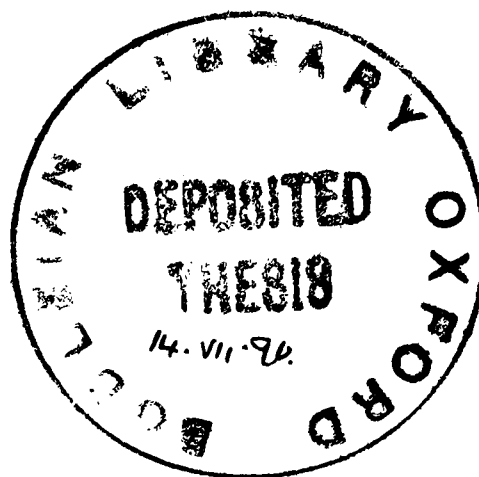


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The Role and Perception of the *Civitas* in Late Roman and
Frankish Gaul

Thesis submitted for D.Phil degree in Modern History



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Abstract

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The Role and Perception of the *Civitas* in Late Roman and Frankish Gaul

The thesis examines the role and perceptions of Gallic *civitates* from A.D. 340 to 840. *Civitates* are those urban centres which were distinguished as imperial administrative capitals and, later, as episcopal sees. The thesis addresses a number of general questions, among which the most fundamental is that of which urban functions were essential to the role and ideal of the *civitas*. Other questions raised include the importance of *romanitas* to urban-based functions and features, the relationship of the episcopal see to the *civitas*, and the changes brought about by the establishment of Germanic rule.

In order fully to examine the above issues, the thesis has been divided into four chapters each dealing with a specific urban function. Thus, *civitates* are considered in the light of their administrative, religious, military and economic roles. Within each chapter, attention is given not only to the practical operation of these functions, but also to their importance to the *civitas* in terms of status and prestige. Further efforts are made to distinguish this type of centre from other settlements. The first chapter, however, deals with the use and application of urban and regional terminology - a study which has demonstrated changing attitudes towards *civitates* and their dependent territories.

The thesis has relied, for the most part, on historical evidence. Archaeological material was omitted, because of the limits of time and because of the necessity to evaluate such evidence in detail and on its own. Despite this limitation, it has been possible to examine aspects of the subject not normally considered by urban historians. For, although there have been studies on *civitates*, most of these have dealt exclusively with their physical features, or have been restricted to limited geographical areas and/or time periods.

In the course of the thesis, it has been shown that the history of *civitates* closely reflects major events, ideals and developments within society. Thus, within the confines of this thesis, it has been possible to illuminate political, religious and cultural changes throughout the period. It is for this reason that a study of this type is important to the further understanding of an otherwise obscure and often neglected period of history.

Abstract

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The Role and Perception of the *Civitas* in Late Roman and Frankish Gaul

The thesis is concerned with the role and perception of Gallic *civitates* in late Roman and early medieval Gaul (A.D. 340-840). Although there have been earlier studies of Gallic urban centres, none have been specifically concerned with *civitates*, except those which have dealt with a specific region. *Civitates* are distinguished from other settlements in that they were the central administrative capitals of the Empire, and were later selected as bishops' sees. Because these cities were the foci of major political, religious and social developments, they are an important gauge to many facets of this period's history.

The thesis is divided into five chapters, four of which deal with those functions which define the centre as 'urban'. These are the city's role as an administrative, religious, military and economic centre. The first chapter, however, is concerned with the use and application of urban and regional terminology.

The fundamental question addressed in this thesis is why these *civitates* were initially considered the main nuclei of the society, and what factors were responsible for the decline of their position. Subordinate to this question are many more specific issues which spring from an examination of the services these cities offered, and the way in which they were consequently viewed.

Chapter I, on the use and application of urban and regional terminology, in many ways serves to introduce issues considered in the later sections of the thesis. The decline of the *civitas*-community, for example, is supported by the disappearance of the term 'patria' in its association with city-territories. While it is true that there have been earlier surveys of this type (for example, the works of Longnon, Jacobs and Vercauteren), they have been restricted either to a particular region or to a time period which is shorter than that covered by this thesis.

Regarding the secular use of *civitates* (the subject of Chapter II), it is important to understand the classical concept of public and private life divided along urban and rural lines. Essential, also, is a knowledge of Germanic attitudes towards late Roman *civitas*-based administration, and the reasons why these ideals changed in the course of the sixth and early seventh century. Another important factor that is considered is

the concept of *patria* loyalty and the decline of the *civitas*-community.

The ecclesiastical role of *civitates* (covered in Chapter III) continues throughout the period included in this thesis. The link between a bishop and his *civitas* is, therefore, essential to the understanding of the city's image. Other issues which are relevant to this role include the replacement of pagan functions and features with Christian rituals and religious buildings, and the relationship between the secular and ecclesiastical authorities, particularly with the changes brought about by the transfer of secular government to the countryside.

A city's military or defensive capability (discussed in Chapter IV) is another role which remains constant throughout the period. The degree of status ascribed to this function, however, is difficult to gauge, owing to the numerous other settlements which provided a similar service, or were the foci for military encounters. However, although other centres also played important military roles (roles which should be considered and compared), a city's defences would have been one of the most obvious symbols of the centre's prestige, along with other features that were more exclusive to the *civitas*, such as a bishop's see.

The economic role of *civitates* has been, without doubt, the most difficult to convey in this thesis, owing to the virtual silence on this topic in the written sources and the omission of archaeological evidence which certainly would have supplemented the chapter. As stated above, however, constraints of time and the complexity of the archaeological material require, at present, that such material be left for treatment in some separate study. Even so, certain economic issues, such as the influence of classical notions against business and the attitudes of the urban church towards commercial activity, have been examined with some degree of success.

The 500-year range of evidence included in this thesis was thought necessary in order to demonstrate fully developments in the use and perception of Gallic *civitates*. Evidence has been taken from a number of sources, some of which would not usually be considered by more traditional urban historians. The use of material such as the sermons of Caesarius of Arles or the letters of St. Columbanus offers information on aspects on *civitates* and urban life which goes beyond the physical aspects of the city. In this same way, many of the secondary sources used cover a range of topics, from attitudes towards mercantile activity to the idea of the heavenly city - each of which offers a view of urban life not normally brought into consideration.

The geographical limits of the thesis have been confined to those parts of Gaul which were under the

direct control of the Merovingian and Carolingian rulers. Outlying areas mentioned in the sources, such as Saxony or Brittany, have been included, although, as with material from foreign regions, they are treated as comparative evidence. Because of the wide geographical and temporal span of the thesis, many of the conclusions offered are fairly general in nature - or at least more general than would have been the case had the study been confined to a particular region or a restricted period of time.

Although a full summary of the conclusions reached in the course of this thesis will not be given here, a word ought to be said on what I would propose to be the most influential factor in the use and perception of Gallic *civitates* of the late Roman and Frankish period. Of all the events and ideas which touched upon the history of these cities, none were perhaps as decisive as the classical urban tradition. By this, I mean the practice and notion of designating an urban settlement to serve as the central place of a defined region. It is this which influenced nearly every aspect of Gallic *civitates*, and many of the precepts discussed in this thesis (e.g., the concept of *patria* loyalty, or the division of public and private life along urban and rural lines) can be traced directly to the fortunes of this tradition.

The decline of the classical urban tradition was a result of many factors. The fading presence of the Empire, the growing power of rural-based aristocrats, and changes within the balance of ecclesiastical authority each served to hasten its end. Other events followed, including the shift of temporal authority from the city to the countryside and the break-up of the city-territory (an occurrence which had long-lasting implications for the power of the urban Church).

In order to follow the history of this tradition, it has been necessary to cover a wide time-range. Evidence from the late Roman and early Merovingian periods shows the tradition as active and flourishing. With the seventh century, however, new ideas on the role and perception of *civitates* emerge. But, evidence from this period is very scattered and change is also slow and uneven. This is why it is essential to examine material from the early Carolingian period, for it is here that developments begun in the later Merovingian era can be seen to have replaced the now outdated classical notions.

It is, therefore, in the early Carolingian period that the status of the *civitas* is clearly seen to be dependent upon its position as an episcopal see. Although some respect was given to certain *civitates* because of their classical past, this recognition was offered out of a nostalgic regard for *romanitas*, and, consequently, did not represent a revival of the classical urban tradition. The superficial nature of

this tribute can be seen in the total disappearance of the concept of the *civitas*-community and the fact that rural-based administration continued to be the norm.

The Church alone maintained its association with *civitates*. In the early Carolingian era, secular administration, defences, economic activity and many religious functions could also be found in other settlements. Because of this, *civitates* were marked only by their episcopal sees, and, in some cases, their past position as the capital of what was now an obsolescent territory.

Civitates had been, in both the late Roman and early Merovingian periods, major tools for the administrative organisation of Gaul. They had also served as the first home of ecclesiastical authority. Although urban-based government declined with the Empire, the Church, as a separate and more stable institution, maintained its place in the cities.

As stated at the beginning of this abstract, the history of the *civitates* of Gaul represents, in many ways, the events, attitudes and changes found within late Roman and Frankish society. Although these broader aspects must take second place to the primary issues of this thesis, they do serve to demonstrate the importance of *civitates* and the necessity of such a study.

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Abbreviations:

<i>ARF</i>	<i>Annales regni Francorum</i>
<i>BAR</i>	<i>British Archaeological Reports</i>
<i>CC</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum</i>
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i>
<i>HF</i>	<i>Libri Historiarum X</i>
<i>LHF</i>	<i>Liber Historiae Francorum</i>
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
	<i>AA</i> <i>Auctores Antiquissimi</i>
	<i>SRG</i> <i>Scriptores rerum Germanicarum</i>
	<i>SRM</i> <i>Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>MM</i>	<i>Miracula et Opera Minora</i>
	<i>GC</i> <i>Liber in Gloria Confessorum</i>
	<i>GM</i> <i>Liber in Gloria Martyrum Beatorum</i>
	<i>LVP</i> <i>Liber Vitae Patrum</i>
<i>ND</i>	<i>Notitia Dignitatum</i>
<i>NG</i>	<i>Notitia Galliarum</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: series latina</i>
<i>SCH</i>	<i>Studies in Church History</i>

You take delight not in a city's
seven or seventy wonders, but in the
answer it gives to a question of
yours.

- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

The aim of this thesis is to examine the ways in which Gallic cities were used and perceived during the late Roman and early medieval periods. By 'cities', I mean those urban centres which were initially designated as imperial administrative capitals and, later, as bishops' sees. Throughout this study, the terms 'civitas', 'civitas-capital' and 'city' will be used to distinguish these major centres from other settlements. The word 'city-territory' will be used to refer to the region dependent upon a *civitas-capital*.¹

Perhaps the most important question to be addressed is: what were the factors which altered the function and perceived place of Gallic cities? How, for example, did the establishment of bishops' sees affect the status of the *civitates*? What was the link between *romanitas* and urban-based administration? What, moreover, was the effect of Germanic rule on the role of cities and their place within society?

Each of these questions raises the more fundamental issue of why cities were initially considered to be the central foci of Gallic society. This question will be

¹It should be noted here that the term 'civitas' was often used (especially in the early Merovingian period) to describe a city-territory. Sources which use this word in this way have been noted in the text of the thesis.

approached by an examination of those urban functions which served to define Gallic *civitates* and to ensure their status. Thus, the city's place as an administrative, religious, defensive or military and economic centre will be considered in turn. The first chapter of the thesis will consider the use and application of urban and regional terms, and how such information may be used to determine the way in which cities were perceived during this period.

The thesis has been restricted to the centuries between c. A.D. 340 and c. 840. The reason for this 500-year span is to give full scope to the development and changes within Gallic urban history. It is also the case that the paucity of the available sources, particularly those of the later Merovingian period, has made it necessary to consider questions on Gallic cities within the context of a broad chronological framework.

Decisions on where to begin and end the study were, admittedly, more arbitrary. The opening date of A.D. 340 was chosen because classical secular features were still to be found in these centres. It is also a time when Christian elements were in the process of becoming established within Gallic cities.² This date was also a

²Duchesne notes only seventeen Gallic urban centres which can be positively identified as bishops' sees in the fourth century. These are usually verified by a bishop's subscription at a church council. L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule* (Paris, 1894), 7-30. Although we cannot be certain of the exact number of bishops' sees during this period, it is unlikely that the total of early bishoprics matched that claimed by later sources. The reason for this is that many later writers (such as Gregory of Tours) were anxious to provide their *civitas*-capitals with episcopal traditions - traditions which were not always based on historical fact. See E.

convenient starting point since many of the Gallic sources used for the late Roman period begin around this time. The closing date for the thesis of A.D. 840 is perhaps less arbitrary, in that it was about this time that invasions of outside groups such as the Vikings became more acute and, thus, dramatically altered the role of *civitas*-capitals.

Each chapter (or, in the case of Chapter V, each section) has been divided into four major periods: late Roman (A.D. 340-540), early Merovingian (A.D. 540-600), late Merovingian (A.D. 600-751) and early Carolingian (A.D. 751-843). Once again, these are fairly arbitrary divisions which are used solely for the purpose of organising the evidence and highlighting major periods of change. The end of the late Roman period in Gaul, for example, is a very flexible date. The year A.D. 540 was not chosen here in order to imply that this is the most appropriate date to mark the end of this era. It was selected, rather, because it provides an effective division between the available sources (using Gregory of Tours' own lifetime to roughly define the limits of the early Merovingian age). This date also serves to mark the firm establishment of Merovingian rule throughout most of Gaul.³

The period between A.D. 540 and 600 can rightly be called the age of Gregory of Tours, since his works pro-

Griffe, *La Gaule Chrétienne à l'Époque Romaine*, III, *La Cité Chrétienne* (Paris, 1965), 258-59, where he discusses the cult of ancient bishops.

³Burgundy had been won by the Franks in the year A.D. 534, and Provence was granted to them some two years later.

vide the bulk of the information on Gaul during these years. By extending the period to A.D. 600, it is possible to include the poems of Venantius Fortunatus, a contemporary and friend of Gregory. The later Merovingian period terminates at a well-known date - that of A.D. 751. The deposition of the Merovingian dynasty and the early years of the Carolingian kings were not, however, particularly distinctive in terms of city use and perceptions. Nevertheless, the event provides an obvious division and a means by which the evidence can be organised. As stated above, the early Carolingian period continues up to the onset of major civil wars and foreign invasions.

The geographical limits of the thesis have been restricted, for the most part, to those parts of Gaul which were under the direct control of the Merovingian and Carolingian rulers. Naturally, the boundaries of this region varied throughout the period. Outlying areas such as Saxony, Brittany and Gascony are also mentioned on occasion in the sources and, therefore, provide useful comparative evidence. The correspondence of source material to particular regions within Gaul is a matter which will be considered later in this Introduction.

The evidence used for this thesis is almost entirely derived from written sources. The decision to exclude the archaeological material was made in deference to the broad temporal scope of the study and to my own time limits, which did not allow for the thorough examination such evidence would have required. It could also be

argued that the availability and range of archaeological evidence necessitates a separate study in which the problems associated with the abundant, but scattered, material can be dealt with more effectively.⁴

Before examining the sources used for this thesis, a word should be said on earlier studies of this type. While much has been written on particular aspects of Gallic urban history, no study has been attempted which examines the subject of the role and position of Gallic *civitates*. Duby's first volume, *La ville antique*, concentrates, for the most part, on the physical aspects of Gallic cities, although it must be said that the first volume of *A History of Private Life* (edited by Duby and Ariès) does consider some of the issues addressed in this thesis.⁵ Regional studies, such as Vercauteren's *Étude sur les Civitates de la Belgique*, Rouche's *L'Aquitaine des Wisigoths aux Arabes 418-781* and Wightman's *Gallia Belgica* have each provided information which has been useful in the completion of this thesis. Much of the work on the identification of *civitates* and the application and meaning of urban qualifications was carried out in the late nineteenth century by Jacobs and Longnon.

⁴A detailed examination of the topographical and archaeological aspects of cities in southern Gaul is currently being undertaken by Simon Loseby (Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford), who has been kind enough to enlighten me on the complexities of such a study.

⁵G. Duby, ed., *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville antique, des origines au ix^e siècle* (Paris, 1980). P. Ariès and G. Duby, gen. eds., *A History of Private Life from Pagan Rome to Byzantium* (Cambridge, Ma., 1987). The issues covered in this latter volume include the division of public and private life along urban and rural lines and classical attitudes towards business. See p. 139-53 and 186.

These studies have proved to be an invaluable foundation upon which later scholars have based their works.⁶

This thesis proposes to add to this body of knowledge by considering not a particular region, but a substantial part of Frankish Gaul. The thesis will also concern itself with both the functions of Gallic cities and their perceived roles and status. Because of this, the thesis must be fairly general in its approach to Gallic cities.

By the inclusion of a 500-year time span, I hope to be able to follow developments in use and perception which would not have been evident had the thesis concentrated on a single period. The idea of what constitutes a city during these centuries has been taken from a number of sources, some of which are not normally consulted by urban historians. The sermons of Caesarius, for example, or the letters of Columbanus each offer perspectives on cities and urban life which should be considered. To this same end, there are several secondary sources dealing with issues ranging from civic duty to theological arguments, which have also been used to broaden the examination of *civitates* beyond their physical aspects.

One of the most important sources is the *Notitia Galliarum*. This document is believed to have been drawn up sometime in the late fourth or early fifth century, although the earliest surviving copy dates from the early

⁶See the Bibliography p. 308-9, for a complete list of the works by Jacobs and Longnon.

Merovingian period (mid-sixth century).⁷ Harries has suggested that the original dated no later than A.D. 407, since it was in this year that Arles replaced Trier as the imperial capital.⁸ The document is a list of the seventeen provinces of Gaul, their metropolitan capitals and the *civitates* of these metropolitan regions. Although it was probably drawn up as a secular document, it would appear, by the sixth century, to have been used to denote ecclesiastical metropolitan sees and their dependent *civitates*. This, at least, is the opinion of Harries, who argues that the episcopal cities listed do not correspond to the ecclesiastical organisation of the late fourth or early fifth century.⁹

One of the unusual features of the document is its listing of *castra*. A number of these can be shown to have had bishops at the time when the mid-sixth-century copy was drawn up. On the other hand, evidence for bishops' sees in these *castra* in the late fourth or early fifth century is lacking. Given this, it is perhaps the case that they represent bishoprics which were added to the sixth-century document while retaining their previous title of *castrum*.¹⁰ It is certainly true that all the

⁷There are, in fact, 101 copies of the *Notitia Galliarum*, ranging from the mid-sixth to the sixteenth century. Each copy was corrected and updated, although this process was not consistent and, therefore, cannot always be relied upon. The earliest copies of the *Notitia Galliarum* are Paris n. 12097 (originally Corbie, from the mid-sixth century) and Cologne (Köln) n. 212 (seventh century): see *NG*, p. 562-63.

⁸Harries, 'Church and State in the *Notitia Galliarum*', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, LXVIII (1978), 27.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 35-6. See also Chapter I, p. 92, which is under the heading, 'Secondary Settlements, ''Castrum'', ''Vicus'' and ''Villa'''.

castra of the *Notitia Galliarum* are listed in later copies of the document as *civitates*.¹¹

Another important source for the late Roman period in Gaul is the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus. This work is particularly useful since it offers one of the few secular accounts of events in Gaul. As a member of the *protectores domestici* - an elite sector of the imperial bodyguard - Ammianus was stationed in northern Gaul between the late summer of A.D. 355 and the late spring of 357. Much of what Ammianus recorded of the military events of this region and period is believed to have been taken from first-hand experience or from contemporary informants. Like so many writers of this period, however, Ammianus was not averse to embellishing his narrative. Various scholars have demonstrated stylistic links with earlier authors such as Cicero, Sallust, Tacitus, Virgil and others.¹² Although Ammianus in his surviving books does not admit to having drawn on earlier historical works, he is known to have been familiar with them - especially the writings of Tacitus and Livy.¹³ It was indeed once thought that Ammianus'

¹¹Because of the complexities of manuscript copying and survival, it is difficult to determine when the title of 'civitas' was added to any particular settlement.

¹²For a complete listing of these authors and the corresponding passages of the *Res Gestae*, see G.B.A. Fletcher, 'Stylistic Borrowings and Parallels in Ammianus Marcellinus', *Revue de Philologie, de Littérature et d'Histoire Anciennes*, XI (1937), 377-95.

¹³Thompson claims that Ammianus was very much influenced by these writers, while another scholar, Bonfante, goes so far as to say that Ammianus used Tacitus as his prime model. E.A. Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus* (Cambridge, 1947), 21; and L.W. Bonfante, 'Emperor, God and Man in the IV Century, Julian the Apostate and Ammianus Marcellinus', *La Parola del Passato, Rivista di Studi Antichi*, XIX (1964), 402.

history contained large undigested sections of lost earlier works. This view was refuted, however, by Thompson, who argued that although Ammianus' work was a 'mosaic of sources', he did not take large sections from an earlier source on the subject to add to his own history.¹⁴

The *Res Gestae* also includes a number of digressions. These are found throughout the history and are usually concerned with geographical, ethnographical or scientific matters.¹⁵ The digression which concerns us in this thesis is one on the provinces and cities of Gaul. It has been argued that Ammianus was basing his narrative, not on the geographical reality of the times, but on divisions first instituted by the emperor Augustus and committed to writing by Strabo and others.¹⁶ This is perhaps why his listing of provinces and cities does not

There are, however, some scholars who would argue with those who see Tacitus as Ammianus' literary model. Blockley, for example, states that Ammianus, although familiar with Tacitus, did not use this earlier writer's work as his main guide and influence. This Blockley believes to be true for both the historical passages and the digressions. R.C. Blockley, 'Tacitean Influence upon Ammianus Marcellinus', *Latomus*, XXXII (1973), 63-78.

¹⁴By 'mosaic', Thompson is referring to Ammianus' own first-hand knowledge, as well as information gathered from contemporaries, speeches, public records, poems letters, etc.... Thompson, *The Historical Work of Ammianus Marcellinus*, 20-3. See also I. Gualandri, 'Fonti Geografiche di Ammiano Marcellino', *La Parola del Passato, Rivista di Studi Antichi*, XXIII (1968), 199-211.

¹⁵Exceptions to these subjects are his digressions on Rome. See R. Pack, 'The Roman Digressions of Ammianus Marcellinus', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, LXXXIV (1953), 181-89.

¹⁶W. Sontheimer, 'Der Exkurs über Gallien bei Ammianus Marcellinus', *Klio, Beiträge zur alten Geschichte* (Leipzig, 1926), 19-20. Sontheimer also claims that in addition to earlier authors, Ammianus was in possession of a map which was not accurate for his period. *Ibid.*, 19-22.

always match up to other fourth-century documents and references of this same region. The accuracy of this particular digression is further called into question by the possibility that it was presented as a panegyrical framework into which the exploits of Julian could be placed. Seen in this light, the digression is merely a literary embellishment for the historical events, and should not, therefore, be taken as an accurate representation of the political and geographical divisions of Gaul.¹⁷

When reviewing the evidence presented in the *Res Gestae* it should be noted that it is written on two levels. On one level are his accounts of military events which, though literary in form, are, nevertheless, based largely on his own experiences and contemporary evidence.¹⁸ The digressions, on the other hand, are not only based on outdated evidence, but are often employed as literary devices, rather than factual explanations.

The letters and poems of Ausonius, a contemporary of Ammianus and a native of Gaul, are also a useful source of information on the secular aspects of cities and urban life in Gaul. Although a Christian, Ausonius had followed a secular career as a teacher. His writings, therefore, offer an insight into the lives and attitudes of the landed Christians of this period.

¹⁷J. Matthews, 'Ammianus Marcellinus', *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome*, II, ed. T.J. Luce (New York, 1982), 1125.

¹⁸A discussion of Ammianus' military knowledge and writings is found in N.J.E. Austin, *Ammianus on Warfare, An Investigation into Ammianus' Military Knowledge* (Brussels, 1979) [= *Collection Latomus*, CLXV].

Apollinaris Sidonius is another late Roman native of Gaul whose writings have been frequently used in this study. The letters and poems of this fifth-century Gallic aristocrat are especially important in that they span both a secular and an ecclesiastical career. Thus, with regard to *civitas*-capitals, we have information on secular as well as religious activities and perceptions of cities. As will be discussed later, a change of career from secular to ecclesiastical administration was quite common during this period. The letters and poems of Sidonius, however, differ from other accounts of similar lives (especially saints' lives) which were often written by churchmen whose perspectives were ecclesiastical.

Other secular sources of the period include laws from the *Codex Theodosianus*, the *Notitia Dignitatum* (which lists the imperial factories of Gaul) and other comparative (*i.e.* non-Gallic) works such as the letters of Symmachus. These non-ecclesiastical sources are, however, overshadowed by the abundance of Christian writings. This is not to say that information on secular aspects of cities is not to be found in religious texts, but it must be remembered that such evidence should be used with caution as it often includes religious biases which colour the writer's viewpoint.

One of the most important ecclesiastical sources for the late Roman period (and indeed, throughout the period covered in this thesis) is the collection of church councils. Church councils provide information not only

on the existence of episcopal cities and their titles, but also on the way in which the Church used cities as major religious centres. Church canons regarding secondary settlements often demonstrate their religious status in relation to episcopal cities. Canons on sanctuary, the duties of bishops and the relation of the Church to secular affairs further help to identify the religious role and place of Gallic *civitates*.

The above-mentioned letters and poems of Sidonius, bishop of Clermont, demonstrate the attitudes of such men towards their episcopal cities and the monopoly which these centres held on Christian activity. The sermons of Caesarius, bishop of Arles, on the other hand, offer an interesting contrast to Sidonius; for, unlike this former secular administrator, Caesarius was the product of a monastic tradition and was himself divorced, by choice, from classical traditions.

Extreme opposition to many classical urban elements is found in the writings of Salvian the Presbyter. While it is unlikely that the opinions offered by this churchman were widely held by the ecclesiastical community of Gaul, his major work, *De Gubernatione Dei*, demonstrates the degree to which hostility towards urban features and practices could be expressed. Saints' lives are also useful for highlighting the perceptions and opinions of the Church towards *civitates*. Some, including the *Vita* of St. Severinus, offer information on the secular as well as the ecclesiastical use and perception of cities.

Evidence for the early Merovingian period is taken almost exclusively from the works of Gregory, bishop of Tours. Gregory himself listed his works in his *History*, stating:

Decem libros Historiarum, septem
Miraculorum, unum de Vita Patrum
scripsi; in Psalterii tractatu librum
unum commentatus sum; de Cursibus
etiam ecclesiasticis unum librum
condidi.¹⁹

The first of these works, the *Libri Historiarum X* (referred to in this thesis as either *HF* or the *History*), is the most useful for our purposes, in that it provides an uninterrupted narrative of the events of this period.

Gregory of Tours was born into a senatorial Gallo-Roman family around the year A.D. 540. He began writing his *History* soon after his consecration as bishop of Tours in A.D. 573. The first six books were completed around A.D. 585, but were later revised by Gregory who inserted a number of new chapters. Books VII-X were completed between A.D. 585 and Gregory's death in 594.²⁰

Gregory begins his *History* with the creation of the world, using Jerome's *Vulgate* and his translation from Greek of the ecclesiastical history by Eusebius. He also cites other late classical writers such as Sulpicius Severus, Orosius and Victorius of Aquitaine and, at

¹⁹'I have written the ten books of this *History*, seven books of *Miracles*, and one book on the *Life of the Fathers*. I have written one book on the *Commentaries of the Psalms*; I have also written one book on the *Offices of the Church*.' Gregory, *HF*, X.31 (p. 449).

²⁰An introduction to the life and works of Gregory of Tours is found in W. Goffart, *The Narrators of Barbarian History, Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon* (Princeton, 1988), 112-234; see especially pages 119-29, which deal with the writing of the *History*.

times, quotes them directly. Book II covers the period from A.D. 397 to 511 and includes extracts from two fourth-century histories now lost. Other details of this period are drawn from earlier annals and saints' lives. The remaining eight books are considered to be based, for the most part, on Gregory's direct experiences written in his own words, with the exception of seven original documents which he quotes in full in Books IX and X.

The seven books of *Miracles* which Gregory claimed to have written are believed to have included the *Liber in Gloria Martyrum Beatorum* (referred to here as the *GM*) which was written sometime before A.D. 590, and consists of one book with 106 chapters. Almost certainly included among the books of miracles are the *Liber de Passione et Virtutibus Sancti Juliani Martyris* (one book), the *De Virtutibus Beati Martini Episcopi* (four books) and the *Liber in Gloria Confessorum* (one book of 110 chapters, referred to here as the *GC*). The *Liber Vitae Patrum* (*LVP*), which is also used in this thesis, consists of one book with twenty chapters.

Venantius Fortunatus was a contemporary and friend of Gregory of Tours. His collection of poems is, therefore, an important comparative source for this period. Although originally from Italy, Venantius followed a clerical career in Gaul, and later became bishop of the see of Poitiers. Many of his poems are in the style of panegyrics, a form of poetry which idealizes its subject (and a point to keep in mind when considering the

evidence within them). Other sources for the period include, as stated earlier, church councils.

Although sources are scarce for the seventh and early eighth centuries, diplomas surviving from this period are more numerous than those of the fifth and sixth centuries combined. It is, however, important to note that the majority of these diplomas, like most Merovingian sources, have come down to us in the form of post-Merovingian copies.²¹

As a tool for determining urban use and perceptions, such evidence does have its limitations. Nearly all the documents rely on set formulae which do not include direct information on *civitates*. Nevertheless, diplomas of this period do provide a certain amount of indirect knowledge. At a very basic level, they can be used to indicate patterns of use with regard to settlement and regional terminology. More importantly, however, they pinpoint the place where administrative functions were held.

Records of later Merovingian ecclesiastical councils are, for the most part, post-seventh century copies, although their authenticity is perhaps less in doubt than in the case of documents dealing with the allocation of lands and estates. Evidence from church councils, as

²¹Although there are hundreds of documents dated to this period, a number of the Carolingian copies are known to have been forgeries. See E. James' discussion of this in *The Origins of France: From Clovis to the Capetians 500-1000* (London, 1982), 202-5. For a general discussion of Merovingian royal documents, see G. Tessier, *La Diplomatique Royale Française* (Paris, 1962), 1-38.

mentioned earlier, often demonstrates the relationship between the Christian community and *civitates*.

The *Chronicle of Fredegar* (referred to in this thesis as the *Chronicle*) is the most important narrative source for the later Merovingian period. The work begins with a biblical chronology of the sort which is common in chronicles of the early Middle Ages. This section of the work (comprising books I and II) includes material taken from the works of Jerome, Hydatius, Isidore and the *Liber Generationes*. Book III presents a résumé of Gregory of Tours' *History* up to the year A.D. 584. From the beginning of the fourth book, however, the work is original, written in A.D. 603 by someone who was alive at the time of the recorded events. This part of the work continues up to A.D. 642, where it breaks off abruptly, perhaps due to the demise of the chronicler, or to the loss of the remainder of the manuscript.

Another chronicle, known as the *Continuations*, was added to this earlier work. The *Continuations* comprises fifty-four chapters and covers the period between A.D. 642 and 768. The first ten chapters are taken from the *Liber Historia Francorum* (see below - referred to in this thesis as the *LHF*). The remainder of the *Continuations* is thought to be an original creation. From A.D. 736, this chronicle was written under the direction of Count Childebrand, and from A.D. 753 under that of Count Nibelung, his son. The *Continuations* end in the year A.D. 768 with the death of Pippin III. They are therefore a useful source for the early Carolingian era.

The question of the authorship of the *Chronicle* has long been debated by scholars of the Frankish period. Originally believed to be the work of one man, the *Chronicle* has also been attributed to several authors, although all remain unidentified. The scheme of authorship put forward by Wallace-Hadrill supports the multiple author theory:²²

<u>Chron.</u>	<u>Books and (Chpt).</u>	<u>Period Covered</u>	<u>Period Written</u>
'A'	I,II,IV (1-43)	Creation-613	c. 613
'B'	III, IV (44-90)	613-642	640-660
'Cont. I'	(LHF 1-10)	642-716	727-736
	(11-17)	717-735	717-735
'Cont. II'	(18-33)	736-751	c. 751
'Cont. III'	(34-54)	751-768	after 768

According to Wallace-Hadrill, authors 'A' and 'B' of the *Chronicle* are believed to have been Burgundians, the latter having a greater awareness of the political affairs of his period. 'B' probably edited the work of 'A', although the extent of his corrections is not known. The three continuators are also thought to have corrected the pre-existing texts, but, again, we cannot be certain what form these revisions took. A more recent theory of single authorship has been put forward by Goffart in his article, 'The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered'.²³ Goffart bases his argument on a number of textual elements, the most important being the Prologue of the work in which it

²²Wallace-Hadrill's arguments for more than one author are found in J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar with Its Continuations* (London, 1960), xvi-xxviii.

²³W. Goffart, 'The Fredegar Problem Reconsidered', *Speculum*, XXXVIII (1963), 206-41.

is clearly stated that the author has composed the whole of the chronicle.²⁴

Despite these and other problems, the *Chronicle* remains the most significant source for the later Merovingian period, offering the only collection of detailed evidence covering the whole of the period. As the only source of this scope, it serves as an essential framework with which the other meagre writings of the period can be compared.

The *LHF* (*Liber Historiae Francorum*) originates from Neustria, probably at Rouen or St-Denis, and records the history of the Franks from their mythical beginnings to the year A.D. 717. It is thought to have been written around A.D. 727, although the earliest surviving manuscript post-dates this by sixty years.²⁵ The work is divided into fifty-three chapters of which the first four are original. Chapters 5-35, however, are largely taken from the *History* of Gregory of Tours. As an independent source, the *LHF* is rather disappointing, since the greater part of the work is simply a rewriting of this earlier source.²⁶

Although the author of the *LHF* is unknown, he is not thought to have been an ecclesiastic. This assumption is based, for the most part, on the context of the work, which seems to be primarily concerned with the deeds of the Frankish aristocracy and their kings.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 216-17.

²⁵A.A. Gerberding, *A Critical Study of the Liber Historia Francorum* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1982), 245.

²⁶As we will see, however, the alteration of urban and regional terms by the *LHF* author makes for an interesting comparative study.

The Irish monk, Columbanus, was one of the most influential figures of seventh-century Gaul. Works of Columbanus used for this thesis include several letters, sermons and the saint's *Vita* written by a fellow monk named Jonas. Jonas entered the Italian monastery of Bobbio three years after the saint's death, and although the *Vita* is Italian in origin, Jonas is said to have travelled to Gaul in A.D. 640 to gather first-hand information about Columbanus' life. The *Vita Columbani*, which appeared in A.D. 643, gives a detailed account of the saint's activities in Gaul, including his attempts to introduce Irish monasticism into the bishop-dominated society. A number of other saints' lives have also been included in this study, since many of these demonstrate the role of the Church in late Merovingian cities.

One of the major sources for the early Carolingian period is the *Annales Regni Francorum*. The *ARF* covers a period from A.D. 741 to 829, and is thought to have been an official work commissioned and written at the royal court.²⁷ It is, moreover, a secular narrative which concentrates on political and military events. The *ARF* was probably the work of several writers. The first, writing between A.D. 787 and 793, began his narrative in the year A.D. 741 and continued into his own time using the *Chronicle* and other earlier sources.

The second author of the *ARF* covered the period between A.D. 795 and 807. The author is unknown (as is

²⁷See the Introduction of B.W. Scholz, *Carolingian Chronicles, Royal Frankish Annals and Nithard's Histories* (Ann Arbor, 1970), 2-3.

the writer of the first part of the work), but is believed to have been writing at the time of the events he described. The third and final author of the *ARF* was also a contemporary of the recorded period of A.D. 808-829.²⁸ Some scholars have wanted to ascribe parts of the *ARF*, especially the section covering the period between A.D. 809-829, to Charlemagne's biographer, Einhard. The arguments presented for this theory are not, however, widely accepted.²⁹

For the reign of Charlemagne, Einhard's *Vita Caroli* is, of course, a major source. Alcuin, the York scholar, was another member of Charlemagne's court whose letters and poems have provided information on the role and perception of Gallic cities.

For a slightly later period, an important source is Nithard's *Histories*. The work is concerned with the sons of Louis the Pious and their political and military activities. Nithard, who was a grandson of Charlemagne, was a member of the court of Charles the Bald. His account of the struggles between this ruler and his brothers is, naturally, biased in favour of his patron. The narrative covers the years between A.D. 840 and 843.

Other sources for this period include secular and ecclesiastical documents, poems, letters, saints' lives and church councils. Each genre, in its own way, has provided information on Gallic cities and their place

²⁸Scholz notes that the annals for the years between A.D. 818 and 829 were almost certainly written in a royal chapel, very likely under the direction of archchaplain Hilduin, abbot of St-Denis: *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 6-8.

within society. Among these sources, the letters of St. Boniface have been particularly useful, since there are several which are concerned with the establishment of new episcopal cities.

A word ought to be said on the geographical biases of the sources selected for this thesis.³⁰ The late Roman period, for instance, is dominated by sources which originate in the southern and central regions of Gaul. Ausonius wrote from Bordeaux, while Sidonius' works come from both Clermont and Lyon. The sermons of Caesarius were produced for his congregation in the city-territory of Arles, and Salvian, although probably a native of Trier, wrote his major works at the southern monastery of Lérins. Salvian's move from the north to the south of Gaul might have been a result of the Empire's transfer of government from Trier to Arles in the wake of the barbarian advances of the fifth century. On the whole, southern Gaul was more romanized than the northern provinces, although, as will be shown with the writings of both Salvian and Caesarius, this did not always produce a more classical viewpoint.

One major source of this period does offer a glimpse of the northern territories of Gaul during this period. Although not a native of Gaul, Ammianus spent many years in northern parts of this region recording the political and military events of that time. Another source from outside southern Gaul is the *Vita* of St. Severinus

³⁰See also the map which shows the relationship of source material to geographical regions and time periods: Appendix, p. 281.

dealing with events in Roman Noricum (inside present-day Austria). Information from the *Vita* has been included in this thesis, although strictly speaking it falls outside the stated geographical limits.

The works of Gregory of Tours originate, not surprisingly, from his episcopal city-territory, close to the episcopal see and adopted home of his contemporary Venantius Fortunatus. Gregory's ecclesiastical duties, however, gave him the opportunity to travel through many of the city-territories of Gaul and to meet and question those who had travelled in regions unknown to him. He was a frequent traveller in the central, eastern and northern regions of Gaul, although the Rhône valley and the south, while known, were less familiar. Gregory is not thought to have ventured into the city-territory of Bordeaux or the regions of Brittany or Septimania (the latter being a Visigothic territory). Indeed, it is quite probable that Gregory never travelled outside Gaul, and that all his information about foreign regions was supplied by visiting clerics and other travellers.

With the later Merovingian period, there is a shift of evidence to the northern regions of Gaul. The geographical origins of these later sources, coming as they do from less romanized territories, may account, in part, for the changes found in city use and perception. To what degree the origin of this evidence has influenced the overall picture of Gallic cities for this time period is, however, difficult to gauge. What is certain is that the predominance of northern sources continued into the

early Carolingian period, as many of the major works were the product of the northern-based royal court. Occasionally, there are Carolingian sources which include information on the southern regions - the Aquitaine campaigns recorded in Nithard's *Histories* being perhaps the best example. Although there is little to be done to counter these biases, the origin of the sources of any given time period should be kept in mind when reviewing the evidence.

I. Place-name Qualification

This chapter is concerned with the use and meaning of urban and regional qualifications and with the information which they provide on the status of *civitas*-capitals and their relation to other settlements. While there have been a number of works on this subject, most have been restricted to a particular source or to a time-period which is shorter than that covered in this thesis. This chapter will attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of the late Roman and early medieval periods, drawing upon the work of Longnon, Vercauteren, Jacobs and others.

'Civitas' and 'Urbs'

The distinction between *civitates* and other settlements of the classical period was more a matter of law than of the site's size or wealth.¹ Nicolet has pointed out that the term 'civis', from which the word 'civitas' is taken, is derived from an Indo-European word meaning family guest or friend. Indeed, the Latin 'civitas' conveys something of this sense of a community; and as many early *civitates* of Gaul were, in fact, based on pre-existing tribal groupings, this sense of kinship and community was readily acceptable to the administrative units of that name.²

¹A. Poulter, 'Townships and villages', *The Roman World*, I, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 388.

²C. Nicolet. *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (London, 1980), 22-3.

The classical *civitates* were themselves divided into three grades of status: the *civitates foederatae* (allied with Rome), the *civitates liberae* (those cities which retained their basic liberties), and the *civitates stipendiariae* (those cities which paid a tribute).³

These titles referred to administrative districts (often tribal-based) which were controlled from a central place. The term 'civitas', therefore, carried with it precise legal and administrative connotations. Its counterpart 'urbs', however, was not used in this same restrictive sense.

Around A.D. 312, the distinctions between affiliated, free and tributary city-territories began to fade. The title of 'civitas' was also more and more often used in the place of two other Roman terms used to define the status of an urban district, 'municipium' and 'colonia' (see p. 52). Legal distinctions between towns of differing status were also waning.⁴

The history of settlement status in the classical period is a complicated affair which changes throughout the era and from region to region. In Gaul outside *Narbonensis* (that is, outside the area which had not been initially colonized by Greece or Rome), there was a definite tribal association with the term. Caesar had used 'civitas' as a vague term for 'nation', while Augustus gave it the more precise definition of 'city-state'. This latter qualification was, however, rather

³D. Braund, ed., *The Administration of the Roman Empire (241 B.C. - A.D. 193)* (Exeter, 1988), 55.

⁴F.F. Abbott and A.C. Johnson. *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire* (Princeton, 1926), 192.

artificial since a group was now associated with a city and administrative district, rather than a tribal conglomeration. In these less romanized areas, the title of 'civitas' was the preferred term for such capitals.⁵

In the late Roman period, the terms 'civitas' and 'urbs' were both applied to settlements of high status. These terms were, of course, originally secular - defining the city's role as a major administrative centre and as the central place of its assigned territory. They are, however, confusing, since both 'civitas' and 'urbs' could be taken to mean either the city alone or the city and its territory. Distinctions between the city and the city-territory are often difficult to make, although it does seem that 'civitas' was used more often than 'urbs' to define a city-territory. In a passage from a letter written by Sidonius, for example, he spoke of a man returning from the 'urbs' of Toulouse. It is not clear from the context, however, whether Sidonius was referring to the city, or to the city-territory.⁶ Sidonius seems to have applied these urban terms almost exclusively to the cities themselves, preferring regional terms such as 'patria', 'territorium' and 'regio' for defining city-territories. Exceptions to this practice can be found in his references to a bishop or count, where he uses 'civitas' or 'urbs', implying both the city and its territory.

⁵J.F. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul, the Three Provinces, 58 B.C - A.D. 260* (London, 1983), 103-108.

⁶Sidonius, *Ep.* IV.22.1 (p. 72).

In ecclesiastical terminology, 'civitas' seems to have been preferred. Indeed, the term 'urbs' did not appear in church council subscriptions until the seventh century.⁷ Many of the subscriptions for the late Roman church councils included the qualification of 'civitas' - i.e., 'Ex provincia Viennensium civit. Avennica Necterus episcopus'.⁸ Most signatures, however, give only the bishop's name and the unqualified name of his city-territory. As with the imperial usage of 'civitas' and 'urbs', both could have referred to either the episcopal city or the diocese (which, of course, would have included the *civitas*-capital). I would like first, however, to examine the terms as they apply to urban centres.

The only Gallic definition of a late Roman *civitas*-capital comes from the pen of Sidonius. Here, the term 'urbs' was used to describe the city of Bourges: 'Quocirca...urbium status non tam murorum ambitu quam civium claritate taxandus est.'⁹ While Sidonius might have borrowed the phrase from Augustine (see Chapter III, p. 160-61), his definition of a city's status had nothing to do with the unity of the Christian community; for although he was speaking on behalf of a candidate for the

⁷See, for example, *Concilia, Medogarnomense* (A.D. 662-675), (p. 313). Although it is not reflected in the church councils of the early Merovingian period, the use of 'urbs' in a bishop's title is found in the works of Gregory of Tours, i.e., 'Felix Namneticae urbis episcopus...': Gregory, *HF*, V.5 (p. 196). Indeed, Gregory used 'urbs' in this way in sixty-five out of eighty-one references. The predominance of this term is also found in similar references to counts, with 'urbs' being used in twenty out of a total of twenty-nine references.

⁸*Concilia, Arausicanum* (A.D. 441), (p. 87).

⁹'Therefore,... the standing of a city is to be appraised not so much by the circuit of its walls, as by the splendour of its citizens.' Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.9.23 (p. 117).

episcopal chair of the city, his description of the city was entirely secular in tone.¹⁰

It is unlikely that Sidonius' choice of 'urbs' was intended to carry a distinction from 'civitas'. We do not, for example, have here the distinction made between the two terms by Isidore nearly one-hundred and fifty years later: 'Nam urbs ipsa moenia sunt, civitas autem non saxa, sed habitatores vocantur.'¹¹ In Isidore's opinion, 'urbs' defined the physical aspects of a city and 'civitas', its citizens. This distinction is not to be found in the Gallic sources of the late Roman period.

Some writers of this era did seem to prefer one term over the other. Caesarius of Arles, for example, used the term 'civitas' in virtually every reference to urban centres. His preference for this word may have been due to the terminology of his sources, such as Augustine. Salvian, on the other hand, used both terms in his list of the cities of Gaul.¹²

The use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' to qualify the whole of a city-territory is most often found in references to secular or ecclesiastical administrative titles - *i.e.*, 'the bishop of the *civitas* of X', or 'the count of the *urbs* of Y'. Although the two terms are also used in a less formal way to denote city-territories, it is more

¹⁰Sidonius might have taken this idea on the nature of a city from classical writers, although we do know that he was acquainted with the works of Augustine. See *Ibid.*, Ep. IV.3.7 (p. 56); IX.20.2 (p. 150); and II.9.4 (p. 30).

¹¹Isidore, *Et.* XV.i.11.2.

¹²Salvian, V.8 (p. 74).

often the case that regional qualifications (terms such as 'patria', 'territorium' or 'regio') were preferred.¹³

Thus it is clear that both 'civitas' and 'urbs' were applied in the late Roman period to those cities which maintained ecclesiastical and secular priority over a designated territory and over the secondary settlements within this region. The interdependence of the city and its territory is evidenced by the fact that both terms could be used to qualify the urban centre and the countryside as one. As we will see, the use of these terms to identify city-territories becomes more common in the early Merovingian period.

'Civitas' and 'urbs' were not the only terms used to define a city. 'Oppidum', 'municipium' and even 'castrum' could also be applied to centres of high status. The application and meaning of these terms will be discussed in turn, although it is important to note here that the use of these terms to denote *civitas*-capitals was not, as it was to become in the early Merovingian period, an indication of inferior status.¹⁴

Evidence on the use and meaning of 'civitas' and 'urbs' during the early Merovingian period is derived

¹³See, for example, Ausonius' use of the term 'patria' in his *Commemoratio Professorum Burdigalensium*: Ausonius, XVI (p. 55-71).

¹⁴'Oppidum' was simply a general term which seems to have been usually applied to walled towns, and was used much in the same way as we would use the term 'walled settlement'. 'Municipium' carried more the meaning of a self-governing town, and therefore, could have been applied correctly to all *civitas*-capitals. 'Castrum' was applied to a number of cities listed in the *Notitia Galliarum* - although its use in this document has been called into question by some scholars. See below p. 92, which falls under the section headed, 'Secondary Settlements: ''Castrum'', ''Vicus'' and ''Villa'''.

primarily from the works of Gregory of Tours. This is because Gregory, unlike any other author of the period, offers a great deal of material from which patterns of application and meaning are discernible.¹⁵

A table of urban place-names and their qualifications from the works of Gregory of Tours has been drawn up to accompany this section (see Appendix p. 282-301). 'Urban Centres' I and II list, in alphabetical order, every settlement mentioned by Gregory which has been qualified by 'civitas', 'urbs', 'oppidum' or 'castrum'. Each Gallic place-name found in 'Urban Centres I' is followed by a capital letter, A-O, which corresponds to one of the fifteen metropolitan districts that had authority over the *civitas*-capitals. Metropolitan capitals have been underlined in the table.¹⁶

References to the settlements listed in the table have been placed into one of five categories. The first heading, 'city', refers to those references where the term has been used to describe the city. The second heading, 'c/t', is used for references to the city-territory, and the third category, 'c/t?', is for those instances where the meaning of the term is ambiguous. In

¹⁵No reference to this subject can be made, however, without first acknowledging the debt owed to Longnon, for his fundamental study, *Géographie de la Gaule au VI^e siècle*. See also H. Leclercq and F. Cabrol, *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, V.1, *Encaustique-Feux* (Paris, 1922), 2528-37. The earliest study of this kind is Jacobs, *Géographie de Grégoire de Tours, Le Pagus et l'Administration en Gaule* (Paris, 1858).

¹⁶Metropolitan sees had been in existence since the late Roman period, but it is only with the sixth-century copy of the *Notitia Galliarum* (the earliest in existence) that we can be certain that those centres named were, indeed, the sees of metropolitan bishops.

those references where a bishop has been identified with one of the listed terms (*i.e.*, 'Gregory, the bishop of the *civitas* of Tours'), these have been placed under the heading of 'bishop'. This has also been done for those references which qualify the office of a count.

Eighty-four settlements are qualified as either 'civitas' or 'urbs' in the works of Gregory of Tours. Of these, eighty are known, from the *Notitia Galliarum* and other sources, to have been *civitas*-capitals. At the time of Gregory, it would appear that there were 122 settlements of this status, including fifteen metropolitan sees. That eighty of the eighty-four settlements qualified by either 'civitas' or 'urbs' were centres of *civitas* status is significant, in that it demonstrates that these terms were not generally applied to non-episcopal towns. The use of the word 'oppidum' in association with episcopal cities has, moreover, been found in the majority of cases to mean either a sector of the given city or its suburb.¹⁷ Thus, 'civitas' and 'urbs' were reserved almost exclusively for distinguishing episcopal cities or city-territories. This is not, however, surprising, as cities of this period were easily differentiate from other settlements. The most obvious role of a *civitas*-capital, in Gregory's eyes, was religious in nature. Indeed, as will be noted in Chapter III, this was all that was lacking in the case of the *castrum* of Dijon.¹⁸

¹⁷See the sections of this chapter on the terms 'oppidum' and 'castrum'.

¹⁸See Chapter III, p. 170-71.

There is little doubt that the terms 'civitas' and 'urbs' were used synonymously in the works of Gregory of Tours. In references to episcopal cities, for example, there seems to be no difference in the way in which they are used. The use of 'urbs' to mean the city and 'civitas' to mean the citizens, which we find in Isidore, does not apply to the works of Gregory; for in the latter source, citizens are often associated with the term 'urbs', and gates and walls with 'civitas'.¹⁹

Although there appears to be no pattern of application of 'civitas' and 'urbs', the latter term is used in well over two-thirds of the references to episcopal cities. The reason for Gregory's preference of 'urbs' is unclear. Had the term 'civitas' been used more often than 'urbs' to denote city-territories, one might have argued that the predominance of 'urbs' represented a desire to distinguish the city from its region. This, however, is not the case, for only one in every four references of this type uses the term 'civitas'. An examination of the application of 'urbs' and 'civitas' to the offices of the bishop and the count has shown that 'urbs' was used in sixty-five out of eighty-one references to bishops, and twenty out of twenty-nine references to counts.

The predominance of the term 'urbs' is difficult to account for in the works of Gregory. Perhaps he felt a

¹⁹The *LVP*, for example, includes a passage which states that the 'muri civitatis' of Clermont were very strong: Gregory, *MM*, *LVP*, IV.2 (p. 675). And from the *History* there is a passage which refers to the important citizens of the 'urbes' of Soissons and Meaux: Gregory, *HF*, IX.36 (p. 391).

need to break away from the secular administrative terminology of the late Roman period, or, more possibly, his writings simply reflect a pattern of usage common to his time and region. These possibilities will be considered below, in a paragraph on contemporary evidence.

Gregory of Tours is believed never to have travelled beyond Gaul. However, he recorded thirty-seven foreign towns in his works, and these are listed in a separate table headed 'Urban Centres II' (Appendix p. 290-92).

In many cases, Gregory's references to foreign cities such as Babel, Nineveh and Jerusalem are clearly taken from the Vulgate, or from chronicles and histories such as those of Eusebius and Orosius. It may not be surprising then to find that references to these foreign towns differ slightly, in that 'civitas' is used as often as 'urbs'.²⁰

There are three settlements in the works of Gregory qualified as either 'civitas' or 'urbs' which do not appear to have had a bishop. These are Deutz (*Divitia*), Maestricht (*Treiectens*) and Zülrich (*Tulpiacus*). Each of the qualifications is concerned with the city itself. Zülrich is also identified as 'oppidum', and is discussed in the following section on the use of this term. Deutz, a town subordinate to the city of Vermand, and Maestricht, which was under the authority of Tongres, are classified by 'civitas' and 'urbs' respectively.

²⁰In a strict tally, 'civitas' is used forty-two times and 'urbs' sixty-seven. However, if one excludes Rome (which was traditionally qualified by 'urbs') from this count, the frequency of application is much closer, with 'urbs' being used thirty-nine times and 'civitas' thirty-eight.

