The Countryside of Florence and Lucca during the High Middle Ages (11th-13th Centuries). A Study on Land Management and its Change

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Name and college of the candidate – Lorenzo Tabarrini, Linacre College

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Short Abstract

This thesis examines the history of land management in the countryside of Florence and Lucca during the central medieval period (1000-1250). In particular, it analyses in depth the decades from *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230, a phase that was marked by an overall transformation of estate-management forms, due to the political and economic context of that time. The thesis is structured in five chapters. Chapter 1 is divided into two main sections: the first one discusses the history of historiography, and stresses that the forms of land management in Tuscany during the central Middle Ages have been relatively less studied in comparison to the early and late Middle Ages; the second one outlines the political history of Lucca and Florence between the 11th and the 13th centuries. Chapter 2 sets out the two historical processes (indeed, the two main conceptual tools) that constitute the background to the rest of the thesis: first, it describes the early medieval manorial system (*sistema curtense*) in the countryside of Lucca and Florence; second, it examines the characteristics of the signorial mutation over the 11th and the 12th centuries, when local powers replaced the political authority of the marquises of *Tuscia* (the ancient name for Tuscany). Chapters 3 and 4 present a series of case-studies that are relevant to the history of land management in the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia. They show that a radical change was taking place from the 1180s onwards; in the Fiorentino *corvée*-work was abolished, whereas in the Lucchesia fixed rents in kind were increased substantially. Chapter 5 proposes an explanation for this process of change, which, moreover, can be linked to the development of sharecropping holdings (*mezzadria poderale*) around Florence in the late Middle Ages, and to the absence of a similar development around Lucca over the same period.

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Long Abstract

This thesis investigates the history of land management in the countryside of Florence and Lucca (northern Tuscany) during the central medieval period (1000-1250), with a particular focus on the years from *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230, which were marked by a radical transformation of estate-management forms. The thesis is structured in five chapters, and is based on the analysis of a series of case-studies.

Chapter 1 consists of two main sections. The first one outlines the history of the historiography on land management in medieval Tuscany. It argues that, from the 1970s onwards, the studies of medieval Tuscan agriculture have concentrated, for the most part, on the early Middle Ages and the late Middle Ages. More in detail, early medievalists have focused their attention on the so-called manorial system (*sistema curtense*). This was an organisational form of large farms – above all monastic ones – which was widespread in the core regions of the Carolingian Empire, and which was employed in Tuscany as well. It consisted, essentially, in the partition of landed properties into two parts: a manorial demesne and a group of tenant-plots, whose holders were granted land in return for the regular performance of labour-services on the demesne. The late Middle Ages saw instead the development, in some areas of Tuscany, of the so-called *mezzadria poderale* – that is, of a farming regime centred on large and coherent sharecropping holdings (*poderi*). *Mezzadria poderale* was more complex than simple sharecropping; not only did it envisage the division of the harvest in two halves between proprietors and tenants, but it also entailed the joint provision of livestock and seed. The separation between early and late medievalists has made the central medieval period a relatively less studied phase of the history of land management in Tuscany. This thesis aims to fill the gap, to some extent at least, by comparing the countryside of Florence with that of

Lucca over the years 1000-1250; it also investigates whether the study of the high Middle Ages gives us the possibility of identifying the elements that led to the formation of *mezzadria poderale* in the Fiorentino during the late medieval period, and, at the same time, why *mezzadria poderale* appears to have never developed in the Lucchesia. The second section of chapter 1 examines the political history of the two cities between the 11th and the 13th centuries, for this is an essential background to the history of the relations between landowners and tenants. It starts from the crisis of the Carolingian political structure, the March of *Tuscia*, in the 1070s-1080s, which paved the way for the creation of local lordships (*signorie*) in the countryside, and of growingly independent governing bodies (*comuni*) in the cities. This happened fairly soon in Lucca – the *comune* was fully formed by the end of the 1130s – and later in Florence – indeed, the city was governed by a regularly-rotating set of rulers only in the 1170s. A crucial phase in the history of Tuscan *comuni* was represented by the wars against Emperor Frederick I 'Barbarossa' (1154-83); the state of almost constant warfare forced the governments of Lucca and Florence to impose new taxes, as part of an increasingly complex bureaucratic structure. Afterwards, during the years following the death of Frederick's son, Henry VI (1197), the internal conflicts between city factions, and the wars for the control of the countryside (*contado*), caused a further expansion of the tax system.

Chapter 2 describes the two historical processes that need to be fleshed out in order to understand properly the case-studies of chapters 3 and 4. The first section outlines the characteristics of the *sistema curtense* in the Lucchesia and the Fiorentino during the early medieval period. In the Lucchesia, the demand for *corvée*-work was widespread in the late 8th and 9th centuries among the landed estates of the bishopric – the only ones that can be studied in detail – but labour-services virtually disappeared by 900, and manors were progressively lost to local magnates because of the political weakness of the prelates. Around Florence, instead – where our sources are incomparably less abundant for the early Middle Ages – we get at least the impression that the manorial model was vital in the late 10th century, and indeed that manorial estates still existed in the 12th, although it becomes possible to analyse them in depth only from the 1180s onwards, thanks to the redaction of lists of customary renders. The second section of chapter 2 examines the beginning of the signorial mutation, and focuses on the phenomenon of castle-building (*incastellamento*) during the 10th and 11th centuries, which is evidence of the strengthening of local powers (although, as we have seen, the political authority of the March of *Tuscia* would break down only in the 1070s-1080s). *Incastellamento* is likely to have affected the relations between landowners and tenants, in that the construction of fortifications created, in some cases at least, tight bonds of dependency between peasants

and lords. Rural lordship (*signoria* in Italian), however, took up different forms. In particular, land-based lordship prevailed in the countryside of both Florence and Lucca – that is, the landowning class could exert rights of *signoria* (those regarding low justice, for instance, or else the imposition of castle-linked duties and military service) only over tenants. The reasons for this are likely to have lain in the high level of fragmentation of the patterns of landowning and landholding, which made it impossible, for proprietors, to create coherent territorial lordships – that is, territories where rights of lordship weighed over independent owners and dependent tenants at the same time. The prevalence of land-based *signoria* in the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia justifies the discussion, in the final section of chapter 2, of unfree tenancy, as it developed throughout the 12th century. Highly-dependent tenants were identified, for the most part, as *manentes* and *coloni* – the former word was commonly employed in the hinterland of Lucca, whereas the latter was widespread in the environs of Florence. Normally, *manentes* and *coloni* did not have land of their own; their status was hereditary; they were sold, donated, rented out and pledged as real estate; the bond to the land they cultivated is frequently attested, and was probably their most typical characteristic. What is more, *manentes* and *coloni* constituted, in most cases, the category of tenants whose obligations were transformed between the 12th and the 13th centuries.

Chapter 3 examines case-studies concerning the Florentine countryside. The Fiorentino is, for the most part, a hilly region, which is not particularly suitable for cereal-farming. In 1181-2 the Fiorentino was hit, like most of Tuscany, by a famine which pushed up the price of grain and land; the debasement of the currency, the *denarius*, further strengthened the inflationary trend. At a later stage, the wars to take full control of the *contado*, together with growing city demand, contributed to keeping prices high. This context triggered an overall transformation of the tenants' renders, as is shown by the case-studies which are examined in this chapter; their geographical scope covers the immediate environs of the city and the Chianti region – indeed, it was in Chianti that the earliest *mezzadria* contracts were stipulated. The first case-study concerns the Badia a Settimo, an abbey located in the southern outskirts of Florence. At the beginning of the 13th century, the Badia was highly indebted to private lenders, and was therefore forced to lease out its manorial demesnes. In particular, the estate of S. Martino alla Palma, which is a polyculture-oriented area, and which was worked through the labour-services performed by the *coloni* of the monastery, was largely ceded away. *Corvée*-work was progressively abolished and slowly replaced by *mezzadria* agreements. The cereal-growing demesne of *Tigliano*, instead, was leased out in 1200 through short-term leases, granted in return for high fixed rents in wheat. The burden of indebtedness weighed also on

the shoulders of the monastic community of S. Michele di Passignano, in central Chianti. In the 1190s, the abbots of S. Michele started to abolish *corvée*-work and to demand fixed rents in grain, which, in most cases, were heavier than the ancient duties performed by tenants. Reforms of land management became particularly intense during the abbatiate of Uberto (1197-1205), who converted the renders of the abbey *coloni* more consistently than any other abbot, while committing himself to investments on land despite the debt of S. Michele. It was in this period, moreover, that the first sharecropping agreements including *mezzadria* elements started to be redacted; they were mostly applied to lands characterised by the mixed cropping of different types of cereals, and by polyculture in general. The final section of chapter 3 discusses, more briefly, other case-studies. Bishop Ardingo of Florence, for example, abolished labour-services in the 1230s, and began to demand fixed rents in grain from his dependants in the Chianti region. The monasteries of S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono and S. Casciano di Montescalari ceased to demand cash rents and switched to kind between, roughly, 1180 and 1230. This section ends with a discussion of the notarial protocols written by the notary Palmerio, dating to the years 1237-8. Notarial protocols, or registers, were books with full legal validity, in which notaries recorded deeds in an abbreviated form (*imbreviature*). Even though *imbreviature* do not include many lease agreements (credit operations were more numerous), it has to be noted that the share-tenure agreements recorded within them were applied – again – to polyculture-oriented lands.

Chapter 4 analyses case-studies concerning the countryside of Lucca. The Lucchesia was affected, too, by the 1181-2 famine that I mentioned above. The rise in the prices of grain and land resulting therefrom did not stop in the following years; it was reinforced by the debasement of the *denarius*, by the subsequent crisis of confidence in the purchasing power of money, and by growing city demand. Moreover, it needs stressing that the curve of prices was nearly identical to that of rents in kind, which rose accordingly. It was exactly from the late 12th century onwards that Lucchese landowners started to exploit land with a clearly-recognisable profit-oriented attitude, as it was happening in the Fiorentino over the same period. This is why the case-studies of this chapter are focused on rents, and their increase, during the central Middle Ages. The first case-study compares two estate-centres of the chapter of S. Martino, the cathedral church of Lucca: the village of Massa Macinaia, located in the very fertile plain east of the city, known as the Sei Miglia; and the castle of Massarosa, in the Versilia region, west of Lucca. This section investigates how the canons employed their signorial powers over these two localities during the decades in which the inflationary trend made it necessary to boost the extraction of agricultural surplus from tenants. Massa Macinaia

is a clear example of land-based *signoria*. The canons held signorial rights there, but in the context of the highly-fragmented patterns of lordship and landowning that were typical of the Sei Miglia, which forced them to compete with lay aristocratic families in order to create some type of local hegemony (in fact, they never fully succeeded). What the clergy of S. Martino could do (and did) between 1180 and 1230 was to increase rents on a case-by-case, tenant-by-tenant basis. Massarosa constituted, instead, one of the few examples of territorial lordship in the Lucchesia; there, the canons' *signoria* weighed on all the inhabitants of the castle. By virtue of this, the canons were able to collect various renders from the entire population of Massarosa, and to increase them all at once, as they did in the 1190s. They had to face, however, overt peasant resistance; and, even if the canons' *signoria* remained strong, the clerics of S. Martino had to reach a compromise with the representatives of the Massarosesi over the collection of rents. The second section of chapter 4 discusses the documentation of the richest monastery of Lucca, named after S. Ponziano. Here, the effects of the economic conjuncture of the period 1180-1230 took the form of the massive issuing of fixed-term leases from the 1180s onwards; indeed, temporary agreements gave the monks the possibility of increasing rents at the end of the contract. Also, it has to be noted that the tenants' dues almost always consisted in the provision of fixed rents in kind. Share tenures were only a few, and, furthermore, they were applied to fairly unproductive estates; these estates were located, for the most part, in the southern outskirts of the city, which were ravaged by the wars between Lucca and Pisa. Moreover, Lucchese sharecropping agreements hardly envisaged *mezzadria* clauses, such as the joint provision of seed-corn on the part of both landowners and tenants. The same pattern emerges from the *imbreviature* of the Lucchese notary Ser Ciabatto, which are examined in the final section of chapter 4. Ciabatto's *imbreviature* are of particular interest, in that they allow us to study in great detail the notary's clientele, which was composed, for the most part, by members of the middle urban lay *élite* – a social class that is hardly visible in ecclesiastical sources. We thus learn that urban *élites* resorted to sharecropping agreements only occasionally, similarly to the monks of S. Ponziano.

Chapter 5 contains the general conclusions of the thesis. First, it sets out a comparison between Florence and Lucca on the one hand, and the best-studied cities of northern and central Italy on the other. It argues that, in the late 12th and early 13th centuries, Florence and Lucca caught up with the two most advanced economies of medieval Italy, those of Rome and Milan, as is shown by the increased extraction of agricultural surplus over the decades bestriding the two centuries. The second section of chapter 5 emphasises the role played by the development of credit markets as a necessary premise to rent increases, and proposes an

overall explanation for the specific types of lease agreements that were chosen by landowners. The abolition of *corvée*-work around Florence, and its substitution with fixed rents – and, to a lesser extent, with share tenures including *mezzadria* elements – was due to the need to give tenants a stake in the quality and the quantity of the agricultural output, something they did not have in a *corvée*-based regime. In both the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia, fixed rents in wheat were preferred over other forms of renders, as a result of the landowners' efforts towards the collection of ready-marketable grain during an age in which a growing urban population needed to be fed. This section also argues that it is only over a period marked by substantial rent increases that it becomes possible to identify the causes of the late-medieval development of *mezzadria poderale* in the Fiorentino, and of the absence of this development in the Lucchesia. The late-medieval *poderi* suited best the relatively low productive levels of many polyculture-oriented areas of the Fiorentino. Lucchese landowners, instead, always tended to opt for high fixed rents because of the fertility of their countryside, which protected them against the risk of failure in the provision of rents.

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L.T.
Bologna, July 2019

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Abbreviations

Annales Florentini I and *II*	*Annales Florentini I* and *II*, ed. O. Hartwig, Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz II (Magdeburg, 1880), 3-4 and 40-2
Annales Pisani	*Gli* Annales Pisani *di Bernardo Marangone*, ed. M. L. Gentile, Rerum Italicarum Scriptores VI/2 (Bologna, 1936)
Badia	*Le carte del monastero di S. Maria in Firenze (Badia)*, eds L. Schiaparelli, F. Baldasseroni, R. Ciasca, A. M. Enriques, I. Lori Sanfilippo, R. Ninci (2 vols, Rome, 1913-90)
ChLA	*Chartae Latinae Antiquiores*, 108 vols (Dietikon-Zürich, 1954-)
Ciabattus	*Ser Ciabattus: Imbreviature lucchesi del Duecento* I *(Anni 1222-1232)*, ed. A. Meyer (Lucca, 2005)
Die Gesta Florentinorum	*Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca in doppelter Fassung nebst Teilen der Gesta Florentinorum und Gesta Lucanorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS rer. Germ. VIII (Berlin, 1930), 243-77
Gazzetta ufficiale	*Gazzetta ufficiale della Repubblica italiana*, accessed 2 December 2018 at www.gazzettaufficiale.it

Gesta Lucanorum	*Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca in doppelter Fassung nebst Teilen der Gesta Florentinorum und Gesta Lucanorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS rer. Germ. VIII (Berlin, 1930), 278-324
Historia Welforum	*Historia Welforum Weingartensis*, ed. L. Weiland, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS XXI (Hannover, 1869), 454-71
Inventari	*Inventari altomedievali di terre, coloni e redditi*, eds A. Castagnetti, M. Luzzati, G. Pasquali and A. Vasina (Rome, 1979)
Lettere originali	*Lettere originali del Medioevo latino (VII-XI sec.)*, eds. A. Petrucci and G. Ammannati (2 vols, Pisa, 2002-8)
MD	*Memorie e documenti*, ed. F. Bertini (vols IV/1 and IV/2, Lucca, 1818-36)
MDL	*Memorie e documenti per servire all'istoria della città e stato di Lucca*, ed. D. Barsocchini (vols V/2 and V/3, Lucca, 1818-36)
MGH, DD H II	*Heinrici II. et Arduini Diplomata*, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germanorum III (Hannover, 1900-3)
MGH, DD H IV/2	*Heinrici IV. Diplomata* vol. 2, eds D. Von Gladiss and A. Gawlik, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata VI (1941-78)

MGH, DD F I	*Friderici I. Diplomata*, ed. H. Appelt, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata X (5 vols, Hannover, 1975-90)
MGH, DD Lo I	*Lothar I. und Lothar II. Diplomata*, ed. T. Schieffer, Monumenta Germaniae Historica Diplomata Karolinorum III (Berlin-Zürich, 1966)
RCL	*Regesto del capitolo di Lucca*, eds P. Guidi and O. Parenti (4 vols, Rome, 1910-39)
Regesto di Coltibuono	*Regesto di Coltibuono*, ed. L. Pagliai (Rome, 1909)
Sanzanomis	*Sanzanomis Gesta Florentinorum*, ed. O. Hartwig, Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz I (Magdeburg, 1875), 1-34
Settimo e Buonsollazzo	*Carte della Badia di Settimo e della Badia di Buonsollazzo nell'Archivio di Stato di Firenze (998-1200)*, eds. A. Ghignoli and A. R. Ferrucci (Florence, 2004)
Tholomei Annales	*Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca in doppelter Fassung nebst Teilen der Gesta Florentinorum und Gesta Lucanorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, Monumenta Germaniae Historica SS rer. Germ. VIII (Berlin, 1930), XL-242

Units of measurement

In central-medieval Tuscany, as well as in most of Europe during that period, there was nothing like a common system of measurement. This means that units of measurement varied greatly, even in places close to each other. Cities, villages and castles each had their own units, which were in turn a sign of political independence and local authority. Many of those units cannot be converted into modern ones, except approximately (a reliable conversion becomes possible only with the units established in the 14th and 15th centuries, which are, in most cases, the ones that would survive up until the Napoleonic era). I shall do so chapter by chapter, whenever the argument makes it necessary. Also, I shall propose relative estimates; that is, I will assess whether one medieval measure was different from another medieval measure, or whether a particular type of rent (e.g. a rent in money) was more or less burdensome than another one (e.g. a rent in produce).

