH Dipl. Reg. Germ, III Arnulfs Dipl. (Berlin, 1955) n. 123 pp. 180-182.]. It is entirely plausible that Arnulf should have alienated rights over the city wall at this time for this was one of the powers being given away by kings in their struggles for the kingdom in the last decade of the ninth century. See G. Rossetti, Formazione e carattere della signoria, p. 248.

70. The development of seigneurial powers over the city of Milan by the archbishops is rather mysterious for they conspicuously lacked the grants of jurisdiction over walls which most other bishops in the north acquired in the course of the first half of the tenth century. There is an interesting diploma of Guy of Spoleto (one of Arnulf's rivals for the kingship) in which Guy conceded part of the wall of Milan to Aupald, archpresbiter at the request of Archbishop Anselm in December 890 (L. Schiaparelli, ' Il rotolo dell'archivio Capitolare di Novara ', ASL, xxvii (1900) doc. 4.) The relevant passage is '...muro mediolanensis urbis intrinsecus, haud longe sitam pretaxati archiepiscopi domo inter duas turres, quibus subjacet pratam quod Aredei vocatur ...'. This suggests that perhaps the archbishops were not as powerful at this time as usually thought, although the remarks of G. Rossetti that the archbishops had the power if not the rights is probably correct [discussing seigneurial rights of bishops over their cities, she suggest that Milan was '...forse l'esempio piu clamoroso e piu precoce di signoria vescovile...(but)...non hanno tramandato diplomi regi che riconoscessero ai vescovi i diritti giurisdizionali sulla citta e sul distretto, ma la dinamica del potere, al di la della varieta dei casi particolare, fu la stessa.' Formazione e carattere della signoria, p. 287.].
71. The best study of this for Milan is G. Sergi, ' I Rapporti vassallatico-beneficiari ', in Milano e I Milanesi (Spoleto, 1986) pp. 137-163.
72. This is clearest in the case of NAT 155, an exchange between Abbot Peter and the church of S. Giovanni, Monza, written up at Sant' Ambrogio and witnessed by, amongst others, Giselbert, Nortemannus, and Giusus of Milan, none of whom were termed vassalli of Peter here. Yet, Giselbert, Nortemannus and Giusus, were termed his vassalli in NAT 160. Indeed in NAT 161, a Giselbertus de intra civitate Mediolani, f.q. Angilbert, exchanged property with Abbot Peter. Amongst the witnesses was Nortemannus, vassallus of Abbot Peter.
73. S. Gasparri, Strutture militari, p. 690 and p. 703

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- 'Chartae beneficii, lo sappiamo, non ne esistevano...'.
74. NAT 52, Laudebert of Confienza. CDL 860.
75. Sergi, Rapporti vassallatico, p. 158. He stresses, quite correctly, that the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio had, as recorded, more vassals than abbots of Nonantola for example, and many more than the archbishops of Milan.
76. See above, Introduction, pp. 14-15.
77. Iudices as abbatial vassi: Petrus, CDL 624; Heberardus, CDL 694,719,748,782,753. Giselbert, CDL 719,748,753,845,860.
78. Laudebert of Confienza, NAT 52 and 80, vassal of Deusdedit and Andreas. Nithard, NAT 75 and 83, vassal of Gausarius and Andreas. Jordan 'Getzo', CDL 642, 671,748, vassal of Aupald and Peter. Giselbert 'Getzo', CDL 719,748,753,845,860, vassal of Peter and Gaidoald.
79. Documents witnessed by vassi outside of the monastery itself were very few: NAT 75 (Gudo) and NAT 139 (Ucc).
80. The abbot of Monte Amiata had vassals as early as 809 [S. Gasparri, Strutture militari, p. 701].
81. NAT 126, where Archbishop Anspert was accompanied to a placitum by four of his vassalli.
82. NAT 75.
83. NAT 139.
84. See above Chapter 5, p. 234.
85. NAT 122.
86. NAT 110,117,128,129.
87. NAT 112,122,127.
88. CDL 573,608 (and probably, if it is the same man, CDL 609, 621,670,719).
89. ' Cuginco ' remains unidentified. NAT 106,109,110, 111,115,117,125,127,133,134,(?)151.
90. C.J. Wickham, Early Medieval Italy, pp. 141-142, who points out that church leasing was clearly a two-way process.
91. NAT 61a (Madericus), NAT 139 (Appo), NAT 101 (Lupus).
92. NAT 109.
93. See Chapter 6 pp. 272, 274.
94. It was suggested in Chapter 6 that the abbots had relatively easy access to money (Above p. 277). The point about the urban origins of their vassals is that these may have been paid soldiers.
95. Outlined by C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City, pp. xx-xxiii.
96. The clearest discussions are those of Violante in his article, ' Un esempio di signoria rurale "territoriale" nel secolo XII; la " corte " di Talamona in Valtellina secondo una sentenza del commune di Milano ', in Etudes de civilisation médiévale. Melanges offerts a E.R. Labande (Poitiers,

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- 1975) pp. 739-749, at p. 746 nt. 36. See also his, 'La signoria " territoriale " come quadro delle strutture organizzative del contado nella Lombardia del secolo XII', in Histoire Comparée de l'administration. [Beiheft 9 of Francia] (Munich, 1980) pp. 333-344, at p. 333 nt. 2 .
97. Violante, Un esempio di signoria territoriale, p. 746 nt.37.
98. See above Chapter 1, p. 58.
99. A well documented case of the establishment of a monastic seignery is provided by the monastery of S. Salvatore at Redon in Eastern Brittany. Here abbots certainly acted as judges over a defined territorial bloc around the monastery by the late ninth century. It provides, '...a particularly good example of the importance of the control of judicial institutions in fostering seigneurial development ' [p. 199 in W. Davies, Small Worlds: The Village Community in Early Medieval Brittany (London, 1988)]. Redon was a small settlement compared to Milan, and the abbots of its monastery had far fewer competing jurisdictions to deal with than the abbots of Sant' Ambrogio.
100. NAT 47,68,74,101,112,114,116,126,144,146/146a,156,160,163, CDL 396,416,417,427,475,558.
101. NAT 112,114,156,160,163, CDL 475,558.
102. The Settlement of Disputes in Early Medieval Europe, eds. W. Davies and P. Fouracre (Cambridge, 1986) p. 269.
103. ' ...the church standing in for the state...' p. 233 in the Settlement of Disputes (C.J. Wickham). The standard work on Milanese placita is H. Keller, 'Der Gerischtstort in oberitalienischen und toskanischen Stunten ', QF xlix (1969) pp. 1-71.
104. CDL 417, does record the archbishop sitting alone judging the Limonta dispute (see above Chapter 5 p. 235) but it reflects later tenth-century developments.
105. Respectively, NAT 68, NAT 126, and NAT 74, 101.
106. NAT 74 and 101.
107. C.J. Wickham, The Mountains and the City, p. xvii.
108. See above Chapter 4 pp. 171-172 and Chapter 5 p. 235.
109. NAT 163.
110. See above p. 239.
111. NAT 146a.
112. Hilderatus, NAT 94,111,126,146a.
113. See above p. 93.
114. See above Chapter 4 p. 183.

CONCLUSION.

There can be no doubt that the foundation of a Benedictine community at Sant'Ambrogio brought about changes in the society of both Milan and the countryside in the period before 1000. Of the innovations which resulted, the increased attention given to the cult of Saint Ambrose and the establishment of the 'Ambrosian Tradition' have usually been considered the most important. Sant'Ambrogio was '...one of the symbols of continuity in Christian history.' Yet this is to take an élitist view of the past for there is no suggestion in any Milanese source of the ninth and tenth centuries that these particular innovations touched more than a handful of people. We are still very much in the dark as far as our knowledge of the religious beliefs of the majority in this period is concerned, but it can safely be said that most knew little about the theology of Ambrose and may have known little more about the differences between the practices of the Milanese and Roman churches. The advent of the monastery may have been important in the history of the Christian Church, but that history only forms a part of the history of the early Middle Ages.

To set alongside it there is the history of the impact of lay society on church institutions, about which, surprisingly perhaps, the Sant'Ambrogio charters are able to give valuable insights. This is important to understand, and I phrase it in this way - rather than the more usual 'impact of the church on lay society' - because in our example it was the church that was the new element in the equation, and the church which had to contend with already existing tenurial relationships into which it had to make inroads if any property was to come its way. The monastery of Sant'Ambrogio was a comparatively late foundation and was by no means the only church, or even the only monastery, in Milan in the late eighth century.

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There were very many churches there, and in Monza, Como, Lodi, and Bergamo, which already had property - sometimes substantial property - within the area which the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio was to acquire rights later. To add to this there was of course the great mass of lay owners about whose holdings we know less, though not as little as is often thought. Italian charters at least contain a lot of information about lay society.

All in all there appears to have been very little space into which the new community could be fitted. There were no tracts of unsettled and uncultivated land in the area - at least none worth having - and it remains a particular feature of the Sant'Ambrogio material throughout the period that the monastery made little attempt to 'open up' new sites for agriculture in the way Nonantola did. This complexity, and in places such as Milan there were crowds of owners competing for rights, largely explains why Sant'Ambrogio's properties were scattered over the region and probably explains also why some of them were so far away from Milan, in all probability much further away than the lands of any other Milanese church. So the complexities of established tenurial relationships determined more than any other single element where Sant'Ambrogio could have property; for the monastery, at least in its early history, did not have the means to take over property forcibly.

It is in light of this complexity that the fact that the monastery received most of its gifts from kings and archbishops should be seen. Initially the monastery was very much a foundation of sophisticated and wealthy aristocratic interests. They may well have had religious motives for their gifts as they certainly knew about Ambrose, who was a favoured theologian with the Carolingians. Indeed Archbishop Angilbert II and Archbishop Anspert - two of the monastery's principal benefactors - were deeply involved with the cult of

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Ambrose and with challenging the position of the Popes with regard to religious rites. Association with such exclusivity was, in the marked absence of any pious donations from lesser men to the monastery, the only way in which Sant'Ambrogio could break into existing tenurial patterns. It has been shown that it was as a direct result of the patronage of these powerful protectors that the growth in the amount of land which the community had, took place at all and even then it had hardly begun until the third decade of the ninth century. The fact of such patronage coupled with the absence of much interaction with less powerful men reinforces the impression we get of exclusivity in the early years of the monastery's history. The result was that the monastery acquired ex-royal and archiepiscopal properties where rival interests had already been dealt with, most visibly in the case of Limonta - where the king had had to defend the estate from the challenge posed by the church of Missaglia - and Campione, where the family of Toto apparently had no rivals to their ownership. Unsurprisingly then these gifts formed the core of Sant'Ambrogio's patrimony throughout our period.

