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Ravenna

its role in earlier medieval change and exchange

Edited by Judith Herrin and Jinty Nelson



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15. Culture and society in Ottonian Ravenna: imperial renewal or new beginnings?*

Tom Brown

Until quite recently the city of Ravenna has received a thumbs down from historians – terms such as ‘decline’, ‘backwater’ and ‘marginal’ were commonly applied to post-Byzantine Ravenna. Edward Hutton, still the only writer in English of a detailed history of medieval Ravenna, wrote in 1913 that ‘after the misfortune of 751 ... Ravenna found itself ... little more than a decaying provincial city. [Her] memories ... smoulder in her ruined heart as the fire may do in the ashes when all that was living and glorious has been consumed. Almost nothing ... she became when Charlemagne left her, a mere body still wrapt in gorgeous raiment stiff with gold, but without a soul’.¹ The art historian Corrado Ricci, the first director of antiquities in Ravenna, wrote of the city losing its title of Ravenna Felix amid decadence, ruin, disasters and floods.² Is this view of Ravenna justified?

One of the remarkable things about Ravenna is the relatively abundant evidence. Up to the mid ninth century we are well informed thanks to the rich history of Agnellus.³ Thereafter we have source problems. It is not that sources are few but there are no detailed contemporary local texts

* This chapter is dedicated to David A. Warner of Rhode Island School of Art, who died on 8 May 2013. One of the foremost scholars on Ottonian Germany in the English-speaking world, he was best known for his translation of the *Chronicon* of Thietmar of Merseburg (*Ottonian Germany: the Chronicon of Thietmar of Merseburg* (Manchester, 2001)) and for his excellent paper ‘The representation of empire: Otto I at Ravenna’, originally given at a St. Andrews conference where I had the pleasure of meeting him (published in *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800–1500*, ed. S. MacLean and B. Weiler (Turnhout, 2006), pp. 121–40). I also wish to record my thanks to Judith Herrin and Jinty Nelson for organizing both the original workshop and this volume: it is gratifying to see such a quantum leap in the English-language literature on Ravenna.

¹ E. Hutton, *Ravenna: a Study* (1913), pp. 210–11. The recent book by D. M. Deliyannis, *Ravenna in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2010) takes a more positive view but says little on the period beyond 700.

² C. Ricci, *Guida di Ravenna* (Ravenna, 1878), e.g., p. 199. On his career and writings, see *Corrado Ricci: Nuovi Studi e Documenti*, ed. N. Lombardini and others (Ravenna, 1999).

³ *Agnelli Ravennatis Liber Pontificalis ecclesiae Ravennatis*, ed. D. M. Deliyannis (CCCM, cxcix, Turnhout, 2006); *The Book of Pontiffs of the Church of Ravenna*, trans. and ed. D. M. Deliyannis (Washington, DC, 2004).

to provide a narrative. But we do have a *lot* of documents. The famous early papyri were replaced from c.700 by parchments, mainly preserved in the Archivio Arcivescovile.⁴ There are also remarkable survivals such as a register of 163 transactions commonly known as the *Codex Bavarus*. This was compiled *in papyrus* in the late tenth century but includes donations, leases and grants involving the church stretching back to c.700.⁵ Altogether Ravenna preserves the second greatest number of documents from early medieval Italy after Lucca – with around 450 surviving from 440 A.D. to 1002.⁶

There is also a wealth of judicial texts, such as *placita* and royal diplomas, and a wealth of some conciliar acts survive – Ravenna was a regular site for holding councils from the mid ninth century, both local provincial synods for Emilia-Romagna and wider ones summoned by the pope.⁷ There are also fairly common references in outside sources such as Italian and German chronicles. Most importantly, there is an increasing amount of archaeological evidence.⁸ And we know that Ravenna had a great heritage of monuments from its imperial past, which made a considerable impression on visitors, including rulers such as Charlemagne.⁹