Money

Both Florence and Lucca used the silver *denarius* (which I shall also call denier and abbreviate as *d.*) as their ongoing currency. Following a traditional relation dating back to the 8th century, 12 *denarii* were worth 1 *solidus* (*s.*) and it took 20 *solidi* to make 1 *libra* (*£*) (cf. Spufford, *Money*, p. 34). It is important to stress that *solidi* and *librae* were units of account, whereas *denarii* constituted the only 'real' circulating money.

Square and capacity measures

The measure for grain, wine and oil that we shall see most often is the *staium* or *starium* (pl. *-a*, *-ora*), which I will abbreviate as *st.*, and which existed in many local variants. The *st.* was used as both a capacity measure and a square measure – the latter being equivalent to the extension of soil that could be sown with a *st.* Also, in Lucchese documents one frequently meets the *cultra*, a unit of square measure which could be divided into 24 or (more rarely) 22 *st.* Arnold Esch has convincingly argued that the *cultra* was identical to the *modius*, which was a type of measurement employed also in the Florentine countryside, dating back to the Roman age (cf. Esch, 'Lucca', pp. 22-4 and in general Bongi, *Inventario* II, 66-77). Both the *cultra* and the *modius* could be subdivided into 4 *quarre* or quarters. These relationships, unfortunately, do not make it possible to be sure of the capacity, and subsequently of the hectarage, which *staia* had; there is at least one exception, however (that is, the *staium* of the monastery of S. Michele di Passignano), which will be fleshed out in chapter 3.

Dates

The Florentine year started with the feast of the Annunciation (25 March), and the documents were dated accordingly (*ab incarnatione*). In Lucca, the *ab-incarnatione* style was used up until the 1150s, but was substituted almost completely by the Nativity style (25 December) thereafter. I have converted all the dates in the text into the modern style, but each time medieval dates (and as a result the shelf marks of the unedited charters I have read) differ from modern ones, I shall point this out in the footnotes.

Note on terminology and translation

I have translated the names of kings, emperors, popes and marquises (except for Marquis Engelberto) into English, whereas I put into Italian the names of bishops, abbots, lay aristocrats (except for German ones), peasants and everyone else. With regard to patronymics, please note that, for instance, Martino di Pietro means Martin son of Peter, whereas the Latin *Martinus quondam Petri* is translated as Martino of the late Pietro. Italian place-names have been kept in roman, including the territories of cities (Fiorentino, Lucchesia, Sei Miglia and so on). Since Firenze has a well-established English form, I will use it (Florence/Florentine, as opposed to Lucca/Lucchese). Italicised place-names are employed only for disappeared settlements (e.g. *Tigliano*). Italian technical terms or expressions (such as *incastellamento*, *sistema curtense*, *mezzadria*, *Comune di Popolo*) have been italicised, except for the adjective 'signorial' (an adaptation to English of the Italian *signorile*).

An important note concerns the translation from Latin of *granum* and *frumentum*. In Tuscany, medieval notaries mostly used them as equivalent words for wheat, the standard cereal in most of the region. *Blada* refers instead to all types of cereals. However, since we cannot be completely sure that *granum* does not include also 'inferior' grains, such as spelt (possibly used as a recovery crop), I shall use 'wheat' when *granum* appears together with another cereal; for instance, I translate *granum et milium* as 'wheat and millet' ('grain and millet' makes no sense, since the latter is a subgroup of the former). I shall instead use 'grain' when *granum* features alone, and when the context does not allow us to conclude safely that *granum* really designates wheat.

He did not know that since the nursing mothers were no longer sent to work on his land, they did still harder work on their own land. He did not know that the priest who met him with the cross oppressed the peasants by his exactions, and that the pupils' parents wept at having to let him take their children and secured their release by heavy payments. He did not know that the brick buildings, built to plan, were being built by serfs whose manorial labor was thus increased, though lessened on paper. He did not know that where the steward had shown him in the accounts that the serfs' payments had been diminished by a third, their obligatory manorial work had been increased by a half.

Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*

1

Introduction

1.1
Land management in medieval Tuscany
An outline history of the historiography

The history of land management in medieval Tuscany has had a long tradition of studies, whose efflorescence can be placed in the thirty years from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. To some extent, this was part of a scholarly trend in which many Italian medievalists (along with foreign colleagues) focused their intellectual efforts on the documentation that sheds light on the rural history of almost all the regions of medieval Italy. At the same time, Tuscany remained a privileged area of research, since it was regarded as the homeland of *mezzadria* – better, of *mezzadria poderale*, which is its complete name. The *mezzadria poderale* is a particular form of share tenancy applied to extensive farming units, which were in general suitable to polyculture and were known as *poderi*. It was characterised by the division of the harvest in two halves between the landowner and his tenant, by the joint provision of livestock and seeds and by the short duration of the contract – which, however, was in general renewed. The *mezzadria poderale* slowly spread over most of the hilly countryside of central Italy during the 14th and 15th centuries, and survived up to the second half of the 20th century. It can thus be regarded as an exceptionally large-scale and remarkably resilient farming regime – indeed, an essential component of Italian agrarian identity.

Studies on Tuscan land management and the dismantling of *mezzadria poderale* were almost contemporary processes.[1] In 1964, the government led by Aldo Moro (the christian-democratic prime minister kidnapped and killed by a group of the Red Brigades in 1978) banned the stipulation of new *mezzadria* leases, and in 1982 a new law established that extant *mezzadria* contracts had to be terminated upon request of the lessee (otherwise, residual contracts would be abolished within ten years).[2] However, the disappearance of *mezzadria*

[1] Which does not mean that land management in medieval Tuscany had not been studied at all before that period; but research paid more attention, for the most part, to the relations between the city and the countryside. This was the case, for instance, with Volpe, *Studi*; Plesner, *L'emigrazione*; Fiumi, 'Sui rapporti'. An overview of historiography until 2001 can be found in Pinto, 'Toscana'.

[2] The laws through which *mezzadria* contracts were abolished can be read in the *Gazzetta ufficiale*, 22-09-1964, no. 233, and ibid., 03-05-1982, no. 203.

poderale was getting under way before the direct interventions of Italian governments. During the 1950s, Italy was rapidly industrialising and steadily growing portions of the rural population were moving from the countryside to the city, and from the primary to the secondary sector. The *poderi*, which had framed the work of tenants and shaped the countryside for centuries (namely through the presence of isolated rural houses where *mezzadri* and their families lived),[3] were sometimes abandoned. This was also a major turning point with respect to the then-recent Fascist dictatorship, which had actively encouraged the stipulation of *mezzadria* contracts. Due to the division of the harvest in two halves (although the regime augmented in fact the percentage owed to landowners) and to the joint provision of seeds and livestock, the *mezzadria poderale* was seen as the embodiment of the corporatist principles promoted by the regime, and thus as a way to resolve the conflict between capital and labour in the countryside.[4]

This background is relevant to the historiography that I shall discuss in the next section, and it was thus necessary to sketch it out. At the same time, I have to stress that this thesis is mainly focused on the central – or high – Middle Ages, the period, roughly, from 1000 to 1250. Since the *mezzadria poderale* is principally a late medieval and Renaissance phenomenon, it does not constitute one of the subjects of my research. In order to clarify what I do examine in the thesis, a few key concepts have to be defined before we can move on. I shall speak of sharecropping contracts/share tenancies/share tenures so as to describe lease agreements in which the rent was fixed as a proportion of the final harvest; I will use, instead, the expressions 'sharecropping contracts/share tenancies/share tenures including *mezzadria* elements', or else 'early *mezzadria* contracts', whenever a share-tenancy contract includes at least two of the three following features: the division of the harvest in two halves; a clause related to the joint provision of seed-corn; and one or more clauses strengthening the landowners' right to supervise regularly the tenants' work on the holdings they had leased out.

These elements are not sufficient, alone, to speak of *mezzadria poderale*. The contracts we shall analyse were not applied to *poderi*, nor were they renewed after a few years (except for one agreement that we will examine in chapter 3.2.2.4). They do constitute, however, some of the main traits of that agrarian system as it will develop in the late medieval period, which justifies the use of expressions such as 'early *mezzadria*'. One of the claims of this thesis is that the share tenancies surfacing in the charters from the 11th to the 13th century, as well as their

[3] On this distinguishing feature cf. Pinto, 'Per una storia'.
[4] For a long-term and European-wide overview of *mezzadria* cf. the essays collected in Biagioli and Pazzagli, *Mezzadri*. On the Fascist regime and the promulgation of the so-called 'Carta della mezzadria' cf. Lupo, *Il fascismo*, p. 345 and following; Piccinni, 'Mezzadria', pp. 925-6.

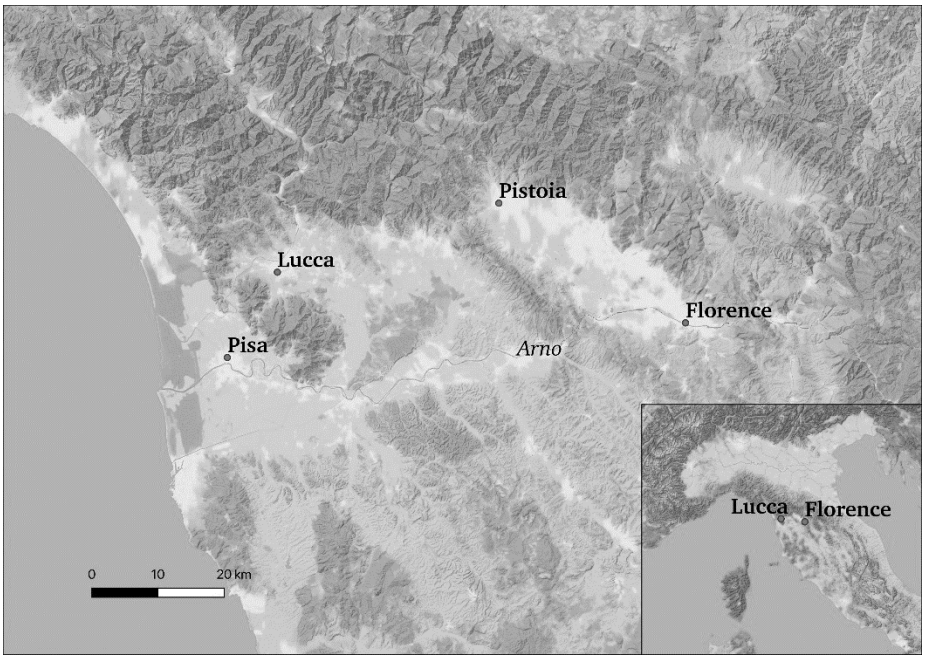
enrichment through *mezzadria* elements, should be seen, primarily, as one of the outcomes of an overall transformation of land management which took place in the central Middle Ages and was particularly intense during the five decades between *c.* 1180 and *c.* 1230. This was in turn the result of a set of contemporary social, economic and political factors that deserve to be examined in their own right, and not in the light of later developments of *mezzadria* in the 14th and 15th centuries – which would mean to interpret high medieval farming regimes teleologically, as has actually been done sometimes. The study of those factors, and of their effects on rural society and the economy, is precisely the aim of this thesis.

Dismissing every temptation towards teleology is all the more important if we consider that the eventual success of *mezzadria* was never complete, neither in Tuscany, nor in central Italy. Both *mezzadria* and share tenancies including *mezzadria* characteristics were notably absent from the plains – where other forms of tenancy agreement prevailed – and it is therefore necessary to explain this diversity. What determined landlords' choices? What led them to opt for one type of contract instead of another one? An answer cannot be provided through the analysis of a single case-study, nor through a research on high-medieval Tuscany as a whole – which, due to the huge amount of available evidence, would entail the risk of reconstructing general historical processes without paying sufficient attention to local realities, losing thereby the sense of place and time that indeed is sometimes lacking in grand historical narratives. Taking into account a set of examples from two sub-regions of Tuscany seemed to me the most sensible solution to avoid both generalisations and localisms, and to read with care a considerable, but nonetheless manageable, number of documents.

The two areas I have chosen for this comparative study are the countryside of Florence and that of Lucca. As will hopefully become clear in the following section, it is generally accepted that the Fiorentino experienced a precocious development of share tenancies envisaging some *mezzadria* characteristics, which slowly spread throughout the Chianti region (south of the city) from the late 12th century. The Lucchesia has always been, conversely, a controversial field of research. Scholars have long debated on the presence or absence of *mezzadria* in the countryside around the city, concluding – most of them at least – that *poderi mezzadrili* never constituted the dominant farming regime at any moment in the history of the Lucchese region.

At this point, I need to state explicitly a change of heart which occurred, more or less, when I was halfway through my research, and which I have already confessed implicitly. The choice of Florence and Lucca was motivated by the desire to compare two areas which, in the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, would be part, respectively, of 'Tuscany with *mezzadria*'

and 'Tuscany without *mezzadria*' – a distinction that has had a long-standing historiographical fortune since a seminal essay published by Michele Luzzati in 1979, in which the author drew a line between the eastern areas of the region, where *mezzadria* was widespread, and the western territories, where it was absent or remarkably late in its development.[5] In other words, I was thinking teleologically. Reading the primary sources of the central Middle Ages convinced me that it was necessary to blur this contrast (which however needs not to be dismissed, and I myself will make suggestions about the reasons for it), and to focus on the forms of land management of this period, without hindsight. This framework will inform the following discussion of the extant historiography, and will hopefully clarify three main points; why it is important to study, again, the history of land management in Tuscany; why it might be good to do that with specific regard to the high Middle Ages; and why the documentation from Lucca and Florence can provide us with a suitable basis for a comparative study.



1. *The main cities of northern Tuscany in the central medieval period*

1.1.1 Two extremities: *sistema curtense* and *mezzadria*

Among the many, excellent analytical studies published so far, the one that remains unparalleled as to the quantity of sources examined, the level of detail and the chronological range addressed (from the 11th to the 19th century) remains Elio Conti's *Formation of the Modern*

[5] Luzzati, 'Toscana'.