So much for the advent of the monastery, a story which tends to reinforce some of the standard ideas about such things: the early Carolingians were not especially generous to churches although they were keen to implement a more regularised monastic life; the early years of monastic history were relatively uneventful, basically characterised by a limited acquisition of land in the face of existing, complex tenurial patterns. The next phase of Sant'Ambrogio history is rather more distinctive, particularly in the way it cautions us in over-estimating the success of churches in the ninth century, the supposed 'Golden Age' of church property.

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The caution arises from the fact that the charters reveal clearly that some people - running into many hundreds - whilst they may not have known much about the theology behind the setting up of the monastery did know about the terra sancti Ambrosii, about the landed property of the monastery, and we may suggest that it concerned them far more than the 'Ambrosian Tradition'. They encountered the monastery in a context involving landed property in some way or other: when witnessing monastic charters, when giving or selling land to the abbots, when their neighbours were tenants of the monastery, or when they sat in court experiencing a dispute over land between the monastery and its adversaries. These people - who begin to appear regularly in these contexts only from the 830's - were not restricted to the educated or the aristocracy but were drawn from spheres of different experience. Whether they lived in Milan or outside it, what the foundation of Sant'Ambrogio meant for them was the fact of a new landlord, trying to increase its presence in particular places as a consequence of the spate of royal gifts which had been made to it.

The new landlord was inclined to preserve the documents which recorded the details of its landlordship at a time when this action was not common, thus giving us an insight into the social and economic relationships which developed around the new institution, which if not unparalleled, is at least rare in the early medieval period. The monks did not simply store the texts but used them and manipulated them as tools through which to increase or defend the rights of their community. It was this use which affected those outside the monastery. We are fortunate in the amount of localised detail which these texts preserve, for it is only in the detailed analysis of a given place that we can really understand what was happening there as a result of monastic activity.

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Unsurprisingly the consequences of this were not the same in all places, and this material is notable for the considerable variety of scenarios it allows us to glimpse. The majority of these scenarios demonstrate how hard it was for a new owner to make inroads into old-established tenurial patterns rather than the more commonly accepted picture of the all-conquering, dominant monastic landlord. They demonstrate too that the monastery had to co-operate if it wanted to become the beneficiary of gifts, gifts which were usually very far from simple in their motivation but which rather came at the end of complicated chains of social relationships. If it is frustrating that we can understand so little about how the church was exploited to set alongside what we know - from this and other examples - about the church as exploiter, nevertheless the little that we can recover is useful in correcting again the impression that Sant'Ambrogio, by virtue of its connection with Ambrose, could ease itself without trouble into a position in its landholding similar to that which Ambrose had in the minds of educated theologians.

Relations with less powerful laymen, with families such as the Anselmi of Inzago, the Leopegisi of Cologno and the many others whose stories we can only begin to uncover were in most respects easily as important as relationships with kings, counts and archbishops. It was from these groups that the monastery was able to increase the amount of land it owned, principally by buying up land parcels to add to existing plots in the latter part of the ninth century. However it was medium-sized owners such as these who challenged the rights of the community when the monastery acted in a way which conflicted with established interests of their families. For some of these men the monastery seems to have provided a vehicle for social advancement: Anselm of Inzago's

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association with the community seems to have helped his fortunes with the bishop of Bergamo, undoubtedly a more powerful figure than the abbot of Sant'Ambrogio at that time. For some the opposite resulted from their association with the monastery: their social position declined. The Leopegisi of Cologno being the classic case; even if they declined from a less exalted height than is usually thought they declined nonetheless.

What is very notable in the cases both of the Anselmi and the Leopegisi is the length of time over which relations with Sant'Ambrogio happened. It is easy to underestimate the importance of this for a span of thirty years seen at a distance of a thousand years may seem small, but it was a lifetime in the ninth century. It meant too that the monastery was not a very dynamic force in local society, in spite of the fact that it was often the major dynamic force nonetheless. Change came very slowly and was often fiercely resisted. The protracted Limonta disputes - which lasted from 882 until 957, well over the average early medieval lifespan - stand as an emblem of the intransigence of local custom in the face of the attempted introduction of change by the monastery. Limonta was exceptional, but most disputes in which the monastery was involved took at least ten years to be concluded. This makes an important comment on the degree of power which the monastery derived from its landowning, in a world where, in the last instance, force was the quickest way of ending an argument. It is probable - although entirely undemonstrable - that the monastery was the loser in some disputes for just this reason.

So the monastery, by virtue of its landholding, came as an outsider into rural society, whether welcomed or not by existing elites. It was not though just another landlord: it was imbued with the urban ethos, the owner of a lot of scattered but increasingly consolidated property, and its abbot was beginning to emerge as a powerful man,

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with the ability - one presumes, for there are no explicit cases recorded - to settle matters with force, with the aid of his fideles and vassi. Monastic ownership brought with it what were characteristically urban customs at this date: written records, disputes heard in the city, the measurement of land by designated officials. In these respects its impact was less close to Milan than further north, where it remained the only Milanese institution with substantial properties in our period. This meant that some men went all the way to Milan to take part in court cases or to take surplus production to the market there. The monastery, albeit in a small way, was a representative of urban culture in the countryside.

By virtue of the considerable spread of its properties the monastery had relations with men over the whole diocese of Milan and beyond. The principal significance of this was economic: it drew a lot of properties into an economy of which Milan was the centre whereas before a local market may have sufficed. Although there is only a little evidence that the monastery managed its holdings as a single economic unit, the evidence is there nonetheless and suggest that the monastery was not presiding over a single 'closed', self-sufficient entity but one which was opened up to the society of Milan, with its traders and merchants and thereby to the other cities of the Po plain and the Adriatic. As far as we can tell from the surviving evidence no other Milanese church fell into this category. If we look into the later Middle Ages, Sant'Ambrogio still had properties over a wider area than other monasteries, notably than the powerful community of the Monastero Maggiore. By comparison with the lands of the greatest early medieval houses such as St. Denis or St. Germain-dés-Près this spread was not especially extensive. But it may have been the case - especially given the qualifications which have to be made in the light of the Sant'Ambrogio case about the ability of

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monasteries to enforce effective possession of their lands - that vast dispersed holdings were more difficult to organise and to exploit effectively. A lot depended too on the agricultural quality of the properties concerned, and upon the ability to exploit especially valuable commodities, such as minerals.

These are the principal conclusions to which this study has led. The example of Sant'Ambrogio makes strongly the point that early medieval society - however unsophisticated by earlier and later standards - was not a simple one, made up of Three Orders, in which the Church and Kings alone ruled over an amorphous 'rest', but it was very complex, a complexity which comes through strongest when studied at the local level of Cologno or Inzago or Limonta. It is a commonplace to stress the inadequacy of the historical sources of the early Middle Ages but it surely remains surprising and fascinating that such local insights can be gained at all about a time so close to the very edge of pre-history in western Europe.

APPENDIX 1

Abbreviations:

- A= authenticated copy.
 AdM= Archivio del Museo (del Archivio di Stato di Milano).
 AV= Ambrosius de Valnexio.
 C= Copy (date of copy is given).
 CDL= Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae, ed. G. Porro-Lambertenghi (Turin, 1873).
 IC= Santa Eufemia Isola Comacina.
 CDLS= Codice Diplomatico Longobardo, ed. L. Schiaparelli
 MGH= Monumenta Germaniae Historica.
 NAT= IL Museo Diplomatico del Archivio di Stato di Milano, ed. A.R. Natale (Milan, c 1970).
 O= Original
 Palestra= Regesto delle pergamene dell' Archivio Arcivescovile di Milano, ed. A Palestra.
 Pand= Archivio Capitolare di Sant' Ambrogio. Pergamene Regesto dal VII-XI secolo, ed. L.S. Pandolfi (Unpublished typescript of 1960)
 PLAC= I Placiti del Regnum Italiae, ed. C. Manaresi.
 PS= Petrus Sinistrarius .
 sGia=San Giacomo, Pontida
 sGio=San Giorgio, Milan.
 sMar=Santa Margherita, Milan.
 sSal=San Salvatore/Santa Maria Wigilinda, Milan.
 sVinc=San Vincenzo, Milan.

N.B. All charters derive from Sant' Ambrogio unless otherwise noted.

		EIGHTH CENTURY						
Archive no.		NAT	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	DATE	O/C
Adm sec VIII	3	5		29			721	o
"	4	6	4	36			725 Jun	o
"	6	8	6	53			735 Jan	o
"	10	11	10	78			742 May	12
"	11	12	73				724-744	o
"	13	15	13	95			748 Apr	o
"	14	16	16	123			756 Oct	o
"	15	17	28	190			765 Aug	o
"	16	18	40	233			769 Nov	o
"	17	19	"	234			" "	o
"	18	20	41	252			771 Apr	o
"	19	21	53				774 Aug	o
"	20	22	998				776 Feb	12/13
Pand VIII	1-4	23	54				776 Apr	12/13
AdM sec VIII	21	24	55				776 May	12APS
"	22	25	56				777 Mar	o
"	23	26	57				781 Feb	12/13APS
"	10/25	28	59				784	12A
Bibl. Ambr								
Cod. Castelli	295		61				787	16
AdM sec VIII	26	29	63				789 Jul	o

Appendices

Archive no.	NAT	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	DATE	O/C
AdM sec VIII	27	30	64			789 Oct	13APS
"	28	31	65		DK164	790 Apr	10
"	29	32	66			792 Jan	o
"	30	33	67			793 Apr	o
"	31	34	69			796 Jun	o
"	32	35	70			799 Feb	o

NINTH CENTURY							
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AdM sec IX	2	37	78			804 Mar	o
"	3	38	82			806 Jan	o
"	4	39	83			807 Jul	o
"	5	40	84			807 Sep	o
"	6	42	85			809 Mar	o
"	7	43	86			c810	o
"	8	44	87			812 Apr	o
"	9	45	90			814 Mar	o
"	11	47	98	1,34		822 May	o
"	12	48	100	1,148		823 Jun	o
Pand sec IX	1		102			823 Jul	o
AdM sec IX	13	49	105			824 Jan	o
"	14	50	107			826 May	o
"	15	52	113			830	o
"	16	53	114			832 Jun	o
"	17	54	117			833 Aug	o
"	18	55	118			833 Oct	o
"	19	56	120			835 Jan	o
"	21	57	121		DL23	835 Jan	o
"	"	57a				" "	11
"	"	57b				" "	16
"	22	58	122			835 Mar	13A
"	23	59	124		DL26	835 May	o
"	24a	60	125			835 May	10/11
"	24b	60a				" "	" "
"	27	61	126			pre835	9/10
"	"	61a	"			pre835	" "
"	"	61b	"			post835	" "
Pand sec IX	2		127			836	o same
AdM sec IX	25	62				"	9 text
"	26	63	131			837 Dec	o
"	27	64	133			839 May	o
"	28	65	135			839 Aug	o
"	29	66	136			840 ?	9A
"	30	67	137			840 May	o
"	31	68	138	1,45		?823-840	o
"	32	69	142			841 Oct	o
"	33	70/a	145			842 Apr	12A
"	34	71	146			842 ?	o
"	35	73	153			c843 ?	11
"	37	74	154	1,48		844 Apr	o
"	38	75				c844 ?	o
"	"	76	155			844 Jun	o