The area of the old *Exarchatus*, roughly the present provinces of Emilia-Romagna and the northern Marche, now controlled by the archbishops, and known as Romania, was quite distinctive from the remaining areas of northern Italy which were known as *Langobardia* or the *regnum Italiae*. Key elements of the Byzantine administrative system persisted. We find continued use of titles from the Byzantine era such as *magister militum*, *tribunus* and consul. These appear to have been largely or exclusively honorary, but there is clearly a system by which powerful figures obtained titles and certain offices recur in families, reminiscent of areas under nominal Byzantine authority such as Venice, and the southern cities of Amalfi,

⁴ J-O. Tjäder, *Die Nichtliterarischen lateinschen Papyri Italiens aus der Zeit 445–700* (3 vols., Lund, 1954–82); R. Benericetti, *Le carte ravennati del secolo ottavo e nono* (Bologna, 2006); R. Benericetti, *Le carte ravennati del secolo decimo* (3 vols., Bologna, 2002–10).

⁵ *Breviarium Ecclesiae Ravennatis (Codice Bavaro)*, ed. G. Rabotti (Rome, 1985).

⁶ B. Cavarra *et al.*, 'Gli Archivi come fonti della storia di Ravenna: regesto dei documenti', in *Storia di Ravenna*, ed. A. Carile (2 vols., Venice, 1991), ii, 401–547.

⁷ *Die Konzilien Deutschlands und Reichsitaliens 916–1001*, I, ed. E. D. Hehl (Hanover, 1987); *I placiti del 'Regnum Italiae'*, ed. C. Manaresi (3 vols., Rome, 1955–60); see also S. MacLean, 'Legislation and politics in late Carolingian Italy: the Ravenna constitutions', *EME*, xviii (2010), 394–416.

⁸ E. Cirelli, *Ravenna; Archeologia di una città* (Bologna, 2008).

⁹ T. S. Brown, 'Louis the Pious and the papacy: a Ravenna perspective', *Charlemagne's Heir*, ed. P. Godman and R. Collins (Oxford, 1990), pp. 297–307; J. L. Nelson, 'Charlemagne and Ravenna', ch. 11, this volume.

Gaeta and Naples.¹⁰ The system reflects the existence of an entrenched regional aristocracy with a strong sense of identity and of distinct Romano-Byzantine military and administrative traditions. In the case of personal names in Longobardia Germanic names prevail among the elite, but in Romania traditional 'Byzantine' names, such as Theodore, Theophylact, and Mauricius, remain the norm alongside purely 'Christian' names such as Iohannes and Petrus.¹¹ There are similar differences in agrarian organization and terminology.¹² Large 'manorial' complexes are uncommon and the terms for estates and farms are quite distinct from Longobardia. Instead of terms such as *curtis*, traditional Roman terms such as *massa* or *fundus* are used for agricultural units.¹³ Also traditional Roman terms for institutions are preserved; for example the normal word for notary is not *notarius* but *tabellio*.¹⁴

There are, however, problems in tracing the history of Ravenna at periods when the evidence is scanty, such as those of the 'local kings' (888–962).¹⁵ It can be argued that the see benefited from the collapse of Carolingian power following the death of Louis II in 875. As with other Italian towns, the growing disorder had some positive effects through making the cities a refuge against competing forces, including Magyar and Arab raiders, and strengthening the political and ideological position of the bishop as leader of the urban community. But other factors also worked to the benefit of Ravenna. Its rivals, the popes, went through a period of upheaval following the murder of John VIII in 882, culminating in the 'pornocracy' colourfully described by Liutprand of Cremona.¹⁶ Ravenna came to play a more central

¹⁰ G. Vespignani, *La Romania italiana dall'esarcato al patrimonio: il Codex parisinus (BNP, NAL 2573) testimone della formazione di società locali nei secoli IX e X* (Spoleto, 2001).

¹¹ See Wolfgang Haubrichs's chapter, ch. 12, this volume.

¹² T. S. Brown, 'The interplay between Roman and Byzantine traditions in the exarchate of Ravenna', *Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'alto medioevo 3–9 aprile 1986, Settimana di studio del Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo*, xxxiv (Spoleto, 1988), 127–67, and also Brown, 'The background of Byzantine relations with Italy in the ninth century: legacies, attachments and antagonisms', in *Byzantium and the West, c.850–c.1200. Proceedings of the XVIIIth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies (Amsterdam, 1988)* (= *Byzantinische Forschungen*, xiii), pp. 27–45.