Agrarian Structure in the Florentine Countryside, whose first volume was published in 1965.[6] Conti's book is particularly relevant to the topic of this thesis and constitutes a good starting point, for its main concern is the birth and spread of *mezzadria* as applied to large farming units, the above-mentioned *poderi* – *mezzadria poderale* was indeed the 'modern agrarian structure' mentioned in the title.

In Conti's view, *mezzadria poderale* represented the eventual response to a long-lasting feature of the countryside surrounding Florence, that is, the high level of fragmentation characterising agricultural holdings at least from the 11th century.[7] Thanks to an extremely detailed analysis of the sample territory of Poggio al Vento (in central Chianti), Conti painted a gloomy picture of the high-medieval rural world, in which an ever-growing number of people endeavoured to avert the constant risk of hunger by chaotically buying or renting small plots of land in the attempt to increase their meagre revenues – hence the just-mentioned parcelling of landed estates. The subsequent formation of larger farming units was a slow and irregular process which took place over a long period stretching from the 13th to the 15th century, and becomes clearly visible through the cadastral surveys of the Florentine countryside made in 1427 and 1498. *Poderi mezzadrili* were characterised by some well-defined features, such as the prevalence of polyculture and the joint supply of livestock and seed by both landowners and tenants, and the high number of Florentine citizens within the group of proprietors who opted for this type of lease.[8]

Conti was thus looking at the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance in the first place, and his analysis of earlier periods was framed by the problem of *appoderamento*, that is, the process which progressively led to the gathering of piecemeal tenures into coherent *poderi*.[9] Furthermore, it must be noted that the archival set he had chosen for his study – that of the Chianti monastery of S. Michele di Passignano, which we will focus on in chapter 3 – has preserved a remarkably high number of charters, but only from the 980s onwards; a choice that prevented Conti from pushing his research further back. Indeed, he could only propose that in the 9th century (and so after the Carolingian conquest of northern and central Italy)

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[6] Conti, *La formazione* I.

[7] See for example ibid., p. 4, where the author uses the expression 'agrarian pulverisation' and p. 135, where Conti speaks of an 'explosion of toponyms' in order to stress how the increase in the number of place names reflected the process of agrarian fragmentation.

[8] Conti, *La formazione* I, 1-5 and 84-5 on the prevalence of arboreal crops; on polyculture see the data ibid. III/2, 23-233 (concerning the crops which used to prevail in the sample-zones studied by the author); on cost-sharing cf. the edition of two *mezzadria* contracts of the 15th century ibid. I, 342-4; cf. ibid. III/2, 150-1 on Florentine citizens choosing *mezzadria* around Passignano – even though, in this instance, there is not much difference between lay people and ecclesiastical bodies, since they both opted for *mezzadria* during the 15th century. In general, however, citizens opted for *mezzadria* more often than churches and monasteries, as other examples provided by Conti do show (see, for instance, the localities of *Panzano* and *Paterno* ibid. III/2, 136-7 and 166-7).

[9] On *appoderamento* see the data collected ibid. III/2, 345-94.

one of the farming regimes adopted in the Fiorentino, principally amongst the largest ecclesiastical estates, might have been the so-called manorial system (*sistema curtense* in Italian); but that was a mere hypothesis, drawn from the then-recent scientific literature on the subject – and, moreover, Conti recognised that the *sistema curtense* was probably far from embracing the whole Florentine countryside.[10] To me, Conti was right when he imagined that the manorial system was important in the Fiorentino during the early Middle Ages, even though he did not delve into the issue. Since this is an important point for my argument, it is essential to outline in a few words what the *sistema curtense* was.

The *sistema curtense* – whose name derives from *curtis*, a word that can be translated as 'estate' in this context – is an organisational form of large farms (above all monastic ones) which was particularly widespread in the core regions of the Carolingian Empire (those between the Seine and the Rhine, such as the Parisian basin, southern Belgium, Alsace and Lorraine) and which consisted essentially in the partition of landed properties into two parts: the manorial demesne (*pars dominica*) and a group of tenant-plots (often called *mansi*, which constituted the *pars massaricia*) whose holders were granted land in return for the regular performance of labour-services on the demesne. This was the most characteristic element of the Carolingian *curtis*, as it ensured the existence of a functional link between its two constitutive parts. What is more relevant to our topic is that, after the conquest of the Lombard Kingdom on the part of Charlemagne in 774, a fully-formed *sistema curtense* began to appear in northern-central Italy too, and thus in Tuscany – although we need to stress that some of its elements can be traced already in the Lombard period, and that its spread was not uniform across the regions occupied by the Franks. It is indeed important to note that the *sistema curtense* should be regarded, in the first place, as a model (or, if you like, as an ideal-type) which materialised in different ways depending on local contexts.[11]

Let us get back to Conti. As I said, it was simply impossible for him to discuss, unless hypothetically, the manorial system in the early-medieval Florentine countryside. However, he maintained that the dissolution of the *mansus* was presumably the process which led to the fragmentation of landed properties during the high Middle Ages, and that, in this sense, *appoderamento* represented the end-point of an opposite process of reassembling.[12] But Conti did not manage to fully account for the existence of this slow, long-lasting shift because of the absence of a detailed analysis of the 12th and 13th centuries, which he never completed

[10] Conti, *La formazione* I, 8-11.
[11] The bibliography on the *sistema curtense* is huge. An overview can be found in Verhulst, *The Carolingian Economy*, especially pp. 31-60; Wickham, *Framing*, pp. 280-8; Devroey, *Puissants*, in particular pp. 519-83; Toubert, *L'Europe,* pp. 25-246; the essays gathered in Devroey and Wilkin, *Autour*.
[12] On the dissolution of the *mansus* cf. Conti, *La formazione* I, 133-43.

(despite reading the documentation of that period, as is shown by the summaries of Passignano charters at the end of the first volume of his book). The central centuries of the medieval age were thus a sort of missing link.

The possible connections between *sistema curtense* and *mezzadria* became the object of an important essay published by the English scholar Philip Jones in 1968, tellingly entitled 'From manor to *mezzadria*'.[13] Unlike Conti, who had decided to investigate the origins of *mezzadria poderale* because the disappearance of that farming system (which was taking place, as we have seen before, between the 1950s and the 1960s) appeared to him as a landmark event – indeed, the end of a world that had lasted for centuries – Jones was more interested in the birth of the modern bourgeoisie within the highly-industrialised Tuscan communes, a bourgeoisie who chose – in Florence at least – to employ *mezzadria* as its most privileged type of lease agreement in the countryside. Jones' interest was thus orientated (similarly to Conti, in this respect) towards the 15th century, and it is no chance that his essay appeared as part of a volume called *Politics and Society in Renaissance Florence*; his aim was to explain the shift from the feudal world of the *curtes* to the urbanised, pre-capitalist world of merchants using *mezzadria poderale* for the management of their landed properties. A similar framework characterised the book published just one year before Jones' essay by the Soviet scholar Ljubov Aleksandrovna Kotel'nikova, *Peasant World and Cities in Italy from the 11th to the 14th Century* – which however reached a larger audience only later on, thanks to the translation from Russian to Italian made in 1975.[14] Even if Kotel'nikova analysed a huge quantity of edited sources from all over northern and central Italy, she paid particular attention to Tuscany in view of the early date and wealth of its charters, and of the striking development of the manufacturing sector in Tuscan cities during the late Middle Ages. Her analysis was framed by a rigid Marxian perspective, and indeed the main aim of *Peasant World and Cities* was to explain how the feudal mode of production turned into the capitalist one – not too dissimilarly from Jones, in fact. Nonetheless, she distanced herself from Marx when discussing *mezzadria* agreements, described by the German philosopher as the type of lease that marked the transition from feudal rent to capitalist rent.[15] According to Kotel'nikova, such shift could not be attributed to *mezzadria*, since the provision of seed (and of what we might call, in general terms, startup capital) to the lessees on the part of landowners was not intended to

[13] Jones, 'From manor'.
[14] Kotel'nikova, *Mondo*.
[15] Marx, *Das Kapital* III, ch. XLVII.

increase agricultural production – what would have constituted a fully capitalist feature – but was simply a form of credit, devoid of any push towards maximising profit.[16]

As will emerge from the general conclusions in chapter 5, I do not believe that the Marxist framework is helpful in the understanding of the rationale of *mezzadria*. As for now, it is important to stress that, differently from Conti, both Jones and Kotel'nikova did write on the transformations of land management during the 12th and 13th centuries, but situated them within a long-term process stretching to the 14th and (in the case of Jones) 16th centuries, whose main traits were growing commercialisation, expansion of cities in the countryside and the leading role (both political and economic) played by urban mercantile strata – with the effects this had on the relations between landowners and tenants, since merchants became great estate owners themselves. These final ends seem all reasonable to me, and the following section will be dedicated indeed to the political developments of Florence and Lucca, with specific regard to the control that the two cities exerted on their hinterland; this was a fundamental component in the history of farming regimes, and the same applies to the growing scale of mercantile activities. But, to repeat, we need to study the central Middle Ages without hindsight, for Jones and Kotel'nikova built up an implicitly teleological framework in which later outcomes determine earlier phenomena. At the same time, we must avoid locating land management too tightly inside the grand narrative of medieval economic growth. This is in itself entirely acceptable, but it entails the risk of neglecting the specifities that emerge from the analysis of individual case-studies; and of overshadowing, thereby, the importance of political and economic conjunctures in the overall storyline of growth.

In this context, the *sistema curtense* was regarded as a sort of dead end by both authors. It had disappeared around Lucca already by the early 10th century, whereas in the countryside of Florence demesnes of considerable size – and the demand for labour-services through which they were cultivated – could still be found in the late 12th century. This chronology is essentially the one I shall adhere to, but the interpretation of what the *sistema curtense* actually was – namely, what economic purposes it served – needs to be reconsidered. Kotel'nikova did not discuss that, for the manor was basically outside her analysis; that is, it was a given starting point, the organisational form of land management progressively abandoned via the leasing of demesnes, and substituted with the demand for rents in produce from tenants – and it was this substitution, interpreted as a sign of increased demand, which was the core of her argument.[17] As to Jones, he did not seem to attribute any value to the *curtis* as a profit-

[16] Kotel'nikova, *Mondo*, pp. 283-4 and 303-5.
[17] Cf. ibid., pp. 26-7 on Lucca ('*corvées* were of little importance in the hinterland of Lucca from the 11th to the 13th centuries, and it is not necessary to take them into consideration') and pp. 65-6 on Florence, where the

making agrarian regime. 'Reform [of land management] at first was mostly addressed to getting more from the traditional [manorial] system […] In the end, however, it was not by lordship but by land that revenues were redressed'; 'Italy […] was the country where manorial society was earliest affected by economic growth, where land first recovered value as a means to wealth not lordship'.[18] 'Lordship' is the key-word here. Jones maintained that the manor was primarily a power structure, indeed a form of lordship, with little potential for economic growth; it was its reform, consisting in the rediscovery of land as a source of (mainly economic) income, that brought about the shift from manor to *mezzadria*. This interpretation is problematic to me, since it is close to impossible to think that the *sistema curtense* was completely profit-averse, and that it managed to survive for centuries all the same.

This incompatibility between the *sistema curtense* and the market – which was, we might say, the legacy of Pirenne's view on the Carolingian economy as serving the sole purpose of self-sufficiency – was revised, indeed reversed, between the 1970s and the 1980s, thanks to the works of French-speaking and Italian scholars in the first place (even though we need to stress that criticisms of Pirenne's thesis in Italy date back to the ground-breaking book by Cinzio Violante on Milanese society during the pre-communal age, published in 1953).[19] However, it was at this point that historians of land management divided themselves between medievalists of the early period dealing with the *curtis*, and historians of the late period dealing with *mezzadria*, undercutting thereby the research on the possible connections between the two. The efforts towards synthesis shared by Conti, Jones and Kotel'nikova became much rarer, and this applies to Tuscany as well as to Italy as a whole. This had an important implication for the study of the high medieval period, which was – we might say – not defined by either of the two models – the *sistema curtense* and the *mezzadria* – commonly used as points of reference for the analysis of the early Middle Ages on the one hand, and of the late Middle Ages on the other. The subsequent fluidity in the conceptualisation of the forms of land management in the central centuries of the medieval era is in itself good, but has led to a degree of uncertainty about the possibility of identifying any unifying characteristic of the patterns of landholding over that period.

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author mentions the days of labour that had to be performed in some parts of the Florentine countryside and describes them as marginal dues ('among more than 300 documents […] we have found just one charter in which the lessee, evidently a cultivator, had to give a rent in produce and to perform *corvées* in addition to rents in money').

[18] Jones, 'From manor', p. 198 and 204.

[19] Pirenne, *Mohammed*, pp. 260-5; Violante, *La società* (whose first part remains the best account, on the part of an Italian scholar, of Pirenne's thesis and its limits); on the French-speaking side, cf. the seminal essay by Devroey, 'Un monastère', concerning the abbey of Saint-Germain-des-Prés; see also Toubert, 'La part', in which the author stresses the role of the *sistema curtense* as a driver of economic growth; and more recently Devroey, *Puissants*, chapter 14, section IV.

The most important studies on Tuscan *mezzadria* published in the 1970s and the 1980s are a good example of the partial exclusion of the central Middle Ages from the research on land management. The analysis of 14th and 15th-century sources was the main focus of scholars of the late medieval age such as Giovanni Cherubini, Giuliano Pinto, David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, to whom we owe the most complete and intelligent accounts of *mezzadria poderale* (and to whom we need to add Giorgio Giorgetti, who – despite being principally interested in early modern and modern history – did look back at the Middle Ages). The choice to investigate those two centuries, and the relative lack of interest in previous ones, is easily understandable, first because the available documentation of that period provides a richness of detail which cannot be matched for earlier times, and second as a result of the fact that the formation of sharecropping *poderi*, as noted above, is a late medieval and early modern phenomenon. It was in the wake of Cherubini and Pinto's teaching that the much regretted historian Stephan Epstein could argue that 'it is *mezzadria poderale* that makes Tuscan sharecropping distinctive, not share tenure by itself',[20] but assumptions like this may lead us seriously to underestimate the novelty represented by the first sharecropping agreements of the early 13th century. Even if they concerned only isolated pieces of land, and the formation of *poderi* was far from being complete, they were undoubtedly innovative: not only the already-mentioned clauses on the joint provision of seeds, but also other regulations – for instance, the short duration of the contract and the monitoring of the tenant's labour during the year – were hardly envisaged by previous types of lease. Briefly, the novelty represented by early *mezzadria* agreements must not be obscured by the absence of *poderi* and has to be examined in its own right.[21]

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[20] The quotation comes from Epstein and Galassi, 'A debate', p. 117.

[21] This framework is well exemplified in Cherubini, 'La "Tavola delle possessioni" '; Id., 'Proprietari' (which both concern the Sienese *Tavola delle Possessioni*, redacted between 1316 and 1320); Id., 'La mezzadria' (which, though examining the 'origins' of *mezzadria*, is focussed in fact on the 14th century); Pinto, *Il libro* (research based on the *Specchio umano* by Domenico Lenzi, better known as *Libro del Biadaiolo*, which records the prices of wheat and other types of grain in Florence throughout the 1320s and 1330s); Id., 'La mezzadria delle origini' (regarding Tuscan farmhouses, and how they were related to the process of *appoderamento*, during the 14th and 15th centuries); Id., 'Contadini e proprietari' (where the analysis concerns, for the most part, the late-14th, 15th and 16th centuries); Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans* (the most complete study of the Florentine cadastral survey dating to 1427); Giorgetti, *Contadini* (regarding 'relations of productions and agrarian contracts from the 16th century up to the present day', as reported in the subtitle); Epstein, *Alle origini* (which starts from the 1260s, thus excluding the 12th century and the first half of the 13th century). This approach, mostly orientated towards the late Middle Ages (albeit with some exceptions, one of which I will mention in a moment) also characterised the two important conferences on land management held in 1977: *Civiltà ed economia agricola* and *Contadini e proprietari nella Toscana moderna*. The high Middle Ages were taken into account, for the most part, in textbooks or general overviews of the issue: Cammarosano, *Le campagne*, in particular pp. 130-1 – even though we owe to Cammarosano one of the few articles examining specifically the period going from the late 12th century to the early Trecento, concerning Siena (cf. Id., 'Le campagne', originally a paper given during the just-mentioned conference *Contadini e proprietari nella Toscana moderna*); Cherubini, 'Le campagne italiane'. The legacy of these studies has been picked up and kept alive by Gabriella Piccinni ('Le donne'; 'Mezzadria'; 'Rubriche') and Maria Ginatempo ('La mezzadria').