Appendices

Archive no.	NAT	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	DATE	O/C
"	38½	77	156			844 Oct	12/13AAV
"	39	79	158			846 Jan	o
"	40	80	159			847 May	o
"	41	81	161			847 Aug	o
"	42	82	165			848 Mar	o
"	43	83	167			848 Mar	o
"	44	84	168			849 Aug	o
"	45	85	169			850 Jul	o
"	46	86	172			851 Mar	o
"	47	87	178			852 Oct	12/13
AdM sec IX	48	88	179			852 Nov	o
"	49	89	181			853 Jan	o
"	50	90	183			853 ?	9cc
"	51	91	184			854 Feb	o
"	52	92	185			854 Feb	o
Palestra	1		186			854 May	12
AdM sec IX	53	93	190			855 Jun	o
"	54	94	191			856 Mar	o
"	55	95	197			856 Jun	o
"	56	96	199			856 Dec	o
"	57	97	200			857 Feb	o
"	58	98	201			857 Jun	o
"	59	99	204			858 Jan	o
"	60	100	206			859 Mar	o
"	61	101	207	1,64		859 May	o
"	62	102	208			859 Jun	o
"	63	103	209			859 Dec	o
"	64	104	214			861 Mar	o
"	65	105	216			861 May	o
"	66	106	222			862 Mar	o
"	67	107	223			862 ?	o
"	68	108	225			863 Mar	o
"	69	109	226			863 Jul	o
"	70	110	227			863 Dec	o
"	71	111	228			864 Jan	o
"	72	112	229	1,66		864 Mar	o
"	73	113	230			864 Mar	o
Pand sec IX	3		233			864 Dec	o
AdM sec IX	74	114	234	1,67		865 Jan	o
"	75	115	235			865 Mar	o
"	76	116	236			865 Mar	10
"	77	117	239			865 ?	o
"	78	118	241			866 Feb	12AAV
"	79	119	243			867 Apr	o
Pand sec IX	4		244			867 Nov	o
AdM sec IX	80	120	246			870 Mar	o
"	81	121	247			870 Apr	o
"	82	122	249			870 Nov	9/10
lost			252			871 Feb	?o
AdM sec IX	83	123	255			873 Jun	9/10
"	84	124	256			873 Dec	o
"	85	125	257			874 Apr	9cc

Appendices

Archive No.	NAT	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	Date	O/C
"	86	126	258		1,78	874 Dec 12/13	AAV
"	87	127	259			875 Jan	o
"	88	128	260			875 Feb	o
"	89	129	261			875 Feb	o
"	90	130	264			875 Dec	o
"	91	131	265			876 Feb	o
"	92	132	266			876 Apr	o
"	93	133	267			876 Aug	o
"	94	134	268			876 Jun	12A
Pand sec IX	5		269			877 Mar	o
AdM sec IX	95	135	271			877 Jun	12A
AdM sec IX	96	137	287			879 Sep	9/10
"	97	138	290			879 ?	9ccA
"	98	139	291			879 Nov	o
"	99	142				880 ?	12
"	100	141	294			880 Mar	o
"	102	143	295			880 Mar	o
?AdM lost			296			880 May	12
sec IX	103	144	297			880 ?	12/13AAV
Pand sec IX	6		312			882 Jun	o
AdM sec IX	104	146				882 ?	o same
"	"	146a	314			882 Nov	9/10text
Pand sec IX	7					882 ?	12
AdM sec IX	105	147	315			882 ?	o
"	106	148	325			884 Dec	o
"	107	149	326			885 Mar	o
"	108	150	327			885 Mar	o
"	109	151	330			885 May	o
"	110	152	331			885 Jul	o
"	111	153				887 Jul	12/13
Pand sec IX	8		339			887 Jul	o
AdM sec IX	112	154				892 May	11
"	113	155	352			892 May	o
"	114	156	356		1,100	892 Aug	o
?AdM lost			357			892 Oct	?cA
AdM sec IX	116	157	358			893 ?	12 same
Pand sec IX	9					893 ?	12 text
AdM sec IX	117	158/a	360			894 Mar	10 [x2]
Pand sec IX	10		362			894 ?	o
AdM sec IX	118	159				894 Dec	12/
"	119	160	370		1,101	896 Oct	o
Pand sec IX	11		371			896-98	?9 or 10
AdM sec IX	120	161	372			897 May	o
"	121	162	374			897 May	o
TENTH CENTURY							
Archive No.			CDL	PLAC	MGH	Date	O/C
AdM sec X	145		390			901 ?	o
"	146		396	1,110		900 Sep	12
AdM sec IX	122	163		1,112		900 Sep	10
AdM sec X	147		402			903 Jan	10cc
"	148		405			903 Aug	o
"	149		409			904 May	o

Appendices

Archive No.	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	Date	O/C
"	150	416	1,117		905 Jul	o
"	151	417			905 Jul	10
"	152(A)	427	1,122		c906-910	o/18
Pand sec X	1	429			909 Mar	o
Adm sec IX	153	446			912 Feb	o
"	154	447			912 Jun	o
"	155	451			913 Feb	o
"	156	457			915 Mar	11
"	157	460			915 May	o
"	158	465			915 Oct	11 IC
"	159	473			917 Jul	o
Adm sec X	160	475	1,129		918 Apr	o
"	161	476			918 Aug	o
"	162	478			918 Nov	12 IC
"	164	488			920 Mar	o
Pand sec X	2	498			922 Jun	o
Adm sec X	168	502			923 May	o
"	169	517			926 Feb	9cca
"	173	531			929 Jun	11sApp
"	175	538			931 May	o
"	174	539			931 May	o
"	176	542			932 Mar	o
"	177	547			936 Nov	o
"	180½	556			940 Oct	o sMar
"	181	557			941 Jan	o
Pand sec X	3	558	1,139		941 Feb	o
Adm sec X	182	559			941 Feb	o
"	183	560			941 Mar	o IC
?Adm lost		564			941 Jul	?osMar
Adm sec X	185	570			942 Aug	o
"	187	573			943 Dec	o
"	189	578			946 Oct	o
"	193	592			950 Feb	o
"	196	596			951 Oct	o
"	197	599			952 Feb	11
"	198	602			953 Apr	o
Pand sec X	4	607			955 Jan	o
Adm sec X	199	608			955 Jun	o
"	200	609			955 Jun	o
"	201	611			955 Aug	o
"	202	614			956 May	o
Pand sec X	5	620			956 Dec	o
Adm sec X	203	621			957 Jan	o
"	204	624			957 Aug	o
"	205	625			957 Sep	o
"	207	642			c960 ?	ofrag
"	209	637			960 Apr	o
"	214	649			961 Feb	10sSal
"	221	661			962 Aug	10
"	224	665			962 Dec	o
"	226	669			963 Apr	o
"	227	670			963 Apr	o
"	230	671			963 Jun	o

Appendices

Archive No.	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	Date	O/C
? Adm lost	674				963 Sep	o?sMar
Pand sec X 6	675				963 Nov	o
AdM sec x 229	679				c963 ?	o
Pand sec X 7	682				964 Apr	o
" 8	683				964 May	o
" 9	684				964 Jun	o
" 10	690				965 Mar	o
AdM sec X 233	693				966 Mar	o sGia
" 234	694				966 Apr	o
" 238	704				967 Jun	o sMar
" 239	706				968 Mar	o sGia
" 240	707				968 Apr	10A
Pand sec X 11	709				968 Jul	10cc
AdM sec X 241	715				970 Jan	12sGio
" 242	719				970 Apr	o
" 240	722				970 Aug	o
" 244	723				970 Nov	o
" 245	727				971 May	o IC
?AdM lost	729/790				c971 ?	?o
Pand sec X 13	731				972 Jan	o
AdM sec X 246	732				972 Feb	o
Pand sec X 14	735				972 Apr	o
" 15	739				972 Oct	o
" 16	741				972 Nov	o
AdM sec X 248½	748				973 Apr	o
" 250	752				974 Apr	o
" 251	753				974 May	o
Pand sec X 17	762				975 MAy	o
AdM sec X 253	763				975 Jul	o
" 254	766				975 Oct	o
Pand sec X 18	768				975 Oct	o
AdM sec X 255	773				976 Apr	o IC
" 259	787				978 Jul	10cc
" 261	789				978 Dec	o
" 260	790/729				c978 ?	o frag
" 264	799				980 Jun	10
Pand sec X 19	800				980 Sep	o
AdM sec X 268	810				982 Mar	o IC
" 269	813				983 Jan	o IC
" 270	814				983 Mar	o IC
" 271	819				983 ?	o IC
" 272	816				983 May	12
" 273	817				983 May	o IC
Pand sec X 20	822				984 Apr	o
AdM sec X 277	826				985 Mar	o
" 278	828				985 ?	o
" 279	832				987 Jan	o
" 280	834				987 Mar	o
Pand sec X 21	836				987 Jul	o
AdM sec X 282	842				988 Jan	11sGio
Pand sec X 22	845				988 Aug	10cc
AdM sec X 285	846				988 Nov	o
" 288v	858				991 Apr	10 IC

Appendices

Archive No.	CDL	CDLS	PLAC	MGH	Date	O/C
"	289	859			991 May	o
"	290	860			991 Dec	o
"	291	861			992 Jan	o IC
"	292	862			992 Feb	o IC
"	294	866			992 May	o IC
Pand sec X	23	867			992 May	osVinc
"	24	868			992 Jun	o
AdM sec X	295	869			992 Sep	o IC
Pand sec X	25	871			993 Feb	10cc
"	26				"	"
"	27				"	"
AdM sec X	298	873			993 Mar	o IC
"	299	877			993 Apr	o
?Adm lost		880			993 Nov	?
AdM sec X	300	881			994 Jan	o IC
"	301	883			994 Mar	o IC
Pand sec X	28	884			994 Jun	o
AdM sec x	302	889			995 Mar	o
"	304	894			995 Jul	o
"	303	895			995 Jul	11 IC
"	305	896			995 Aug	12
"	306	899			995 Sep	o IC
"	315	926			997 Jan	osGio
"	316	928			997 Feb	o
"	371	929			997 Apr	o
Pand sec X	29	930			997 Apr	12
"	30	931			997 Apr	10
"	31	932			997 Apr	o
AdM sec X	318	936			997 Nov	osGio
Pand sec X	32	937			997 Nov	10cca
?Adm lost		939			998 Jan	?o
AdM sec X	326	949			998 Oct	o IC
?Adm lost		956			999 Mar	?
AdM sec X	328	957			999 Mar	o
"	329	958			999 Mar	o
"	333½	965			999 Jun	15
"	334	966			999 Aug	o IC
"	336	971			999 Nov	o
Pand sec X	33	974			1000 Jan	10A
AdM sec X	337	976			1000 Feb	o IC
Pand sec x	34	978			1000 Mar	o
AdM sec X	343	990			1000 Oct	o
?Adm lost		993			1000 Dec	?
Pand sec VIII 1-4		998			n.d ?	12/13
AdM		1001			pre-11	?o
"		1002			"	"
"		1003			"	"

Appendices

APPENDIX TWO.

