

Abstracts

Giuseppe Albertoni

Bishops and fiefs without vassals? The case of the Bishops of Brixen / Bressanone between the tenth and thirteenth centuries

Vassalage in the bishopric of Brixen / Bressanone during the middle centuries of the medieval period has not attracted great interest among previous scholars. This can be explained with reference either to the central role assigned to the church ministry as the real axis of political and economic activity in the bishopric or to the tacit assumption of an equivalence between the keywords *miles* and *vassus*, both of which are interpreted in line with the tradition of legal historical studies established in the 1930s and 1940s. Only recently have these paradigms been called into question, thanks to new research carried out with reference to current historiographical debate, which has identified the region between the Inn and Adige rivers as one of the main areas of transmission for new feudal law into areas north of the Alps. But was this really the case? By analyzing sources from the Brixen area, this article shows that the process of transmission cannot be reduced to a simple ‘journey’ from south to north. Indeed, while the bishops of Trento already utilized the new feudal law in a conscious manner from the second half of the twelfth century onwards, their counterparts in Brixen only applied it partially from the thirteenth century onwards, with regard to concessions that had always had a wide range of interlocutors and that generally had little to do with the formation of relationships between vassal and beneficiary.

Luigi Provero

A church between the plain and the mountains: the clientele of the bishops of Turin in the thirteenth century

The medieval diocese of Turin constituted an extensive area, including plains and hills around the city, but also a broad swathe of the Alps, from the valley of Stura, near Cuneo, to the valleys of Lanzo. From a territorial point of view, the ecclesiastic tasks of the bishops and their landed wealth were very different: while the former were very considerable, the latter was rather limited, mostly concentrated in the hills eastward of the city and the plains to the west. Many areas of the diocese were therefore almost totally devoid of episcopal holdings. This study analyzes how investitures (whether feudal or not) were used by the bishops of Turin in mountain areas dozens of kilometers away from the city. The most important source for my study is the *Libro delle investiture* (Book of

investitures), which includes documents produced by Goffredo of Montanaro, bishop of Turin from 1264 to 1300.

Goffredo's actions display several distinctive features when compared to his predecessors. Firstly, he travelled extensively across the diocese, aiming for a more direct presence and control. Secondly, the bishop developed a wide-ranging investiture policy, which was varied both in terms of form (including feudal and non-feudal investitures) and in terms of content (tithes, seigneurial rights, ecclesiastical offices, and so on). Lastly, he renewed his church's record-keeping policy, producing the *Libro delle investiture*. Hence, investitures functioned in different ways across the diocese. In the valleys near Saluzzo, for example, Goffredo invested lesser aristocrats with tithes rights, primarily for the purpose of economic redistribution, but without conceding any jurisdictional rights. By way of contrast, the bishop was unable to build up client relationships with the lesser aristocracy in the valley of Lanzo, and he always had to act through the political mediation of the largest seigneurial families, to whom he conceded jurisdictional rights. Finally, in the Susa valley, the bishop was almost totally excluded from local political dynamics. Therefore, Goffredo acted here in a different manner, concentrating on the defense of his ecclesiastical rights and his control of the local churches.

Overall, the history of the Turin bishopric shows that investitures were a flexible political tool, whose specific functions can only be understood by studying them on a regional level. The various forms and contents of the investitures directly reflected the different hold that the bishop had over local societies.

Vito Rovigo

“Et propter hoc habent feudum a domino.” Service fiefs in the diocese of Trento in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: an endogenous phenomenon or imported model?

Since the twelfth century, the custom of using fiefs in order to reward service seems to have been widespread in the alpine bishopric of Trento, as in the whole of northern Italy. However, previous scholars have paid little attention to this phenomenon: the so-called *feuda conditionalia* have always been treated as a matter pertaining to servility or, at least, as a corruption of the concepts of feudalism and vassalage. This essay aims to show why bishops and the nobility resorted to this practice and how it influenced the social growth of small landowners.

The bishopric of Trento lay on the cultural, jurisprudential and linguistic border between the communal form typical in Italy (with its *scientia iuris*) and

the Holy Roman Empire. From this point of view, it is therefore interesting to analyze how terms like *beneficium*, *feodum*, and *feudum* were used in this area. From the earliest statements in this regard, it is quite clear that the same word, *feudum*, was used to refer to different business or legal deals, which were related to each other through a dynamic social process. This implies that the definition of fiefdom (*Leihwesen*) used by Roman Deutinger is appropriate to the term *feudum*. Moreover, there is a gap between the actual use of these words and the legal theory on fiefs. Hence, these terms need to be considered as flexible containers, which were essential for drawing distinctions between those who could benefit from particular relationships and rights and those who could not.

Jessika Novak

In the shadow of the burgundian Rudolfing dynasty. Feudal relations and the building of clienteles around the the abbey of Saint-Maurice in Wallis

There are no traces to be found for the legal grounding or sealing of the ties of vassalage in the 'classical' sense at the abbey of Saint-Maurice d'Agaune, whose charters testify to the exchange of goods only in occasional cases or, more frequently, to the establishment of a feudal relationship or even a combination of both forms. The economic component was at the forefront of land grants for both recipients and givers. This was true of those people who mainly came from the region across the Jura mountains, but were not explicitly titled 'followers' (*Getreue*), and it was also true in the rare cases in which people were explicitly described as *milites* or *fideles* in the documents. Some examples point to a policy of rounding out landholdings, while others indicate that Saint-Maurice d'Agaune equally sought to expand its vineyards, whether in conjunction with a feudal relationship or not. There is not a single passage in the charters that testifies to an avowal of loyalty; the only obligation mentioned is the rendering of an annual interest payment, which was not infrequently symbolic in nature.

Irrespective of the lack of firm evidence, relationships of vassalage will have formed a background of one kind or another at St. Maurice. Even if there is no evidence of new loyalty relationships being sealed, already existing personal ties to the *fideles* were consolidated through the granting of fiefs. Most probably, the Rudolfinger further endowed their followers (whom they were already obliged to protect) in order to better carry out their tasks and to strengthen royal sovereignty.

Gerald Steinacher

The role of South Tyroleans in the SS security services in Italy

German-speaking South Tyrol was annexed by Italy in 1919–20, after which the Italian government imposed harsh measures against the local culture and language. With Hitler's rise to power, many in South Tyrol hoped for a 'national liberation' by Germany. Following the Allied invasion of Sicily in 1943, the German army occupied most of northern and central Italy. Many South Tyroleans then joined the ranks of the security services of the SS in Italy and became heavily involved in the fighting against partisans, resistance leaders, and Allied agents, as well as in the deportation of Italian Jews. The role of South Tyroleans in the SS security services in Italy challenges the widespread, but one-sided notion of South Tyrol's victimhood status during Fascism and Nazism.