Explanations on why the above towns should be given these titles vary. Longnon believes that Deutz and Zülrich could have been short-lived bishoprics, although there is no evidence beyond Gregory's choice of the word to support this theory.²¹ He also holds that the description of Maestricht as an *urbs* stems from the fact that the settlement was a favourite residence of the bishop of Tongres.²² This explanation is, however, unlikely, when one considers how Gregory insisted on using the term 'castrum' to describe Dijon, even though it too was the favourite residence of a bishop.

Turning to the poems of Venantius, he too used 'urbs' more often than 'civitas'. Most of these references are found in a religious context. It cannot be argued, however, that 'urbs' was considered to be a more ecclesiastical term, since every reference with the formula, 'the bishop of the city of X', uses the word 'civitas'.²³ As with Gregory's works, there does not appear to be any particular reason for preferring 'urbs' over 'civitas' in most categories. The one exception, that of the use of 'civitas' for a bishop's urban title, might have been done with deference to the same tradition which led to the use of this term for church council subscriptions.²⁴

Although 'civitas' is found in many of the bishop's subscriptions into the seventh century, a number of

²¹Longnon, *Géographie*, 10-11.

²²*Ibid.*, 387.

²³Each of these is found in the titles of his poems, not the text.

²⁴See above p. 28, fn. 7.

council prefaces from this period use the term 'urbs' when giving the place of issue. The use of 'civitas' in such prefaces decreases through the early Merovingian period, although it never falls out of use altogether. Indeed, like the term 'urbs', 'civitas' appears regularly in texts of church councils throughout the period, thus making it evident that either was acceptable in sources of this type.²⁵

With the exception of episcopal urban titles, it would seem that the use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' in both Venantius and the councils coincides with what is found in the works of Gregory. Never in the poems of Venantius, for example, is either term used to describe a non-episcopal settlement. Both 'civitas' and 'urbs' seem to have been used interchangeably, although there is a preference for the latter term, especially in those passages which describe the city itself.

In the later Merovingian period, the writers of both the *Chronicle* and the *LHF* show that the terms 'civitas' and 'urbs' had become restricted to *civitas*-capitals. Neither term is ever used in these sources to describe a secondary settlement or a city-territory.²⁶ Indeed, in a passage borrowed from Gregory of Tours' *History* where a region is described, the author of the *LHF* has

²⁵See *Concilia*, V. II, for examples of this usage.

²⁶The use of either term to denote a city-territory is occasionally found in charters and other official documents. The use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' decreases, however, near the end of the period, as it is gradually replaced by the term 'pagus'. For a comparative list of *civitas*-capitals and other settlements mentioned in the *Chronicle*, see Jacobs, *Géographie de Frédégaire de ses Continuateurs et des Gesta Regnum Francorum* (Paris, 1859), p. 6-32.

substituted the word 'pagus' for 'urbs' - knowing, perhaps, that his audience would consider the latter word solely in terms of its urban meaning.²⁷ 'Civitas' too, it would appear, had lost its meaning of a city-territory in the opinion of the author of the *LHF*; for in another passage borrowed from Gregory's *History*, he added 'terrae' and 'villae' to a phrase concerned with the flight of people from their native 'civitates' to avoid a new tax imposed on them by King Chilperic.²⁸ Gregory's use of the term 'civitas' was clearly meant to encompass the whole of the city-territory - a pattern of usage which was apparently not acceptable to the author of the *LHF*.

Vercauteren has drawn attention to this general decline in the use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' to define city-territories, and goes on to attribute the trend to the breakup of the *civitas*-community into smaller conscriptions known as *pagi*.²⁹ This is evident not only from the passage of the *LHF* cited above, but also from the charters of the period, which demonstrate a clear preference for the term 'pagus' when describing regions or lands.³⁰ From the *Chronicle*, too, there is the phrase 'pagus et civitates', in a passage describing the terri-

²⁷*LHF*, XXI (p. 276): 'Cumque venissent cum magno hoste in paygo Viennense, in loco qui dicitur Visoronica.' Compare this with Gregory of Tours' statement: 'Cumque pariter apud Visorontiam locum urbis Viennensis coniuncti fuissent,' Gregory, *HF*, III.6 (p. 113).

²⁸*LHF*, XXXIV (p. 299): 'Pro qua causa multi reliquentes terras, villas [*LHF* addition] civitates vel possessiones proprias'. See Gregory, *HF*, V.28 (p. 222) for the original passage.

²⁹Vercauteren, *Civitates*, 351.

³⁰*Documenta*, Bruckner, includes many original charters which demonstrate this trend.

tory and cities given by Dagobert to Charibert, his brother.³¹

Considering the question of why either 'civitas' or 'urbs' was chosen, it appears from Book IV of the *Chronicle* that the two terms were used interchangeably, with a clear preference shown, however, for the term 'civitas'. In the first seventeen chapters of the *Continuations*, nine *civitas*-capitals were given urban qualifications; six of these were from the pen of the first continuator, and all were described as 'urbs', with the exception of Köln, which was also qualified as a *civitas*. The *LHF* recorded the qualification of 'urbs' for Köln, Laon and Noyon, and 'civitas' for Angers. There appears to be no reason for the use of one term over the other, and there is even a passage in which both were used to identify the city of Köln.³² In light of this evidence, the more frequent use of the term 'urbs' does not seem particularly significant, and may simply reflect a pattern of common usage rather than any differentiation in meaning.

As mentioned earlier, the use of 'urbs' in episcopal council subscriptions is first found in the seventh century. Of those councils held in cities, both 'urbs' and 'civitas' are found in these lists, though not together. Prefaces to these councils also employ both terms when qualifying the place of issue.

³¹*Chronicle*, IV.57 (p. 149).

³²*Ibid.*, *Cont.*, 10 (p. 174): 'Deinde Colonia urbe reversus ipsam civitatem coepit.'

During the Carolingian period, the terms 'civitas' and 'urbs' both continued to be used to qualify episcopal cities. For example, the *Continuations of the Chronicle* uses both terms in the same sentence (apparently for stylistic variation):

Instituto placito initoque consilio
cum proceribus eorum mense Septembrio
die dominico XIII Kl. Octobris, Car-
lus ad Novionem urbem et Carlomannus
ad Saxonis civitatem pariter uno die
a proceribus eorum et consecratione
sacerdotum sublimati sunt in regno.³³

Both the *ARF* and Nithard's *Histories* include passages which apply both terms to episcopal cities. The *ARF* uses both terms to describe the city of Huesca (in Spain), while the *Histories* have a passage on the 'urbs' of Sens and the 'civitas' of Troyes.³⁴ The *Histories* tend to alternate the two terms, but the *ARF* uses 'civitas' for nearly every one of its references to Gallic and foreign cities.³⁵

Although the majority of references using 'civitas' and 'urbs' are associated with established episcopal cities, there are a few instance where secondary settlements are qualified by these terms. The *ARF*, for example, gives the title of 'civitas' twice to the newly completed stronghold of Esesfelth. This was probably

³³'They summoned their nobles to meet them in council, and then both on the same day, Sunday, 18 September, they received consecration by the Church and were raised to their thrones by their great men, Charles at the town of Noyon, and Carloman at the city of Soissons'. *Chronicle, Cont.*, LIV (p. 193) [tr. Wallace-Hadrill, 121].

³⁴*ARF*, A.D. 799 (p. 108); and Nithard, II.6 (p. 56-8).

³⁵There are a few exception to this usage in the *ARF*, including one reference to the clergy of the 'urbs' of Metz and two to the 'urbs' of Rome. Rome, however, was traditionally qualified by the term 'urbs'.

done deliberately, in order to enhance its status since it is known to have been given a count.³⁶ Similarly, the royal *villa* of Aachen is qualified as an *urbs* in a poem of this period, possibly because of the desire of the poet to link the settlement with Rome.³⁷

When describing territories, the charters of the period show a preference for the term 'pagus' or other regional terms.³⁸ The disappearance of the terms 'civitas' or 'urbs' to define city-territories, and indeed, the lack of references to city regions in these documents, certainly argues for a decline in the idea of the *civitas*-community.

With reference to the use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' to qualify city mints, it has been found that of the coins of the Fitzwilliam and Prou catalogue, only the term 'civitas' was applied (see Chapter V, p. 255-62). Not all coins, of course, carried this qualification and there were many which were stamped with non-episcopal titles such as 'vicus' or 'castrum'.³⁹ This holds true for coins from the early Merovingian period through to the end of the early Carolingian era. The inclusion of a site qualification of any form is not often found on classical coins, and its persistent appearance on

³⁶ARF, A.D. 809 (p. 129).

³⁷Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance* (London, 1985), 202.

³⁸See, for example, *Diplomata*, Bruckner, 3-7 and 39.

³⁹P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage, with a catalogue of the coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, I, *The Early Middle Ages (5th-10th centuries)* (Cambridge, 1986), 463-507; and 520-32. See also M. Prou, *Les Monnaies Mérovingiennes* (Paris, 1892); and *Les Monnaies Carolingiennes* (Paris, 1896) (both = *Catalogue des Monnaies Françaises de la Bibliothèque Nationale*).

Frankish coins is difficult to explain. That other mint localities are also qualified argues against the use of 'civitas' to mean the city-territory. If, however, 'civitas' is a qualification of the city, it is hard to understand why 'urbs' would not have been equally appropriate.

Perhaps the term 'civitas' was thought to convey a stronger sense of administrative authority. A. Wallace-Hadrill, in his article 'Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus', argues that, in the case of imperial coins, it was the image of the emperor which gave legitimacy to the coin. He further claims that all coins, no matter what period, bear some figure or mark of authority.⁴⁰ As few coins of the Merovingian period bear the stamp of a figure of authority, it is perhaps the case that the place-name, moneyer, and, in many cases, the reverse stamp of the cross, might have lent some authorization to the coin. It cannot be argued, however, that the appearance of 'civitas' gave any heightened sense of legitimacy, for as we have noted above, many coins bore the qualification of smaller towns and settlements.

Throughout the late Roman and early Merovingian period, one can show that the application of 'civitas' and 'urbs' to episcopal cities was fairly consistent. The exceptions, even those of the early Carolingian period, were rare, and were often the result of special

⁴⁰A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Image and Authority in the Coinage of Augustus', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, LXXVI (1986), 67-8.

circumstances. The choice between the two terms 'civitas' and 'urbs' is difficult to account for, and does not seem to be the result of a difference in the meaning of the two terms. The decline of the use of 'civitas' and 'urbs' to define city-territories, however, can be said to reflect the division of the *civitates* and the decline in the idea of the *civitas* community.

'Oppidum'

In classical times, the term 'oppidum' was used only to qualify a settlement - unlike 'civitas', which could also be used to define an administrative region. Abbott and Johnson believe that the term was simply a 'generic' word for an autonomous community.⁴¹ This is in agreement with Longnon's late Roman definition of the term, although he also introduces an important new connotation, that of a defensive function: 'une ville forte d'une importance ordinairement supérieure à celle du *castrum*'.⁴² Similarly, Vercauteren argues that in the late Roman period the title of 'castrum' was restricted to official and purely military settlements,⁴³ while 'oppidum' was most often used as a common term for a

⁴¹Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, 4 and 10.

⁴²Longnon, *Géographie*, 14.

⁴³An obvious exception to this would be the private *villa-castra* in the works of Sidonius. Vercauteren is more likely referring to a period when imperial rule was still relatively strong.

walled town.⁴⁴ It would appear, therefore, that the term carried no legal meaning in the Roman period.⁴⁵

In the Gallic sources, 'oppidum' does indeed seem to have been preferred to 'castrum' when describing a town. This is not to say, however, that 'oppidum' was an equal of the terms 'civitas' or 'urbs'. These terms were imperial qualifications for towns of an officially ascribed status. 'Oppidum' carried no such official meaning, and was, therefore, a neutral qualification which could be applied without insult to an urban centre of high status.

This appears to have been the case in Gaul for most of the late Roman period. Ammianus used the term to qualify a number of cities, including Vienne, Sens and the Italian city of Susa.⁴⁶ The use of 'oppidum' to qualify Sens was varied with the term 'urbs' and appears to have had the same meaning. Ammianus often used 'oppida' as a collective term for urban settlements. It is, however, difficult to know in these passages whether he was speaking of *civitas*-capitals and/or secondary settlements.⁴⁷

⁴⁴Vercauteren, *Civitates*, 347. This view is echoed by A. Jourdan-Lombard in his article, 'Oppidum et banlieu sur l'origine et les dimensions du territoire urbain', *Annales*, XXVII (1972), 377-78.

⁴⁵See, however, Sherwin-White's discussion of Pliny's description of the 'oppida civium Romanorum', where he suggests that this is an instance where the term is being used to confer status. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford, 1973), 344-50.

⁴⁶Amm. Marc., XV.10.3 (p. 63); XVI.2.1 (p. 72); and XVI.3.3 and 4.1 (p. 74).

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, XV.9.7 (p. 62); XV.11.2 (p. 65); XV.11.11 (p. 66); and XX.4.1 (p. 189). As with many qualifications found in the *Res Gestae*, especially those found in his digressions, they could well have been taken from earlier writers or modified to fit a past literary style. Scho-

The *Vita* of Germanus of Auxerre referred to the bishop's city on two occasions as an *oppidum*. The *Vita* of St. Severinus gives this qualification to four settlements, most of them bishops' sees.⁴⁸ Sidonius used the term to describe the Gallic cities of Lyon, Clermont, Chalon-sur-Saône, Vaison, Marseille and Narbonne.⁴⁹ He also used 'oppida' as a collective reference for towns in Gaul, Italy and Spain, though the rank of these centres is not known. In official usage, however, the term appears to be rare. There is only one Gallic church council of this period which included the term 'oppidum'. This is the Council of Arles (A.D. 314), which states in its preface that it is held 'oppido Arelatensi'.⁵⁰

There is at least one late Roman writer who also does not seem to have favoured the term 'oppidum'. Caesarius of Arles never used the term to identify episcopal cities, nor did he apply it to the illustrative cities of his sermons (whether biblical or unnamed). Indeed, 'oppidum' was used only once by Caesarius. It

lars such as Bonfante and Frank have noted how Ammianus decorated his works with 'various artistic rhetorical ornaments'. L.W. Bonfante, 'Emperor, God and Man in the IV Century, Julian the Apostate and Ammianus Marcellinus', *La Parola del Passato, Rivista di Studi Antichi*, 403. See also E. Frank, 'Symbolic Imagery in Ammianus Marcellinus', *The Classical Bulletin*, XLII (1966), 46.

⁴⁸*V. Ger.*, I (p. 251) and VI (p. 254). For a discussion on the use of 'oppidum' in the *Vita* of St. Severinus, see Bieler, 19, fn. 21.

⁴⁹Sidonius, *Ep.* IV.8.1 (p. 59), for Lyon; VI.12.8 (p. 102), for Clermont - one of eight references using this term; IV.25.1 (p. 76), for Chalon-sur-Saône; V.6.2 (p. 81), for Vaison - one of two references (although it is probable that this city did not have walls at this time); IX.4.1 (p. 152), for Marseille; and *Carm.* XXII.1 (p. 244), for Narbonne.

⁵⁰*Concilia, Arelatense* (A.D. 314), (p. 9).

appears in a letter regarding the metropolitan rights of Arles over Vienne, where Vienne is described as an 'oppidum'. It is quite clear, however, that Caesarius was using the term as a subtle derision of Vienne's relative status, for he identified his own city as a *civitas*.⁵¹

Similarly, the compilers of the *Notitia Galliarum* seem to have been reluctant to use the term 'oppidum'. Instead, they described the majority the settlements not qualified as 'civitas' as 'castra', despite the fact that several were clearly substantial settlements. This use of 'castrum' may have been because 'oppidum' was too vague a qualification for an official document.

Gregory of Tours' use of 'oppidum' demonstrates that its meaning of fortified town was carried over into the early Merovingian period. Longnon names twelve places associated with the term, although I have noted nineteen cases of sites described as 'oppidum' by Gregory. Of these, fifteen were episcopal cities.⁵² However, it is possible that the use of the term 'oppidum' in association with these cities may define, not the settlement as a whole, but the specifically walled part of a larger urban agglomeration.

The *civitas*-capital of Nîmes is perhaps the best example of such usage, for here the tomb of the martyr

⁵¹Caesarius, *Varia*, Ep. VI (p. 9).

⁵²The cities qualified by the term 'oppidum' in the works of Gregory of Tours are: Köln, Orléans, Auxerre, Bordeaux, Mâcon, Mainz, Nîmes, Paris, Périgueux, Poitiers, Reims, Rouen, Tongres, Tours and Vermand (St-Quentin).

Baudile was located, 'apud Nemausensis urbis oppido.'⁵³ The tomb of the martyr did indeed lie just outside the city walls in the suburb of the city.⁵⁴ A similar application of the term is found in a passage which speaks of the *oppidum* of Mâcon. Here, envoys from King Recared (Richaredus) of Spain were sent to King Guntram, who ordered them to stop, 'apud Matascense opidum'. They were then refused an audience. Although the meaning of the word 'oppidum' is not entirely clear, it is possible that the envoys were halted outside the walls and denied entrance into the enclosed city.⁵⁵

Most references to episcopal cities in the works of Gregory are, unfortunately, less clear in their meaning. On one occasion, Gregory used 'oppidum' in the context of a bishop's title. In a passage from the *History* he described the bishop of Mainz as being of 'Momotiacensis opidi'.⁵⁶ The use of 'oppidum' in this passage is interesting in that it could be a reference to a diocese. Both Longnon and Jacobs point out that the charters of the seventh century did, at times, use the word 'oppidum' in place of 'pagus' or some other territorial term. Longnon himself claims that the reference to St. Cyprian as the 'abbas Petrocorii opidi', is clearly an example of this type of usage, since the monastery of the saint was nearly forty-five kilometres away from the episcopal city

⁵³Gregory, *MM*, GC LXXVII (p. 539).

⁵⁴For a map of the city and the location of the tomb of St. Baudile, see Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux*, 194.

⁵⁵Gregory, *HF*, IX.1 (p. 359). See also Jourdan-Lombard's discussion on Gregory's reference to the *oppidum* of Paris, 'Oppidum et banlieu', *Annales*, 378-79.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, *HF*, IX.29 (p. 383).

of Périgueux.⁵⁷ Thus 'oppidum' perhaps carried the alternative meanings of a city-territory, the walled quarter of a city or the city itself during this period.

The word 'oppidum' was also applied by Gregory to three settlements which were not *civitas*-capitals. These are Birten, Zülpich and Bethlehem. Bethlehem is always qualified as 'oppidum' in the works of Gregory, and is the only foreign settlement to be designated as such. The use of 'oppidum' to qualify this site is probably based on earlier sources. Of the other two *oppida*, there is little doubt that Gregory used the term to describe the towns themselves. Both sites were subordinate to the see of Köln.⁵⁸ Both were fortified settlements.

Longnon and others hold that *oppida* ranked above *castra* during this period. An argument can be made for a distinction between the two types of settlements, since, in the works of Gregory, no *oppidum* is ever given the alternative title of 'castrum' and vice versa. It can also be said that 'oppidum' is applied more often than 'castrum' to episcopal cities.⁵⁹ Even so, there were probably a number of *castra* which were the equal of Zülpich or Birten - the most obvious contender being the 'castrum' of Dijon - a site which was held in high regard by Gregory.

⁵⁷Longnon, *Géographie*, 14; and Gregory, *MM*, GC XCVIII (p. 811).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 99, fn. 3 and 386, for a discussion of the status of Zülpich. Information on the settlement of Birten is found in this same source on page 384.

⁵⁹See above, fn. 57. 'Castrum' is used only once by Gregory to qualify a *civitas* - that of Béziers.

As earlier, the term 'oppidum' does not appear in any of the Merovingian church councils. This may be, however, because it was felt that the term might not carry the same ecclesiastical weight as 'civitas' or 'urbs'. Venantius did, however, use 'oppida' in his poems as a collective term for towns.⁶⁰

In the later Merovingian period, the use of 'oppidum' altered slightly, in that it was used more often to distinguish certain sections of a settlement or a particular region. Evidence from the *Vita* of St. Columbanus, however, demonstrates that the term could still be applied to *civitas*-capitals. In this source the Italian biographer Jonas used the term 'oppidum' along with 'civitas' and 'urbs' to describe episcopal cities.⁶¹ It could be argued, however, that Jonas' monastic background was responsible for this lack of distinction.

Neither the *Chronicle* nor the documents from this period give any clear indication that 'oppidum' was used to describe cities. Two charters of this period do, however, identify the towns of Dijon and St-Denis as *oppida*.⁶² Another slightly different use of the term, which is also found in the seventh-century charters, is to identify the specifically walled quarter of a town. This usage appears in the context of the phrase 'sub oppidum', which appears to be similar in meaning to

⁶⁰Venantius, VI.5.112 (p. 139).

⁶¹*V. Col.*, XIX (p. 89): 'Vesontionensem oppidum'; XXI (p. 93): 'ad Nivernensem oppidum'; XXVI (p. 99): 'Meldensem oppidum'; and XXVIII (p. 105): 'Mettensem oppidum'. All were episcopal cities and all are references to the city itself, not the city-territory.

⁶²*Diplomata*, Pardessus, I (p. 230); II (p. 365). The charters are dated to A.D. 627 and 734 respectively.

'suburbs'. The basilica of St. Benignus, for example, was noted as being in 'sub oppidum Divione' - and the church is known, in fact, to have been located just outside the city walls of Dijon.⁶³ The term is also found in association with episcopal cities, as demonstrated by the reference to the basilica of St. Columbanus and Bishop Lupus which was said to have been located in 'sub oppidum Senonis civitate'. Another reference, this one to the basilica of St. Peter, also includes the phrase, 'Sub oppidum Senonis civitate'.⁶⁴ The use of the term 'civitas' in these passages implies that the 'sub oppidum' was a separate part of the city outside the walls.

The use of 'oppidum' to mean a territory is found once in the *Chronicle* and once in the *Vita Audoini*.⁶⁵ The passage from the *Chronicle* refers to the 'oppidum et suburbana' of the city of Avignon being occupied by Duke Childebrand, while the city itself was held by the Saracens. Wallace-Hadrill has translated 'oppidum' as 'the approaches' to the city, and, given the reference to the 'suburbs' as well, it is difficult to see the passage in any other light.⁶⁶

The early Carolingian sources show that the use of 'oppidum' to identify *civitas*-capitals continued to decline. There are, for example, no certain references

⁶³*Ibid.*, II (p. 14), A.D. 632. For a map of Dijon marking the location of the basilica see, Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux*, 111.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, II (p. 109), A.D. 659; and, (p. 230), A.D. 694.

⁶⁵For references found in charters above p. 48, fn. 62.

⁶⁶Wallace-Hadrill, *The Fourth Book of the Chronicle of Fredegar, Cont.* XX (p. 94).

to episcopal cities qualified by this term, although Einhard's life of Charlemagne included 'oppida' as a collective term for towns in Italy.⁶⁷ There is a possibility that *oppida* were perceived as different from those centres identified as 'urbes'. In a letter to Pope Zacharias, Boniface wrote: 'Et illa tria oppida sive urbes, in quibus constituti et ordinati sunt, scriptis Auctoritatis vestrae confirmari et stabiliri precantes desideramus.'⁶⁸ Boniface's request for the confirmation of these *oppida* or *urbes* which had been given bishops shows that there was some differentiation between the two terms. Indeed, none of the sites seem to have been clearly identified as 'urbes', since elsewhere Buraburg is called an 'oppidum', Würzburg, a 'castrum', and Erfurt is ironically labelled as an 'urbs paganorum rustico-rum'.⁶⁹

The term 'oppidum' continued to be used in the early Carolingian period to designate a walled quarter of a city. A charter of A.D. 779 includes the phrase: 'sub oppidum Cabiloninsis urbis' [Chalon-sur-Saône] - almost certainly a reference to a section of the city outside

⁶⁷Einhard, II.6 and 9 (p. 514-16 and 517)

⁶⁸Boniface, *Ep.* XLIX (A.D. 742) (p. 101).

⁶⁹*Ibid.* See also the *Vita* of St. Boniface, VII (p. 38); which tells how Duke Odilo divided the province of Bavaria into four dioceses ('parrochia'). One of these four was the *oppidum* of Salzburg and another, Regensburg, was referred to as a 'civitas'. Here again we have the use of a term normally applied to episcopal cities being used to describe a settlement (Regensburg) which had yet to receive a bishop. That the writer was not simply anticipating this event is shown by the fact that he does not give the title of 'civitas' to Salzburg. W. Levison, 'Vita Sancti Bonifatii' (Berlin, 1905) (= *MGH SRG*, LVII), p. 1-58.

the walls.⁷⁰ The Italian poem on the city of Verona offers comparative evidence of this usage:

Castro magno et excelso et firma pugnacula;
pontes lapideos fundatos super flumen Adesis,
quorum capita perlingit in orbem [= urbem] in
oppidum.⁷¹

Godman has, probably rightly, taken 'oppidum' to mean the *castrum* mentioned in line 29, since the known Roman bridge did link the main part of Verona to the heavily defended *castrum*. It has been argued that, in this case, 'oppidum' is used to describe the most effectively defended part of the city.⁷² While this is certainly a possibility, the term could also be a more general reference to the extramural settlement on the other side of the river.

Looking over the whole of the late Roman and early Frankish period, it is evident that the use of 'oppidum' to describe *civitas*-capitals began to decline in the early Merovingian era. The term was used throughout, however, as a collective qualification for urban settlements. The association of 'oppidum' with the walled quarter of a city becomes more apparent in the post-classical period and continues into the early Carolingian era. The use of the term to define a territory also increases as the period progresses. This rise can

⁷⁰*Diplomata*, Bruckner (A.D. 779) (p. 6).

⁷¹Pighi, *Versus de Verona, Versum de Mediolano civitate* (Bologna, 1960), 19-21 (p. 152): 'A great and lofty citadel provides a strong bastion against attack, there are stone bridges built over the river Adige, the heads of which link the town and the citadel' [tr. Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 181].

⁷²Ward-Perkins, *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages, Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy A.D. 300-850* (Oxford, 1984), 166, 187, 219-20.

perhaps be linked to the division of the *civitas*-community and the need to use less rigid terms to describe regions within the city-territory.

'Municipium'

In the provinces of the classical period, the term 'municipium' referred to a settlement which had been conquered and incorporated into the Roman Empire. It was this which distinguished these towns from *coloniae*, which were established by settlers sent out by the Roman government. *Municipia* also differed from *coloniae* in that they were allowed to keep their local law, rather than follow Roman legal procedures.⁷³

Municipia were usually under the control of the governor of the province, unlike *coloniae*, which were self-governing.⁷⁴ The comparison of the precise standing of *municipia* and *coloniae* is difficult, however, because of the variability of the rights and privileges granted to each individual settlement. As noted earlier, the terms 'colonia' and 'municipium' began to be replaced by 'civitas' in the early part of the fourth century, although the term 'municipium' did not fade out altogether.⁷⁵

In the late Roman period, the term 'municipium' appears to have referred to a town whose citizens were

⁷³Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, 8-9. See also a discussion of *municipia* within Rome and Italy and their status relative to *coloniae* in Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome*, 27-9.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 9.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 192.

governed by their own laws and magistrates, Thus, while it was used less often than 'civitas' or 'urbs', it was frequently considered to be an acceptable qualification for *civitas*-capitals. It is found three times in the works of Sidonius, and, in each instance, the settlement referred to is a *civitas*-capital.⁷⁶ Eugippius also uses the word, qualifying the urban centres of Quintanis and Tiburnia as '*municipia*'. Both were *civitas*-capitals, and Tiburnia was indeed the metropolitan see of Noricum Mediterraneum.⁷⁷

Although the above examples show that 'municipium' could be used to describe *civitas*-capitals, it is also true, as Vercauteren has argued, that the term could be used specifically to distinguish towns which were inferior in status.⁷⁸ In the fifth century, for instance, the *Vita* of St. Germanus tells how the saint passed through *vici*, *municipia* and *civitates*, on his way to Arles.⁷⁹ A distinction between cities and *municipia* is also found in the works of Salvian. 'Quae enim sunt non modo urbes, sed etiam municipia atque vici, ubi non quot curiales fuerint, tot tyranni sunt?'⁸⁰ In this passage, 'municipia' are clearly distinguished from

⁷⁶Sidonius, *Ep.* II.11.2 (p. 35), for reference to the cities of Bordeaux and Lyon; and III.1.2 (p. 39), and VII.2.7 (p. 105-6), refer to the city of Clermont.

⁷⁷Tiburnia is also referred to by Eugippius as a 'metropolis', a term which is rarely found in the Gallic sources. Reasons for the absence of this term is perhaps explained by the fact that most references to metropolitan cities refer only to the office of metropolitan, not to the city as a metropolitan see. *V. Sev.*, XXI.2 (p. 18); and XV.1 (p. 15).

⁷⁸Vercauteren, *Civitates*, 350.

⁷⁹*V. Ger.*, XXI (p. 266-67).

⁸⁰Salvian, *V.4.18* (p. 234).

'urbes' and apparently, as in the *Vita* of St. Germanus, they are placed somewhere between these and humble *vici*.

'Municipium' appears only twice in the works of Gregory of Tours. Each is a reference to a *civitas* or perhaps a city-territory. The first qualifies Auxerre: 'Peonius vero huius municipii comitatum regebat.'⁸¹ It is the city of Auxerre which was the seat of this office, but the count's jurisdiction extended throughout the whole of the city-territory.

The other reference is found in *De Gloria Confessorum*, in a passage which states: 'Franco episcopus huius municipii ecclesiam gubernaret.'⁸² As above, although the office is based in the city, the bishop would have had control over the entire city-territory. The similarity of the contexts of these two passages suggests that Gregory had some reason for using 'municipium'. Although we cannot be certain, it is possible that it was chosen because it conveyed some sense of the administrative aspects of a city.⁸³ 'Municipium' is found only once in the church councils of this period. It is listed alongside the term 'civitas', and was, it seems, meant to identify non-episcopal cities of a lower status.⁸⁴

The term 'municipium' is rarely found in the sources of the later Merovingian period. Indeed, the only case I

⁸¹ 'Peonius governed the countship of that *municipium*.' Gregory, *HF*, IV.42 (p. 175).

⁸² 'Bishop Franco governed the church of that *municipium*...' Gregory, *MM*, GC, LXXI (p. 789).

⁸³ Perhaps because the term still carried the meaning of a self-governing centre with its own laws and governors. See also Longnon's discussion of this term in *Géographie*, 13-14.

⁸⁴ 'per civitates aut municipia': *Concilia, Matisconense* (A.D. 581-83), c. 16 (p. 227).

can find is in the *Vita Eligii* where it is recorded that the bishop found the body of St. Lucian in the *municipium* of Belloacus.⁸⁵ Very little is known of St. Lucian, except that he was a priest who had been put to death in the city of Beauvais at some time in the early Christian period: it is, therefore, likely that the term was here used to describe the city of Beauvais itself and not its wider territory.

Vercauteren believes that 'municipium' was no longer in use at the time of the Carolingian renaissance, except by poets and other writers whose application of the term was an anachronistic use of classical terminology.⁸⁶ Looking over the evidence gathered for this section, I can only agree with this conclusion. Indeed, it is quite clear that the use of this term was well in decline at the onset of the Merovingian period.

'Suburbium'

The term 'suburbium' is perhaps the most consistent term discussed in this chapter. This is hardly surprising, as the very elements of the word - 'sub' and 'urbs' - serve to restrict its application. The term is applied to the part of an urban settlement that lay between the centre of the city and the surrounding countryside. The inner edge of the *suburbium* most often took the form of a town wall. Given this fact, one might expect the term to be applied to the extramural part of any settlement which

⁸⁵*V. Elig.*, II (p. 700).

⁸⁶Vercauteren, *Civitates*, 351-52.

had defences. This was not, however, the case, for 'suburbium' was almost exclusively used to define the extramural settlement of *civitas*-capitals. Why this was so is not clear, unless the element 'urbs' limited the application of the term to those centres which were thought to merit this urban qualification. There is, however, one exception to this rule and it is found in the *Chronicle*. Here the *Chronicle* tells of a patrician, named Willibad, who was buried at the church of St. Bonique, in the 'suburbium' of Dijon, a secondary settlement, though admittedly an exceptional one.⁸⁷

The question of where the *suburbium* ended and the countryside began is not easily answered. Gregory of Tours recorded that the troops of King Theuderic made their camp in the *suburbium* of Clermont ('Rex igitur Theudoricus ad urbem Avernam usque accedens in civi [meaning 'civitas'] illis suburbana').⁸⁸ Also from the *History* comes the reference, 'advenit festivitas dedicationis oratorii ruris suburbanii.'⁸⁹ Here, the *suburbium* is clearly a rural region, although still considered to be within the limits of the city.

How far the suburb of a city was supposed to extend is no more clear to us in the later Merovingian period than it is for earlier centuries; for there are examples of churches, monasteries and secondary settlements known

⁸⁷'suburbano Divioninse': *Chronicle*, IV.83 (p. 163). Dijon was not made a bishopric until A.D. 1731. See Wood, 'Early Merovingian devotion in town and country', *SCH*, XVI (Oxford, 1979), 75. See also Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux*, 112-14, and the map, p. 111. The church is referred to as St. Bénigne's.
⁸⁸Gregory, *HF*, III.12 (p. 118).
⁸⁹*Ibid.*, VI.11 (p. 256).

to be located several miles from the city walls, yet still regarded as within the 'suburbium'. In the early Carolingian period a city's *suburbium* seems also to have extended a long way, for in a passage from the *ARF* the *villa* of Ingelheim is said to be located 'in suburbano Mogontiacense' - over five miles from the city of Mainz.⁹⁰ Many of the charters of the period also use the term 'suburbium', but most of these are references to the extramural areas immediately around a city.

'Patria'

Many writers of the classical period use the term 'patria' to describe a person's homeland by birth. The Roman state allowed inhabitants of conquered regions, such as Gaul, to retain their local loyalties. Yet if he became a Roman citizen, the individual gained an additional *patria* - that of Rome. In these instances, 'patria' carried with it a dual meaning. Cicero promoted this idea, placing the loyalty owed to Rome as the citizen's first priority. Even so, he held that one's native *patria* was also to be held dear, although this was an emotional bond rather than a legal attachment as with the state.⁹¹

While loyalty towards the native *patria* took the form of sentimental attachment, the *patria* of Rome demanded services to the state. The relationship between

⁹⁰*ARF*, A.D. 787 (p. 78).

⁹¹See Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 154 and 160-61, for a more detailed discussion of Cicero's writings on dual *patria*.

the citizen and the *patria* of Rome was, therefore, a legal bond which was embodied in public life and civil law. It could be argued that this notion reversed itself in the late Roman period; for with the weakening of the Empire, loyalty to the state became more ideal in nature, while public activity and service was given over to the native *patria*. In the Christian writings of the late Roman period, the concept of dual *patriae* is expanded and given a new meaning in the context of the citizenship of heaven and earth.

As will be discussed in Chapter II, the secular term '*patria*', although in no sense an administrative word, was almost always associated in the minds of the Gallo-Romans of the late classical period with city-territories. This link between the city and its region helped to create the feeling of *civitas*-community, and to promote the city as much more than just an administrative centre. '*Patria*' was not, however, just another regional term, for it defined, above all else, a person's relationship with his city-territory. Because of this, all references using '*patria*' must be considered in the light of the subject of the passage. As we will see, it is often the case that the Gallo-Romans used the term in relation to city-territories, while beyond the borders of the Empire they applied it to more generalised regions.

In the late Roman period, however, the term is rarely applied to regions other than a city-territory. Exceptions to this rule are usually concerned with less well-defined regions, or territories which were

unfamiliar to the Gallic writers of this period.

Sidonius, for example, used 'patria' on one occasion to describe the region of the Saxons.⁹² The most common use of 'patria' in ecclesiastical writings (aside from references to city-territories) was, however, as a reference to heaven.⁹³

'Patria' continued to convey the meaning of one's own city-territory in the works of Gregory of Tours. The term is not examined, however, by Jacobs, Longnon, or Vercauteren. Reasons for this may stem from the fact that the majority of Gregory's references to this term were vague and cannot be traced to any particular region. However, of those Gallic references which can be identified, all but one qualified a city-territory.⁹⁴ The one exception is a reference to Brittany as the 'patria' of a powerful chieftain: here, as Sidonius does above, Gregory is using the term to describe the territorial identity of a less-urbanized and relatively barbaric ruler.

Gregory also used the term to qualify three foreign regions - Galicia, Lombardy and Pannonia.⁹⁵ Again, his unfamiliarity with these regions might account for the use of this term. His reliance on second-hand information could also have been a reason for his selection of 'patria'. His use of the term in this wider sense might

⁹²Sidonius, *Ep.* VIII.6.15 (p. 132).

⁹³See Chapter III, p. 158-61.

⁹⁴These are the city-territories of Poitiers, Tours, Citeutat (Bigorre), Bordeaux, Chartres, Clermont, Embrun, Gap, Langres and Limoges.

⁹⁵Gregory, *MM*, V.*Mart.* (p. 596); *HF*, VI.6 (p. 251), and *HF*, VI.43 (p. 282).

also be due to the fact that each of the references deals with pagan or barbaric groups whom Gregory might have been unwilling to associate with city-territories.

Many references to 'patria' in the works of Gregory of Tours are associated with Frankish kingdoms. The boundaries of these are rarely stable, giving the word itself a rather vague geographical meaning. These are, in truth, political regions, and are perhaps one of the earliest indications of a change in perception away from the classical administrative unit.

The poems of Venantius offer comparative examples of the use of this term. When referring to city-territories, Venantius almost always used the term 'patria'.⁹⁶ The majority of these references are from poems which praised a bishop's role within his episcopal city and diocese. For example, Bishop Leontius of Bordeaux was praised for being the 'ornament' of his *patria*, Felix, bishop of Nantes, was called 'tutor patriae', and Ragnemodus of Paris, 'pater patriae'.⁹⁷

As with the works of Gregory of Tours, the poems of Venantius demonstrate that 'patria' could also be applied to regions which were defined in terms of political authority. There are, for example, passages which speak of the *patriae* of the kingdoms of Theudebert, Charibert and other Frankish rulers.⁹⁸ The boundaries of these

⁹⁶One of the few exceptions to this is a poem written for Gregory of Tours which describes the city-territory as a 'regio'. Venantius, VIII.15.9 (p. 198).

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, I.15.67 (p. 17); III.8.17 (p. 58); and IX.10.1 (p. 216). Other city-territories qualified in this way include Clermont, Langres, Limoges, Chartres and Tours.

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, II.11.16 (p. 41); VI.2.37 (p. 132); and IX.1.25 (p. 202).

territories were less rigid than the city-territory divisions. 'Patria' in these instances refers to those lands (whatever the limits) which were under the authority of the king in question. As with Gregory of Tours, it is possible that Venantius was dividing his use of the term along Gallo-Roman and Germanic lines, though this, of course, is dictated in part by the way in which dioceses were set over classical administrative boundaries, and kingdoms by a more arbitrary scheme. Venantius also used 'patria' to refer to the jurisdiction of a count or duke. While a count's region, during this period, would have corresponded to a city-territory, the territory of a duke often included at least two of these conscriptions.

With the decline of the *civitas*-community in the later Merovingian period, there was an inevitable decrease in the use of 'patria', particularly with reference to *civitates*. City-territories were not qualified by this term in either the *Chronicle* or the *LHF*. Moreover, on one occasion, the *LHF* author substituted the term 'regio' for 'patria' in a passage borrowed from Gregory of Tours.⁹⁹ 'Patria' was also used by Columbanus, but only with reference to his homeland of Ireland.¹⁰⁰

The only use of the term which carries over into this period is its application to descriptions of heaven. Such references are to be found, for example, in the works of Columbanus. The term had, however, by now

⁹⁹See Chapter II, p. 127, fn. 58.

¹⁰⁰Columbanus, *Ep.* II.6 (p. 16 and 18).

probably assumed the very general sense of a homeland, without the specific connotations of a city-territory of heaven such as is found in the works of Caesarius and other early writers.¹⁰¹

The term 'patria' re-emerged in the Carolingian period, although not in its late Roman sense. Instead, the term carried, for the most part, the sense of a wider homeland or, in a few cases, that of a kingdom. Einhard, for example, spoke of the kingdom of Charlemagne as a 'patria'. He also used the term to qualify the customary dress and speech of this kingdom.¹⁰² It is this latter example which shows how the term had broadened from its *civitas* sense, and had taken on an almost nationalistic meaning.

'Patria' is often found in the poetry of the period, although none of the examples seems to refer to a city-territory. Its revival, especially in the poetry, is perhaps a result of the renewed interest in classical literature. If this is so, the term had lost any specific association with *civitates*.

The most comprehensive source for this period, the *ARF*, includes several references to *patriae*. Not one of these, however, is a reference to a city-territory.

'Patria' is used to describe the land of the Saxons, the kingdom of Pippin (the Short), the region of the Avars, the land of the Slavs, the kingdom of Northumbria, an

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*, Sermons V and VIII (p. 84 and 86, and 94 and 96).

¹⁰²Einhard, III.23 (p. 529): 'Vestitu patrio, id est Francico utebatur'; and, *Ibid.*, III.29 (p. 534): 'Inchoavit et grammaticam patrii [= 'patria'] sermonis '

unspecified region of Sicily, the kingdom of Krum (king of the Bulgars) and the homeland of Heriold, a Danish king.¹⁰³ The term does not appear in Nithard's *Histories*.

Reviewing the above evidence on the use and meaning of 'patria', it is clear that there were significant changes from the early Merovingian period onwards. Evidence from the late Roman era shows that the term was used almost exclusively to denote city-territories - a practice which demonstrates the loyalty given to these regions. Early Merovingian sources carried on this tradition, although the introduction of Frankish political kingdoms served to broaden the term, and to draw it away from its classical meaning.

It was in the late Merovingian period that the use of 'patria' underwent its most distinct alteration. Indeed, the virtual disappearance of the term implies that many of the writers of the period were uncertain of its application.

The early Carolingian period witnessed a revival of the use of 'patria', but not of its classical meaning. The reason for this is easily understood. How could 'patria' be used to identify city-territories if these regions were no longer seen as the divisions upon which society was organised? The use of 'patria' in an almost nationalistic sense during this period is particularly interesting, for here is a usage which went beyond narrow territorial boundaries - to the extent that the term was

¹⁰³ARF, A.D. 758, 767, 796, 805, 811 and 813 (p. 16, 24, 98, 120, 126, 133-34, 139 and 152).

no longer associated with small geographical regions, but with broad political areas.

Regional Qualifications

This section is concerned with the application and meaning of regional qualifications. These include the terms 'provincia', 'territorium', 'terminus', 'regio', and 'pagus'. 'Provincia' will be considered first under a separate heading.

'Provincia'

In classical times, a system of administrative conscriptions was established to govern the Empire. These were known as 'provinciae' and each was under the direction of a provincial governor.¹⁰⁴ Near the end of the third century, the emperor Diocletian undertook a major reorganisation of this system. Nearly every province was subdivided, although several of these new territories were short-lived.¹⁰⁵

The two major sources for the provincial structure of the late Empire are the 'laterculus Veronensis' or 'Verona List' and the *Notitia Dignitatum*. The *Notitia*

¹⁰⁴For a discussion of the offices and workings of this provincial system, see G. Burton, 'Government and the provinces', *The Roman World*, I, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 423-39.

¹⁰⁵An account of this provincial reorganisation is found in Jones, *LRE*, 42-3, and 107. See *Ibid.*, Appendix III, 1451-61, for a summary of the most important evidence. See also J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, 'Government and administration in the Late Empire', *The Roman World*, I, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 455-56, for a discussion of the reason behind the divisions of Diocletian and the possible date of the reorganisation.

Galliarum, discussed in the Introduction, is also useful, although it is, of course, restricted to Gaul.¹⁰⁶ The 'Verona List' has been dated to the first half of the fourth century.¹⁰⁷ The *Notitia Dignitatum* has recently been dated by Mann to the period A.D. 385-408.¹⁰⁸

Finally, the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus includes a list of the provinces of Gaul. This list often differs from texts of the 'Verona List', the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the *Notitia Galliarum*, probably because Ammianus was using outdated written source material.¹⁰⁹ But while the inconsistencies of the *Res Gestae* list have been attributed to his use of outdated sources (see Introduction p. 10-11), it is possible that it reflects, in part, mid-fourth century realities not recorded in the earlier 'Verona List' and the later *Notitia Dignitatum*.

In the late Roman period the term 'provincia' was most often used to designate the administrative provinces of the Empire, as reorganised under Diocletian and Constantine. These provinces were grouped into larger

¹⁰⁶ Editions of the 'Verona List' and the *Notitia Dignitatum* are to be found in O. Seeck, *Notitia Dignitatum* (Berlin, 1876) - listed as *ND* in the bibliography. A discussion of the provinces of Gaul listed in the *Notitia Galliarum* is found in Harries, 'Church and State in the *Notitia Galliarum*' *The Journal of Roman Studies*, *LXVIII*, 28.

¹⁰⁷ A detailed discussion of the 'Verona List' and a survey on the organisation of each province is found in T.D. Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine* (Cambridge, Mass., 1982), 195-225. A modern survey of the dioceses and provinces of the Empire which includes a summary of the evidence of change from the Severi to the sixth century is found in Jones, *LRE*, 1451-461.

¹⁰⁸ J.C. Mann, 'What was the *Notitia Dignitatum* for?', *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew (Oxford, 1976) (= *BAR Supplementary Series*, XV), 5 and 8.

¹⁰⁹ *Amm. Marc.*, XV.11.7-15 (p. 66-7).

administrative units known in Diocletian's day as 'dioeceses' (although the meaning of this term was altered when it was adopted by the Church).¹¹⁰

'Provincia' could, during the late Roman period, refer to an ecclesiastical region, or the secular administrative conscription, or, in some cases, both. These two districts in fact usually corresponded to one another in terms of geographical boundaries and provincial capitals. The ecclesiastical head of a 'provincia' was known as the metropolitan - an office which was to outlast the imperial provincial governors.

Many ecclesiastical sources of this period use the term 'provincia' to distinguish ecclesiastical metropolitan regions. Some councils include subscriptions which list the bishop both by his city and by his province. Sidonius applies the term to the bishops within his province of Aquitania Prima, calling them his 'provincial colleagues'.¹¹¹ The presence of imperial officials must, however, have preserved for a time the secular use of the word.

Neither Longnon nor Leclercq discusses the use of the term 'provincia' in the works of Gregory of Tours. There are two instances where Gregory clearly used the term in its ecclesiastical sense. The first involves Leontius, bishop of Bordeaux (a metropolitan see), who called together the bishops of his province ('provinciae suae episcopis').¹¹² In another passage Gregory referred

¹¹⁰*Ibid.*, 47-8.

¹¹¹'provincialium collegarum': Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.5.3 (p. 108).

¹¹²Gregory, *HF*, IV.26 (p. 161).

to himself saying that he took counsel with the bishops of his province.¹¹³ Tours, like Bordeaux, was a metropolitan see.

This, however, was not the only sense of 'provincia' in Gregory's works. Indeed, out of seven cities described by this term, only three were the seats of metropolitan bishops. Moreover, when Gregory applied the term to cities which were metropolitan sees, many of the references were not placed in an ecclesiastical context. The *provincia* of Arles, for example, is referred to in a passage relating to the spread of a plague, while that of Marseille is found in a military context.¹¹⁴ Gregory indeed seems often to have used the term for very general descriptions of geographical regions. Although he was aware of the term's ecclesiastical meaning, he clearly did not feel compelled to use it solely in this restrictive sense.

Gregory also used the term in an even broader sense when he applied it to the region of Septimania ('Septimaniam provinciam').¹¹⁵ Septimania was a part of the Visigothic kingdom and was, therefore, politically distinct from Frankish Gaul.

Gregory's use of 'provincia' to describe the region of Belgica Secunda demonstrates that the imperial meaning of the term was still understood, if no longer in common use. A reference in Gregory's account of the posthumous miracles of St. Julian (who died some time in the fourth

¹¹³*Ibid.*, V.49 (p. 242).

¹¹⁴*Ibid.*, IV.5 (p. 144); and II.32 (p. 93).

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, VIII.30 (p. 343).

century) tells of a certain man 'apud Belgicae secundae provintiam', who visited a basilica in the suburb of Reims built in honour of the saint.¹¹⁶ Unless we know the date of this event (sometime between the fourth and sixth centuries), it is impossible to say whether Gregory was speaking of the province in a retrospective historical sense (as we today would refer to an inhabitant of Roman France as an inhabitant of 'Gaul'), or whether, in the sixth century, the region could still correctly be called by its classical name. If the latter is the case, it would show that the region could be considered by its imperial title well beyond its existence as an administrative territory.¹¹⁷

A particular problem is the use of the term 'Provincia' by Gregory of Tours to describe a region of southern Gaul (modern Provence).¹¹⁸ This area did not correspond to any late Roman province; however, the practice of calling this region (the first in Gaul to fall under Roman control and officially titled *Gallia transalpina*) 'the province' (*provincia*) seems to have developed early in the Roman period.¹¹⁹ The continuity of the term into the early medieval period, while other regions often acquired tribal names (Burgundy,

¹¹⁶Gregory, *MM*, *MJ* XXXII (p. 577). See Jones, *LRE*, 1452, which shows the province listed in both the 'Verona List' and the *Notitia Dignitatum*.

¹¹⁷The province of Belgica Secunda is also listed in the *Notitia Galliarum*. See *NG*, 590.

¹¹⁸Gregory, *HF*, VI.6 (p. 251).

¹¹⁹Unfortunately, I have not been able to trace the origins of this usage, which is stated rather than explained by the obvious sources: Chevallier and Drinkwater (see Bibliography, Secondary sources).

Aquitaine, etc...), perhaps indicates a particularly strong survival of *romanitas* in this territory.¹²⁰

Gregory's application of the word 'provincia' to the foreign regions of Achaia and Lusitania (within the secular dioceses of Macedonia and Hispania respectively) is perhaps a retrospective historical qualification, for each had been a province of imperial Rome.¹²¹ Gregory also called the region of Carpitania in Spain a *provincia*, although this was not a province in classical times.¹²²

The word 'provincia' is also found in many of the church councils of this period, and here it is used exclusively to refer to the province of a metropolitan, or, in its adjectival form, to describe the bishops of a metropolitan region. It would appear that the term was closely associated with metropolitan districts throughout the early Merovingian period. Its secular use, however, was, as we have seen, becoming more varied - perhaps as a result of the fading imperial administration.

Evidence from the later Merovingian period demonstrates an increase in the frequency with which the term was used to describe secular regions. In the earlier books of the *Chronicle*, there are examples of references to imperial provinces. These include the *provinciae* of Lugdunensis Prima and Aquitanica.¹²³ Each of these

¹²⁰Margaret O'Hea, personal observation.

¹²¹*Ibid.*, VI.33 (p. 274); and Gregory, *MM*, *HM*, XXX and XXIII (p. 501 and 506). Jones, *LRE*, 1453 and 1456. Achaia is listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, but not in the 'Verona List'.

¹²²See Regional Qualifications Table II, p. 300.

¹²³*Chronicle*, II.46 (p. 68); and II.56 (p. 77). Jones, *LRE*, 1452.

references is from a part of the *Chronicle* which relied heavily on earlier sources.

From the fourth book of the *Chronicle* there are references to the Spanish province of Cantabria, the provinces of Tuscany, Thrace and Rome, in addition to a general reference to the provinces of Africa.¹²⁴ Cantabria was not an imperial province, although Tuscany is listed in the *Notitia Dignitatum* and the 'Verona List' under the heading, 'Tuscia et Umbria'.¹²⁵ Thrace is also listed in these sources as an imperial province.¹²⁶ Rome and its region, on the other hand, was never a late Roman province, but an urban prefecture.¹²⁷ For the region of Gaul, there are references to the provinces of Gaul and Germany and to the province of Aquitaine.¹²⁸ The *Continuations* include references to the Frankish *provinciae* of Burgundy and Aquitaine, which were considered to be distinct geographical territories, although their boundaries did not always correspond to political limits.¹²⁹

Each of the above qualifications from the *Chronicle* is found in a secular context, and this increase in the frequency of secular uses of 'provincia' may, in part, be explained by the decline of the term 'civitas' to describe territories. That is to say, rather than

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, IV.33.50, 63, 69 and 81 (p. 133, 145, 151, 155 and 162). There are also several references to the provinces of the classical Empire: *Ibid.*, IV, 64-6 (p. 152-54).

¹²⁵Jones. *LRE*, 1454.

¹²⁶*Ibid.*, 1456.

¹²⁷*Ibid.*, 1454.

¹²⁸*Ibid.*, IV.36 (p. 134); and IV.57 (p. 149).

¹²⁹*Ibid.*, *Cont.* 18 and 46-8 (p. 176-77 and 189-90).

qualifying an area by listing city-territories, the authors of the *Chronicle* preferred to revive the term 'provincia'.¹³⁰ It is also likely that regions such as Burgundy and Aquitaine were beginning to be more widely recognised than the old imperial divisions. Later Merovingian usage of this term did not always correspond to imperial boundaries or recognised imperial regions. The *Vita* of Praeiection, for example, stated that the saint was born in 'Avernensium provincia', even though in Roman times this was only a city-territory.¹³¹

The use of the term 'provincia' continued into the early Carolingian period in both its secular and ecclesiastical applications. The correspondence between St. Boniface and Pope Gregory, for example, demonstrates that 'provincia' was an accepted qualification for the metropolitan see of Bavaria.¹³² Other sources, including Einhard's life of Charlemagne, Nithard's *Histories* and the *ARF*, provide examples of secular uses of this term. Many of these relate to large geographical regions such as Gascony, Saxony and Septimania.¹³³ There are also city-territories qualified by 'provincia', although among

¹³⁰The restriction of the use of 'civitas' to qualify cities alone is supported by the fact that one of the authors of the *Chronicle*, borrowing from an earlier source, added the term 'civitas' to the passage: 'Anno 14 regni Teudericī beatus Columbanus creverat iam passim fama is civitatis suae [added] in universas Gallias vel Germaniae provincias.' The earlier source is the *Vita* of St. Columbanus written around A.D. 643. *Ibid.*, IV.36 (p. 134).