County and Diocesan Jurisdiction in North-Western Lombardy.

The problems posed by the nature of political and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in this area in the ninth and tenth centuries are complex and can only be touched on here. As far as Sant'Ambrogio is concerned the key issue is simply did either the counts or the archbishops of Milan use the monastery to further claims to jurisdiction in rivalry with neighbouring counts or bishops? The fundamentals have been established in a series of articles and books, the most important of which are D. Bullough, 'The Counties of the Regnum Italiae in the Carolingian period...', PBSR, xxiii (1955); N. Christie, The Settlement and Defence of Byzantine and Langobard North and Central Italy (unpublished PhD thesis, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1985); E. Riboldi, 'I contadi rurali del Milanese (sec. ix-xii)', ASL s.4, v. 2 (1904); P. Schaefer, Il Sottoceneri nel Medioevo (Lugano, 1954) and G. Wielich, Il Locarnese nel tempo carolingio e nell'epoca feudale (Locarno, 1958).

In our period the extent of the respective comitates of the counts of Milan, Seprio and Bergamo/Lecco is unclear. Certainly the River Adda provided the boundary between Milan and Bergamo. The problems come upon looking further north. In the early ninth century as we have seen elsewhere the counts of Milan and Seprio came from the same family. Castelseprio appears to have functioned as a stronghold, and various places are termed finibus seprienses in our charters (Campione, Balerna, Mendrisio, Cairate - that is to say with a marked Comasco orientation). What the position of Como was remains unclear for there is never any mention of counts of Como, although it was termed a civitas. Further north Isola Comacina appears to have been within the

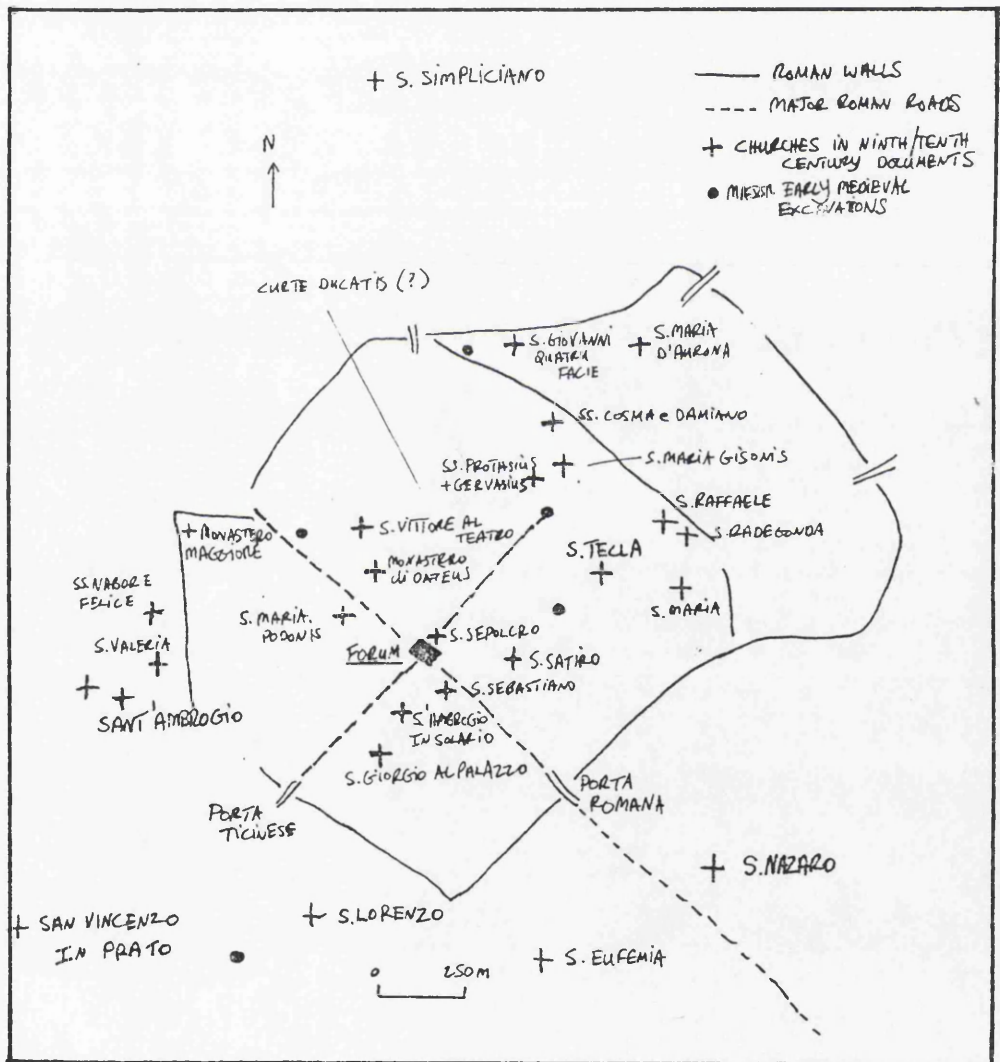
Appendices

comitatus of Bergamo/Lecco, at least in the tenth century (Christie, Settlement and Defence, pp. 147-152). The position of the Valtellina is similarly unclear.

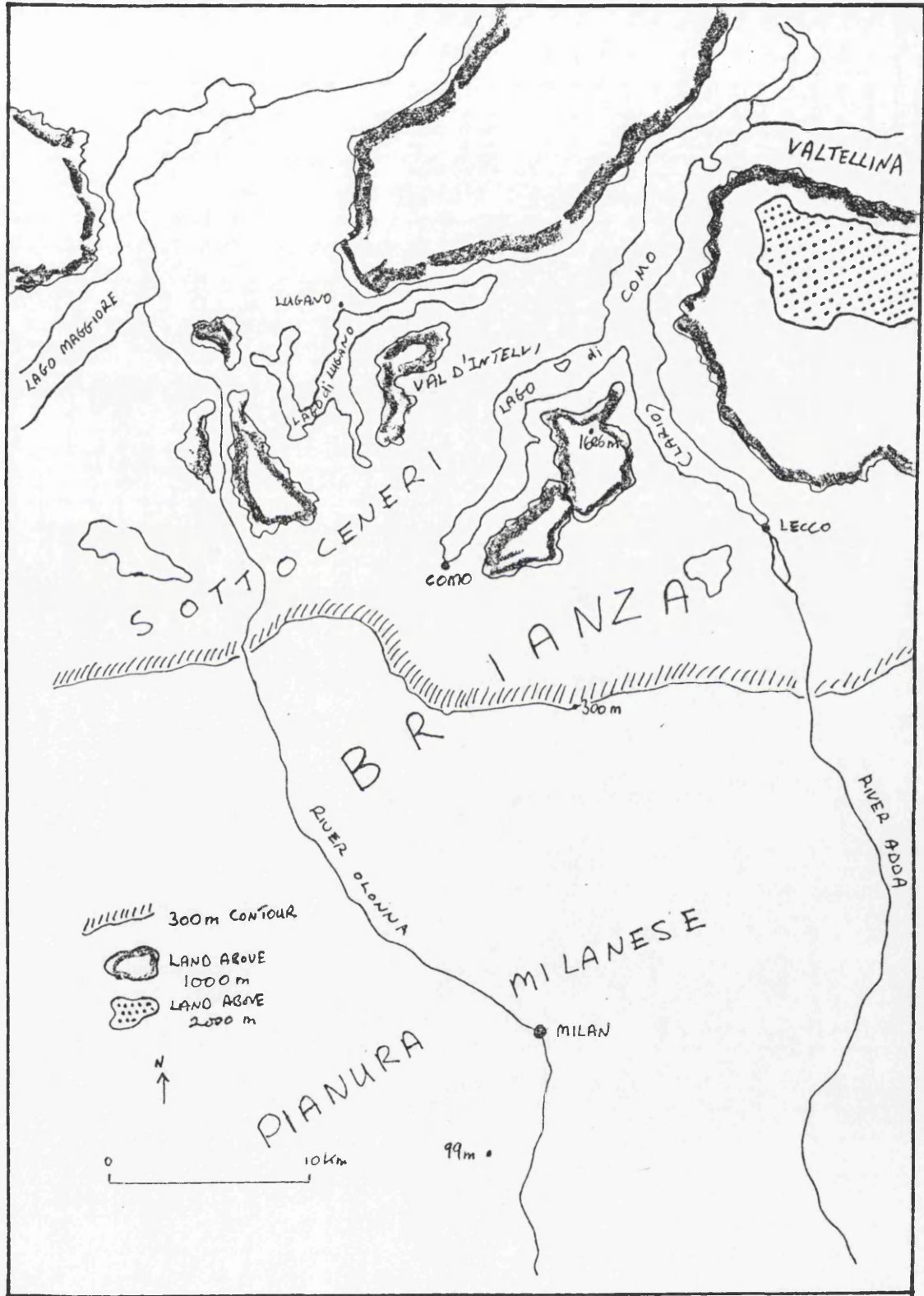
As far as dioceses are concerned Como is again the problem place. It had a bishop but the extent of his diocese is absolutely unclear in our period. The dispute between the bishop of Como and the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio in 874 over jurisdiction in Campione was decided in favour of the monastery, admittedly in a case chaired by the archbishop of Milan. Certainly the status of the Valtellina is problematic. Traditionally it has been thought to be Como oriented (e.g. Bognetti in Storia di Milano, vol. 2 pp. 306-310) but as it is termed judicaria Mediolanensis in 867 (NAT 119) quite rightly some have doubted this.

