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Benevento and Salerno

The Rise and Fall of Capital Cities in Lombard Southern Italy between the 8th and 10th Centuries

Abstract: After the Carolingian conquest of the Lombard Kingdom in 774, the Duchy of Benevento became an independent principality. Duke Arechis (758–787) proclaimed himself *princeps gentis Langobardorum*, thus opposing the political authority of the new King of the Lombards, Charlemagne. During the second half of the 8th century, Arechis refounded Salerno as the second capital city of Lombard Southern Italy by building a palace which stood as a marker of his political authority within the urban landscape. When the competition between two factions of the Beneventan aristocracy led to a civil war (839–849), Salerno became first a gathering place for members of the faction opposing Prince Radelchis and then the capital city of a new Lombard principality. By considering both written and archaeological sources, this paper focuses on the social and political aspects that led to the urban development of Salerno and challenged the role of Benevento during the 8th and 9th centuries. Some final considerations contextualise the rise of Capua as a third capital city in Lombard Southern Italy during the 9th and 10th centuries.

1 Introduction

In 1999 the book „The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages“ was published as one of the numerous volumes in „The Transformation of the Roman World“ series. In his study on Italy, Gian Pietro Brogiolo, one of the editors of the volume, identified some of the criteria that led late-antique and early me-

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dieval authors to describe an inhabited centre as a *civitas*.¹ One of these criteria was the presence of a bishop and of a public official, who would reside in a palace and could govern a stretch of territory from the city. A *civitas* would also have a certain military and economic prominence: within its walls it would house a market, associated with productive activities and consumption. Moreover, cities were home to different social classes, including – most notably – members of the elite.² This paper focuses mainly on two issues, namely the spatial communication of public authority in Lombard Southern Italy during the 8th and 9th centuries and the role that the dialectic between urban elites and public power played both in changing the seat of power or confirming the existing one. Although historical and archaeological research has extensively addressed the first topic, it has often failed to take into account the social and political context of the Duchy/Principality of Benevento. Consequently, the communication of public authority, which took place in public spaces through buildings and inscriptions, has been analysed from a top-down perspective, thus failing to consider the shared and negotiating nature of early medieval political power, as well as the peculiar features of the internal competition in Benevento. Besides a review of the research carried out so far on the city capitals of Lombard Southern Italy, this paper aims to illustrate how power networks³ – and especially the interaction between the dukes/princes and urban elites – built, shaped and defined Benevento and Salerno as capitals during the 8th and 10th centuries.

Before discussing the political and social construction of these cities as capitals, it is worth making some preliminary remarks concerning the state of archaeological research, which is essential for understanding the transformations of the urban landscape during this period. From an archaeological standpoint, only Salerno has been the object of detailed excavation campaigns related to these issues, which have highlighted

1 Gian Pietro Brogiolo, *Ideas of the Town in Italy during the Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages*, in: id./Brian Ward-Perkins (Eds.), *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden 1999 (*Transformation of the Roman World* 4), pp. 99–126, at pp. 99–101.

2 A broad outline of the concept of elite in the early Middle Ages as well as of the problems related to their categorisation can be found in the publications resulting from the collective research programme on „Elites in the Early Middle Ages“ (2003–2009). See François Bougard/Régine Le Jan, *Hiérarchie: le concept et son champ d'application dans les sociétés du haut Moyen Âge*, in: Dominique Iogna-Prat/François Bougard/Régine Le Jan (Eds.), *Hiérarchie et stratification sociale dans l'Occident medieval, 400–1100*, Turnhout 2008 (*Haut Moyen Âge* 6), pp. 5–10; Chris Wickham, *The Changing Composition of Early Elites*, in: François Bougard/Hans Werner Goetz/Régine Le Jan (Eds.), *Théorie et pratiques des élites au Haut Moyen Âge. Conception, perception et réalisation sociale*, Turnhout 2011 (*Haut Moyen Âge* 13), pp. 5–20; François Bougard/Geneviève Bührer-Thierry/Régine Le Jan, *Les élites du haut Moyen Âge. Identités, stratégies, mobilité*, in: *Annales* 4 (2013), pp. 1079–1112; and – with a specific connection to the topics of this article – François Bougard/Philippe Depreux/Régine Le Jan (Eds.), *Les élites et leurs espaces. Mobilité, rayonnement, domination (du VI^e au XI^e siècle)*, Turnhout 2007 (*Haut Moyen Âge* 5).

3 Chris Wickham, *Topographies of Power. Introduction*, in: Mayke de Jong/Frans Theuvs (Eds.), *Topographies of Power in the Early Middle Ages*, Leiden 2001 (*Transformation of the Roman World* 6), pp. 1–8, at pp. 7 f.

Arechis's plan to refound the city as the second capital of Lombard Southern Italy.⁴ On the contrary, the archaeological surveys on Benevento have not paid much attention to the area of the palace, which is believed to have been located just north of the church of Santa Sofia, due to the topography and layout of the city.⁵ The excavations have chiefly focused on other areas of this city, such as the cathedral, not least because it was almost completely destroyed in bombing raids during the Second World War.⁶ Such a highly diverse scenario from the point of view of archaeological investigations affected the structure of this paper and it will also make some of the conclusions necessarily partial ones.

4 The excavations carried out in the city center of Salerno by Paolo Peduto together with a group of archaeologists from the University of Salerno have been the subject of several publications. See esp. Paolo Peduto, *Arechi II a Salerno. Continuità e rinnovamento*, in: Lucia Sinisi (Ed.), *Presenze longobarde in Italia meridionale. Il caso della Puglia*, Ravenna 2007, pp. 19–30; id./Rosa Fiorillo/Angela Corolla (Eds.), *Salerno: una sede ducale della Longobardia meridionale*, Spoleto 2013 (*Studi e ricerche di archeologia e storia dell'arte* 16).

5 On the debate concerning the exact location of the ducal palace in Benevento, see Marcello Rotili, *Benevento romana e longobarda. L'immagine urbana*, Benevento 1986, pp. 107–109; Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, *Esistono una architettura e una urbanistica longobarde?*, in: *La civiltà dei Longobardi in Europa. Atti del convegno dell'Accademia dei Lincei*, Roma, 24–26 maggio 1971, Cividale del Friuli, 27–28 maggio 1971, Roma 1974, pp. 289–329, at pp. 301 f., 321 f.; Ghislaine Noyé, *L'espressione architettonica del potere. Praetoria bizantini e palatia longobardi nell'Italia meridionale*, in: Jean-Marie Martin/Annick Peters-Custot/Vivien Prigent (Eds.), *L'heritage byzantin en Italie (VIII^e–XII^e siècle)*, vol. 2: *Les cadres juridiques et sociaux et les institutions publiques*, Roma 2012, pp. 389–451, at pp. 424–427. On archaeological excavations pertaining to early medieval, see Luigina Tomay, *Benevento longobarda. Dinamiche insediative e processi di trasformazione*, in: Gabriella D'Henry/Chiara Lambert (Eds.), *Il popolo dei Longobardi meridionali (570–1076). Testimonianze storiche e monumentali. Atti del convegno*, Salerno, 28 giugno 2008, Salerno 2009, pp. 119–152; Marcello Rotili, *Benevento fra Antichità e Medioevo. Nuovi dati dalle ricerche degli ultimi quarant'anni*, in: Rosa Fiorillo/Chiara Lambert (Eds.), *Medioevo letto, scavato, rivalutato. Studi in onore di Paolo Peduto*, Firenze 2012, pp. 315–330.

6 Marcello Rotili, *Benevento la cattedrale e la città nel XII secolo*, in: *Romanobarbarica* 19 (2006–2009), pp. 363–390. Recently, also id., *Nuovi dati sulla cattedrale di Benevento*, in: Anna Maria D'Achille (Ed.), *Domus sapienter staurata. Scritti di storia dell'arte per Marina Righetti*, Cinisello Balsamo 2021, pp. 47–61. Other areas of the city have also been excavated, leading to the discovery of strata and artifacts from the late-antique and early medieval periods. It is worth mentioning here at least the excavations in the Cellarulo district, which revealed the late-antique urban layout, as well as the Lombard necropolis located in the immediate surroundings of the church of Santa Sofia in Benevento, now in the Museo del Sannio. Id., *Benevento nella Tarda Antichità. Dalla diagnostica archeologica in contrada Cellarulo alla ricostruzione dell'assetto urbano*, Napoli 2006; Aurora Lupia, *Il sepolcreto altomedievale*, in: ead. (Ed.), *Testimonianze di epoca altomedievale a Benevento. Lo scavo del Museo del Sannio*, Napoli 1998, pp. 71–111.

2 The Duchy of Benevento: a Lombard Sub-Regnum?

Between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages the urban fabric of Southern Italy experienced an overall transformation due to a combination of multiple factors, which also led to the downsizing of inhabited centres and to the disappearance of certain bishoprics.⁷ After a long debate, nowadays both historians and archaeologists generally agree that material damage caused by natural disasters, such as floods and earthquakes, as well as the economic and social consequences of the Gothic War (535–553) could not be the only causes of the transformation of southern Italian settlements during this period.⁸ On the contrary, this is considered to be a long-running process, which must also be linked to specific political choices made in Late Antiquity and to the major administrative and social changes they led to.⁹ In such a context, the first Lombards arrived in the Italian peninsula in 568/569 and chose to settle in Benevento around 570, based on military considerations: the city was located on the *via Appia* axis, from which the *via Traiana* branched off (fig. 1).¹⁰ Following different itineraries, these two roads connected Rome and Brindisi and directed Lombard expansion towards *Apulia*.