¹³¹*V. Prae.*, I (p. 226). Clermont was not a metropolitan capital.

¹³²Boniface, *Ep.* XLIX (p. 101): 'vel correctis tres ordinavimus episcopos: et provinciam in tres parochias discrevimus.' See also *Ep.*, XLVI and LI (p. 97 and 112).

¹³³Einhard, II.5 (p. 514); II.14 (p. 521); II.17 (p. 524).

these, only Narbonne would have merited the title in the late classical sense of the term as a metropolitan capital of an imperial province.¹³⁴ It is clear that in Gaul, from the eighth century onwards, the term 'provincia' had lost its Roman meaning.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, II.17 (p. 524); and *ARF*, A.D. 761 and 813 (p. 20 and 139).

'Territorium', 'Terminus', 'Regio' and 'Pagus'

The terms 'territorium', 'terminus' and 'regio' are most often found in the late Roman sources for Gaul to qualify a city-territory. These terms do not occur with the same frequency as in the early Merovingian period, perhaps because 'civitas', 'urbs' and 'patria' were also used in the late Roman era to define a city-territory. 'Territorium' and 'regio' are used synonymously, although 'regio' appears more frequently in relation to unspecified foreign areas.¹³⁵

The terms 'territorium' and 'regio' are especially useful when an author wishes to identify the region belonging to a city. Ammianus speaks of the 'territoria' of the 'civitates' of Strasbourg, Brumath, Saverne, Seltz, Speyer, Worms and Mainz.¹³⁶ In the same way, Caesarius asks, 'Ubi tot regiones? Ubi tantae splendissimae civitates?'¹³⁷ A final example, from a letter of Sidonius, includes first his praise of the countryside of Clermont - described as its 'territorium' - and then of the city itself - 'civitas'.¹³⁸ The word 'terminus', during this period, seems to be restricted to defining borders and boundaries.¹³⁹ Even so, the majority of the boundaries described are those of city-territories.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁵See, for example, Sidonius, *Ep.* VIII.5.1 (p. 129); and *Ep.* VIII.12.2 (p. 143); Caesarius, *Ser.* XXXVII.1 (p. 155); *Ser.* LXXXV.1 (p. 334).

¹³⁶Amm. Marc., XVI.2.12 (p. 73-4).

¹³⁷Caesarius, *Ser.* LXX.1 (p. 284).

¹³⁸Sidonius, *Ep.* IV.21.5 and 6 (p. 72).

¹³⁹See Longnon's discussion of the late Roman meaning of this term, *Géographie*, 34.

¹⁴⁰See, for example, Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.5.5 (p. 103).

Because the term 'pagus' does not appear often in the sources of the late Roman period, it is perhaps best to look at its meaning and use in the classical era. The exact meaning of the word 'pagus' differed from region to region. In general terms, 'pagus' was applied to rural administrative regions. Many of these had existed before the Romans. Caesar used the word to describe a part of a Gallic tribe; however, because of Rome's policy of superimposing its own administrative units on to existing tribal boundaries, the word came to be associated with the governmental control of the region.¹⁴¹ In Gaul, where many *civitates* had been based on tribal divisions, the *pagi* represented subdivisions of that particular group for administrative purposes.¹⁴²

On those few occasions when 'pagus' is found in the late Roman sources cited in this thesis, it is usually associated with a secondary settlement - most often, a *vicus*. As we have seen, the term had, in classical times, the meaning of a subdivision of a city-territory, often based on earlier tribal divisions.¹⁴³ Just as many cities took on the name of a local people, so too, apparently, did a number of the Gallic *vici* and *pagi* of the late Roman period.

At no time when the word 'territorium' is used by Gregory of Tours does he mean anything other than a district dependent upon a central place (generally, but

¹⁴¹Abbott and Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman Empire*, 14. The reference from Caesar is taken from *De Bello Gallico*, I.12.

¹⁴²J. Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 108-9.

¹⁴³Longnon, *Géographie*, 24-5.

not always, a *civitas*). This holds true for both Gallic and foreign references, as is shown by the Regional Qualification tables in the Appendix (see p. 293-301). Table I, referring to territorial names in Gaul from Gregory's works, demonstrates this clearly, for all of the place-names which can be identified are known to refer to central settlements of their given district. In the case of the other secondary settlements, such as Dijon, the related territories would, of course, have been smaller than the city-territories upon which they depended.¹⁴⁴ The remaining thirty references using 'territorium', however, are each associated with the name of a city-territory. Thus, the word 'territorium' is never used by Gregory to describe larger geographical regions such as Brittany, Septimania or Gaul. This usage is also found in Gregory's qualification of foreign territories, for here only Milan is listed as having a 'territorium'.¹⁴⁵

As in classical times, an inhabitant of Merovingian Gaul would usually have considered his 'territorium' to be that of his native city-territory. Many examples can be cited in support of this assumption. In the *History*, for example, Gregory speaks of the wife of a certain Claudius who was 'ex Meldensi terreturium' (meaning here

¹⁴⁴In the case of Dijon, Longnon interprets 'territorium Divionense' as a 'pagus' - that is, it has the sense of a smaller district with the *castrum* of Dijon as the central-place. Both the district and the *castrum* would have been dependent upon the city of Langres. Longnon, *Atlas Historique*, 97.

¹⁴⁵For a listing of the foreign territories and settlements cited by Gregory, see Jacobs, *Géographie de Grégoire de Tours*, 81-154.

the city-territory of Meaux).¹⁴⁶ In the *Liber Vitae Patrum* there is a reference to the saint Patroclus as being 'Biturigi territorium incola' - an inhabitant of the city-territory of Bourges.¹⁴⁷ A final example, taken from the *Libri de Virtutibus Sancti Martini Episcopi*, speaks of 'Homo ergo incola territorii Turonici' (Tours).¹⁴⁸ Indeed, when Gregory of Tours refers to individuals from or belonging to a 'territorium', he is almost invariably referring to a city-territory.

In an article on the application of urban and regional terms in the early Merovingian period, Leclercq claims that Gregory's use of the word 'terminus' did not have as restrictive a meaning as it had in the classical period, when it was used to designate the boundaries of a given region.¹⁴⁹ Looking first at the qualifications not associated with place-names (and, therefore, not listed in the tables), there are a number of cases where 'terminus' ought to be translated as 'limits' or 'boundary'. In Gregory's book on the miracles of St. Martin, for instance, the phrase, 'extra terminum loci', refers to the boundary outside the *villa* of Nazelles.¹⁵⁰ Another example, this one from the *History*, reads: 'Cumque iam prope terminum illorum esset' - here, the 'terminus' of the Saxons.¹⁵¹ There are also a number of occasions when Gregory could have meant either a boundary

¹⁴⁶Gregory, *HF*, VII.29 (p. 308).

¹⁴⁷Gregory, *MM*, *LVP*, IX.1 (p. 702).

¹⁴⁸Gregory, *MM*, *LVM*, II.41 (p. 624).

¹⁴⁹H. Leclercq. *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, V.I, 2536.

¹⁵⁰Gregory, *MM*, *LVM*, I.29 (p. 602).

¹⁵¹Gregory, *HF*, IV.14 (p. 151).

or a territory, but as none of these clearly demonstrates that 'terminus' meant a city-territory, the term cannot be regarded as a synonym of 'territorium'. The term 'terminus' is often, however, associated with city-territory names. Of the twenty-nine references which use 'terminus' in association with a Gallic place-name, twenty-seven are concerned with *civitas*-capitals and their territories. Gregory's qualification of city-territories does not appear to favour one term over the other, since 'territorium' is used seventy times and 'terminus' sixty-six.

'Terminus' does not appear therefore to have had more than one meaning in the works of Gregory of Tours. Its use by Gregory to define boundaries of large geographical regions without an administrative identity, city-territories and smaller regions with a central place make it perhaps one of the most variable terms available to the bishop.

The term 'regio' in the works of Gregory of Tours does not have as strong an association with city-territories as either 'territorium' or 'terminus'. Admittedly, when describing places in Gaul, Gregory uses 'regio' sixteen times to refer to city-territories and only five times for other types of regions. When describing foreign places, however, he commonly uses the term in a wider and more general sense.

Gregory appears to be more comfortable in using 'regio' when speaking of foreign places. It must be remembered that Gregory is believed never to have

travelled beyond Gaul. In light of this, his choice of 'regio' to describe unfamiliar places might suggest a need to use a term which could have a vague meaning. The broad application of the word is demonstrated in a substantial number of passages which are not associated with territorial place-names. In these instances, 'regio' is used to designate unspecified lands or countryside, the kingdom of a ruler, the habitation of a group of peoples and unnamed foreign regions.¹⁵²

Although 'regio' is used by Gregory to qualify city-territories, he seems to have preferred to apply the term to those places which were unfamiliar to him, where the limits of the area were undefined, or when the region was unnamed. The only other territorial term which can be said to have an even less defined meaning is 'locus' - a qualification which has, for this very reason, been omitted from this section.

According to Leclercq and other scholars, a 'pagus' was a territory governed by a count. Longnon, however, believed that Gregory did not use the term in this sense, and his argument is strongly supported by the evidence.¹⁵³ Six of the place-names in Gregory associated with the term 'pagus' are those of *vici*.¹⁵⁴ 'Pagus' was

¹⁵²Some examples of these uses are found in *Ibid.*, HF, II.32 (p. 94); HF, III.4 (p. 111); HF, III.7 (p. 115); HF, IV.4 (p. 144); HF, IV.16 (p. 155); and HF, IV.41 (p. 174).

¹⁵³Longnon, *Géographie*, 26. For Leclercq's discussion see *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, 2534.

¹⁵⁴The six *vici* named are Barrou (Barraum), Brioude (Brivate), Craon (Crovium), Neuville (Noviliacus), Trezel (Transiliaensum) and Yzeures (Iciodoro). There are, of course, many variations on the spellings of these settlements depending on the manuscript consulted.

clearly used in these instances to describe a region in which the *vicus* acted as a central-place. Four *castra*, Melun (Melodunum), Tonnerre (Tornodorum), Beaunois (Belenum), and Etampes (Stampae), are also associated with *pagi*. The term was not limited, however, to areas controlled by a central place. Gregory speaks of two large forest regions - the 'pagus Perticensis' and the 'pagus Vabrensis'.¹⁵⁵ 'Pagus' is also used on one occasion to denote an ethnographic region, that of Theifalia, in the city-territory of Poitiers. The area was named after the Taifals, an Asiatic people who were settled there some time during the third or fourth century.¹⁵⁶

Jacobs claims that 'pagus' was most often an uncertain and vague term which usually corresponded to our word 'place'.¹⁵⁷ Longnon agrees with Jacobs, but, with the exception of those references not associated with regional place-names, I have found little evidence to support this claim. Of the unnamed *pagi*, it is evident that many could well have been specific districts. One reference from the *History* recounts how long-haired kings were set over the 'pagi' and 'civitates' of Thuringia.¹⁵⁸ Clearly the use of 'pagi' could imply, in this case, either an organised subdivision of the city-territory, or a generalised rural area. In the same way, a passage relating to the devastation of a

¹⁵⁵Gregory, *MM*, GC XCVII (p. 810); and *HF*, IX.12 (p. 368).

¹⁵⁶James, *Life of the Fathers* (Liverpool, 1985), 152, fn. XV.1.

¹⁵⁷Jacobs, *Géographie de Grégoire de Tours*, 46.

¹⁵⁸Gregory, *HF*, II.9 (p. 77).

pagus belonging to King Theudoric's kingdom can be taken to mean either a specific district or the countryside.¹⁵⁹ Nearly all the references, however, make mention of a named region, and with the exception of the forested areas and Champagne (see below), all of these territories were dependent upon a settlement which served as the central place for the *pagus*. Thus, the most common use of the term, in Gregory's works, appears to be that of designating subdivisions of city-territories. Gregory also records six city-territories as '*pagi*'. It is possible, however, that he was speaking of a *pagus* of the city in question, although this cannot be proven.

Pagi would, of course, have been the regions to cite had Gregory used '*pagus*' to mean a district of a count. In none of the instances, however, where he speaks of a count and his territory does Gregory use this term. This seems rather strange, especially in the light of those references which directly address the count's office in regional terms (*i.e.*, 'the count of the region of X', where he insists on using the terms '*civitas*' or '*urbs*'). Although it could be argued that the double meaning of '*civitas*' and '*urbs*' (as both 'city' and 'city-territory') could have been a reason for Gregory's choice, it must be remembered that had he wished to designate the city and its territory in reference to a count, '*pagus*' would have served this same function.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, III.3 (p. 110).

¹⁶⁰*Ibid.*, VIII.18 (p. 337). Church councils of the period demonstrate that '*pagus*' was considered to be a central place of an established region: *Concilia, Parisiense* (A.D. 573), Preface (p. 212). Evidence from the poems of Venantius, is, however, inconclusive, for only the term

'Pagus' is by far the most frequently used territorial term in the later Merovingian period. Both 'territorium' and 'regio' were used to qualify city-territories, but neither appears with any great frequency in comparison to the term 'pagus'.¹⁶¹ This may be because there was a need in the later Merovingian period to describe land in smaller divisions, owing to the breakup of the city-territory by local lords, and the increase in the authority of rural-based aristocratic families.

Pagi are cited in association with *civitas*-capitals, secondary settlements and old territorial names based on ethnic groups. Of all the regional qualifications 'pagus' is the most common in the documents of the period. Most *villae*, for example, are associated with a *pagus* in these sources.

The predominance of 'pagus' over other regional terms continues into the early Carolingian period. Documents and charters use this term almost exclusively when describing lands. The word 'territorium' is also used on occasion, and seems usually to denote city-territories.¹⁶²

'Pagus' is the most common territorial term in the *ARF*. Here, it is used to describe the territories of Albi, Gevaudan, and other regions based on secondary

'regio' is used with reference to Gaul. Venantius, III.4.1 (p. 53). 'Civitas' and 'patria' are used more often to distinguish city-territories.

¹⁶¹The predominance of 'pagus' is especially evident in the charters and other documents of this period.

¹⁶²For example, *Diplomata*, Bruckner (p. 79), A.D. 797-81, makes mention of the 'territorium' of Narbonne.

settlements.¹⁵³ The term is used collectively to describe the frontier district destroyed by the Saxons.¹⁵⁴ There is also evidence which demonstrates that the term was used to qualify city-territories.¹⁵⁵ In a poem of this period, both the city-territories of Toulouse and Cahors are qualified as *pagi*.¹⁵⁶ As in the later Merovingian period, a frequent use of this term in the early Carolingian era may reflect a society organised into more localised regions.

'Dioecesis' and 'Parrocia'

'Dioecesis' and 'parrocia' are terms which were used to qualify ecclesiastical districts. In the late Roman period, 'dioecesis' had originally been used to describe secular administrative regions made up of two or more imperial provinces. The creation of these secular dioceses was the work of the emperor Diocletian, whose aim was to provide a means by which to oversee the provincial government. There were twelve dioceses in the Empire - those of Gaul being *Viennensis* and *Galliae*. The official who governed a diocesis was known as a 'vicarius' or 'agens vices'.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ARF, A.D. 767, 775, and 784 (p. 24, 42 and 68).

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, A.D. 815 (p. 142).

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, A.D. 823 (p. 162). The term is used here to describe the *pagus* of Worms, a city-territory.

¹⁵⁶Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, XIX.137-38 (p. 172): 'Nempe Tolosani locus est rurisque Caturci Extimus; hoc finit pagus uterque loco.'

¹⁵⁷See Barnes, *The New Empire of Diocletian and Constantine*, 224-25, for a discussion on these administrative divisions and the date of their creation.

With the establishment of Christianity, the term 'dioecesis' took on the sense of an ecclesiastical region, although it was generally applied not to the vast secular dioceses of the late Empire, but to individual city-territories. The words 'diocese' and 'parish' have come to mean, in our own times, an episcopal district and the smaller conscriptions which make up a diocese. This arrangement was not, however, relevant to the situation in the late Roman period. To begin with, each city-territory would not have included enough smaller districts to fill the territory. Instead, it seems likely that there were a limited number of secondary settlements with a church which each served as an ecclesiastical central place for an undefined region. These smaller ecclesiastical regions radiated out from the secondary settlements without having any clearly defined regional boundaries.¹⁰⁰ Throughout the late Roman and early Merovingian periods, such churches were often neglected in favour of city cathedrals and other urban religious foundations. Indeed, the lack of an organised parish system may well have been responsible for the continuance of pagan practices in the countryside.

The terminology of ecclesiastical districts is often as uncertain as the organisation itself. Sidonius uses

¹⁰⁰G. Fournier, *Le peuplement rural en Basse-Auvergne durant le Haut Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1962), 333. See also, M. Aubrun, *L'ancien diocèse de Limoges des origines au milieu du XI^{ème} siècle* (Clermont-Ferrand, 1981), 221-30, which argues for the formation of parishes in the early medieval period in Gaul, but does not present any conclusive evidence for this occurring before the Carolingian era.

'dioecesis' for parish when he speaks of making the rounds of the subdivisions of his episcopal district.¹⁶⁹ However, he also uses 'dioecesis' to mean an ecclesiastical city-territory or diocese. Sidonius used the term 'parrocia' on two occasions, and both refer to small regions under the control of a diocese.¹⁷⁰ The *Vita* of St. Martin by Sulpicius Severus also seems to use 'dioecesis' for parish, for Martin is recorded on two occasions as making the rounds of the 'dioeceses' - meaning, in modern terms, his parishes. Sulpicius also used the term 'parrocia' to describe Bethlehem, which he noted as belonging to the bishop of Jerusalem.¹⁷¹

Evidence from other sources of this period demonstrates a more consistent use of the two terms. Caesarius of Arles, for example, used the term 'parrocia' to mean an ecclesiastical subdivision of a city-territory.¹⁷² Late Roman church councils associated 'dioecesis' with episcopal districts and 'parrociae' with those regions subject to the diocese.¹⁷³ A canon from the Council of Agde (A.D. 506) includes the phrase: 'nonnisi in civitatibus aut in parrociis teneant.'¹⁷⁴ The canon

¹⁶⁹Sidonius, *Ep.* IX.16.2 (p. 170): 'Nam peragratis forte dioecesibus cum domum veni.' See Anderson (under 'Sidonius' in the Primary Sources), 597, fn.5.

¹⁷⁰Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.6.8 (p. 109-10); and *Ep.* VII.6.8 (p. 109-10).

¹⁷¹*V. Mart.*, *Dia.* II.3 (p. 203): 'Dum dioecesses visitat...'; and *Dia.* II.9 (p. 207): 'Quodam autem tempore, dum dioeceses circumiret...'; and *Dia.* I.8 (p. 189).

¹⁷²Caesarius, *Ser.* I.1 (p. 3).

¹⁷³Examples of this usage are found in *Concilia, Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua* (A.D. 475), c. 87(XXXVI) (p. 180); *Agathense* (A.D. 506), c. 21 (p. 207); *Aurelianense* (A.D. 511), c. 15 (p. 9); *Epaonense* (A.D. 517), c. 25 (p. 30); *Lugdunense* (A.D. 518-23), c. 2 and 4 (p. 39); and *Claremontanum* (A.D. 535), c. 10 (p. 107).

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*, *Agathense* (A.D. 506), c. 21 (p. 203).

is concerned with the holding of religious festivals, and shows how 'parrociae' could be juxtaposed with 'civitates' to describe the countryside and the city, and the rural and urban churches.

The terms 'dioecesis' and 'parrocia' were both used in the early Merovingian period to describe ecclesiastical districts. The word 'dioecesis', was, by the time of Gregory, almost exclusively used to designate the district of a bishop. Even so, the word appears less frequently in Gregory than the alternative city-territory terms of 'civitas' and 'urbs'. It must be admitted that many of these passages are secular in context. Yet, no one could deny the appropriateness of an episcopal title which reads, 'the bishop of the *dioecesis* of X'. This use, however, is never found in the works of Gregory or in the church councils of this period.

'Dioecesis' was applied by Gregory to seven territorial place-names. Six of these were episcopal dioceses. The seventh, Candes, was not, and Longnon has suggested that this is the one instance in Gregory where 'dioecesis' was given the meaning of 'parish'.¹⁷⁵ What is interesting with regard to the city-territories is that Gregory not only used the term in a strictly ecclesiastical context, but also in general secular references, almost as a geographical term.

The early Merovingian *parrocia* was a small territorial unit which served an ecclesiastical function within the larger diocese. Most *parrociae* were associated with

¹⁷⁵Longnon, *Géographie*, 36.

a *vicus* or *castrum*, which performed a similar, but less significant role than did the episcopal city. The use of the term 'parrocia' to define smaller districts of this type is found in the works of Gregory. There are, however, a few exceptions. One reference to Gaul, for example, seems to describe city-territories. Gregory speaks of the 'pagus Tonnerrois' (Tournès) as a dependent of the 'parochia Lingonicensis'.¹⁷⁶ It is probable that 'parrocia' is here used in the sense of a diocese rather than a parish. This, at least, is the opinion of Bordier, who translates the passage, 'dans la diocèse de Langres'.¹⁷⁷ In any case, the term could not have been a reference to a parish of the city of Langres, since Tournès was a settlement in its own right. For the most part, Gregory seems to use the term to mean a smaller district subordinate to the diocese.¹⁷⁸

Neither 'dioecesis' nor 'parrocia' is used in the original texts of the Chronicle. Nor are they to be found in the *LHF*. These omissions, however, are a peculiarity of the sources, and can be attributed to their secular content and motives. Judging from the other sources selected for this section, it is almost certain that 'dioecesis' was used to distinguish a diocese, and 'parrocia' a parish. Most references to 'dioeceses' are associated with the name of a city-

¹⁷⁶Gregory, *MM*, GC, LXXXV (p. 803).

¹⁷⁷Bordier, *Les Livres des Miracles et autres opuscules de Georges Florent Grégoire évêque de France*, 4 vols. (Paris, 1857), 81.

¹⁷⁸See Longnon, *Atlas Historique*, 145-46. See also, Gregory, *LVP*, VIII.8 (p. 698), for an example of this usage.

territory, or are cited as the diocese of a certain bishop.¹⁷⁹ The term 'parrocia' is also found in connection with city-territories, but the term is often in the plural form, meaning that these are parishes within this region.¹⁸⁰

The Council of Clichy (A.D. 626-27) includes a canon which links the term 'dioecesis' with 'pagus'. The canon is concerned with the sin of incest and decrees that such offences should be corrected by the bishops and presbyters in their respective dioceses and *pagi*.¹⁸¹ A more straightforward use of the term is found in the preface of the Council of Bordeaux, which states that the meeting was held, 'in diocesim Burdigalense.'¹⁸² The ecclesiastical meaning of the term 'parrocia' is demonstrated in several church councils. Both the Council of Clichy and that of Chalon-sur-Saône use the word to describe the ecclesiastical subdivisions of a diocese.¹⁸³ The Council of Chalon-sur-Saône also includes a canon which addresses abbots and archpresbyters residing in their 'monasteria vel parrochias'.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁹For example, 'Cum in diocesim Burdigalense...' *Concilia, Modogarnomense* (A.D. 662-75), Preface (p. 312); and 'ad fines diocesis suae,' - the diocese of St. Audoenus (Rouen): *V. Aud.*, XI (p. 560).

¹⁸⁰'Sicque vir sanctus per diversas parrochias virtutum semina atque verborum acumina spargebat.' *Ibid.*, X (p. 559).

¹⁸¹*Concilia, Clippiacense* (A.D. 626-27), c. 10 (p. 293). The canon perhaps demonstrates the increasing authority of the rural clergy, for the bishop's jurisdiction over the diocese would have included the *pagi*.

¹⁸²*Ibid.*, *Burdigalense* (A.D. 662-75), Preface (p. 312).

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, *Clippiacense* (A.D. 626-27), c. 21 (p. 295); and *Cabilonense* (A.D. 647-53), c. 5 (p. 304).

¹⁸⁴*Ibid.*, *Cabilonense* (A.D. 647-53), c. 11 (p. 305).

Owing to the secular context of the early Carolingian narrative sources, we have few examples of the use of either 'dioecesis' or 'parrocia'. It is evident, however, that they were, on occasion, used interchangeably. Both Boniface and Pope Gregory II referred in their correspondence to the newly created episcopal territories of Bavaria as *parrociae*.¹⁰⁵ This usage was also repeated in the *Vita* of St. Boniface in a reference to these same episcopal territories.¹⁰⁶

'Comitatus' and 'Ducatus'

'Comitatus' and 'ducatus' appear for the first time as regional terms in the late sixth century. Prior to this period, the terms referred only to administrative posts. The word 'ducatus', meaning duchy, is mentioned four times in the *Chronicle*, and each is a reference to the duchy of Detelin.¹⁰⁷ This area included the cities and regions of Boulogne, Thérouanne, Arras, Noyon, Cambrai and Tournai.¹⁰⁸ Jacobs claimed that the appearance of the word 'ducatus' pointed to a shift in Merovingian administrative policy; for although the title of 'dux' is found in the works of Gregory of Tours, the use of the word in the *Chronicle* to mean an administra-

¹⁰⁵Boniface, *Ep.* XLVI and XLIX (p. 97 and 101).

¹⁰⁶*V. Bon.*, VII (p. 38): 'Odilone duce, consentiente, in IV divisit parrochias quattuor que hiis praesedere fecit episcopos...'

¹⁰⁷Gregory of Tours makes reference to the *Ducatus Campaniae*, Gregory, *HF*, IX.14, p. 370. This, however, is Gregory's only reference which uses the term in a geographical sense. For the duchy of Detelin, see *Chronicle*, IV.20.37 and 38 (p. 128 and 139-40).

¹⁰⁸Moreau, *Dictionnaire de Géographie Historique de la Gaule et de la France* (Paris, 1972), 102.

tive territory implies that the office came with the region and not the region with the office.¹⁸⁹ The term 'ducatus' is also found in the *LHF*. The reference is to the duchy of Champagne ('ducatum Campaninse'). Champagne is also mentioned in Gregory's *History*, although it is not qualified as a 'ducatus'.¹⁹⁰ The term 'comitatus' is also found in the seventh-century sources with the meaning of an administrative territory. A diploma of Dagobert II, for example, lists a number of *pagi* which are said to be located in *comitatus*.¹⁹¹

'Comitatus' and 'ducatus' are also found in the early Carolingian sources. Nithard's *Histories* record how the Ripuarian counties ('comitatus') of Moilla, Haettra, Hammolant and Maegare were handed over to Charles the Bald.¹⁹² The *ARF* included a reference to the duchy of Bavaria, and also mentions the Italian duchy of Spoleto.¹⁹³ Unlike the ecclesiastical regions, many of these territories did not conform to Roman imperial boundaries. The Church, however, was still tied to the *civitas*-capital, and because of this it seems to have held more tenaciously to the late Roman traditions of administrative organisation.

Secondary Settlements: 'Castrum', 'Vicus' and 'Villa'

¹⁸⁹Jacobs, *Géographie de Frédégaire*, 5.

¹⁹⁰Gregory, *HF*, VIII.18 (p. 337); and *Ibid.*, *HF*, X.3 (p. 410).

¹⁹¹'in comitatu Chilcheim, ... in comitatu Ilchicha, ... in comitatu Bargense.' *Diplomata*, Pardessus, II, A.D. 675 (p. 171)

¹⁹²Nithard, I.6 (p. 24).

¹⁹³*ARF*, A.D. 748 and 824 (p. 6 and 164).

A study of any one of the above-named types of settlement would easily constitute a thesis in itself. This section will, therefore, be restricted to a general survey of what types of settlements were represented by the terms 'castrum', 'vicus' and 'villa' and how these were distinguished from *civitas*-capitals.

The terms 'castrum' and 'castellum' did not denote legal status in the classical period. Like 'oppidum', they were common terms for a particular type of settlement - in this case, one which was fortified. The use of 'castrum' and 'castellum' was linked, for the most part, to military sites occupied exclusively by the army. These sites ranged in size and importance from large legionary fortresses to small strongholds on the frontier.¹⁹⁴ In any case, the use of either term was rare in the classical period.¹⁹⁵

In the late Roman period the terms 'castrum' and 'castellum' usually designated a fortified site.¹⁹⁶ Under this broad definition, 'castrum' and 'castellum' were used to identify a number of settlement types ranging from imperial strongholds, serving a purely military function, to private estates with walls. This latter type of *castrum* is known from the writings of Sidonius. In a letter to his friend Aper, Sidonius asked him if he was lodging among mountain *castella*, and 'in

¹⁹⁴V. A. Maxfield, 'Mainland Europe', *The Roman World*, I, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 139-93.

¹⁹⁵Rivet, 'The *Notitia Galliarum*: some questions', *Aspects of the Notitia Dignitatum*, ed. R. Goodburn and P. Bartholomew (Oxford, 1976) [= *BAR, Supplementary Series*, XV], 134-35.

¹⁹⁶For examples of sites in Gaul, see *Ibid.*, 121 and 135.

eligenda sede perfugii quandam pateris ex munitio-
 frequentia difficultatem?'¹⁹⁷ It would seem that Aper
 was travelling from fortress to fortress in the same way
 as those of his class would have made the rounds of the
villae of friends. Another fortified dwelling of this
 sort is mentioned in a letter addressed to Elaphius.

The best-known of these, however, is the 'Burgus' of
 Pontius Leontius.¹⁹⁸ The 'burgus' was located in
 Visigothic territory. Although the term 'villa' is not
 used by Sidonius to describe the site, it has generally
 been thought of as a fortified country estate. The site
 differs, however, from other *villae* in that it was
 located in a well defended position and was described as
 having a circuit of battlements.¹⁹⁹ Obviously the site
 afforded considerable protection in times of danger, yet
 whether it was a permanent residence or one used solely
 for safety is not known. Percival describes the site as
 'a stronghold rather than a country house', but goes on
 to say that many *villae* of this period were fortified.²⁰⁰

Ammianus used the term 'castrum' to describe the
 military fortresses around Köln, though he often used the
 word 'munimentum' to qualify strongholds such as those
 along the frontier.²⁰¹ During the late Roman period,

¹⁹⁷'Do you find some difficulty in choosing your place of
 retreat owing to the multitude of such fortifications?'
 Sidonius, *Ep.* V.14.1 (p. 87).

¹⁹⁸*Ibid.*, IV.15.3 (p. 67). See also Chapter IV, p. 204,
 fn. 32, for a reference to the Burgus.

¹⁹⁹Describing the site Sidonius notes: 'namque domus de
 flumine surgunt splendentesque sedent per propugnacula
 thermae.' Sidonius, *Carm.* XXII, 127-28, (p. 247).

²⁰⁰J. Percival, *The Roman Villa: An Historical Intro-
 duction* (London, 1976), 174-76.

²⁰¹Amm. Marc., XVI.3.1 (p. 74); XVII.1.11 (p. 106); and
 XVII.9.1 (p. 120).

sites not exclusively occupied by the army were also qualified as 'castra' and 'castella'. In the *Vita* of St. Severinus, for example, mention is made of the *castella* of Cucullis and Quintanis.²⁰² Here, *castella* are clearly distinguished from other sites, as is evidenced by the two occasions where the terms 'oppida' and 'castella' are found together.²⁰³

'Castrum' and 'castellum' differed from 'oppidum' in that they were rarely applied to *civitas*-capitals. This, as suggested earlier, is perhaps because these terms had a restrictive official meaning - i.e., that of a small fortified site which served a purely military or defensive function. Although this definition was not always adhered to, 'castrum' and 'castellum', unlike 'oppidum', carried the sense of a secondary settlement. One could argue against this interpretation using evidence from the *Notitia Galliarum*, where *castra* appear with *civitates*. It is, however, quite possible, as Harries suggests, that the centres qualified by this term were added to the sixth-century list as newly founded *civitates*, but were referred to by their former Roman qualification of 'castrum'.²⁰⁴

Vici and *villae* have been distinguished from other settlements by the fact that there is no conclusive evidence that they were walled. Percival believes that

²⁰²*V. Sev.*, XI.2, XII.1 and 5, XV.1 and XVI.1 (p. 13-16).

²⁰³*Ibid.*, XI.1 and XVII.1 (p. 13 and 17). See L. Bieler, *Eugippius, The Life of Saint Severin* (Washington, 1965) (= *Fathers of the Church*, LV), 19, fn. 21, for a discussion of the use of this term in the *Vita*.

²⁰⁴Harries, 'Church and State in the *Notitia Galliarum*', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 27 and 31-6.

the latter term had no legal or technical meaning in the classical period. His definition of *villae* is, therefore, quite general: 'a place in the country: a place to live in as opposed to a temple or sanctuary, and a 'private' place as opposed to one for the use of the general public'.²⁰⁵ He further defines *villae* as rural or suburban establishments often connected with some sort of farming activity.

The *villae* of the Merovingian age in many ways resembled their classical predecessors. They were agricultural estates, usually under the control of persons of high status. This last statement is borne out by a list of those *villae* which are found in the works of Gregory of Tours. Of the twenty-six mentioned, eleven were royal residences, while many of the remainder were estates belonging to bishops, counts and other authoritative figures.

The four *villae* mentioned in the poems of Venantius seem also to have been aristocratic estates.²⁰⁶ Poulter writes:

In the western provinces the term *vicus* (village) was usually applied to even the largest settlements which lacked municipal authority. The term had a strict legal definition in that it was used of dependent communities which, despite limited, local autonomy, owed allegiance to a higher civilian authority.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁵J. Percival, 'The villa in Italy and the provinces', *The Roman World*, II, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 527-46.

²⁰⁶Venantius, I.18 (p. 22); I.19 (p. 22-23); I.20 (p. 23); and VI.7 (p. 147).

²⁰⁷Poulter, 'Townships and villages', *The Roman World*, I, ed. J. Wachter, 398.

The term also could be used to qualify tribal capitals (many of which were *civitates*), wards of cities, and groups of administrative or religious buildings.²⁰⁸ Some scholars claim that in classical Gaul, the term was used (particularly in inscriptions) to mean a site which was under the control of a *civitas*, but possessing a recognised level of independence, legal status and its own administrative officers. Drinkwater argues with this strict definition, saying that while the term could be applied in a legal sense, it was also commonly used to designate 'a whole range of human habitation'.²⁰⁹

It is difficult to say, using evidence from the works of Gregory, just what type of site constituted a *vicus*. It is clear, however, that he distinguished such places from *villae*. So too did the church councils of this period, as in seen in the *Concilium Turonense*, of A.D. 567 (c. 20, page 183). Gregory never identified a settlement as both a *vicus* and a *villa*. Even the term 'domus' (a word sometimes used in place of 'villa') in association with *vici* has been found to mean a particular building within the given site and not another qualification of the *vicus*. The *vici* of the Merovingian era are believed to have been nucleated rural settlements, each serving a small territorial conscription by providing necessities such as a church and, perhaps, a local market.

The term 'vicus' was nearly always used by Gregory to designate rural settlements. On two occasions,

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*

²⁰⁹Drinkwater, *Roman Gaul*, 135-37.

however, he applied the word to a section of a city. The first tells of Bishop Marcellus of Paris, who had once driven a serpent from the town, and who now rested 'in ipsius civitatis vico'.²¹⁰ Bordier, in his translation of the text, interprets 'vicus' as the suburb of the city ('dans le faubourg même de Paris') - a translation which seems appropriate since the tomb of the saint is known to have been located just outside the city walls.²¹¹

The other reference which demonstrates this type of usage is concerned with the tomb of St. Crescentius, which Gregory located 'in vico Parisiorum, haud procul a loco quo senior, ut aiunt ecclesia nuncupatus.'²¹² The location of this older church is uncertain, although Vieillard-Troiekouroff has suggested that, while the tomb has not been found in the above-mentioned church of St. Marcel, it could perhaps lie in the adjacent cemetery.²¹³ If this is so, then Gregory used 'vicus' to mean a suburb of the city of Paris.

Gregory cites fifty-nine *vici* which are, without doubt, rural settlements.²¹⁴ Of these, thirty-four are noted as having a church during this period. Two of these, Loches (Luccas) and Chinon (Chinonensem), were

²¹⁰Gregory, *MM*, GC, LXXXVII (p. 804).

²¹¹A map of the city and the location of Bishop Marcellus' tomb is found in Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux*, 203 and 210-11.

²¹²Gregory, *MM*, GC, CIII (p. 813).

²¹³Vieillard-Troiekouroff bases her argument on conclusions reached by J. Dubois in his 'L'emplacement des premiers sanctuaires de Paris', *Journal des Savants* (1968), 32-9. Here Dubois has identified St. Marcellus as the ancient church of the passage, basing his claim on a sixteenth-century report that the oratory of St. Crescentius was found in the south aisle of the church.

²¹⁴For a comparative list of *vici*, see Longnon, *Géographie*, 17.

also qualified as *castra*. Chinon had been a *castrum* during the imperial period and Gregory's use of 'castrum' might simply have been a reference using its former title, especially since he uses the term in a passage recording a siege of the settlement in A.D. 465.²¹⁵ Alternatively, Chinon, like the modern town, may have consisted of both a fortified *castrum* and a lower unfortified *vicus*.

Gregory also refers to the *vicus/castrum* of Loches.²¹⁶ The site of the *castrum* was located on a hill above the *vicus* of that same name, which, from Gregory's account, must have been founded before the fortress. Although this settlement was not of classical origin, it is important to note that the term for designating a small walled defensive site was still, for Gregory, 'castrum'. The remaining fifty-three *vici* appear fairly straightforward - i.e., rural sites often associated with a specific ecclesiastical organisation and function.²¹⁷

The term 'castrum' was used by Gregory to mean either a fortified stronghold or a secondary settlement. There are twenty-six *castra* mentioned in the works of Gregory, and of these only three were given an alternative title. The *castra* of Chinon and Loches have already been discussed. The *castrum* of Béziers differs, however,

²¹⁵Chinon is referred to four times as a *castrum* in this passage: Gregory, *MM*, GC, XXII (p. 761-62). His use of the term may well be a result of a reliance on an earlier text.

²¹⁶Gregory, *MM*, LVP, XVIII.1 (p. 734).

²¹⁷Gregory's most extensive list of *vici* is found in Book X of the *History*, where he records those settlements which were given churches by the bishops of Tours: Gregory, *HF*, X.31 (p. 442-49).

in that it was also termed a *civitas*.²¹⁸ A number of *castra* from imperial times had become thriving towns. Even so, Gregory's use of the term here is puzzling.

Gregory used the word 'castellum' on occasion, apparently with the same sense as 'castrum'. However, while 'castrum' occurs fifty-eight times in Gregory's works, 'castellum' is used on only four occasions - three of which are copied directly from other sources. The fourth, a reference to the 'castellum' of Blaye, concerns the miracles of St. Romaine, and could have been taken from an earlier lost life of the saint.²¹⁹

There are far more *villae* recorded in the seventh- and early eighth-century documentary sources than *vici*. These Merovingian *villae* may have differed very little in appearance from the *vici* of this period, except for the presence of an aristocratic or royal hall. Many *villae* by this time had become centres of religious activity, and thus centres of population. Of the *villae* recorded in the narrative sources, nearly all were royal estates which served as the setting for courts, councils and political and military meetings.

Both 'castrum' and 'castellum' were used to qualify fortified sites in the later Merovingian period. These ranged from urbanized settlements, such as Dorestad, to

²¹⁸*Ibid.*, III.21 and 22 (p. 130-31).

²¹⁹Of the four sites qualified by the term 'castrum', Châteaudun and Vendôme were taken from the Treaty of Andelot, drawn up in A.D. 587: *Ibid.*, IX.20 (p. 375). The reference to Neuss is found in a passage copied directly from Sulpicius Alexander, a fifth-century writer: *Ibid.*, II.9 (p. 73). Reference to the *castrum* of Blaye is from Gregory, *MM*, GC, XLV (p. 776).

those sites which served a purely military function.²²⁰ The choice of either 'castrum' or 'castellum' appears to have been arbitrary, although the secular documents favour the latter term. References to *castra* are found most often in the *Chronicle*.²²¹

In the early Carolingian period 'castrum' designated a number of settlement types. These included military fortresses on the Saxon frontier and civilian settlements, some of which were raised to episcopal status during this period.²²² Yet despite the variety of settlements recorded, the term 'castrum' was almost never applied to *civitas*-capitals, nor was 'civitas' used to describe a secondary fortified settlement.²²³ *Castra* played an important part in the military campaigns of this period, especially in frontier areas.²²⁴ 'Castrum'

²²⁰*Chronicle, Cont.*, VI (p. 172), for the qualification of Dorestad.

²²¹See Chapter IV, p. 222, for mention of the functions found in these settlements.

²²²Both the *castella* of Wurizaburg and Traiectus were given bishops at the beginning of this period: Boniface, *Ep.* XLIX (p. 101); and *Ep.* XCIV (p. 208).

²²³One of the few exceptions is found in a passage from the *ARF* on the siege of the *castrum* of Bûraburg in A.D. 773. This settlement was one of the Bavarian towns to be granted a bishop in the mid-eighth century. The site was originally known as a *castrum* and the use of the term in the *ARF* (p. 34-8) may be because of its former title. One of the rare examples where 'civitas' has been used to qualify what is obviously a secondary fortified settlement also comes from the *ARF*. The passage states: 'Imperator autem, cum ei multa de iactantia et superbia regis Danorum nuntiarentus, statuit trans Albiam fluvium civitatem aedificare Francorumque in ea ponere praesidium.' *ARF*. A.D. 809 (p. 129). Unless a bishop was installed in the garrison, it is difficult to account for the use of 'civitas'.

²²⁴The *ARF* includes references to the restoration of *castra* on the Saxon frontier. See, for example, *ARF*, A.D. 772, 775 and 789 (p. 32-5, 40-3, 68-71 and 84-7).

and 'castellum' were also used to identify military strongholds in Gaul, Spain and Italy.

The term 'vicus' was used during this period to qualify a number of rural settlements. Even so, it was used less frequently than 'villa', perhaps because many of the main sources of this period concentrate on events around royal estates. 'Viculus' was also used to describe a quarter of a town, as the chronicle of St-Riquier demonstrates.²²⁵

Most *villae* mentioned in the early Carolingian sources were royal estates. Many of these, however, were thriving towns with markets, mints, churches, and, in some cases, impressive defences. The best-known *villa* was Charlemagne's Aachen. Although usually qualified as a *villa*, it was described on one occasion as an 'urbs'. This term is found in a poem which wished to promote the settlement as a second Rome.²²⁶

Throughout the late Roman and early Merovingian periods, the terms 'villa', 'viculus' and 'castrum' were rarely applied to episcopal cities. Even in the early Carolingian period, when the rise of rural religious foundations and the possession of markets, defences and other urban features on private estates might have blurred the distinctions between cities and these 'secondary' settlements, this usage is infrequent. An examination of these terms does not, however, tell the

²²⁵See Chapter V, p. 275, fn. 103, which cites the passage on the *vici* or manufacturing quarters of the settlement.

²²⁶Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 202.

whole story; for while the city retained its episcopal status, the terms 'villa', 'vicus' and 'castrum' might have denoted equal, or perhaps even more important, settlements.

'Emporium'

A brief word should be said on the use and meaning of 'emporium'. In classical times, the term meant a place of trade or a market-town. Given the silence of the late Roman and Merovingian sources on urban commercial activities, it is not surprising to find that 'emporium' does not feature often in the sources until the ninth century. To describe a settlement as an 'emporium' was to focus entirely on its economic role. Even Dorestad, a well-known trading centre of the late Merovingian period, was qualified by the term 'castrum'.²²⁷

The increasingly important commercial role of some sites in the early Carolingian period seems to correspond with the emergence of the term 'emporium'. The *emporium* of Reric is one example of a town whose primary characteristics were economic (see Chapter V, pages 269).

Summary

In many cases, it can be shown that changes in the meaning and application of urban and regional terms coincided with alterations in the use and perception of

²²⁷*Chronicle, Cont.*, 6 (p. 172). The passage is concerned with a battle on the site, which may account for the use of the term 'castrum'.

civitas-capitals and their territories. Thus the decline of the term '*patria*', to refer to a city-territory, and the increase in the frequency of other regional words, demonstrates the breakdown of the *civitas*-community and the fading influence of the episcopal city over its territory. This development is further demonstrated by the restriction of the use of '*civitas*' and '*urbs*' to qualify only the city itself.

The rise of important rural settlements is more difficult to trace through the use of urban and regional terms. Centres such as Dijon or royal estates continued to be qualified by terms which seemed to imply a decreased prestige. Yet the change in status for many of these settlements was not to be found in their titles. The royal *villa* was still distinct from the episcopal city, but the qualification of '*civitas*' was no longer seen as a prerequisite for authority, power, wealth or prestige. This is not to deny the influence or position of episcopal cities, but it is certainly the case that, by the Carolingian period, the possession of a bishop's see was not a prerequisite for high status.

II. The *Civitas* as a Centre of Secular Administration

Late Roman Gaul A.D. 340-540

The cities of late imperial Gaul, indeed of the whole Roman world, were, in the words of A.H.M. Jones, '...the cells of which the empire was composed'.¹ The majority of Gallic cities and their associated territories were based on tribal groupings dating back before the conquests of Caesar. Indeed, in the third and fourth centuries a number of these cities give up their official names and assumed romanized forms of their Gallic tribal titles.²

Each *civitas* possessed an associated territory which was usually known by the name of its *civitas*-capital. There were no legal distinctions between the urban and rural members of the city and its region, and a person's homeland or *patria* was always defined as the city-territory of his family.

Loyalty to one's *patria* was strongly felt within the society, as is evidenced by many writers of this period. '...quod summas in adfectu partes iure sibi usurpat terra quae genuit', writes Sidonius of his brother-in-law Ecdicus' city-territory of Clermont.³ In a poem written by Sidonius sometime between A.D. 462 and 466, he asks his friend Consentius of Narbonne: 'Quid primum venerer

¹Jones, *LRE*, 712.

²An example of the former occurrence is the case of Angers, which changed its name in the fourth century from *Juliomagus* to *civitas Andecavorum*.

³'The land which has begotten you justifiably takes the greatest part of your affections.' Sidonius, *Ep.* III.3 (p. 41). Clermont will be used throughout the thesis to refer to the *Civitas Arvernorum*.

colamque pro te?' Sidonius then answers his own question, saying,

Ni fallor patriam patremque iuxta;
qui quamquam sibi vindicare summum
possit iure locum, tamen necesse est
illam vincere quae parit parentes.⁴

Ausonius, writing in the fourth century, compares his city-territory of Bordeaux with the imperial *civitates* of Rome and Constantinople, saying,

...non equidem certans cum maiestate
duarum,
solo set potior nomine, quod patria.⁵

Loyalty to one's *patria*, in Ausonius' view, was even expected from those who had left their city-territory. In his collection of poems commemorating the professors of Bordeaux he claims that although Exuperius has passed his last years in Cahors, nevertheless,

sed patriae te iure vocant et origo parentum
Burdigalae ut rursum nomen de rhetore
reddas.

He makes a similar demand of the deceased Sedatus, who had been a rhetorician of Toulouse:

cumque vagantem operam divisae im-
penderis urbi,
arbitrium de te sumit origo suum.⁶

⁴'To what must I first give reverence and worship on your behalf? To your *patria*, if I am not mistaken, and then to your father. Although he might rightly demand to have the highest place, nevertheless, it is inevitable that the parent of parents should be first.' *Ibid.*, *Carm.* XXIII.33-36 (p. 251).

⁵'Although Bordeaux cannot be seen as a rival to the grandeur of those two, yet by its name alone it rises above them because it is my *patria*.' Ausonius, XV.16.2.5-6 (p. 56).

⁶'But your *patria* and the origin of your family call upon you to return again your title of rhetorician to Bordeaux.' *Ibid.*, XVI.18.16-17 (p. 67). 'You have wandered and devoted your efforts to a distant city, but the rights of your city-territory claim you.' *Ibid.*, XVI.20.9-10 (p. 67).

An individual's *patria* was often included in literary descriptions. In many cases, his or her native land was as important a biographical detail as a person's family background or occupation.⁷ Eugippius, in his fifth-century life of St. Severinus, states in the Preface: 'Sane patria, de qua fuerit oriundus, fortasse necessario a nobis inquiritur, ut inde, sicut moris est, texendae cuiuspiam vitae sumatur exordium'. In this same way, Hilary, a fifth-century bishop of Arles, begins his sermon on the life of St. Honoratus saying, 'Et illud notum est omnibus oratoriae disciplinae, quorum laudandam receperint vitam, patriam prius et originem praedicare.'⁸

It is only fair to say that the two examples quoted above go on to condemn the loyalty given to *patriae*. The views of Eugippius and Hilary were those of a small minority of fifth-century churchmen - those who considered the secular tradition of *patria* loyalty to be a threat to the devotion owed to heaven, the 'true *patria*'. Despite this controversy (which will be examined in Chapter III), it is evident from the above passages that the inclusion of someone's *patria*, if not always approved, was at least expected in biographical descriptions.

⁷An example of this can be seen in the opening of the *Vita* of St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (written around A.D. 480). 'Igitur Germanus Autesioderensis oppidi indigena fuit, parentibus splendidissimis procreatus et ab ipsis infantiae rudimentis studiis liberalibus institutus.' *V. Ger.*, I (p. 251). Although 'oppidum' rather than 'patria' is used here, it is the city-territory which is meant.

⁸'Doubtless, the *patria* from which he originated is an unavoidable topic in our account, since it is the custom of writers of *Vitae* to consider such matters'. *V. Sev.*, Preface.⁷ (p. 2). 'It is the customary habit of all orators who have undertaken to praise a life, to speak first of the *patria* and lineage'. *V. Hon.*, I.1 (p. 51).

When speaking of a *patria*, writers of the late Roman period usually refer to both the city and its region. When describing the *civitas*-capital itself, the terms 'civitas', 'urbs' and 'oppidum' are used interchangeably. These cities relied on their territories for foodstuffs and revenues. A *civitas*, in turn, provided its region with a central market and the necessities and amenities of Roman life. Its secular functions included administrative and judicial services, as well as the more diverting urban features - the baths, theatre and other public entertainment buildings. Many towns in Gaul were also known for their schools, the possession of which is seen, in the works of Ausonius, to have been a source of civic pride.⁹

The government of late Roman cities was generally uniform throughout the Empire because of the similarity of urban constitutions. *Civitates* were, with the exception of judicial duties, self-governing. The greater part of the administrative duties fell on to the shoulders of the *decuriones* - members of the curial order who were elected for life from the ranks of the landed class.

⁹Ausonius devotes an entire book to the professors of Bordeaux, and calls the city a second Athens. Ausonius, XVI.15.8 (p. 65). A number of schools in Gaul were well-known, and a few of their instructors (including Ausonius and his uncle) were offered teaching positions at the imperial court. A discussion of Ausonius and his academic career is found in H. Isbell 'Decimius Magnus Ausonius: The Poet and His World', *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, ed. J.W. Binns (London, 1974), 34-9. An introduction to fifth-century lay schools is found in T.J. Haarhoff's, *Schools of Gaul, A Study of Pagan and Christian Education in the Last Century of the Western Empire* (Oxford, 1920), especially Parts II and III. See also P. Riché, *Education et culture dans l'Occident barbare, VI^e-VIII^e Siècles* (Paris, 1962), 55-171.

Although the office had brought prestige in an earlier period, increasing financial difficulties, in the form of the maintenance of public buildings and walls, the conscription of troops, and the provision of games for the urban population, proved too great and too expensive a task for many late Roman *decuriones*. The most crippling duty of all, however, was the collection of imperial levies and taxes; for, if this official could not take in the required sum, he was expected to make up the difference out of his own pocket.

The position of *decuriones* had been hereditary since before the days of Diocletian. Consequently, many families found themselves bound to an office that was neither profitable nor prestigious.¹⁰ It is little wonder that the demand to provide public services under harsh economic conditions made the curial office ruinous not only in financial terms, but also in terms of a citizen's popularity. Salvian, a churchman of this period, makes the claim that there was corruption within this office:

'quid aliud curialium quam iniquitas?' and 'Quae enim sunt non modo urbes, sed etiam municipia atque vici, ubi non quot curiales fuerint, tot tyranni sunt?'¹¹

Admittedly, Salvian's condemnation of the curial order stems from an almost fanatical hatred of all things Roman. Even so, his words demonstrate the extent to

¹⁰The classic account of the troubles of this class is found in Jones, *LRE*, 748-55.

¹¹'What is the life [sc. 'vita', from an earlier phrase] of *curiales* other than injustice?' Salvian, III.10.50 (p. 224). 'Indeed, where, not only in cities, but also in municipalities and villages, are there not as many tyrants as there are *curiales*?' *Ibid.*, V.4.18 (p. 324).

which the ills of the Empire were borne by this class (although many might well have been corrupt).