As can be seen from the tenor of this brief discussion the questions are rather theoretical. Power in this period meant military force and so the locus of it was liable to change quite easily. The fact that the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio owned properties across several comitates and dioceses probably does not mean that its property-owning was an emblem of Milanese hegemony, even though it was favoured with a lot of archiepiscopal gifts.

MAP 1: MILAN IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

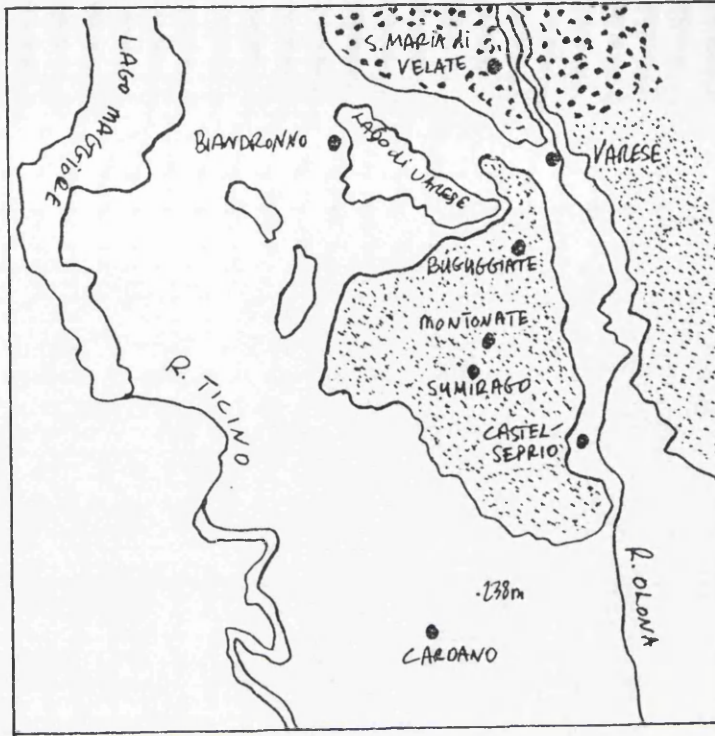




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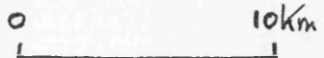
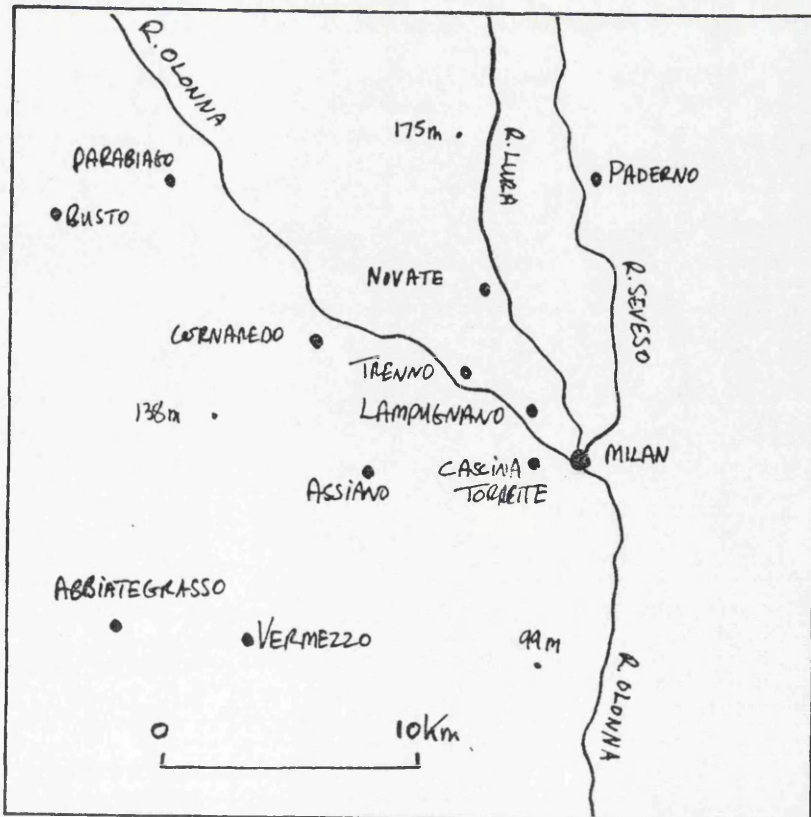