7 An overview of the debate on urban continuity and discontinuity in Southern Italy between Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages can be found in Giuliano Volpe, *Introduzione. Paesaggi e insediamenti urbani dell'Italia meridionale tra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo. Materiali e problemi per un confronto*, in: id./Roberto Giuliani (Eds.), *Paesaggi e insediamenti urbani in Italia meridionale fra Tardoantico. Atti del II Seminario sul Tardoantico e l'Altomedioevo in Italia meridionale*, Foggia-Monte Sant'Angelo, 27–28 maggio 2006, Bari 2011, pp. 9–20; id./Roberto Goffredo, *Reflections on Late Antique Cities in Apulia and Calabria and in Southern Italy*, in: André Carneiro/Neil Christie/Pilar Diarte-Blasco (Eds.), *Urban Transformations in the Late Antique West. Materials, Agents, and Models*, Coimbra 2020, pp. 61–88. See also Paul Arthur, *La città in Italia meridionale in età tardoantica. Riflessioni intorno alle evidenze materiali*, in: Stefania Ceccoli/Attilio Stazio (Eds.), *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica. Atti del XXXVIII Convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia*, Taranto, 2–6 ottobre 1998, Taranto 2000, pp. 167–200; Eliodoro Savino, *Aspetti della trasformazione della città in Campania tra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo*, in: Volpe/Giuliani (Eds.), *Paesaggi e insediamenti urbani*, pp. 273–282. An analysis of the transformation of episcopal organisation in Southern Italy during the same period can be found in Giovanni Vitolo, *Vescovi e diocesi*, in: Giuseppe Galasso/Rosario Romeo (Eds.), *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, vol. 3: *Alto medioevo*, Napoli 1990, pp. 75–151, at pp. 75–86.

8 Emanuela Guidoboni/Alberto Comastri/Giusto Traina (Eds.), *Catalogue of Ancient Earthquakes in the Mediterranean Area up to the 10th Century*, Roma 1994, pp. 252–254; Eliodoro Savino, *Campania tardoantica (284–604 d. C.)*, Bari 2005, pp. 103–122; Marcello Rotili, *Forme e funzioni dello spazio urbano in Campania nella tarda antichità*, in: *Hortus artium medievalium* 23 (2017), pp. 713 f.

9 Andrea Giardina, *Le due Italie nella forma tarda dell'Impero*, in: id. (Ed.), *Società romana e impero tardoantico*, vol. 1: *Istituzioni, ceti, economie*, Roma-Bari 1986, pp. 1–30; Francesco Grelle, *Ordinamento provinciale e organizzazione locale nell'Italia meridionale*, in: *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica* (see note 7), pp. 115–139.

10 Stefano Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, in: Giuseppe Galasso/Rosario Romeo (Eds.), *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, vol. 2/2: *Il Medioevo*, Napoli 1988, pp. 83–146, at pp. 86–91.

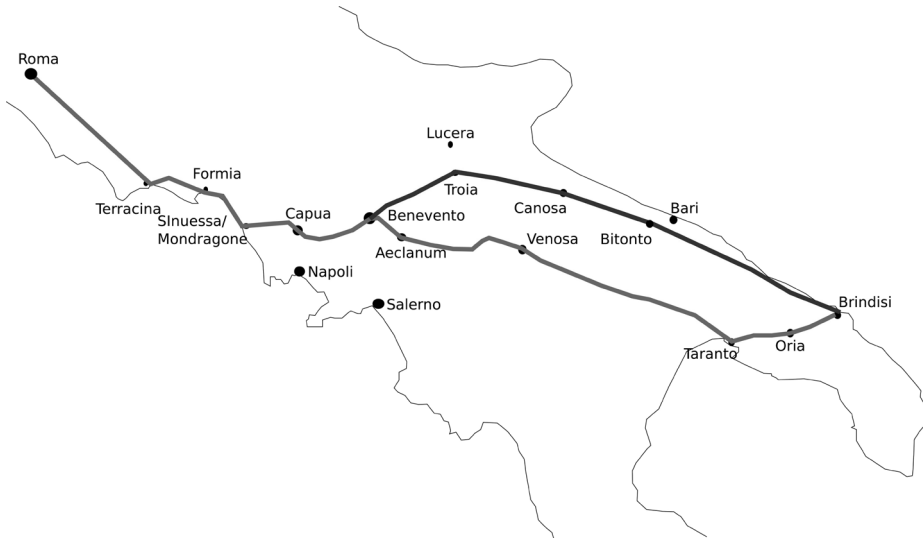


Fig. 1: The Appian Road.

In the 7th and 8th centuries, the Dukes of Benevento were able to acquire extensive military and political autonomy, largely thanks to the geographical location of the duchy within the Lombard Kingdom: it was far from Pavia, the kingdom's capital, and was relatively isolated from the other Lombard territories (fig. 2).

The dukes often led independent military expeditions against the Byzantine regions to consolidate and extend the borders of their domain.¹¹ Like the Dukes of Spoleto, they could even afford to display a different kind of behaviour towards the pope compared to the Lombard king.¹²

Although Paul the Deacon's „*Historia Langobardorum*“ also mentions other cities – most notably Capua, which played a prominent role during the military campaign launched by Emperor Constans II (641–668)¹³ – Benevento was by far the most important centre in Lombard Southern Italy. The main reason for this was the presence of public authorities. The establishment of a veritable dynasty as far back as the 7th century allowed the Dukes of Benevento to develop a strong political awareness from early on,

¹¹ Pauli *Historia Langobardorum*, ed. by Ludwig Bethmann/Georg Waitz, in: MGH *Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum*, secc. VI–IX, Hannover 1878, c. VI/2 (Romuald I), pp. 164 f.

¹² *Ibid.*, c. VI/27, p. 174 (Gisulf I), c. VI/40, pp. 178 f. (Romuald II); Stefano Gasparri, *I duchi longobardi*, Roma 1978, pp. 90–97.

¹³ Pauli *Historia Langobardorum* (see note 11), c. V/9, p. 149. On Constans II's campaign in the Italian peninsula see Pasquale Corsi, *La politica italiana di Costante II*, in: Bisanzio, Roma e l'Italia nell'alto medioevo, Spoleto 1988 (Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 34), pp. 751–796.



Fig. 2: Early medieval Italy, mid. 7th century: Lombard and Byzantine territories.

as is attested by the representation of public authority.¹⁴ This is illustrated especially by the coins issued by the local mint, as well as by the ducal title attested in 8th-century charters. Although the Beneventan gold coinage is modelled after the 6th-century Byzantine one, it always bears the initial of the duke in charge, who is depicted on one side of the coin, with a cross on the reverse (fig. 3).¹⁵

¹⁴ Gasparri, *I duchi longobardi* (see note 12), pp. 86–100.

¹⁵ Philip Grierson/Mark Blackburn (Eds.), *Medieval European Coinage with a Catalogue of the Coins in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge*, vol. 1: *The Early Middle Ages (5th–10th centuries)*, Cambridge 1986, nr. 307–310 (Heraclius), p. 311 f. (Constans II), p. 475; Ermanno Arslan, *Emissione e circolazione della moneta nei ducati di Spoleto e Benevento*, in: *I Longobardi dei ducati di Spoleto e Benevento*, Atti del XVI Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto Medioevo, Spoleto 20–23 ottobre 2002, Benevento, 24–27 ottobre 2002, Spoleto 2003, pp. 1031–1052, at pp. 1042–1044.



Fig. 3: Arechis's gold tremissis.

The formula *vir gloriosissimus dux gentis Langobardorum* also reflects a broad degree of political authority, second only to that of the king. The ducal rank is here expressed with reference to the whole Lombard people and not simply by association with a city, as in the case of the other dukes.¹⁶ An important setting for representing and asserting public authority was also the judicial context. According to an 'assembly paradigm' common to many early medieval kingdoms, the Lombard dukes would adjudicate disputes and issue verdicts together with a group of officials.¹⁷ On the contrary, 8th-century judicial records show that the Duke of Benevento would stand alone before the disputing parties and almost invariably in his palace.¹⁸ By behaving exactly as the Lombard King would in Pavia, he was able to utilise the judicial domain as a sort of theatre in which to practice, legitimise and represent his own public authority before the local aristocracy.¹⁹

16 Herwig Wolfram, *Intitulatio I. Lateinische Königs- und Fürstentitel bis zum Ende des 8. Jahrhunderts*, Graz 1967, pp. 185–205.

17 During the early medieval period, the use of judicial assemblies was prevalent in Western Europe and Benevento represented a veritable exception. Concerning the Italian peninsula, see at least François Bougard, *La justice dans le royaume d'Italie de la fin du VIII^e siècle au début du XI^e siècle*, Roma 1995, pp. 139–204; Andrea Castagnetti, *Giustizia partecipata. Lociservatores, scabini e astanti nei placiti lucchesi (785–822)*, in: *Studi medievali* 56,1 (2015), pp. 1–40. On the 'assembly paradigm', see Chris Wickham, *Consensus and Assemblies in the Romano-Germanic Kingdoms. A Comparative Approach*, in: Verena Epp/Christoph H. F. Meyer (Eds.), *Recht und Konsens im frühen Mittelalter*, Ostfildern 2017, pp. 389–424; Susan Reynolds, *Rationality and Collective Judgement in the Law of Western Europe before the Twelfth Century*, in: *Quaestiones medii aevi novae* 5 (2000), pp. 3–19.