It would appear that a large number of *decuriones* fled from their imperial duties - either into the Church, or, if they could afford it, into retirement on their rural estates. The abandonment of towns for the countryside is attested to by a law (A.D. 396) in the *Codex Theodosianus*, which states:

Curiales omnes iubemus interminatione moneri, ne civitates fugiant aut deserant rus habitandi causa, fundum, quem civitati praetulerint, scientes fisco esse sociandum eoque rure esse carituros, cuius causa impios se vitando patriam demonstrarint.¹²

The initial rush into the ecclesiastical orders had been prompted, in part, by a ruling of Constantine, in 313, which declared that the Christian clergy were to be immune from curial duties.¹³ Such a law proved to be too tempting an offer for many *decuriones*, and, as a result, efforts were later made to curtail the numbers taking advantage of it, by requiring that all or part of

¹²*Codex Theod*, XII.18.2 (p 733): 'We command that all decurions shall be warned under threat of punishment that they must not flee or desert the municipalities for the purpose of dwelling in the country. They shall know that if they prefer any farm to the municipality, such farms shall be confiscated to the fisc, and they shall be deprived of that country district for the sake of which they show themselves impious by avoiding their municipality' [tr. Pharr, 383]. The law was issued by the emperors Arcadius and Honorius to the Praetorian Prefect Eutychianus (probably of Illyricum, see *PLRE*, 320) around the year A.D. 396.

¹³'qui divino cultui ministeria religionis impendunt. id est hi, qui clerici appellantur, ab omnibus omnino muneribus excusentur, ne sacrilego livore quorundam a divinis obsequiis avocentur'. *Codex Theod.*, XVI.2.2 (p. 835).

an individual's property must be given up upon entering the Church.¹⁴

The emperor Honorius, writing in A.D. 400 to the Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, complained,

Destitutae ministeriis civitates
splendorem, quo pridem nituerant,
amiserunt: plurimi siquidem collegia-
ti cultum urbium deserentes agrestem
vitam secuti in secreta sese et devia
contulerunt.¹⁵

The migration of craftsmen from the city to the countryside suggests either that the need for their services was in decline in the *civitates*, or there was a substantial rural aristocracy to patronise this class. Certainly this law of Honorius, and the laws of later emperors which stress the need for both *collegiati* and *decuriones* to return to their cities, demonstrates an awareness on the part of the central government of a substantial problem.

Despite the decline of the curial office in Gaul, it did not disappear altogether and was even adopted by many of the invading Germanic rulers. Curial authority, however, was to be limited by the rising power of bishops and the establishment of the *comes civitatis*, an office which became the principal means of secular administration for both the city and its territory.

¹⁴See Jones, *LRE*, 745-47, for a discussion of the ordination of *decuriones* and the laws pertaining to their taking up ecclesiastical orders.

¹⁵'The cities impoverished of services have lost the splendour with which they once had shone, since most of the *collegiati* [craftsmen], having deserted the refinements of the city, have fled to pursue a rural life in secret seclusion.' *Codex Theod.*, XII.19.1 (p. 733).

The position of *comes civitatis* may, in origin, have been purely a military office, but its responsibilities soon expanded to include the keeping of law and order and duties to the central government of the assigned city. In some instances, the *comes* also served in a judicial capacity.¹⁶ The duties of the *comes civitatis* varied from region to region in late Roman Gaul. Counts were not to be found in all regions, although many of the areas without this officer had holders of similar positions with different titles.

After the Germanic invasions, whether the office was primarily held by Gallo-Romans or Franks seems to have depended on the region in question.¹⁷ In Burgundy, *civitates* were given one of each.¹⁸ More often, however, the office was dominated by either Gallo-Romans or Franks, with the latter probably being more common in the northern, less romanized areas.

The office of *defensor civitatis* seems to have been purely judicial, though the title was sometimes held by the count. An idea of the duties and responsibilities of this position can be gleaned from a group of laws in the *Theodosian Code*. Here, it is clear that the *defensor*

¹⁶Again, Jones, *LRE*, 257-62, provides the best overview of the duties and laws pertaining to this office.

¹⁷B. Brennan rightly points out that tallies of Gallo-Roman or Frankish names cannot be taken as proof of an individual's cultural origin, since many people at this date may have changed their names. See B. Brennan, 'Senators and social mobility in sixth-century Gaul', *Journal of Medieval History*, II.2 (June, 1985), 156.

¹⁸'Sciunt itaque optimales consiliarii, domestici et maiores domus nostrae, cancellarii etiam, Burgundiones quoque et Romani civitatum et pagorum comites vel iudices deputati, omnes etiam et militantes.' 'Leges Burgundionum', *MGH, Leges Nationum Germanicarum*, II.1, ed. L.A. de Salis (Hannover, 1892), 5 (p. 31).

civitatis was intended to serve as a protector of the urban *plebs* and to defend their rights against those with greater power and wealth.¹⁹ Given the nature of these duties, it is little wonder that the title of *defensor civitatis* was to be passed on to the bishop upon the decline of this secular position.

It is surprising that the Gallic sources of the late Roman period have very little to say about the crisis of secular administration within *civitates*. Many writers present an idealized picture of Gaul and its cities. A number of authors of the period viewed the *civitas* as a symbolic representation of the strength and status of the province. Ammianus Marcellinus, in his *Res Gestae*, chose to describe Gaul in terms of its cities. In one passage he begins, 'secunda Germania, prima ab occidentali exordiens cardine, Agrippina et Tungris munita, civitatibus amplis et copiosis' - and so he continues for the whole of Gaul, recording first the name of the province followed by a description of the major cities of that region.²⁰ As noted in the Introduction (see p. 10-11), Ammianus' geographical divisions of Gaul are not always accurate. Moreover, the information on the cities themselves is more literary than historical, and may not, therefore, reflect their condition or status at the time of his writing. Even so, Ammianus chose to attribute the fame of each province to its respective city - to praise their palaces, walls, wealth, size and, in the case of

¹⁹*Codex Theod.* I.29.1-8 (p. 64-6).

²⁰'First beginning on the western boundary is Second Germany, defended by Köln and Tongres, spacious and affluent cities': *Amm. Marc.*, XV.11.7 (p. 66).

abandoned or destroyed cities, their past glory. His description of the ruined city of Avenches illustrates this latter point; for although he records that the *civitas* is now abandoned, he adds that its former importance is proven by the half-ruined buildings.²¹

Other writers, such as Ausonius or Sidonius, usually include both the *civitas*-capital and its countryside in their descriptions of city-territories. Even so, it is the city itself which gives the rural region its identity. Rarely does one find a lengthy city-territory description which makes no mention of its *civitas*-capital.

The Gallic churchman Salvian offers a description of a great city, Carthage, capital of the diocese of Africa, noting:

quia universa penitus, quibus in toto mundo disciplina rei publicae vel procuratur vel regitur, in se habuit. Illic enim omnia officiorum publicorum instrumenta, illic artium liberalium scholae, illic philosophorum officinae, cuncta denique vel linguarum gymnasia vel morum; illic quoque etiam copiae militares et regentes militiam potestates, illic honor proconsularis, illic iudex cotidianus et rector, . . . : illic denique omnes rerum dispensatores et differentes inter se tam gradu quam vocabulo dignitates, omnium, ut ita dicam, platearum et competitorum procuratores, cuncta ferme et loca urbis et membra populi gubernantes.²²

²¹ *Ibid.*, XV.11.12 (p. 66).

²² 'She had completely within herself all the materials which are used for the provisioning, ruling, and governing of the State, anywhere in the whole world. In that city were located all the agencies of public office, there were the schools of liberal arts, there were the workshops of the philosophers and finally, all the schools for languages and ethics. There were also the military stores and the military headquarters, there the proconsular dignity, there the daily judge and provincial ruler... There were also all the administrators and

The Gallic counterpart to Carthage would have been, in Salvian's time, the *civitas* of Trier, though this also had the distinction of being an imperial capital. Ausonius, in his poem, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, notes that Trier, ranked sixth out of twenty cities, is an imperial *civitas*.²³ Trier had served as an imperial residence from Constantine to Gratian. It had also been the home of the Praetorian Prefect of Gaul, an honour it held up until the beginning of the fifth century, when the seat was moved to Arles.²⁴ Although many cities in Gaul would not have included, like Carthage, elaborate schools, military headquarters or governors' palaces, each would certainly have maintained its urban dignitaries - *decuriones*, judges and lesser administrators.

The most direct account of urban administration appears in Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei*. It is, however, a source which must be approached critically, as it is openly hostile to the classical non-Christian elements of society. In this text, Salvian censures not only the *decuriones*, but all holders of secular public office: '...quid aliud officialium quam calumnia?'²⁵ Salvian blames the state of affairs in Gaul on the corrupt administration. 'Ac per hoc vitiositas et impuritas quasi germanitas quaedam est hominum Romanorum

dignitaries differing among themselves in grade and title, the keepers, so to speak, of streets and crossroads, governing almost all parts of the city and members of the population.' Salvian, VII.16.67-68 (p. 478-80) [tr. O'Sullivan, 208-9].

²³Ausonius, XVIX.28-32 (p. 99).

²⁴Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas*, I, Gallien (Köln, 1975), 234-35.

²⁵'What is the life [sc. 'vita'] of officials other than treachery?' Salvian, III.10.50 (p. 224).

et quasi mens atque natura, quia ibi praecipue vitia ubicumque Romani.²⁶ These Romans are, by necessity, in the cities along with those urban features which Salvian considers corrupt - the baths, theatre and circus.

It was, of course, the duty of the secular administration to maintain these facilities. The objections raised by Salvian and other churchmen to this will be discussed further in Chapter III. It is important to note here, however, that the secular government's ties to such institutions often set it at odds with the more extreme members of the Christian community.

Although the city and countryside were often viewed as closely interlinked, there appears to have been a strict division between urban and rural activities. This at least holds true for those involved in secular administration. Sidonius, an aristocrat, administrator, and, eventually, bishop, offers a clear example of the attitudes of his class towards towns and town life. While in the countryside he gives himself up to writing, reading, hunting and visiting the *villae* of friends and relatives. In a letter to his friend Trygetius, who is staying in the *civitas* of Bazas, he asks, 'attrahere Burdigalam [where Sidonius is staying at a friend's estate] non potestates, non amicitiae, non optimata vivariis ostrea queant?'²⁷ If, however, Sidonius wishes to bring his

²⁶ 'And this corruption and impurity exists as if it were in the blood of the Romans - as if it were their minds and nature, because wherever there are Romans there is corruption.' *Ibid.*, VI.8.40 (p. 338).

²⁷ '...can neither obligations, nor friendship, nor the best oysters in fishponds lure you to Bordeaux?' Sidonius, *Ep.* VIII.12.1 (p. 143). I am not certain of Sidonius' use of the term 'potestates'. Opposed, as it

friends to the city, he will call upon their sense of duty (whether secular or ecclesiastical), reminding them that they ought not to linger in the idleness which rural life promotes: 'Quid Serranorum aemulus et Camillorum cum regas stivam, dissimulas optare palmatam? Parce tantum in nobilitatis invidiam rusticari.'²⁸

It is evident that Sidonius recognised a duality of public duty and private repose embodied in the town and countryside respectively. This division was a long-established precept of the Roman ruling class, and is found in the writings of Cicero, Pliny and Virgil. This precept is also echoed by more contemporary writers. Symmachus, writing to Probus around the year A.D. 383, consoled his friend whose leisure had been disrupted by a summons to Milan: 'Quisque bonae frugis est in publicum commodum vindicatur. Pone illas interim cogitationes felicis otii tui'.²⁹ A Gallic example of this idea is found in the writings of Ausonius. In a poem describing his estate, he notes with pride how his property is located near enough to the city of Bordeaux to enjoy its benefits, and at the same time is at a distance which

is, to 'amicitiae', it would seem that the word might carry the meaning of an authority above that of the duties of friendship - i.e., an official summons.

²⁸ 'Why guide the plough-handle in imitation of Serranus and Camillus, and disregard the desire for a consul's robe? Refrain from bringing dishonour on to the nobility by spending so much time in the country.' *Ibid.*, Ep. VIII.8.2 (p. 134). Sidonius is writing to his friend Syagrius, believed to be of Lyon.

²⁹ 'An honest man is required in the service of the State. Abandon for a time those dreams of happy leisure', Symmachus, Ep. I.58 (p. 27). See also J. Matthews' discussion of the division of public and private activities of the senatorial class in 'The Letters of Symmachus', *Latin Literature of the Fourth Century*, ed. J.W. Binns (London, 1974), 77-80.

allows him to avoid the noise and confusion of the urban crowds.³⁰ The occupations of urban and rural life are compared in Ausonius' letter to Paulus. Here, Ausonius invites his friend to his estate where they may,

dulcia secreti repetantur ut otia
ruris, nugis amoena seriis; tempora
disponas ubi tu tua iusque tuum sit,
ut nil agas vel quod voles.³¹

For the aristocratic Gallo-Roman, it was the city which hosted public activity and furthered administrative careers. Greatness was not to be found in *villa* life. Yet, it is clear from the above-quoted passages that rural estates were seen as an essential counterpart to the public urban sphere. Indeed, it is quite probable that most members of the aristocracy would have viewed a solely urban existence as being as unthinkable as one limited to country estates.

This delineation was also adopted in a modified form by members of the Church. Paulinus of Nola, a native of Gaul, writes to his friend Aper, a monk, saying,

...et ideo rarus, ut scribis, urbium
frequentator, familiare secretum la-
citi ruris adamasti, non otium nego-
tio praeferens, neque te ecclesias-
ticae utilitati subtrahens, sed iam
pene forensibus turbis aemulos eccle-
siarum tumultus et concilia inquieta
declinans.³²

³⁰ 'Haec mihi nec procul urbe sita est, nec prorsus ad urbem, ne patiar turbas utque bonis potiar.' Ausonius, XII.2.29-30 (p. 35).

³¹ 'find again the sweet freedom of the hidden countryside, and the pleasure of trifling in earnest. You may dispose of your time as you yourself see fit; so that you may do nothing or else what you wish.' *Ibid.*, Ep. X.31-34 (p. 169).

³² 'Therefore, rarely, so you write, are you a frequenter of the cities. You have come to love the intimate privacy of the countryside; not that you place leisure before duty, nor do you withdraw yourself from being of

Paulinus provides a clear statement on the briskness of urban ecclesiastical activities, explicitly paralleled with the commonplace classical notion of the town as a centre of feverish secular business (in contrast to the quiet of the countryside). However, Paulinus also feels a need to excuse his friend's rural retreat, saying that he has not gone into the countryside for rest, nor has he shunned the duties of the Church. This ecclesiastical relationship between Church and city will be explored further in the following chapter.

Although there is no doubt that classical secular administration was to be found primarily in *civitas*-capitals, the period between A.D. 340 and 540 witnessed a number of Germanic invasions which introduced a new ruling class to Gaul. While the framework of urban government remained relatively unchanged (with the exception of those duties which had passed on to the Church), the influence of the Western and Eastern emperors was obviously diminished by the presence of the barbarian kings. Most appeared to have quickly adopted town-based government, though these were usually the more romanized leaders. Remote groups, such as the Alamanni, seem to have been initially shy of towns. Ammianus records: 'nam ipsa oppida ut circumdata retiis busta declinant'.³³

Apart from these few exceptions, Germanic rulers appeared

service to the Church. Yet, at present, you avoid the tumult of the churches and the disquiet of the councils which nearly rival the crowds of the forum.' Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* XXXVIII. 10 (p. 332-33).

³³ 'For the towns themselves [those towns which had been invaded - namely Strasbourg, Brumath, Saverne, Seltz, Speyer, Worms, and Mainz] they avoided as if they were circled by nets.' Amm. Marc., XVI.2.12 (73-4).

to have used cities as administrative bases - a practice which continued up until the beginning of the seventh century.

The Early Merovingian Period A.D. 540-600

The most comprehensive source for the early Merovingian period is Gregory of Tours' *Libri Historiarum X* (referred to here as the *History*). It is evident that by Gregory's time, that is, the latter half of the sixth century, cities were an essential element of Frankish rule. Royal income was drawn from them, refuge was taken in them, power was conferred by them, and Gregory makes mention of kings residing in urban palaces and being buried in suburban churches. Indeed, the entire basis for authority appears, from the *History*, to have been founded on the possession and control of *civitas*-capitals.

That *civitates* (cities and their dependent territories) served as the units of collection for taxes and revenues is demonstrated in a number of passages in the *History*. The levying of a new tax by King Chilperic is said to have prompted a mass exodus from the affected cities and a revolt of the people of Limoges.³⁴ Childebert II had new tax lists drawn up for the cities of Poitiers and Tours, though in the latter case, Gregory

³⁴Although the taxes were levied on both the rural and urban population, it was the *civitas*-capitals which served as the centres for collection. Gregory, *HF*, V.28 (p. 222-23). For a general survey of Merovingian taxation see W. Goffart, 'Old and New in Merovingian Taxation', *Past and Present*, XCVI (August, 1982), 3-21.

himself argued for the exemption of his people on the grounds that previous kings had not increased the taxes out of respect for St. Martin.³⁵ The urban Church was also a source of royal income, since ecclesiastical revenues from a city-territory would flow into the bishop's coffer. The collection of taxes from the clergy is attested to in Gregory's account of King Chilperic's remittance of all past revenues owed by the Church.³⁶

Merovingian cities were frequently used as places of refuge, as we shall see in Chapter IV, and their role as symbols of power and prestige can be inferred by the fact that they were often the centre of military struggles. This important status is also demonstrated by the political actions of the early Merovingian kings. When the kingdom of Lothar I came to be divided between his sons Charibert, Guntram, Chilperic and Sigibert, each one took a kingdom and designated for himself a city as a royal seat.³⁷ In this same way, when King Guntram came to pass on his kingdom to his nephew Childebert, he handed him his spear saying, 'Et hoc nunc vade et omnes civitates meas tamquam tuas proprias sub tui iuris dominatione subice.'³⁸ The possession of cities was a necessary prerequisite for power, and while the lands associated with them were almost certainly included, it

³⁵Gregory, IX.30 (p. 384-85).

³⁶These taxes were not, however, abolished. *Ibid.*, X.7 (p. 413-14).

³⁷These are Paris, Orléans, Soissons and Reims respectively. *Ibid.*, IV.22 (p. 159).

³⁸'And now proceed to govern all my cities under your own command.' *Ibid.*, VII.33 (p. 313).

was the *civitates* themselves which were seen as the symbols of authority.

This conferring of power was also granted to Merovingian queens in the form of the *Morgengabe*, or morning gift. The *Morgengabe* was given by a Merovingian king to his queen on the morning after their wedding day. In the ceremony, the king would recite the names of those cities to be given to the queen. These were henceforth considered to be her own property from which she collected revenue.³⁹

Many Frankish kings were crowned in *civitates* and took up residence in urban palaces. According to Brühl, a number of these residences were, in fact, the former palaces of the Roman governors. His argument is weakened, however, by the fact that he often bases his theories on inconclusive evidence, such as the former importance of the city or mention of a king visiting the centre.⁴⁰ Even so, it does seem probable that some Merovingian kings would have used the abandoned Roman palaces, since many were eager to emulate their imperial predecessors.

The link with imperial administrative tradition appears to have been an important consideration for a number of sixth-century Frankish leaders. The fact that the imperial system had been based on *civitates* ensured the survival of the city as a secular administrative

³⁹Gregory's reference to the *Morgengabe* is taken from a treaty between Guntram and Childebert. Gregory, *HF*, IX.20 (p. 376).

⁴⁰See, for example, his arguments for a royal palaces in Poitiers, Reims and Chalon-sur-Saône. Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas*, 174; 63-4; and 135.

centre. I would argue that early Merovingian kings understood that their legitimacy lay in the control of cities. Revenues and military benefits aside, these kings recognised that cities granted them a place alongside previous imperial rulers. Brühl believes that early Merovingian rulers resided in urban palaces to demonstrate their link with the Roman administration and the consequent validity of their position to the Gallo-Romans.⁴¹ If this is so, it would explain, in part, why we find, in the course of the seventh century, a simultaneous decline of both the imperial administrative tradition and urban-based government.

During the course of the sixth century, it is clear that many Merovingian kings made considerable efforts to associate themselves with the Empire. Such ambitions were, at times, encouraged by the eastern emperors, as a very famous passage concerning Clovis from Gregory's *History* shows:

Igitur ab Anastasio imperatore code-
cillos de consolato accepit, et in
basilica beati Martini tunica blattea
indutus et clamide, inpones vertice
diademam.⁴²

⁴¹C. Brühl, 'The Town as a Political Centre: General Survey', *European Towns: Their Archaeology and Early History*, ed. M.W. Barley (London, 1977), 419-29.

⁴²'Letters reached Clovis from the Emperor Anastasius to confer the consulate on him. In Saint Martin's church he stood clad in a purple tunic and the military mantle, and he crowned himself with a diadem.' Gregory, *HF*, II.38 (p. 102) [tr. Thorpe, 154]. It is possible to question the accuracy of this passage and to claim that Gregory's account is more literary than historical. His phrase, 'he crowned himself with a diadem', for example, could be taken to mean simply that he accepted the consular dignity. See I. Wood, 'Gregory of Tours and Clovis', *Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, LXIII (1985), 249-72, which casts doubt upon Gregory's entire account of Clovis' career. For a discussion on the validity of

Gregory of Tours also records, '...et ab ea die tamquam consul aut augustus est vocitatus.'⁴³

The imperial ceremony of *adventus* was also taken up by Merovingian rulers.⁴⁴ Again from Gregory we have an account on how Godigisel entered into the city of Vienne in triumph after a treaty with Clovis, and Clovis himself rode through the streets of Tours distributing gold and silver coins after being granted the consulship.⁴⁵ Even as late as A.D. 589, we have an account from Gregory of the *adventus* of Theudebert, the son of King Childebert, who was received into the city of Soissons by the citizens as their protector and ruler.⁴⁶ The late sixth-century poet Venantius Fortunatus also encouraged the classical association, by comparing King Charibert with the emperor Trajan.⁴⁷

The fact that many Merovingian kings were buried in *civitates* is perhaps as much a result of the urban-based Church as any deliberate policy to emulate classical tradition. Even so, the Church, as the last surviving remnant of the Empire, was one of the factors which induced the Frankish kings to adopt urban administration.

the above passage, see M. Reydellet, *La Royauté dans la Littérature Latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Seville* (Rome, 1981) (= *Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*), CCXLIII, 406-408.

⁴³'...and from that day he was called consul or Augustus.' Gregory, *HF*, II.38 (p. 102).

⁴⁴On the origin and development of the ceremony of *adventus* see S. MacCormack, 'Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of *Adventus*', *Historia*, XXI (1972), 721-52.

⁴⁵Gregory, *HF*, II.33 (p. 96); and II.38 (p. 102).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, IX.36 (p. 391).

⁴⁷Venantius, VI.2.81-2 (p. 133).

The chief secular administrator of the *civitas* was the count. Under the early Merovingian rulers, this position was seen as the secular counterpart to the episcopal office. The civic duties shared between these two officers often resulted in bitter quarrels and outright struggles for supremacy. In many ways their responsibilities were similar, and there are several references in Gregory's *History* to the episcopal ordination of retired counts.⁴⁸ A count's urban duties included the trying of court cases (a job sometimes shared with the bishop), the collection of revenues and the keeping of the peace. Often a count was called upon to defend his city, either by gathering troops or by repairing his city walls.⁴⁹ There are also numerous references in Gregory's *History* to *duces* who controlled two or more cities. This office, however, appears to have been concerned with military duties, and they are not as closely associated with cities as the counts.⁵⁰

Attitudes towards the division of public and private activities along urban and rural lines seem to have been

⁴⁸Marachar, count of Angoulême, is noted as joining the Church and becoming bishop after his term as count of the city. Gregory, *HF.*, V.36 (p. 228). Two other counts (one of Javols and the other of Saintes) are also said to have become bishops later in their careers. *Ibid.*, VI.38 (p. 278); and VIII.22 (p. 339-40).

⁴⁹King Chilperic, when he hears that his brother Guntram and his nephew Childebert are planning to take his cities, retreats to the *civitas* of Cambrai, taking his treasury, and there orders that the dukes and counts repair the walls of their cities and secure themselves within them: *Ibid.*, VI.41 (p. 281). Gregory also records the gathering of troops by the count of Tours. *Ibid.*, VII.29 (p. 308).

⁵⁰See R. Sprandel, 'Dux und comes in der Merovingerzeit', *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte, Germanistische Abteilung*, LXXIV (1957), 47-54.

carried over from the late Roman period. Such practices were, as stated above, continued by the Franks because of their acceptance of an urban system of administration. The majority of bishop's councils, usually called at the request of the king, were held in *civitas*-capitals. It was, as we have seen, also important for a Frankish ruler to choose a city as his royal seat - the first Merovingian king recorded to have done so being Clovis, who selected Paris as his capital.⁵¹ The practice of residing in Roman administrative capitals had been adopted by Visigothic and the Ostrogothic rulers, and it is possible that Merovingian kings before Clovis had done the same.⁵²

Secular attitudes towards *patriae* appear to have continued unaltered during the early Merovingian period. This is not surprising, given that the Franks had accepted the boundaries of the late Roman city-territories. Although the sixth century sources do not echo the late Roman maxims on the place of *patria* loyalty, it is evident that most writers of this period used the term to mean a specific city-territory. In a poem written to honour Lupus, a governor of Marseille, Venantius addressed him as, 'felix animus patriae' - the *patria* here being the city-territory of Marseille.⁵³ Venantius, however, is often seen as the last gasp of *romanitas* within the Frankish kingdom; and indeed, his use of the

⁵¹Gregory, *HF*, II.38 (p. 102).

⁵²E. Ewig, 'Résidence et capitale pendant le haut Moyen Age', *Revue Historique*, CCXXX (1963), 28-31 and 47-50. Ewig argues that Clovis selected Paris because of its strategic position and for its famous saints.

⁵³Venantius, VII.7.23 and 71 (p. 159).

term 'patria' is not to be found in the writings of the later Merovingian period.

The Later Merovingian Period A.D. 600-752

The seventh and early eighth centuries in Gaul are the most obscure years of Merovingian history. The detailed and personalized sources characteristic of the earlier centuries are nowhere to be found, and one searches in vain for works which compare with the writings of the well-known authors of the fifth and sixth centuries. It is also, unfortunately, a period in which the use and perception of Gallic cities altered dramatically. The majority of secular administrative functions appear to have moved away from the cities and into the countryside during this period. Proof of this is to be found in the seventh- and early eighth-century narrative documentation which shows that there was a decrease in the number of secular and ecclesiastical councils held in cities. An examination of the secular charters from this period also demonstrates this trend, in that far more were issued from secondary settlements than from *civitas*-capitals (the majority being issued from *villae*).⁵⁴

Reasons for this change may be linked to a decline in the imperial tradition of urban administration. This is not to imply that the Franks, realising that Rome was no more, took the first opportunity to return to their estates in response to a Germanic love of the country-

⁵⁴See *Diplomata* Bruckner, and *Diplomata* Pardessus.

side. This nineteenth-century view has long been discounted. Yet the question remains: why were the cities abandoned?

A weakening Empire and the blending of Germanic and Gallo-Roman peoples certainly would have lessened the need for Frankish rulers to justify their authority by residing and governing in cities. There are, undoubtedly, comparatively fewer references to Gallo-Roman or senatorial families during the course of this period. This also holds true for references to Franks, so that, by the end of the Merovingian age, it can be said that the governmental system was no longer composed of Gallo-Roman administrators serving a Germanic ruling class. The memory of Rome was also perhaps losing its influence.

In addition to these factors, there appears to have been a strengthening of the ideal of Merovingian kingship in the first half of the seventh century. Such a development would have enabled Merovingian kings to see themselves as rulers in their own right, with no need to associate with the Empire or its traditions of administration. I do not mean to imply here a conscious break with *romanitas*, since the abandonment of the cities by the secular authorities was clearly the result of many factors - the decline of the Empire and the amalgamation of the population being only two.

Other suggestions for the rise of rural administration can perhaps be supported by the changes found within the Merovingian monarchy and aristocracy. The decline of monarchical control is evident from the main

sources of the period, and, of course, from the replacement of the Merovingian dynasty in A.D. 751. Whether the aristocrats of this era were aware of this shift of power is not known, although it is of interest to this question to include a tale which the Fredegar chronicler added in a reworking of Gregory's *History*. The chronicler tells of Childeric and Basina, the parents of Clovis, on their wedding night. Basina is said to have sent Childeric out three times with instructions to return each time and relate what he has seen. The first time he speaks of having seen lions and leopards, the second, bears and wolves, and the third, lesser animals, such as dogs. Basina replies to him', and so will your descendents be.'⁵⁵

The result of the decline of monarchical control was a corresponding rise in the power of the nobility. A number of city-territories, which had retained their imperial boundaries up until this time, were now divided among local lords along the lines of *pagi* (see Chapter I, p. 81). These regions became self-sufficient and were able to function independently from the *civitas*-capital.⁵⁶ The majority of charters from this period use the term 'pagus' to refer to a division of land. While there are even fewer documents of this sort from the sixth century, these do seem to use city-territory

⁵⁵*Chronicle*, III. (p.96).

⁵⁶Although few secular documents of this period survive, a charter of around A.D. 631 demonstrates how the land of a *pagus* is divided up between members of an aristocratic family. *Diplomata* Pardessus, 'Charta divisionis Praedium in Pago Lemovinio Inter Theudilanam, Maurinum, et Audegiselum', II (p. 9).

terms, i.e. 'regio', 'territorium', and even 'civitas' and 'urbs'. The substitution of 'pagus' for other territory terms is also found in the narrative sources. In the *LHF*, for example, the word 'paygus' (a variation on the usual spelling) has been substituted for 'urbs' in a passage taken from Gregory's *History*.⁵⁷

Such divisions must have had an effect on the *civitates*, cutting down their rural revenues and undermining the sense of *civitas* community and loyalty to one's *patria*. The decline of this feeling of community can be supported by the almost total disappearance of the term 'patria'. City-territories are never qualified by this word in the *Chronicle*, and in the *LHF*, in a passage borrowed from Gregory's *History*, the seventh-century author has substituted the term 'regio' for 'patria'.⁵⁸

Freedom from the city meant a corresponding release from the authority of the bishop. Evidence from this period shows that there were many new religious foundations established without the approval of the episcopal branch of the Church. This was not, however, a calculated move on the part of the aristocracy against episcopal power, but rather a natural consequence of

⁵⁷*LHF*, XXI (p.276): 'Cumque venissent cum magno hoste in paygo Viennense, in loco qui dicitur Visoroncia'. The passage from Gregory's *History* reads: 'Cumque pariter apud Visorontiam locum urbis Viennensis coniuncti fuissent,....' Gregory, *HF*, III.6 (p 113). See also R.A. Gerberding's chapter, 'The *Liber Historiae Francorum* and Gregory of Tours' in *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum* (Oxford, 1987), 31-46.

⁵⁸*LHF*, XXI (p. 276-77): 'Burgundiones peremunt, cunctasque regiones vastantes,....' Gregory, *HF*, III.6 (p. 114): 'Burgundionis oppraemunt patriamque in suam redigunt potestatem'.

having found an accessible means by which to exercise control from a rural base.

Much of the recorded activity involving secular authority in and around cities was military in nature. This picture of late Merovingian *civitates* is, however, partly a result of the available sources which tend to emphasise military events. This aspect of town use and perception will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Evidence from the *Chronicle* suggests that late Merovingian cities shared a number of public functions with non-urban settlements. In A.D. 616, King Lothar summoned the bishops and nobles of Burgundy to the *villa* of Bonneuil. There, it is said, 'cunctis illorum iustis petitionibus annuens, preceptionibus roboravit'.⁵⁹ In A.D. 627, Lothar again called his bishops and great men - this time to the *villa* of Clichy - in order to discuss 'pro utilitate regia et salute patriae...'.⁶⁰ Although earlier Frankish kings had also spent time on their rural estates, official councils and meetings of the sixth century took place, more often than not, in *civitas*-capitals.

During the seventh century there is, as has been shown, a marked increase in the number of administrative functions held outside the city. Urban administration was not, however, abandoned altogether. In the *Chronicle*, we are told that Charibert (in A.D. 629) selected

⁵⁹ 'He examined their just requests and agreed in writing to their supplications.' *Chronicle*, IV.44 (p. 143).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, IV.55 (p. 148). This is the only reference to a *patria* in the whole of the *Chronicle* and *Continuations*. The term in this passage refers to the kingdom of Lothar, II which included Neustria and Burgundy.

Toulouse as his royal seat, in the same way as the sons of Lothar I, some sixty-eight years earlier, had taken the cities of Paris, Orléans, Soissons, and Reims.⁶¹ Some Merovingian kings of this period continued to be buried in and around major cities, though Krüger's catalogue of known royal burials shows that there is an increase in the number of rural burials in comparison to those of the sixth century.⁶²

An example of urban administrative activity is found in the *Chronicle*, where King Dagobert (c. A.D. 629) is said to have arrived at the city of Langres and there given justice to the urban population, both rich and poor. This same king is also recorded as receiving counsel from his bishops and nobles in the city of Metz, and afterwards placing his son Sigibert on the throne there - allowing him to consider the city as his seat.⁶³ The later Merovingian era would appear, therefore, to have been a time when traditions of administrative policy were not tied to any one type of settlement.

The Early Carolingian Period A.D. 751-843

The current scholarly consensus is that the secular administration of the Carolingian realm was conducted, as

⁶¹*Ibid.*, IV.57 (p.149).

⁶²The catalogue demonstrates that half of the known royal burials of the later Merovingian period take place in secondary settlements, in comparison to the one rural burial, out of a total of eleven, in the sixth century. K.H. Krüger, *Königsgrabkirchen der Franken, Angelsachsen und Langobarden bis zur Mitte des 8. Jahrhunderts*, (München, 1971) [= *Münstersche Mittelalter Schriften*, IV], 30-7.

⁶³*Chronicle*, IV.58 (p. 149); and IV.75 (p. 159).

a rule, from rural settlements. These include royal *villae* and monastery-palaces which were established by Charlemagne and his successors. It is also clear, however, that cities continued to play some part in royal administration. Of royal charters and other diplomas of Charlemagne, out of 164 places of issue, 37 were from 16 different Frankish *civitates*, and 26 from foreign cities.⁶⁴ Of the Frankish cities, Worms, Regensburg, Speyer and Agen are each noted as having a *palatium*.⁶⁵

Yet many scholars, among them Fixot and McKitterick, claim that the only urban palace to be found in the Carolingian period was at Worms.⁶⁶ The above charter evidence, however, would seem to counter this view. Moreover, the *Annales regni Francorum* (referred to here as *ARF*) makes mention of a palace belonging to Charlemagne in the *civitas*-capital of Regensburg.⁶⁷

⁶⁴The foreign *civitates* are nearly all in Italy. Of the remaining documents, 91 are issued from Frankish *villae*, or from Frankish monasteries. None are from foreign monasteries or *villae*, implying that Charlemagne was adapting himself to traditions of administration and patterns of urban residence found in Italy during this period. Charters from other Carolingian rulers show a similar trend, with the exception of the charters of Lothar II, of which none were issued from foreign cities.

⁶⁵Reference to the *palatium* of Agen is found in an immunity of Pippin III (783), *Diplomata* Mühlbacher, 84. Five references to the *palatia* of Worms, Regensburg and Speyer are from the reign of Charlemagne (*Ibid.*, 221, 230, 234, 339 and 346). A charter of Louis the Pious (831) is issued from the palace of Regensburg, *Diplomata* Kehr, 8.

⁶⁶M. Fixot, 'Une image idéale, une réalité difficile', *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville antique des origines au IX^e siècle*, ed. G. Duby (Paris, 1980), 503; and R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians* (London, 1983), 21.

⁶⁷The passage refers to a visit made by bishop Felix of Urgel. 'Huius rei causa ductus ad palatium regis, nam is tunc apud Reginum Baiocariae civitatem, in qua hiemaverat residebat;' *ARF*, A.D. 792 (p. 91).

From the evidence collected by Brühl, it is evident that while most Merovingian administrative residences appear to have been neglected by the Carolingians, there are a few which might have continued to be used. Brühl believes that urban royal residences were moved to the suburbs in the ninth century - often next to or within suburban monasteries. These monastery-palaces, however, were not used regularly until the reign of Charles the Bald.⁸⁸

The custom of rural administration was not absolute. Many cities, as indicated above, continued to serve as issuing points for charters and residences for kings. Returning to the *ARF*, it is evident that there were many times when cities were included in a king's itinerary, or acted as hosts to secular assemblies, military meetings and diplomatic envoys. Louis the Pious is recorded, in A.D. 818, travelling to Aachen via Angers, Rouen, Amiens and Cambrai. The *ARF* also mentions courts and meetings at Worms, Orléans, Regensburg and Selz, and a meeting of diplomatic envoys at Worms.⁸⁹

Nithard's history of the sons of Louis the Pious (covering the years 814-43) clearly demonstrates the use of *civitates* for political purposes. Of the six assemblies mentioned, four take place within *civitates*. Four of the five councils held between the warring sons are, again, in cities, as are the four meetings mentioned with foreign envoys. The decision to meet in cities may,

⁸⁸Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas*, 249-50.

⁸⁹*ARF*, A.D. 818 (p. 148-49), for the travels of Louis the Pious.

of course, have been influenced by a need for security, though this is not made clear by Nithard. Another reference from Nithard also records how Charles, after meeting with his brother in Langres, returns to Aachen via Beauvais, Compiègne, Soissons, Reims and Châlons-sur-Marne in order to gather political support for his cause.⁷⁰

But it is not only kings who use *civitates* for political ends or as an administrative base. The efforts of Charlemagne and his successors to establish counts in episcopal cities resulted in the re-introduction of secular urban administration. With this re-instatement of urban-based authority came the development of the *comitatus* - a secular territorial division. Although rarely used in Merovingian times to describe anything other than the office of count, the term took on a distinct geographical meaning towards the end of the eighth century. *Comitatus* were often founded on earlier divisions of city-territories, and their urban base was usually the *civitas* of the region. Counts were encouraged to work with their bishops in the running of the city and its territory. In addition to secular duties, the count, or in some cases the duke, was called upon to confirm ecclesiastical appointments, including, on occasion, the selection of a new bishop.⁷¹

⁷⁰Nithard, III, 2 (p. 29-31).

⁷¹Boniface is told by Pope Gregory III (739) to seek the approval of the duke and other nobles of Bavaria before ordaining his new bishops: Boniface, *Ep.* XLVI (p. 97). As for counts, the synods of this period refer to them as defenders of the Church and exhort them to work closely with their bishops.

Although there is evidence for administrative activity in *civitates* during this period, it is still the case that the majority of such functions were performed from rural settlements. The decline of the administrative status of cities is perhaps best illustrated by the exalted place given to secondary settlements such as Aachen. Moduin the poet spoke of Aachen, saying: 'Aurea Roma iterum renovata renascitur orbi.'⁷² The concept of Aachen as a second Rome, however, was closely associated with Charlemagne's role as emperor; for without the dignity of this title, the parallel between Aachen and Rome could not have been drawn.

The Carolingian Empire can be seen to have had a roving capital which established itself wherever the king's preference took it. Thus, it would appear that Carolingian emperors gave administrative legitimacy to every court residence. If this was the case, then the size or status of a settlement would have had little to do with its potential as an administrative centre. Moreover, the *civitates* would have held few advantages over *villae* or other settlements (some of which were fortified), since the position of political centres was more a matter of royal preference than of any administrative tradition.

⁷²P. Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 'Euloga', 27 (p. 192).

Summary

This chapter has been concerned with demonstrating how Gallic *civitates* went from being the primary centres of secular administration to settlements which were used only occasionally for this purpose. While it could be argued that the re-introduction of counts into Carolingian cities revived this tradition, it must be admitted that their administrative role was not on the scale of the sixth-century *comites*. Moreover, as we shall see in the next chapter, this re-instatement may not have been made in response to any change in administrative policy, but simply as a means of keeping the power of the bishop in check and to make certain that the king's interests were represented in all settlements.

It seems likely that the decline of urban secular administration in the later Merovingian period was a result of the disappearance of *romanitas*. As stated earlier, however, this factor cannot be seen as wholly responsible. The transfer of secular administration from the city to the countryside appears to have derived from many events and developments of the period. A number of these factors are linked directly with the urban Church - a subject which has not yet received full attention, but will be considered in detail in the following chapter.

III. The *Civitas* as a Centre of Religious Activity

Late Roman Gaul A.D. 340-540

The religious role of Gallic *civitates* between A.D. 340 and 540 is a changing one. Although this thesis begins some twenty-eight years after the Edict of Milan, it is evident that this was still a period in which pagan rites were very much in evidence. From the earliest writings of Ausonius (c. A.D. 334) to the sermons of Caesarius (ending around A.D. 530), there are successive accounts of pagan rituals being carried out in *civitas*-capitals. Although the majority of these records come from the pens of Christian writers, who offer a hostile view of these rites, they provide clear evidence for the persistence of paganism and for a society which was not entirely willing to give up its pre-Christian traditions.¹

One of the stumbling blocks which the early Church encountered was the fact that pagan beliefs and associations were bound to the very fabric of the *civitas*-capital. Salvian highlights this link in a passage from the *De gubernatione Dei*. 'Colitur namque et honoratur Minerva in gymnasiis, Venus in theatris, Neptunus in circis, Mars in harenis, Mercurius in palaestris'.²

¹Another important source for these activities is the ecclesiastical canons, many of which expressly address the issue of paganism in both the cities and the countryside. See, for example, *Concilia, Aurelianense* (A.D. 533), c. 21; and even later into the early Merovingian period, *Concilia, Autisiodense* (A.D. 561-605), c. 1, 3, 4 and 8: *Concilia*, (p. 98; and 265-70).

²'For Minerva is revered and honoured in the gymnasium, Venus in the theatres, Neptune in the circus, Mars in the

Many civic and military duties were also traditionally tied to pagan rituals. Secular urban events, such as the dedication of a building or the celebration of a military victory, were rarely carried out without some associated pagan ritual.

In Italy, there is evidence of attempts to maintain the traditions and facilities associated with pagan rituals in *civitates*. A mid-fourth-century law from the *Codex Theodosianus* states:

Quamquam omnis superstitio penitus
eruenda sit, tamen volumus ut aedes
templorum, quae extra muros sunt po-
sitae, intactae incorruptaeque con-
sistant. Nam cum ex nonnullis vel
ludorum vel circensium vel agonum
origo fuerit exorta, non convenit ea
convelli, ex quibus populo Romano
praebeatur priscarum sollemnitatis
voluptatum.³

A very well-known Italian example, of course, is found in the *Relationes* of Symmachus, where he defends the Senate's right to keep its altar of Victory.⁴ Symmachus'

amphitheatres and Mercury in the wrestling schools': Salvian, VI.11 (p. 400 and 402). A map of the location of secular buildings of entertainment in Gaul is found in Duby, ed., *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville antique*, 288-89. Many of these structures, however, were probably not in use in Salvian's day. For a general discussion on the fate of Roman buildings of secular entertainment see B. Ward-Perkins' chapter, 'The Buildings of Secular Entertainment', in *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 109-118.

³'Although all superstition must be completely eradicated, nevertheless, it is Our will that the buildings of the temples situated outside the walls shall remain untouched and uninjured. For since certain plays or spectacles of the circus or contest derive their origin from some of these temples, such structures shall not be torn down, since from them is provided the regular performance of long established amusements for the Roman people.' *Codex Theod.*, (A.D. 342) Constantius and Constans to Catullinus, Prefect of the City of Rome in A.D. 342, XVI.10.3 (p. 898) [tr. Pharr, 472].

⁴'Praestate, oro vos, ut ea quae pueri suscepimus, senes posteris relinquamus. Consuetudinis amor magnus est...'

arguments have been seen by many scholars to represent the standard precepts of paganism of this period.⁵ Harries, for example, cites the conflict as exemplifying the 'cultural and religious milieu' of the Empire in the fourth century.⁶ As with the Theodosian law, the appeal had been made in opposition to Christian factions wishing to do away with this pagan facility, and as with the temples of the Theodosian law, the altar's preservation was urged on the grounds of custom, tradition and religious tolerance.

The writings of Salvian, approximately one hundred years after the Theodosian law, and some fifty years after Symmachus, demonstrate that the association of pagan beliefs with Gallic urban facilities was strong enough to prompt protest from certain members of the Church. By the end of the fifth century, however, protests such as Salvian's were rare. Even before A.D. 391, when the emperor Theodosius ordered all the pagan temples of the Empire to be closed and all rites abolished, paganism, as an accepted urban characteristic,

Symmachus, *Relationes*, III.4 (p. 281). For Christian reactions to Symmachus' argument, see, of course, Ambrose's contemporary letters (*Epp.* 17 and 18) written to the Emperor as well as the later arguments put forward by Prudentius, *Contra Symmachi orationem, Aurelii Prudentii Clementis*, ed. M.P. Cunningham (Turnholt, 1966) (= CC, CXXVI) 182-250), written some twenty years after Symmachus' appeal.

⁵For a discussion of this event and its consequences, see J. Matthews, *Western Aristocracies and Imperial Court A.D. 364-425* (Oxford, 1975), 205-11. See also J.J. Sheridan, 'The Altar of Victory: Paganism's Last Battle', *L'Antiquité Classique*, XXXV (1966), 186-206.

⁶J. Harries, 'The Rise of Christianity', *The Roman World*, II, ed. J. Wachter (London, 1987), 797.

was perhaps losing its hold in *civitates*.⁷ The decline in civic administration meant a corresponding drop in the religious practices associated with these functions. Moreover, the Church gained ground as these functions faded, and was often able to substitute its own institutions for those which were lost.

In Gaul, the decline of pagan temples made way for the rise of Christian basilicas.⁸ Traditional public building, already on the wane, was replaced by ecclesiastical projects. The State's feeding of the poor and the offering of games were shifted onto the shoulders of the Church, which instigated its own system of social welfare. Other non-Christian facilities - baths, theatres and the circus - were almost universally condemned by the Church, and were, in part, replaced by Christian feasts and festivals. Even the decline of lay schools was offset, in the end, by the rise of ecclesiastical educational institutions.

Pre-Christian cities of the Empire had always taken pride in their patron deities, who were enshrined in temples and honoured by festivals. Although the replacement of temples by churches was logical enough, how was the Church to substitute for the divine patrons them-

⁷'Placuit omnibus locis adque urbibus universis claudi protinus templa et accessu vetito omnibus licentiam delinquendi perditis abnegari.' *Codex Theod.*, XVI.10.4 (p. 898).

⁸An example of the deliberate destruction of pagan temples and cult centres is found in Sulpicius Severus, 'De Vita Beati Martini', *V. Mart.*, XII (p. 278); XIII (p. 280-82); XIV (p. 282 and 284); and XV (p. 284 and 286). These passages detail the destruction of rural temples.

deus et reliquis tribuens pia munera terris, sparsit
ubique loci magnas sua membra per urbes.' Paulinus then
goes on to name these cities and their saints.¹¹

The importance of saints for the spiritual status of
a city is also brought out by Prudentius. Palmer, in her
book *Prudentius on the Martyrs*, claims this author as
'the greatest Christian poet of the Late Antique
period...'¹² Prudentius, a native of north-east Spain,
had served first as a provincial governor and then as a
high official in the court of Theodosius. It is not
known how much of his poetry was written during his
period of service to the imperial state, but the pious
court of Milan might certainly have encouraged the
expression of Christian views and attitudes.¹³ Palmer
notes how Prudentius was able to combine classical
literary conventions with new ideas on the Christian
Empire.¹⁴ This is certainly brought out in his poem on
the saints of Rome. Here, Prudentius attributes Rome's
reformed image to the saints buried there.¹⁵ Emphasi-
sing the role of cities as the harbourers of saints, he
claims that on the Day of Judgement:

Orbe de magno caput excitata
Obviam Christo properanter ibit

¹¹ 'Thus, God bestows healing gifts on the earth. He
distributes his limbs everywhere through the great
cities.' *Ibid.*, *Carm.* XIX.76-7 (p. 121).

¹² A.M. Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs* (Oxford, 1989),
1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 30-1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4-5, 180, and Chapter VIII on the sources of the
Peristephanon, 227-77.

¹⁵ 'Vix fama nota est abditis/Quam plena sanctis Roma sit/
Quam dives urbanum solum/Sacris sepulcris floreat.'
Prudentius, *Peristephanon*, II.541-44 (p. 275-76).

Civitas quaeque pretiosa portans
Dona canistris.¹⁶

A city's prominence, therefore, is reflected in the number and eminence of these patrons.

The cities of Gaul were also praised for their saints. Paulinus of Pella chose to settle in Marseille, in part because it was 'urbe quidem in qua plures sancti essent mihi cari'.¹⁷ Other cities were quick to claim martyrs and saints as their own, just as earlier, Ausonius had claimed the late professors of Bordeaux. Gregory of Tours, in his *History*, records how the cities of Tours and Poitiers had argued over who was to have possession of the body of St. Martin - a contest won by the men of Tours, who stole the saint away while the men of Poitiers slept.¹⁸ Sidonius praised Mamertus, bishop of Vienne, for having gained the remains of the martyr Ferreolus and the head of St. Julian.¹⁹ Those cities which could not obtain saints from within their territory had no reservations about importing their relics. Bishop

¹⁶ 'Throughout the wide world each city will raise its head and will hastily go to meet Christ, carrying its precious gifts in baskets' - the 'gifts' being the ashes of their saints. *Ibid.*, IV. 13-16 (p. 286). For Prudentius, it is not only the quality of the saints which lends status to a city, but also the quantity. Saragossa, for example, is particularly praised because it has no less than eighteen martyrs. *Ibid.*, IV.1-4. (p. 286). 'Bis novem noster populus sub uno/Martyrum servat cineres sepulcro/Caesaraugustam vocitamus urbem res cui tanta est.' See also Palmer's comment on Prudentius' obvious pride in his native Spanish saints: Palmer, *Prudentius on the Martyrs*, 95-6.

¹⁷ 'a city where, in fact, there were many saints dear to me.' Paulinus of Pella, *Eucharisticus*, 521 (p. 92).

¹⁸ Gregory, *HF*, I.48 (p. 55-56).

¹⁹ Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.1 (p. 104). St. Julian's body rested at the *vicus* of Brioude, one of the few rural shrines to become popular. See also the *Vita* of St. Julian by Gregory of Tours.

Victricius of Rouen, for example, was honoured to receive the relics of foreign saints into his city and, from that point on, to consider them as the centre's own patrons and protectors.²⁰ The acquisition of saints in the late Roman period was considered to be a subject of praise well beyond this period, as a poem of Venantius Fortunatus shows:

Massilia Victor martyr ab urbe venit.
 Porrigit ipsa decens Arelas pia dona Genesi
 Astris, Caesario concomitante suo.
 Ipse Parisiaca properat Dionysius urbe;
 Augustiduno, Symphoriane, venis.
 Privatum Gabalus, Julianum Arvernus abundans,
 Ferreolum pariter pulchra Vienna gerit.²¹

And it was not only established cities which sought out these patrons. Paulinus of Nola gives an account of the introduction of saints into the newly founded city of Constantinople:

Nam Constantinus proprii cum conderet urbem
 nominis et primus Romano in nomine regum
 christicolam gereret, divinum mente recepit
 consilium, ut quoniam Romanae moenibus urbis
 aemula magnificis strueret tunc moenia coeptis,
 his quoque Romuleam sequeretur dotibus urbem,
 ut sua apostolicis muniret moenia laetus
 corporibus. Tunc Andream deuexit Achiuis
 Timotheumque Asia; geminis ita turribus extat
 Constantinopolis, magnae caput aemula Romae,
 verius hoc similis Romanis culmine muris,
 quod Petrum Paulumque pari deus ambitione
 Compensavit ei, meruit quae sumere Pauli
 discipulum cum fratre Petri.²²

²⁰Victricius, *De laude sanctorum*.

²¹'The martyr Victor came from the city of Marseille. Arles gave both the pious Genesius and Caesarius. In the same way, the city of Paris gave Denis; Symphorian came from Autun. Javols is rich because of Privatus, Clermont [perhaps meaning here the territory rather than the city] because of Julian. In like manner, beautiful Vienne bore Ferreolus.' Venantius, *De Virginitate*, VIII.3. 154-62 (p. 185).

²²'When Constantine was founding the city named after himself, and was the first of the Roman kings to proclaim himself a Christian, the godsent idea came to him that since he was then embarking on that splendid enterprise

According to Paulinus of Nola, it was necessary to acquire saints, not only for reasons of spiritual status, but also to ensure, as the pagan gods before them, the safety of the urban centre.

The changes brought about by the Church in the *civitates* were not always the result of a deliberate policy. Peter Brown, in *The Cult of the Saints*, argues that the introduction of relic worship effectively dissolved the classical barriers between the intramural city and its suburb, particularly its suburban cemeteries.²³ This can certainly be seen in the late Roman period as the bodies of saints were either moved into the city proper, or, if found in suburban cemeteries, were made the focus of cult centres and religious foundations.²⁴ Thus, town and suburb were brought closer together, by the attraction of saints and the subsequent fading of the pagan taboos on the separation of burials and the city.

A result of this link between the walled city and its suburb was the further alienation of the countryside.

of building a city which would rival Rome, he should likewise emulate Romulus' city with a further endowment - he would eagerly defend his walls with the bodies of apostles. He then removed Andrew from the Greeks and Timothy from Asia; and so Constantinople now stands with twin towers vying to match the harmony of great Rome, and more genuinely rivalling the walls of Rome through its eminence that God bestowed on her, for he counterbalanced Peter and Paul with a protection as great, since Constantinople gained the disciple of Paul and the brother of Peter.' Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* XIX.1.329-42 (p. 129-30).