MAP 2: NORTH-WEST LOMBARDY

Maps

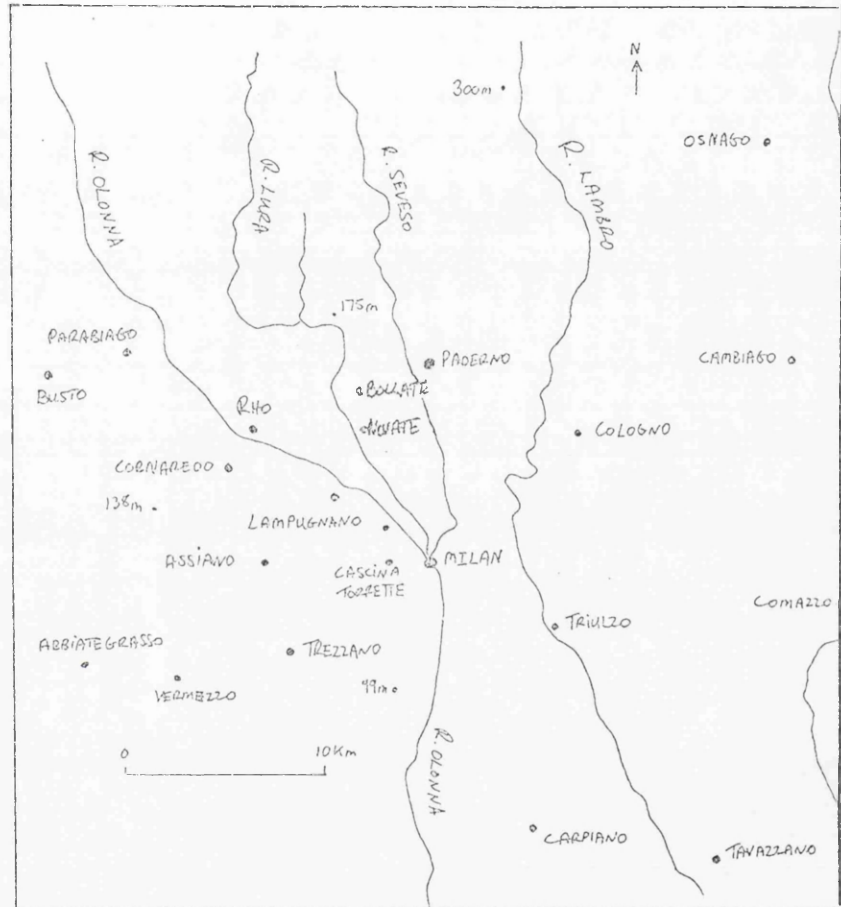


-  LAND OVER 300m
-  LAND OVER 800m

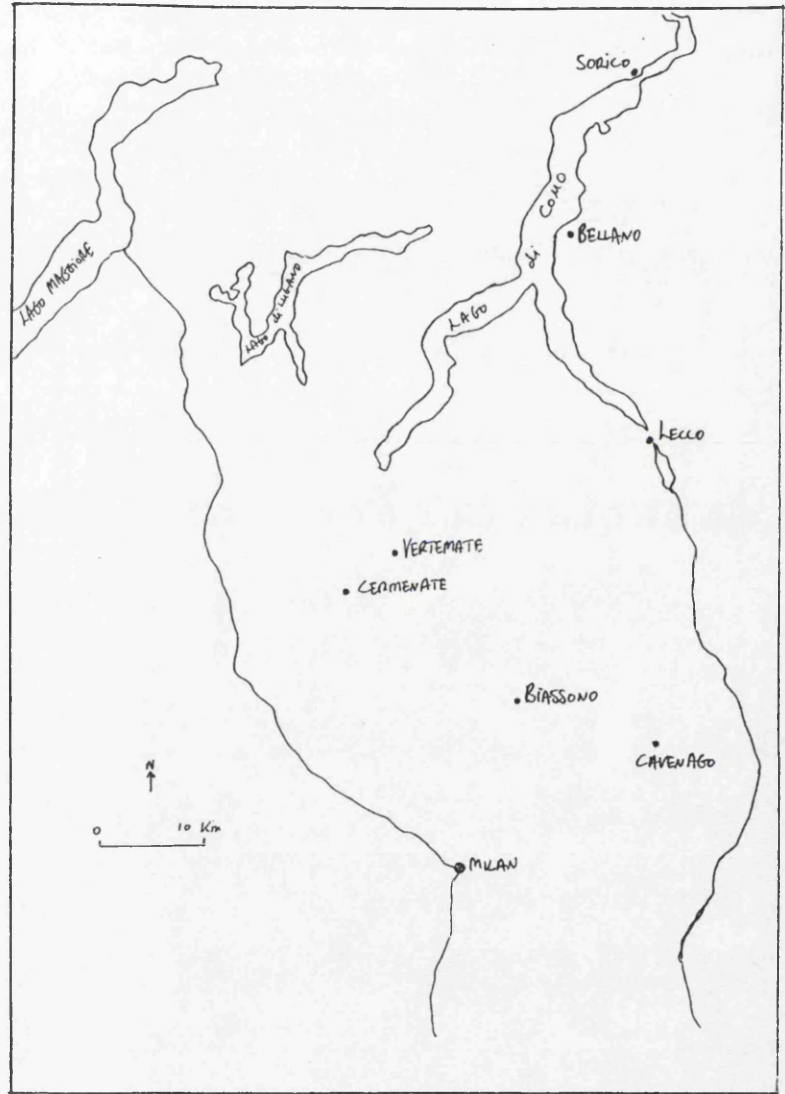


MAP 4: PROPERTIES OF BASHICA, SANT'AMBROGIO

Maps

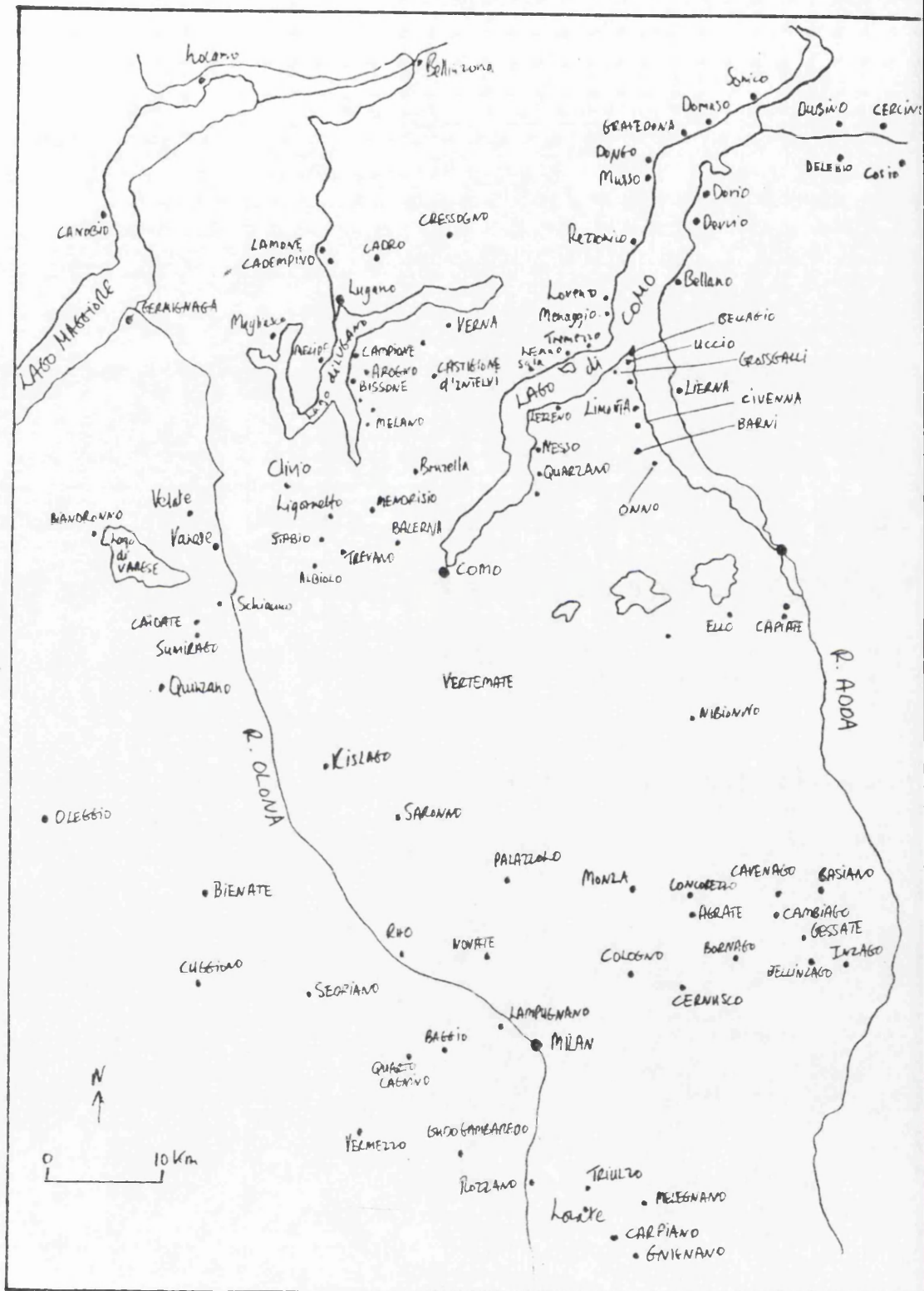


MAP 5: ECCLESIASTICAL PROPERTIES
IN NORTH-WEST LOMBARDY.



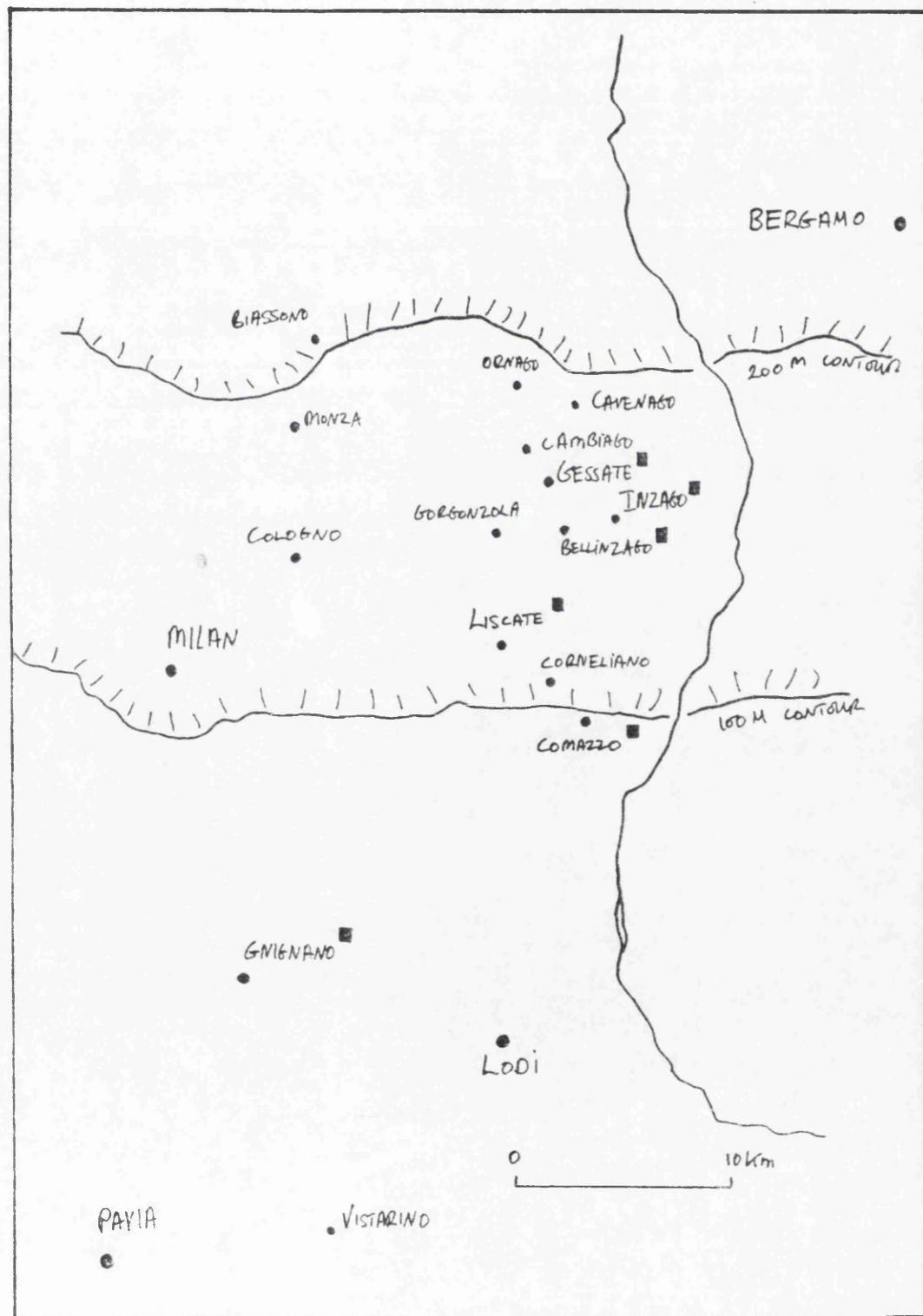
MAP 6: ARCHIEPISCOPAL PROPERTIES

Maps



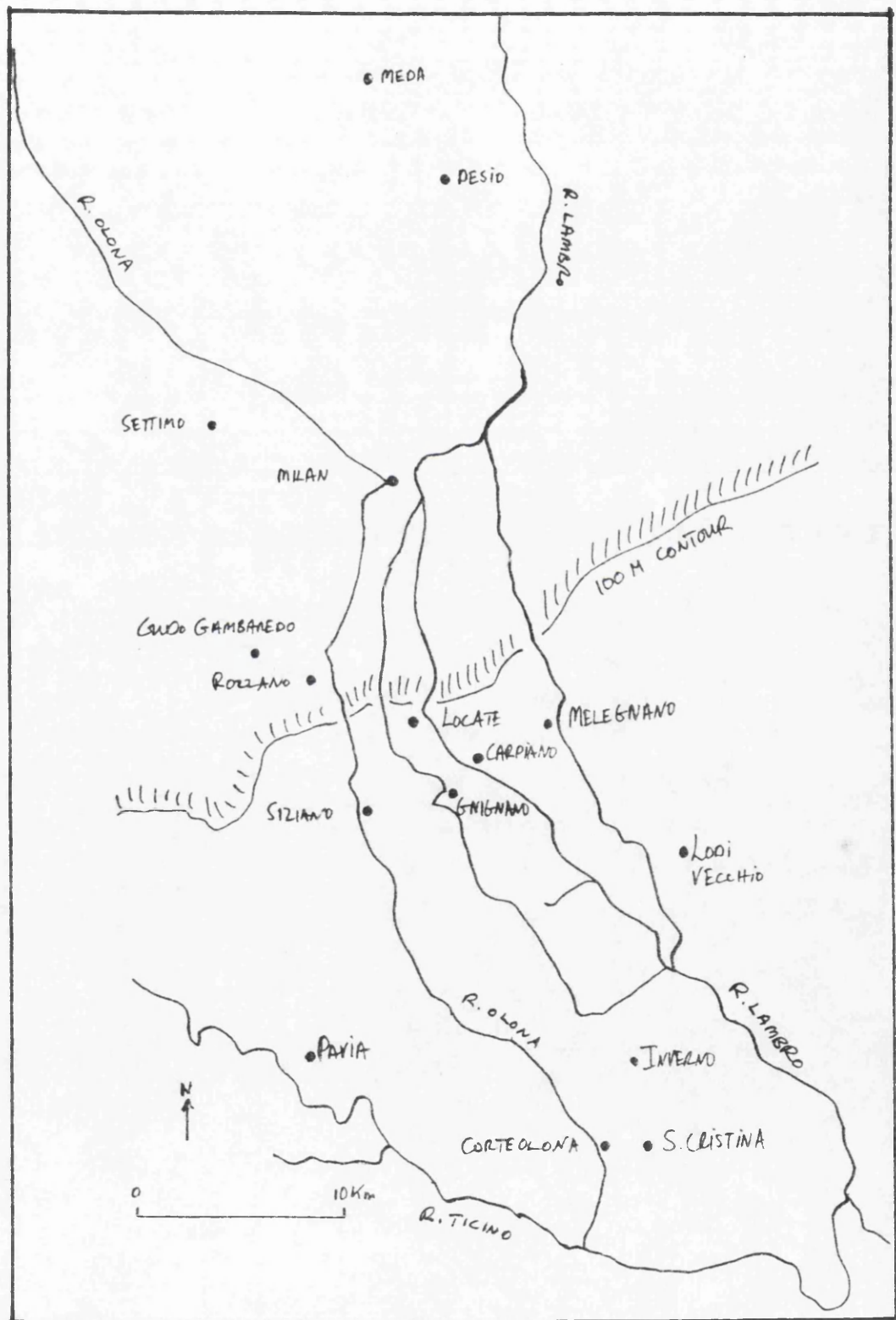
MAP 7: PROPERTIES OF MONASTERY OF SANT' AMBROGIO,
c. 780 — 1000.