If we look at the other side of medievalists studying land management in Tuscany, that is, if we look at historians of the *sistema curtense*, it is easy to note that they usually stopped at the 11th century – the moment at which the alleged end of the manorial system took place, for the organic link between demesnes and tenures was compromised by the progressive leasing out of the former, and by the subsequent decline of labour-services as a privileged means to cultivate land. This was the case with Bruno Andreolli, probably the Italian scholar most consistently committed to the analysis of the *sistema curtense* in Tuscany. He worked on the charters of the diocesan archives of Lucca and of the Benedictine monastery of S. Salvatore al Monte Amiata, in the southern part of the region (whose documents are now preserved in the State archives of Siena). These are the only two substantial archival sets for Tuscany in the early Middle Ages – the Lucchese set is the richest in Europe as to the number of private charters – and they do show that the demand for *corvées* was high in the 9th century, but only in that period. Indeed, by the 11th century at the latest, the manorial system was undergoing irreversible transformations due to the overall social and economic change of that period, which was regarded by Andreolli as a turning-point.[22] Possibly as a result of his almost-exclusive interest in the early Middle Ages, and thus (inevitably) in Lucca and the Amiata, Andreolli excluded from his research those areas, like the Florentine countryside, which might have challenged his conclusions – in that the Fiorentino, as noted by Jones already in the late 1960s, testifies to the survival of manorial forms of land management well into the central Middle Ages. It is interesting to note, in this sense, that Andreolli did not take into account the central Middle Ages, and thus the possible links between early- and late-medieval forms of land management, even when he did turn his attention to later periods, namely to the 14th-century Lucchese countryside. It is worth mentioning the essay in which Andreolli thoroughly investigated the topic of the alleged absence of *mezzadria* in the countryside of Lucca through the legislation of the Lucchese commune and the inventories of landed estates belonging to the local bishops. Both sources showed that share tenancies and *mezzadria* were extremely marginal in the city hinterland in 1308, 1334-6 and 1364. In subsequent years, Andreolli's findings have been debated, and sometimes contested (not very convincingly, though), almost exclusively by late medievalists. This gives me the opportunity to clarify that no entirely

[22] The two most important essays on Tuscany are Andreolli, 'Contratti', regarding the Lucchesia in the 8th and 9th centuries, and Id., 'L'evoluzione', which concerns Tuscany as a whole, and whose end-point is the 10th century; cf. also Id., 'Il sistema'. The importance of the 11th century is also reflected by the overview of the *sistema curtense* in Italy written by Andreolli and Massimo Montanari in 1983 (Andreolli and Montanari, *L'azienda*), which stops at the 11th century (described as the moment of crisis of the manor; see for example p. 202) and also by Andreolli's essays concerning Italy as a whole (see for instance Andreolli, 'Contratti agrari e gestione'; Id., 'La gestione').

conclusive arguments have been put forward, so far, as to the absence or marginality of *mezzadria* in the 14th- and 15th-century Lucchesia – nor does my thesis, which discusses an earlier age, claim to have found one, although I shall hint at a possible solution to this problem in chapters 4 and 5. Here we need to focus on the history of historiography, and stress that the post-1970 division between early and late medievalists as to the history of Tuscan agriculture endured – notwithstanding some exceptions, as with Andreolli. As a consequence, the central centuries of the medieval era remained a missing link between the two, hardly intercommunicating, historiographical traditions.[23]

As we anticipated at the beginning of this section, the late 1980s constituted the last moment in which the forms of land management in medieval Tuscany were treated as the main topic in studies concerning rural societies. We need to cite here the three volumes dedicated to the contract of *mezzadria* in the countryside of Florence and Siena, which were published from 1987 to 1992 – Lucca, as well as Pisa, was tellingly excluded in view of the alleged absence of *mezzadria* across the coastal areas of the region.[24] Those volumes are by far the most detailed account of a single type of lease agreement, and are enriched by an edition of *mezzadria* charters which makes it possible to get an overall picture of their spread throughout eastern and central Tuscany. They are however rather descriptive works, not centred on farming regimes in general but only on a particular contract, and in this sense they are implicitly teleological – the eyes being fixed on the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It is not inappropriate to argue, nonetheless, that – together with Maria Ginatempo's 1988 book on the 15th-century Senese[25] – they marked the end of the most prolific phase of the historiography on *mezzadria*, and perhaps on land management in medieval Tuscany.

This does not mean at all that farming regimes have been neglected by historians since then. It can be argued, however, that they have been less studied *per se*; medievalists have mostly discussed them as part of other research questions, which have taken centre stage in

[23] Cf. Andreolli's essay, 'Considerazioni'. Andreolli confirmed the assumptions made by Marino Berengo in his landmark book on Lucca in the 16th century, where Berengo argued that the Lucchese countryside was characterised by the absence of *poderi mezzadrili* in that period (Berengo, *Nobili*, in particular pp. 301 and 307). Through the analysis of many 15th-century lease agreements, Micheal Bratchel argued that 'Many of the Lucchese examples embrace so many of the structural features of *mezzadria* that I am disinclined to withhold use of the term' (Bratchel, *Lucca*, p. 187); Bratchel's study, however, was not systematic. D. J. Osheim argued that, since *mezzadria* was mainly adopted by urban owners, its absence around Lucca was evidence of the strength of rural owners (Osheim, 'Countrymen', p. 318); this argument, however, does not account for, but derives from, the alleged absence of *mezzadria*. Renzo Sabbatini maintained that *mezzadria* was widespread in the environs of Lucca during the modern age, but cites only a book by the 19th-century *erudito* Antonio Mazzarosa to support his claim (Sabbatini, 'Lucca', p. 155). Future systematic research will certainly stem from Alessandra Potenti's studies (cf. chapter 5). The connections between early medieval and late medieval farming regimes do surface in the works of Chris Wickham (cf. *infra*).

[24] Pinto and Pirillo, *Il contratto* I; Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II; Piccinni, *Il contratto di mezzadria* III.

[25] Ginatempo, *Crisi*.

the scholarship since the late 1980s. For instance, the ground-breaking works by Chris Wickham do discuss land management, but within a wide socio-economic framework of analysis that covers the study of village societies in the Tuscan Apennines (with particular regard to their relations with cities),[26] the development of rural communes in the Lucca plain,[27] the spread of fortified settlements (that is, the long-debated process of *incastellamento*) and the forms of rural lordship.[28] The same applies to the far-reaching doctoral research undertaken by Simone M. Collavini on the Aldobrandeschi counts (a family whose most substantial landed properties were located in the Maremma plain, in the southern part of the region, and who managed to preserve a coherent polity until the end of the 13th century), which was turned into a book in 1998 and paved the way for his successive studies on signorial powers in Tuscany.[29] It is also worth mentioning the book by Odile Redon on Siena and the rural communities subject to its jurisdiction;[30] the huge *thèse*, now consisting of two volumes, written by Jean-Pierre Delumeau on Arezzo and its countryside;[31] and Enrico Faini's important study on Florence between 1000 and 1211.[32] In all these texts, albeit in varying degrees, land management is regarded as a necessary premise to address other historical issues.

By the beginning of the second millennium, the interest in the *sistema curtense* and the *mezzadria* as privileged objects of historical analysis has significantly diminished, all the more so in comparison with the research undertaken in previous decades. It is however necessary to point out that some doctoral theses discussed recently (some very recently) shed light on an issue that will retain much of our attention in the following pages, that is, the social and economic transformations of the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. This is the case with Giampaolo Francesconi's extensive study on the monastery of S. Salvatore di Camaldoli and the local societies linked to it from the 11th to the 13th centuries; with Tommaso Casini's research on signorial powers and the rural world in north-eastern Tuscany; and with Philippe Lefeuvre's work on rural *élites* in the upper Arno valley and the Chianti region in the 12th and 13th centuries.[33] Francesconi studied an area which is outside the geographical scope of this thesis, but Casini and Lefeuvre will both receive due attention, since they have

[26] Wickham, *The Mountains*.
[27] Id., *Community*.
[28] Cf. Id., 'Paesaggi', for *incastellamento* on the Amiata and, for an overview of the whole issue, see Id., 'Documenti'; on rural lordship in Tuscany cf. the synthesis in Id., 'La signoria'; on lordship in the Lucchesia see in particular Id., 'Economia' and 'Manentes'.
[29] Collavini, '*"Honorabilis domus"* '; on rural *signoria* in Tuscany I cite here only the essays that are not just accounts of a single family and/or area, such as Id., 'Il "servaggio" '; Id., 'La condizione'; Id., 'Signoria ed *élites*'.
[30] Redon, *L'espace*, which brought to completion a research begun in the 1980s (cf. Ead., *Uomini*).
[31] Delumeau, *Arezzo*.
[32] Faini, *Firenze*.
[33] Francesconi, 'Tra riforma'; Casini, 'Signoria'; Lefeuvre, 'La notabilité'.

convincingly shown that society in the early-13th-century Florentine hinterland was changing rapidly – we might say indeed that change was accelerating. Investigating what this meant for the relationships between landowners and tenants is the main aim of my research.

In addition to the works cited so far, there are quite a number of local studies which I will take into account when examining the archival sets I have selected; but it is already clear that research on land management in Tuscany during the Middle Ages is abundant and, for the most part, of very good quality – even though the patterns of estate management do not constitute the main interest of social and economic medievalists any longer. Is it really worth studying it again?

1.1.2 A new look at an old problem

Linking two historiographical traditions that have largely developed separately, that on the *sistema curtense* and that on *mezzadria* (with the partial exception of the big syntheses written in the 1960s) will be one of the challenges I shall try to face in the following pages. The fact that, during the 1970s, historians of the early medieval period and historians of the late medieval period started to belong to two essentially different groups contributed to making the central Middle Ages a sort of no-man's-land, regarded as the end-point of the *curtis* or as the starting point of *mezzadria*, and more rarely as a period to be studied on its own. This general tendency was also favoured by the lack of good editions of high medieval charters, and by some practical difficulties in accessing the archives – a problem that has been only partially solved in very recent times through the digitisation of documents. It might be argued, however, that digitisation and decreasing interest in land management (rather, in land management as the main topic of studies on rural societies) went hand in hand.

Thus, investigating Tuscan the patterns of estate management during the central medieval era is one of the few ways in which an otherwise exceptionally-rich historiographical tradition can be renewed. Doing so with specific regard to Florence and Lucca helps to revise the teleological framework (sometimes quite explicit, sometimes latent) underpinning much of the extant research on the subject, which has been influenced and orientated by the later development of *mezzadria*, or its absence. I have myself started from there, and it is not my intention to deny this long-term process. But my analysis will focus on the period from *c.* 1000 to *c.* 1250 in the first place; only as an aside, and for reasons that will become clear in due course, I shall propose what social and economic factors might *also* let us cast a glance at the

transformations of land management in the late Middle Ages. This thesis discusses estate management in the central Middle Ages; its interpretation must not be determined by what came after.

This is linked, in turn, to another problem that surfaced only occasionally in the analysis of the existing historiography which I have sketched out hitherto, and which will be of crucial importance for my overall argument; that of medieval economic growth and, more specifically, of its phases. In this respect, I have hinted at the fifty years from *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230 as a particularly important period, for they represented a moment of accelerated expansion of economy and society as a whole, in Tuscany and in some parts of northern and central Italy as well. With regard to this, I shall set out some comparative remarks about Tuscany, Italy and Europe in chapter 5. As for now, in view of the fact that the reasons for socio-economic mutations were also political, we need to focus our attention on the development of the communes of Lucca and Florence between the 11th and the 13th centuries, paying specific attention to their relations with the surrounding countryside. We shall start to shed light, thereby, on the patterns of change that characterised the high medieval era in general, and the 1180-1230 phase in particular.

1.2
The political history of Lucca, Florence and their countryside (11th -13th centuries)

This section will be focused on the main issues regarding the political history of the two cities I have chosen for my study, and of the countryside surrounding them. Discussing political history here is obviously meant to provide the reader with a background which will help to frame each case-study as participating in the wider development of northern and central Tuscany as a whole; but, more importantly, an analysis of the most significant moments in the history of Florence and Lucca during the high Middle Ages – with particular regard to the relations between the cities and the countryside – is aimed at linking political change with social and economic transformations, as well as general themes with local history. No historian would claim that those fields should be kept separate. But their actual integration, rather than a simple juxtaposition, has not always been practised. This is exactly what I shall start to do now – although wider implications will surface as we proceed.

I have spoken so far of 'countryside' in quite a generic way, identifying with this word the hinterland of cities. In what follows, 'countryside' will indicate the rural areas on which

Lucca and Florence extended their jurisdiction – in other words, the areas that were progressively included within their *contado*. Geography and ecology do constitute, quite obviously, an essential part of the relations between city and hinterland, but their importance will be clearly visible when the analysis shifts to the history of tenancy agreements; this is why they are discussed at the beginning of chapters 3 and 4, where I also clarify which case-studies I decided to examine for each city, and on what grounds. This section will essentially concern, instead, urban political history and institutional developments.

1.2.1 The development of the commune and the expansion into the countryside

From a political point of view (and almost certainly also from a demographic one), Lucca was far more important than Florence during the early Middle Ages. It was the seat of the marquis of *Tuscia*, that is to say, of the highest public official of the Carolingian administrative district whose boundaries largely overlap with those of contemporary Tuscany. Moreover, Lucca was the 'capital' of a fairly coherent polity, since the marquises showed a long-standing capacity to exert their authority well after the crisis of the Carolingian Empire during the 10th century. There is no trace of a weakening of their power until the death of Marquise Beatrix in 1076 and the revolt of Lucca itself against Bishop Anselmo II, the ally of Matilda of Tuscany in the Investiture Controversy, in 1080.[34]

Conversely, Florence seems to have been a relatively marginal city right up to the end of the 11th century, when Matilda started to reside there at a time when Lucca, as we have just seen, appeared to be hostile. Its evolution from a rather unimportant centre, located in an unfavourable geographic position (east of the town of Signa, right after the point in which the river Arno is navigable), to one of the largest economic and cultural poles of Europe remains, to some extent at least, a fascinating mystery even today.[35]

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[34] On the boundaries of the March of *Tuscia* cf. Cori, 'Geografia', pp. 12-3 and Ronzani, 'Dalla regione', pp. 77-9; on the long-lasting tightness of the March cf. Wickham, 'La signoria'; the basic analysis on early-medieval Lucca is Schwarzmaier, *Lucca*, to which we need to add the recent doctoral thesis written by Tomei, 'Alle radici' – the most complete account on Lucchese aristocracies up to the end of the 11th century. See also the sections dedicated by Chris Wickham to Lucca in his study on the societies of the Apennines during the early Middle Ages (Wickham, *The Mountains*, particularly the introduction to the Garfagnana at pp. 15-7); on Matilda of Tuscany and her relations with Tuscan cities cf. Puglia, *'Beata filia Petri'*.

[35] An all-encompassing study of the early phases of Florentine history remains the first volume by Davidsohn, *Geschichte*; the economic evolution of high-medieval Florence has been studied by Day, 'The early development'; the most complete account on Florentine rural aristocracies (and thus on their relations with the city) between the 10th and the 12th centuries is Cortese, *Signori*; that on urban aristocracies is Faini, *Firenze*, which goes up to the year 1211.

It might be thought that the different degree of development of the two cities is partly an impression resulting from the quality of the archival sets we can dispose of. The diocesan archives of Lucca have indeed preserved more than 1,800 charters prior to the 11th century (by far the highest number of original single-sheet manuscripts available in Europe for a single city in that period),[36] whereas the quantity of Florentine documents up to the middle of the 10th century is extremely limited. We cannot completely exclude that fate must have played some role in determining such a scarcity of sources for early-medieval Florence; the best proof of it seems to be that its diocesan archives were destroyed by a fire during the 16th century. However, the abbreviated transcriptions of the documents once preserved there, which were gathered in a book written in the first half of the 14th century and known as the *Bullettone*, show that the number of Florentine episcopal charters issued before 1000 was probably low.[37] And, after all, we shall see in a moment that in the 12th century, too (when a considerable quantity of notarial deeds exists for both cities), the difference in the degree of institutionalisation between Lucca and Florence is not a mere impression derived from the characteristics of our documentation.