²³P. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints* (London, 1981), 4-5

²⁴An example of the latter practice is found in the writings of Paulinus of Nola. The building around the suburban tomb of St. Felix is said by Paulinus to be so impressive that many mistake the place for a town. Paulinus of Nola, *Carm.* XXVIII (p. 291-305).

Both Wightman and Lane Fox point to this consequence of urban-based Church organisation.²⁵ Given that the cult of saints was promoted by the Church in cities, it is not surprising to find the countryside being deliberately deprived of this same privilege. Such a prohibition is spelled out specifically in a Church canon of A.D. 517: 'Sanctorum reliquiae in oratoriis villarebus non ponantur.'²⁶ As we will see, this was not the only religious function denied to rural places of worship.

Although it is obvious that the late Roman *civitates* of Gaul became increasingly associated with the Church as the period progressed, the concept of the city as a Christian religious centre was not always in the minds of the writers of this faith. Ausonius, for example, in his *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, makes no mention of Christian features or functions for any of the twenty urban centres he includes in his list.²⁷ Likewise, Sidonius, in his descriptions of the cities of Clermont and Narbonne, does not refer to churches, monasteries, or any Christian activity.²⁸ The latter description is interesting, for here, Sidonius lists in detail those features of a city which he believes to be worthy of note.

²⁵R. Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (Harmondsworth, 1986), 46; and E.M. Wightman, *Gallia Belgica* (London, 1985), 298.

²⁶'Sacred relics are not to be kept in the oratories of villas'. *Concilia, Epanense*, (A.D. 517), c. 25 (p. 30).

²⁷Ausonius, XIX (p. 98-103).

²⁸Sidonius, *Ep.* IV.21.5-6 (p. 72); and *Carm.* XXIII.37-47 (p. 251). It is thought that both descriptions were written before Sidonius became bishop of Clermont, though there is a chance that the poem might have been composed soon after his election (between 468 and 472). Sidonius' family had, nevertheless, been Christian for at least three generations.

Salve, Narbo potens salubritate,
urbe et rure simul bonus videri,
muris, civibus, ambitu, tabernis,
portis, porticibus, foro, theatro,
delubris, capitoliis, monetis,
thermis, arcubus, horreis, macellis,
pratis, fontibus, insulis, salinis,
stagnis, flumine, merce, ponte,
ponto;
unus qui venerere iure divos
Lenaeum, Cererem, Palem, Minervam
spicis, palmite, pascuis, trapetis.²⁹

What is immediately clear from the above passage is that the substitution of saints for patron gods was not entirely successful - even by the latter half of the fifth century. Even so, it is probable that the use of pagan imagery by Sidonius is not indicative of his religious sentiments, but rather demonstrates the power and conservatism of the literary models of the period.

There is, nevertheless, a striking contrast between Sidonius' highly traditional praise for classical urban features and the condemnation heaped upon these facilities by such writers as Salvian and Caesarius. Urban vice is a predominant theme in Salvian's *De gubernatione Dei*. There are numerous references to the evils of the theatre, and he states outright, 'quod nihil ferme vel criminum vel flagitiorum est quod in spectaculis non

29 'Hail Narbonne, superior in your vitality, gladdening the eye with your city and countryside, with your walls, citizens, area, shops, gates, porticoes, forum, theatre, temples, capitol, mints, baths, arches, granaries, markets, meadows, fountains, islands, salt mines, ponds, rivers, merchandise, bridge and pontoon; you who have the best title of all to promote the gods Bacchus, Ceres, Pales and Minerva by virtue of your vines, corn, pastures and olive mills.' *Ibid.* Note that the term for 'temple' - 'delubrum' - has the meaning of a pagan place of worship. Sidonius uses the term 'ecclesia' when speaking of a Christian church, or 'sacrarium' for a chapel.

sit.³⁰ Despite the harshness of Salvian's statement, he did not view the city itself as the perpetrator of these sins, but rather as the innocent victim of the corrupt Roman society: 'Totus Romanus orbis et miser est et luxuriosus.'³¹ In Salvian's opinion, the salvation of both the cities and their citizens lay in the hands of the barbarians.

Sed videlicet responderi hoc potest, non in omnibus haec Romanorum urbibus agi. Verum est: etiam plus ego addo, nec illic quidem nunc agi, ubi semper acta sunt antea. Non enim hoc agitur iam in Mogontiacensium civitate, sed quia excisa atque deleta est: non agitur Agrippinae, sed quia hostibus plena: non agitur Treverorum urbe excellentissima, sed quia quadruplici est eversione prostrata: non agitur dinique in plurimis Galliarum urbibus et Hispaniarum...Quae spes Christianis plebibus ante deum est, quandoquidem ex illo in urbibus Romanis haec mala non sunt, ex quo in barbarorum iure esse coeperunt?³²

³⁰ 'there is almost no crime or shameful act which does not exist at the games.' Salvian, VI.2 (p. 366).

³¹ 'The entire Roman world is wretched and wanton.' *Ibid.*, VII.1 (p. 432).

³² 'But it is certain that it can be argued that such performances [in the theatres and at the games] are not done in all Roman cities. This is true: I would also add that they are not now done where they had been previously performed. They are not now done in the city of Mainz, but this is because it is destroyed and in ruins. They are not performed in Köln, but this is because it is greatly crowded with the enemy. They are not performed in the most excellent city of Trier, but this is because it has been overthrown four times by subversion. They are not now performed in most of the cities of Gaul and Spain....What hope is there for the Christian population before God, given that these evils only go out of existence in the Roman cities from that moment when the laws of the barbarians begin?' *Ibid.* VI.8 (p. 388). Salvian speaks elsewhere in this work on the virtues of the barbarians and claims that the pagan Vandals and Goths are better than the pagan Romans because their faith does not include sinful practices *Ibid.*, V.3-4 (p. 318-326). Roman Christians are also criticized because they, unlike the barbarians, attend the theatre and games. *Ibid.*, VI.7 (p. 384 and 386). It

Although these cities harboured corruption, they were not, in Salvian's eyes, to be blamed for the indignities found within them; for as soon as they were given over to barbarian rule, and ceased to support classical entertainments, these centres were no longer considered dangerous.

Caesarius, writing some sixty years after Salvian, addresses the same issue of urban vice embodied in classical features found in the city. In a sermon to his congregation at Arles, he preaches against the theatre and the baths and further laments, *'sed etiam in hac ipsa civitate dicantur adhuc esse aliquae mulieres infelices, quae in honore Iovis quinta feria nec telam nec fustum facere vellent.'*³³ Like Salvian, Caesarius had rejected traditional Roman culture, though experience had taught him not to share Salvian's optimism on the moral effects of Germanic rule.

It is evident that the break by some churchmen with classical traditions and, in the case of Salvian and Caesarius, with classical urban features, varied widely throughout the period. Within the Christian community there was also a broad range of thought on the relationship of churchmen to secular administrative careers. Around the year A.D. 470, Sidonius sent a plea for

is interesting to speculate what Sidonius would have thought of Salvian's remarks; for although Sidonius' congregation must certainly have included Germanic peoples, he is known to have been hostile to the incursion of barbarians into his society, and would have found Salvian's statements on Roman civilisation inexcusable.³³ 'But even in this very city there are still said to be some miserable women who, in honour of Jove, wish neither to weave nor to spin on the fifth day of the week [Thursday].' Caesarius, Ser. LII.2 (p. 221).

military aid to his brother-in-law, Ecdicius, saying, 'statuit te auctore nobilitas seu patriam dimittere seu capillos.'³⁴ Sidonius himself took the latter course and became bishop of Clermont. Sidonius was a member of an aristocratic Gallo-Roman family which had served in secular administration for at least three generations. The infiltration of the Gallic nobility into the Church was, however, a recent trend, beginning perhaps as late as the end of the fourth century. Harries argues that the retreat of those of the senatorial class into episcopal offices was not common in Gaul before Sidonius' time (i.e., around the year A.D. 470), since the secular legislation discussed in the previous chapter applied to *decuriones* of a lesser rank.³⁵

The change in career for Sidonius, and others like him, was the result of many factors, including the dodging of curial duties, the waning of secular power and pressure from the invading Germanic forces. This is not to deny that there were many Gallo-Roman aristocrats who entered into the Church out of a sincere regard for the Christian faith. These were, however, unsettled times and the fact that many late Roman churchmen had formerly held secular posts implies that an ecclesiastical career might have been considered as a refuge, or perhaps as a means by which to remain in an administrative capacity.³⁶

³⁴'The nobility has determined by your authority to relinquish either its *patria* or its hair.' Sidonius, *Ep.* II.1.4 (p. 21-2).

³⁵J. Harries, *Bishops, Senators and their Cities in Southern and Central Gaul, A.D. 407-476* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1980), 275.

³⁶Sidonius had held several secular offices, including the Prefecture of the City of Rome, prior to becoming a

At the opposite end of the spectrum, in the early sixth century, we find Caesarius, bishop of Arles, writing to Pope Symmachus to request that he forbid episcopal ordination to anyone who had served as an imperial provincial officer.³⁷ For Caesarius, a bishop's duties were, above all, spiritual, and would, therefore, be compromised by traditional secular virtues. Sidonius offers an interesting contrast to this attitude; for in a speech given in Bourges, he praises the merits of his friend Simplicius, who is standing for the episcopal see of that city. Here, in true classical fashion, Sidonius speaks of his friend's qualities: his eloquence, his aristocratic ancestry (including, he says, a galaxy of bishops and prefects), in short, a host of admirable attributes which make up a man in whom 'respublica in eo quod admiretur et ecclesia possit invenire quod diligat.'³⁸

The administrative skills of men such as Sidonius were much needed by the urban Church - especially during the fifth century when barbarian kings were striving to gain a foothold in Gaul. It was because of the uncertainty of the times that urban congregations sought out administrative leaders, trained in public affairs, who had the political influence and the private resources necessary to carry out their responsibilities. It was to

bishop. Another fifth-century bishop, Germanus of Auxerre, had followed a career in law before joining the church.

³⁷Caesarius, *Varia*, Ep. XV (p 29).

³⁸'the State is able to find in him something to admire, and the Church something to be valued.' Sidonius, Ep. VII.9.16 (p. 115).

their mutual benefit that the Church and men like Sidonius joined together to initiate, in the words of Philip Rousseau, 'a process by which the Church not only became a pilgrim within the Roman world, but prepared itself to come to terms with those beyond the confines of *romanitas*.'³⁹

The duties of a late Roman bishop were numerous and varied. Church canons of this period state that bishops were to look after the needs of the poor and infirm.⁴⁰ It can be argued that late Roman bishops took over the role of civic patron, in that they were directly responsible for the welfare of the urban poor. Bishops had access to half of the urban offerings (the other half going to the lower clergy) and a third of the offerings of the rural churches. In addition to this, the bishop served as the overseer for all Church property and buildings within his diocese, and was the recipient of a large percentage of the revenue generated by these holdings.⁴¹ No monastery could be founded without a bishop's consent, and this control further restricted religious activity to the *civitas*-capital.⁴²

The title of *defensor civitatis* was held by several bishops during the late Roman period. While some question whether the granting of this secular position to

³⁹P. Rousseau, 'In Search of Sidonius the Bishop', *Historia*, XXV (1976), 337.

⁴⁰For example, see *Concilia, Aureliense* (A.D. 511), c. 16 (p. 9). 'Episcopus pauperibus vel infirmis qui debilitate faciente non possunt suis manibus laborare, victum et vestitum, in quantum possebilis habuerit largiatur.'

⁴¹*Ibid.*, c. 14, 17, and 15 respectively.

⁴²*Ibid.*, *Concilia, Agathense* (A.D. 506), c. 27 (p. 205).

bishops was a common practice, other scholars, such as Latouche, see this development as a natural consequence of the bishop's acceptance of the role of urban patron.⁴³ The official post of *defensor civitatis* did not continue beyond the late Roman period, although bishops were still seen as the protectors of their cities.⁴⁴

Some early bishops of this period are recorded as dividing their time between the episcopal city and its diocese. Martin of Tours, Julian of Le Mans and Avitus of Vienne all devoted a part of their time to rural ecclesiastical duties.⁴⁵ In the case of these bishops, there does not appear to have been a distinction between the importance of urban and rural activities. Several of the early bishops of this period are recorded as making the rounds of their dioceses. The evidence for this practice diminishes as the period comes to a close - Caesarius of Arles being perhaps the last of the sixth-century bishops to promote pastoral care for the countryside.⁴⁶

⁴³Latouche, *BWE*, 106-7; and 159-60. In his discussion on the title of *defensor civitatis*, Latouche seeks to counter the argument put forward by Chénon, that the granting of this position to bishops was unusual: Chénon, *Étude historique sur le Defensor civitatis* (Paris, 1889), 94.

⁴⁴The poems of Venantius are, perhaps, the best example of the continuance of this idea. See p. 167.

⁴⁵The activities of Martin of Tours are recorded in his *Vita*. Julian of Le Mans travelled 'Per singulos vicos aecclesias dedicavit et sacerdotes instituit.' *Actus*, 36.

⁴⁶A letter of Sulpicius Severus concerning St. Martin demonstrates that a tour of one's diocese was expected of bishops of this period. 'Cum ad dioecesim quandams pro sollemni consuetudine, sicut episcopis visitare ecclesias suas moris est, media fere hieme Martinus venisset, mansionem ei in secretario ecclesiae clerici paraverunt multumque ignem scabro iam et pertenui pavimento subdiderunt.' *V. Mar.*, *Ep.* I.10 (p. 320 and 322) On the efforts of Caesarius of Arles to promote pastoral care in

Martin of Tours, however, preferred the quiet life offered by the monastery to the noise and crowds of the city.⁴⁷ Other bishops, such as Germanus of Auxerre, also turned to monasteries for rest.⁴⁸ It could perhaps be argued that these churchmen gained spiritual strength from the solitude of their monasteries much in the same way as Roman secular administrators had sought repose through restful activities on their rural estates.

The increasing tendency to found monasteries in and around cities must have further widened the gap between the city and its rural region. While the majority of religious rites and festivals were held in *civitas*-capitals, there is some evidence to suggest that a suburban monastery of this period would have also offered some spiritual care to a city's inhabitants. The *Vita* of St. Germanus of Auxerre demonstrates this point:

Qui duplicem viam Christo ad profectum religionis instituens, in conspectu oppidi, interposito Icauna flumine, monasterium conlocavit, ut ad fidem catholicam populi et congregationibus monachorum et ecclesiastica [meaning here, the urban Church] gratia raperentur, ...⁴⁹

The saint's life goes on to say how as a 'dux' of the soldiers of God, St. Germanus made it his practice to stay alternately in the monastery and the urban church so

the countryside see W. M. Daly, 'Caesarius of Arles, A Precursor of Medieval Christendom', *Traditio*, XXVI (1970), 5 and 27-28.

⁴⁷*V. Mart.*, IX.1. (p. 270); and X.2-3. (p. 272 and 274).

⁴⁸*V. Ger.*, IX (p. 256).

⁴⁹'For the progress of the religion, he [St. Germanus] instigated in two ways a road to Christ by erecting a monastery along the river Yonne, in sight of the town, so that the population might be impelled to the Catholic faith by the society of the monastery and the favour of the Church.' *V. Ger.*, VI (p. 254).

that 'certantibus studiis aemulantes ad perfectionis gloriam provocaret.'⁵⁰

That there was a rivalry for authority as well as spiritual competition between the monasteries and the urban churches of this period is evident from the numerous canons stressing the power of the bishop over abbots and monks. Canon 19 of the Council of Orléans sets out this hierarchy in no uncertain terms:

Abbates pro humilitate religionis in episcoporum potestate consistent et, si quid extra regulam fecerint, ab episcopis conrigantur; qui semel in anno, in loco ubi episcopus elegerit, accepta vocatione conveniant.⁵¹

Also from this council we have a canon which seeks to suppress independent ascetics. By this canon, no monk was allowed to leave his monastery and set up a separate cell without the permission of his bishop and abbot.⁵² Such laws allowed the bishops to keep control of all religious activity and to discourage movements which threatened to deviate from the authority and tenets of the Church.

As stated above, most religious rites and festivals were held in *civitas*-capitals. Church canons of this period stress the limitations placed on private oratories

⁵⁰'set the goal of perfection before each of the rivals in this warfare.' *Ibid.*, IX (p. 256) [tr. Hoare, 293].

⁵¹'Abbots for the humility of their religion shall be placed under the control of bishops, and if they do something outside the rule, they will be corrected by the bishops. Once every year, in a place chosen by the bishop, they will answer his summons and assemble.' *Concilia, Aureliense* (A.D. 511), c. 19 (p. 10).

⁵²*Ibid.*, c. 22 (p. 11). 'Nullus monachus congregatione monasterii derelicta ambitionis et vanitatis impulso cella construere sene episcopi permissione vel abbatis sui voluntate praesumat.'

(particularly those in rural areas), and the necessity of celebrating major rites and festivals in cities. The one known exception to these canons is a decree from the Council of Agde (A.D. 506). Here, we have a reference to parish churches (distinguished from urban churches and private oratories) at which mass could be held and to oratories which could be used for the mass, although not on major feast days (unless special permission had been granted).⁵³ The granting of such privileges was, however, unusual and might have reflected the unconventional views of the bishop presiding over the council, Caesarius of Arles.⁵⁴

The majority of canon laws concerning religious observations state that these should be celebrated in episcopal cities, though most are found in the later councils of the period, and are, perhaps, not reflective of the late Roman period as a whole. Canon 25 of the Council of Orléans states that a town dweller ['civis'] may not celebrate Easter, Christmas or Pentecost at his *villa* unless he is ill.⁵⁵ Likewise, the Council of

⁵³'Si quis etiam extra parrocias in quibus legitimus est ordinariusque conventus, oratorium in agro habere voluerit, reliquis festivitibus ut ibi missas teneant propter fatigationem familiae iusta ordinatione permittimus; Pascha vero, Natale Domini, Epiphaniam, Ascensionem Domini, Pentecosten et Natale sancti Ioannis Baptistae, vel si qui maximi dies in festivitibus habentur, nonnisi in civitatibus aut in parrociis teneant. Clerici vero, si qui in his festivitibus quos supra diximus, in oratoriis nisi iubente aut permittente episcopo missas facere aut tenere voluerint a communione pellantur.' *Ibid.*, *Agathense* (A.D. 506), c. 21 (p. 202-3).

⁵⁴See H. Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century*, *Analecta Gregoriana*, LI (Rome, 1950), 73, for a discussion of this canon.

⁵⁵'Ut nulli civium pascae, natalis Domini vel quinquagesimae sollemnitatem in villa leceat celebrare, nisi quem

Clermont, in A.D. 535, calls upon all priests and deacons to come to their episcopal city for the major Church festivals.⁵⁶

Narrative sources of the period also suggest that the city was used and perceived as the main centre for religious activity. Ausonius felt compelled to attend the Easter festivities in his native *civitas* of Bordeaux - even though he would have preferred to remain on his country estate.

Instantis revocant quia nos sollemnia Paschae
Libera nec nobis est mora desidiaae.

Once at Bordeaux, Ausonius continued to complain,

Nos etenim primis sanctum post Pascha diebus
Avenus agrum visere.
Nam populi coetus et compita sordida rixis
Fastidientes cernimus
Angustas fervere vias et congrege volgo
Nomen plateas perdere.⁵⁷

In addition to religious festivals, the urban Church of this period was also beginning to gain a monopoly of baptisms and confirmations. This, however, might have been more the result of the Church's neglect of the countryside, rather than any deliberate policy to withdraw this rite from rural churches.

The instigation of rogations, which were prayers said in procession in times of danger, was another

infirmetas probabitur tenuisse.' *Concilia, Aurelianense* (A.D. 511), c. 25 (p. 11).

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, *Concilia, Arvernense* (A.D. 535), c. 15 (p. 109).

⁵⁷'the impending festival of Easter calls me back [to the city of Bordeaux], nor am I at liberty to delay...' and: 'For in the first days after holy Easter I am eager to see my estate. For I dislike looking at crowds of people and the squalid quarrels at the crossroads, the narrow, overflowing roads, and the broadways which counter their name because of the rabble assembled there.' Ausonius, *Ep.* VII.9-10 (p. 166); and *Ep.* X.17-22 (p. 168).

occasion which drew people into the city. These prayers were led by bishops who appeared, at such times, as the protectors and patrons of their cities.⁵⁸ The importance of this ceremony is emphasised by Sidonius, who writes to his friend Aper saying: 'Quicquid illud est, quod vel otio vel negotio vacas, in urbem tamen, nisi fallimur, rogationum contemplatione revocabere.'⁵⁹ A church canon of the early sixth century further highlights the deference to be paid to this ceremony, by making it a set festival to be held before Ascension Day. It also decrees that everyone, even the servants, should be freed from their work and allowed to participate.⁶⁰

The christianized ceremony of *adventus* was another event which focused attention on the bishop and his city.⁶¹ This occasion was often used by the Church to mark the arrival of relics into a city. The bishop would usually lead the procession, acting as the mortal counterpart to the city's spiritual patron. The *De laude sanctorum*, written in A.D. 386 by Bishop Victricius of

⁵⁸See p. 151, fn. 43 and 44, on the role of the bishop as *defensor civitates*. Just as saints had taken over the role of pagan gods, so too did the bishops assume the position of the leading citizen of classical times.

⁵⁹Sidonius, *Ep.* V.14.1 (p. 87). 'No matter how you are spending your time, whether in business or in idleness, you will, if I mistake not, be drawn back to the city by the prospect of the Rogations.' [tr. Anderson, 217].

⁶⁰*Concilia, Aurelianense* (A.D. 511), c. 27 (p. 11-12). 'Rogationes, id est laetantias, ante ascensionem Domini ab omnibus ecclesiis placuit celebrari, ita ut praemissum triduanum ieiunium in Domenicae ascensionis festivitate solvatur; per quod triduum serui et ancillae ab omni opere relaxentur, quo magis plebs universa conveniat. Quo triduo omnis abstineant et quadraginsimalibus cibis utantur.'

⁶¹S. MacCormack, 'Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: The Ceremony of Adventus', *Historia*, 724-27, includes a discussion of the effects of Christianity on this ceremony.

Rouen as an accompaniment to the arrival of relics into his city, is perhaps the best illustration of such an event. We learn from his description that the relics were carried in a procession which included monks, boys, a choir of virgins, and other worthy members of the community. Victricius claimed in his account that the possession of the relics brought honour to his city.⁶²

The role of bishop as leading citizen was also strengthened by the occasional secular duties taken on by holders of this office. Civil disputes were, at times, brought before the bishop, and some were asked to intercede for their cities in secular matters. Germanus of Auxerre, for example, negotiated with the Praetorian Prefect at Arles in an attempt to relieve his city from the burden of taxes.⁶³ Sidonius of Clermont served as an ambassador for his city-territory and was instrumental in the city's defence against the attacking Visigoths.⁶⁴

Harries argues that ecclesiastical patrons would have been more reliable, since they would be better able to weather political change.⁶⁵ As we have seen in the case of Sidonius, however, this was not always possible.⁶⁶ Harries is, of course, right to point out that

⁶²Victricius, *De laude sanctorum*, (p. 108-53).

⁶³V. Ger., XIX (p.265).

⁶⁴In a letter to Bishop Basilus of Aix, one of the four bishops appointed by the emperor to negotiate with the Visigothic king Euric, Sidonius pleads with the bishop, asking that bishops be ordained within the Gothic territory. Sidonius, *Ep.* VII.6.10 (p. 110). Sidonius also made efforts to secure the military aid of his brother-in-law (see p. 147, fn. 34). His involvement in the defence of his city was such that he was imprisoned upon its surrender. *Ibid.*, *Ep.* VIII.3.1 (p. 127).

⁶⁵Harries, *Bishops, Senators, and their Cities*, 119.

⁶⁶Compare the fate of Quintianus, a late Roman bishop of Rodez, who was exiled from his city as a result of taking

fifth-century bishops were quickly overtaking their secular administrative counterparts in terms of authority and influence within the city. A bishop's ability to draw on popular support (accentuated, no doubt, by his position as the distributor of charity), must have placed him in a better light than the secular officials struggling to maintain those services promised by the Empire.⁶⁷

How essential then was the city to the Church in the late Roman period? *Civitas*-capitals provided a system by which society could be reached and ministered to in an organised fashion. They ensured a degree of security, and by their very nature, a uniformity which made certain that the Church as an institution would be less subject to division and diversity.⁶⁸ In short, the *civitates* were as important to the Church as the Church was for the survival of the cities. Each gave legitimacy to the other at a time when urban centres might have faded out altogether.

A final word should be said on the place of the *patria* or city-territory in the eyes of the late Roman Church. As noted in Chapter II, churchmen such as Hilary were suspicious of the loyalty offered to *patriae*.⁶⁹ Eugippius also condemned the citing of one's

too active a political role. Gregory, *HF*, II.36 (p. 98-9).

⁶⁷Harries, *Bishops, Senators, and their Cities*, 276-77.

⁶⁸A. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (London, 1985), 66.

⁶⁹'Est illud notum est omnibus oratoriae disciplinae, quorum laudandam receperint vitam, patriam prius et originem praedicare, ut quod in propriis vitutibus deest, in patrum gloria praecessisse videatur. Nos autem in Christo omnes unum sumus: et fastigium nobilitatis est

birthplace, saying: 'Quid prodest...servo dei significatio loci vel generis sui, cum possit id tacendo facilius vitare, iactantiam...quo mereatur dextris socius fieri et supernae patriae civis ascribi?.'⁷⁰

The rejection of one's earthly *patria* for a heavenly homeland is found most prominently in the writings of Caesarius of Arles. Despite his own visions of a unified Christian society, Caesarius recognised the traditional loyalties instilled into his Gallic congregation. Caesarius made use of these values by advocating a transfer of their temporal loyalties to a higher, more spiritual plane:

Duae sunt civitates...una est civitas mundi, alia est civitas paradisi. In civitate mundi bonus christianus semper peregrinatur; in civitate paradisi civis esse cognoscitur. Ista est civitas laboriosa, ille quieta;...in hoc enim probamus, quod peregrini sumus, si patriam desideramus. Nemo se circumveniat,...christianorum patria in caelo est, non est hic: christianorum civitas, christianorum beatitudo, christianorum vera et aeterna felicitas non est hic... Patria nostra paradisi est, civitas nostra Hierusalem est illa caelestis; ...Sic ergo in ista peregrinatione vivamus ut illam talem patriam, quam diu hic sumus, desiderare possimus.⁷¹

inter Dei filios computari; nec addere nobis quicquam ad dignitatem terrenae originis decus nisi contemptu suo potest.' *V. Hon.*, I (p. 76).

⁷⁰'What is accomplished for a servant of God to point out his homeland and lineage? If such things are kept secret he is easily able to avoid pride,...wherefore, may he merit to be on the right side of society and to be made a citizen of the heavenly patria?' *V. Sev.*, Preface.9 (p. 2-3).

⁷¹'There are two cities... the one is the city of the world, the other the city of paradise. The good Christian ever journeys in the city of the world, but he is recognised as a citizen of the city of paradise. The former city is full of labour, while the latter is restful...We ought to be pilgrims in this world, in order

Caesarius' argument was founded on the works of St. Augustine - the most frequently quoted writer in his sermons. Both Augustine and Caesarius used the word 'peregrini' when speaking of the pilgrims of the world who long for heaven. The word itself has been translated by Mueller as 'pilgrims', but it carries more the meaning of an alien resident of a region.⁷²

Much of the controversy on the place of *patria* loyalty seems to stem from the Church's suspicion regarding the classical traditions associated with it. There is a fear that God and the community of Christians are taking second place to secular allegiances. As Paulinus of Nola says in a letter to his pagan friend Jovius, God is '*patria omnium communis*'.⁷³

Not all Christians shared this view. We have already seen in Chapter II how both Sidonius and Ausonius emphasised the loyalty owed to city-territories. Theirs, it would seem, was the predominant view, though many in the Church took pains to put forward the idea of a Christian community without defined boundaries. Augus-

that we may merit to be citizens of heaven. If a man loves the world and wants to be a citizen of it, he has no place in heaven, for by the fact that we long for our true country we prove that we are pilgrims. Let no one deceive himself...the true country of Christians, their blessedness, their true and eternal happiness is not here, but in heaven. Our true country is paradise, our city of Jerusalem that heavenly one; May we therefore so live in this earthly sojourn that we may be able to long for such a country as long as we are here.' Caesarius, Ser. CLI.2 (p. 584) [tr. Mueller, 238].

⁷²A discussion of Augustine's use of this term is in P. Brown, *Augustine of Hippo, A Biography* (London, 1967), 324.

⁷³Paulinus of Nola, *Ep.* XVI.7 (p. 121).

tine's description of such a community as being a city which is characterized by its citizens, not its walls, would have been met with sympathy by many churchmen of this era; for like Augustine, they envisaged a united fellowship bound only by its Christian beliefs - a marked contrast to men like Sidonius who would have felt the Christian community to be obligated and inextricably tied to their respective *civitas*-capitals.⁷⁴

Early Merovingian Gaul A.D. 540-600

Civitas-capitals of Gaul can be said to have reached the height of their importance as religious centres in the latter half of the sixth century. In this period little attention appears to have been given to the needs of the non-urban churches, and nowhere in the church canons is there found any encouragement to minister to the countryside. There were, of course, both rural churches and a body of clerics assigned to these institutions. Yet, while the mass was allowed in country churches, and even private oratories, it was usually the case that major religious events were the prerogative of the urban Church.

Beck holds that from A.D. 541 there were some rural churches which included baptisteries. He admits, however, that he can find no direct evidence to support

⁷⁴Augustine, 'De Excidio Urbis Romae Sermo', *Aurelii Augustini Opera*, Pars XIII.II, ed. M.V. O'Reilly (Turnholt, 1969), 249-62 (= CC)

this assumption.⁷⁵ Gregory of Tours speaks in his *History* of the baptism of King Guntram's nephew at the village of Nanterre ('in vico Nemptudoro'), outside Paris. Gregory mentions that the child's mother, Fredegund, had originally asked that the boy be baptised in Paris. He also notes that the king had only recently recovered from an illness and, having stopped at Rueil, his estate, he ordered his nephew to be brought there and made preparations for the baptism to be held at Nanterre. There is, however, no suggestion that the village baptism was in any way an unavoidable compromise; nor does the village itself appear ill-equipped for the task - for Gregory mentions the existence of a sacred font.⁷⁶

It is generally held that bishops of this period had very little to do with promoting pastoral care of the countryside. The neglect by the urban Church of these rural areas is demonstrated not only by the silence of the Church canons, but also by the most comprehensive source for the period, Gregory's *History*. Only one bishop, Pappolus of Langres, is recorded here as making a round of his parishes and church-owned *villae*. Even so, if Gregory's account of the man's character is to be believed, he was not administering pastoral care, but rather taking an inventory of the property and posses-

⁷⁵Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century*, 74-6.

⁷⁶Gregory, *HF*, X.28 (p. 439-40). Note, however, that the ceremony is not carried out at Guntram's private estate. Whether this was because the oratory (assuming one existed) was not grand enough for the occasion, or because baptisms in such places were discouraged, is not known. The *villa* of Rueil is not associated in the works of Gregory with any sort of religious building. See M. Vieillard-Troiekouroff, *Les monuments religieux*, 466.

sions under his control.⁷⁷ There is also an account in the *History* of the dedication of an oratory outside the walls of Marseille, but the distance is not given. The bishop of the city did, however, lead a procession to this structure - a fact which might imply that the oratory was not too far from the city. It is also interesting to note Gregory's use of territorial terms:

'advenit festivitas dedicationis oratorii ruris suburbanii.'⁷⁸ Had the oratory been quite a distance from Marseille, Gregory might not have used the term 'suburbium'.

Gregory is not, however, completely silent on the rural activities of early Merovingian bishops. In his *Liber Vitae Patrum*, we have two references, one to the blessing of a rural church, and the other, an account of the arrival of relics at a church in a small settlement.⁷⁹ In a contemporary source, the *Vita* of St. Géry, mention is made of Magneric, bishop of Trier, on a tour of his parishes, although no details are given of the precise nature of his activities.⁸⁰

Although the degree of religious activity in the countryside is uncertain, it is evident that the majority of religious rites and festivals were considered by the Church to be the privilege of episcopal cities. The Church councils of the sixth century include many canons which give *civitates* rights over other settlements for

⁷⁷Gregory, *HF*, V.5 (p. 197-98).

⁷⁸*Ibid.*, VI.11 (p. 256): 'The festival for the dedication of a rural oratory in the suburbs drew near.'

⁷⁹Gregory, *MM*, *LVP*, VIII.8 and 11 (p. 698, and 700-701).

⁸⁰*V. Gaug.*, II (p. 652).

these occasions. The Council of Orléans, in A.D. 541, declared that citizens were not allowed to celebrate Easter at their private oratories, but must go into the episcopal city for the event.⁸¹ Bishops maintained further control over oratories by ordering that no clerics from outside the diocese could perform services in them without their permission.⁸² The Council of Auxerre (A.D. 561-605) ensured that presbyters and abbots came into the episcopal city on appointed days for synods and councils.⁸³

An examination of church councils shows that most were held in *civitas*-capitals (the ratio of urban to secondary settlements being about five to one). There is a slight increase in the number of rural councils held in secondary settlements near the end of the sixth century, but the reasons for this are not clear. From Gregory's *History* it is evident that ecclesiastical councils usually were summoned on the order of a king. Thus, this increase in rural councils might well be an early indicator of the shift of secular administration to the countryside in the later Merovingian period.

Rogations, instigated in the fifth century, became regulated during the early Merovingian period. Although this ceremony was still performed in times of trouble, we

⁸¹*Concilia, Aurelianense* (A.D. 541), c. 3 (p. 132). 'Quisquis de prioribus civibus pascha extra civitatem tenere voverit, sciat sibi a cuncta synodum esse prohibitum.'

⁸²*Ibid.*, c. 7.

⁸³*Ibid.*, *Synodus Dioecesis Autissiodorensis* (A.D. 561-605), c. 7 (p. 266). 'Ut medio Madio omnes presbyteri ad synodo in civitatem veniant et Kalendis Novembris omnes abbates ad concilium conveniant.'

find the event occurring regularly before Ascension Day, and also to mark special religious occasions. For example, rogations were held at the ordination of Bishop Géry to the see of Cambrai.⁸⁴

The use of cities as the main repositories for relics continued into the early Merovingian period. Gregory of Tours' evident pride in the shrine of St. Martin is a recurrent theme throughout his *History*. Venantius, in his poem, *De Virginitate*, offers a list of saints and their cities, with the clear implication that the fame of the latter rests on these heavenly patrons.⁸⁵ But in addition to the status conferred on a city by its relics, the late Roman belief in the protection offered by the saints continued into this period. Isidore of Seville, writing in the very early years of the seventh century on the history of the Goths, demonstrates his own faith in the power of saintly guardianship by recounting how, on two occasions, saints protected the cities of Merida and Cordova.⁸⁶ Gregory of Tours offers several

⁸⁴Examples of rogations held in times of trouble are recorded in Gregory's *History*, X.30 (p. 442). Gregory also includes an account of a man who attends rogations in Paris: *Ibid.*, IX.6 (p. 362). Two references in Gregory's *History*, however, refer to rogations held in the village of Brioude at the church of St. Julian. Brioude would appear to be an exception to the rule of *civitas*-centred religious activity. See P. Brown's discussion of the site, where he argues that although the centre was a *vicus*, it was controlled by aristocrats with very strong ties to the episcopal city of Clermont. Brown, *The Cult of the Saints*, 122. See also I. Wood, on this same subject in 'Early Merovingian devotion in town and country' *SCH*, 72. Reference to the Rogations held at the ordination of St. Géry is from *V. Gaug.*, VIII (654-55).

⁸⁵Venantius, *De virginitate*, VIII.3 (p. 184-86).

⁸⁶Isidore, *De Origine Gothorum*, XXXII (p.32); and *Historia Wandalorum*, LXXIII (p. 296).

Gallic examples of this belief. In the *Liber Vitae Patrum*, he gives an account of how the city of Trier was protected from a plague by Bishop Nicetius and two former bishops of the city who had been canonised.⁸⁷ From Gregory's *History* we have a description of how St. Martin defended his own city of Tours against Roccolen, a retainer of King Chilperic.⁸⁸

Given the position of the urban Church, it is little wonder that most early Merovingian saints were canonised from the ranks of the episcopate. Much of the pride and status of a city appears to have been founded on the episcopal office. In many ways, the bishop was as essential a symbol of the urban Church as the cathedral. Indeed, it was this office which elevated a church and gave status to the urban settlement.

The honour and admiration which many Gallic cities showered upon their bishops is recorded in the works of Gregory of Tours. In the *History*, for example, he relates how, in the fifth century, the people of Clermont gathered around the dying bishop Sidonius, saying, 'Cur nos deseres, pastor bone, vel cui nos quasi orphanos derelinquis? Numquid erit nobis post transitum tuum vita?'⁸⁹ Similarly, he records how, in his own period, the priest Cato (who had been offered the see of Tours) gathered a crowd around him and ordered them to shout,

⁸⁷Gregory, *MM*, *LVP*, XVII.4 (p. 731).

⁸⁸Gregory, *HF.*, V.4. (p. 195-96).

⁸⁹'Why do you desert us, good pastor? Why are we abandoned as if orphans? After your death, what will be our life?' *Ibid.*, II.23 (p. 85).

'Rogamus, ne nos, relinquas, quos alere consuesti.'⁹⁰ Of course, not all bishops, or would-be bishops, deserved such devotion, since many abused their office and neglected their duties to the city and the Christian community.

Venantius, admittedly a highly panegyric writer, devoted a number of his poems to praising Gallic bishops. With few exceptions, the poems declare that the bishop in question is a source of pride to his city. In a poem addressed to the bishop of Verdun he claims:

Urbs Vereduna, brevi quamvis claudaris in orbe,
Pontificis meritis amplificata places.⁹¹

A poem written for the bishop of Metz states:

Urbs munita nimis, quam cingit murus et amnis
Pontificis merito stas valitura magis.⁹²

A final example, taken from the poem *De Leontio episcopo*, praises the virtues of the bishop of Bordeaux:

Fecisti ut libeat cunctos huc currere cives,
Et domus una vocet quicquid in urbe manet.
Ornasti patriam cui dona perennia praestas,
Tu quoque dicendus Burdegalense decus:
Quantum inter reliquas caput haec super
extulit urbes,
Tantum pontifices vincis honore gradus.⁹³

⁹⁰'We beg of you not to leave us and to support us as you have been accustomed.' *Ibid.*, IV.11 (p. 147).

⁹¹'City of Verdun, although your circuit is small, you are great because of the merits of your bishop.' Venantius, III.23.1-2 (p. 73).

⁹²'Greatly fortified by your walls and by your river, the city, nevertheless, draws its strength from the merit of its bishop...' *Ibid.*, III.13.15-16 (p. 66).

⁹³'It is you who cause the citizens to run with joy to the altars. It is you who draw into the walls the entire city. But if you have adorned your *patria* with enduring monuments, you also merit to be called the honour of Bordeaux. As much as that city is elevated above others, so too are you elevated above other bishops.' *Ibid.*, I.15.65-70 (p. 17).

Fortunatus also notes that these bishops are patrons of their *patriae*.⁹⁴ The word is used here in its late Roman sense - i.e., to refer to a city-territory, or, in ecclesiastical terms, a diocese.

Although the rural role of early Merovingian bishops can be called into question, there is no doubt as to their position as leading citizens of *civitas*-capitals. The secular ceremony of *adventus*, used by the Church for the reception of relics, is also to be found, on occasion, at the ordination of a new bishop. Venantius tells of the welcoming of Gregory as the new bishop of Tours, and gives him the title, 'plebis pater, urbis amator'.⁹⁵ And from the life of St. Géry, there is an account of how this bishop, on the day of his ordination, was introduced to his city.⁹⁶

But even without these symbolic trappings, a bishop would have been regarded as a civic patron simply by merit of his episcopal duties. The care of his congregation, however, often went beyond that of tending to their spiritual and vital needs. Obligations to the poor and infirm aside, a bishop was also to see that his flock was treated fairly in secular matters - including those of the judicial court. Some bishops took an active role in the defence of their people, as when, for example,

⁹⁴One bishop is called the 'tutor patriae', and others, 'patriae vigor' and 'patriae caput'. *Ibid.*, III.8.17 (p. 88); III.22.7 (p. 72); and IV.10.8 (p. 86).

⁹⁵Venantius, IV.3.5 (p. 106). A discussion of this event is found in J.W. George, 'Portraits of Two Merovingian Bishops in the Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus', *Journal of Medieval History*, XIII.III (Sept., 1987), 195.

⁹⁶V. Gaug., VI and VII (p. 653-54). The *Vita* goes on to say how the bishop afterwards ordered the count of the city to release prisoners.

Gregory of Tours argued for the relief of his city from taxes, or when, earlier, Desiderius of Verdun asked for a loan from the king in order to support the city's failing businessmen.⁹⁷ The image of the bishop as a defender and shepherd of his urban congregation is demonstrated in the poems of Venantius, where bishops are given the titles, 'defensio plebis' and 'pater urbis'.⁹⁸

Bishops in the latter half of the sixth century also inherited from the classical tradition the role of public builder. Although the majority of the projects were ecclesiastical in nature, there are, on occasion, references to bishops undertaking secular works. Both Gregory of Tours and Venantius supply examples of bishops building in cities. Nicetius of Lyon, for example, is cited in the *History* for his building of churches and houses.⁹⁹ And in his list of the bishops of Tours, many are praised for their building of churches (both urban and rural).¹⁰⁰ In nearly every one of the episcopal poems of Venantius, some mention is made of a bishop's building projects. Most of these are religious structures, though in one instance, bishop Leontius of Bordeaux is said to have carried out repairs on a country estate - rebuilding the baths and fountains.¹⁰¹ Another

⁹⁷Gregory, *HF*, IX.30 (p. 384-85); and III.34 (p. 137-38).

⁹⁸Venantius, III.5.5 (p. 54); and II.21.1 (p. 71).

⁹⁹'ecclesias erigere, domus componere...diligentissime studebat.' Gregory, *HF*, IV.36 (p. 170). Gregory does not say whether these houses are for secular or ecclesiastical use.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, X., 442-44.

¹⁰¹Venantius, I.18 (p. 22). No mention is made of a religious building at the villa. See George, 'Portraits of Two Merovingian Bishops in the Poetry of Venantius Fortunatus', *Journal of Medieval History*, 192-93; and 197-200, on the building projects of this bishop. For an

secular project is the diverting of a river by Felix, the bishop of Nantes.¹⁰² Gregory of Tours is also praised by Venantius for his building, although these were all ecclesiastical structures.¹⁰³

The importance of the episcopal office and the status which this position granted was the main means by which *civitates* were distinguished from other settlements. Proof of this is given in a passage of Gregory's *History* on the *castrum* of Dijon.

Est autem castrum firmissimis muris in media planitie et satis iocunda compositum, terras valde ferriles atque fecundas, ita ut, arvis semel scissis vomere, semina iaceantur et magna fructuum opulentia subsequatur...Quattuor portae a quattuor plagis mundi sunt positae, totumque aedificium triginta tres torres exornant, murus vero illius de quadris lapidibus usque in viginti pedes desuper a minuto lapide aedificatum habetur, habens in altum pedes triginta, in lato pedes quindecim. Qui cur non civitas dicta sit, ignoro.¹⁰⁴

The passage is well worth a careful study. If Gregory's description is to be believed, Dijon is an impressive urban centre with a fertile countryside to

overview on secular building by early Merovingian bishops see Beck, *The Pastoral Care of Souls in South-East France during the Sixth Century*, 320.

¹⁰²Venantius, III.10 (p. 62-3).

¹⁰³*Ibid.*, X.6 (p. 234-38).

¹⁰⁴[Dijon is] '...a fortified place with very strong walls, built in the middle of a pleasant plain. Its lands are fertile and so productive that the fields are sown after a single ploughing whereupon follows a great and rich harvest... Four gates face the four corners of the world, and thirty-three towers guard the circuit of the walls, which are of squared stones to the height of twenty feet, and above of smaller stones, the total height being thirty feet with a thickness of fifteen. Why the place is not styled a city I cannot say.' Gregory, *HF*, III.19 (p. 129) [tr. Dalton, 103].

supply it. Gregory also mentions that the *castrum* was thought to have been built by the emperor Aurelian and thus he endows the settlement with a classical tradition. Yet, despite its walls, lands, prosperity, and tradition, Dijon is only a *castrum*.

At the beginning of his chapter on this settlement, Gregory notes how Dijon was a favourite residence of St. Gregory, the bishop of Langres (and great-grandfather of Gregory of Tours). In the *Liber Vitae Patrum*, he again speaks of St. Gregory's residence in the *castrum*. According to this account, the bishop's house in Dijon was located next to a baptistery - an unusual possession for a secondary settlement if the sources of the period are reliable.¹⁰⁵

The presence of the baptistery and the bishop's residence must have been the primary cause for Gregory's comment, 'Qui cur non civitas dicta sit, ignoro.' As will be shown, the term 'civitas' in the works of Gregory is used, with few exceptions (apart from its meaning as a city-territory), to describe an episcopal city. Dijon, as a notable urban centre, seems to have lacked the one attribute which would have granted it this qualification - i.e., a bishop's see.¹⁰⁶ Without this honour, Dijon remains a secondary settlement. Reasons why it was not given a bishop are not clear, as Gregory himself admits. The episcopal city of Langres, however, might have had something to do with the withholding of this office. In any event, the fortunes of Dijon are of no great

¹⁰⁵Gregory, *MM*, *LVP*, VII.2 (p. 687).

¹⁰⁶See Chapter I, p. 35.

consequence to this study, as the settlement was not granted episcopal status until the mid 1700s.

The Later Merovingian Period A.D. 600-751

As discussed in the Introduction, the sources for the later Merovingian period, such as they are, concentrate, for the most part, on military and political events. Ecclesiastical evidence is scant, but does demonstrate changes in the city's position as a religious centre. Several church canons, for example, are concerned with the bishop's authority in his rural community. The Council of Chalon-sur-Saône (A.D. 647-653) includes two such canons. The first states that laymen should not interfere with the property or with the control of rural parishes, while the second prohibits secular officials (usually, in this case, counts) from infringing on a bishop's right to tour his diocese's parishes and monasteries.¹⁰⁷ This legislation is hardly surprising, given that the urban Church lost much of its control over rural religious foundations during this period.

The urban monopoly on ecclesiastical activity and the region-wide control of bishops suffered from the

¹⁰⁷*Concilia, Cabilonense* (A.D. 647-653), c. 5 (p. 304): 'Saeculares vero, qui necdum sunt ad clericato cenversi, res parrochiarum vel ipsos parrochias minime ad regendum debeant habere commissas.'; and c. 11 (p. 305). 'Perenit ad sancta synodo, quod iudicis publici contra veternam consuetudinem per omnes parrochias vel monasteria, quas mos est episcopis circuire, ipsiut eis praeparent, inuitus adque districtus ante se faciant exhibere, quod omnimodis nec religione convenit nec canonum permittit auctoritas.'

division of city-territories by local aristocrats. Authority was also diminished by the rise of private religious foundations, including rural monasteries. The development of rural monasticism and its consequences for the *civitates* were not entirely the result of actions of the Frankish aristocracy. In the year A.D. 591, Columbanus, an Irish monk, arrived in France and was instrumental in the establishment of rural monasteries of a type which were more common in Ireland than Gaul.¹⁰⁸ Previously, Celtic monastic organisation, though not unknown in Gaul before Columbanus, was, nevertheless, largely confined to Brittany.¹⁰⁹ The work of Columbanus contributed to the establishment of rural monasticism within Gaul. Even so, the success of his efforts was aided by the political climate of the time and the region in which he worked.

Columbanus was the product of a non-urban society where bishops were often overshadowed by ruling abbots who, according to Sharpe, exercised control over the temporalities of the church.¹¹⁰ That is to say, abbots were concerned with lands, revenues and administrative

¹⁰⁸Colombanus had come to Gaul as a *peregrinus*, that is, a self-imposed exile from his native land. The tradition of *peregrinatio* is discussed by T.M. Charles-Edwards in 'The Social Background to Irish *Peregrinatio*', *Celtica*, XI (1975), 43-59. He also comments on the relationship between the *peregrinatio* tradition and missionary work, saying that those who were *peregrini* did not necessarily intend to become missionaries, although this was often a natural consequence of exile. *Ibid.*, 57-8.

¹⁰⁹P. Riché, 'Columbanus, His Followers, and the Merovingian Church', *Columbanus and Merovingian Monasticism*, ed. H.B. Clarke and M. Brennan (Oxford, 1981) (= *BAR, International Series*, CXIII), 161.

¹¹⁰A. Sharpe, 'Some Problems Concerning the Organization of the Church in Early Medieval Ireland', *Peritia*, III (1984), 263.

dealings, while bishops took on the pastoral and sacramental duties.¹¹¹ Because of this, Irish abbots would have been more likely to be involved with the founding of new monasteries.

The practice of Celtic monasticism emphasised asceticism, learning, and obedience to the leaders of the religious community.¹¹² The solitary life was preferred to the communal, although, more often than not, this principle was modified in the form of a group of monks living together in an isolated area.¹¹³

At the time of Columbanus' arrival in Gaul, urban monasticism was still very much the norm, with bishops exercising almost complete control over these institutions. In such a situation, and with such a background, Columbanus was destined to come into conflict with the Merovingian bishops. To begin with, he felt no obligation towards the episcopal office. Indeed, his first monastery, a rural establishment built on the ruins of a Roman *castrum* (Anagratius), was granted, not by a bishop, but by King Childebert II of Austrasia.¹¹⁴ Columbanus also angered the bishops by refusing to attend a council in A.D. 603, where he was to be rebuked for keeping the Celtic date for Easter.¹¹⁵

Each monastic foundation established by Columbanus was a rural one, and the only request that the monk ever

¹¹¹*Ibid.*, 265.

¹¹²Columbanus, (p. xiii, xv).

¹¹³'secreti melius vivunt quam publici...' From a letter of Columbanus to the synod of Chalon-sur-Saône, *Ibid.*, Ep. II.8 (p. 20).

¹¹⁴*V. Col.*, I.6 (p. 81).

¹¹⁵Columbanus, (p. 20-1).

made to visit a city was in order that he might see the tomb of St. Martin at Tours. If Columbanus recognised the authority of any episcopate, it was that of the see of Rome. Even so, he was quite eager to make it clear that it was the office, and not the city, which held his respect. Writing to Pope Gregory in the year A.D. 600 he states:

Et si animum corpus sequeretur, Roma iterum sui rem sustineret contemptus, ut quomodo docto narrante Hieronymo legimus, quosdam de ultimis Hyelini littoris finibus olim venisse Romam et, mirum dictu, aliud extra Romam quaesisse, ita et ego nunc te, non Romam, desiderans, salva sanctorum reverentia cinerum, expeterem.¹¹⁶

And again, he repeats this sentiment in a letter of A.D. 613 to Pope Boniface IV: 'Nos enim, ut ante dixi, devincti sumus cathedrae sancti Petri; licet enim Roma magna est et vulgata, per istam cathedram tantum apud nos est magna et clara.'¹¹⁷

Although Columbanus preferred solitude, he was not averse to using traditional urban imagery. In his few surviving sermons we find that he used the analogy of a besieged city to explain the necessity of a pure soul. And on another occasion, in a letter to his followers at

¹¹⁶ 'And if the body followed the mind, Rome herself would, once more, suffer contempt; for as we read in the narrative of the sage Jerome how some men from the most remote limits of the shores of Hyele once came to Rome, and, amazing to tell, sought out something apart from Rome, so too do I seek, wanting now, not Rome, but you [the Pope], without disrespect to the worship of the ashes of the saints.' *Ibid.*, *Ep.* I.8 (p. 8 and 10).

¹¹⁷ 'For we, as I have said before, are devoted to the see of St. Peter; for, although Rome is great and well-known, as far as we are concerned, it is great and famous only on account of that chair.' *Ibid.*, *Ep.* V.11 (p. 48).

Luxeuil, he refers to heaven as 'civitatem Dei viventis'.¹¹⁸

Many bishops must have resented the disregard by Columbanus and his followers of their canonical rights to control rural foundations. The tendency for the Merovingian kings and aristocracy to support this movement and/or to engage in such activities themselves must also have grated on the nerves of many bishops. Some, it would seem, made efforts to check the growing tide of private foundations. Eligius, bishop of Noyon, had tried to stop a noble named Erchinoald from building a monastery over the body of St. Fursey. Failing in this, he embarked upon his own campaign to establish both urban and rural cult centres. In the *Vita* of Eligius, it is recorded that he 'discovered' the body of St. Quentin near the *civitas*-capital of Noyon, and had it put on display. He then found the martyr Paito in the *vicus* of Sacilinio, and had a tomb built around his body, which is described as 'urbane' - that is, fit for a city. Eligius also obtained saints for the cities of Soissons and Beauvais.¹¹⁹

Audoenus, Bishop of Rouen, also understood the importance of maintaining a link with the rural community. Audoenus is said to have made frequent visits to the countryside, where he founded new churches and repaired existing religious buildings. He also contested a grant made by King Childeric of Neustria for the abbey of St.