18 Concerning the places where justice was exercised, see Bougard, *La justice dans le royaume d'Italie* (see note 17), pp. 209–218; Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, *Spazi privati e funzioni pubbliche nell'edilizia residenziale alto medievale*, in: Giovanna Bianchi/Maria Cristina La Rocca/Tiziana Lazzari (Eds.), *Spazio pubblico e spazio privato tra storia e archeologia (secoli VIX)*, Turnhout 2018 (*Seminari del Centro interuniversitario per la storia e l'archeologia dell'alto medioevo* 7), pp. 199–212, at pp. 204–212.

19 Paolo Delogu, *La giustizia nell'Italia meridionale longobarda*, in: *La giustizia nell'alto medioevo, secoli IX–XI*, Spoleto 1997 (*Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 44), pp. 257–312, at pp. 263 f.; Giulia Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda. Competizione, conflitto e potere politico a Benevento (secoli VIII–IX)*, Roma 2020, pp. 73–77.

From the mid-8th century, then, if not earlier, the Duchy of Benevento *de facto* emerged as a sub-regnum within the Lombard Kingdom. In this respect, the pattern behind the dukes' marriages is particularly revealing. When the „*Historia Langobardorum*“ provides information about the background of a duke's wife, it invariably states that she was of northern origin. In the middle of the 8th century, three of these women not only came from the aristocracy of the Lombard Kingdom, but were even members of the royal family. During the 8th century, both Romuald II's wife, Gumperga, and Gisulf II's wife, Scauniperga, were probably members of the royal family;²⁰ Arechis's wife, Adelperga, was no less than King Desiderius's daughter. The latter was the sister both of Liutperga, the wife of Tassilo of Bavaria, and of Charlemagne's anonymous wife, who was rejected by the Frankish king after the death of his brother, Carloman, in 771.²¹ As Janet Nelson has already stressed, these marriages were all part of Desiderius's political strategy, which aimed to expand his prestige beyond the borders of the Lombard Kingdom.²² Benevento had an important role in this plan – one very similar, albeit not identical, to the king's strategy towards Bavaria and the Frankish Kingdom.

Moreover, during the Carolingian conquest of the Italian peninsula in 774, the Benevento army was not involved in any military operations. Although Arechis remained loyal to King Desiderius, the „*Liber Pontificalis*“ tells us that he did not join the king in battle and preferred to stay in Benevento to maintain control over Southern Italy, whereas Theodicius, the Duke of Spoleto, helped Desiderius with his army.²³ Taking into account the family link between Arechis and Desiderius, the duke's lack of interest in helping his king and father-in-law could be considered not only a political strategy, but also further proof of Benevento's *de facto* independence from Pavia before the Carolingian conquest. Whatever the reasons behind Arechis's avoidance of battle, this reveals a certain disengagement from the Lombard Kingdom. It certainly proved to be a successful strategy: after the Lombards' military defeat, the Spoletons first sub-

20 Pauli *Historia Langobardorum* (see note 11), c. VI/50, p. 182 (Gumperga); c. VI/55, p. 184 (Scauniperga); Giulia Zornetta, Testa o Croce. Scauniperga, donna e reggente nella Benevento longobarda, in: *Zapruder* 56 (2021), pp. 37–58.

21 Charlemagne's marriage to Desiderius's daughter is a matter of debate. See Marco Stoffella, Chi ha sposato chi? Carlomanno e Gerberga, Carlo e Ildegarda e il presunto matrimonio con una principessa longobarda, in: *Reti medievali* 20,2 (2019), pp. 7–49.

22 Janet L. Nelson, Making a Difference in Eighth-Century Politics. The Daughters of Desiderius, in: Alexander C. Murray (Ed.), *After Rome's Fall. Narrators and Sources of Early Medieval History. Essays Presented to Walter Goffart*, Toronto 1998, pp. 171–190.

23 Vita Hadriani, in: *Le Liber Pontificalis. Texte, introduction et commentaire*, ed. by Louis Duchesne, vol. 1, Paris 1886, p. 487. On Charlemagne's conquest of the Lombard Kingdom see esp. Stefano Gasparri, The Fall of the Lombard Kingdom. Facts, Memory, Propaganda, in: id. (Ed.), 774, Ipotesi su una transizione. Atti del seminario (Poggibonsi, 16–18 febbraio 2006), Turnhout 2008, pp. 41–66; id., Italia longobarda. Il regno, i Franchi, il papato, Roma-Bari 2012, pp. 100–142.

mitted to Pope Hadrian I, by cutting their hair *more Romanorum* – in the custom of the Romans – before becoming subjects of the Frankish Kingdom,²⁴ whereas the Beneventans remained independent.

3 Benevento and Salerno between *ducatus* and *principatus*

Since the Duchy of Benevento attained the status of a veritable sub-regnum, during the 8th century the city in which the dukes resided took the form of a real capital. The reason for this was not only that it had its own palatium and mint, but also that it was chosen as a place of residence by both the dukes and the Lombard elite, who based their wealth and social status on their relationship with the public authorities.

As other scholars have already noted, the urban development plan that Duke Arechis (758–787) implemented in Benevento is particularly significant and brings out some of the defining aspects of the city as a capital.²⁵ Mentioned both in the duke's funerary epitaph and, with praise, in chronicles, this building plan was already put in place in the period before Arechis adopted the title of prince in 774.²⁶ The model which he looked to was rooted in the Lombard tradition and in a certain respect it was that of the Lombard kings in Pavia.²⁷ However, it was primarily that of the previous Dukes of Benevento, who had not only established a great legacy in the representation of public authority, but almost certainly used to reside in Benevento. This is confirmed by the fact that as many as 34 of the 42 documents considered authentic by the „Codice diplomatico longobardo“ do in fact name the urban palace as the place of issue.²⁸ On the contrary, Byzantine influence seems to play a very limited role in shaping the representation of public authority in Lombard Southern Italy, at any rate until the end of the 9th century. However, a trace of this influence may be found precisely in the adjective *sacrus* or *sacratissimus*, which is often associated with the *palatium* in the ducal diplomas. According

²⁴ Vita Hadriani (see note 23), pp. 495 f.

²⁵ Paolo Delogu, *Mito di una città meridionale* (Salerno, secoli VIII–XI), Napoli 1977, pp. 15–20.

²⁶ Both Erchempert's *Ystoriola* and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* celebrate Arechis's building activity. Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum*, ed. by Ludwig Bethmann/Georg Waitz, in: *MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum secc. VI–IX*, Hannover 1878, c. 3, pp. 235 f.; *Chronicon Salernitanum. A Critical Edition with Studies on Literary and Historical Sources and on Language*, ed. by Ulla Westerbergh, Lund 1956, c. 17, p. 22. Arechis's epitaph is published in *ibid.*, pp. 24 f.

²⁷ Piero Majocchi, *Sviluppo e affermazione di una capitale altomedievale. Pavia in età gota e longobarda*, in: Carmen Eguiluz Méndez/Stefano Gasparri (Eds.), *Le trasformazioni dello spazio urbano nell'alto medioevo (secoli V–VIII). Città mediterranee a confronto*, in: *Reti medievali* 11 (2010), pp. 169–182.

²⁸ Herbert Zielinski, *Introduzione diplomatica*, in: *Codice diplomatico longobardo*, vol. 2/2: *I diplomi dei duchi di Benevento*, ed. by *id.*, Roma 2003 (*Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 65), pp. 26 f.

to the historiographical tradition of the Abbey of Montecassino, Arechis built the Beneventan palace from scratch.²⁹ However, the mention of a *palatium* in charters from the previous period betrays its presence at least from the early 8th century.³⁰ Arechis may thus have simply renovated or embellished an already extant building.

Most important, he reinforced and extended the walls of Benevento. In the early medieval period, the settlement occupied a small area compared to the Roman city. During the 5th century, the south-west of the current historic centre was gradually abandoned and public spaces such as the forum and amphitheatre were reused as cemeteries and quarries, as archaeological excavations have revealed.³¹ In the aftermath of the Gothic War, the city's two Roman triumphal arches, the Arco del Sacramento and Arco di Traiano, were assigned a new function as city gates and the walls were rebuilt after Totila's demolition in 542.³² Due to a possible increase in population, in the second half of the 8th century Arechis not only consolidated the extant fortifications but also developed the urban settlement to the south by creating a new district, the *civitas nova*, thereby extending the walls (see fig. 4).³³

Certainly, by 760 or thereabout the duke had erected the church of Santa Sofia di Benevento in an area not far from the site of the *palatium*, where there was already a cemetery.³⁴ The hagiographical tradition suggests that it was at this time that the relics of St. Mercury and the Twelve brothers were moved into the building.³⁵ According to the „Annales Beneventani“, the construction of the church had already begun under Duke

29 „Iste primus appellatus est princeps, et fecit duo palatia, unum in Benevento et alio in Salerno“. *Chronica Sancti Benedicti Casinensis*, ed. by Georg Waitz, in: *MGH Scriptores rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum secc. VI–IX*, Hannover 1878, c. 26, p. 488; *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, ed. by Hartmut Hoffmann, *MGH Scriptores*, nr. 34, Hannover 1980, c. I/15, p. 53.

30 The first mention of a ducal palace in Benevento dates from the reign of Romuald II (706–731). *Codice diplomatico longobardo*, vol. 2/2 (see note 28), nr. 3, p. 15. On restoration of *palatia* as a way of representing public authority in continuity with the past see Cristina La Rocca, *Una prudente maschera „antiqua“. La politica edilizia di Teoderico*, in: *Teoderico il Grande e i Goti d'Italia*, Atti del XIII Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Milano, 2–6 novembre 1992, pp. 451–515; Noyé, *L'espressione architettonica del potere* (see note 5), p. 402.