¹³ G. Pasquali, *Agricoltura e società rurale in Romagna nel medioevo* (Bologna, 1984); also Pasquali, 'Una signoria rurale assente o silente? Il caso anomalo della Romagna', in *La signoria rurale nel medioevo italiano*, Atti del Seminario di Pisa (1985), ed. A. Spicciani and C. Violante, I (Pisa, 1997), pp. 63–80; N. Mancassola, *L'azienda curtense tra Langobardia e Romani: rapporti di lavoro e patti colonici dall'età carolingia al Mille* (Bologna, 2008).

¹⁴ P. De Lorenzi, *Storia del Notariato ravennate* (2 vols., Ravenna, 1962).

¹⁵ G. Fasoli, *I re d'Italia 888–962* (Florence, 1949); V. Fumagalli, *Il Regno Italico* (Storia d'Italia UTET, 1978).

¹⁶ Liutprand of Cremona, *Antapodosis*, ed J. Becker, in *MGH SRG* 41 (Hanover, 1915), pp. 59–60.

role in the kingdom of Italy, and was used increasingly as a residence by kings such as Lambert of Spoleto (perhaps because it was on the route between his power base and the heart of the *regnum Italiae*). It may also have benefited from the sack of the ‘capital’ of the kingdom, Pavia, in 924, and from the desire of the insecure kings to strengthen their claims to the imperial title by associating themselves with a quintessentially ‘imperial’ city: Guy and his son Lambert were crowned emperors there in 892. In addition, the city became the venue for frequent assemblies from the 880s on, including lay diets, ecclesiastical synods and large-scale judicial hearings (*placita*).¹⁷ The enhanced political influence of the archbishops is reflected in the increasing number of their land grants preserved, which also suggests a generally resilient economy. Growing economic ties between the fertile cereal-producing area of Romagna and Rome are a possible reason for the appointment of the Ravenna archbishop John IX as Pope John X – although Liutprand claims that the infamous Marozia wanted him as her lover!¹⁸

Moving on to the Ottonians: relations with Ravenna have received considerable attention from scholars, especially in Germany and Italy. Ravenna, with its imperial associations and surviving monuments, has been seen as contributing to the exalted Ottonian ideology (what Schramm categorized as the *Herrschaftsprogramme*)¹⁹ and particularly the Byzantinizing aspirations of Otto III.²⁰ The Ottonians bestowed favours on the archbishops, after Otto I’s defeat of the local Italian ruler Berengar

¹⁷ MacLean, ‘Legislation’.

¹⁸ C. Wickham, ‘“The Romans according to their malign custom”: Rome in Italy in the late ninth and tenth centuries’, in *Early Medieval Rome and the Christian West. Essays in Honour of Donald A. Bullough*, ed. J. M. H. Smith (Leiden, 2000), pp. 151–67; and C. Wickham, *Roma medievale. Crisi e stabilità di una città 950–1150* (Rome, 2013), translated as *Medieval Rome: Stability and Crisis of a City, 900–1150* (Oxford, 2015); R. Savigni, ‘Sacerdozio e Regno in eta Post-Carolingia; L’episcopato di Giovanni X, arcivescovo di Ravenna (905–914) e papa (914–928)’, *Rivista della Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, xlv (1992), 1–29; R. Savigni, ‘Giovanni IX da Tossignano (papa Giovanni X) e i suoi rapporti con la corte ducale spoletana’, in *Ravenna e Spoleto, I rapporti tra due metropoli*, ed. M. Tagliaferri (Bologna, 2007), pp. 215–46; C. Gnocchi, ‘Giovanni X’, *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, lv (Rome, 2001), cols. 568–71.

¹⁹ P. E. Schramm, *Kaiser, Rom und Renovatio: Studien zur Geschichte des römischen Erneuerungsgedankens vom Ende des karolingischen Reiches bis zum Investiturstreit* (Leipzig, 1929), p. 79.