¹¹⁸*Ibid.*, *Instructiones*, II.2 (p. 68); and *Ep.* IV.6 (p. 32).

¹¹⁹*V. Elig.*, II.2 (p. 675); and II.7 (p. 700).

Wandrille, as this action threatened the bishop's control over one of the most valuable monasteries in his territory.¹²⁰

The suspicion which often greeted attempts by the secular members of society to establish religious centres is also illustrated in the *Vita* of St. Amandus. St. Amandus had been a monk of the Columbanus tradition, and was later made a bishop. The *Vita* records that he had asked for lands to found a monastery from King Childeric II. This action, however, angered Mummolus, the bishop of Uzès, who was not pleased that Amandus had received land from the king.¹²¹

Eligius, Audoenus and Amandus were bishops who, although sometimes in conflict with the new monasticism, seem to have had some sympathy for Columbanus and Celtic practices. Amandus' life as a monk prior to his election might well account for his sentiments, but Eligius and Audoenus had secular beginnings. Both were educated together at the court of Lothar - Eligius entering the service of the royal treasurer of Dagobert I, and Audoenus becoming chancellor under this same king.¹²² As bishops they both displayed interests outside their *civitas*-capitals. It is known that Audoenus had been brought as a child before Columbanus for the monk's blessing. As friends at the court of Lothar, it is

¹²⁰*V. Aud.*, IV (p. 556); (X (p. 559); and *V. Lan.*, (p. 606-12).

¹²¹*V. Amand.*, XXIII (p. 445-46).

¹²²See P. Fouracre, 'The Work of Audoenus of Rouen and Eligius of Noyon in Extending Episcopal Influence from Town to the Country in Seventh-Century Neustria', *SCH*, XVI (Oxford, 1979) 77.

possible that Audoenus and Eligius shared an admiration for Columbanus and his ideas.

While Celtic monasticism and the struggle for the control of rural religious foundations might have prompted many bishops to take an interest in the countryside, the revival of pastoral care outside the *civitas* was not universal. Fouracre argues for a north/south divide, claiming that - apart from prominent cities such as Paris or Reims - most northern bishops had little choice but to attend to their rural parishes. On the other hand, dioceses in the southern region, which were areas with strong urban traditions, appear to have produced bishops who focused their energies on the city and its suburb.¹²³

Whether the degree of urban involvement depended on these factors or not, it is true that most bishops were content to restrict their activities to the city. Indeed, it could be argued that the transfer of secular control to secondary settlements enabled many bishops to increase their authority within the *civitas*-capital. The need for these bishops to deal with secular matters in their cities (owing to the lack of governmental control) meant that they were often distracted from, or not interested in, more general spiritual concerns. St. Boniface, writing to Pope Zacharias in A.D. 742, complained:

Franci enim, ut seniores dicunt, plus
quam per tempus octuginta annorum
synodum non fecerunt nec archiepisco-
pum habuerunt nec aecclesiae canonica

¹²³*Ibid.*, 88-9.

iura alicubi fundabant vel renovabant. Modo autem maxima ex parte per civitates episcopales sedes tradite sunt laicis cupidis ad possidendum vel adulteratis clericis scortatoribus et publicanis seculariter ad perfruendum.¹²⁴

The involvement of bishops in secular affairs is evident from several canons which seek to correct errant churchmen.¹²⁵ The *Vitae* of Leudegar of Autun and Praeiection of Clermont offer two examples of the way in which many bishops of this period involved themselves in the secular political workings of their city. Both men were elected to sees with strong urban traditions in areas which had been heavily influenced by *romanitas*. The *Vitae* of these two men emphasise their urban duties (such as the founding of urban monasteries and churches, repairing of city walls, etc.), saying nothing of their activities in, or attitudes towards, the rural Christian community. Leudegar and Praeiection were deeply entangled in the politics of their cities and the latter bishop is even said to have taken up the title of *major domus* upon

¹²⁴ 'For the Franks, as the elders have said, have not held a synod for over eighty years. They have neither had an archbishop, nor have they created or renewed anywhere the canon law of the Church. The episcopal sees in cities are, for the greater part, held by covetous laymen or are infringed upon by adulterous and unchaste clerics and notorious men for secular ends.' Boniface, *Ep.* XLIX (p.102). Although this letter comes at the very end of the late Merovingian period, it is evident that there has been a neglect of ecclesiastical affairs for some time.

¹²⁵ For example, a council of A.D. 673-75 includes a canon which decrees that churchmen shall not carry weapons. *Concilia, Latunense* (A.D. 673-75) c.2 (p. 315). A canon from the council of Paris also demonstrates that some bishops were abusing their authority, since it forbids 'agents of bishops' to force men to help them or to use violence against them. *Concilia, Parisiense* (A.D. 614), c. 14 (p. 79-80).

his return from political exile.¹²⁶ Such activity on the part of bishops might have been one of the major reasons for the Carolingian policy of re-introducing counts into the city.

Although the presence of the episcopal office preserved the high status of *civitates*, the religious functions previously associated almost exclusively with these centres began to be taken up by secondary settlements. The foundation of rural cult centres, monasteries and churches would have given the population a local religious focus and one that went hand in hand with the developing political conscriptions being carved out by aristocratic families. With regard to church councils, it would seem that there was an increase in the number of meetings held in secondary settlements as one moves towards the end of the period. What this meant for the role and status of *civitates* is, however, a question which is best answered in the context of the early Carolingian evidence.

The Early Carolingian Period A.D. 751-843

Modern scholars of this period usually emphasise the ecclesiastical character of Carolingian *civitas*-capitals. The assumption that these cities were primarily devoted to church functions is, however, one which requires closer examination. One of the most important sources for the period, the *ARF*, shows that *civitates* were not

¹²⁶*Pas. Prae.*, (p. 223-48); and *Pas. Leud.*, (p. 282-362).

used solely for religious activities. The secular functions recorded in the *ARF* (and examined in Chapter II) imply that while clerics might have made up the core of an intramural population, the Church did not completely dominate the way in which these centres were used and perceived.

Reasons for believing otherwise are perhaps founded on the notion that the majority of these cities suffered from a general economic and demographic decline, and were therefore abandoned by those with secular authority. But this, as we have seen, is too simple an explanation for the events of the later Merovingian period. True, there appears to have been a commercial decline within many of the walled cities. There was, however, at the same time, an expansion in building and development in the suburbs. James makes the point that in the larger *civitates*, where there was room for expansion, the outlying *burgi* did not become independent commercial settlements.¹²⁷ Thus, the economic decline noted within the walls of smaller *civitates* might represent a shifting of the market-place to an extramural site, rather than any loss of commercial viability.

But the continuity of a market, whether inside or outside the walls, cannot in itself be used as evidence for the non-ecclesiastical character of early Carolingian *civitates*, since bishops clearly exerted a great deal of influence over the commercial development of their cities, and since many of the *burgi* were dependent upon

¹²⁷James, *The Origins of France*, 68.

suburban monastic foundations. Yet the control of the suburb and walled city by either the bishop or abbot does not, of course, make these cities the sole property of the Church. Secular concerns also had their place in these centres.

McKitterick claims that by the eighth century aristocratic families virtually controlled the Church. The bishops, abbots and other clergy put forward by these families were more localised in their political outlook and more deeply involved in secular affairs.¹²⁸ Again, it is important to stress that this situation was not a result of a conscious policy on the part of the aristocracy. Bishops with secular interests were nothing new to the Church, although there seems to have been a growing awareness in reforming circles that the episcopate was not performing as it should.

A canon of the Synod of Frankfurt states:

Ut nullus episcopus propriam sedem
amittat aliubi frequentando aut in
propriis rebus suis manere audeat
amplius quam tres ebdomadas. Et
propinqui vel heredes episcopi res
quae ab episcopo sunt acquisitae aut
per comparationes aut per traditio-
nes, postquam episcopus fuerit
ordinatus, necquaquam post eius
obitum hereditare debeant.¹²⁹

¹²⁸Note, for example the abbot/statesman Wala, who was a cousin of Charlemagne, or royal bishops, e.g. Drogo, bishop of Metz and brother of King Louis the Pious. *V. Wala.*, (p. 1559D-1650B); and *ARF*, A.D. 823 (p. 161). It is, of course, true that aristocratic bishops were in existence from the late fifth century and that they were also involved in political matters; however, the existence of a strong imperial or royal administration in the cities perhaps freed these bishops from some of the secular concerns of their Carolingian counterparts.

¹²⁹'That no bishop should desert his particular see to frequent other places, or dare to remain on his own property for more than three weeks. And that the relations

Other canons, such as those issued at Mantua and Aachen, insist that a bishop should make tours of his parishes.¹³⁰

A canon from the above-mentioned synod of Frankfurt strives to recall wandering bishops to their episcopal duties. 'Definitum est a domno rege et sancta synodo, ut episcopus non migret de civitate in civitate, sed curam habeat ecclesiae suae'.¹³¹ This canon is based on an earlier admonition and shows that not all Carolingian bishops spent their entire time in cities.

Carolingian kings probably recognised the danger of absolute episcopal control in *civitates*. One means by which to maintain a secular hold over bishops was the king's right to call and preside over ecclesiastical councils - a privilege which had originated in the early Merovingian period. Counts, who were reintroduced into the cities by Charlemagne, were encouraged to work with the bishops and to share the duties of administration in both city and countryside.¹³²

and heirs of the bishop shall not obtain anything that the bishop has acquired by purchase or by gift, since the time that he became bishop.' *Leges, Synodus Franconofurtensis*, XXVIII (A.D. 794), c. 41 (p. 77).

¹³⁰The earlier council of Mantua (A.D. 781) also stresses that a count should accompany a bishop on his rounds of the diocese. *Leges, Mantuanum*, XC (A.D. 781), c. 6 (p. 190): 'Ut quando episcopus per sua parrochia cercata fercerit, comis vel sculdais adiutorium perbeat, qualiter ministerium suum pleniter perficere valeat secundum canonicam institutionem'; and *Capitulare Aquisgranense*, LXXVII (A.D. 801-13), c. 1 (p. 170).

¹³¹*Leges, Synodus Franconofurtensis*, XXVIII (A.D. 794) c. 7 (p. 75). 'It was established by our lord king and the holy synod that bishops are not to move from city to city, but are to take care of their own churches.'

¹³²The urban duties included the keeping of order and joint judgement of certain cases. See *Ibid.*, c. 30 (p. 71); and *Capitularia Missorum Specialia*, XXXIV (A.D. 802), c. 18a (p. 101).

This method of governing did not always run smoothly, as a capitulary issued at Aachen demonstrates:

Interrogandi sunt, in quibus rebus
vel locis ecclesiastici laicis aut
laici ecclesiasticis ministerium suum
impediunt. In hoc loco discutiendum
est atque interveniendum, in quantum
se episcopus aut abbas rebus secula-
ribus debeat inserere vel in quantum
comes vel alter laicus in ecclesias-
tica negocia.¹³³

Other ways of reducing episcopal power involved the granting of immunities to rural or suburban monasteries. These measures, however, did little to undermine the bishop's urban authority.

What can be learnt from the above discussion is that *civitas*-capitals of the Carolingian period were not solely controlled or even primarily characterised by ecclesiastical interests. The efforts of the Carolingian rulers to direct episcopal policy while secularizing urban administration demonstrate that they were not willing to give the *civitates* entirely over to ecclesiastical officials.

But leaving secular and economic issues aside, in what way were these cities ecclesiastical and how did they compare in their performance of religious duties to other settlements? Although bishops effectively gained greater influence within their *civitates* over the course of the seventh and early eighth centuries, it is evident

¹³³ 'They are to be asked in what matters or situations ecclesiastics impede laymen or laymen ecclesiastics in the exercise of their offices. At this point there is to be a discussion and debate on the extent to which a bishop or abbot ought to involve himself in secular matters or a count or other layman in ecclesiastical affairs.' *Leges, Capitulare Tractanda Cum Comitibus Episcopis et Abbatibus*, LXXI (A.D. 811), c. 5 (p. 161).

that as religious centres, the cities lost a degree of power and prestige under the Carolingians. The further growth of rural religious foundations deprived the cities of revenue and pilgrims. Episcopal *civitates*, once the focus for all rites and festivals, lost their former monopoly. Church canons of this period, instead of ordering the faithful into the city, now called for bishops and clerics to go out into the parishes and for preaching to be given, 'non solum in civitatibus, sed etiam in omnibus parroeciis.'¹³⁴ This renewed interest in the rural Christian community is perhaps indicative of the Church's efforts to compete with private foundations and to come to terms with the needs of a rural congregation which could no longer be ignored.

The status of the *civitas* as a religious centre was not, however, completely undermined. City-based cults, such as the shrine of St. Martin, continued to draw in the faithful, and bishops were still regarded as the protectors of their dioceses and cities. The *ARF* records six councils which are known to be specifically ecclesiastical taking place in *civitates*, and many other royal councils of a less certain nature also being held in cities.

The *ARF* also reveals that nearly a third of the court's Christmas and Easter festivals were spent in episcopal cities. The number of recorded ecclesiastical councils and festivals does, however, show that these events occurred more often in secondary settlements.

¹³⁴*Concilia Caro., Concilium Arelatense*, XXXIV (A.D. 813), c. 10 (p. 251).

Even on the two occasions when Gaul was visited by a pope, it would seem that both pontiffs were entertained at royal *villae*, rather than *civitates*.¹³⁵

From this evidence, it appears that Carolingian *civitas*-capitals were no longer considered to be the undisputed focus for all religious activity. Yet the status and prestige of traditional cities was not to be entirely erased; for, had the qualities and traditions upon which these centres were based not survived, then it is likely that the title of 'civitas' (and perhaps even the episcopal office) would have been given to such centres as Aachen, Frankfurt, or even Dorestad. Thus, it could be said that the *civitates* - especially those which dated from the Roman period - retained vestiges of their status, despite the decline in ecclesiastical activity.

That the early Carolingians had an idea of what a bishop's city should be is demonstrated in a number of sources. From church councils there is a canon which stresses: 'Quod non oporteat in villolis nec in vicis episcopos ordinare.'¹³⁶ The strongest statement on this issue, however, is found in the correspondence of St. Boniface in A.D. 743, just before the Carolingian period. The opinions expressed in this exchange of letters on the nature of episcopal cities continued into the Carolingian period, as is evidenced by the synod of Frankfurt in A.D. 794. The letters between St. Boniface and the Pope are important, for here we have a record describing the

¹³⁵ARF, A.D. 753 and 804 (p. 10 and 119).

¹³⁶'That it is not fitting to ordain bishops in small estates or villages.' *Leges, Synodus Franconofurtensis* (A.D. 794), c. 22 (p. 76).

foundation of episcopal sees. These are, as noted by St. Boniface, the Bavarian 'castellum' of Würzburg, the 'oppidum' of Buraburg, and the 'locus' of Erfurt - which is further described as 'urbs paganorum rusticorum'.¹³⁷ This information is from a letter of St. Boniface to Pope Zacharias in which Boniface requests confirmation of status for the sees he is to establish. The Pope's reply, dated A.D. 743, shows that he might have felt some hesitation in granting episcopal status to a *castrum*, an *oppidum* and an 'urbs paganorum rusticorum'.

et petisti, ut per auctoritatem sedis
nostrae episcopales ibidem sedes
firmentur. Sed tua sancta Fraternitas
pertractet mature et subtili
consideratione discernat, si expedi-
at: aut si loca vel populorum turbæ
talìa esse probantur, ut episcopos
habere mereantur. Meministi enim,
Carissime, quid in sacris canonibus
præcipimur observare: ut minime in
villulas vel in modicas civitates
episcopos ordinemus: ne vilescat
nomen episcopi.¹³⁸

It is clear from this letter that an episcopal city must not only be the centre of a large Christian population (i.e., one which is worthy of having a bishop), but must also be a settlement of suitable size and status.¹³⁹

¹³⁷Boniface, *Ep.* XLIX (p. 101).

¹³⁸'You ask that these episcopal sees may be established by our authority; but let your Fraternity give further thought and examine most carefully whether this is advisable, whether the places and the number of inhabitants are worthy of having bishops. You remember, beloved, what is laid down in the sacred canons: that we should not establish bishops in villages or small cities lest the title of bishop be cheapened.' *Ibid.*, *Ep.* L, (p. 106) [tr. Emerton, 83].

¹³⁹Pope Gregory also considered the size of the population to be an important factor in determining what settlements should have bishops. Boniface, *Ep.* XXV (p. 67) (A.D. 732). Gregory gives Boniface the authority to establish bishops, 'ubi multitudo excrevit fidelium...'

Pope Zacharias' reference to 'modicas civitates' shows that the qualification 'civitas' was not always restricted to episcopal cities. This use of the term is, however, rare for this period.

The absence of a bishop did not necessarily condemn a settlement to obscurity in terms of ecclesiastical affairs. As stated above, royal *villae* served as meeting places for synods, as sites of papal visits, and, if located near a cult centre, as an attraction for pilgrims. Many of these cult centres were major religious foci in their own right with splendid ecclesiastical buildings.¹⁴⁰ These new religious centres were not, however, a threat to all aspects of the bishop's urban authority, for while they were capable of drawing off revenue and pilgrims, they could not themselves take on the honour reserved for an episcopal city. Secondary towns knew their limits with regard to their position as religious centres. In many cases, bishop's cities were distinguished only by the episcopal office and the title of *civitas*. Even so, the canon laws on the founding of episcopal sees indicates that there was some effort to keep episcopal *civitates* distinct and to maintain their role as diocesan centres¹⁴¹ The status of the *civitas*

¹⁴⁰Of particular note is the church at the palace of Ingelheim, located in the suburb of Mainz. See Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 254. Other centres, such as St-Denis and Jouarre, were chosen by kings and nobles as burial places. See J. M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), 179.

¹⁴¹An example can be drawn from the *villa* of Aachen. The estate is referred to as a second Rome, but, in every instance, the reference reflects a secular concept, as it is Rome's position as capital of an empire which has been duplicated and not the city's distinction as the centre of the Christian world. In this same way, *civitas*-

was ensured by the tradition and dignity of the episcopal office. It was in the Church's interest to maintain this status, and it was in the king's interest to see that it was not abused by those wishing to use it for secular gains.

It would be useful to know how the newly founded *civitates* were seen in comparison to the ancient episcopal cities. Was the *civitas* of Buraburg, for example, the ecclesiastical equal of, say, the see of Reims? Unfortunately, we do not have the evidence from Gaul to determine this, although two city descriptions from Italy show that pride could be taken in a city's classical past and in the number of bishops and saints it could produce (achievements which newly founded cities could not hope to emulate).¹⁴²

capitals could not lose their episcopal character to secondary settlements, regardless of the participation of the latter in ecclesiastical events. See Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 192.

¹⁴²The first poem, 'Laudes Mediolanensis Civitatis', was written around the year A.D. 738 and does not appear to have any identifiable model. The poem is divided into sections devoted firstly to praising Milan's city walls and public works, secondly to its churches, charities, and the religious devotion of its citizens. It concludes with a list of the saints who watch over and protect the *civitas*. The poem also includes a passage contrasting the pagan and Christian city. The Christian theme of the poem comprises two-thirds of its content. There is no mention of political activity (save the naming of the Lombard king, Liutprand) or economic functions. See Pighi, *Versus de Verona, Versus de Mediolano civitate*, 145-47. The poem on Verona (c. A.D. 800) was almost certainly influenced by the Milan poem, and, most probably, written in rivalry to it. Both are similar in style and content, though the later poem compiles a longer list of saints and bishops. As with the Milan poem, the Christian and pagan elements of the city are compared. *Ibid.*, 152-54. See also J.K. Hyde, 'Medieval Descriptions of Cities', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, XLVIII (1966), 310-15.

Whether the Carolingians took pride in their classical urban past is uncertain, although their obvious regard for imperial Rome implies that they were not insensitive to this heritage. It is also a matter of speculation whether these cities, like their Italian counterparts, would have been described in primarily ecclesiastical terms. Again, there is no conclusive answer, although it is perhaps safe to say that religious activity was considered to be a prominent, if not the principal, feature of early Carolingian cities.

Summary

To conclude this chapter, I should like briefly to summarise the changes in ecclesiastical use and perception of Gallic cities. The late Roman Church was destined by circumstances to become an urban institution. Its subsequent role as the administrative substitute for secular government ensured that the Church would centre its activities in and around cities. Gallic cities of this period, consequently, took on a stronger ecclesiastical character.

The situation changed, however, during the course of the seventh and early eighth centuries. The gradual migration of secular administration from the city to the countryside resulted in the breakdown of episcopal authority over the diocese and the division of ecclesiastical functions among smaller rural conscriptions. This situation, however, left the *civitates* very much in the hands of their bishops.

The early Carolingian period witnessed the crystallisation of these developments. With the exception of the bishop's office, many *civitates* were, in truth, no different from other urban centres that had developed by this period; some indeed were certainly smaller and less important in political and economic terms. And yet, efforts were made to distinguish episcopal cities and to maintain the dignity of the episcopate.

That few late Roman cities survived into the Middle Ages save those which were designated as bishop's sees points to the vital role the Church played in the continuance of urban life. Most scholars of this period see the Church as the salvation of post-classical cities. In the words of Latouche, 'Religious and ecclesiastical activity saved the lives of a host of Gallo-Roman cities,....'¹⁴³ The vitality of these cities, he goes on to say, was a 'sociological phenomenon', meaning that town life of this period should not be defined in economic terms alone.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³Latouche, *BWE*, 103-5.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.* A point to keep in mind when considering the economic role of Gallic *civitates* of the late Roman and early medieval periods.

IV. The *Civitas* as a Centre of Defensive and Military Activity

The Late Roman Period A.D. 340-540

The defensive and military aspects of late Roman *civitates* can be divided into four general categories. The first concerns the city's position in military affairs - i.e., its role as a centre of martial activity and its importance as a strategic fortified position. The next includes an examination of the physical defensive features - walls and gates. Attention here is given not only to the practical use of these features, but also to their symbolic value. Also considered in this section is the question of the necessity of town walls to *civitates* and the comparative status of walled secondary settlements. The third category looks at the use of cities as places of refuge. The fourth and final category is also concerned with this function, but concentrates on the Church's response to secular urban defence: the idea of sanctuary and the way the urban Church operated this practice.

I will consider first the city's role as a centre for military activity. Many sources of the period demonstrate the variety of military functions to be found in *civitas*-capitals. The *Vita Beati Martini* records the gathering of troops at the city of Worms ('Vangionum civitatem') and the distribution there of a donative to

the soldiers of Julian Caesar.¹ Cities and rural settlements alike were expected to quarter troops, as a decree of A.D. 398 outlines:

In qualibet vel nos ipsi urbe fuerimus vel ii qui nobis militant commorentur, omni tam mensorum quam etiam hospitem iniquitate summota duas domus propriae domus, tertia hospiti deputata, eatenus intrepidus ac securus possideat portiones, ut in tres domum divisa partes primam eligendi dominus habeat facultatem, secundam hospes quam voluerit exequatur, tertia domino relinquenda.²

The *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus, the most comprehensive source for the military use of late Roman Gallic cities, notes the gathering of troops by Julian, on one occasion outside the city of Chalon-sur-Saône, and on another at Reims.³ It would appear from Ammianus that Julian conducted his campaigns in Gaul from city to city. On his way to relieve the city of Autun, for example, he made stops in Auxerre, Troyes and, finally, Reims, where, 'in unum congregatum exercitum vehementem unius mensis cibaria iusserat operiri praesentiam

¹*V. Mart.*, IV.1 (p. 260): 'Julianus Caesar coacto in unum exercito apud Vangionum civitatem donativum coepit erogare militibus.'

²'In any city in which We Ourselves may be or in which those who perform imperial service for us may sojourn, We remove all injustice both on the part of our quartering officers and of the persons quartered. One third of a house shall be assigned to a quartered person, and the owner shall possess two thirds of his house as his own in full confidence and security, to the extent that when the house has been thus divided into three parts, the owner shall have the first opportunity to choose his portion, and the person quartered shall obtain which ever part he wishes second, while the third part shall be left over for the owner.' *Codex Theod.*, VII.8.5 (p. 328) [tr. Pharr, 166]. Although the decree was issued in Constantinople, it clearly refers to all cities of the Empire.

³*Amm. Marc.*, XIV.10.3 (p. 28); and XVI.2.8 (p. 73).

suam....'⁴ The halts called at both Auxerre and Troyes were said to be made for the benefit of the weary troops.

The advantages of resting at such centres were numerous. To begin with, many of these cities were located along major roads and waterways, making access to them easier in terms of time and effort. Most *civitas*-capitals of Gaul also possessed (from the third century) defensive walls which allowed for quick and secure retreat should the army suffer an unexpected attack. Cities would also have been able to provide the necessary provisions, including, in some cases, supplies of clothing or weapons. This latter service would certainly have been available in the city of Trier, since this centre was praised for just this in Ausonius' *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, and is listed as a major producer of arms in the *Notitia Dignitatum*.⁵ It was also the case that many *civitates* would have been able to offer greater facilities for the quartering of soldiers than would have been available from a secondary settlement. Moreover, a city of *civitas* status would probably have included more elaborate facilities for the housing of high military officials.

During the course of his Gallic campaigns, Julian always chose a city for his winter headquarters. While Ammianus does not record in every instance whether the army was also quartered in these cities, he does note that during Julian's stay in Paris, he met with officials

⁴'...he ordered the army to gather in one place, with food for one month, to await his arrival....' *Ibid.*, XVI.2.1-8 (p. 72-3).

⁵Ausonius, XIX.32 (p. 99); and *ND*, OC. IX. 37-8 (p. 146).

and soldiers in the suburb of that city.⁶ It was on this occasion that Julian was proclaimed Augustus by his troops.

Roman military activity was also centred upon secondary settlements - particularly *castra*, which would also have been enclosed. The use of *castra*, however, was more common in frontier regions where there were few, if any, *civitates*. In those territories where cities were found, the Roman army appears to have founded its activities on areas which were within reach of a *civitas*-capital. This situation was forced, in part, by the tactics of the Germanic leaders who very often skirted the Roman forces altogether to attack undefended cities. Such manoeuvres often left the Roman army no choice but to rush from one city to another in an attempt to break a siege or drive the enemy from a city.

Yet, the competence of the Germanic forces in the art of siege warfare was often woefully inadequate. As Contamine aptly observes: 'Their capacity for siege warfare - fundamental to the defeat of an urban civilization..., was considered deplorable by the Romans'.⁷ Eugippius, in his *Vita* of St. Severinus tells of an attack on the *civitas* of Lauriacum. The attacking barbarian forces were frightened by the noise and light from a fire in the city and fled. The next morning the citizens

⁶Amm. Marc., XX.4.1 (p. 191). The cities which serve as Julian's winter headquarters include Sens, Vienne and Paris.

⁷P. Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1980), 11.

ventured out of the gates and found ladders with which the barbarians had hoped to scale the walls.⁹

More often than not, the Germanic forces were content to blockade a city rather than try to enter it by force. Take, for example, the siege of the city of Sens, where Julian was able to hold out without reinforcements for a month and so broke the patience of the Alamanni, who retreated in disappointment, 'inaniter stultaque cogitasse civitatis obsidium mussitantes.'¹⁰

But the lifting of the siege at Sens was no great victory for Julian; for he had been stranded in the city because of the inefficiency of his 'magister equitum', who had failed to send reinforcements. Many triumphs of the Germanic forces were due to the inadequacies of the late Roman army. Few cities were able to wait for Roman military intervention; and, as a result, they often capitulated because of quick attacks on unguarded defences, treachery, blockades, or by the voluntary actions of their citizens who opened the gates in the hope that they would be treated mercifully.¹¹

Isidore of Seville's *Historia Gothorum Wandalorum Sueborum* includes several accounts of the besieging of cities by Germanic forces. The attack on Arles, by the Gothic king Theudered, was unsuccessful owing to the intervention of Aetius, the leader of the Roman army in that region. Theudered afterwards laid siege to the city

⁹V. Sev., XXX (p. 22-3).

¹⁰'...grumbling at their vanity and foolishness in thinking to besiege the city.' Amm. Marc., XVI.4.2 (p. 74-5).

¹¹Contamine, *War in the Middle Ages*, 12-13.

of Narbonne, hoping to starve it into submission. This too failed, however, as he was driven off by the Roman officer Litorius who had enlisted the aid of the Huns.¹¹

Isidore also provides an example of how cities were lost to the Germanic forces in his account of the surrender of Narbonne. Here, Isidore relates that the city did not surrender as a result of a siege, but by the treachery of Agrippinus, a Gallo-Roman count. The *civitas* had been used as a political pawn in order to counter the ambitions of a rival count (Aegidius) and to gain the favour of the Goths.¹²

Gregory of Tours also offers an account of the betrayal of a late Roman city. The *History* relates how Godigisel was under siege in the city of Vienne by his brother Gundobad. Fearing he would run out of food, Godigisel expelled the urban population from the city. Unfortunately, he also had ejected the engineer of the city's aqueduct, who, enraged at having been driven out, went straight to Gundobad and revealed to him how to enter the city via the aqueduct.¹³

The declining resources of the Empire led to a breakdown of the Roman army's capacity to deal with the Germanic invasions. Eugippius, in his *Vita* of St. Severinus was well aware of this situation.

Per id temporis, quo Romanum constabat imperium, multorum milites oppidorum pro custodia limitis publicis stipendiis alebantur. Qua consuetu-

¹¹Isidore, XXIII. and XXIV (p. 277).

¹²*Ibid.*, XXXIII (p. 280).

¹³Gregory, *HF*, II.33 (p. 95-6).

dine desinente simul militares turmae
sunt deletae,¹⁴

Attacks carried out on *civitates* were an essential tactic of the Germanic invaders. Yet, many of the less-romanized groups did not care to live in cities. Ammianus demonstrates this fact when speaking of the Juthungi, a branch of the Alamanni: 'Raetias turbulente vastabant, adeo ut etiam oppidorum temptarent obsidia praeter solitum.'¹⁵ Ammianus also reports that while the Alamanni were content to take cities, they preferred to live outside the walls.¹⁶ The majority of military ventures by the barbarians were only raids, and few were equipped to carry out long-term sieges. To those tribes less familiar with *romanitas*, cities were a new form of settlement. Julian's campaigns into the territory of the Alamanni, for example, met with only villages and farms ('*villae*' and '*vici*'), although the houses were said to have been built in imitation of Roman domestic structures.¹⁷

Most of the Germanic forces were, however, familiar with the Empire and its cities. That *civitas*-capitals were seen as essential possessions is evidenced by the efforts made to ensure their capture. Time and time again the sources of this period relate the siege and

¹⁴'At the time when the empire of the Romans was still in existence, the soldiers of many towns were supported by public funds to defend the borders. When this support ceased, this company of soldiers was abolished.' V. Sev., XXI.1 (p. 18).

¹⁵'They were devastating the region of Raetia with such a force as to undertake the besieging of towns, contrary to their custom.' Amm. Marc., XVII.6.1 (p. 116).

¹⁶*Ibid.*, XVI.2.12 (p. 73-74).

¹⁷'curatius ritu Romano constructa,' *Ibid.*, XVII.1.7 (p. 105-6).

fall of Gallic cities. Köln, Autun, Lyon and many unnamed cities are recorded as suffering from barbarian attacks in the *Res Gestae*. Many of these early attacks were mere raids, and as such do not represent any long-term establishment of Germanic rule. Towards the end of the period, however, cities were eagerly sought out and acquired with the idea of ruling over them permanently. This development is hardly surprising, given that the Germanic leaders understood that a city must be held if its territory was to be controlled.

The single feature which distinguishes a city as a defensive and military centre is its walls. It is known that nearly all *civitates*, as well as many secondary settlements, already had, or, acquired walls during this period. As Butler points out in his survey 'Late Roman town walls in Gaul', the building of defences during the third and fourth centuries was a result of Germanic invasions.¹⁸ Butler's survey includes defences found in both *civitates* and other settlements. The appendix is particularly useful in that it lists these enclosures with their possible dates of construction.¹⁹ Of the sites listed which later become episcopal sees, the smallest in area is *Civitas Vappincensium* (Gop) with an area of 2.75 acres, while the largest is *Civitas Treverorum* (Trier) with 712 acres.²⁰

¹⁸A.M. Butler, 'Late Roman town walls in Gaul', *Archaeological Journal*, CXXVI (1959), 25-8.

¹⁹The dating of the walls is based on literary and archaeological information, although the latter is out of date in some cases. *Ibid.*, 48-50.

²⁰*Ibid.*, 50. Note that in both cases, however, the defences are thought to have been built after A.D. 270.

Praises given to a city's walls are often placed in the context of past military events. Attention is drawn to the city's historical role with the walls (or, in some cases, their ruins) standing as a silent testament of an honoured past. The *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* singles out seven cities for their defensive features and/or their part in military campaigns. Thus, Trier is lauded for both its impressive walls and its ability to provision the imperial forces. Capua, although it is said to be no longer a great city, is, nevertheless, given eighth place because of its former military strength.²⁴

Sidonius' poem on the city of Narbonne praised the city, although it had obviously been damaged by recent military activity:

sed per semirutas superbus arces,
ostendens veteris decus duelli,
quassatos geris ictibus molares,
laudandis pretiosior ruinis.
Sint urbes aliae situ minaces,
quas vires humiles per alta condunt,
et per praecipites locata cristas
numquam moenia caesa gloriantur:
tu pulsate places fidemque fortem
oppugnatio passa publicavit.²⁵

be said that the term 'moenia', used in reference to the city of Aquileia, might have referred to the buildings rather than the walls. See B. Ward-Perkins' discussion on the meaning of this word in *From Classical Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, 25n., 29, 46n., 78, 193 and 231.

²⁴Ausonius, XIX (p. 99-100). The wealth of the city is also mentioned, but Ausonius holds that it was her military prowess which enabled Capua to oppose Rome.

²⁵'but proud in the midst of half-ruined defences exhibiting the glory of an old war, by the great stones which have been shaken, you bring higher praises to these ruins: Let other cities threaten by means of their location - those which are built on high by base men. The walls built on steep crests glory in that they have never been destroyed: You, though battered, win esteem. The well-known fame of that battle publishes your strength.' Sidonius, *Carm.* XXIII.59-68 (p. 251).

The *Res Gestae* of Ammianus also praises certain cities for their part in military events. In his description of Gaul, Ammianus claims that the *civitates* of Mainz, Worms, Speyer and Strasbourg were famous because they were instrumental in the Empire's struggle against the Germanic invasions. 'Dein prima Germania, ubi praeter alia municipia Mogontiacus est et Vangiones, et Nemetae et Argentoratus, barbaricis cladibus nota.'²⁶ It is important to remember, however, that Ammianus is concerned with providing a literary and broad historical framework for the military achievements of Julian. The actual extent of any particular city's military reputation at the time of the writing of the *Res Gestae* is, therefore, questionable.

Although archaeological evidence has yet to prove this for every case, most cities are believed to have acquired walls during the third century. It is quite probable that a *civitas*-capital sans defences would have stood out, since enclosed secondary settlements were not unusual. It must be repeated, however, that these defences did not in themselves constitute the status of a city. The obvious pride taken in such features does imply that they were considered to be an important facility, but in addition to the symbolic significance of city walls, there was the more practical aspect of their use as a defence against a hostile force.

Sidonius refers here to the attack made on Narbonne by Theodoric.

²⁶ 'Then there is Germania Prima where together with other *municipia*, are Mainz, Worms, Speyer and Strasbourg, famous for the injuries inflicted on the barbarians.' Amm. Marc., XV.11.8 (p. 66).

The Germanic attacks, which tended to centre on *civitas*-capitals, elevated the defensive function of these cities in the eyes of their citizens. This role was, of course, shared with enclosed secondary settlements which found themselves under attack. The *Vita* of St. Severinus offers examples of *castella* which were occupied by the population in times of danger.²⁷

Ian Wood believes that the *castrum* of Dijon might have served as a refuge for the fifth-century bishop Avitus of Vienne in preference to his episcopal city.²⁸ If Gregory's description of the defences of this settlement is to be believed, the use of Dijon as a safe refuge would be perfectly understandable, although the city of Vienne also had considerable defences (with a perimeter of 1950 m., according to Brühl), with both the baptistery and cathedral located within the city's defences.²⁹ However, the formidable walls of Dijon might well have been a factor in the bishop's use of the *castrum*, which certainly became a favourite episcopal residence, with its own baptistery and, perhaps, its own episcopal palace.

The preference in times of danger for a secondary settlement as opposed to a *civitas*-capital was, however, rare. Rousseau points out the attitude of Sidonius towards the Germanic sieges: 'The experience of barbarian siege might have made the city seem suddenly more

²⁷V. Sev., XI.1 (p. 13); and XXX.1 (p. 22).

²⁸I. Wood, *Avitus of Vienne, Religion and Culture in the Auvergne and the Rhône Valley, 470-530* (Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1980), 115.

²⁹Brühl, *Palatium und Civitas*, 245; 234; and the map opposite p. 232.

vulnerable...; but Clermont was infinitely preferable to the isolated (if fortified) *castella* of the nobility.³⁰ Rousseau cites as an example of this attitude a letter of Sidonius which speaks of how Seronatus, a retainer of the Visigoths, burdened the people of the territory of Javols with duties and taxes. Their suffering, according to Sidonius, was partly because they were living in isolated regions without any towns where they could take refuge or make a stand.³¹

The freedom to choose between an urban or rural retreat was usually limited to the upper classes and their dependents. There are a number of *villae-cum-fortresses* in the works of Sidonius, although just how common such settlements were is not known, nor is it certain whether they were restricted to the Auvergne. Many seem to have been located in mountainous regions and thus might have offered the protection of an isolated and defensible site.³²

Yet the possession of urban defences (even those in good repair) did not always ensure the security of the urban population. Throughout the late Roman period, as

³⁰Rousseau, 'In Search of Sidonius the Bishop', *Historia* 364.

³¹'At ille sic ira celer, quod piger mole, ceu draco e specu vix evolutus iam metu exanguibus Gabalitanis e proximo infertur; quos singulos sparsos inoppidatos nunc inauditis indictionum generibus exhaurit, nunc flexuosa clumnarum fraude circumretit, ne tum quidem domum laboriosos redire permittens, cum tributum annuum datavere.' Sidonius, *Ep.* V.13.2 (p. 87).

³²*Ibid.* *Ep.* V.14.1 (p. 87): Sidonius writes to his friend Aper asking: 'An fortasse montana sedes circum castella et in eligenda sede perfugii quandam pateris ex munitionum frequentia difficultatem?' Note also Sidonius' description of the *burgus* of Pontius Leontius, *Carm.* XXII (p. 244-50).

the imperial forces declined, the cities of Gaul were left to defend themselves. The consequences of this struggle in the frontier regions can be seen in the writings of Eugippius, who relates, for example, how the city of Batavis was successfully captured because there was not a sufficient guard on the walls - the majority of the inhabitants being outside the city helping with the harvest. Another frontier city, that of Lauriacum, had to organise its own garrison and scouts.³³

On the lack of protection in the less isolated cities of Gaul we have the writings of Salvian, who complained that the Romans were so occupied with their vices that there was no protection offered for the *civitates*.³⁴ Although Salvian attributed the loss of the cities to the judgement of God, it is probably quite true that many suffered during this period because the central civil and military authorities could not organise any adequate means of defence. In the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus, groups of veterans are recorded as having defended the walls of Autun alongside a small regular force, and the defences themselves were noted as being in a state of disrepair.³⁵ Efforts were made by Julian to mend the walls of cities and fortresses, although it is evident that he was fighting a losing battle; for no sooner did he recapture and repair a city, than word came that some other urban centre was threatened or had fallen

³³V. Ser., XXII.4 (p. 19); and XXX.1 (p. 22).

³⁴Salvian, VI.14. (p. 412 and 414).

³⁵Amm. Marc., XVI.2.1 (p. 72).

to the enemy.³⁶ Under these conditions, it is little wonder that many urban populations chose either to set up their own guard, or, as the period progressed, to give themselves over to Germanic rule.

The use of cities for political refuge became more common towards the end of the period, as traditional channels of authority declined and the struggle among the Germanic leaders for control heightened. Gregory of Tours tells how, at the time of Clovis, Gundobad fled to take refuge in the city of Clermont, having lost a battle against the combined forces of his brother, Godigisel, and Clovis.³⁷ As often occurred in these cases, Gundobad surrendered to Clovis, not as a result of an attack on the city, but by striking a deal.

Not every faction of late Roman society, however, agreed with the trust placed in city defences. The praise given to walls and the military role of cities originated, for the most part, from secular sources or contexts. This is not to suggest that churchmen as a whole were reluctant to take pride in these features, but it is clear that some held that more faith should be placed in God than in city walls.

Paulinus of Nola, in a poem on St. Felix, uses the example of Jericho to illustrate that a city without God's support is defenceless:

³⁶This situation must have been particularly frustrating, given the fact that the barbarians often took pains to avoid direct confrontations. Ammianus, for example, tells of how the Laeti slipped between two large encampments of Roman soldiers and attacked the city of Lyon: *Ibid.*, XVI.11.3-4 (p. 88); and XVIII.2.3-4 (p. 136).

³⁷Gregory, *HF*, II.32 (p. 93-95).

et perspice qui potiore
praesidio fuerint, quos urbs circum
data magnis
absque deo muris an quos sine
moenibus urbis
vallabat socio virtus divina favore.
Illam dico urbem quam perdidit acer
Iesus'38

auxilium est', was the judgement of Anianus upon hearing this report.⁴¹

The *History* also includes an account of how two kings, Childebert and Lothar, were prevented from capturing the Spanish city of Saragossa. Realising they were under siege, 'At ille (*i.e.*, the citizens) in tanta humilitate ad Deum conversi sunt, ut induti ciliciis, abstinentia cibis et poculis, cum tunica beati Vincenti martiris muros civitatis psallendo circuirent.'⁴² Once the Frankish army understood what the citizens were doing, they became frightened and broke off the attack.

In hagiographical accounts, bishops are often recorded as putting more trust in spiritual and divine protection. In practice, however, most must also have recognised the necessity of a city's physical defences. Thus, while Anianus was content to lead his flock in prayer, others, such as Sidonius, sought direct military aid for the relief of their urban centres. In practical terms, a bishop, as the acknowledged defender of his city, could not afford to ignore the protection offered by these defences.

It could be argued that the Church was very much aware of the society's need for protection, and in response to this, offered an ecclesiastical counterpart to city walls - church sanctuary. Church sanctuary could, of course, be applied to rural religious buildings as

⁴¹Gregory, *HF*, II.7 (p. 68-9).

⁴²'The people of the city turned to God in great humility, so that they dressed in hair shirts and, abstaining from food and drink, they walked around the walls of the city singing as they carried the tunic of the blessed martyr Vincent.' *Ibid.*, III.29 (p. 133-34).

well as city churches, although in practice an urban church offered a number of advantages over its parochial counterpart. To begin with, urban churches were often located within a city's walls, and thus a refugee could benefit from both secular and ecclesiastical protection. Secondly, city churches were under direct episcopal control, so that while a pursuer might presume to evade the warnings of a country priest, he would be less willing to flout the authority of a bishop. Finally, many urban churches of this period would have been associated with revered saints - thus making the extraction of a refugee from their protection all the more infamous, and in some cases dangerous.

A decree from the *Constitutiones Sirmondianae* (A.D. 419) sets out the terms of sanctuary:

Nam cum plerique vim fortunae saevientis aufugerint adque ecclesiasticae defensionis munimen elegerint, patiuntur inclusi non minorem quam vitae vere custodiam: nullis enim temporibus in luce vestibuli eis aperitur egressus. Adque ideo quinquaginta passibus ultra basilicae fores ecclesiasticae venerationis sanctitas inhaerebit. Et quo loco quisque tenuerit exeuntem, sacrilegii crimen incurrat.⁴³

⁴³ 'For when very many people flee from the violence of a cruel fortune and choose the protection of the defence of the churches, when they are confined therein, they suffer no less imprisonment than that which they have avoided. For at no times is an egress opened to them into the light of the vestibule. Therefore, the sanctity of ecclesiastical reverence shall apply to the space of fifty paces beyond the doors of the church. If anyone should hold a person who leaves the church but is within this area, he shall incur the criminal charge of sacrilege.' *Codex Theod., Constitutiones Sirmondianae* XIII (p. 917). See also an earlier code (IX.45.1 and 2 (p. 519) A.D. 392 and 397) which prohibits public debtors and Jews from entering a church in order to avoid paying the sums they owe.

Canon law also endeavoured to establish the rights of sanctuary. The Council of Orange (A.D. 441) decreed: 'Eos qui ad ecclesiam confugerint tradi non oportere, sed loci reverentia et intercessione defendi.'⁴⁴ The Council of Orléans, in A.D. 511, devoted its first three canons to the issue of sanctuary, stating in the first that sanctuary was to include not only the atrium of the church, but also the church house and bishop's house.⁴⁵

Although these laws apply to both urban and rural churches, it is often an urban church which is recorded as receiving fugitives. One reason for this may be that the sources are generally concerned with prominent individuals who seek refuge for political reasons. The non-urban churches might also have managed a brisk trade in refugees, but many of these could well have been slaves, servants (see Council of Orléans, c. 3), or other persons who are not recorded in the sources.

From the late Roman period, there are two Gallic examples of refuge being taken in urban churches. Ammianus records how Silvanus the Frank was killed after being dragged from a palace chapel in Köln where he had sought refuge. He does not say what happened after Silvanus' death, nor does he say whether any churchman had tried to save the man.⁴⁶ The *History* of Gregory of Tours includes many examples of people taking advantage

⁴⁴ 'Whoever takes refuge in a church should not be handed over, but, out of respect for the holiness of the place, should be protected.' *Concilia, Arausicanum* (A.D. 441), c. 5 (p. 79).

⁴⁵ 'ut ab ecclesiae atrii vel domum ecclesiae vel domum episcopi eos abstrahi omnino non liceat;' *Ibid.*, *Aurelianensis* (A.D. 511), c. 1 (p. 4-5).

⁴⁶ *Amm. Marc.*, XV.5.31 (p. 54).

of church sanctuary, but the only occasion he records from late Roman times was when Godigisel sought refuge in a church upon the capture of Vienne. Unfortunately, the church and its bishop were Arian, and so Gregory reports, with no regret, that the laws of sanctuary were ignored and the fugitive slain.⁴⁷

The Early Merovingian Period A.D. 540-600

The importance of cities as centres of military activity during the early Merovingian period is evidenced by the *History* of Gregory of Tours. From this source we have a vivid illustration of how *civitates* served as major foci for numerous military campaigns. In his *History*, the acquisition and possession of cities is seen as a gauge of military prowess and success. Many battles were fought in the open country, and on several occasions rural regions and secondary settlements were subjected to pillaging and devastation; yet it was the taking and holding of a city which was seen as essential before its territory could be claimed.

The necessity of taking a city in order to lay claim to its region is clear in several passages from the *History*. Whenever a territory is said to be lost, its surrender is recorded in terms of *civitates*. 'Chilpericus, frater eius, Remum pervadit et alias civitates, quae ad eum pertenebant, abstulit'.⁴⁸ This formula also

⁴⁷Gregory, *HF*, II.33 (p. 95-6).

⁴⁸'His [Sigibert's] brother Chilperic captured Reims and took other cities which belonged to Sigibert.' *Ibid.*, IV.23 (p. 159).

holds true for those areas which are regained or given over:

pacem petiit civitatesque eius, quas
Theodoberthus male pervaserat,
reddidit, depraecans, ut nullo casu
culpantur earum habitatores, quos
ille iniuste igne ferroque adpraemens
adquisierat.⁴⁹

The lands associated with these cities were included in such exchanges; yet one could not rule a region without controlling its *civitas*-capital.

Most military conflicts were centred in or upon *civitas*-capitals. Those which were not appear to be primarily encounters with foreign forces without strong urban traditions - i.e., the Saxons, Huns and, to a lesser degree, the Bretons. The same military advantages of late Roman *civitates* can be applied to cities of the early Merovingian period. Cities were used not just for defence, but also for the gathering of troops, either within the walls or in the suburbs.⁵⁰ They were also used as military headquarters and for the holding of political prisoners.⁵¹

Civitates seem to have generally surrendered as a result of negotiation, rather than falling to assault.

⁴⁹ 'He [Chilperic] asked for peace, and he gave back those cities which Theudebert had wrongly devastated, asking that none of the inhabitants of these cities should be blamed, since they had been seized unjustly with threats of fire and the sword.' *Ibid.*, IV.49 (p. 184).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, IV.44 (p. 178-79). Armies were also, on occasion, gathered in rural areas. See IV.51 (p. 186).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, IV.44 (p. 178). Rodan, a Lombard leader, took the city of Grenoble and set up his headquarters there before embarking on a campaign to subdue the region, and Sigibert used the city of Paris to prepare for his campaigns against Chilperic. *Ibid.*, IV.50 (p. 185). For examples of political prisoners kept in cities see *Ibid.*, V.1 (p. 191-92); V.41 (p. 233); and VIII.12 (p. 331-32).

The best example of this is Gregory's account of the siege of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges. In the fifteen days of the siege, machines were constructed to destroy the city's defences. These machines consisted of wagons fitted with battering rams with a protective covering of wattling, leather saddles and wooden beams. However, when the besiegers made their assault under this covering, those defending the city dropped stones and burning tar and fat over the walls, killing many of the attackers. A second assault was made the following day using fascines (bundled sticks) to try to fill up a ravine on the eastern side of the walls. This too failed, and those on the walls again dropped stones on the besieging soldiers.⁵²

St-Bertrand-de-Comminges, like many other cities of this period, was not won by force, but by treachery and coercion. Gundovald, who was holding the city, was handed over to King Guntram's forces by his own men, who betrayed their leader in exchange for their lives. King Sigibert's army, while under siege by King Guntram's forces in the city of Arles, was persuaded by the bishop of the city to go forth from the walls and fight. The bishop had offered God's blessing and the promise that

⁵²*Ibid.*, VII.37 (p. 317). On the site of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges and the validity of Gregory's account see E. James, *The Merovingian Archaeology of South-West Gaul*, Part i: *Text* (Oxford, 1977) (= *BAR, Supplementary Series*, XXV (i)), 290. Some historians would argue that the city had been abandoned at the time that Gregory was writing. Compare this siege to the attack by the Huns in A.D. 451 on the city of Orléans. Here too, battering rams were used, but as the inhabitants were occupied in prayer, the Huns did manage to do a great deal of damage to the walls before the imperial forces arrived. Gregory, *HF*, II.7 (p. 68-9).

the gates of the city would open to readmit the army should they be forced to retreat. The bishop, however, was lying on both counts, and Sigibert's soldiers found themselves trapped between the besieging forces and the inhabitants of the city who took the opportunity to hurl stones from the walls.⁵³

Other cities, such as Aix and Uzès, bought off their attackers with silver and other bribes.⁵⁴ On occasion the people of a city would fight of their own volition against an assault, but more often than not, they were used as pawns by whichever king or noble held the centre.⁵⁵ The population in the countryside also suffered from these campaigns, for if a city could not be captured, retribution was often taken out on the rural inhabitants.⁵⁶ The aim of this policy was, however, to weaken the cities and to frighten the population into submission.

The use of cities as a place of refuge for both the urban inhabitants and particularly important individuals goes hand in hand with the type of warfare carried on during this period. King Chilperic took refuge with his wife and sons in the city of Tournai upon being threatened by Guntram. Bishop Egidius, having escaped death

⁵³*Ibid.*, IV.30 (p. 165-66).

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, IV.44 (p. 178); and VI.7 (p. 253). Most accounts in the *History*, however, do not specify how cities are taken.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, IV.45 (p. 179-80). Two citizens of the city of Poitiers organised a resistance to the siege of the count of Auxerre, but were defeated and killed.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, VIII.30 (p. 344): 'Erant enim valde munitae et de cybis ac reliquis necessariis adplene refertae, et horum urbana depopulantes urbisque minus inrumpere valuerunt.'

at the hands of King Childebert's army, made his way quickly to his see at Reims and shut himself up within its walls.⁵⁷ Another account tells of King Chilperic giving orders to his counts to repair the walls of their cities and to lock themselves inside along with their families. Here, certainly, is a passage which demonstrates how siege warfare was a tactic to be prepared for and expected during the early Merovingian period.⁵⁸

Another account in the *History* tells how Gundovald prepared for siege at the city of St-Bertrand-de-Comminges by deceiving its citizens. Having occupied the city, Gundovald told the citizens to prepare for a siege by bringing all their supplies into the walls. This done, he announced that the enemy was approaching and that they should march out to meet this force in battle. As the last citizen dutifully marched out of the city, Gundovald's men shut and locked the gates. With the whole of the city's supplies now inside, Gregory claims: 'si viriliter stetissent, per multorum annorum spacia victus alimenta egerent.'⁵⁹

References to city walls, outside the context of military or defensive events, are rare in Gregory's *History*. Indeed, the source includes no detailed descriptions of an urban centre's defences save for Gregory's account of the *castrum* of Dijon. Here,

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, IV.50 (p. 185-86); and VI.31 (p. 271-72).

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, VI.41 (p. 281).

⁵⁹'If they had stood like men, they would not have needed supplies of food for many years.' *Ibid.*, VII.34 (p. 314-15).