31 Tomay, *Benevento longobarda* (see note 5), pp. 119–121.

32 Prokop *Gotenkriege*, ed. by Otto Veh, München 1966, pars III, c. 6, p. 473.

33 Rotili, *Benevento romana e longobarda* (see note 5), pp. 107–109; Tomay, *Benevento longobarda* (see note 5), p. 122.

34 Aurora Lupia, *Testimonanze di epoca altomedievale a Benevento* (see note 6), pp. 73–111.

35 Hans Belting, *Studien zum Beneventanischen Hof im 8. Jahrhundert*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks papers* 16 (1962), pp. 141–193, at pp. 156–159; Antonio Vuolo, *Agiografia beneventana*, in: Giancarlo Andenna/Giorgio Picasso (Eds.), *Longobardia e Longobardi nell'Italia meridionale. Le istituzioni ecclesiastiche. Atti del II convegno internazionale di studi del Centro di cultura dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Benevento, 29–31 maggio 1992*, Milano 1996, pp. 199–237, at pp. 202–217; Amalia Galdi, *Identità e pluralità nella Benevento longobarda. Poteri e culti dei santi*, in: Errico Cuzzo/Mario Iadanza (Eds.), *Il ducato e principato di Benevento. Aspetti e problemi (secoli VI–XI)*. Atti di convegno, Museo del Sannio, 1° febbraio 2013, Benevento 2014, pp. 93–110, at pp. 99 f.

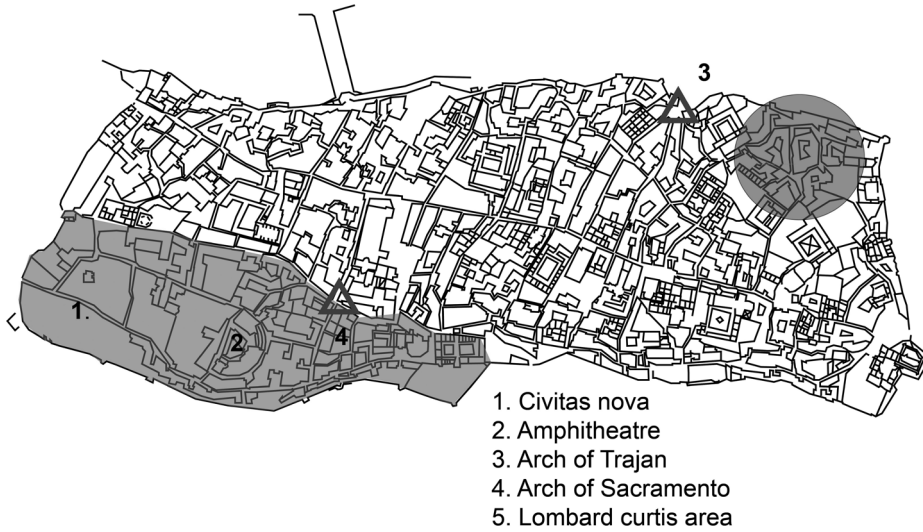


Fig. 4: Map of Benevento: the area of *civitas nova*.

Gisulf II (731–732, 742–751), a piece of information that is also recorded in the „*Chronica monasterii Casinensis*“ by Leo Marsicanus.³⁶ Although this detail has only recently caught historians’ attention, it proves to be extremely relevant, because it puts Arechis in a conscious relationship with his predecessor, and thus with the Beneventan ducal tradition in which he clearly sought to embed his own foundation.³⁷ However, even if Arechis only completed a project launched by Gisulf II, he significantly influenced its outcome. Above all, he collected saints’ bodies from some minor centres across Lombard Southern Italy, in such a way as to make his capital the main centre for the veneration of relics in the whole region.³⁸ Moreover, alongside the church, a female monastery was also built, which was again completed before 774. Historians have already highlighted the similarities between this monastic institution and San Salvatore di Brescia, the nunnery

³⁶ *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (cod. Vat. Lat. 4939), ed. by Jean-Marie Martin, Roma 2000 (*Fonti per la storia dell’Italia medievale, Rerum italicarum scriptores* 3), *Annales Beneventani*, a. 737, p. 210, a. 769, p. 211; *Chronica monasterii Casinensis* (see note 29), c. I/6, p. 30.

³⁷ Vito Loré, *Monasteri, re e duchi. Modelli di relazione fra VIII e X secolo*, in: *Monachesimi d’Oriente e d’Occidente nell’alto medioevo*, Spoleto 2017 (*Settimane del Centro Italiano di Studi sull’Alto Medioevo* 54), pp. 947–984, at p. 960; Giulia Zornetta, *Il monastero femminile di Santa Sofia di Benevento. Ambizioni e limiti di un progetto politico e familiare nell’Italia meridionale longobarda (secoli VIII–IX)*, in: Veronica West-Harling (Ed.), *Il monachesimo femminile in Italia nei secoli VIII–XI. Famiglia, potere, memoria*, in: *Reti Medievali* 20,1 (2019), pp. 541–566, at p. 545.

³⁸ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 89–92.

founded by King Desiderius and Ansa in 753.³⁹ Recently, however, some important differences have been brought to light. Above all, although Arechis also entrusted some personal possessions to the monastery of Santa Sofia,⁴⁰ the core of his donations is almost exclusively made up of fiscal assets. In 774, he probably meant to reinforce the public role of this foundation in conjunction with his new princely office, and did so by both confirming some of the previous donations and incorporating a substantial number of fiscal properties into the monastery's patrimony.⁴¹ This kind of 'second endowment' of Santa Sofia, achieved in conjunction with the establishment of the principality, lies at the basis of the enduring prosperity of the monastic institution, which continued to be held in high esteem by Lombard princes even after the extinction of Arechis's dynasty.⁴²

An overview of Arechis's building programme would not be complete without a mention of his refounding of Salerno, which was celebrated by both Erchempert's „Ystoriola“ and the „Chronicon Salernitanum“. ⁴³ It is unclear whether the development of this centre, which hitherto had not been a particularly relevant one, occurred before or after 774.⁴⁴ However, Arechis certainly came to prefer Salerno after this date. This was due to the city's strategic position from a military point of view, as well as in terms of connections, a position that was primarily exploited for anti-Carolingian purposes.⁴⁵ By contrast to Benevento, Salerno was on the sea; and this would ensure an access route for reinforcements and, most importantly, a means of escape, should the conflict with

³⁹ Delogu, *Mito di una città meridionale* (see note 25), pp. 13–35; Jean-Marie Martin, *Il cod. Vat. Lat. 4939 e la storia di S. Sofia*, in: *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pp. 58 f.; Loré, *Monasteri, re e duchi* (see note 36), p. 960; Zornetta, *Il monastero femminile di Santa Sofia* (see note 37), pp. 550 f. On San Salvatore di Brescia, see at least Gian Pietro Brogiolo, *Dalla corte regia al monastero di San Salvatore – Santa Giulia di Brescia*, Mantova 2014.

⁴⁰ *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pars I, nr. 1 [39–43], pp. 317–319; nr. 10, pp. 351 f.; nr. 14, pp. 357 f.

⁴¹ On Arechis's donations to Santa Sofia, recently also Vito Loré, *I diplomi di Arechi II, Montecassino e un monastero doppio. Sulla storia di S. Sofia di Benevento nei secoli VIII e IX*, in: Roberta Mucciarelli/Michele Pellegrini, *Il tarlo dello storico. Studi di allievi e amici per Gabriella Piccinni*, Arcidosso 2021, pp. 35–54, at pp. 36–40.

⁴² *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pars I, nr. 26, pp. 379 f. (Sico); nr. 27–29, pp. 380–386 (Sicard); nr. 30, 32–34, pp. 387 f., 390–395 (Radelchis II); nr. 39, 41, 43, pp. 404–406, 408–411, 413–416 (Pandulf I – Landulf III); nr. 40, pp. 406–408 (Landulf I – Atenulf II); nr. 42, pp. 411–413 (Pandulf II); nr. 44, pp. 416–424 (Landulf V – Pandulf III); pars II, nr. 5, pp. 437–439 (Grimoald IV); nr. 16, pp. 464–466 (Radelchis I); nr. 17 f., pp. 466–469 (Radelchis II); pars III, nr. 24, pp. 517–519 (Aio); pars VI, nr. 25, pp. 747–750 (Landulf VI); nr. 32, pp. 766 f. (Sicard).

⁴³ Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 3, p. 235; *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 17, p. 22.

⁴⁴ These considerations relate exclusively to the political role of Salerno. On the contrary, archaeological excavations and especially the analysis of ceramics highlighted its economic function by revealing that the town remained part of the Mediterranean trade routes until the 7th century. At the beginning of the 8th century, however, it was the only city still functioning in the Salerno-Paestum plain, at least in the areas under Beneventan control. Alessandro Di Muro, *Mezzogiorno longobardo. Insediamenti, economia e istituzioni tra Salerno e il Sele dal VII all'XI secolo*, Bari 2008.

⁴⁵ Delogu, *Mito di una città meridionale* (see note 25), pp. 36–42.