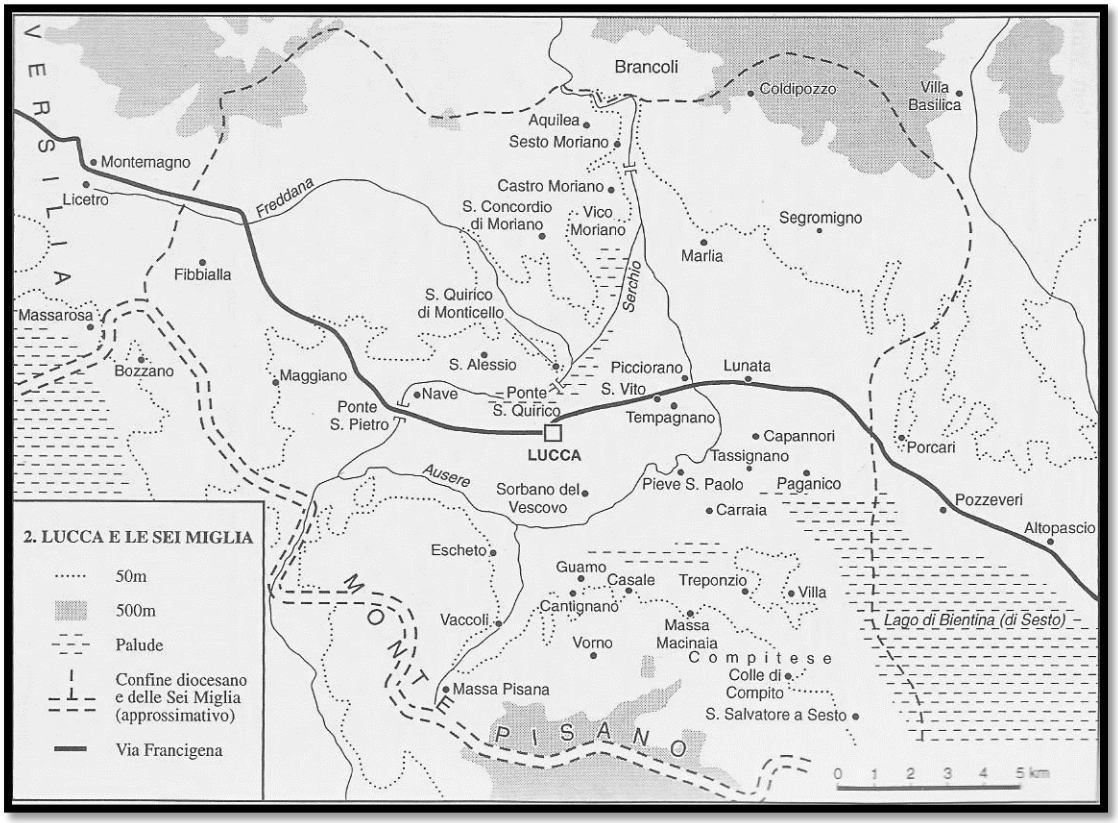
For all these reasons, I will start my analysis with Lucca before moving on to Florence. The section on Lucca will be more general, because I shall try to outline some general issues regarding the history of Tuscany as a whole (who were the *podestà*, what was the *Comune di Popolo*, for instance), so that it will not be necessary to address them again when discussing Florence. After that, I will take stock and explain why the political history of the two cities matters for the study of land management and its change.

1.2.1.1 Lucca

We can start our analysis of Lucca and its countryside with the privilege issued in 1081 by Emperor Henry IV, since this document can be regarded as the first positive evidence of the control exerted by the city over its hinterland. In fact, Henry probably ratified a pre-existing situation in order to reward the Lucchesi for their support against Matilda of Tuscany, for after *c.* 1050 emperors were not as powerful as they used to be and it is highly unlikely that Henry could create a city jurisdiction *ex novo*. At any rate, in 1081 the Lucchesi became the

[36] An appraisal of the quantity of documents originally preserved in the Lucchese diocesan archives (which must have been much larger than the number of charters available today) has been made by Tomei, 'Un nuovo', pp. 577-8.
[37] On the *Bullettone* cf. Dameron, *Episcopal power* and also *infra*, chapter 3.

official rulers of an area stretching for six miles around the city, then known as the Sei Miglia, that would survive up to the 19th century – when its ancient boundaries were transformed – and that maintains its territorial specificity even today. What is particularly relevant to us, however, is that Henry ordered that the Sei Miglia had to be kept free of castles, and so of signorial enclaves (although some castles had been built by the last quarter of the 11th century and the Lucchesi had to take some of them down), and that the area should not remain 'without legitimate jurisdiction', where 'legitimate' refers to the city political authority. Combined with the almost complete absence of signorial powers – which is particularly telling, since the Sei Miglia are documented by the hundreds of charters of the bishopric and the cathedral chapter of Lucca – we can safely conclude that Henry's privilege mirrored quite accurately the control exerted by Lucca over this section of its countryside.[38]



2. *Lucca and the Sei Miglia (adapted from Wickham,* Legge*, p. 124)*

Possibly as a result of the existence of this coherent *iurisdictio* over the hinterland, the first signs of communal organisation in Lucca appeared quite early. Public officials labelled as

[38] Cf. the edition of Henry IV's diploma in MGH, DD H IV/2, 437-8, no. 334. Cf. Schwarzmaier, *Lucca*, pp. 66-7; Wickham, *Community*, pp. 15-7.

consuls (*consules*) are first mentioned in the metrical *Vita Anselmi* (that is, Sant'Anselmo II of Lucca) by Bishop Rangerio as already existing in the late 1080s, but it is very unlikely that they constituted the highest political authority of the city in that period, or that their office had been formalised and made stable by that time. Rather, they were described in Rangerio's text as judges who could be called upon in order to arbitrate an issue – but only if both contending parties agreed to have their dispute decided before them, according to the *Vita*. In a similar way, consuls are recorded in a charter dating to 1119 as standing among a crowd of Lucchesi witnessing a purchase of land by Bishop Benedetto – and it is worth highlighting that, in addition to the Lucchesi who were explicitly named, there was also a group of people that the notary Dario portrayed as a *populi multitudo* who could barely fit into the episcopal palace (and to whom I shall come back in a moment). This time we know the consuls' names: Uberto of the late Conetto, member of a family of (arguably) middle landowners; Salomone of the late Salomone, the descendent of a (probably) Jewish family whose components acted as both clients and creditors of the Lucchese bishops; and Giovanni, who cannot be identified because of the absence of a patronymic.[39] It would be hard to argue, on the basis of the 1119 charter, that consuls already were the most powerful officials of a formalised set of city rulers, for they featured there in an apparently subordinate position to Benedetto, and were standing in the middle of a group of people in which legal experts (such as *iudices* and *notarii*) were numerous; thus, the consuls might well have been just judges holding a specific judicial office – as they seem to have been in the *Vita Anselmi* – and were present, arguably, only because of the political importance of the sale – because a large *multitudo* of Lucchesi was there.[40]

It cannot be completely excluded, however, that consuls were already the representatives of an informal city collectivity, designated in this instance with the term *multitudo*; this impression is reinforced by an only slightly later source, since in 1120 the Lucchese consuls were the recipients of a diploma issued by Marquis Conrad, and were thus recognised by him as a fully public authority representing the city. It seems thus sensible to assume that, whatever the function fulfilled by the consuls in 1119 was, the institutionalisation of the consulate as the highest civil office in Lucca must have been quite fast, probably faster than the bishop expected and hoped. We know for sure that the commune developed independently of the bishopric from the late 1120s at the latest, since a lay *cancellarius* is recorded for the first time in 1127, and that consular judgements started in 1136 and then

[39] On Uberto's ancestors cf. Savigni, *Episcopato*, p. 602 (who cites the document in ASDLu, *Arcivescovile*, * L 50, *a.* 1047, where Uberto of the late Cunzio, along with his brother Conetto – in all likelihood the father of the 1119 consul – donated some lands to the episcopate); on Salomone cf. ibid., p. 585.
[40] Blomquist and Osheim, 'The first' (with an edition of the 1119 charter at pp. 37-9); Savigni, *Episcopato*, pp. 47-8.

became regular – even though consular tribunals existed already some years before, because the fine that could be imposed by the *consules treguani* (the magistrates arbitrating issues related to the Lucchese countryside) is first cited in a document dating to 1130. From 1133, then, the clause regarding the 'penalty [inflicted] by the consuls and the *treguani*' started to be used consistently in the ending section of notarial charters.[41]

By the mid-12th century the Lucchese commune was fully institutionalised, as was its control over the Sei Miglia. The almost complete absence of emperors from Italy up to the 1150s – with the partial exceptions of the campaigns of Henry V in 1116 and Lothar III in 1132 and 1136 – made it impossible for the German monarchs to claim back what Henry IV had conceded to Lucca. Before the military expeditions undertaken by Frederick I in Italy, the main factor of political and territorial instability was represented by the recurring conflicts with Pisa for the control of lands and castles lying between the two cities, which started in 1004 and went on in the form of low-intensity wars for most of the 11th, the 12th and the 13th centuries. The ecclesiastical institutions and the few signorial families holding substantial jurisdictional rights within the Sei Miglia or on its external edges (on which see *infra*) did not seem to have endangered the hegemony of the city on this part of its surrounding countryside.[42]

As we have just said, the most disruptive element of this pattern was represented (as was the case for most of northern and central Italy) by the military campaigns undertaken by Emperor Frederick I from 1154 to 1183, the date of the peace of Constance. It has to be emphasised, however, that the relations maintained by Frederick with the cities and the signoral lordships of what is now Tuscany were, in general, less hostile and less violent if compared to the sanguinary conflicts that took place in Lombardy. But this does not mean at all that the impact of imperial politics on this part of the Kingdom of Italy was negligible or ephemeral, and Lucca is a good example of this. To start with, the city was granted a diploma by Frederick I in 1155, in which the emperor prevented Pisa and any other *civitas* from minting coins similar to those of Lucca. In the same year, however, Frederick conceded another privilege to Pisa – and a highly laudatory one, for Pisa was described as the Empire's most-preferred city in Italy – in which he allowed the Pisans to mint their own coins. This might seem contradictory at first glance, but was in fact motivated by the rather opportunistic

[41] Wickham, *Courts*, pp. 31-2; for a synthesis cf. Id., *Sleepwalking*, pp. 180-2; Conrad's diploma is edited in Tommasi, *Sommario*, pp. 5-6, no. 3 (1120 October 3); the document which first cites the *consules treguani* is ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1130 June 2; the 'pena consulum et treguanorum' is reported in Savigni, *Episcopato*, p. 87.
[42] On the campaign undertaken by Henry V in 1116 cf. Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 384 and following; on Lothar III cf. Fiore, 'L'Impero', pp. 36-7; on Lucca cf. Wickham, *Community*, chapter II; Cortese, 'L'Impero e la Toscana', pp. 49-50 and note 1.

political project pursued by Frederick, who was endeavouring to establish good relations with the two most important cities in *Tuscia* at the same time – and, with regard to Pisa, to form a military alliance that would let him dispose of the Pisan fleet for an expedition against the Norman Kingdom.[43]

The existence of two legally-acknowledged mints in Tuscany was thus recognised by the imperial authority in the 1150s, but the Lucchese coins and the Pisan coins became two different types of currency only in 1181. This was a change that can hardly be underestimated, since it is likely to have contributed to a process of inflation (which we shall examine in detail in chapters 3 and 4) by flooding the market with Pisan money – by then fully legal. In the meantime, other substantial institutional transformations were getting under way. After the second Diet held in Roncaglia in 1158 – where Frederick, in very broad terms, tried to impose himself and the Empire as the overarching authority over the by-then largely independent cities of northern and central Italy – the March of *Tuscia* was left in the hands of Welf VI, the uncle of Frederick and marquis in the region. In 1160, Welf granted a second diploma to Lucca, in which he acknowledged the city jurisdiction over an area stretching for five miles around the city in return for an annual compensation of 1000 *s.* of Lucchese *denarii*. The downgrading from Henry's IV six miles probably reflected an attempt to limit the expansion of Lucca in the surrounding countryside – one of the cores, after all, of Barbarossa's politics in Italy – but it is very unlikely to have had any practical effect. In the same year, Welf convoked a Diet in S. Genesio (in the middle Arno valley) where the representatives of the Tuscan cities, along with the most important families of rural aristocrats (the Gherardeschi, the Guidi and the Aldobrandeschi) and some minor nobles met in order to swear fidelity to Welf. The German marquis' political autonomy and authority, however, did not last long, to the point that the assembly of S. Genesio can be considered as the last act of the March of *Tuscia* – and Lucca mirrors this political change quite well. In 1162, Frederick reached an agreement with the Lucchese consuls (in front of an assembly held in S. Genesio again) in which he took upon the emperor, and so upon himself, all the jurisdictional prerogatives pertaining to the city and its remit, the *comitatus*. Those prerogatives were called *regalia*, and were given back to the commune of Lucca for six years. In return, the Lucchesi had to pay him £400 of Lucchese *denarii* annually – to which the 1000 *s.* owed to the marquis could be deducted, with the consent of the emperor.[44]

[43] Frederick's privilege for Lucca is in MGH, DD F I/1, 190-2, no. 112 (soon after 1155 June 18); that for Pisa is ibid., pp. 200-2, no. 119 (1155 August 25); on the latter cf. Ronzani, 'La nozione', pp. 80-2.
[44] Welf's diploma is edited in Cianelli, *Dissertazioni*, pp. 173-5 (1160 April 13); cf. also *Tholomei Annales*, p. 67 (both the date and the number of miles that constituted the jurisdictional area of Lucca are wrong; cf. note 1 and 2); for the agreement between the Lucchese consuls and Frederick I cf. MGH, DD F I/2, 239-41, no. 375 (*c.* 1162

This attempted centralisation in the hands of Frederick of local public powers, which were presented as deriving directly from the monarchical authority, was meant to divest Welf of his role and deprive the March of *Tuscia* of its status as a partly-independent regional governmental structure. It was matched by the employment of German personnel (namely counts and *podestà*) in *Tuscia* during the years in which Rainald of Dassel, archbishop of Cologne, was appointed as the representative of the Empire there (1162-4); Rainald was indeed the main negotiator of the 1162 agreement and would hold another Diet in S. Genesio in 1164.[45] What I would like to stress here, however, is that the city of Lucca seems to have been burdened with quite high tributes demanded by the Empire, presumably for the very first time, according to the extant documentation. It is worth noting that Henry IV's diploma of 1081 did not envisage any regular payment on the part of Lucca in favour of the emperor. It is not easy to know whether the annual tributes were actually paid, nor why Lucca was required to give money to the Empire whereas Pisa was not – as appears from the 1155 diploma addressed to the latter, which however was issued quite early and may not be a good guide to the imperial fiscal measures adopted in the 1160s. At any rate, I would argue that Pisa was contributing to imperial politics by making its powerful fleet available to Frederick I,[46] and for obvious reasons Lucca could not do the same (the attempt to create a port at *Motrone*, west of the city, never came to anything);[47] hence the monetary tributes to the marquis and the emperor. What is relevant to us is that the presence of the Empire in *Tuscia* was strong, certainly far stronger than it had been in the first half of the 12th century, and that this appears to have resulted in an increased level of fiscal demand on Lucca.