Gregory was undoubtedly impressed by the walls, towers and gates, and these features might well have contributed in some way to his questioning of the *castrum's* secondary status.⁶⁰

The idea of ecclesiastical sanctuary appears to have established itself firmly in the workings of early Frankish society. Church canons continued to repeat the decrees of the earlier councils on the penalties for forcibly removing refugees from churches and ecclesiastical buildings.⁶¹ Gregory of Tours' *History* includes several examples of the way in which sanctuary was practised and perceived by the Gallic population of this period.

Gregory himself speaks on two occasions of the sanctity of this tradition. Rocolen, a retainer of Childeric, had ordered Gregory to expel Guntram from his church at Tours, and threatened to burn the city and its suburbs if his command was not heeded. Gregory recorded his response:

Quo auditu, mittimus ad eum legationem, dicentes, haec ab antiquo facta non fuisse, quae hic fieri deposcebat; sed nec modo permitti posse, ut basilica sancta violaretur;⁶²

And on another occasion, he wrote:

⁶⁰See Chapter III, p. 170-71.

⁶¹*Concilia, Matisconense* (A.D. 585), c. 8 (p. 242): 'Item Christianae religionis negotia pertractantes comperimus quosdam Seudochristianos de sacrosanctis ecclesiis suae religionis oblitus fugitivos subtrahere.' See also W. Ullmann, 'Public Welfare and Social Legislation in the Early Medieval Councils', *SCH*, VII (Oxford, 1971), 13-16.

⁶²'When we heard this, we sent to him messengers saying that what he demanded to be done had not been done from antiquity; and that it was not to be permitted for a holy church to be violated.' Gregory, *HF*, V.4 (p. 195).

Igitur Chilpericus nuntius ad nos direxit dicens: 'Eiecite apostatam [Merovech] illum de basilicam; sin autem aliud, totam regionem illam igni succendam.' Cumque nos rescripsimus, impossibile esse, quod temporibus hereticorum non fuerat christianis nunc temporibus fieri, ipsi exercitum commovit et illuc dirigit.⁶³

In both instances, Gregory was able to stand his ground, for Roccolen was struck down by illness and died and Merovech left the church of St. Martin voluntarily.

Nearly every identifiable reference to sanctuary in the *History* is concerned with urban churches. The added security offered by a city seems to have been a strong attraction to those who found themselves in need of a safe retreat. Bishops, as we have seen above, very often took an active stand on the rights of sanctuary, and while those who sought sanctuary were not always successful, it was certainly considered to be the only option once physical defences had failed. Episcopal authority was equal to, if not above, most secular positions, and it is not surprising that the majority of those seeking a refuge wished to take advantage of this situation by retreating into an urban church.

The faith which was placed in urban churches and their bishops is illustrated in several passages from the *History*. There are, however, two stories told by Gregory of people seeking sanctuary in rural churches, though

⁶³ 'Consequently, Chilperic sent messengers to us saying, 'Cast out that apostate from the church; if however, you do not, I will burn the entire territory.' When we responded that it was impossible to do now what had not been done in the time of heretics, he gathered an army himself and sent it against the city.' *Ibid.*, V.14 (p. 202).

both perhaps show the disadvantages of not choosing refuge in an urban church. The first story concerns two rural servants who are said by Gregory to have married without their lord's, Duke Rauching's, permission. The passage implies that sanctuary was sought by the couple in a local country church. The priest of this church was sent to speak to the duke about this matter, but refused to hand over the servants until Rauching had promised to allow them to stay together. The priest then handed the couple over and Rauching buried them alive in a single grave.⁶⁴ Whether a bishop's authority would have prompted greater respect on the part of the duke is uncertain, but it is clear that Rauching had no qualms about violating the rights of sanctuary or lying to a rural priest.

The other example of sanctuary in a rural church also demonstrates that an urban refuge was to be preferred. Duke Ursio and Duke Berthefried are said to have taken refuge with their families at a rural church located on an estate. King Childebert raised an army and sent it to the site. The church was besieged and set on fire and Ursio was killed in the fighting which ensued. Gregory makes no mention here of any churchmen interfering in the struggle. Duke Berthefried, who had survived the attack, fled to the city of Verdun. There he sought sanctuary: 'Ibique in oratorio, qui in domo ecclesiastica erat, se tutari putans, praesertim cum et ipse pontifex Agericus in hac domo resederet.'⁶⁵

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, V.3 (p. 192-95).

⁶⁵'He thought himself safe in the oratory, which was in the church-house, chiefly because the bishop Agericus resided in this house.' *Ibid.*, IX.12 (p. 369).

King Childebert, however, was angered by the report of his escape and ordered the duke to be killed. Gregory is careful to report that the king was not aware that Berthefried had taken sanctuary. Of the bishop, Gregory records: 'Sed cum eum pontifex reddere nequiret, sed defensare conaretur.' He failed in his efforts, however, and the duke was murdered in the oratory. Gregory concludes his account with this passage:

Multum ex hoc episcopus dolens, quod eum non solum defensare non potuit, verum etiam locum, in quo orare consueverat, et in quo sanctorum pignora adgregata fuerant sanguine humano pollui vidit. Misit autem Childeberthus rex cum muneribus, ut a moerore revocaretur; sed noluit consolare.⁶⁶

This passage clearly demonstrates the regret of King Childebert in having ignored the bishop's authority and violated the tenets of sanctuary. Despite the tragic conclusion of this account, it is evident that Berthefried sought out an urban church because he believed that the bishop would be able to protect him. Indeed, had King Childebert known of the situation, the authority of Agericus might not have been ignored.

A passage which again shows the influence of bishops in the matter of sanctuary concerns Count Firminus, who took sanctuary with his sister-in-law in the cathedral of Clermont. King Chramn, son of Lothar I, ordered two men

⁶⁶ 'The bishop was much grieved by this, since he was not able to defend him, but also because he saw the place in which he was accustomed to pray, and where the relics of the saints were collected, stained with a man's blood. King Childebert, however, sent presents in order to recall him from his sadness, but he did not wish to be consoled.' *Ibid.*

to drive them out of the cathedral, knowing that the bishop was away from the city at the time. Firminus and his sister-in-law were led by a false friend to the door of the church and there snatched out and sent into exile.⁶⁷ Efforts were usually made to avoid taking someone out of a church by force, and a fugitive was often persuaded to leave a church by means of lies, threats and bribery.

The reluctance of many in positions of high authority to violate openly the rights of sanctuary in urban churches suggests that this tradition was often respected. Of course, this did not stop some from attempting to circumvent the restrictions of sanctuary. On one occasion, guards were placed at the entrances to the church of St. Martin when it was thought that Merovech would try to seek sanctuary there.⁶⁸ Such an action implies that once in, the rebel would have been difficult to dislodge.

The attractions of seeking sanctuary in a city were further enhanced by the fact that many urban churches were associated with respected saints. Gregory of Tours warned Rocolen when he threatened to ignore the rights of sanctuary of the church of St. Martin: 'quod si fierit, nec sibi fore prosperum nec rege, qui haec iussa mandasset; metueretque magis sanctitatem antestetis, cuius virtus hesternae die paralitica membra dirixisset.'⁶⁹ Rocolen disregarded this warning, and fell ill

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, IV.13 (p. 149-51).

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, V.18 (p. 209).

⁶⁹'because if it were to be done, it would bring fortune to neither him, nor the king who had issued this command;

and died before he could carry out his orders. In another passage, the widow of Duke Rauching was said to have taken refuge in the church of Soissons, because she thought she would be protected by the saints.⁷⁰

Doubtless, some rural churches could also claim eminent saints and relics, but the additional security offered by the urban churches, in the form of episcopal authority, city walls, and a location which was populous and public, was more likely to be sought by those who had the choice.

The Later Merovingian Period A.D. 600-741

Although the later Merovingian period is not well documented, its principal sources deal primarily with political and military events. Evidence for the military role of cities is derived, for the most part, from the *Chronicle* and the *LHF*. From these sources, it is evident that *civitates* continued to serve as military headquarters and centres for the gathering of troops. Both Metz and Langres were chosen as the rallying point for the soldiers of the surrounding territory.⁷¹ It is also evident from the *Chronicle* and the *LHF* that a number of military functions were shared by secondary settlements - particularly *castra*. The *LHF*, for example, tells how an

he should stand in great fear before the saint [St. Martin] whose power yesterday straightened paralysed limbs.' *Ibid.*, V.4 (p. 195).

⁷⁰'Sed videns nuncium, ... in basilicam sancti Medardi antestitis confugit, ibique se tutare confessores praesidio putans.' *Ibid.*, IX.9 (365-66).

⁷¹'Anno 17 regni sui Lingonas de universas regni sui provincias mense Madio exercitus adunatur,' *Chronicle*, IV.38 (p. 139); and, 'cum exercito de regnum Austrasiorum de Mettis urbem promovens,' *Ibid.*, IV.74 (p. 158).

army was gathered at the *castrum* of Tiron.⁷² The *Chronicle* records how *castra* were used for military meetings and the holding of political prisoners. Both sources include numerous references to the siege of such settlements in addition to several accounts of battles being fought in the open countryside.⁷³

Yet it would appear, at least for the first half of this period, that cities were still considered to be the symbolic representations of the city-territory as a whole. As such, they were still considered an essential possession if claim was to be made for a region. The *Chronicle*, for example, records how Dagobert made over to his brother Charibert the *civitates* and *pagi* of the territory between the Loire and the Spanish frontier.⁷⁴

But, while it is evident that efforts were made to take and hold *civitates*, there was a great deal of military activity which was not centred on the city.⁷⁵ If one compares the accounts in the *Chronicle* and the *LHF* to the military episodes related in Gregory's *History* it would appear that the seventh and early eighth centuries witnessed a shift of military emphasis away from *civitates*. But while this development fits neatly into the

⁷²*LHF*, XL, 310.

⁷³*Chronicle*, IV.37 (p. 138) and IV.26 (p. 131) include references to military disputes resolved in secondary settlements, with the latter reference taking place in a *villa*. A reference to the holding of a political prisoner is found in *Ibid.*, IV.51 (p. 145).

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, IV.57 (p. 149); see also IV.45 (p. 143). Examples of cities captured as a prerequisite to the taking of their territory are found in *Ibid.*, *Cont.* 9 (p. 174); *Cont.* 11 (p. 174-75); *Cont.* 20 (p. 178); and *Cont.* 25 (p. 180).

⁷⁵See, for example, *Ibid.*, IV.26, 38 and 78 (p. 132, 139-40 and 159-61).

political situation of the period, it is possible that Gregory's *History* might not have given the full details on the subjugation of the countryside, and that his vague references to the destruction of a rural region might well have included the siege and capture of walled secondary settlements. If, however, the *History* is reliable, the increase in the number of references to the military use of *castra* during the late Merovingian period could be seen as a consequence of the shift of secular administration from the city to the countryside.

Although there are more accounts of open battle in comparison to those found in the previous period, siege warfare still played a significant role in the struggle for authority. The *Chronicle's* descriptions of sieges are numerous and often detailed. Only one, however, gives a full account of siege methods. The passage concerns the siege of Avignon:

Quique praepropere ad eandem urbem
pervenientes tentoria instruunt,
undique ipsud oppidum et suburbana
praeoccupant, munitissimam civitatem
obsedunt, aciem instruunt, donec
insecutus vir belligerator Carlus
praedictam urbem adgreditur, muros
circumdat, castra ponit, obsidionem
coacervat. In modum Hiericho cum
strepitu hostium et sonitum turbarum,
cum machinis et restium funibus super
muros et edium moenia inruunt, urbem
munitissimam ingredientis succen-
dunt.⁷⁶

⁷⁶Childebrand lost no time in bivouacking in the approaches and surrounding countryside of this excellently provisioned city and in the setting about his preparations for the forthcoming engagement until the arrival of Charles, who forthwith shut up the city, erected siegeworks and tightened the blockade. Then as once before Jericho, the armies gave a great shout, the trumpets brayed and the men rushed in to assault with battering rams and rope ladders to get over the walls and

The passage goes on to say how the city was then entered and burned. This would appear to be the only Merovingian account of the successful use of siege weapons. Given, however, that many accounts, both in Gregory's *History* and in later sources, do not specify how a city is taken, it is difficult to know how often these devices were used with the above results.

Much of the detail given of these assaults does not concentrate on the siege itself, but rather on the destruction which follows. The *Chronicle* includes several accounts of the razing of city walls upon their capture. The *civitates* along the Seine were said to have been destroyed and their walls razed after their territories had been devastated.⁷⁷ A specific reference to the razing of walls, however, comes from the *Continuations* of the *Chronicle*:

cum duce victore regionem Gothicam depopulant. Urbes famosissimas Nemausum, Agatem hac Biterris, funditus muros et moenia destruens igne subposito concremavit, suburbana et castra illius regionis vastavit.⁷⁸

As noted earlier, the word 'moenia' could be a reference to the buildings of the city (see fn. 23).

buildings, and they took the strong city,' *Ibid.*, *Cont.* 20 (p. 177) [tr. Wallace-Hadrill, 94]. Note that Wallace-Hadrill has translated 'oppidum et suburbana' as simply, 'the approaches and surrounding countryside'. The phrase suggests, however, that there was a secondary, possibly fortified, settlement (*oppidum*) independent of the suburb, yet still near enough to the city to require attention.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*, IV.20 (p. 128).

⁷⁸'And then under the command of their conquering duke they laid waste the Gothic region. The famous cities of Nîmes, Agde and Béziers were burnt, and their walls and buildings he razed to the ground. The suburbs and strongholds of that area were destroyed.' *Ibid.*, *Cont.* 20 (p. 178) [tr. Wallace-Hadrill, 95].

A final example is also taken from the *Chronicle*. The account, which concerns Lombard activity in Italy, seems to imply that the destruction of a city's walls could go beyond the desire to cripple the city physically, and did, in fact, undermine the prestige and status of the settlement.

Chrotharius cum exercito Genava
maretema, Albingano, Varicotti,
Saona, Ubitergio et Lune civitates
litore mares de imperio auferens,
vastat, rumpit, incendio, concremans;
populum derepit, spoliat et captivi-
tate condemnat. Murus civitatebus
superscriptis usque ad fundamento
distribuens, vicus has civitates no-
menare praecepit.⁷⁹

The razing of these city walls appears to be the one action, above all others, which deprived these settlements of their status. Simply ordering that the Italian towns be known only as *vici* would not have been sufficient had the city defences remained as a tangible argument to the contrary. It was the razing of the walls which destroyed the identity of these cities - reducing them to secondary settlements.

The above descriptions of the systematic destruction of city walls would seem to mark a significant change in Merovingian military policy, were it not for one unsettling factor - namely, that the *Chronicle* is the only source which includes accounts of the razing of walls.

⁷⁹ 'Rothari went with his army and took from the Empire the maritime cities of Genoa, Albenga, Varigotti, Savona, Oderzo and Luni. He ravaged and destroyed them and left them in flames; and the inhabitants, stripped of their belongings, were seized and led into captivity, and he razed the walls to the ground and ordered that these cities should be known only as villages in the future.' *Ibid.*, IV.71 (p. 156) [tr. Wallace-Hadrill, 60].

By contrast, the *LHF* does not relate such events, though it has a tendency, when borrowing from other sources, to add or expand details of violent incidents. Thus, for example, Gregory of Tours' account of the Frankish victory over the Saxons simply states that they took the country; while the *LHF* records that the entire region was devastated and depopulated.⁸⁰

It is, indeed, possible that the *Chronicle's* accounts of the destruction of city walls are mere literary embellishments and perhaps exaggerate the damage done in such circumstances. This perhaps is more understandable if we are dealing with a single author of the *Chronicle*; for if we accept Wallace-Hadrill's theory of authorship, such literary devices would have to have been carried on by four separate chroniclers writing over a period of 150 years.⁸¹ Moreover, it would have been a literary tradition with no apparent predecessors, since Gregory's *History* includes the siege, capture, sacking and burning of *civitates*, but not the razing of city walls. Nor does the early Carolingian evidence support this practice, for the only examples of the razing of defences are from the part of the *Chronicle* which was written during this later period.⁸²

⁸⁰'Totamque regionem illam vastantes atque captivantes, depopulant.' *LHF*, XXII. (p. 277). R.A. Gerberding, *The Rise of the Carolingians and the Liber Historiae Francorum*, 36, notes: 'Despite Gregory's vision of the Franks as having brought a much needed manliness and vigour, albeit violent, into Gaul, Gregory's picture was not quite violent enough for the *LHF* author. In nine places he added devastation, depopulation, and other acts of military violence to Gregory's reports.'

⁸¹See Introduction p. 18-19.

⁸²*Ibid.*, *Cont.* 46 (p. 189). In one account, the walls of several cities and strongholds were razed as a means of

Many of the attacks made on cities during this period were, in truth, no more than raids. The destruction of a city's walls, a rather labour-intensive and time-consuming process, is not in keeping with this sort of military campaign. The fact that *castra* as well as *civitates* are said, in the *Chronicle*, to have their walls razed, further undermines the notion that this policy (if it was carried out) was undertaken to deprive a city of its status.⁵³ This is not to deny that such an idea was in the minds of the authors of the *Chronicle*, but it is very unlikely that it was a policy of the Merovingian armies.

A final argument against the connection between the razing of city walls and the destruction of urban status is the fact that many city walls of this period were apparently partially dismantled by the citizens themselves to provide building material for churches and other structures. This destruction, which was carried into the Carolingian era, would certainly not have been allowed had the status of a centre depended on the condition of its walls.⁵⁴

self-defence. The story concerns a noble named Waiofer, who, upon realising that he was about to lose his territory to King Pippin, chose to raze the walls of all the cities of Aquitaine under his control - that is, Poitiers, Limoges, Saintes, Périgueux, Angoulême and many other cities and fortified places. The only Carolingian reference to the complete razing of a settlement's walls, other than those from the *Continuations*, is that of a *castrum* abandoned by the Franks. This fortress, known as Eresburg, was destroyed by the Saxons, but, as it was a frontier settlement, it might have been only a small fortification: *ARF*, A.D. 776 (p. 44).

⁵³See, for example, *Chronicle, Cont.* 25 (p. 180).

⁵⁴See M. Fixot, 'Une image idéale, une réalité difficile', *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville*

To sum up the military role of late Merovingian cities, it is obvious that for the aristocracy and the monarchy, the military role of *civitas*-capitals was often all-important. However, seen in a purely strategic light, they would have been no different from prosperous *castra*, such as Dijon or Dorestad. Yet the city with its prestigious episcopal see and civil and ecclesiastical revenues could well have demanded a higher respect and status than that given to secondary settlements. Despite the growing use of *castra* and other secondary settlements for military purposes, the *civitas*-capital remained a coveted prize for both lords and kings.

As in the early Merovingian period, cities continued to be used as places of refuge. The *Chronicle* records that Theudebert fled to the city of Köln after a military defeat, and that the rebel Martin shut himself up in the city of Laon to escape justice.⁶⁶ The *LHF* includes the same account of Martin and a reference to Duke Eudo, who sought refuge in Paris after being defeated by Charles.⁶⁷

The *LHF* does not include any reference to church sanctuary. However, church canons continue to attest to its importance and the *Chronicle* records three instances of this, although each is brief with very few details.⁶⁷ On two occasions, refuge was taken in an urban church, that of St. Remi in Reims and at the suburban church of

antique, 510-11. Fixot does not, however, say where exactly he has gathered this information.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, IV.38 (p. 139); and *Cont.* 3 (p. 170).

⁶⁶*LHF*, XLVI (p. 320); and LIII (p. 327).

⁶⁷*Concilia, Clippiacense* (A.D. 626-27), C. 9 (p. 293); and *Concillium Quid sub Sonnatio Remensi Episcopo, Habitum esse Traditur* (A.D. 626-27), c. 7 (p. 298).

Saint-Epvre in Toul.⁸⁸ The third reference to the seeking of sanctuary is interesting, in that the fugitive, Leudemund, fled to the monastery of Luxeuil, and there put himself under the protection of the abbot.⁸⁹ Luxeuil was a monastery which had originally belonged to St. Columbanus, and was located in a remote area far away from any city. That Leudemund chose to take refuge here perhaps shows the growing power and influence of monasteries and abbots. Eustasius, the abbot of the monastery, was able to plead the fugitive's case successfully to Lothar, who gave the man a full pardon and allowed him to return to his city.

The Early Carolingian Period A.D. 751-843

Carolingian sources record a number of instances where *civitates* and other settlements were used for military purposes; indeed, both the *ARF* and Nithard's *Histories* are almost entirely taken up with military events. These occur, more often than not, in and around *castra*, though it must be remembered that many of the campaigns were directed against the Saxons and other groups who did not have episcopal cities. The Carolingians, when based on the Saxon frontier, had little choice but to build their own fortresses or to occupy the *castra* of their enemy.

In Gaul, Italy and Spain, military conflicts were usually centred upon *civitates*. In Italy, where the

⁸⁸*Chronicle*, IV.83 (p. 163); and IV.54 (p. 147-48).

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, IV.44 (p. 142-43).

tradition of cities and city-based administration remained strong, the use of *civitates* in military matters is hardly surprising. From the *ARF*, the entry for the year A.D. 801 tells of the capture and destruction of the Italian city of Chieti and of the subsequent surrender of the *castella* belonging to this *civitas*.⁹⁰ Further evidence from the *ARF* and other sources demonstrates that nearly all the military campaigns in Italy were concerned with the capture of *civitas*-capitals.⁹¹

This is not to say that *castra* and other settlements were ignored. Even so, it was usually the case that when a region with an urban tradition was taken, efforts were made to secure the city of that territory. In Italy especially, Frankish garrisons were often stationed in *civitates*.⁹² A garrison was also recorded at the Gallic city of Bourges at the end of a campaign in A.D. 776.⁹³

Cities were also used, during this period, for the gathering of troops and the holding of war councils.⁹⁴ These activities are also found in secondary settlements, though more so in areas without an urban tradition. In Brittany, where cities were often not significant centres, pains were taken on two campaigns to secure *civita*-

⁹⁰*ARF*. A.D. 801 (p. 116).

⁹¹See, for example, *Ibid.*, A.D. 755 (p. 12-13), in a passage which describes a siege of the city of Pavia.

⁹²*Ibid.*, A.D. 774 (38); A.D. 776 (p. 42, 44, 46 and 48); and A.D. 802 (p. 117).

⁹³*Ibid.*, A.D. 776 (p. 22 and 24).

⁹⁴For the holding of these councils see Nithard, I.5 (p. 22); and III.5 (p. 100-101). Armies are gathered in the cities of Chalon-sur-Saône, Mainz and Vienne: *Ibid.*, II.9 (p. 64-8); II.7 (p. 112-14); and I.4 (p. 14-20).

tes before embarking on the subjugation of the *castra* and other secondary settlements.⁹⁵

There are several descriptions of the siege of *civitates* in the sources of this period. Mention is made in the *ARF* of King Louis attacking the Spanish city of Tortosa, although the campaign was not successful.⁹⁶ From Nithard's *Histories* there is an account of how Hildegard, the sister of Charles the Bald, captured Adalgar, the king's retainer, and held him prisoner in the city of Laon. Charles rode to this city with an army, but was saved the trouble of a siege by the capitulation of the citizens who did not believe they could defend their walls.⁹⁷ A passage from the *Chronicle* records the assault on the city of Clermont by King Pippin:

Circumsepsit urbem munitionem fortissimam, ita ut nullus egredi ausus fuisset aut ingredi potuisset, cum machinis et omni genere armorum, circumdedit ea vallo. Multis vulneratis plurisque interfectis fractisque muris cepit urbem et restituit eam dicione sue iure proelii et homines illos quos Waiofarius ad defendendam ipsam civitatem dimiserat clementiam sue pietatis absoluit dimissisque reversi sunt ad propria.⁹⁸

Also included in the sources of the period are descriptions of the siege of *castra*. A passage from the

⁹⁵*ARF*, A.D. 818 (p. 148-49); and A.D. 824 (p. 164-67).

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, A.D. 809 (p. 127-30).

⁹⁷Nithard, III.4. (p. 96-8).

⁹⁸'He then surrounded the town with a strong fortification, with siege-engines and all manner of weapons, so that no one would have dared to leave or enter it, and he also built a rampart. Finally, he took the city after many had been wounded and more slain, and the walls breached. He restored it to his rule by right of conquest, but of his goodness showed mercy to the men left there as garrison by Waiofar, and dismissed them to go off home.' *Ibid.*, *Cont.* 43 (p. 187) [tr. Wallace-Hadrill, 112].

ARF tells of the siege of the *castrum* of Syburg. Having taken the fortress of Eresburg, and razed its walls and buildings (see fn. 82), the Saxons approached the *castrum* of Syburg, with this same goal in mind. Unable to take the stronghold by force, they set up catapults. These, the chronicler reports, did more damage to the Saxons than to the walls or inhabitants of the *castrum*. They also made faggots with the intention of taking the city with one assault, but these (however they were used) also failed. The Saxons were finally driven away by a miraculous sign over the roof of the settlement's church. A garrison was set up in the fortress, and the rest of the Frankish army returned home.⁹⁹ From the above examples, it is evident that siege warfare was still an uncertain business, and that its success was often a matter of chance.

In what capacity then, did Carolingian cities serve a martial role? They were, as they had been in Merovingian times, places of refuge for the local population and for political fugitives. Their walls and markets also made them ideal localities for the gathering of troops. *Civitates* were also used for the military control of a dependent region, and garrisons were often placed in them to ensure the possession of the region. In those areas where city-based administration was prevalent, the control of a city was often necessary for the domination of its territory.

⁹⁹*ARF*, A.D. 776 (p. 42, 44, 46 and 48).

This appears to have been the case even in areas where it was also vital to subdue the *castra*. For example, Pippin III's campaigns into Aquitaine or the conflicts between the sons of Louis the Pious all focused on the acquisition of key cities.¹⁰⁰ It must be admitted that, in a strictly military sense, the *civitates* of the Carolingian period were no better or worse than the *castra*. Both would have had the potential of providing a refuge or a place to quarter armies. Many *castra*, being, in reality, thriving towns, could have offered supplies of food and perhaps even of weapons. The tendency of Carolingian rulers and nobles to base themselves in certain regions in *civitates* does, however, suggest that there was more to be gained in the occupation of a city.

A *civitas* was identified in part by its defences, but these alone, as was stated earlier, did not lend status to the city. Even so, contemporary evidence, particularly from Italy, shows that great pride was sometimes taken in the defences of an urban centre. Both the Milan and Verona poems, for example, speak of the height and strength of the cities' walls.¹⁰¹ Descriptions of Frankish town walls are limited, however, to the secondary settlement of Aachen. The poet Moduin praises the lofty walls of new Rome, as he calls the settlement. Another poet speaks of how Aachen's walls tower up to the

¹⁰⁰Although Pippin III also took a number of *castra* in his raids, the campaigns were always based around *civitates*.

¹⁰¹Paghi, *Versus de Verona, Versum de Mediolano civitate*, 145 and 152.

sky.¹⁰² There are, unfortunately, no descriptions of the walls of Carolingian *civitates*, although the gates of some cities were used as an urban symbol on coins.¹⁰³

There is no early Carolingian narrative source which refers to the idea or practice of sanctuary. This omission is understandable, given the secular content of the evidence and the fact that so much of the narrative is devoted to campaigns against the Saxons, Avars, Danes and other pagan societies. Canon laws of this period do, however, imply that the right of sanctuary was still very much in use, although a canon from the capitulary of Herstal (A.D. 779) seeks to prevent this privilege from being abused: 'Ut homicidas aut caeteros reos qui legibus mori debent, si ad ecclesiam confugerint, non excusentur, neque eis ibidem victus detur.'¹⁰⁴ Ullmann, in his discussion on sanctuary and its canons, makes the point that this practice did not guarantee freedom, but rather was designed to moderate the punishment of criminals.¹⁰⁵ Not all who sought sanctuary were immediately handed over, as we have seen, but those accused of more violent

¹⁰²Godman, *The Poetry of the Carolingian Renaissance*, 192 and 202.

¹⁰³Fixot, 'Une image idéale, une réalité difficile', *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville antique*, 529. Fixot draws attention to coins minted in the cities of Arles and Sens. See also a coin of Louis the Pious which shows the city gates of the *civitas* of Orléans. P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I, *The Early Middle Ages*, 527 and plate 34, p. 759.

¹⁰⁴'Concerning murderers and other guilty men who ought by law to die, if they take refuge in a church they are not to be pardoned, and no food is to be given to them there.' *Leges, Capitulare Haristallensi* (A.D. 779), c. 8 (p. 48).

¹⁰⁵Ullmann, 'Public Welfare and Social Legislation in the Early Medieval Councils', *SCH*, VII, 14-15.

crimes were required to be given up on the condition that they would not be subjected to corporal punishment.

The Council of Paderborn offered a more straightforward canon on sanctuary. The canon states that a fugitive should be allowed to stay in the church in peace until his case is to be heard, and that his life and limbs should be spared out of respect for the church. The canon also says that the offender will be brought before the king, who will decide what is to become of him.¹⁰⁶ This latter stipulation is not found in the earlier canons, and might indicate a rise in the power of the king, or a decline in the authority of the bishops - or perhaps both. It is unfortunate that the main narrative sources offer no examples of sanctuary in practice; for it would have been interesting to see if the instances of sanctuary sought in urban churches equalled the number of times it was taken in a rural religious foundation, or if the authority of the bishop in such cases was curtailed by either the king or his nobles.

Summary

The use and perception of cities as defensive and military centres appears to have remained fairly constant throughout the late Roman and early Medieval period. Even in the Carolingian era, when many cities were physically indistinguishable from secondary settlements,

¹⁰⁶*Leges, Capitulatio de Partibus Saxoniae* (A.D. 775-90), c.2 (p. 68).

there seems to have been a tendency to centre military activities upon *civitates*. There could, of course, be many practical reasons for this - their strategic location, or their position along major waterways and roads. Yet it was also the status of *civitates*, their ancestry and traditional prestige, which made their acquisition necessary for the control of a Frankish territory. Thus, at least in terms of martial status, the importance of the *civitas* was preserved for the whole of the period.

V. The *Civitas* as a Centre of Economic Activity

The Late Roman Period A.D. 340-540

While the economic role of *civitas*-capitals may seem to be the most obvious function associated with urban centres, there is relatively little written information on this aspect of Gallic cities. As this thesis is restricted to such evidence, it is necessary to state at this point that the conclusions presented here on the city's role as an economic centre are, at best, tentative. It is the aim of this chapter, nevertheless, to provide a survey of the historical evidence, which may, at some later date, be of use to students of the subject with knowledge of and access to corresponding archaeological data.¹

Because of the scarcity of written references (the reasons for which will be examined below), the inclusion of archaeological material is an important factor in the understanding of the economic role of cities. Yet it is fair to say, even in these days of increased attention to post-classical sites, that the archaeological material gathered up to now is far from satisfactory. Given the fact that most of these late Roman and early medieval urban sites lie beneath modern towns and cities, this is hardly surprising. Even conclusions regarding the location of major topographical features, such as defences and cathedrals, are often the product of scholarly

¹A survey of historical and archaeological evidence for Frankish trade and manufacturing is found in E. James, *The Franks* (Oxford, 1988), 200-209.

guesswork. This is not so crippling a factor when dealing with aspects of the *civitas* which are relatively well documented - i.e., the military, administrative or religious roles. The city's economic position, however, would well benefit from a solid body of archaeological material to support the meagre assemblage of written evidence. The present situation is, however, improving - a fact which perhaps justifies the presentation of this one-sided collection of evidence.

Although there are sizeable gaps in both the historical and archaeological records for the late Roman period, there are several studies which address the issue of urban economic history. Of particular note is R. Latouche's *The Birth of Western Economy* - a work which has become the starting point for many students of this subject and which is held up as the primary refutation of Pirenne's economic theories.² Other more recent studies - Ennen's *The Medieval Town*, or A.H.M. Jones' *LRE* - have also examined this issue with the aid of the written sources.³

Yet despite the thoroughness of such studies, it is evident, and readily admitted, that the historical material for urban economic history is relatively sparse.

²R. Latouche, *BWE*.

³There have been a number of works in the last ten years which have examined the economic role of cities in light of the archaeological evidence. See M.W. Barley's collection of articles in *European Towns: Their Archaeology and Early History* (London, 1977); P. Wells, *Farms, Villages, and Cities, Commerce and Urban Origins in Late Prehistoric Europe* (London, 1984); R. Hodges, *Dark Age Economics, The Origins of Towns and Trade A.D. 600-1000* (London, 1982); and G. Duby (ed.), *Histoire de la France urbaine, I, La ville antique, des origines au IX^e siècle* (Paris, 1980).

Reasons for the virtual silence of these records can perhaps be traced to classical attitudes towards commerce and trade. I will not attempt here to repeat the conclusions already put forward in such works as D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, or Veyne's chapter, 'A Definition of Labor', in *A History of Private Life*.⁴ It is, however, important to make it clear that business was not considered to be an occupation for the nobility in the classical period. 'Mercatura autem, si tenuis est, sordida putanda est,' wrote Cicero, in an often-quoted passage on the merits of husbandry.⁵ This attitude was restricted, it would seem, to those of the senatorial class who engaged in business on a small scale. Nevertheless, even senators with wide commercial operations would not have been ostentatious in their business dealings. 'Quaestus omnis patribus indecorus visus.'⁶ While it is quite probable that many Roman citizens made their fortune by commercial activities, admission into the aristocracy often called for the laying aside of these pursuits (at least public association with them) and taking up respectable agricultural activities on private estates, and/or a military or administrative career.

⁴J.H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (London, 1981): see especially chapters I and III; P. Ariès and G. Duby, gen. eds., *A History of Private Life*, I, *From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*, 124-27; and 119-23.

⁵'Commerce, however, if it is practised, is an unclean occupation.' H.A. Holden, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis De Officiis* (Cambridge, 1891), I.42.150 (p. 54).

⁶'All business is seen as ignoble for a senator.' B.O. Foster, ed., *Livy* (London, 1982) [= The Loeb Classical Library], XXI.63.4 (p. 188).

That this attitude persisted into the late Roman period in Gaul is attested to by the agricultural and administrative occupations of the upper classes. Christianity, in turn, supported the general distaste for commerce with canons against usury. Mercantile activity was not, however, condemned by the Church, although certain restrictions were placed on its operations. The earliest recorded Gallic council, that of Arles in A.D. 314, forbade clerics to practise usury, although this prohibition was not extended to the lay population until the time of Charlemagne.⁷

The extent to which the legislation of the Church affected day to day commercial activity is difficult to ascertain. Certainly the laws on interest in the *Codex Theodosianus* might, on occasion, have come into conflict with the Church's views.⁸ Yet the situation must have differed from city to city throughout the period, depending on the strength of imperial government and the influence of the urban church officials.

Commercial activity within Gallic cities of the late Roman period can be divided into two categories - imperial manufacture and trade, and private business ventures.

⁷'De ministris qui fenerant placuit eos iuxta formam divinitus datam a communione abstinere.' *Concilia, Arelatense* (A.D. 314), c. 13(12) (p. 11). This decree echoes canon 20 of the Synod of Elvira which forbade both laymen and clergy from lending money at interest. See Latouche's discussion of the origin and early laws regarding this practice, Latouche, *BWE*, 51-3. There are no Gallic church canons which prohibit trading on Sunday until the sixth century.

⁸For examples of laws on interest see *Codex Theod.*, II.4.6 (p. 80-1); II.33 (p. 124-25); III.30.6 (p. 164-65); X.24.1-3 (p. 568-69); XII.3.2 (711-12); and XIII.1.18 (p. 739).

The *Notitia Dignitatum* offers a list of the imperial factories for the provinces of the Empire. The list for Gaul includes:

Argentomagensis - *armorum omnium* [=civitas Strasbourg - mixed arms].

Matisconensis - *sagittaria* [=civitas Mâcon - arrows].

Augustodunensis - *loricaria, balistaria et clibanaria* [=civitas Autun - cavalry armour, siege artillery and shields].

Augustodunensis - *scutaria* [=civitas Autun - shields].

Suessionensis - ... [=civitas Soissons - unspecified]

Remensis - *spatharia* [=civitas Rheims - swords].

Triherorum - *scutaria* [=civitas Trier - shields].

Triherorum - *balistaria* [=civitas Trier - siege artillery].

Ambianensis - *spatharia et scutaria* [=civitas Amiens - swords and shields].⁹

What is immediately evident from this list is that each of the factories was located in a *civitas*.¹⁰ Reasons for this may well be linked to the military advantages of cities discussed in Chapter IV (see p. 194). The location of cities along major roads and waterways must also have been a factor in the location of these factories.¹¹

⁹*ND*, OC., IX.30-9 (p. 145-46). A discussion of this document is found in Jones, *LRE.*, 1417-28).

¹⁰The *civitas* of *Matisconense* might, however be an exception, since the centre is qualified as a 'castrum' in the earliest copies of the *Notitia Galliarum*, and only as 'civitas' in an eighth-century copy of the document: *NG*, 585. The earliest council reference to the bishop of Mâcon is in A.D. 538 at the council of Orléans [*Concilia, Aurelianense*, 129]. Duchesne notes this as the earliest verified reference to a bishop of that city (in the year A.D. 538). L. Duchesne, *Fastes épiscopaux de l'ancienne Gaule*, II, 197.

¹¹For a map of the roads and waterways of Gaul during this period see N.H.H. Sitwell, *Roman Roads of Europe* (London, 1981), 78-9.

The influence of the factory workers is believed, by Jones to have been great, and he cites two non-Gallic examples of the magnitude of their numbers in relation to the other citizens of the cities.¹² If, however, their numbers were large, the decline of the imperial government and army must, in the latter half of this period, have led to diminishing employment and the eventual loss of these industries. Private businessmen probably suffered too, as they would have relied on the patronage of these workers and other imperial personnel.¹³

The *Notitia Dignitatum* also lists imperial-run weaving mills in Gaul:

Procurator gynaecii - Arelatensis, provinciae Viennensis
 [= woollen mill - Arles].

Procurator gynaecii - Lugdunensis [= woollen mill - Lyon].

Procurator gynaecii - Remensis [= woollen mill - Rheims].

Procurator gynaecii - Tornacensis, Belgicae secundae [= woollen mill - Tournai].

Procurator gynaecii - Triberorum, Belgicae primae [= woollen mill - Trier].

Procurator gynaecii - Augustoduno, translati Mettis [= woollen mill - Autun].

Procurator linyfii - Viennensis, Galliarum [= linen mill - Vienne].¹⁴

Again, we can see how each of these factories was located in a *civitas*-capital. These mills, which produced gar-

¹²Jones, *LRE*, 836.

¹³The employees of these factories were classified as soldiers, as slaves or as free persons who were bound to the trade through heredity. *Ibid.*, 835-37.

¹⁴*ND*, OC., XI.54-9; and 62 (p. 151).

ments for the soldiers, must also have declined with the weakening of the Empire.

Mention has already been made of Ausonius' praises for the city of Trier with its ability to clothe and arm the imperial forces.¹⁵ This, however, appears to be the only narrative reference which praises a state-owned industry in Gaul. Nevertheless, it is quite possible that the possession of an imperial factory brought prestige to a *civitas* as it would have been seen, not as unclean commerce, but as a service to the Empire. Certainly Ausonius' words, framed as they are in a poem which is meant to bestow honour on his chosen cities, demonstrate that such activities could be regarded in a favourable light.

Indeed, Ausonius' *Ordo Urbium Nobilium* does, in many ways, run counter to classical attitudes towards business; for instead of politely ignoring this aspect of urban life, several cities are lauded for their productive capabilities and/or their trading activity. Trier, for example, is praised not only for its production of military garments and arms, but also for its part in long-distance commerce:

...largus tranquillo praelabitur amne Mosella,
longinqua omnigenae vectans commercia terrae.¹⁶

Other cities, such as Milan, Carthage and Capua, are referred to as wealthy, though the source of their riches is not given. The city of Arles, however, is noted

¹⁵Ausonius, *Ordo Urbium Nobilium*, XIX.31 (p. 99).

¹⁶'The abundant Moselle flows by with tranquil waters, carrying the distant commerce of all peoples of the earth.' *Ibid.*, XIX.33-34 (p. 99).

specifically as a distributing centre for long-distance goods:

per quem Romani commercia suscipis orbis
nec cohibes, populosque alios et moenia ditas,
Gallia quis fruitor gremioque Aquitania lato.¹⁷

Both Narbonne and the Italian city of Aquileia are praised, by Ausonius, for their harbours. These features are not directly associated with commercial activity, although this must have been one of their main uses. Narbonne especially is praised for its role as a major port of trade:

Te maris Eoi merces et Hiberica ditant
aequora, te classes Libyci Siculique profundi,
et quidquid vario per flumina, per freta cursu
advehitur: toto tibi navigat orbe catapulus.¹⁸

The trading activities noted in Ausonius' poem appear to be restricted to long-distance goods. Thus, it is likely that the items he referred to as brought into and distributed by these cities were primarily luxury merchandise.

Condemnation of businessmen comes, not surprisingly, from the pen of Salvian the Presbyter: 'Quid autem aliud est cunctorum negotiantium vita quam fraus atque per-
iurium?'¹⁹ In the light of the fact that Salvian has few favourable things to say about anyone of this period,

¹⁷ 'by which it [the Rhône] gathers the merchandise of the Roman world, and makes wealthy [by distributing these goods] other people and walled towns which Gaul and Aquitaine cherish in their wide embrace.' *Ibid.*, XIX.78-80 (p. 100)

¹⁸ 'Thee, the merchandise of the eastern sea and Spanish main enrich, thee the fleets of the Libyan and Sicilian deeps, and all freights which pass by many different sea routes o'er rivers and o'er seas that whole world over no argosy [a merchant ship] is afloat but for thy sake.' *Ibid.*, XIX. 124-27 (p. 102) [tr. White, 281].

¹⁹ 'But what, other than fraud and perjury, is the life of all businessmen?' Salvian, III.10.50 (p. 224).

save the barbarians and churchmen, his opinion of the merchants of his day should not perhaps be given too much weight, nor, as we shall see, should it be interpreted as a general Christian condemnation of the entire commercial profession.

Looking to the writings of Sidonius, one would expect either a polite silence on the subject or patronising disapproval, such as he exhibits towards his Germanic neighbours. Yet, in his verses on the merits of the city of Narbonne, he includes shops, markets and merchandise in his list.²⁰ Sidonius employed merchants on several occasions to deliver his letters. One merchant in particular, Amantius, features frequently in Sidonius' correspondence. Although Sidonius' treatment of this merchant implies he felt some disdain for his occupation, it is clear that he is simply taking the attitude of an aristocrat towards someone of inferior rank and birth. Amantius, therefore, plays the part of a client, to Sidonius' role as classical patron. Sidonius betrays no prejudice against trade itself when he speaks of Amantius and his business dealings in the port city of Marseille.²¹ Indeed, Sidonius seems to display a jocular regard for the merchant's commercial skills which enabled him, he claims, to negotiate for the hand of a rich wife.²²

²⁰See Chapter III, p. 144-45, fn. 29 for a text and translation of this passage.

²¹*Ibid.*, Ep. VII.7.1 (p. 110); and VI.8.1 (p. 99).

²²*Ibid.* See also Anderson, 324, fn. 2.

Some scholars have pointed to Sidonius' letter VI.8 as evidence for his disdain of commercial activity.²³ The letter introduces its bearer, Amantius, with these lines: 'Apicum oblato pauperem vitam sola mercandi actione sustentat.'²⁴ A further reading of the letter, however, shows that Sidonius has no contempt for commerce; for he notes that, if Amantius also had an artisan skill, he would not be subject to the uncertainty of his profession, which depended upon the arrival of merchandise. W.H. Semple takes issue with Anderson's interpretation of the latter part of the letter, which includes the phrase, 'Huius igitur teneram frontem, dura rudimenta commendo.' Anderson interprets the line: 'So I commend to you this man with all his air of rawness and his untutored roughness.' Semple's translation reads: 'I commend to you this man who looks so young and has had such a hard schooling.'²⁵ In any case, it is clear that Sidonius' opinion of Amantius' profession is concerned with the speculative nature of the job and not with the occupation as a whole.

The silence of ecclesiastical sources on the commercial role of cities is understandable given the context of many of these writings. Even so, there are a few references to urban markets and trade in the *Vita* of St. Severinus, the works of Paulinus of Nola, and others. The *Vita* of St. Severinus mentions markets in the cities

²³D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome*, 5; and Anderson, 270, fn. 1.

²⁴'The bearer of this letter makes a poor living by his occupation as a buyer.' Sidonius, *Ep.* VI.8.1 (p. 99).

²⁵*Ibid.*, *Ep.* VI.8.2 (p. 99; and Anderson, 270. fn. 1.

and towns of Noricum.²⁶ The work also provides information on the unstable trading conditions in frontier areas:

Interea beatum virum cives oppidi memorati suppliciter adierunt, ut pergens ad Febanem, Rugorum principem, mercandi eis licentiam postuleret. Quibus ipse: 'tempus' inquit 'huis oppidi propinquavit, ut desertum, sicut cetera superiora castella cultore destituta, remaneat. Quid ergo necesse est locis mercimonia providere, ubi ultra non poterit apparere mercator?'²⁷

St. Severinus' warning is here a prophetic one, for it would seem that the city was later overrun and that merchants did indeed have difficulties trading in the region.²⁸

Bishop Caesarius of Arles, in an effort to get his message across to his urban congregation, often included examples of mercantile activity in his sermons. In one sermon, he used the example of illiterate merchants who hired men who could read and write in order to help them make a profit. Caesarius then asked why his congregation

²⁶V. Sev., VI.4 (p. 11); and XXVIII.2 (p. 21).

²⁷'In the meantime, it is said, the citizens of the *oppidum* [Batavis - an episcopal city] approached the blessed man with a request for him to hasten to Feba, the prince of the Rugi, and to seek, on their behalf, permission to trade. St. Severinus answered, 'The time is near for this *oppidum* to be deserted, just as the other northern *castella* have been abandoned by their inhabitants. Why, therefore, is there a need to provide goods to places where merchants will not be able to come to any longer?'' *Ibid.*, XXII.2 (p. 19).

²⁸'Praeterea quadam die vir dei cunctos pauperes in una basilica statuit congregari, oleum prout poscebat ratio largiturus: quam speciem in illis locis difficillimam negotiatorum tantum deferebat euectio.' *Ibid.*, XXVIII.2 (p. 21).

could not do the same for the sake of spiritual gain.²⁹

And in another sermon he asks:

si institores aurifices fabri vel
reliqui artifices maturius vigilant,
ut possint corporis necessaria pro-
videre, nos non debemus ante lucem ad
ecclesiam surgere... Si negotiatores
vigilare solent pro lucro pucuniae,
nos quare non vigilemus pro amore
vitae perpetuae? ³⁰

These passages do not in any way condemn mercantile activity within Arles, and indeed, the only censorious remark Caesarius makes is when he chides those who leave for the marketplace for business before the end of mass.³¹

Perhaps the clearest proof of Caesarius' acceptance of the commerce of Arles is his use of economic terms to describe the tenets of Christianity. 'vobis eas tamquam idoneis et efficacibus negociatoribus Christi offerre praesumpsi,' so Caesarius addresses an assembly of bishops.³² In another sermon he compares the clergy of the Christian faith to merchants, saying: 'Ipsi enim sunt negotiatores, qui oleum animarum lampadibus necessarium vendunt; per ipsos enim hoc negotium Christus exercere consuevit.'³³ Finally, in sermon CCXXX, it is quite

²⁹Caesarius, Ser. VI.2 (p. 33).

³⁰'if artisans awake early to procure bodily necessities, should we not get up early before dawn to go to church?...if merchants usually look out for material gain why should we not be alert out of love for eternal life?' *Ibid.*, Ser. LXXII.1 (p. 290) [tr. Mueller, 338].

³¹Caesarius, in this same passage, also lectures those who leave mass early in order to attend to lawsuits in the halls of the basilicas. *Ibid.*, Ser. LXXIV.3 (p. 298).

³²'I presume to offer to you who are like apt and accomplished traders of Christ,...' *Ibid.*, Ser. I.1 (p. 4).

³³'For there are merchants who sell the necessary oil for the lamps of the souls and it is through these merchants

clear that he has no objections to using the business imagery of the Parable of the Talents:

Et iterum te, . . . , ammoneo, ut
talenta, quae tibi hodie dominus
quasi bono negotiatori duplicanda
commisit cum multiplicato faenore
ante tribunal aeterni iudicis
restituas.³⁴

It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions on the viability of commercial activity within Arles. Even so, Caesarius' use of such examples does imply that trade and manufacturing practices were common enough to be used as examples for his urban congregation. But while secular and ecclesiastical attitudes towards commerce are, at times, discernible, the question remains - how important was this function to the life of late Roman *civitates* in Gaul?

Certainly the emperor Honorius felt that the flight of craftsmen from the Gallic cities was a serious threat to their viability and status.³⁵ It is difficult to know whether Honorius' opinions were shared by the majority of the Gallo-Roman population. Yet it must be said that commerce, however important in practical terms, did not have the same status as administrative, religious or defensive functions within the city; for while mercantile activity was not condemned, it was rarely cited as proof of the prestige of a *civitas*.

that Christ is accustomed to oversee this trade.' *Ibid.*, Ser. CLVI.3 (p. 602).

³⁴'And I again remind you, to return with multiplied interest the talents which today the Lord has commended to you to duplicate like a good businessman.' *Ibid.*, CCXXX. 6 (p. 868).

³⁵See Chapter II, p. 108, fn. 15.

The Early Merovingian Period A.D. 540-600

Commercial activity in early Merovingian cities is believed to have been primarily for the ruling elite.³⁶ The continuance of an urban secular administration cannot, however, be taken as proof of a thriving city-based economy. Latouche has argued that the use of *civitates* by the Visigoths and Merovingian leaders was merely a symbolic gesture with little to do with the commercial role of cities.³⁷ There is, indeed, no indication from the early Merovingian sources that economic activity was a factor in the Franks' or Visigoths' decision to base themselves within cities.

Having said this, it must be admitted that the economic role of early Merovingian cities is difficult to comment on since it is so poorly documented. Gregory of Tours rarely gives his attention to commercial matters and then only in passing references. The economic role of *civitates* and other settlements has little to do with Gregory's narrative of kings, bishops and military events. References to commerce are, consequently, included only in those instances where they happen to fit into the story. His only description of an urban centre, that of the *castrum* of Dijon, mentions only the agricultural potential of the settlement's region, with not even a hint of the site's mercantile activity.

³⁶See Geary's discussion of Merovingian commerce in cities, *Before France and Germany, The Creation and Transformation of the Merovingian World* (Oxford, 1988), 96.

³⁷Latouche also notes that these cities were valued as much for their military role as for their symbolic importance. Latouche, *BWE*, 101-102.

But the relationship between the urban Church and city commerce must have been more complex than is implied in the *History*. Church councils of this period include canons which prohibit work on Sundays.³⁸ There is also one canon on usury, though the decree applies only to the clergy.³⁹ The lending of money at interest was, it would seem, an accepted secular practice, for Gregory's only direct reference to urban commerce concerns a loan requested by the bishop of Verdun for the businessmen of his city.

videns habitatoris eius valde
pauperes atque destitutus, dolebat
super eos; et cum ipse per Theudori-
cum de rebus suis remansisset extra-
neus nec haberet de proprio, qualiter
eos consolaretur, bonitatem et cle-
mentiam circa omnes Theudoberti regis
cernens, misit ad eum legationem,
dicens:... 'cumque hi negotium exer-
centes responsum in civitate nostra,
sicut reliquae habent, praestiterint,
pecuniam tuam cum usuris legitimis
reddimus'. Tunc ille pietate
commotus, septem ei milia aureorum
pristitit.⁴⁰

³⁸*Concilia, Synodus Dioecesis Autissiodorensis* (A.D. 561-605), c. 16 (p. 267); *Matescense* (A.D. 585), c. 1 (p. 239); and *Aurelianense* (A.D. 538), c. 31(28) (p. 125).

³⁹*Ibid.*, *Aurelianense* (A.D. 538), c. 30(27) (p. 125): 'Ut clericus a diaconatum insupra pecuniam non commodit ad usuras nec de praestitis beneficiis quidquam amplius, quam datur, sperit neve in exercendis negociis, ut publici, qui ad populi responsum negotiaturis observant, turpis lucri cupiditate versetur aut sub alieno nomine interdicta negotia audeat exerciri. Quod si quis adversum statuta venire praesumserit, communione concessa ab ordine regradetur.'

⁴⁰'seeing that the inhabitants [of the city of Verdun] were very poor and destitute, he grieved over them, since he himself had no possessions, Theudoric having withdrawn these things from him. Perceiving the goodness of King Theudebert and his clemency to all, he sent to him legates saying,... 'When those who oversee the business in our city act, in the same way as they have in other cities, they will keep their promise, and I will give back to you the money with lawful interest.' Then the

It is evident from this passage that loans made in the secular sphere were expected to accumulate interest. Indeed, the phrase, 'usuris legitimis', suggests that there was a standard rate, or at least an established mode of usury during this period.⁴¹ Theudebert's refusal to accept Verdun's repayment is seen by Gregory as an act of charity. The king's actions might also have been motivated by an interest in the economic viability of his city. Verdun was, after all, his possession, and as such its economic welfare must have been of some concern to the monarch. The passage also suggests that such dealings had been carried out in other cities, and so implies that those who had money might have been willing to invest in the economic growth of *civitates*.