²⁰ G. Althoff, *Otto III*, trans. P. G. Jestic (Philadelphia, Pa., 2010), esp. pp. 59–61, 126–7; Warner, ‘Ideals and action in the reign of Otto III’, *Journal of Medieval History*, xxv (1999), 1–18. On the visit of St. Nilus of Ravenna to that city and his friendship with Otto III, see J.-M. Sansterre, ‘Otto III et les saints ascètes de son temps’, *Rivista della Storia della Chiesa in Italia*, xliii (1989), 377–412; and *San Nilo. Il monastero italo-bizantino di Grottaferrata. 1004–2004 Mille anni di storia, spiritualità e cultura*, ed. E. Fabbriatore (Rome, 2005).

II in 962. Although Otto emulated the Carolingian policy of donating the exarchate to the papacy by his *Ottonianum* privilege, in practice, he developed close ties with the archbishop, treated the *Exarchatus* as imperial territory, and made extensive use of the city as a residence. Frequent assemblies and synods were held there, and two palaces were established, one at Caesarea and the other at San Severo in Classe. The city is frequently mentioned in Ottonian sources, privileges were confirmed, and towards the end of the century the archbishops received comital power over a number of areas of the exarchate. The city was a favoured residence of Theophano, who made a grant to the nunnery of S. Maria in Cosmedin. It played a particularly active role in the reign of her son Otto III who encouraged visits by his holy men protégés, such as Nilus of Rossano and Adalbert of Prague, and appointed the scholarly Gerbert of Rheims as its archbishop before promoting him to the papacy. Otto resided there for considerable periods of time and held numerous assemblies and councils in the city.²¹

Not surprisingly, therefore, considerable attention has been paid by both Italian and German scholars to this 'special relationship', the complex relationship with the papacy, and exploitation of Ravenna's imperial past.²² But was this a golden age – when the Ravennati rested on the glorious laurels of their past and basked in the admiration and appreciation of external rulers, flattered by association with a quintessentially imperial city? In reality, the attention paid by the Ottonians was sporadic. Otto II never visited the city until the last years of his reign as sole ruler. There was also resistance to this policy – as David Warner showed in his study of the violent revolt of the deacon Rainerius and his lay allies against Archbishop Peter in 966.²³ This represented opposition to the archbishop's support for Otto, and in particular to the threatened loss of the aristocracy's access to

²¹ Many Ottonian *diplomata* were issued at Ravenna. Significantly, these included one creating the archbishopric of Magdeburg in 968.

²² K. Görich, *Otto III. Romanus Saxonicus et Italicus* (Sigmaringen, 1993) is a fairly recent study. The vast scholarship on Ottonian relations with Italy is usefully summarized by I. Giovanni in 'La dinastia ottoniana, i regni e l'impero', *Reti Medievali* (2008) (<http://www.rm.unina.it/reptorio/rm_giovanni_isabella_ottoni.html>). Specifically on relations with Ravenna, see P. E. Schramm, *Gli imperatori della casa di Sassonia alla luce della simbolistica dello Stato, Renovatio Imperii, Atti della giornata internazionale di Studio per il Millenario* (Ravenna, 4–5 novembre 1961) (Faenza, 1963), pp. 15–40; *Ottone III e Romualdo di Ravenna: impero, monasteri e santi asceti, Atti del 24. convegno del Centro studi avellaniti (Fonte Avellana 2002)* (Verona, 2003).

²³ D. Warner, 'The representation of empire'. The episode has been extensively studied because it represented a major setback to the growing power of the Guidi family, who later became powerful in the mountainous areas of Tuscany adjoining Romagna. See Schoolman in this volume (ch. 10) and also F. Canaccini, *La lunga storia di una stirpe comitale. I conti Guidi tra Romagna e Toscana. Atti del Convegno di studi* (Florence, 2009).

church lands and involvement in the appointment of archbishops. This was suppressed by Otto at a diet in 967 but later, after Otto III's death, a longer revolt occurred against the new German archbishop Frederick. In 1004 the Ravenna nobility elected a local man, Adalbert, who was not deposed by Henry II until 1013. Henry then had to secure control over the city by appointing his brother Arnold as archbishop. Arnold in turn faced an uprising and had to be reinstated by Henry. There was another bloody revolt against Conrad II in 1026.²⁴