Maps



MAP 8: PROPERTIES OF ANSELM OF INZAGO

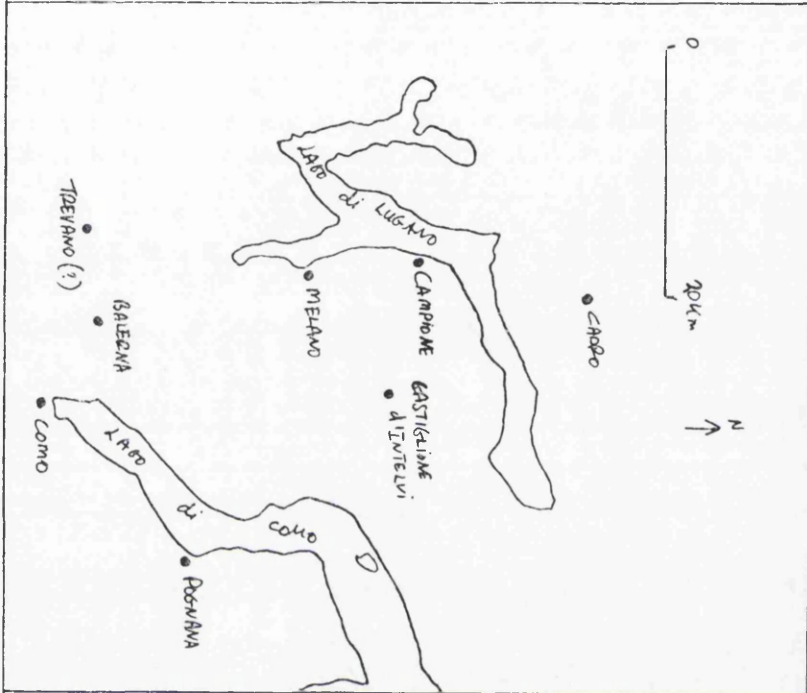
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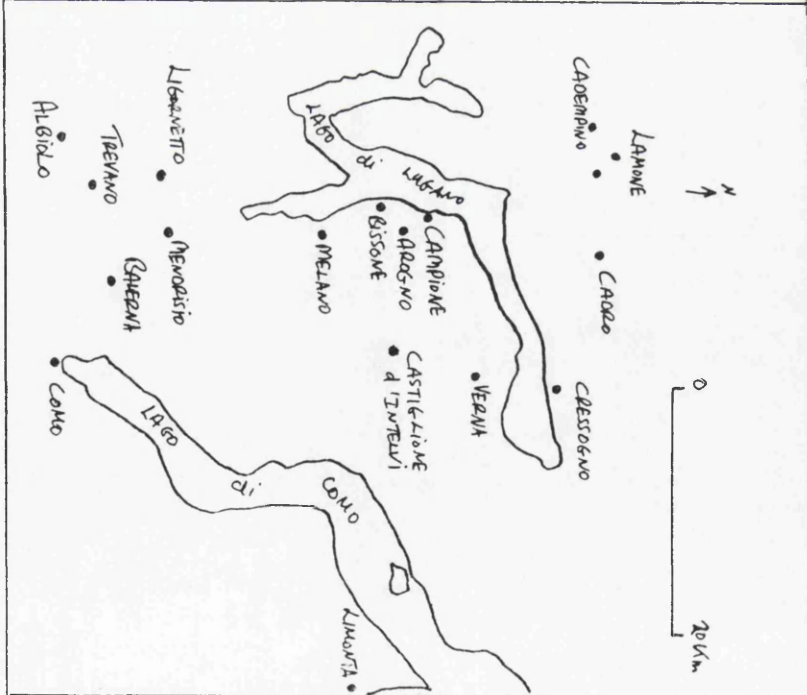
MAP 9: SNIGNANO AND VICINITY.

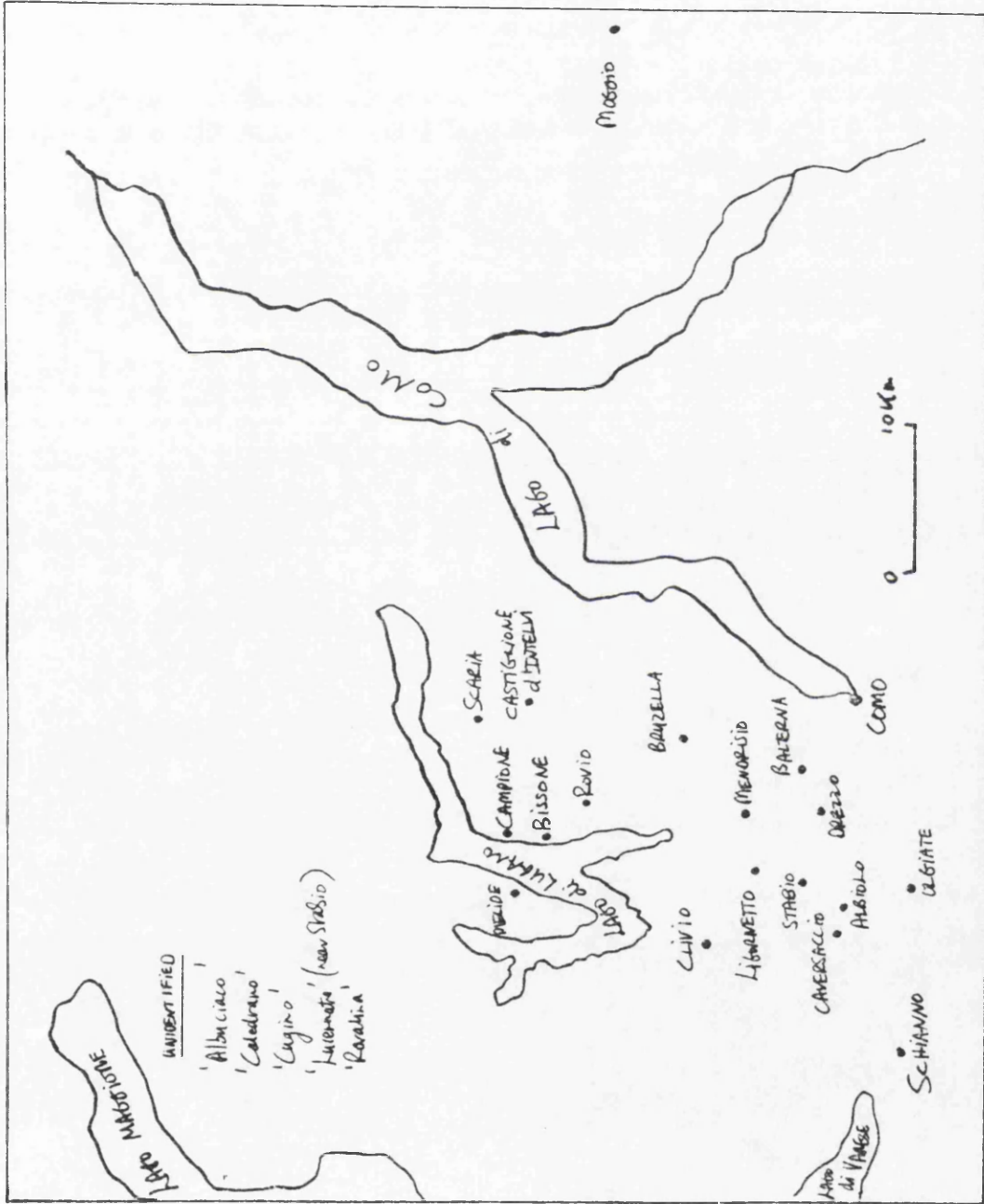
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MAP 10: CAMPIONE ESTATE c. 810