Charlemagne take a turn for the worse. Arechis, therefore, strengthened and extended the city walls, an operation that furnished the occasion for the composition of a poetic text celebrating his initiative.⁴⁶

The city was further provided with a palace, which in all likelihood was developed on two floors, according to the model of late-antique architecture.⁴⁷ The second floor included both a hall and an exterior gallery, which is still partly visible on the west side of the building. According to the „Chronicon Salernitanum“, the palace also had a large staircase opening onto the seaside.⁴⁸ Since the princely hall later became the church of San Pietro a Corte, its original decoration has been partially preserved to this day, once again revealing a distinctive reference to late-antique models.⁴⁹ Along with the remains of the *opus sectile* floor and some of the mosaic tiles that covered the walls, fragments of an inscription were also found. On the basis of a long-standing tradition, the epitaph written on this marble slab is attributed to Paul the Deacon, who wrote it to celebrate Arechis and his new seat of power.⁵⁰ It is a high-level cultural product, which consciously uses the graphic language of Roman epigraphy to further emphasise the political authority of the first prince.⁵¹

Alessandro Di Muro has hypothesised that the refounding of Salerno was primarily due to economic reasons: Arechis was planning to develop a ‚Lombard‘ harbour and to make all products from the hinterland converge there, so as to bypass the Naples market.⁵² Undoubtedly, economic reasons cannot entirely be ruled out: Lombard Southern Italy was at the centre of a demographic and economic expansion during the 8th century, whose nature largely continues to elude historians. Probably, the rebirth of towns in the Principality of Benevento and the Lombard princes' remarkable wealth

46 Karl Neff, *Die Gedichte des Paulus Diaconus. Kritische und erklärende Ausgabe*, München 1908, pp. 15–18; Thomas Granier, *Capitales royales et princières de l'Italie lombarde d'après la poésie d'éloge (VII^e–IX^e siècle)*, in: *Les villes capitales au Moyen Âge, XXXVI Congrès de la Société des historiens médiévistes de l'Enseignement supérieur publique*, Istanbul, 1–6 juin 2005, Paris 2006, pp. 57–74, at pp. 66–68; Peduto, *Arechi II a Salerno* (see note 4), p. 23.

47 Andrea Augenti, *Architetture del potere. I palazzi urbani tra tarda Antichità e Medioevo*, in: Bianchi/La Rocca/Lazzari (Eds.), *Spazio pubblico e spazio privato* (see note 18), pp. 145–172.

48 *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 12, p. 18.

49 Alessandro Di Muro, *La cultura artistica nella Langobardia minor dell'VIII secolo e l'opus sectile della cappella palatina di Arechi II a Salerno*, Napoli 1996; Paolo Peduto, *Consuetudine ed evoluzione dell'antico nelle costruzioni di Arechi II*, in: id./Fiorillo/Corolla (Eds.), *Salerno* (see note 4), pp. 1–19.

50 Pasquale Natella, *Palacium et Ecclesiam Instituit. Storia del complesso longobardo di San Pietro a Corte di Salerno*, in: Mariano Grieco (Ed.), *San Pietro a Corte. Recupero di una memoria nella città di Salerno*, Napoli 2000, pp. 87–132, at p. 114; Granier, *Capitales royales et princières* (see note 46), pp. 63 f.

51 Chiara Lambert, *La produzione epigrafica dei secoli VIII e IX in Salerno e Benevento*, in: Giuseppe Roma (Ed.), *I Longobardi del Sud*, Roma 2010, pp. 291–322, at p. 292.

52 Alessandro Di Muro, *Economia e mercato nel Mezzogiorno longobardo (secc. VIII–IX)*, Salerno 2009, pp. 87–89.

in gold both reflect this growth.⁵³ However, it was Prince Sicard who most prominently pursued this goal during the 830s. As the campaigns against Naples and Amalfi did not lead to any enduring control over these centres, Sicard had part of the Amalfi coastal community deported to Salerno, so as to lend the city the kind of mercantile character it had evidently lacked until then.⁵⁴

Whatever the original reasons for Arechis' redevelopment of the city, it seems that Salerno too, like the monastery of Santa Sofia, benefited from the establishment of the principality in 774. It was probably after this date that Arechis gave Salerno the shape of a second capital, investing in the construction of a palace and establishing a close personal bond with the city. It is worth noting that he did not give his name to Salerno. In this respect, he did not follow the Roman emperors' model, which was adopted not only by the Byzantine rulers in the Eastern Mediterranean but also by the pope, who claimed this kind of Roman tradition especially from the second half of the 8th century onwards, and then – with little success – in the Frankish Kingdom.⁵⁵ Naming a city after the ruling sovereign was a familiar practice also in Lombard Southern Italy, as the later case of Sicopolis proves. In the first half of the 9th century, the counts of Capua founded this city on a hill near their former seat of power, *Capua vetere*. According to Erchempert, its name was given to avoid conflict with Prince Sico, who claimed to be the only authority qualified to found new centres, since he was the real ruler of the region.⁵⁶ Compared to such initiative, the refounding of Salerno differs primarily in terms of how Arechis associated his memory with the city: not only did he include the buildings of his new princely court in the urban space, but he also chose the cathedral of this town – rather than Benevento – as the burial place first for his son Romuald and then also for himself. In doing so, he turned Salerno into the preferential location for preserving his own memory and that of his dynasty.⁵⁷

⁵³ Id., The rebirth of towns in the Beneventan principality (8th–9th centuries), in: John F. Moreland/John Mitchell/Bea Leal (Eds.), *Encounters, Excavations and Argosies. Essays for Richard Hodges*, Oxford 2017, pp. 116–126; id., *Alle origini della città medievale. Il Mezzogiorno longobardo (secoli VIII–IX)*, in: Bruno Figliuolo/Rosalba Di Meglio/Antonella Ambrosio (Eds.), *Ingenita curiositas. Studi sull'Italia medievale per Giovanni Vitolo*, Battipaglia 2018, pp. 516–542.

⁵⁴ *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 73–74, pp. 72 f.; Huguetta Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne (IX^e–XI^e)*. Pouvoir et société en Italie lombarde méridionale, Roma 1991, pp. 800–807.

⁵⁵ Georg Ostrogorsky, *Byzantine Cities in the Early Middle Ages*, in: *Dunbarton Oaks Papers* 13 (1959), pp. 45–65; Laura Bertoldo, *Le città carolingie battezzate con il nome di uno sovrano nell'alto Medioevo (secoli VIII–IX)*. Continuità di un toponimo classico?, in: *Archeologia medievale* 21 (1994), pp. 657–664.

⁵⁶ Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 15, p. 240, c. 24, pp. 243 f.; *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 58, p. 58, c. 95, p. 95. Concerning the foundation of Sicopolis, see Barbara Visentin, *La nuova Capua longobarda. Identità etnica e coscienza civica nel Mezzogiorno altomedievale*, Manduria 2012, pp. 73–94.

⁵⁷ Since the former cathedral of Salerno was replaced by the present Romanesque cathedral around 1085, the inscriptions from the tombs of Arechis and the other members of his family have been lost. Consequently, the funerary epitaphs are known only from written sources. *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 17, p. 22.

The idea of creating a second, off-centre capital cannot be exclusively interpreted either in economic terms or in relation to the Carolingian threat. Rather, there is a necessarily political aspect to it. In all likelihood, the refounding of Salerno – just like the redefinition of Santa Sofia as a public institution – came to be associated with the transition from duchy to principality; most significantly, however, it marked a clear distance between the prince and the aristocracy. As highlighted by Josiane Barbier and Martin Gravel in relation to the Frankish world, the limited mobility of a king – which is to say, the fact that aristocrats needed to travel to the sovereign's palace in order to meet him – was important for the representation of the king's political authority and hence for clearly distinguishing him from the kingdom's notables.⁵⁸ I would argue that after 774 Arechis chose Salerno as his princely court not so much because of any military emergency – after all, there was no real emergency before Charlemagne's arrival in Capua in 786⁵⁹ – but to create a distance between himself and the aristocracy of Benevento.

Over the course of the 8th century, the Beneventan aristocracy had accrued also wealth through the policy of redistribution adopted by previous dukes. The considerable donations to the Abbey of Montecassino made by Gastald Guacco in 797 and some judicial records from the mid-8th century, particularly those concerning Wadulf's properties, show that at least part of the aristocracy had one or more dwellings in the capital, along with extensive landed property throughout the region.⁶⁰ Moreover, around the mid-8th century the elite of Benevento were involved in a series of plots that led to the

58 Josiane Barbier, *Un rituel politique à la court mérovingienne. L'audience royale*, in: Jean-Pierre Cailliet/Michel Sot (Eds.), *L'audience. Rituels et cadres spatiaux dans l'Antiquité et le haut Moyen Âge*, Paris 2007, pp. 241–263; Martin Gravel, *Distances, rencontres, communications. Réaliser l'Empire sous Charlemagne et Louis le Pieux*, Turnhout 2012 (*Haut Moyen Âge* 15), pp. 51–62.

59 Ottorino Bertolini, *Carlo Magno e Benevento*, in: Helmut Beumann/Wolfgang Braunfels (Eds.), *Karl der Große. Lebenswerk und Nachleben*, vol. 1, Düsseldorf 1965, pp. 609–671, at pp. 633–636; Giulia Zornetta, „Semper ero liber, credo, tuente Deo“. Pippin, Grimoald III, and Lombard Southern Italy, in: Giuseppe Albertoni/Francesco Borri (Eds.), *Spes Italiae*, Turnhout 2022, pp. 131–154, at pp. 135–141.