Not only were details of imperial policy towards Ravenna complex, but the Ottonian presence contributed to major changes happening in the city itself. First, though, it must be stressed that Ravenna and other Italian cities had an influence on the Reich itself through the movement of chancery staff, and such religious practices as the translations of relics, as discussed by Wolfgang Huschner in his monumental *Transalpine Kommunikation im Mittelalter*. Especially interesting is the case of Magdeburg.²⁵ The foundation document of the archbishopric was issued at Ravenna in 968, and relics from Ravenna were sent to the northern city, along with columns, capitals and other decorations for the cathedral.²⁶ This deliberate emulation of Ravenna fits in with its prominent role in the missions to the Slavs, which cannot be discussed in detail here.²⁷

Returning to Ravenna itself, the documents give an impression of general prosperity. Peasants were required to convey considerable quantities of grain, flax, oil and wine to the local *domus* of the see of Ravenna. We know of extensive clearances taking place, such as those near one of the mouths of the Po, at the great new monastery of Pomposa, south of Ferrara. The plains of the Romagna were traditionally fertile and with a greater measure of security, so it is likely that they already met the food needs of cities up the Po valley, as well as Venice and Rome, as in the later middle ages. Nor is it certain that trading activity declined as much as is traditionally believed as a result of the silting-up of harbours and the rise of the aggressive power of Venice. Merchants (*negotiatores*) are common in the documents, and while the harbour of Classe fell out of use with the receding of the coast, new

²⁴ H. Zimmermann, 'Nella tradizione di città capitale: presenza germanica in società locale dall'età sassone a quella sveva', in *Storia di Ravenna*, ed. A. Vasina (3 vols., Venice, 1993), iii. 115–16.

²⁵ W. Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation im Mittelalter: diplomatische, kulturelle und politische Wechselwirkungen zwischen Italien und dem nordalpinen Reich (9.–11. Jahrhundert)* (3 vols., Hanover, 2003).

²⁶ A major theme of Huschner, *Transalpine Kommunikation*, ii, is the close relationship between Ravenna and Archbishop Adalbert of Magdeburg (968–81).

²⁷ *Missio ad gentes. Ravenna e l'evangelizzazione dell'Est europeo*, ed. P. Novara (Ravenna, 2002).

harbours were developed to the east and wharves were built on the banks of the river network within the city.²⁸ Ravenna continued to trade throughout the Adriatic zone and with the east. It was joined to new trading centres such as Comacchio, whose emporium has been the subject of recent excavations and the focus of a conference on emporia held in 2009. The continuance of extensive trade with the Adriatic and eastern worlds is demonstrated by the extensive references in the documents to Byzantine gold coins (*aurei byzantini* or *infigurati*). A remarkable number of *negotiatores* can also be found in documents – no fewer than eighty-four references in the tenth century.²⁹ The common view that Venice dominated long-distance maritime trade from an early date perhaps needs to be questioned. Also important were new settlements often reclaimed from marshy land, or established in the foothills of the Apennines. The number and importance of these can be traced in the documents and also from the building of *pievi*, a network of baptismal churches developed in the countryside partly to serve the pastoral needs of new communities. Monasteries such as Pomposa played a central role in such *bonifica*.³⁰

The wealth and importance of Ravenna is evident in other construction activity: repairs to roads and riverside quays; continued construction of churches (twenty-seven in the tenth century, according to Cirelli); new churches, such as S. Paolo associated with Otto I's queen, Adelheid; the restoration of major churches, for example, the *Basilica Apostolorum* (now S. Francesco); the building of new crypts as at S. Apollinare in Classe and S. Apollinare Nuovo; and of course the remarkable Ravenna *campanili*.³¹ Other monuments were reused, for example the mausoleum of Theoderic was reborn as a monastery. All this confirms the views expressed in the recent book by Mariette Verhoeven which emphasizes the strong cultural memory in Ravenna and the constant renewal of the monuments.³² Nor

²⁸ Vespignani, *La Romania*; Cirelli, *Ravenna*.

²⁹ This is based on a trawl of the documents in Benericetti, *Le carte*, and forms a major theme of my forthcoming (2016) book on early medieval Ravenna.