During the 1160s and the 1170s, Lucca did not further expand its political control over the countryside – unlike Florence, as we shall see in the next section. It was involved, though, in the wars against Pisa, Florence and the Aldobrandeschi counts, since it backed (along with Genoa and Siena) the imperial representative in *Tuscia* Christian I, archbishop of Mainz, who was particularly hostile to Pisa;[48] and it can be argued that this contributed to a surge in the commune's public expenditure. It is indeed worth asking what the cost of warfare was at a time in which conflicts were so frequent. The armies of the Italian communes were,

July 15) and ibid., *Constitutiones* I, 302-4, no. 214 (1162 July 9); cf. also Tirelli, 'Lucca', pp. 158-9; Tomei, 'Locus', p. 138, note 149; Cortese, 'L'Impero e la Toscana', p. 58, note 38.

[45] On S. Genesio's Diet held in 1164 cf. *Annales Pisani*, p. 31.

[46] Cf. for instance *Annales Pisani*, p. 31: 'the afore-mentioned [Pisan] consuls prepared ten galleys in that year [1164, but already 1165 according to the Pisan style of dating] and four *dermones* [war galleys] in the place of the horses they should bring to the emperor's army'.

[47] Cf. *Tholomei Annales*, pp. 37, 48, 136 and 157; *Annales Pisani*, pp. 50-2; Wickham, *Community*, p. 13. Cf. also *infra*, chapter 4.1.

[48] Cortese, 'L'Impero e la Toscana', pp. 69-70.

for the most part and at least in this period, paid forces made up of citizens. Foreign troops were hired too, however, and their salaries are not completely unknown. Let us look at the military treaty stipulated between Lucca and Florence after the end of the just-mentioned wars, probably in 1184 (we only have the oath taken in that year by the Lucchese consuls, who swore to stick to the alliance previously sealed). According to the text of the oath, the daily wage of the Lucchese soldiers who would serve the Florentine armies swung between 12 *d.* for infantrymen and archers, and 3 *s.* for cavalrymen (*milites*). The agreement envisaged (along with other things) that Lucca should provide 150 horsemen along with 500 infantrymen and archers. Since Lucca promised to provide military support to Florence from May to October and then for twenty days, this may have resulted in a total expenditure of £8,217.5 of Lucchese *denarii* per year on the part of the Florentine commune. This is of course an estimate, and one that concerns Florence and not Lucca; it conveys, at any rate, an idea of how burdensome the cost of warfare could be.[49]

This context of increased public expenditure is even more evident if we consider that, all throughout the second half of the 12th century, a new circuit of city walls was being built. Its construction was financed through the levy of *datia* and *prestationes* weighing on the Lucchese lay citizens and clerics (the construction would come to an end in the first quarter of the 13th century).[50] Almost at the same time, the first evidence (however isolated and fragmentary) concerning the existence of a Lucchese public deficit, dating to 1179, surfaces in our documentary record.[51] In addition to this, there are clues pointing to the progressive creation of a land-tax register (*estimo*) already in 1182, when the Lucchese consuls promised to the people of Montecalvoli (on the northern banks of the Arno, and thus outside the Sei Miglia but within the Lucchese diocese) not to impose taxes superior to those demanded from Lucchese citizens – and the exaction should have been made 'facta extimatione sui poderis', which we might translate, with a modernisation, as 'after the cadastral survey'.[52] Moreover, from the 1160s onwards the number of consular judgements increased sharply and new tribunals (albeit with similar tasks) were founded in 1177 (I am referring, here, to the 'court of complaints', *curia querimoniarum*) and in 1181 (the 'court of the strangers', *curia foretanorum*).

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[49] Although focused on Florence, cf. for a general overview Waley, 'The army'. On communal armies as receiving some salary cf. Id., *The Italian*, p. 84; Maire-Vigueur, *Cavalieri*, p. 134. A useful handbook is the quite recent Grillo, *Cavalieri* (particularly pp. 111-6). The text of the oath was edited by Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 20-4, no. XIV (1184 October 28).

[50] The document concerning *datia* and *prestationes* was edited by Tommasi, *Sommario*, pp. 8-9 (*Documenti*), no. 6 (1206 August 7). References to the taxes paid in order to finance the construction of new city walls, as well as to taxes in general, have been gathered by Savigni, *Episcopato*, pp. 91-3; see also Tirelli, 'Lucca', p. 174 and note 56.

[51] ASLu, *S. Giovanni* and ibid., *Spedale*, both dated to 1179 July 31. I owe this information to Tirelli, 'Lucca', pp. 196-7, note 116.

[52] Cf. Bongi, 'Quattro documenti', pp. 224-7, no. 2 (1182 August 23).

Chris Wickham has shown that justice in Lucca was fairly economical (all the more so if compared, for instance, with contemporary England), although the growth in the number of court-cases must have generated some income for the commune all the same.[53]

In 1186, three years after the peace of Constance, Henry VI (son of Frederick I) granted a privilege to the city in which he acknowledged the existence of a six-mile area under the control of Lucca. Welf's reduction to five miles, however ineffective in practice, seems thus to have been cancelled, but Henry also clarified what the boundaries of the urban jurisdiction within the Sei Miglia actually were – the main exceptions being the bishopric's lordship over Moriano (now known as the *frazione* of Ponte a Moriano) and Sorbano del Vescovo, that of the cathedral canons on Massa Macinaia, and the signorial rights of some aristocratic families (namely the Porcaresi, the Montemagno and the lords of Vorno) on their private holdings. In addition to this, Henry imposed an annual tribute of sixty Marks of Cologne, equivalent to *c.* £300 in *denarii*[54] – and so £100 less than Frederick I's annual levy enacted in 1162. Together with the official reestablishment of the city jurisdiction over an area of six miles, this reduction can be interpreted as an attempt, on the part of Henry, to secure the allegiance of Lucca. At any rate, even though £300 was not an extremely high sum, it is nonetheless evidence of the continuity of imperial fiscal pressure on the city and its remit.

The final fifteen years of the 12th century were marked also by the appearance of the first *podestà* in Lucca, Paganello, who belonged to the just-mentioned aristocratic family of the Porcaresi and took office in 1187 (it is interesting to note that Paganello was the founding-father of an entire family of *podestà*, who would be present in Lucca, Pisa, Florence, Pistoia, Siena and Volterra; Paganello himself will be *podestà* in Florence during the biennium 1200-1). This evolution was the consequence of a highly experimental phase in the institutional framework of the communes, which took place in the years following the peace of Constance and was characterised by growing internal conflicts. It was thus seen as necessary that a monocratic authority, whether indigenous or foreign, should take the power in specific periods by substituting for the college of consuls. It is also likely that the imitation of models of local power 'imported' by the Germans in Italy played some role in determining the

[53] Wickham, *Courts*, pp. 44-5.

[54] On the ratio between Marks and Lucchese-Pisan *denarii* during the first half of the 13th century (1 *marca* = £5.02-5½) cf. Davidsohn, *Forschungen* IV, 316-7. Peter Spufford identified the *marcae* as silver ingots when discussing the account of Wolfger's (the bishop of Passau) journey to Italy in the early 13th century; but the explicit reference to '10 marcas… ad pondus coloniense […] 5 marc [sic] ad pondus col.', makes it more likely to consider them as the currency of Cologne. Cf. the edition in Jesse, *Quellenbuch*, no. 370, pp. 249-52 (the two references to *marcae* are at p. 249 and 250); Spufford, *Money*, pp. 209-10, *contra* Baldassarri, *Zecca*, p. 90, who thinks that Wolfger's *marcae* are the Marks of Cologne. The edition of the privilege is in Cianelli, *Dissertazioni* I, 198-200 (1186 April 30); cf. von der Nahmer, *Reichsverwaltung*, p. 162; Wickham, *Community*, p. 15.

emergence of the *podestà* within the communes; it is indeed worth recalling not only the counts and *podestà* whom we met while discussing the politics of Frederick I's representative Rainald of Dassel, but also the *podestà* and *rector* of the aristocrats of Versilia and Garfagnana, who is first attested in 1185 as the head of this powerful group of imperial vassals located just outside the Sei Miglia – a group who had benefited of a privilege issued by the emperor in the same year.[55]

At the end of the following decade, a turning-point in the history of Tuscany (but we might well say in the history of Europe) was the death without adult sons of Henry VI in 1197. That year marked the beginning of a long phase of political turmoil, in which the authority of the Empire in northern and central Italy vanished – and this time definitely, for even when Frederick II came out of his minority the direct interventions of the imperial representatives were less effective, consisting basically in the support given to the newly-named Ghibelline factions of each city. Soon after the death of Henry, the anti-imperial forces gathered in the so-called 'League of Tuscia' (*societas Tuscie*) in November 1197, including Lucca, Florence, Siena and S. Miniato – the main exception being Pisa, the pro-Empire city *par excellence*.[56] As we shall see in the next section and in chapter 3.2.2.3.1, after 1197 the Florentine commune seized the opportunity given by the acute weakness of the Empire to intensify its expansion in the surrounding countryside. As to Lucca, instead, the years straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries appear to have been marked by growing civil strife (as was indeed the case with other cities in northern Italy, such as Reggio Emilia in the biennium 1199-1200, Brescia in 1200 and Milan in 1203). In more detail, in 1203 Ingherrame da Porcari or da Montemagno[57] led a revolt against the higher strata of the Lucchese aristocracy, in the capacity of chief (*praetor*) of the so-called 'popular group' (*popularis factio*). This has been interpreted as the first sign of the emergence, in Lucca, of the *Comune di Popolo*, that is, of a specific phase in the institutional history of the communes during which merchants and artisans – at any rate rich or quite rich people, whom we must not confuse with the lower strata of society which the word *populus* might imply – became part of the

[55] On the first Lucchese *podestà* cf. Tirelli, 'Lucca', p. 185; with particular regard to foreign *podestà* cf. Ragone, 'Il reclutamento'; on the vassals in Versilia and Garfagnana see the edition of the privilege in MGH, DD F I/4, 1153-5 no. 899 (1185 March 5); Opll, *Stadt*, p. 316; brief references (albeit located in an all-encompassing account on Frederick I) also in Id., *Friedrich*, pp. 147 and 245; see also Tomei, 'La circolazione'.

[56] On Henry VI's death and the *societas Tuscie* cf. Davidshon, *Geschichte* I, 614-20; Collavini, *"Honorabilis domus"*, p. 215 and following.

[57] It is impossible to tell with certainty, for there were two Ingherrame living at the very beginning of the 13th century and belonging to those two families; but it makes little difference in the end, for the 'da Porcari' and the 'da Montemagno' were married into each other and belonged to the same political faction; cf. Tirelli, 'Lucca', pp. 185-6; Tomei, 'La circolazione'.

governing bodies of the cities, in the form of societies (mainly military ones) or professional guilds.[58]

This is the provisional end-point of the analysis on Lucchese political history. With the steady appearance of the *Comune di Popolo*, some of the major political transformations that are relevant to this thesis were brought to an end. I will add further details in chapters 4 and 5, namely on the first thirty years of the 13th century – with regard, for example, to the development of rural communes and of the local cloth industry – because they fit best into the discussion on land management and its change. Let us now move on to Florence.

1.2.1.2 Florence

Differently from Lucca, communal organisation in Florence was both surprisingly late and exceptionally sudden – indeed, the elements that constitute the ideal-type of the Italian commune appeared almost all at once in the early 1170s. Before that period, the governing bodies of the city barely surface from the scanty documentation as formalised institutions. Consuls are mentioned by the chronicler Sanzanome in his *Gesta Florentinorum* (written between 1230 and 1231) as already existing in 1123, when they decided to lay siege to Fiesole (located on a hill north-east of Florence and seat of a bishop) and to build up an army to this end. According to Sanzanome, the assembly (*consilium*) took place in front of the people (*populus*) of Florence, who approved the speech made by 'a certain nobleman' encouraging the Florentines to be brave and behave as their ancestors, the Romans, would have done in similar circumstances. Fiesole was eventually captured and devastated in 1125, but Bishop Giovanni – who had negotiated the terms of surrender with the Florentines – managed to maintain his position and his church.[59]

The war against Fiesole seems to have played an important role in strengthening the collective identity of the Florentine citizens. Sanzanome referred to it as the proper origin of the city in what he called 'modern times', and the record of a hearing of witnesses redacted in the very first years of the 13th century testifies to its long-lasting memory as a significant moment in the history of the city.[60] However, as Enrico Faini convincingly argued, Sanzanome

[58] A recent overview on the *Comuni di Popolo* is in Poloni, *Potere* (cf. on Lucca pp. 9-10 and 15-7); specifically on Lucca cf. Ead., 'Strutturazione' and Ead., *Lucca*; on Ingherrame the basic primary sources are the annals by Tolomeo (*Tholomei Annales*, pp. 92-3) and the 15th-century chronicle by Sercambi (Bongi, *Le croniche* I, 12-5).
[59] *Sanzanomis*, pp. 3-5; see also *Annales Florentini I*, p. 3; Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 393-5 and 397-9.
[60] *Sanzanomis*, p. 2, lines 28-9. The hearing of witnesses, concerning a dispute on the rights of patronage over the nunnery of Rosano (Rignano sull'Arno), has been edited by Bagnai Losacco, *La disputa*; among other depositions,

was probably thinking of the highly-institutionalised consulate of the early 1200s when writing about the *consules* preparing the siege of Fiesole,[61] and nothing suggests that those consuls were already regularly-rotating city rulers in the 1120s – tellingly, Sanzanome himself did not cite any consuls when describing the military campaign that followed the devastation of Fiesole and ended with the destruction of the castle of Montebuoni (1135), in Val di Greve.[62]

the destruction of Fiesole was mentioned by the abbess of Rosano, Sofia, who was more than eighty years old at the time of the dispute (ibid., p. 249). Despite the undeniable importance of the event, I can hardly agree with Robert Davidsohn's claim that the destruction of Fiesole was remembered as a glorious event by the elderly people living at the beginning of the 13th century – an event which 'glowed through the fog of juvenile memories' (Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 397). During the hearing, the military campaigns conducted by the Florentine armies were cited by the witnesses in order to make it clear how far back their memory stretched (*recordatur a*…); indeed, other Florentine wars of the 12th century were mentioned with the same aim, and Fiesole did not stand out as the most important one (a list of those mentions is provided by Bagnai Losacco, *La disputa*, pp. XXIV-V, note 83).

[61] Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 263-4.

[62] *Sanzanomis*, p. 5, lines 24-30.



3. *The dioceses of Florence and Fiesole (adapted from Wickham,* Legge*, p. 446)*

We need to wait until 1138 to read, for the first time, the names of the Florentine consuls (Burello, Florenzo, Broccardo and Servolo, whose families and social backgrounds are, unfortunately, almost impossible to track down) as reported in two documents redacted, respectively, in March and June of that year. In the former, they appeared as witnesses of a deed stipulated in S. Genesio involving, on the one hand, two lay aristocrats holding signorial rights on the castle of Lucardo (in the Chianti region) and, on the other, the consul of Lucca Baldiccione; in the latter, the Florentine consuls signed a pact with Uguccione IV degli Aldobrandeschi, head of the powerful family of counts whom we mentioned while discussing

Lucca, and whose most substantial landholding was located in southern Tuscany.[63] Both documents followed the military expedition of Henry the Proud, duke of Bavaria (1137), who came to Italy in order to restore the authority of Marquis Engelberto in *Tuscia* after Engelberto had fled the region. Henry eventually succeeded and joined Emperor Lothar III in his campaign against the Normans, in southern Italy. His success was, however, very ephemeral; Engelberto was never attested again as marquis in *Tuscia*, and Henry himself seems to have taken up the office; but the latter died in 1139, only one year after Lothar III.[64]

The 1138 documents have been interpreted as part of the agreements reached after the talks held in S. Genesio where the representatives of Lucca, Pisa, Florence and Siena gathered in order to take measures if Henry had become emperor after Lothar's death – at least arguably, for the two charters discussed here are the only evidence of the meeting and they do not state explicitly the reasons for it. If this explanation is true, we might say, in hindsight, that there was no need for such a meeting – it was Conrad III who was elected emperor and Henry the Proud died soon after, as we have just seen. But what is relevant to our topic is that the Florentine consuls seem to have been nothing more than ambassadors representing the city in negotiations involving Tuscan aristocracies, either of local level (such as the family of lords in Lucardo) or of regional importance (such as the Aldobrandeschi).[65] Nothing suggests, here, that being a consul in the 1130s meant to be the member of an organised and stable institutional body.