60 On Guacco, *Registrum Petri Diaconi* (Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, Reg. 3), ed. by Jean-Marie Martin et al., Roma 2015 (*Fonti per la storia dell'Italia medievale. Antiquitates 45/Sources et documents 4*), nr. 179, pp. 543–546; *Chronica monasterii Casinensis* (see note 29), c. I/14, pp. 50–52, c. 18, pp. 60–62; Di Muro, *Economia e mercato* (see note 52), pp. 34–37. On Wadulf, *Codice diplomatico longobardo*, vol. 2/2 (see note 28), nr. 16, 25, pp. 54–59, 86–90; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 34–42. On Lombard elites' tendency to dwell in cities, see Chris Wickham, *Aristocratic Power in Eighth-Century Lombard Italy*, in: Alexander M. Murray (Ed.), *After Rome's Fall* (see note 22), pp. 153–170, at pp. 157–160; Simone M. Collavini, *Duchi e società locali nei ducati di Benevento e di Spoleto nel secolo VIII*, in: *I Longobardi dei ducati di Spoleto e Benevento*, Atti del XVI Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Spoleto-Benevento, 20–27 ottobre 2002, Spoleto 2003, pp. 125–166, at p. 139. On the land ownership of the Lombard elites see also Stefano Gasparri, *Grandi proprietari e sovrani nell'Italia longobarda dell'VIII secolo*, in: Atti del VI Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Milano, 21–25 ottobre 1978, Spoleto 1980, pp. 429–442.

deposition of the Duke Gisulf II and his successor Godescalc (739–742).⁶¹ It seems quite likely, then, that by adopting the title of prince Arechis took the opportunity to assert his prestige by also distancing himself, even geographically, from the aristocracy of Benevento. However, this was possible, first of all, because the potential Carolingian threat, which continued to loom over the South between 774 and 786, probably weakened the degree of internal competition within the Benevento elite, who chose to rally around the prince.

At any rate, this is what both Erchempert's „Ystoriola“ and the „Chronicon Salernitanum“ seem to suggest when reporting on events relating to the end of the 8th century, namely to the principalities of Arechis and Grimoald III (787–806). For instance, in Erchempert's chronicle, Arechis's reign opened a kind of golden age, which was continued by his successors, his son Grimoald III and Grimoald IV (806–817), the latter of whom was an officer at the court of Benevento and possibly a member of a collateral branch of the princely family.⁶² According to its author, under the guidance of these great princes, the Lombards were able to maintain a place in history. It was not as glorious as in Paul the Deacon's „Historia Langobardorum“, but it was clearly better than the one in Erchempert's time, when the Lombards were incapable of defending themselves against the Saracens' raids because of their inner divisions.⁶³

4 Shifting Roles in Dynastic Changes: Benevento and Salerno in the 9th Century

The role of Salerno changed in the first half of the 9th century with the rise of the Siconid dynasty to the princely throne. Sico (817–832) and Sicard (832–839) strengthened the bond between Benevento and their own princely authority, in particular by investing in the cathedral of Santa Maria. This was entrusted with the relics of St. Gennaro and St. Trofimena, which these princes obtained from Naples and Amalfi respectively, along with those of St. Bartholomew, which were shipped from Lipari by orders of

⁶¹ *Historia Langobardorum* (see note 11), c. VI/55, p. 184 (Audelais), c. VI/57, p. 185 (Godescalc); *Codice diplomatico longobardo*, vol. 5: *Le chartae dei ducati di Spoleto e di Benevento*, ed. by Herbert Zielinski, Roma 2003 (*Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 66), nr. 7, p. 365 (Godescalc); Gasparri, *I duchi longobardi* (see note 12), pp. 92–95.

⁶² Aurélie Thomas, *Jeux lombards. Alliances, parenté et politique en Italie méridionale de la fin du VIII^e siècle à la conquête normande*, Roma 2016, pp. 101–111; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 147 f.

⁶³ On the chronicles of Lombard Southern Italy, see Nicola Cilento, *La storiografia nell'Italia meridionale*, in: *La storiografia altomedievale*, Spoleto 1970 (*Settimane di studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo* 17), pp. 521–556; Luigi Andrea Bertò, *Erchempert, a Reluctant Fustigator of His People. History and Ethnic Pride in Southern Italy at the End of the Ninth Century*, in: *Mediterranean studies* 20 (2012), pp. 147–175.

Sicard.⁶⁴ The cathedral also became the last resting place of Sico, who inaugurated the princes' practice of having themselves interred in the *paradisus*, i. e. the porticoed hall in front of the church.⁶⁵ His funerary inscription, which celebrates his military campaigns against Naples, turned this sacred space into a stage for the representation of princely political authority for the first time. The cathedral also housed other tombs, possibly belonging to the Benevento elite, whose inscriptions are currently stored in the Museo del Sannio and still waiting to be published with an overall study.

Before the 9th century, the cathedral had never been at the heart of elite Lombard patronage. Nor did it hold a central position in terms of the city's identity or of urban devotion, which instead focused on the numerous private churches and monasteries founded by the dukes and the members of the Lombard aristocracy.⁶⁶ Moreover, it had never been the role of the Bishop of Benevento to symbolically support the authority of the local dukes and princes.⁶⁷ This was perfectly in line with the tradition of Lombard power, which in this respect differed significantly from the Frankish world. Up until the Siconid dynasty, the cathedral did not even play a significant role within the sacred geography of Southern Italy. It was the church of Santa Sofia and its relics that constituted the focus of devotion in Benevento and shaped the city's religiosity. In fact, it is likely that the Siconids also chose to invest in their relationship with the cathedral in order to limit the role of Santa Sofia, so as to distance themselves from the previous dukes.⁶⁸ By entrusting such prestigious relics to Santa Maria, they invested in a new urban devotional centre that competed with the illustrious Santa Sofia in Benevento. At the same time, they endowed the episcopal see with unprecedented political importance.

64 On the translations of relics made by the Siconid dynasty, see esp. Thomas Granier, *Conflitti, compromessi e trasferimenti di reliquie nel Mezzogiorno latino del secolo IX*, in: *Hagiographica* 13 (2006), pp. 33–71. Concerning the translation of St. Januarius from Naples to Benevento, see Amalia Galdi, *Quam si urbem illam suae subdiderit. La traslazione delle reliquie di san Gennaro a Benevento tra istanze politiche, agiografia e devozione*, in: Gennaro Luongo (Ed.), *San Gennaro nel XVII centenario del martirio*, Napoli 2007, pp. 223–242; Mario Iadanza, *Principi, vescovi e reliquie a Benevento tra i secoli VIII–IX. La traslazione di San Gennaro da Napoli nell'anno 831*, Firenze 2021; and, most recently, Francesco Veronese/Giulia Zornetta, *Holiness on the Move. Relic Translations and the Affirmation of Authority on the Italian Edge of the Carolingian World*, in: *Medieval Worlds* 13 (2021), pp. 54–75.

65 Sico's epitaph is published in *MGH Poetae Latini aevi Carolini II*, ed. by Ernst Dümmler, Berlin 1884, pp. 649–651. See also Lambert, *La produzione epigrafica* (see note 51), pp. 296–298; Daniele Ferraiuolo, *Tra canone e innovazione. Lavorazione delle epigrafi nella Longobardia minor (secoli VIII–X)*, Firenze 2013, pp. 28–31.

66 Giulia Zornetta, *La società beneventana allo specchio. Chiese private e fondazioni ducali nei secoli VIII e IX*, in: Elisa Argenio/Roberto Delle Donne/Rosanna Sornicola (a cura di), *Lingue, scritture e società nell'Italia longobarda. Un percorso di sociolinguistica storica*, Napoli (forthcoming).

67 An overview of the relationship between bishops and Lombard dukes/princes in Southern Italy in Stefano Palmieri, *Duchi, principi e vescovi nella Longobardia meridionale*, in: Andenna/Picasso (Eds.), *Longobardia e Longobardi nell'Italia meridionale* (see note 45), pp. 43–99; Iadanza, *Principi, vescovi e reliquie* (see note 64), pp. 3–34.

68 Zornetta, *Il monastero femminile di Santa Sofia* (see note 37), pp. 559 f.

Even the choice to favour the old capital, Benevento, over Salerno could be interpreted as a break with Arechis's tradition. However, it is far more likely that this choice is connected to these princes' need to consolidate their power, which was rooted in the plot hatched against Grimoald IV in 817.⁶⁹ Following the Treaty of Aachen of 812, which had brought the conflict with the Carolingians to an end, competition had broken out again within the ranks of the Benevento elite in a particularly violent way.⁷⁰ So, unlike Arechis, the Siconids could not afford to reside for too long far from the palace in Benevento, where their physical presence was required to concretely affirm their own public role vis-à-vis the local elite by mediating the conflicts between the various aristocratic groups.

As regards the first half of the 9th century, chronicles and the few surviving documents paint a markedly urban picture of the Benevento aristocracy, closely associated with the palace. The social and political identity of these individuals and their families was chiefly based on their participation in public power. This was contingent upon their relationship with the prince, from whom they obtained donations and especially public offices, which entailed the administration of fiscal properties.⁷¹ The palace, therefore, played a leading role as regards the structuring of political life and society in Benevento. In all likelihood, it also accounts for aristocrats' tendency to reside in the city and for the risks involved in spending too much time outside its walls, as frequently stressed by narrative sources. For instance, according to the „Chronicon Salernitanum“ Count Radelchis of Conza realised that Prince Sico sought to cut him off from all power games when the latter chose to make some important political decisions while Radelchis was outside the city on some administrative business.⁷²

⁶⁹ Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 9, p. 238; *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 48–53, pp. 49–54.