³⁰ *Pomposa: storia, arte, architettura*, ed. A. Samaritani and C. Di Francesco (Ferrara, 1999); C. Rizzardi, 'Chiesa e Impero nel Medioevo: le Abbazie di Ravenna e dell'area padano-adriatica fra tradizione innovazione', *Hortus artium medievalium*, xiii (2007), 117–36, and, on a more general level, various authors, *La bonifica benedettina* (Rome, 1970).

³¹ For details see Cirelli, *Ravenna*; M. Verhoeven, *The Early Christian Monuments of Ravenna: Transformations and Memory* (Turnhout, 2011), esp. catalogue, pp. 245–93; and the various works of F. W. Deichmann, e.g. *Ravenna: Hauptstadt des spätantiken Abendlandes. Bd. I, Ravenna: Geschichte und Monumente* (Wiesbaden, 1969). On *campanili*, see O. Gardella, *I campanili di Ravenna* (Ravenna, 1902); G. Battistini, L. Bissi and L. Rocchi, *I campanili di Ravenna: storia e restauri* (Ravenna, 2008).

³² M. Verhoeven, *Early Christian Monuments*, pp. 13–23.

was this building confined to the city. We also find major projects outside it such as new monasteries including S. Adalbert at Pereo and Pomposa.³³ The *pievi* system seems to have developed from the eighth century onwards, and some imposing examples survive, such as S. Giorgio at Argenta and S. Michele di Arcangelo near Rimini, generally modelled on the Ravenna basilicas.³⁴ Much of this economic expansion was part of a 'virtuous circle' prompted by the wealth and power of local elites in the Ravenna area and further afield, which manifested itself in an increased demand for luxuries and manufactured goods, some of them no doubt produced in Ravenna.

We find evidence of similar dynamism in the church, with the establishment of *pievi* throughout the countryside of Romagna, the foundation of powerful new monasteries such as Pomposa, and the reform of existing ones, such as S. Apollinare in Classe. Another interesting development is the rise of reformed monasticism. In Agnellus's day monasteries seem to have had little corporate life or discipline and were mainly sources of income for aristocratic clergy. The tenth century, however, saw an efflorescence of reformed monasticism, with major churches being reformed on northern lines and the appearance of charismatic leaders such as Adalbert of Prague, Nilus of Rossano and Ravenna and Ravenna's own St. Romuald (to be followed in the eleventh century by Peter Damian and others). This has usually been seen as the result of external influence and imperial support but the movement clearly also benefited from local traditions of reform, perhaps as well as from a reaction against the worldly careerism so well described in Agnellus's earlier text.³⁵

But Ravenna also shows signs by the second half of the tenth century that it was a revived centre in terms of cultural creativity. There had been a tradition of literary texts but this was previously confined to the practical

³³ A. Samaritani, *Analecta Pomposiana. Atti del Primo Convegno Internazionale di Studi Storici Pomposiani* (Codigoro, 1965); Samaritani, *Presenza monastica ed ecclesiale di Pomposa nell'Italia centrosetentrionale. Secoli X–XIV* (Ferrara, 1996).

³⁴ A. Vasina, 'Pievi urbane in Romagna prima e dopo il Mille', *Felix Ravenna*, cxxviii/cxxx (1984–5), 481–506; M. Tabanelli, *Visita alle pievi di Romagna* (Brescia, 1982); M. P. Torricelli, *Centri plebani e strutture insediative nella Romagna medievale* (Bologna, 1989).

³⁵ M. Mazzotti, 'Il monachesimo a Ravenna', *Studi Romagnoli*, xxxi (1980), 75–84; E. Morini, 'Le strutture monastiche a Ravenna', in Carile, *Storia di Ravenna*, ii, pt. 2 (1992), 323–9; G. Rabotti, 'Dai vertici dei poteri medioevali: Ravenna e la sua Chiesa fra diritto e politica dal X al XIII secolo', in Vasina, *Storia di Ravenna*, iii (1993), 129–68. See now the chapter of Augenti and Cirelli in this volume. On Romuald, see *San Romualdo. Storia, agiografia e spiritualità. Atti del 23° Convegno del Centro studi avellaniti (Fonte Avellana, 23–26 agosto 2000)* (San Pietro in Cariano, 2002). On Peter Damian, see G. Fornasari, *Medioevo Riformato del secolo XI. Pier Damiani e Gregorio VII* (Naples, 1996); and Michael Gledhill's chapter 14 in this volume.