The best argument in favour of the low degree of institutionalisation of the consulate, however, is that no consul appears again in our sources until the 1170s. It is likely that this rather surprising 'evanescence' (in Faini's own words) of consuls up to the late 12th century partly depended on accidental gaps in our documentation, for it is really difficult to think that Florence lacked any formal authority for *c.* fifty years – even an assembly, such as that described as a *consilium* by Sanzanome, is never recorded outside the *Gesta*. This is a delay that has largely attracted the attention of historians over the years, especially in the light of the huge demographic and economic development of late medieval Florence, which makes the long-standing evanescence of the Florentine commune even more striking. In this sense, the sudden change that took place in the 1170s requires also a wider explanation, one that is not

[63] The former document is edited in MD IV/2, 172-3, no. CXXII (1138 March 19); the second one in Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 2-3, no. II (1138 June 4).
[64] On Henry in the capacity of marquis cf. *Historia Welforum*, p. 466, §23, *a.* 1136; cf. in general Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 420-5.
[65] Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 424-5; Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 264-6; on the latter document cf. Collavini, '*"Honorabilis domus"*', pp. 178-80.

based exclusively on the absence of sources (although, to repeat, this absence does have to be taken into account, and I shall flesh out this point later on).

Facts first. In 1170, the Florentine armies destroyed the castle of Figline (south-east of the city), where the bishop of Fiesole wished to move his seat with papal consent (the cathedral that had been founded to this end three years before was taken down too). In 1171, the Pisans swore to stick to the military agreement they had concluded with Florence, and this was the first 'international' treaty which Florence stipulated – or, at least, the first which has been preserved in the archives. In December 1172, the first consular court-case surfaces from the charters of the Badia a Settimo (cf. chapter 3.2.1). From the same year on, consuls appear for the first time as an organised and stable office, and we can also track down their family and social background. Finally, from 1173 onwards a new formula, stating the authority of the consuls (along with that of kings and emperors, which was never rejected) started to be used consistently at the bottom of notarial charters: 'under the penalty and the power of the king's representative or of the Florentine consuls'.[66]

Communal characteristics, thus, appeared quite late – but also quite suddenly – in the early 1170s. To some extent, it seems reasonable to think that the rapid institutionalisation of the city government was due to the power-vacuum following Frederick I's retreat to Germany in 1167, and to the disastrous aftermath of the military campaign in Tuscany undertaken by his representative Christian of Mainz in 1171 – engendering the wars briefly discussed in the section on Lucca, which came to an end four years later, thanks to the direct intervention of Frederick I.[67] To this, we might want to add the imitation process which probably pushed the Florentine urban *élites* to take the well-developed communes of western Tuscany as a political model – the military alliance with Pisa, the oldest Italian commune along with Genoa, must have been an important stimulus in this sense. However, both these arguments look more like preconditions than like proper explanations for the development of Florentine communal institutions. As we have seen, imperial power was absent from northern and central Italy for the most part of the 12th century, and there were earlier opportunities for Florentine city rulers to emulate Pisa or Lucca – such as the above-mentioned meetings at S. Genesio in 1138, 1160, 1162 and 1164. Even though the high density of assemblies involving other communes in the

[66] On the date of the sack of Figline cf. Wickham, 'Ecclesiastical', pp. 12-3, note 11; on the military alliance between Pisa and Florence cf. Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 5-6, no. IV (1171 July 2); on the first consular judgment cf. ibid., p. 223, no. 1 (1172 December 30); on the consuls during the years 1172-6 cf. Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 332-5; the document containing the notarial clause about penalties is in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1173 October 14 ('sub pena et obligo nuntio regis et consulum Florentinorum', where *nuntio* has been written, by mistake, in the same case as the preceding *obligo*, despite being a genitive – *nuntii*); cf. also Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 324-6.
[67] Cf. *supra*; Cortese, 'L'Impero e la Toscana', pp. 69-70.

1160s must have definitely played a role, explaining the institutionalisation of Florence governing bodies in terms of reaction or imitation does not fully account for the fact that this process became visible in our documentary record in a few years, during the early 1170s.

Enrico Faini has proposed that the invisibility of the early commune might have depended on the absence, from the group of Florentine leading families, of people holding signorial rights in the countryside right up to the 1170s; those families, such as the Fifanti and Uberti, entered Florence ruling *élite* only from that decade onwards. This was the reason why communal justice slowly started to be visible in that period; although it certainly existed before that date, consular tribunals became a reliable location for the resolution of court-cases involving ecclesiastical lords, and so churches and monasteries (that is, the only institutions that preserved documents), only when those tribunals where in the hands of signorial families. Not by chance, all the twenty-one consular disputes dating from 1172 to 1211 regarded, indeed, conflicts over lands and signorial rights; it was, we might say, class identity that made it convenient for clerics to get justice through the commune, and that made it possible for documents concerning communal justice to be preserved in ecclesiastical archives.[68]

This explanation is definitely well-argued, but, although it accounts for the absence from our documentary sets of the consulate and of consular tribunals, it fails to clarify why an institutionalised assembly – the *consilium* recorded by Sanzanome – was equally absent from our record. Indeed, it would have bee

n perfectly conceivable that a *consilium* could have been attested at some point, as in other cities, even if rural aristocratic families were not part of the city ruling *élite* yet. Moreover, it remains unclear why so many indicators of the institutionalisation of both the commune and the consulate (the treaty with Pisa, the first consular judgement, the first set of regularly-rotating consuls, the notarial clause acknowledging the authority of the consuls) appeared in such a restricted period of time (1171-3).

According to Chris Wickham, it is almost impossible to think that Florence managed without a formalised authority up to the 1170s, and that an assembly – however informal and incoherent – composed by the leading families of the city was totally absent;[69] we need indeed to imagine that it was there in some form, although the extant documentation lacks – as a pure matter of chance, in this instance – positive evidence. With regard to the consulate, instead, the main reason for its emergence in our documentary record probably lay in the constantly growing scale of warfare. Florence was in fact almost always at war since the 1120s,

[68] Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 361-3.
[69] Wickham, *Sleepwalking*, pp. 182-4.

but the city seems to have come into conflict with the Empire and the Papacy *at once* only from the early 1170s. First, the destruction of Figline was an overt act of defiance towards Alexander III, the pope who had backed the move of the episcopal seat of Fiesole to Figline. Second, when the imperial representative Christian of Mainz was in Lombardy (in 1171-2), the Florentine consuls do seem to have been fearing his imminent military campaign in Tuscany and decided to halt the reconstruction of *Paterno*, a castle lying in the central Chianti region whose rebuilding could have been interpreted as a form of hostility towards the imperial army. Furthermore, they built up a new circuit of city walls between 1172 and 1175.[70] These precautionary measures resemble indeed those adopted by Pisa in the mid-1150s, when the leaders of the city constructed new walls – which, in that case, proved to be unnecessary; it is worth recalling here the very generous privilege granted by Frederick to the Pisans in 1155 (see above, section 1.2.1.1, note 43).

I would argue, thus, that escalating warfare – combined with the relative absence (and the fairly ineffective politics) of the Empire and its representatives in Tuscany, as well as with the opposition to the pope – played an essential role in making it necessary, for the Florentine leading *élite*, to formalise the governing bodies of the city and to create a set of rotating rulers in the early 1170s – for diplomatic and, above all, military purposes. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to maintain the regular conscription of citizens – as was indeed necessary – in the long term. The new institutional structure remained in place also after the temporary pacification among Tuscan cities brought about by the intervention of Frederick in Tuscany (1175), for it arguably granted a stronger political stability during a period in which the conflicts for the control over the countryside were about to arise again.

Indeed, in the early 1180s the Florentines began to attack repeatedly the castle of Semifonte, in Val d'Elsa, which the family of the Alberti counts had started to build up in 1177, at a time when the Emperor still was in Tuscany, in order to defend their holdings (and the signorial rights attached to them) from the expansionism of Florence in the surrounding countryside. We shall come back later to the Semifonte war, since it occupied an important place in one of the case-studies analysed in this thesis (that concerning the monastery of S. Michele di Passignano; cf. chapter 3.2.2.3.1).[71] What is important to stress, here, is that in 1184 Count Alberto IV finally had to submit to the Florentines and to cede to them half of the profit coming from the *datium* and *acatum* he was used to levying in the vast area encompassed by the rivers Pesa, Elsa and Arno. In broad terms, the *datium* seems to have been a signorial

[70] On the non-reconstruction of *Paterno* cf. the following note; as to the building of new city walls cf. Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 532-5 and following.
[71] On the Semifonte war cf. Pirillo, 'Semifonte', p. 242 and following; Salvestrini, 'La guerra', pp. 179-88.

tax which lords could impose on people, perhaps on the basis of an approximate estimate of their wealth; sometimes its levy appeared to be occasional, sometimes it was annual – this latter being the case with the Alberti. It is unfortunately impossible to know precisely the sum total of the *datium*, but a figure close to the £400 of Pisan *denarii* that Alberto IV promised to pay to the Florentines every year, in two tranches, does not seem unreasonable. That the Alberti's *datium* could be shared with a commune, then, should not surprise at all, for *datia* could already be levied by cities too (we have seen, in the previous section, the *datia* and *prestationes* imposed by the governing bodies of Lucca in order to build a new circuit of walls). We can say for sure that the act of submission by Alberto IV constituted a new source of revenue for Florence, as well as an acknowledgment of its increasingly stable occupation of the surrounding countryside – what we can call, from now on, the *contado*.[72]

It is possible to speak of a *contado* of Florence from the mid-1180s also on the basis of the diploma issued by Henry VI in 1187 (indeed the first royal diploma known to have been addressed to the city), when the son of Frederick I granted to Florence the jurisdiction over the surrounding countryside – actually quite a limited one, for it stretched ten miles east from the city, ten south, three west and one north. The Florentine armies were already beyond these boundaries, and the diploma can be interpreted as an attempt to limit this expansion – after all, as we have seen in the previous section, Marquis Welf did a similar thing with Lucca when he tried to downgrade the Sei Miglia to a five-mile area. All in all (and notwithstanding the problems linked to the manuscript tradition of the privilege, which is known only through a 13th-century copy), Henry's diploma was the first acknowledgment, on the part of the German monarchs, of the jurisdictional authority of the city over its hinterland, and this happened more than a century after Lucca was granted the control over the Sei Miglia by Henry IV. It is worth pointing out, however, that Florence was not burdened by Henry VI with any tributes to be paid to the Emperor, maybe as a compensation for the restriction of the *contado*, just one year after Lucca had been granted the Sei Miglia again – but this is pure guesswork.[73]

Conversely, the appearance of the *podestà* was only slightly belated in comparison to Lucca, since the first monocratic authority in Florence is attested for the first time in 1193. From then on, consuls and *podestà* governed the city – alternating – up to 1211, when the last

[72] For the Alberti's act of submission cf. Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 25-6, no. XVI (1184 November); Davidsohn, *Geschichte* I, 567-74; Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 327-8, has proposed to identify the sum total of the *datium* and *acatum* with the *librae* that Alberto IV promised to pay annually to the Florentines, but he seems to have misread the figure (800 instead of 400); cf. also Cortese, 'L'Impero e la Toscana', pp. 71-2. The act of submission was renovated in the year 1200; cf. Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 48-51, no. XXVII (1200 February 12-23); then, in 1204, the Alberti count Guido di Borgognone submitted to Florence in a similar way; cf. ibid., pp. 139-143, no. 53 (1204 October 29-1204 November 7).

[73] For the edition, and the problems related to the manuscript tradition, cf. Santini, *Documenti*, pp. XXXVI-VIII.

Florentine *consul civitatis* appears in our documentary record. This was a phase in which the governing bodies of the city became more complex, a phase marked by the slow emergence of the *Popolo* and by its progressive recognition as a part of the Florentine institutions (the first *rectores artium* are first attested in 1193 and the *rectores populi* in 1197, even if the first *Comune di Popolo* in Florence is far later, since it dates to 1250).[74] The information on communal taxation in this period is quite scattered, but its progressive expansion (mainly in the form of annual tributes, as was the case with the Alberti) was a fact throughout the 1180s and the 1190s – the main examples come from the submission of Empoli in 1182, Mangona in 1184 and Certaldo in 1198, to which we need to add the tax demanded for the reconstruction of Semifonte after its capture in 1202 (although the reconstruction was never completed). To 1198 dates also the first mention of a hearth-tax in Florence, when Figline subscribed to the the *societas Tuscie* after the death of Henry VI. Apparently, in this early phase taxation was not progressive – it is indeed worth pointing out that, in 1187, King Henry had exempted aristocrats (*nobiles*) and people of military status (*milites*) from every form of levy, and that in 1198 all the Figlinesi of military status (identified as *milites* and *masnaderii*) were excepted from the payment. According to Bruno Barbadoro, this type of fiscal administration lasted up to the 1220s, when a graduated form of taxation in the countryside was progressively introduced by the commune. We need in fact to wait until the 1230s before we see the Florentine officials visiting the *contado* in order to get information on the status of people, and it seems sensible to think that the reason for it was an attempt to tax the cultivators in the countryside according to their wealth; the best argument in favour of this (although based on later developments, and thus inevitably teleological) is that in the early 1240s both aristocrats and non-aristocrats were taxed at differential rates, and that in 1259 an *extimum* based on assessed wealth was finally introduced. Furthermore, from *c.* 1250 the taxes weighing on ecclesiastical assets were increased.[75]

[74] On the first *podestà* and the appearance of the *rectores* cf. Zorzi, 'I rettori', pp. 484-8.
[75] For all the taxes and tributes listed here cf. Barbadoro, *Le finanze*, pp. 36-7 and more recently Day, 'The early development', pp. 101-10. As to Semifonte and the officials visiting the countryside in the 1230s cf. chapter 2.2.

1.2.2 A short overview

The emergence of the *Comune di Popolo* is the end-point of the period analysed in this thesis. The transformations in the institutional framework of Lucca and Florence that had an impact on land management were brought to an end by then. As a conclusion, it is necessary to make a couple of general observations.

The first one is the early date of the Lucchese commune and of its jurisdiction over the Sei Miglia. This contributed to making Lucca the main market for the agricultural products of its countryside, a process that was already complete in the early 12th century.[76] Conversely, the late appearance of communal organisation in Florence, and the long-lasting wars that finally turned the countryside of the city into its *contado*, made the integration of urban and rural economies a later phenomenon – but nonetheless quite a sudden one, as the case-studies of chapter 3 will show.

The second aspect regards the appearance of taxation – in the form of both tributes imposed by the Empire and *datia* demanded by the communes – which can be regarded as a consequence of constant warfare. In this sense, the history of Lucca and Florence appears to fit into the model of the 'fiscal revolution' proposed by Patrizia Mainoni with regard to Lombardy. According to Mainoni, the density of references to taxes in our documents sharply increased between the 1160s and the 1180s, as a result of the politics of Frederick I and of his representatives, and then of the wars against them, in northern Italy.[77] The diplomas and the private charters analysed so far suggest that this scheme can be applied to Tuscany too. Did this have an effect on the relations between landowners and tenants?

[76] Cf. Wickham, *Community*, ch. 2.
[77] Mainoni, 'A proposito'.

2

From the early to the central Middle Ages
Land management and rural society in the countryside of Lucca and Florence

2.1

An overview of the *sistema curtense* in the countryside of Lucca and Florence during the early medieval period

For reasons of space, it is not possible, here, to describe in great detail the characteristics of the *sistema curtense* in the countryside of Florence and Lucca during the early medieval period. Moreover, the extant documentation allows us to study properly the early-medieval manorial economy only with regard to the estates of the Lucchese bishops, and some good studies have already done so.[1] We need, however, to set out briefly what the *sistema* was, draw a chronology of its alleged demise and compare it, as far as possible, with the few data available for the Fiorentino. This is indeed a necessary premise to the case-studies of chapters 3 and 4, as I will show that manorial forms of land management were still important in the Florentine hinterland during the late 12th century, and that their influence was not negligible also in some parts of the Lucchesia. This, in turn, is a fundamental element in the understanding of the characteristics of local power, and therefore of the relations between landowners and tenants (and of their changes as well).