⁷⁰ The Treaty of Aachen is not known in its details, but it is likely that it entailed an overall redefinition of the spheres of influence of the Carolingian and Byzantine empires, and hence that it concerned Southern Italy as well, if only in an indirect and general way. *Annales regni Francorum/Annales quid dicitur Einhardi*, ed. by Georg Heinrich Pertz/Friedrich Kurze, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, nr. 6, Hannover 1895, a. 812, p. 187; *Einhardi Vita Karoli Magni*, ed. by Oswald Holder-Egger, *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi*, nr. 25, Hannover 1911, c. 15, p. 18; Mladen Ančić, *The Treaty of Aachen. How many Empires?*, in: id./Jonathan Shepard/Trpimir Vedriš (Eds.), *Imperial Spheres and the Adriatic. Byzantium, the Carolingians and the Treaty of Aachen*, London 2018, pp. 31–33. On Beneventan political competition and violence see Giulia Zornetta, *Competizione politica, congiure e violenza. Il principato di Benevento nella prima metà del secolo IX*, in: Francesca Ferrando/Maria Cristina La Rocca/Giulia Morosini (Eds.), *Storie di violenza. Genere, pratiche ed emozioni tra medioevo ed età contemporanea*, Roma 2020, pp. 135–154.

⁷¹ Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento* (see note 10), pp. 122 f.; Collavini, *Duchi e società locali* (see note 60), pp. 144 f.; Vito Loré, *Beni principeschi e partecipazione al potere nel Mezzogiorno longobardo*, in: Marco Valenti/Chris Wickham (Eds.), *Italy, 888–962. A Turning Point*, Turnhout 2014 (*Seminari del Centro interuniversitario per la storia e l'archeologia dell'alto medioevo* 4), pp. 15–39, at pp. 15–17.

⁷² *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 54, pp. 54 f.

Within this highly centralised political and social structure, Sicard favoured only one kinship group, the Dauferids, to the detriment of all other members of the Benevento aristocracy, thereby restricting political competition.⁷³ The outcome was a plot that in 839 brought this prince's rule to an end, and which was followed by an extended period of conflict between rival factions. The conflict only ended in 849 through Louis II's intervention and the splitting of Lombard Southern Italy into two separate polities: the Principality of Benevento and that of Salerno.⁷⁴ The length of the struggle between the Lombard factions, which were both competing for a leading role on the Beneventan political stage, proves that the split of the principality was not initially planned or desired by the two parties. On the contrary, this operation was strongly supported by Louis II (850–875), who looked forward to a prompt pacification of the region primarily to efficiently oppose Muslim expansion.⁷⁵

After 849, Salerno was therefore chosen as the capital of the new principality as a *fait accompli*. The faction headed by Sicard's brother, Siconulf, and by the Dauferids had already established its headquarters in this city in the years just after the plot, possibly not only because of the presence there of another *palatium*, the one built by Arechis, but because the Dauferids had landed estates in the nearby Nocera area.⁷⁶

The „Chronicon Salernitanum“ narrates some episodes in which Prince Sicard acted in the city, such as when he ordered the execution of Abbot Alfano, a member of the faction opposing his brother-in-law, Roffrit.⁷⁷ However, it cannot be said that Sicard appointed Salerno as his residence, but eventually that he stayed there on a periodic basis.⁷⁸ All the diplomas granted by this prince mention Benevento as place of issue, proving that the ancient palace was still the favourite location for the performance of

⁷³ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 160–172.

⁷⁴ *Praeceptum concessionis sive capitulare*, ed. by Jean-Marie Martin, in: id., *Guerre, accords et frontières en Italie méridionale pendant le haut moyen âge*, Roma 2005 (*Sources et documents d'histoire du moyen âge* 7), pp. 201–217; Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne* (see note 54), pp. 241–270.

⁷⁵ On Louis II's political ideology and his campaigns in Southern Italy, see esp. Paolo Delogu, *Strutture politiche e ideologiche nel regno di Lodovico II*, in: *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 80 (1968), pp. 137–189; Clemens Gantner, „Our Common Enemies Shall Be Annihilated!“ How Louis II's Relations with the Byzantine Empire Shaped his Policy in Southern Italy, in: Klaus Herbers/Kordula Wolf (Eds.) *Southern Italy as Contact Area and Border Region during the Early Middle Ages. Religious-Cultural Heterogeneity and Competing Powers in Local, Transregional and Universal Dimensions*, Köln et al. 2018, pp. 295–314.

⁷⁶ Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 14, p. 240; *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 77, p. 75.

⁷⁷ *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 69, p. 67. See also, *ibid.*, c. 65, p. 62. Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 165–173.

⁷⁸ Paolo Delogu, *Il principato di Salerno. La prima dinastia*, in: Galasso/Romeo (Eds.), *Storia del Mezzogiorno*, vol. 2/2: *Il Medioevo* (see note 10), pp. 237–277, at pp. 242 f.

public power.⁷⁹ Despite it cannot be ignored that Sicard had a certain interest in Salerno, which was also reflected in the forced mobility of the Amalfitans, it was only the establishment of a new Lombard principality that revitalised the political role of this city. The *pactum divisionis* turned it into a veritable capital, finally releasing it from the minor role it had always played next to Benevento.

Although the „Chronicon Salernitanum“ paints a vivid picture of its urban elite as early as the first half of the 9th century, Salerno was probably inhabited by a veritable aristocracy, a group of Beneventans, only after 849.⁸⁰ Certainly, the 8th-century buildings were employed as a seat of power by the new prince, Siconulf (839–851), and would not be abandoned until the 10th century. The „Chronicon Salernitanum“ thus reports that the inscription with Paul the Deacon’s text was already partially illegible, while a document from 990 defines the palace as *vetus*.⁸¹ Although Prince Guaimar II of Salerno (901–946) restored Arechis’s palace after an earthquake, it must have been in a state of serious decay by the end of the century, when the city axis moved away from the area where this building was located.

Following the partition of Lombard Southern Italy, the pre-eminence of Benevento as capital city and centre of political coordination was not significantly undermined, but the prince’s authority rested on a territory that had been considerably reduced. During the factional struggle that followed the plot against Sicard in 839, the Counts of Capua allied themselves with Siconulf and the Dauferids.⁸² Consequently, Capua and its territory also became part of the Principality of Salerno leaving the Beneventan party in control of the mountain area of inland Campania and the Adriatic side of the former principality. The reduction of the principality’s territorial extension and the change of ruling dynasty led to a contraction of the political role of the capital, which was also reflected in the extent of internal competition. After 849, the latter took the form of an internal conflict within the Radelchid kinship group, whose members held the princely title, as well as the episcopal see, until the late 9th century.⁸³ At this time, the inroads made by Muslim armed bands and then the Byzantine conquest of much of *Apulia*, an

79 *Chronicon Vulturense* del monaco Giovanni, ed. by Vincenzo Federici, Roma 1925 (*Fonti per la storia d’Italia* 58), vol. 1, nr. 56–59, pp. 291–296; *Registrum Petri Diaconi* (see note 60), nr. 197, pp. 578 f.; *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pars I, nr. 27–29, pp. 380–386, pars III, nr. 12–14, pp. 500–504, nr. 32, pp. 536–538. The only diploma issued outside Benevento was addressed to the goldsmith Autulus in Avellino, *ibid.*, nr. 15, pp. 504 f.

80 The *Chronicon Salernitanum* probably gives the Salernitans an active role within the faction that supported Siconulf more for its author’s civic pride than for the actual contribution they made to the conflict. *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 79, pp. 75 f.

81 *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 37, p. 38; *Codex diplomaticus Cavensis*, ed. by Michele Morcaldi/Mauro Schiani/Silvano De Stefano, vol. 2, Napoli 1875, nr. 425 (990), p. 297. *Peduto*, *Consuetudine ed evoluzione* (see note 49), p. 5.

82 *Erchemperti Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 15, p. 240.

83 Thomas, *Jeux lombards* (see note 62), pp. 208–215; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), p. 280–282.

area rich in fiscal properties,⁸⁴ weakened princely authority and possibly favoured the emergence of local powers. According to narrative sources, in the second half of the 9th century, the princes of Benevento had to face the revolt of some minor centres, as in the case of Trivento and Sant'Agata dei Goti recounted by Erchempert.⁸⁵ All the military setbacks no doubt contributed to the weakening of the Radelchids and the rise of a new dynasty, which came from outside Benevento. In 900 the princely title went to Atenulf of Capua, a member of the Landulfid lineage, whose power had been rooted in that city since the first half of the 9th century.⁸⁶

5 Benevento (and Capua) after 900

Although in the year 900 the Principality of Benevento was a weaker political entity than in the first half of the 9th century,⁸⁷ its capital continued to remain a symbolic centre of power even for the Landulfids.

Despite an urban tradition stretching back to the Roman period, in the first half of the 9th century Capua cannot have been all that different from Conza and Acerenza, two fortified settlements with an important military and political role.⁸⁸ The officials entrusted with these districts were among the most prominent members of the Benevento aristocracy. When they were chosen from outside such ranks – as in the case of Sico, who was appointed Gastald of Acerenza before becoming the prince in 817 – this exposed the prince to criticism, which could lead to significant internal tensions.⁸⁹ When the conflict of factions broke out between 839 and 849, Gastald Landulf was able

⁸⁴ Vito Loré, *I gastaldi nella Puglia longobarda*, in: Bizantini, Longobardi, Arabi ed Ebrei in Puglia nell'alto medioevo. Atti del XX congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, Savellettri di Fasano, 3–6 novembre 2011, Spoleto 2012, pp. 252–255.

⁸⁵ Erchemperti *Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum* (see note 26), c. 39, p. 249 (Trivento), c. 66, p. 260 (Sant'Agata dei Goti); Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento* (see note 10), pp. 128 f.

⁸⁶ On the origins of the Landulfids' power in Capua see at least Nicola Cilento, *Le origini della signoria capuana nella Longobardia minore*, Roma 1966; Vito Loré, *Uno spazio instabile. Capua e i suoi conti nella seconda metà del IX secolo*, in: Bougard/Depreaux/Le Jan (Eds.), *Les élites et leurs espaces* (see note 2), pp. 341–360; Thomas, *Jeux lombards* (see note 62), pp. 131–173.