needs of the clergy for liturgical and hagiographical works, plus of course Agnellus's history of the see. In the late tenth century comes the story of the local man Wilgardus, condemned as a heretic, but described by Ralph Glaber as 'assiduous in his zeal for grammatical art'.³⁶ Later in the eleventh century comes the jurist Peter Crassus renowned for his learning and for his authorship of a volume in defence of Henry IV in the Investiture Contest.³⁷ There is also the strong but mysterious origin legend of the law school of Bologna: it had its beginnings in a migration of jurists from the nearby school of Ravenna. Major changes were also occurring in the society of Ravenna. There was growing unrest towards the archbishops, whose dominance had hitherto gone largely unchallenged, and the jurisdiction of the archbishops had been confined to a smaller area, with some key counties, including Bologna and Faenza, withdrawn from their authority. In addition, archbishops came to be appointed from outside the local aristocratic elite. This was true of Peter in the mid tenth century but later prelates were appointed who were not even Italian – Gerbert in 998 and the German Frederick. Partly as a resentful reaction to this, a series of anti-imperial revolts occurred in Ravenna. But even before these events the Ravenna area was losing its homogeneity.

Among the many internal changes evident from around 888, naming-patterns changed, as powerful new families emerged, often with Germanic names and with lands and connections stretching into Lombard areas in Tuscany or the march of Ancona.³⁸ Overall, the authority of the archbishop seems to have weakened and less aggressive hostility to Rome is apparent.³⁹ Local aristocrats also married into Frankish and Lombard families from across the Apennines in Tuscany from the early tenth century. Thus Germanic names start occurring in local families such as the Traversari, who later became dominant in Ravenna, and the Guidi, who dominated Cesena and the adjoining foothills of the Apennines as counts. The aristocratic elite, clerical and lay, lost its tenacious cohesion and powerful families emerged with strong local power bases and the potential to oppose the hitherto all-powerful archbishop. The evidence from archaeology and documents suggests a pattern of rival families dominating particular areas in the city and building large houses, sometimes with elements of fortification such as towers.

³⁶ R. I. Moore, *Birth of Popular Heresy* (Toronto, 1975), p. 8; J. B. Russell, *Dissent and Reform in the early Middle Ages* (Berkeley, Calif., 1965), pp. 110–11.

³⁷ L. Melve, *Inventing The Public Sphere: the Public Debate During the Investiture Contest (c.1030–1122)* (2 vols., Brill, 2007), ch. 5; see also Simon Corcoran's chapter 8 in the present volume.

³⁸ See Wolfgang Haubrichs (ch. 12) and Edward Schoolman (ch. 10) in this volume.

³⁹ This was most evident in the case of archbishop John IX (905–14) becoming Pope John X.

Oscar Wilde wrote in his poem of 1876, entitled *Ravenna*, 'in ruined loveliness thou liest dead'.⁴⁰ Ravenna was far from ruined or dead in the Ottonian era. Ravenna should not be regarded as a happy historical theme-park for emperors, implying a fairly static, nostalgic, even complacent society. Nor should the tenth century be seen as a period of 'managed retreat', with the archbishops desperately attempting to conserve the authority of themselves and their city by playing their trump card, Ravenna's stock of monuments and association with a glorious imperial past. Certainly the archbishops continued to ally themselves closely with the empire, most notably in the Investiture Contest against the common papal enemy, and Frederick II could still refer to the Ravennati as 'the special people of the empire'. But concentration on the imperial connection overlooks the evidence emerging from the documents and archaeological research that Ravenna was an extremely dynamic society in this period, and the scene of creative social, economic and cultural change. By the tenth century the social consensus maintained in earlier periods was breaking down, and new, strong, local and family groupings were emerging. The archbishops may have continued to peddle the old imperial myths, but perhaps the new elements were less prepared to buy into them, preferring instead to construct new myths of their own.

⁴⁰ Oscar Wilde, *Ravenna* (Oxford, 1878).