The community of merchants and traders within Gallic cities remains fairly obscure. Gregory does, however, provide evidence for groups of Jewish merchants. Colonies of Jewish and Syrian merchants are known to have existed in many Gallic cities of the early Merovingian period.⁴² For the Jews it was often the case that commercial occupations were the only employment open to them; for they were denied secular administrative posts unless they and their family consented to baptism.⁴³ In

king was stirred by piety and made them a loan of 7,000 pieces of gold.' Gregory, *HF*, III.34 (p. 137).

⁴¹See Latouche's discussion of this example in Latouche, *BWE*, 155-56. Note also the late Roman laws in the Theodosian Code, *Codex Theod.*, II.33.1-4 (p. 124-25).

⁴²See D.A. Bullough, 'Social and Economic Structure and Topography in the Early Medieval City', *Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, XXI.II (1974), 379-80.

⁴³A discussion of the canon laws of this period which are concerned with the Merovingian Jewish population is found in Ullmann, 'Public Welfare and Social Legislation in the

every reference but one where mention is made of a Jew in association with a profession, that occupation has something to do with commercial activity.⁴⁴ Jewish merchants are recorded in the cities of Paris, Clermont and Marseille. Marseille, a very important trading port during this period, might have been the home of a very large community of Jewish merchants, for when the Jews of Clermont were exiled from the city for not converting, they are said to have made their way to Marseille.⁴⁵ Gregory does not give any detail on the type of merchantile activity undertaken by Jewish merchants other than to say that they traded in precious objects. Their clients were often kings, members of the aristocracy, or high ecclesiastical officials.⁴⁶ Gregory also mentions a Jew who travelled to the city of Tours in order to collect payment for bonds. The borrowers here were the count and vice-count of the city, and each agreed to pay the sum with the accumulated interest.⁴⁷

The existence of a luxury market is attested to in a number of passages from Gregory which mention or list precious objects. Jewellery, salvers, church vessels and other costly items were certainly available for those who could afford them. The number of clients for this type of trade must have been small, though one client - a king

Early Medieval Councils', *SCH*, VII, 23-5. Some Jews did, however, own lands during this period.

⁴⁴The one exception is a reference to a Jewish doctor. Gregory, *HF*, V.6 (p. 198).

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, V.11 (p. 201).

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, IV.12 (p. 149); IV.35 (169-70); and VI.5 (p. 247).

⁴⁷In this instance, Armentarius, the lender, was murdered and the bonds disappeared. *Ibid.*, VII.23 (p. 305-306).

or bishop - could generate a great deal of commercial activity. Take for example the dowry of the princess Rigunth, which is said to have filled fifty carts.⁴⁸ Many of these objects might, of course, have been old or could have been made in secondary settlements. It is, however, probable that cities, as centres of secular and ecclesiastical activity, offered a market which could well have supported a permanent community of craftsmen and traders.

Merchant houses are recorded in Paris, though Gregory does not say whether these are domestic buildings, workshops or both.⁴⁹ The one description of a market is that of Paris. In the passage, Gregory relates how Count Leudast strolled through this commercial quarter:

...domusque negotiantum circumiens,
species rimatur, argentum pensat
atque diversa ornamenta prospicit,
dicens, 'Haec et haec conparabo, quia
multum mihi aurum argentumque resi-
dit.'⁵⁰

Whether this sort of market was typical of a *civitas* is not known. Paris, however, was an important Merovingian capital which might well have received more custom for luxury trade than more obscure *civitates*.

Shipping activity is mentioned in connection with the *civitates* of Marseille and Orléans. Marseille is said to have received goods from all over the Mediterranean, although wine is the only commodity which Gregory

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, VI.45 (p. 284-85).

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, VI.32 (p. 273).

⁵⁰'...and going around the houses of the merchants, looking at the goods [or 'spices'] displayed, he weighed out silver and examined the various objects saying, 'This and this I will purchase, since much gold and silver has been settled on me.''' *Ibid.*, VI.32 (p. 273).

cites by name.⁵¹ A cargo of wine is also recorded at the city of Orléans. This shipment was bought by a Gallic merchant who arranged to have it transported into the interior of the country.⁵² Many *civitates* would have served as coastal and river ports. Marseille especially appears to have greatly benefitted from the shipping trade, except on the occasion when a plague was brought into the city by the infected crew of a merchant ship from Spain.⁵³

Cities were, of course, the gathering places for agricultural produce. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell from the available sources whether this was exchanged in commercial markets. Certainly the presence of socially important figures within the *civitas*-capitals would have required an extensive food supply. For instance, a bishop's obligations towards the poor and infirm of his city would have called for a regular supply of food products to be brought into the city. In this same way, a royal court or an aristocratic household would have required both common foodstuffs and luxury items.

Cities could also be the sites of mints.⁵⁴ For the purpose of clarity and continuity, this section on the

⁵¹*Ibid.*, IV.43 (p. 177-78).

⁵²*Ibid.*, VII.46 (p. 322).

⁵³*Ibid.*, IX.22 (p. 380).

⁵⁴A discussion of coinage in 'primitive' markets is found in R. Hodges, *Primitive and Peasant Markets* (Oxford, 1988), 108-12. It would be interesting to see whether the models proposed by Hodges can be applied to Merovingian coinage. Hodges uses Anglo-Saxon evidence to support his theories.

location of mints will include both the Merovingian and early Carolingian evidence.

Merovingian rulers minted in precious metals, although the metallic content of the coinage varied widely from region to region.⁵⁵ Ennen argues that these gold and silver coins were only used in major transactions involving foreign trade or were hoarded.⁵⁶ This, however, conflicts with our only description of a market from the *History*; for here Count Leudast says that he is able to pay for the displayed ornaments with both gold and silver. Throughout the Merovingian period, however, it would seem that kings did not keep firm control over the issuing of coins.

Grierson and Blackburn, in their catalogue of early medieval coins from the Fitzwilliam collection, have divided the coinage of this period into three phases.⁵⁷ Phase I covers the years A.D. 500 to 587, and is characterised by pseudo-imperial coins with the figure of Victory on the reverse. Although such coins can be roughly dated to the emperor or king represented, they are few in number and often do not include the place of issue.⁵⁸ Phase II coinage is dated to the period between A.D. 587 and c. 670. The majority of these coins include the name of the moneyer and the place of issue, but rarely bear the names of rulers, bishops or other datable

⁵⁵Ennen, *The Medieval Town* (Amsterdam, 1979), 24.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I, *The Early Middle Ages*, 90-7.

⁵⁸For a general discussion of Merovingian coins see J. Lafaurie, 'Panorama de la numismatique mérovingienne', *Bulletin du Centre d'Études numismatiques*, IV (Brussels, 1967), 41-51.

personages. The same can be said for the coins in the Phase III category (A.D. 670 to the end of the Merovingian era); for while most will give the name of the moneyer and settlement of origin, few also include the authority under which the coin was issued.

Precise dating of Merovingian coins is, therefore, difficult, as Grierson and Blackburn confirm in their introduction to the coins of this period:

Merovingian coinage cannot be arranged chronologically, as can that of the Visigoths, and as the historian would wish, since coins bearing royal names are relatively few and the others can be dated only roughly.⁵⁹

Grierson and Blackburn go on to say, however, 'From c. 570 onwards, ...the bulk of the coins bear the names of local mints, and a geographical arrangement is possible.'⁶⁰

Grierson and Blackburn use just such an arrangement in their study of the Fitzwilliam coins. In this they follow, but modify, the previous work of Prou in his *Les Monnaies Mérovingiennes* and *Les Monnaies Carolingiennes* (Bibliothèque Nationale collection) which also catalogues with reference to place of issue. In reviewing these catalogues, Grierson and Blackburn point out that they are not without their problems. The Merovingian coins, for example, were grouped by Prou according to imperial Gallic provinces and *civitates*. Although such an arrangement might be useful for the earlier medieval

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 81.

⁶⁰*Ibid.*

periods, it does not take into account political changes within Gaul, especially those of the later Merovingian period.⁶¹

In order to overcome this potentially artificial arrangement, the authors of the Fitzwilliam catalogue have placed their coins into broad geographical regions which are more closely aligned with the political realities of the period. These major areas are Burgundy and Provence (as one area), Aquitaine, Neustria and Austrasia. Carolingian coins are grouped chronologically according to kings and emperors, although the overall classification is by place of issue.⁶² Although I have attempted to apply this same arrangement to Prou's collection, it is perhaps best to discuss each of the catalogues in turn.

Looking first at the Fitzwilliam collection, it is important to note that it cannot be used as a representative sample of Merovingian coinage. Even so, the geographical distribution of the mints and the ratio of *civitates* to other sites of issue can suggest broad trends of mint organisation.⁶³ Phase I coins, however, include too few which can be attributed to any specific place of issue, and it is only with the Phase II gold coinage that a tentative geographical distribution can be put forward.

⁶¹Grierson and Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I, *The Early Middle Ages*, 81-2.

⁶²For example, under the heading of Neustria will be subheadings of place-names. Listed under these are the rulers whose coins can be attributed to a particular period and mint.

⁶³p. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I, *The Early Middle Ages*, 464-95.

It is unfortunate that this phase spans both the early and late Merovingian periods; for had a division between pre- and post-A.D. 600 coins been possible, we might have been able to determine whether there had been an increase in the number of mints outside of *civitates* - the sort of conclusion one might expect given the decline of secular administrative functions in *civitates* over the seventh and eighth centuries. Such conclusions, however, are not at present possible, although finds of coins in datable archaeological contexts and studies into the changing metallic makeup of the coins of this period could well clear up the problem in time.⁶⁴

The southern half of Gaul has been shown throughout the thesis to have been more Roman in character and thus more likely to exhibit *civitas*-centred traditions. It might then be expected that mints of this southern region would be found in cities more often than other settlements. Phase II of the Fitzwilliam collection does indeed suggest just such a pattern, with the combined regions of Burgundy and Provence containing a large number of *civitas*-based mints (with approximately three out of every four mint sites being *civitates*).⁶⁵ Coinage from Aquitaine, however, is nearly evenly divided between

⁶⁴An example of the type of research going on in alloy analysis of Merovingian coins can be found in D.M. Metcalf's article, 'Interpreting the alloy of the Merovingian silver coinage', *Studies in Numismatic Method*, ed. C.N.L. Brooke, B.H.I. Stuart, and others (Cambridge, 1983), 113-26.

⁶⁵The coins selected for this survey were only those which could be attributed with a fair degree of certainty to a specific site. The Burgundy/Provence coins included twenty-one from *civitates* and five from other settlements.

episcopal and non-episcopal mint sites. At first glance, Neustria also appears to be equally divided between *civitates* and other sites, but on closer examination, it can be seen that six of the sixteen *civitas*-attributed coins are from Paris - an urban centre which perhaps had a stronger tradition of continuity than is normally associated with northern *civitates*.⁶⁶ The collection's coins from the northern region of Austrasia, on the other hand, appear to fulfil the above-stated expectations, for here there are only two identified *civitas* mints in comparison with twelve mints located in non-episcopal settlements.

Although, as stated earlier, the overall number of coins in the Fitzwilliam collection is not sufficient to form a representative sample, this examination of Phase II coins does seem to suggest a rough north/south division, with the southern areas hosting more *civitas*-based mints than the northern regions. The silver denier coins of Phase III (A.D. 670 onwards) also demonstrate a higher number of city mints in the south. Burgundy and Provence include as many as thirty mints located in cities and none in other settlements. Unfortunately, coins from the regions of Aquitaine, Neustria and Austrasia are too few in number to compare (with no more than five coins from each region).

Grierson and Blackburn's catalogue of the Carolingian coins is arranged by ruler rather than region.

⁶⁶With the possible exception of Trier, although this city lost much of its prestige before the establishment of the Merovingian kingdom.

Grierson, in his article, 'Money and Coinage under Charlemagne', notes that there is evidence for a tightening of control by the rulers over the issuing of coins. Efforts to centralise mints can be seen in the capitularies of the period, many of which restricted the minting of coins to royal palaces and other controlled areas.⁶⁷ Yet with this increase in royal control, there still appears from the Fitzwilliam collection to be a difference in the number of city mints in the northern and southern regions. In the reign of Charlemagne, for example, mints located in the old *civitates* are generally found in the south, while coins issued from non-episcopal sites (particularly from new trading centres such as Dorestad, Quentovic, etc....), are located in the north.⁶⁸ Coins minted by the authority of Louis the Pious are more equally distributed with regard to the overall location of city mints. Again, however, non-episcopal minting towns which can be identified are nearly always to be found in the north of Gaul.⁶⁹

Evidence from Prou's catalogue is not as accurate owing to his failure to consider separately the gold and silver coinage. According to Grierson and Blackburn, he also makes a fundamental mistake in his dating of the end

⁶⁷P. Grierson, 'Money and Coinage under Charlemagne', *Dark Age Numismatics, Selected Studies* (London, 1979), 502. '...their issue [Carolingian coins] was subjected to the control of the state instead of being left to private individuals or local authorities as it had been in Merovingian times.'

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 524-27; and 534-35.

⁶⁹P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage*, I, *The Early Middle Ages*, 520-30.

of the minting of gold coins.⁷⁰ Despite these problems, some general trends can be gathered from Prou's publication. To begin with, it can be said that of the Merovingian coins of this collection which can be attributed to a specific place, southern *civitates* were more often the host to mints than the non-episcopal settlements of this same region. Northern mint sites, however, appear to be more evenly distributed between *civitates* and non-*civitates*.⁷¹ Prou's catalogue again demonstrates, in the same way as the Fitzwilliam collection of Carolingian coins, that coins attributed to Charlemagne tend to come from non-episcopal mint sites in the north, while in the south, *civitas* mints are much more common. The coins of Louis the Pious and other rulers are more evenly distributed.

Both of the collections discussed above exhibit a north/south division in the pattern of minting. In the north, the shifting away from mints in *civitates* was certainly affected by the decline of the administrative status of cities, and by the economic growth of non-episcopal settlements like Dorestad. In the south, it is quite possible that the predominance of city mints was a result both of a more firmly based classical tradition of administration and of a *civitas*-centered economy.

⁷⁰Prou attributed coins of Childebert, the adopted son of Dagobert I (mid-seventh century), to Childebert III of the early eighth century, thus extending the minting of gold coins half a century beyond its actual disappearance. *Ibid.*, 82-3.

⁷¹This near equal distribution may again be due to a large number of coins from Paris (137 out of a total of 183 from the *civitas* mint). Prou, *Les Monnaies Mérovingiennes*, 156-91, plates 12-14.

The Later Merovingian Period A.D. 600-751

Documentary evidence on the economic role of *civitates* for the later Merovingian period is rather thin. While the *Chronicle* provides only a few references to merchants (none of which are associated with cities, Gallic or otherwise), the *LHF* is absolutely silent on this issue. Both sources are concerned with military and political events, and in this context commercial activity rarely makes its way into the narrative.

If either source can be said to provide any information on mercantile activity, it is that they confirm the existence of a luxury market. Among the merchandise listed are slaves, drinking vessels and jewelled ornaments. At no point, however, does the *Chronicle* or the *LHF* record where these objects were made or where they were sold.

The only detailed account of merchant activity comes from a famous passage of the *Chronicle* and involves the actions of a Frankish merchant named Samo. The chronicler relates how Samo, together with a band of other merchants, made an expedition to the region of the Slavs for the purpose of trading with the people called the Wends. Samo fought with the Wends against the Huns and was, consequently, made their king.⁷² Unfortunately, this sudden career change leaves us with no information on how the Wendish goods would have been brought back to Gaul or where they might have been distributed.

⁷²*Chronicle*, IV.48 (p. 144).

The passage is, nevertheless, interesting, for it demonstrates the existence of Northern European trade which was perhaps already becoming as important as the commerce of the Mediterranean.

Although evidence from the above-mentioned sources offers little information on the economic role of cities, perhaps something can be discovered from an examination of the urban changes known to have occurred during this period. The transfer of secular administration to the countryside, for example, almost certainly meant a reduction in the level of city commerce, and encouraged the economic development of non-episcopal settlements as craftsmen moved to accommodate a growing market in these centres.

Many of these secondary settlements dealt with long-distance trade.⁷³ The location of a market toll in Fos during this period demonstrates how secondary centres were coming into economic use. Trade goods received at Marseille would often be transported up the Rhône via the toll markets of Fos, Valence and Lyon. Revenues collected at these points went into the pockets of the Merovingian king in control of the centres.⁷⁴

The commercial role of *civitates* might also have been affected by the rise of rural monastic settlements

⁷³For example, see Hodges' summary on the site of Dorestad in *Dark Age Economics*, 74-7. On the port of Quentovic see, P. Héliot 'La question de Quentovic d'après les travaux récents', *Revue du Nord*, XXIII (1937), 260-65.

⁷⁴A charter which details the goods transported through Fos dates from A.D. 716 and lists spices, fruits, nuts and papyrus among its cargo. See Levillain, *Examen critique des Chartes méro. et carol. de l'abb. de Corbie* (Paris, 1902), 235-37.

and the growing independence of suburban abbeys. Many scholars have discussed the development of the market settlements around monastic sites. The independence which these institutions gained from episcopal authority enabled many to take advantage of the revenues generated by local markets. Charter evidence shows that St-Denis, for example, profited from fairs held near the site.⁷⁵ The workings of these monastic economic centres are, however, better seen in light the of the more abundant Carolingian evidence.

During this period the Church's prohibitions against usury still applied only to clerics, as the council of Clichy shows:

Episcopus, presbyter vel diaconus
usuras a debitoribus exigens aut
desinat aut certe damnetur. Nam neque
centissima exigant aut turpia lucra
requirant; sexcuplum vel decuplum
exigere prohibemus omnibus Christi-
anis.⁷⁶

Note, however, that restrictions were beginning to be made on Christian laymen. The Church's involvement with secular business affairs may have been prompted by the disappearance of the Roman laws concerning these practices.

But while it is clear that commercial activity and the loaning of money was very much in existence during

⁷⁵*Diplomata*, Lauer, plate 6 (text p. 6-7). A fee was charged to each merchant wishing to participate in the fair.

⁷⁶'Bishops, presbyters or deacons must cease extracting interest on debts or be assuredly condemned. For they shall not even collect one hundredth or seek shameful profit. We forbid all Christians to extract six or ten percent.' *Concilia, Clippiacense* (A.D. 626-27), c.1 (p. 291-92).

this period, we cannot say to what degree transactions were being carried out in *civitates*. Kings and other nobles probably had their own purchasers, but we have no hint as to where their business deals were done.

It is very possible that Jews continued to be prominent in commercial affairs, since the *Gesta Dagoberti* records the existence of a Jewish merchant named Solomon, who was the official buyer for the king.⁷⁷ Canon law continued to forbid Jews to hold any type of administrative or military position.⁷⁸ A canon from the Council of Paris implies that the urban Church had some control over the Jewish community, for if a member of this society attempted to disregard the restrictions of his occupation he was to be disciplined by the bishop and the offender and his family were to be baptised.⁷⁹

For the most part, commercial activity in late Merovingian *civitates* remains obscure. Moreover, economic changes within the city are more often verified by events outside the urban centre -i.e., the rise of commercial secondary settlements or the rural establishment of secular administration. To what extent these developments affected the economic role of *civitates* is perhaps best seen in the light of the Carolingian evi-

⁷⁷*Gesta Dago.*, XXXIII (p. 413).

⁷⁸*Concilia, Parisiense* (A.D. 614), c. 17(15) (p. 280): 'Ut nullus Iudaeorum qualemcumque militia aut actione publica super Christianos aut adpetere a principe aut agere presumat. Quod si temptaverit, ab episcopo civitatis illius, ubi actionem contra canonum statuta conpetiit, cum omni familia sua baptismi gratia consequatur.' See also *Leges, Clotharii II Edictum* (A.D. 614), IX, c. 10 and 17 (p. 22 and 23).

⁷⁹A general overview of Jewish society in early Medieval Gaul is found in, B.S. Bachrach *Early Medieval Jewish Policy in Western Europe* (Minneapolis, 1977), 44-83.

dence, since the latter half of the Merovingian period lacks the documentation to justify any firm conclusions.

The Early Carolingian Period A.D. 751-843

The early Carolingian period offers a wider range of evidence on early medieval trading activity. The sources show that the secular authorities took an active interest in commercial practices. The Capitulary of Herstal (A.D. 779) included clauses on trading, one of which attempted to limit the sale of coats of mail outside the kingdom.⁸⁰ The sale of arms, slaves or stallions outside the realm was also forbidden.⁸¹

It was also during this period that stricter laws against usury were issued. As Latouche points out: 'Charlemagne was the first ruler to extend the ban [on usury] to laymen and to give this prohibition, now made binding to all alike, the sanction of civil legislation.'⁸² He goes on to list examples of these laws including the Capitulary of Nijmegen (A.D. 806) which contains clauses that define the nature of usury and explain why it is wrong. Clause 11, for example, states: 'Usura est ubi amplius requiritur quam datur; verbi gratia si dederis solidos decem et amplius requisieris, vel si dederis modium unum frumenti et iterum super aliud

⁸⁰*Leges, Capitulare Haristallense* (A.D. 779), c. 20 (p. 51): 'De brunias, ut nullus foris nostro regno vendere praesumat.'

⁸¹*Ibid.*, *Capitulare Mantuanum* (A.D. 781), c. 7 (p. 190): 'Ut nullus mancipia christiana vel pagana nec qualibet arma vel amissario foris regno nostro vendat.'

⁸²Latouche, *BWE*, 155.

exigeris.'⁸³ The capitulary does not disapprove of loans, only of the interest charged. Justification of this prohibition is based on religious grounds.⁸⁴ The capitulary was drawn up during a time of famine and was thus a means of protecting the poor against unscrupulous businessmen.

Church legislation of this period also attests to the presence of commercial activity. The *Capitulare Paderbrunnense* (A.D. 785) which covered many ecclesiastical issues, decreed that no secular business was to be conducted on Sunday.⁸⁵ A capitulary of Aachen modified this decree by stating that markets could be held on Sunday if this had been done in ancient times and if they were done under the law - i.e., with official permission.⁸⁶ A canon of the Synod of Frankfurt prohibited monks from attending to commercial dealings unless this activity fell within the rule of the order.⁸⁷

In an attempt to keep the minting of coinage under royal control, a decree of A.D. 820 stipulated that counts were to keep a watch over the mints of their cities.⁸⁸ Mints were also to be found in secondary settlements during this period. A number of capitularies

⁸³*Leges, Capitulare Missorum Niumagae Datum*, XLVI, c. 11 (p. 132): 'Usury consists of claiming back more than you give; for instance, if you have given ten *solidi* and ask for more back, or if you have given a hogshead of wheat and afterwards demand one extra.' [tr. Latouche, *BWE*, 156].

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, c. 14 and 16 (p. 132).

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, *Capitulare Paderbrunnense*, XXVI (A.D. 785), c. 18 (p. 69).

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, *Capitulare Aquisgranense*, LXI (A.D. 809), c. 8 (p. 149): 'nisi antiquitus fuit et legitime esse debet.'

⁸⁷*Ibid.*, *Synodus Franconofurtensis*, XXVIII (A.D. 794), c. 11 (p. 75).

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, *Capitulare de Moneta* (A.D. 820), c. 1 (p. 299).

are concerned with minting practices and the setting of fair prices for food and wine.

Narrative evidence for commercial activity is scant. As with the sources of the earlier period, commerce does not play a large part in the records of political and military events. The *ARF* provides evidence for the existence of goods of eastern origin at the Carolingian court, including a clock, a linen tent of many colours, and an elephant.⁸⁹ These, however, were political gifts, not objects of trade. Even so, the import of such items might well mean that other, less exotic objects were brought into the country. Indeed, there is evidence of precious gems, silks and other merchandise within Gaul, though these are usually in the possession of a noble or Church institutions.⁹⁰

The only reference in the *ARF* which links commercial activity to an urban centre refers to a new foundation in a passage which relates how the trading town ('emporium') of Reric was destroyed and its merchants transferred to a new unspecified site, in order to prevent the king of the Obodrites from collecting the taxes which the site generated.⁹¹ It is not known whether the transferred merchants were permanently based in Reric, but it is probable that the king would have extracted payments from them either through rents or through a participation fee for the market.

⁸⁹*ARF*, A.D. 807 (p. 125).

⁹⁰See p. 274, for an example of the objects held by a monastery of this period.

⁹¹*ARF*, A.D. 808 (p. 126).

Nithard's *Histories* include only one reference to commercial activity. The passage tells how merchant ships were conveyed by an unusually strong tide from the mouth of the Seine to just outside the *civitas* of Rouen. Unfortunately, we hear no more about these ships or their cargo, for Charles the Bald seized twenty-eight of them to continue a military campaign.⁹²

Very few references tell us anything about the economic character of urban centres. Fewer still hint at the commercial activity carried on in *civitas*-capitals. Because of this and because medieval towns are traditionally defined as economic centres, many scholars are reluctant to ascribe the term 'urban' to many Carolingian settlements.

The question of the existence of towns in the Carolingian period is a difficult one. Too little evidence concerning the settlements of the eighth and ninth centuries survives to allow us to call them towns and we have very little idea of what they were like.⁹³

Such is the opinion of Rosamund McKitterick, who has based her argument on the evidence presented by Duby, Barley and others. That the very existence of towns and town life should be called into question demonstrates that these scholars are, in all probability, applying a tenth- or eleventh-century model to a type of urbanization which is more fairly judged in the light of its Merovingian predecessors. It is, in truth, a question of definition, and ideas as to what precisely constitutes

⁹²Nithard, II.6 (p. 56-8).

⁹³R. McKitterick, *The Frankish Kingdoms under the Carolingians*, 21; and fn. 12 p. 38.

urban life during this period inevitably seem to lead to Pirenne, whose own argument about whether towns existed in the Carolingian period is worth quoting at length:

The answer depends on the meaning given to the word 'city'. If by it is meant a locality the population of which, instead of living by cultivating the soil, devotes itself to commercial activity, the answer will have to be 'No'. The answer will also be in the negative if we understand by 'city' a community endowed with legal entity and possessing laws and institutions particular to itself. On the other hand, if we think of a city as a centre of administration and as a fortress, it is clear that the Carolingian period knew nearly as many cities as the centuries which followed it must have known. That is merely another way of saying that the cities which were then to be found were without two of the fundamental attributes of cities of the Middle Ages and of modern times - a middle-class population, and a communal organisation.⁹⁴

If early Carolingian *civitates* lacked a strong economic role, did this in itself undermine the status of these centres? Certainly the low ebb of commercial activity in cities of earlier periods had not been a significant factor in their position as major urban centres. Yet past *civitates* had maintained their status because of their monopoly on secular administration and ecclesiastical activity. The dawn of the Carolingian period, however, saw cities which were virtually devoid

⁹⁴H. Pirenne, *Medieval Cities, Their Origins and the Revival of Trade* (Princeton, 1969), 56. A 'communal organisation' means, I take it, the dictation of city policy by prominent commercial citizens, such as during the later Middle Ages; i.e., not the *boni homines* and other small landowners who took part in local administration during the Carolingian period. See F.L. Ganshof, *Frankish Institutions under Charlemagne*, tr. B. and M. Loyn (New York, 1968), 76-7.

of direct royal government and severely restricted in their religious role as the foci of their respective dioceses. And although the secular administrative function of cities was partially revived in the course of this period by the re-introduction of counts, *civitates* did not regain their former position as governmental centres.

Under these circumstances, one might have expected the economic aspects of the city to come to the fore. But while several sources of the period praise cities for their defences or ecclesiastical buildings, there are no passages which highlight their economic role. As with the late Roman and Merovingian eras, commerce is rarely mentioned in association with any type of settlement.

This silence on the economic role of *civitates* is not, however, restricted to Gallic cities. Neither the Milan nor Verona poems make any mention of mercantile activity, though commerce must certainly have contributed to the prosperity of these centres.⁹⁵ Alcuin, in a poem on the city of York, does refer to the *civitas* as a major market centre, but this is only in the context of his historical account of the Roman settlement of Eboracum.⁹⁶

It is clear from this comparative evidence and from the silence of the Carolingian sources that commerce had little to do with the perceived status of a city during this period. This is not to deny the practical impor-

⁹⁵Pighi, *Versus de Verona, Versum de Mediolano civitate*.

⁹⁶Alcuin, in P. Godman, *Alcuin, The Bishops, Kings and Saints of York* (Oxford, 1982), line 24, 'ut foret emporium terra commune marisque' (p. 4).

tance of this function, but it is clear that civic pride did not rely on the centre's economic status.

This, however, is also true of the new settlements of Gaul, like Quentovic and Dorestad, many of which were certainly commercially active. There are relatively few references to economic activity in these settlements, and of direct praises of this function, there are none. Not one of the poems praising the settlement of Aachen, for example, includes references to trade or manufacturing. Yet Aachen was a thriving complex during Charlemagne's reign, and as such it must have stimulated some sort of commercial activity. Moreover, as the emperor's most popular residence, it must also have attracted both local commercial activity as well as long-distance trade.

The *Capitulare de Villis vel Curtis Imperialibus* attributed to Charlemagne or his son, Louis the Pious, shows that many trades were to be found on Carolingian royal estates. Among the craftsmen listed are blacksmiths, gold- and silversmiths, shoemakers, turners, carpenters, shieldmakers, brewers, and other workers which the capitulary claims are too numerous to mention.⁹⁷ In addition to these, royal estates were also producing their own clothing and, of course, nearly all their own food and wine. Perhaps this virtual self-sufficiency explains the demand: 'Ut unusquisque iudex praevideat, quatenus familia nostra ad eorum opus bene laboret et per

⁹⁷*Leges, Capitulare de Villis*, XXXII c.45 and 62 (p. 87 and 88-9).

mercata vacando non eat.'⁹⁸ Nevertheless, some items, such as spices or precious metals or gems, must have been acquired at markets or directly from a merchant.

The *Brevium Exempla*, drawn up either at the end of Charlemagne's reign or in the early days of Louis the Pious, attests to the crafts to be found on monastic properties. The island monastery of Staffelsee (known today as Worth) had a weaving workshop which employed twenty-four women. Food and wine were produced on the monastery's estates.⁹⁹ The survey also lists many precious liturgical objects owned by the monastery, including jewelled crosses for relics, silver chalices and a surplice of silk.¹⁰⁰

Settlements which centred on monastic foundations are particularly prevalent during this period. Hodges claims that Charlemagne used these centres to unite his empire by giving privileges to certain strategically located foundations.¹⁰¹ While the truth of this can be disputed, it is certainly the case that many Carolingian monarchs took a great interest in monasteries and often built residences next to these foundations.

As the city was under the control of the bishop, so secondary settlements with monastic origins answered to the ruling abbot. The abbot of St-Denis collected payments from merchants wishing to participate in the local fairs, as had been the custom in the late Merovingian

⁹⁸*Ibid.*, c.54 (p. 88): 'That every steward shall see to it that our people work well at their tasks, and do not go wasting time at markets.' [tr. Lyon, 71].

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, *Brevium Exempla*, CXXVIII (p. 252).

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, (p. 251).

¹⁰¹R. Hodges, *Primitive and Peasant Markets*, 56-9.

period.¹⁰² The monastery of Centula (St-Riquier) owned all the shops and market buildings of its adjacent settlement, and charged rent in kind for their use. The economic settlement of Centula was divided into specific quarters, called *vici*, and each was given over to a particular commercial activity.¹⁰³ A Viking raid in A.D. 881 left the settlement in ruins.

A number of secondary settlements of this period, especially those involved with trade, did not have walls, or were only partially enclosed. An example of a monastery town which survived into the medieval age is that of St-Omer in Picardy. Like Centula, this was a seventh-century foundation which developed a market economy based on activities such as leather working and cloth manufacturing. By the ninth century, the settlement could boast of workshops, a hospital, a school and churches.¹⁰⁴

Did the establishment of secular and ecclesiastical economic centres alter the commercial role of *civitates*? Certainly the rise of secondary settlements as centres of trade and crafts did little to diminish the status of Carolingian cities; for as has been shown, a city's economic functions were not regarded as an essential element of its prestige. In practical terms, however,

¹⁰²See Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, 140-41, where he discusses the economic fortunes of St-Denis during this period.

¹⁰³St-Riquier, 306-308.

¹⁰⁴See, C. Goudineau, 'Sources et problèmes', *Histoire de la France urbaine*, I, *La ville antique, des origines au IX^e siècle*, ed. G. Duby (Paris, 1980), 136.

self-sufficient estates and rival market towns must have diminished a city's mercantile activity.

Summary

To the modern mind it might seem rather odd that the most obvious function of urban centres should play so unobtrusive a role in the minds and writings of the late Roman and early medieval population. It is, however, possibly a difference in perception at only one level, for while few cared to acknowledge the existence of commerce, it is quite probable that most of the people of Gaul would have agreed on the necessity of commercial activity in their urban centres.

With regard to the economic role of *civitates*, it is clear they were often no different from other commercial settlements. Indeed, unlike the distinction of a city for its military role, there appears to have been no effort made to ascribe status to a *civitas* because of the economic activity to be found there. This was probably an inheritance from the Roman period. *Romanitas* granted no status to trade, as it had to other urban traditions - those which were reflected in administrative, religious and defensive functions. Because of this, no *civitas* could stand solely by the merit of its commercial activity.

Conclusion

The changing role and perception of Gallic cities from the mid-fourth to the mid-ninth century was dependent upon many factors. Of all of these, however, it could be argued that none were as decisive as the classical urban tradition - that is, the imperial policy of designating an urban settlement to serve as the central place of a given region. The classical urban tradition persisted or affected those features and practices associated with late Roman *civitates*. These included, for example, ideas on the private and public division of life along rural and urban lines, loyalty to one's city-territory or *patria* and the presence, during the late Roman period, of both pagan and Christian practices and cult-buildings within the city.

Although the decline of the classical urban tradition was not the only reason for changes in city use and perception, much of Gallic urban history of this period can be traced to the fortunes of this ideal. The city's imperial administrative function, for example, was the foundation upon which later governing bodies - *i.e.*, the Church and the early Merovingian rulers - based their authority.

It was the decline of the classical urban tradition, resulting from the fading influence of the Empire, which helped to initiate the changes of the later Merovingian period. The shift of secular administration from the city to the countryside, the decline of *civitas*-community

and the loss of the monopoly held by the urban Church on religious functions can each be linked, to varying degrees, with the collapse of classical ideals of the role and status of *civitates*. The later Merovingian period was, however, a period of transition, and this being so, it is not surprising to see evidence of both old and new traditions of urban use and perception.

Evidence from the early Carolingian period demonstrates the crystallisation of this new tradition; for *civitates* were now distinguished only by their episcopal sees. There is some evidence to suggest that a degree of deference was given to these old imperial *civitates*. Even so, this recognition indicates, not a revival of classical urban traditions, but a nostalgia for a bygone era. Proof of this can be seen in the continuation of rural-based government and the virtually complete disappearance of the concept of the city-territory.

Only the Church retained its close link with the *civitas*. With secular administration, defensive features and commercial activity also to be found in other settlements of the early Carolingian period, the *civitates* of Gaul were distinguishable only by their episcopal sees, and, on occasion, by their past position as the major centres of their now defunct city-territories.

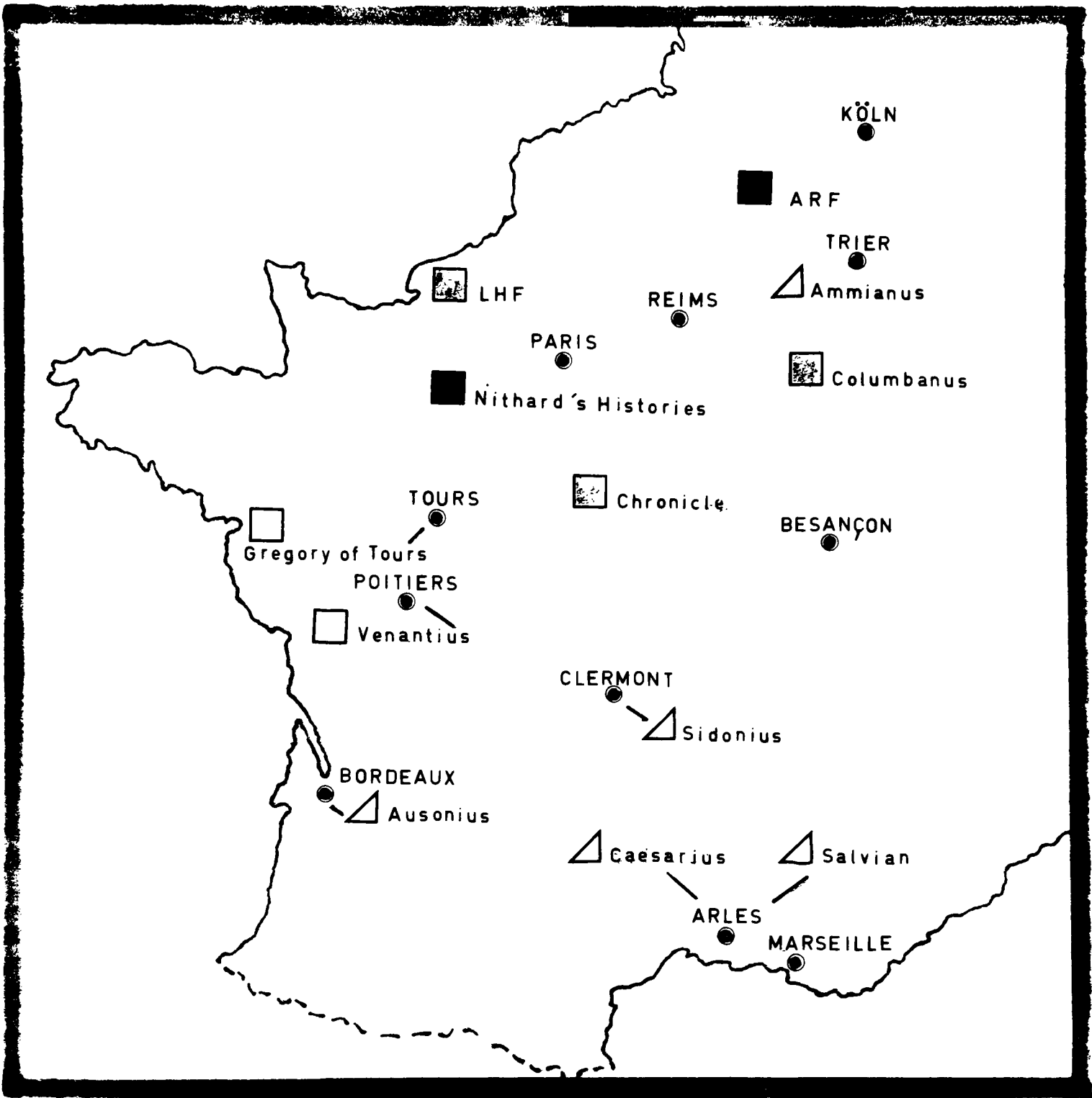
Civitates were the essential element of imperial administrative organisation. They were also the seat of the early Church. Urban-based government declined with the Empire. The episcopal Church, however, as a separate and stronger institution, maintained a persistent hold on

the cities, although its claim to the countryside was diminished by the breakup of the *civitas* community. Thus, the religious function of cities was also affected by the decline of *romanitas*.

The Gallic cities of the late Roman and early Merovingian era were, in a very real sense, a reflection of the period itself - the events, ideals and social developments. Within the confines of the urban history presented here, it has often been possible to discern broader aspects of the society and to see major cultural, religious and political events in a different light. This thesis, in an attempt to clarify the nature of *civitates*, has also sought to demonstrate their importance in the context of late Roman and Frankish society.

APPENDIX

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF MAJOR SOURCES



- △ LATE ROMAN
- EARLY MEROVINGIAN
- ▨ LATE MEROVINGIAN
- EARLY CAROLINGIAN

Key to Qualification Tables

(-taken from the works of Gregory of Tours)

Urban Centres, I and II:

C	- <i>civitas</i>
U	- <i>urbs</i>
O	- <i>oppidum</i>
Cs	- <i>castrum</i> or <i>castellum</i>
city	- refers to those terms which are applied to a <i>civitas</i> -capital
c/t	- refers to a city-territory
c/t?	- refers to those instances where it is not clear whether the passage is referring to a <i>civitas</i> -capital or a city-territory
bishop	- the reference is to a bishop and his see
count	- the reference is to a count or duke and his administrative district

Regional Qualifications, I and II:

ter.	- <i>territorium</i>
trm.	- <i>terminus</i>
reg.	- <i>regio</i>
prv.	- <i>provincia</i>
ptr.	- <i>patria</i>
par.	- <i>parrocchia</i>
dio.	- <i>diocesis</i>
pag.	- <i>pagus</i>

Note: Each table lists both the Latin and modern name of a site or region unless there is no modern equivalent, or the Latin is well known. *Civitas Arvernorum* is listed as Clermont. It should also be noted that there are numerous spelling variants to each of the Latin forms given here.

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Agde N Civitas Agatensium C U O Cs	3	1		1	
Agen L Civitas Agennen- sium C U O Cs	1 1	1			
Aire M Civitas Aturensium C U O Cs	1	-	1		
Aix O Civitas Aquensium C U O Cs	1				
Albi K Civitas Albigen- sium C U O Cs	5	1	2		
Angers C Civitas Andecavo- rum C U O Cs	6	1 1	2	1	
Angoulême L Civitas Ecolis- nensium C U O Cs	1 1	3	1	2	
Arles O Civitas Arelaten- sium C U O Cs	11	1	1		
Auch M Civitas Ausciorum C U O Cs		1			
Autun A Civitas Augusto- dunum C U O Cs	5				1
Auxerre D Civitas Autisio- durum C U O Cs	1 1 1			1	1
Avignon O Civitas Avennico- rum C U O Cs	2 8	2		1	
Avranches B Civitas Abrinca- tum C U O Cs		1		1	

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Bazas M C	1		1		
Civitas Vasatica U	5		1		
O					
Cs					
Besançon I C			1		
Civitas Vesonti- U					
ensium O					
Cs					
Beziers N C		1			
Civitas Biterren- U	1				
sium O					
Cs	1				
Birten C					
Bertunensim U					
Oppidum O	1				
Cs					
Bordeaux L C	2		2		1
Civitas Burdiga- U	13	8	4	2	2
lensium O	1				
Cs					
Bourges K C	3	1	1		1
Civitas Biturigum U	6	2	2	4	
O					
Cs					
Cahors K C		1			
Civitas Cadurcorum U	1		2	2	
O					
Cs					
Cambrai F C		1			
Civitas Camara- U	1	1			
censium O					
Cs					
Carcassonne N C					
Civitas Carcas- U	7				
sonensium O					
Cs					
Cavaillon O C					
Civitas Cabelli- U	4	1			
corum O					
Cs					
Châlons-sur-Marne C	1				
F U		1	1		
Civitas Catalau- O					
norum Cs					
Chalon-sur-Saône C	3				
A U	3		2		
Civitas Cabillo- O					
nense Cs					
Chartres D C					
Civitas Carnotum U	2		1	2	
O					
Cs					

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Cieutat M Civitas Turba C U O Cs	1	1	1	1	
Clermont K Civitas Arverno- rum C U O Cs	12 36	4 9	3 3	2	2 4
Cologne (Köln) H Civitas Agrippinen- sium Colonia C U O Cs	1 2 1		1	1 1	
Coutances B Civitas Constantia C U O Cs		1		1	
Dax M Civitas Aquensium C U O Cs		1 1		3	
Deutz Divitia C U O Cs	1				
Die J Civitas Deensium C U O Cs		1		1	
Embrun O Civitas Ebrodunen- sium C U O Cs	1 1	1 1	1	1	
Gap O Civitas Vappin- censium C U O Cs		1			
Geneva J Civitas Genaven- sium C U O Cs	2 1		1	2	
Grenoble J Civitas Gratiano- politana C U O Cs		2			
Javols K Civitas Gabalum C U O Cs	1	1		1	2
Langres A Civitas Lingonum C U O Cs	1	1		1 1	

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Laon F Civitas Lugdini Clavati C U O Cs	1				
Le Mans C Civitas Cenoman- norum C U O Cs	2 1		1		
Lescar M Civitas Benarnen- sium C U O Cs		1	1		
Limoges K Civitas Lemovicum C U O Cs	5	1	4		2
Lisieux Civitas Lexovi- orum C U O Cs	4			1	
Lyon A Civitas Lugdunen- sium C U O Cs	4 4	1	2	3	
Mâcon A Castrum Matisco- nense C U O Cs	1 1				
Maestrich Treiectens C U O Cs	1				
Mainz G Civitas Mogontia- censium C U O Cs	1	1	1	1	
Marseille O Civitas Massili- ensium C U O Cs	8 12	1	1		
Maurienne J Civitas Maurien- nensis C U O Cs	2				
Meaux D Civitas Melduorum C U O Cs	3	1	2		
Metz E Civitas Medioma- tricum C U O Cs	3 12	2			

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Nantes C	2		1		
Civitas Namntum	2	2		1	
Narbonne N	1		2		
Civitas Narbonen-					
sium					
Nevers D	1				
Civitas Nivernen-					
sium					
Nice O	2			2	
Civitas Cemelen-					
sium					
Nîmes N	4				
Civitas Nemausen-					
sium					
Orléans D	1	1			
Civitas Aurelia-	8	2			
norum	1				
Paris D	5	2	2	1	
Civitas Parisio-	22	3	2	9	
rum	1				
Périgueux L	1	2		1	
Civitas Petroco-	1				
riorum					
Poitiers L	3	2		1	
Civitas Pictavum	11	11	2	4	2
	1				
Reims F	2	1			
Civitas Remorum	9	2	2	3	
	1				
Rennes C					
Civitas Redonum	1	1		1	
Rodez K	1	2		1	1
Civitas Ruteno-	8	2			1
rum					
Rouen B	2	1	1		
Civitas Rotomagen-	1		4	1	
sium	1				

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Saintes L Civitas Santonum C U O Cs	2 9	3	3	3 2	
St-Bertrand-de- Comminges Civitas Convenarum C U O Cs	18				
Senlis F Civitas Silvanec- tum C U O Cs		1			
Sens D Civitas Senonum C U O Cs	1				
Soissons F Civitas Suessio- num C U O Cs	5 9	1	1	1	
Strasbourg G Civitas Argento- ratensium C U O Cs	2				
Tongres H Civitas Tungrorum C U O Cs	2 1				
Toulouse K Civitas Tolosa- tium C U O Cs	1 4		2	1	
Tournai F Civitas Turnacen- sium C U O Cs	1				
Tours C Civitas Turonorum C U O Cs	16 49	3 22	4	3 6	1 3
Trier E Civitas Trevero- rum C U O Cs	1 16			4	
Troyes D Civitas Tricassi- um C U O Cs	3				
Uzès O Civitas Uticensi- um C U O Cs					1 1

URBAN CENTRES I

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Valence J Civitas Valenti- norum	C U O Cs	1			
Vannes C Civitas Venetum	C U O Cs	2 4	2	1	
Vence O Civitas Vencen- sis	C U O Cs		1		
Verdun E Civitas Verodun- ensium	C U O Cs	2 4	1		
Vermand (St-Quen- tin) Civitas Vermando- rum	C U O Cs	1 1			
Vienne J Civitas Viennen- sium	C U O Cs	3 9	1	1	
Viviers (Alba) Civitas Albensium	C U O Cs			1	
Zülpich Tulpiacus	C U O Cs	1 1			

URBAN CENTRES II

Place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Antioch - Syria (Anthiokia) C U O Cs	1 10				
Apamea - Syria (Apamia) C U O Cs	1				
Avenches - Italy (Aventicum) C U O Cs	1				
Babel - Mesopota- mia (Babyl) C U O Cs	3				
Babylon - Egypt (Babylonia) C U O Cs	2				
Barcelona - Spain (Barcelone) C U O Cs	1				
Bethlehem - Pales- tine (Bethleem) C U O Cs	2				
Bologna - Italy (Bononia) C U O Cs	2 1				
Calahorra - Spain (Calagurris) C U O Cs			1		
Carthage - Spain (Carthago) C U O Cs	4				
Clysma - Egypt (Clysma) C U O Cs	1				
Constantinople - Byzantium (Constantinopo- lis) C U O Cs	1 7			1	
Edessa - Mesopo- tamia (Aedissa) C U O Cs	1 1)				

URBAN CENTRES II

Place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Ephesus - Byzantium (Ephesus) C U O Cs	3 1				
Gerona - Spain (Gerunda) C U O Cs			1		
Jericho - Pales- tine (Hiericho) C U O Cs	2				
Jerusalem - Pales- tine (Hierusolima) C U O Cs	1 2				
Livida - Pales-- tine (Livia) C U O Cs	1 2				
Merida - Spain (Emerita) C U O Cs	1				
Milan - Italy (Mediolanum) C U O Cs	3	1	1		
Nineveh - Mesopo- tamia (Nineve) C U O Cs	1				
Nisibis - Mesopo- tamia (Nisebences) C U O Cs			1		
Nola - Italy C U O Cs	1 2			3	
Paneas - Syria (Phaniada) C U O Cs	1 3				
Patras - Greece C U O Cs	1				
Pavia - Italy (Ticinum) C U O Cs		)	1		

URBAN CENTRES II

place-name /Qual.	City	C/T	C/T?	Bishop	Count
Phrygia - Turkey * C (-an imp. province) U O Cs			1		
Piacenza - Italy C (Placentia) U O Cs				1	
Ravenna - Italy C (Ravenna) U O Cs	3				
Rome - Italy C (Roma) U O Cs	4 28				
Sabaria - Hungary C (Sabaria) U O Cs	2				
Saragossa - Spain C (Caesaraugusta) U O Cs	3				
Seville - Spain C (Hispalis) U O Cs	2 1				
Susa - Italy C (Segusium) U O Cs			3		
Toledo -Spain C (Toledus) U O Cs			1		
Turin - Italy C (Civitas Tauri- U nensis) O Cs	1				
Vercelli - Italy C (Vircella) U O Cs	1 1				

* Why Gregory should call a large province an 'urbs' is uncertain. Perhaps he thought Phrygia was a town. If so, this reference demonstrates the loss of geographical and classical knowledge in sixth-century Gaul.

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Agen (Agennum)		1						
Aire (Aturum)		2						
Alamannia			1					
Albi (Albiga)	1							
Angers (Andegavum)	5	3	1	1				
Arles (Arelatum)		1	3	7				
Auch (Ausciorum)	1							
Avranches (Abrincatum)	4	4						
Autun (Augustodunum)		1	1					
Auxerre (Autisiodorum)	1							
Avignon (Avinum)	2							
Barrou (Barrotum)								1

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Belgica Secunda				1				
Belnensi (Belnensum)								1
Bordeaux (Burdigala)	4	1	3	1	1			
Bourges (Biturigum)	6	7	2	2				
Brioude (Britate)								1
Brittany (Armorica)			2		1			
Cahors (Cadurcum)		1						
Cambrai (Camarcum)			1					
Candes (Candaeum)							1	
Cavaillon (Cabilonum)	1							
Champagne (Campania)			1					1
Chartres (Carnotum)	3	2			1		1	

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Châteaudun (Dumensum)		1						
Cieutat (Turba)	1	2			1			
Clermont (Arverni)	11	5	13		2		1	
Craon (Craonium)								1
Dijon (Divione)	1							
Embrun (Ebrodunum)					1			
Étampes (Stampae)								2
Frankish Region			1					
Gap (Vappincum)					1			
Gaul (Gallia)		1						
Javols (Gabalum)	1	1	1					
Le Mans (Cenomanum)	2						1	

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Langres (Lingonum)	1				2	1		
Limoges (Lemovicum)	2	2	2		1			
Lipidiacum								1
Marseille (Massilia)				3				
Meaux (Melduorum)	1							
Nantes (Namnetum)	2	4						
Neuille (Neulleium)								1
Nice (Cemelum)			1					
Nîmes (Nemausus)			2			1		
Orléans (Aurelianum)	2						1	
Paris (Parisia)		4						
Périgueux (Petrocorium)		1						

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Pernay (Pernacum)						1		
perthes (Pertisus)								1
Poitiers (Pictavum)	1	9	2	2	2	1	2	1
Provence (Provincia)				1				
Reims (Remorum)	1							1
Rennes (Redonum)	1		1					
Riez (Reiensium)	1							
Rodez (Rutenorum)	1							
Rouen (Rotomagus)		1	1					
Saintes (Santonum)	2							
Senlis (Silvanectum)	1							
Sens (Senonum)		1						

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Septimania				1				
Soissons (Suessionum)	1							2
Strasbourg (Argentoratum)		1						
Taurendundum			2					
Theifalia								2
Tonnerrois (Tornedrisus)								1
Toulouse (Tolosa)		1						1
Touraine (Turonia)		2						
Tournai (Tornacum)								2
Tours (Turonum)	9	8	11	1	2		2	1
Trezel (Transiliacensum)								1
Trier (Augusta Treverorum)	2							

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS I

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
(Le) Velay (Vellavicum)		1						
Vermand (St-Quentin) (Vermandais)	1							
Vienne (Vienna)	1							
Woëvre (Wavrensus)								1
Yzeures (Isiodorensus)								1

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS II

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Achaia				1				
Antioch (Anthiocia)								1
Armenia		1	1					
Carpitania				2				
Galicia			2		1			
India			1					
Italy		1	1					
Lombardy					1			
Lusitania				1				
Milan (Mediolanensia)	1							
Pannonia			1		2			
Persia			1					

REGIONAL QUALIFICATIONS II

Place-name	ter.	trm.	reg.	prv.	ptr.	par.	dio.	pag.
Spain		1	2					
Tertium (The Third - Italy)			1					

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