⁸⁷ Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento* (see note 10), pp. 131–134.

⁸⁸ On the role of Capua in Late Antiquity, see Savino, *Campania tardoantica* (see note 8), pp. 208 f. Concerning the strategic role of Conza and Acerenza, see Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne* (see note 54), pp. 291–293; Nicola Filippone, *L'alta valle del Sele tra tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo*, Napoli 1993, pp. 28–44; Alessandro Di Muro, *Dinamiche insediative nel Mezzogiorno longobardo altomedievale* (secc. VI–VII). Una traccia, in: id./Francesco La Manna, *Studi sul Mezzogiorno longobardo. Insediamenti e trasformazione del paesaggio tra i secoli VI e X*, Olevano sul Tusciano 2012, pp. 185–214, at pp. 197 f.

⁸⁹ *Chronicon Salernitanum* (see note 26), c. 43–46, pp. 43–48; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda* (see note 19), pp. 146–159.

to carve out a new – albeit ambiguous – political role for himself by relying on the strategic relevance of Capua in the upper Campania region. During the second half of the 9th century, his heirs took advantage of the instability of the Principality of Salerno, to which Capua was formally subjected after 849, and achieved complete autonomy.⁹⁰

In the early medieval period Capua comprised three different centres: *Capua vetere*, Sicopolis, and *Capua nova*. This complex urban layout has not yet received the attention it deserves, although here too some excavations have been conducted.⁹¹ Historians have assigned a marked political meaning both to Gastald Landulf's construction of the *castrum* of Sicopolis, which occurred without Prince Sico's authorisation between 820 and 830, and to the later founding of *Capua nova* on the banks of the Volturno river in 856. However, it was the latter – the very epicentre of the political competition within the Landulfid kinship group described by Erchempert – that acquired all the hallmarks of a capital.⁹² In addition to showing far greater commercial potential than the *castrum* of Sicopolis, the new Capua was also furnished with walls and housed the episcopal see.⁹³ In addition, at least from the 880s, this city had a *palatium*, which allowed the Landulfids to explicitly distance themselves from the princely authority in Salerno.⁹⁴

When Atenulf became Prince of Benevento in the year 900, *Capua nova* did not lose the role it had acquired in the second half of the 9th century.⁹⁵ Although the old Lombard capital retained a symbolic function even within the framework of the Capua-Benevento principality, it seems as though Atenulf's successors favoured Capua as their seat of power. A marked predilection for Capua is suggested by surviving charters from the period between 900 and 981, when – following the death of Pandulf Ironhead – the principality was divided between the two branches of the Landulfid family. Although some charters were also issued from the palace in Benevento (and while others lack a

⁹⁰ Cilento, Le origini della signoria capuana (see note 83), pp. 140–151; Paolo De logu, Il principato di Salerno (see note 78), pp. 248 f.

⁹¹ Mario Pagano, Un caposaldo dell'archeologia longobarda da salvare. Sicopoli, in: Capys 17 (1984), pp. 155–158; Barbara Visentin, Evoluzioni urbane e politiche nella Campania longobarda. Il caso di Capua, in: Sinisi (Ed.), Presenze longobarde (see note 4), pp. 31–39; Nicola Busino, Edilizia pubblica e privata nell'ager Campanus fra tarda antichità e alto medioevo, in: Carlo Ebanista/Marcello Rotili (Eds.), Aristocrazie e società fra transizione romano-germanica e altomedioevo. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Cimitile-Santa Maria Capua Vetere, 14–15 giugno 2012, Cimitile 2015, pp. 91–108; Federico Marazzi, Città scomparse, migrate, sdoppiate. Riflessioni sul tessuto insediativo di Terra di Lavoro in età altomedievale, in: id. (Ed.), Felix Terra. Capua e la Terra di Lavoro in età Longobarda, Cerro al Volturno 2017, pp. 259–274.

⁹² Barbara Visentin, Capua medievale. Forma urbis di una capitale longobarda, in: Marazzi (Ed.), Felix Terra (see note 91), pp. 275–284.

⁹³ One of the oldest references to the walls of Capua nova can be found in Erchemperti Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum (see note 26), c. 57, p. 258; Visentin, La nuova Capua longobarda (see note 56), pp. 129–137. Concerning the relocation of the episcopal see from Sicopolis to Capua, Erchemperti Historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum (see note 26), c. 46, p. 254.

⁹⁴ Visentin, La nuova Capua longobarda (see note 56), pp. 138–149.

⁹⁵ Loré, Uno spazio instabile (see note 86), pp. 356–360.

topical date), most of them were issued in Capua.⁹⁶ Sometimes this is also the case when the addressee is a Beneventan institution, as with the monastery of Santa Sofia.⁹⁷

These princes therefore travelled between Capua and Benevento, yet did not make the old capital their place of residence. On the one hand, political competition – which by the 10th century had become restricted to the Landulfid kinship group and was characterised by very different, and more limited, dynamics compared to the previous centuries⁹⁸ – was played out in Capua and the princes could not avoid taking part in it. On the other hand, the prestigious position of Benevento was once again confirmed by the princely itinerary. The Landulfids strove to be present in this city, not least by re-establishing their connection with Santa Sofia, the monastic foundation linked to Arechis and the origins of the Lombard principality. It was through the support of these princes that the monastery, which in the meantime had turned first into a mixed community and then into a male one, managed to free itself from the protection of the Abbey of Montecassino and was explicitly brought „sub dicione sacri palatii“⁹⁹ for the first time (if only temporarily). However, the princes' periodic visits to the ancient Lombard capital were not only due to the political memory and identity still associated with it, but, once again, to the presence of a local elite eager to engage with the prince. Some insight into 10th-century Beneventan society is offered by a set of documents contained in the third section of the „Chronicon Sanctae Sophie“, namely diplomas in favour of individuals, who are often referred to as *fideles* of the prince.¹⁰⁰ Although 10th-century Benevento has not yet been thoroughly investigated, these diplomas suggest a social milieu still active from a political standpoint. In conclusion, the political landscape of Benevento, while certainly narrower than that of the previous century, could not be ignored by the Capuan princes, who continued to visit the city and engage with its elite.

6 Final Remarks

During the 8th and 9th centuries, the shaping of capital cities in Lombard Southern Italy was obviously related to the presence of political authority, which could be simply physical or enacted in public spaces. In order to be (or remain) a capital, it was essential

96 Karl Voigt, *Beiträge zur Diplomatie der longobardischen Fürsten von Benevent, Capua und Salerno*, Dissertation Göttingen 1902, pp. 66–69.

97 The Landulfids' concessions to Santa Sofia issued in Capua are *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pars I, nr. 37 f., pp. 398–403, nr. 40 f., pp. 406–411; Those issued in Benevento, *ibid.*, pars I, nr. 39, p. 406, nr. 43, pp. 413–416.

98 Loré, *Uno spazio instabile* (see note 86), pp. 357 f.

99 *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), Appendice, nr. 4, pp. 99–104; Martin, *Il cod. Vat. Lat. 4939* (see note 39), pp. 54 f.; more recently, also Loré, *I diplomi di Arechi II* (see note 41), pp. 40–42.

100 *Chronicon S. Sophiae* (see note 36), pars III, nr. 39, pp. 549 f., nr. 41–43, pp. 554–561.

for a city to serve as a venue for interaction between the Lombard duke/prince and local elites, who defined their status through their relationship with the *palatium*.

Before its conquest by the Lombard Kingdom in 774, Benevento was already marked out as a capital. Here the dukes lived in a palace, which was the preferred seat also for the administration of justice, while the Lombard aristocracy owned houses in the city, as well as landed properties throughout the duchy. Before his self-proclamation as prince in 774, Arechis endowed Benevento with a unique position also in the domain of sacred geography, by translating relics into the church he had built, Santa Sofia.

The transition from duchy to principality was a good time for Arechis to define his public authority in a new way, also in relation to the Benevento elite. Thanks to his well-established political power, which was rooted in the ducal period, Arechis chose another city as his primary residence, Salerno, which he refounded before 774 for strategic and perhaps also economic reasons. There he built a new court, to which the aristocracy had to travel for audiences, which meant implicitly acknowledging the different and higher position of the *princeps*. Arechis also decided to associate the memory of himself and his family not so much with Benevento as with Salerno, by choosing to be buried in the city's cathedral.

The following dynasty, the Siconids, had to distance themselves from the first prince and his influential public model, in order to shape and legitimise their own political authority. Consequently, Sico and Sicard renewed the relationship between the Lombard prince and Benevento, the ancient capital, and specifically invested in the cathedral – a connection that was maintained by the following dynasty, the Radelchids. This was also linked to the Siconids' need to make their own presence felt in the political arena in Benevento, which was home to a fierce and increasingly competitive aristocracy.

The split of the principality of Benevento in 849 led to the decline of the princes' power, a situation which was further complicated by other issues, such as Muslim and Byzantine efforts at conquest and the presence of Emperor Louis II in Southern Italy. It also resulted in both a decrease in political competition within the capital and the emergence of autonomist trends among local officials. Despite a situation of general decline, Benevento always remained the seat of the highest political authority and was recognised as a centre of major importance even after the year 900, when the Principality of Capua-Benevento was established. The Landulfid dynasty still preferred Capua, i. e. the city where their power was traditionally based, but the princes were compelled to travel to the ancient capital not only to assert their authority in the most significant urban spaces, but also to deal with an aristocracy that, no matter how weakened, continued to claim a close relationship with their public power.

Sources of Figures

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