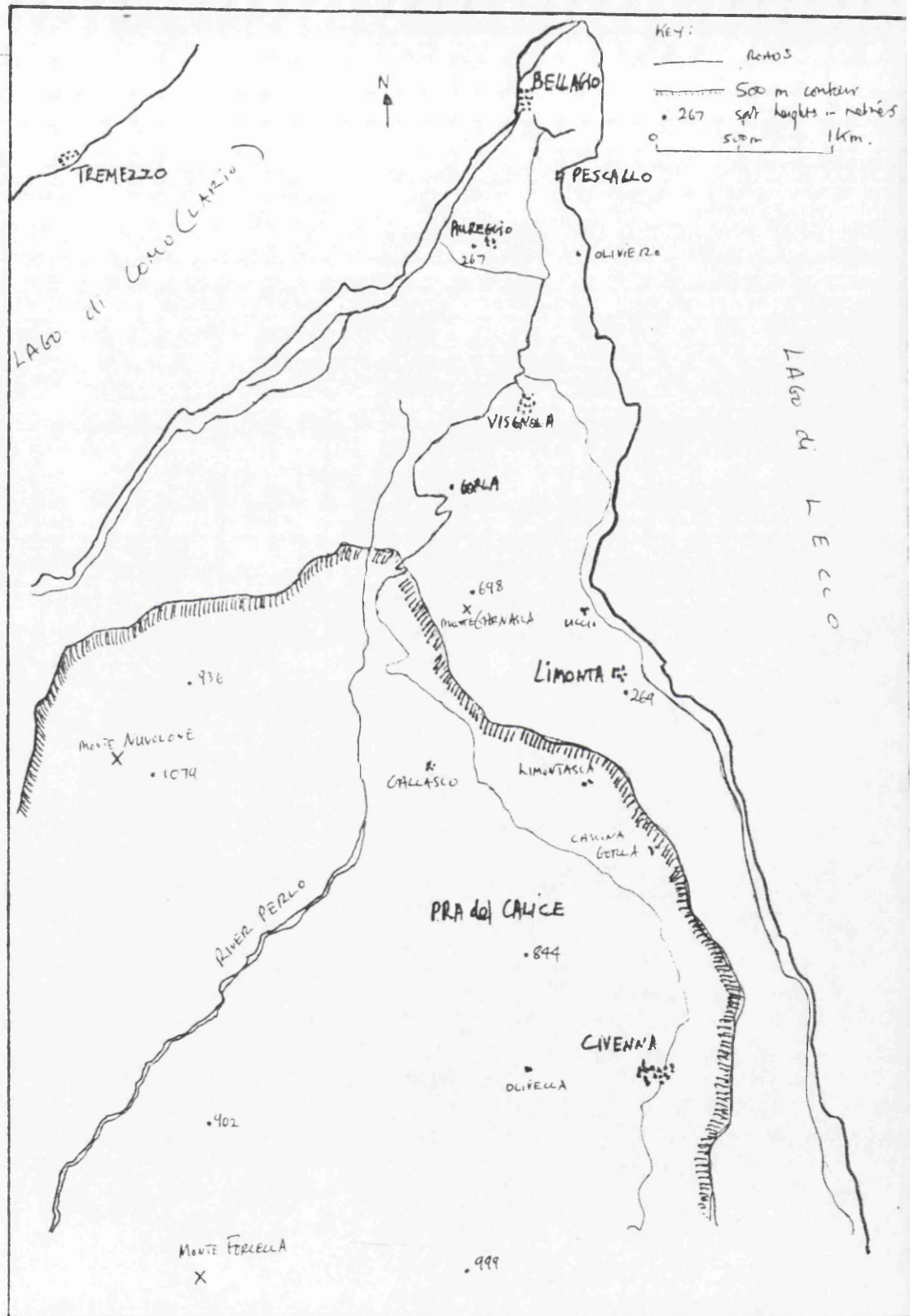
CAMPIONE ESTATE c. 835-1880





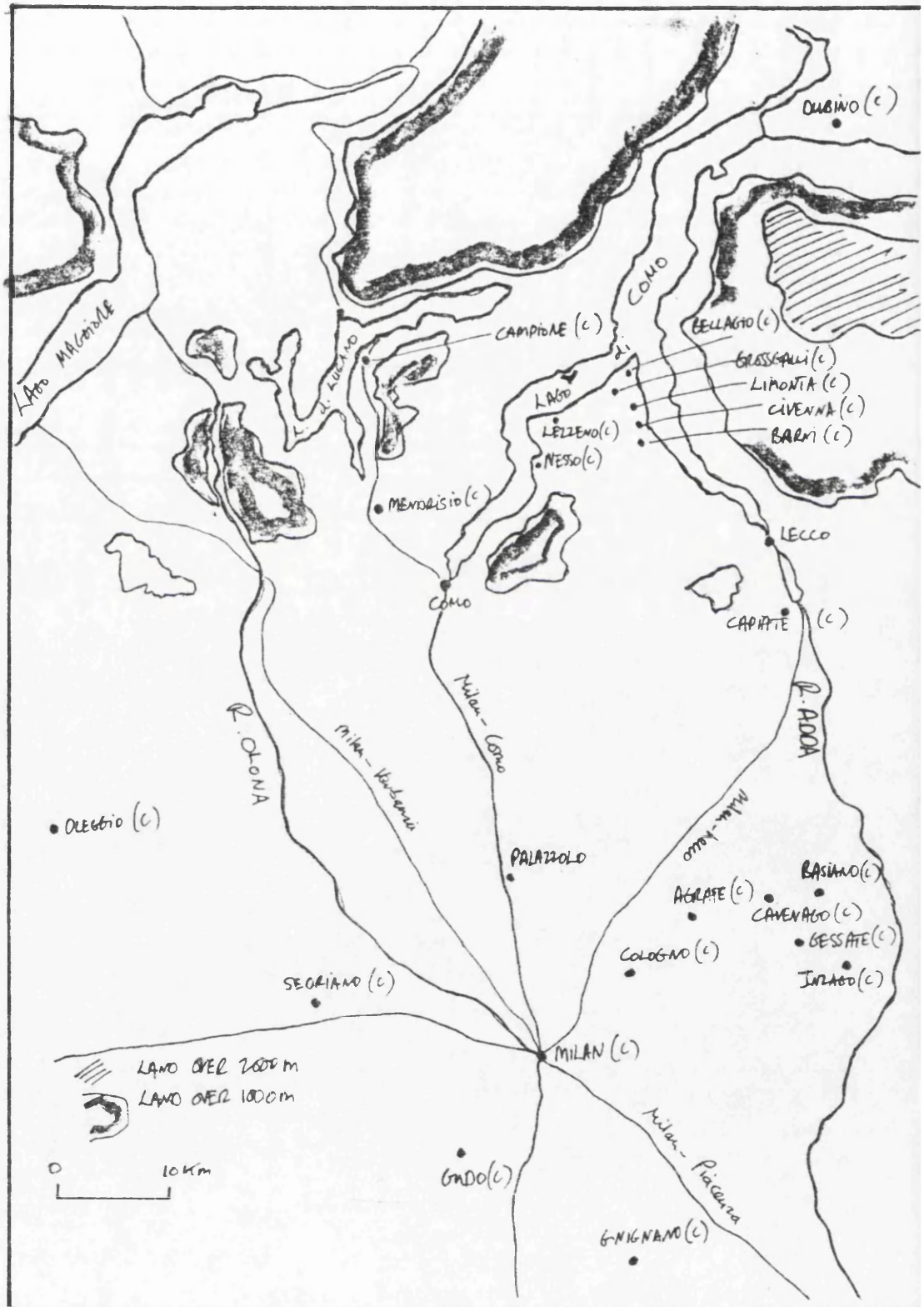
MAP II: ESTIMPS OF ADELGISUS OF SCHIANNNO

Maps



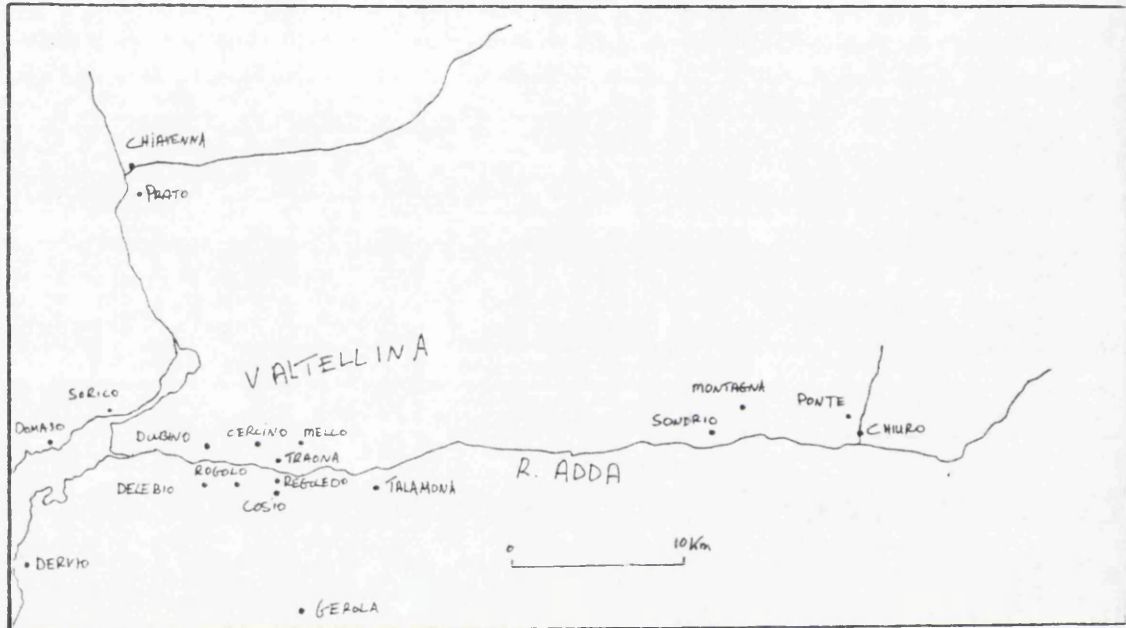
MAP 12: LIMONTA ESTATE.

Maps

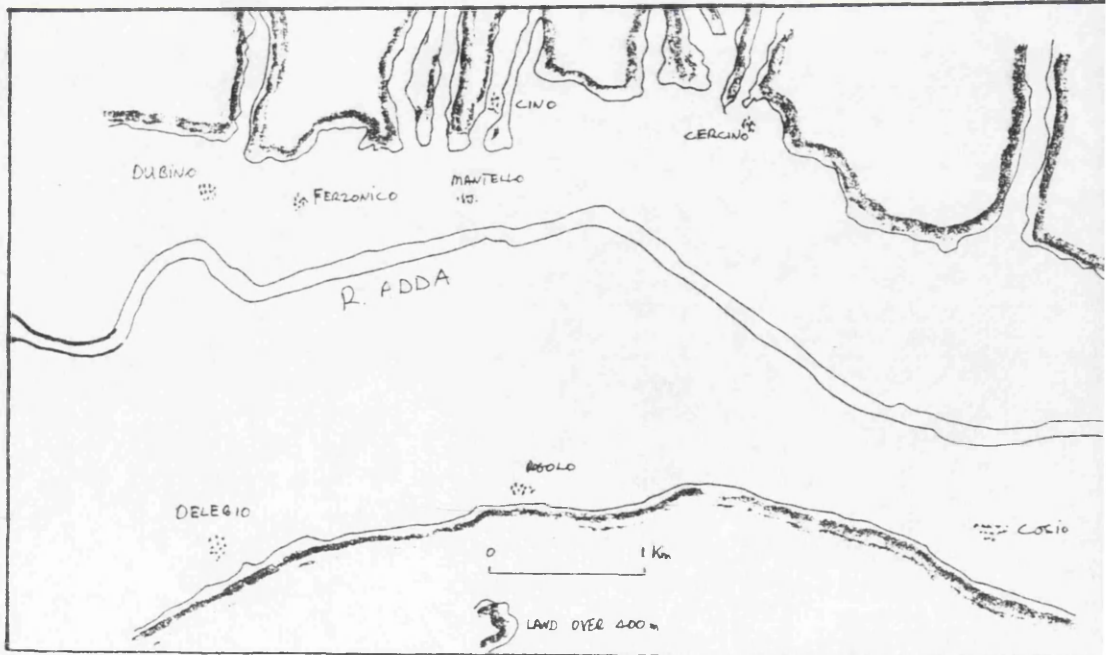


MAP 13: CURTES OF SANT' AMBROGIO

Maps



MAP 14: SANT'AMBROGIO IN THE VALTELLINA



MAP 15: DUBINO ESTATE

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