2.1.1 Lucca

We can study the Lucchese manorial system thanks to two types of sources: the lease charters preserved in the episcopal archives of S. Martino and covering the 8th, 9th and 10th centuries (most of which, from the beginning of the 9th century, go under the name of *libelli,* the most widespread type of lease agreement in Tuscany up to the end of the 11th century);[2] and at least two of the three inventories of lands, tenants and renders of the bishopric redacted in the

[1] Andreolli, 'Contratti', remains the only complete survey of the Lucchese manorial system in the early Middle Ages. Cf. also Id., 'L'evoluzione'; Andreolli and Montanari, *L'azienda*, pp. 147-8. On the Garfagnana region (which I shall describe in chapter 4.1.1) cf. Wickham, *The Mountains*, ch. 3; Andreolli, 'Il sistema'. A useful informative essay is Pasquali, 'L'azienda'. For a comparative approach covering what are now northern-central Italy and France cf. Wickham, *Framing*, pp. 280-302. Besides Lucca, traces of the *sistema curtense* in Tuscany surface from the charters of the monastery of S. Salvatore al Monte Amiata, on which see now Tabarrini, 'Détecter'.

[2] On *libelli* cf. Ghignoli, 'Note', and Ead., 'Libellario nomine'.

890s. Lease charters are of particular interest, in that they are evidence of the existence of demesne farming, and of the demand for labour-services, already before the Frankish conquest of northern and central Italy (774). It can be argued, however, that Lombrad *curtes* were less coherently organised then their Carolingian successors; indeed, labour was required only in a handful of agreements, and, for the most part, in unspecified quantities. From the last quarter of the 8th century onwards, instead, episcopal leases start to state precisely the number of labour-services due by tenants on the bishopric's demesnes. The most frequent obligation consisted in three days labour per week, followed by two days per week – both burdensome workloads. In addition to *corvée*-duties, there is evidence that the bishops of Lucca were used to demanding a share of the harvest in return for the leasing out of vineyards (½ was the most recurrent fraction), whereas they resorted to both fixed rents and share tenancies in order to collect grain from their holdings. Rents in money feature in the charters, too, but are sparsely documented.[3]

We can conclude that the Carolingians appear to have turned into a system of land exploitation a type of tenancy relation that existed already in the Lombard period, but was less structured. This emerges also from the first of the three inventories redacted in the 890s, known as the *inventarium episcopatus*. In the *inventarium*, the most recurrent *corvée*-obligation weighing on the bishopric's leaseholders consisted, again, in three days labour per week (fifty-five entries out of 155), followed by twelve and seven weeks of work per year (eight entries in total); it needs stressing that the *inventarium* testifies to the enduring demand for unspecified quantities of *corvées*, but only in a few cases (thirteen entries). Common impositions consisted also in the provision of half of the wine and cereals, some eggs and animals.[4] The second inventory, the *breve de feora*, enumerates the beneficiaries of fiefs ceded away by the bishops of Lucca, which were apparently rent-free; the information it contains about the renders owed by tenant cultivators to fief-holders, however, does point to the persisting influence of the manorial model among them, especially in the form of annual *corvée*-duties. The third inventory, the *breve de multis pensionibus*, is the least useful to our purposes here. It lists people who had managed to gain substantial grants (including small churches, servants and groups of tenant-houses) from the bishopric in return for cash rents and, more rarely, for oil, half of the wine and the third part of every agricultural product. Only one tenant, a certain Roffredo, performed three days a week labour on the bishopric's demesnes; but, except for Roffredo, this list does not concern the strata of the peasantry burdened with *corvée*-duties, which means that it can hardly be used to track down the evolution of the *sistema curtense*.[5] On top of all this, it has to be noted that none of the three inventories include references to unfree

[3] On the Lombard contracts cf. Andreolli, 'Contratti', pp. 73-91; on 9th-century lease charters envisaging *corvées* cf. ibid., p. 119; for other obligations cf. ibid., pp. 92-3. For an overview cf. Id., 'L'evoluzione'.
[4] The edition is *Inventari*, pp. 205-24, no. XI/1. Cf. the relevant table in Andreolli, 'Contratti'.
[5] The *breve de feora* is edited in *Inventari*, pp. 225-46, no. XI/2. Cf. the relevant table in Andreolli, 'Contratti', and also Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, pp. 71-6. The *breve de multis pensionibus* is edited in Tomei, 'Un nuovo', pp. 589-602.

people exclusively employed in the cultivation of manorial demesnes – that is, who lived at the expense and/or in the house of their manorial lord, and who can be understood as proper slaves. This may have derived from the fact that demesnes were small and scattered among many independent properties – indeed, fragmented patterns of landowning had always been a feature of the Lucchesia, and of the Sei Miglia in particular. As a consequence, the heavy workloads recorded within the *inventarium* and the lease charters must have been sufficient to exploit demesnes fully.[6]

From 907, contracts envisaging *corvée*-work ceased abruptly, and the vast majority of episcopal leases of the 10th century (and indeed up to the 1070s) were granted in return for rents in money – a process that has parallels in northern Italy and the Amiata region, in southern Tuscany.[7] Moreover, the vast majority of the episcopal leases of the 10th century (75-80%) were stipulated with non-cultivators; in particular, the period stretching from the 940s to the 1020s was marked by the massive leasing out of baptismal churches (*pievi*), and of the ecclesiastical tithes connected to them, in favour of the members of the lay aristocracy.[8] Those leases can be ascribed to the category of *Großlibellen*, a word coined by Robert Endres to designate the concession of substantial estates ('big *libelli*') to wealthy clients who did not cultivate land themselves. It follows that the first thing we need to consider when studying the post-900 *sistema curtense* in the Lucchesia is the scarcity of charters addressed to cultivators over that period, which makes it extremely difficult to examine the evolution of land-management patterns. With regard to this, Bruno Andreolli maintained that the disappearance of labour from leases was motivated by the stabilisation of manorial estates from 900 onwards. According to Andreolli, landowners had already absorbed a high number of peasants into the *sistema curtense* by giving them some land in return for a rent (often consisting in the performance of labour-services); this process of expansion had indeed come to an end by the beginning of the 10th century, and tenancy relations had become customary thenceforth.[9] To me, it is difficult to accept that manorial estates ceased to grow in size because they were (so to speak) already operating at full power; there is no real evidence of it and, moreover, this would have hardly been the case with *all* the *curtes* of Tuscany and northern Italy.

In fact, the short answer to this problem is that we cannot propose any conclusive argument about the fate of the Lucchese bishops' manors in the 10th century, due to the lack of

[6] Some remarks on tenants' worlkloads in early-medieval Lucchesia in Collavini, 'La condizione', pp. 343-4; on fragmentation cf. Wickham, *The Mountains*, p. 27; Id., *Community*, pp. 21-3 (with an example from the late 11th century).
[7] Cf. Violante, *La società*, pp. 91-8; Fumagalli, *Coloni*, pp. 31-49; Andreolli and Montanari, *L'azienda*, pp. 201-13. The edition of the 907 document is MDL V/3, 44-5, no. 1108 (907 July 25).
[8] Cf. the Endres, 'Das Kirchengut', in particular the table at p. 277; more recently Tomei, 'Alle radici', esp. pp. 401-4 and *passim*. The drop in the percentage of *libelli* addressed to cultivators has parallels in other Tuscan documentary sets (with the sole exception of Volterra); cf. Rossetti, 'Società', pp. 259-83.
[9] Andreolli, 'L'evoluzione', pp. 119-20.

contracts with cultivators and inventories of renders.[10] It is nonetheless possible to make hypotheses, and try to explain, at least, the absence of documents that could have shed light on the patterns of landholding. Indeed, it has to be noted that around the year 900 a phase of political turmoil put the Lucchese bishops in a weak political position; they needed to secure the allegiance of their lay clienteles, as is best proved by the leasing out of *pievi* and ecclesiastical tithes.[11] One can assume that the beneficiaries of *Großlibellen* came to act as intermediaries between the cultivators and the prelates, and that this accounts for the disappearance of episcopal leases stipulated directly with cultivators. It cannot be excluded, moreover, that the substantial concession of lands to local magnates led to the dismembering of the bishopric's bipartite estates, bringing to an end, thereby, the structural link between tenures and demesnes based on *corveé*-work.

That the manorial system must have come to an end emerges clearly only from the 12th-century Lucchese *tenimenta* – a new type of contract addressed to cultivators, testifying to the landowners' renewed effort to control directly the production process – as well as from the inventories of renders that were redacted from the 1180s onwards (some of which I shall analyse later on). Indeed, the demand for *corvée*-work was almost completely absent at that point.[12] Overall, it is at least possible to suppose that the massive leasing out of the prelates' estates to local magnates actually led to the decline of the classic manor in the 10th and 11th centuries. It needs stressing, at any rate, that this interpretative line applies to the landed estates of the Lucchese bishops, the only ones that are continuously documented from the early to the central Middle Ages. It is one possible model of explanation, and other landowning institutions could have well followed different paths. For instance, we shall see in chapter 4.2.1 that the canons of S. Martino came to own bipartite estates just in the early 10th century, when those of the bishops were presumably on the wane; and that, if not the demand for *corvée*-work, at least the legacy of the manor was still important at the end of the 12th century in, at least, one of the canons' landed properties. Besides, the Florentine countryside offers us a totally different picture of these developments.

[10] I agree here with Wickham, *The Mountains*, p. 84, who argues that the Lucchese manor 'clearly disappears into nothing'.
[11] On this political phase cf. Cammarosano, *Nobili*, pp. 208-9.
[12] Cf. again Kotel'nikova, *Mondo*, pp.26-7, and *infra*. As to *tenimenta* (they will be discussed at length in chapters 3 and 4) cf. Jones, 'An Italian'.

2.1.2 Florence

It will take much less space to discuss the *sistema curtense* in the early medieval Fiorentino. Notarial charters are almost completely absent up to the end of the 10th century, and become really abundant only in the following century – this is mostly due, furthermore, to one monastic institution, the abbey of S. Michele di Passignano, which has preserved more than 50% of the Florentine documents for the 11th and 12th centuries. Carolingian inventories of lands and renders are, moreover, completely absent. It is not possible, therefore, to examine how the forms of land management actually worked from the 8th to the 10th century, and the scholarship on this subject has indeed always focused on the period from *c.* 1000 onwards. We have already seen in chapter 1.1 that the classic account on the Florentine countryside written in 1965 by Elio Conti described the dissolution of the *mansi*, the basic tenant-plots which manorial estates were composed of, on the basis of a mere hypothesis; Conti could only assume that the highly-fragmented patterns of landowning and landholding, which surfaced from the charters of Passignano redacted after the year 1000, were the result of the transformations underwent by early-medieval, originally-coherent *mansi* over the decades.[13]

We can say for sure that the scanty evidence on the 10th century reveals the presence of the manorial model in some parts of the Fiorentino. This surfaces, in particular, from the documentation of the city abbey of S. Maria in Florence, known as the Badia fiorentina. Between 978 and 1009, Countess Willa (wife of the marquis of *Tuscia* Uberto), Marquis Ugo and Marquis Bonifacio donated to the monastery a series of manorial estates, originally belonging to the State domain, composed of demesnes and tenant-plots ('domnicatis quam et massariciis') and located in the Valdarno and the Chianti region. Also, in 998 Ugo bestowed lands to the monastery of S. Michele di Marturi, again in Chianti, including the 'casa et curte domnicata' of Marturi, together with the castle within which the monastery had been built.[14]

The available evidence, thus, suggests that, in the outskirts of Florence and south of the city, the *sistema curtense* did exist on the eve of the 11th century. Do we know if, and when, this model came to an end? We owe to Enrico Faini the most recent analysis of this problem. He has shown, convincingly, that the terminology of the 'classic' manor (above all, that consisting in the mention of *terra dominica*, manorial demesne) had almost completely disappeared by 1150. Faini's data are particularly important as they have been drawn from the documents of all the major

[13] 'As a result of deep and centuries-long transformations, [the dissolution of the *mansus*] is veiled by the mystery which characterises fundamental historical processes' (Conti, *La formazione* I, 289).
[14] *Badia* I, 10-7, no. 5 (978 May 31), 24-9, no. 8 (995 April 27), 36-40, no. 11 (997 January); for Bonifacio's donation cf. ibid. I, 52-5, no. 19 (1009 August 12). On Marturi cf. Cortese, *Signori*, pp. 3-6.

ecclesiastical institutions of the Fiorentino during the central centuries of the Middle Ages.[15] It has to be noted, nonetheless, that the sources at our disposal may not always be a good guide to the patterns of demesne farming. Indeed, the inventories of lands and renders that were redacted in the decades bestriding the 12th and the 13th centuries, and, albeit to a lesser extent, the *tenimentum* contracts stipulated throughout the 12th century point to the presence of a *curtense* organisation also after 1150, and so after the disappearance of the manorial lexicon.

In view of this, chapter 3 will be mostly focused on manorial forms of land management over the years 1180-1230 in the Valdarno and the Chianti region, and on their mutations. Here, we need to set this array of questions about farming regimes against a wider background; that of the development of rural lordship, the major social and political transformation of the Tuscan (one may well say European) countryside during the central medieval period. Like the *sistema curtense*, it is essential to get it straight in order to frame properly the case-studies of chapters 3 and 4.

2.2
The origins of the signorial mutation
The countryside of Lucca and Florence (11th-12th centuries)

In chapter 1.2 I described the break up of the Carolingian political structure (an effective framework for the exertion of power in *Tuscia* up to the 1070s-1080s) from the standpoint of the cities of Florence and Lucca, with regard to the slow emergence of their self-governing bodies, to their military expansion in the surrounding countryside and, at a later stage, to the development of an increasingly-complex tax system. This process was, in its first phases at least, a reaction to the (more or less complete) disintegration of the extant administrative hierarchies, and indeed the cities' *élites* became aware of their role as 'new' and independent rulers only over time.[16] Here, we need to discuss the other main outcome of this reaction; the formation of *signorie*, that is, in very general terms, of local structures of power in the countryside which resulted – albeit at very different times from region to region, as we shall see – from the collapse of the relatively coherent polity represented by the March.

This has been beyond doubt one of the most-debated topics of the social and economic history of the Middle Ages. In particular, the debate over the 'fragmentation of powers' in medieval Europe was fostered by Marc Bloch's landmark book, *La société féodale* (1940); in Bloch's view, such a fragmentation was made possible by a political system where the main expression of

[15] Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 51-3; his data are based on the charters of Passignano, the chapter house of Florence, S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono, S. Maria di Firenze (the so-called Badia fiorentina), the *Bullettone*, San Pietro in Luco di Mugello, S. Cassiano a Montescalari, S. Maria di Vallombrosa.
[16] For this interpretative framework see in general Wickham, *Sleepwalking*.

power was constituted by the ownership of land, rather than by taxation. Then, in the aftermath of World War II, *La société aux XI^e et XII^e siècles dans la région mâconnaise* by Georges Duby (1953) set a model for all the regional monographs on the 'feudal revolution' which followed. Duby's work showed in a masterly manner how the counts of Mâcon endeavoured to keep hold of their jurisdictional territory – while in fact losing it at the hands of an increasingly uncontrollable local aristocracy – towards the end of the 10th century;[17] and the impact of Duby's scholarship was such that the debate on the growing localisation of power in post-Carolingian Europe became a French-dominated one. Duby's model has not been uncontested, however; just to give one example, in the early 1990s the validity of his interpretative framework was seriously challenged by one of Pierre Toubert's pupils, Dominique Barthélemy, who argued that the distinction between a Carolingian 'public' order and a lordly 'private' political framework derived from a cultural bias consisting in the use of two modern notions, 'public' and 'private', to describe the medieval reality. According to Barthélemy, if a political change ever occurred, it was above all terminological – with the lexicon referred to the exertion of local power progressively gaining in explicitness; but the basic opposition between lords and peasants as the axis around which the relations of power in the countryside revolved remained fundamentally unchanged. This view, which is essentially centred on continuity, has been contested in turn, namely by American and English historians such as Thomas Bisson and Charles West, who made instead a strong claim in favour of the existence of a veritable political rupture taking place throughout the 11th century and even earlier.[18]

Barthélemy was certainly right when he criticised the excessively rigid interpretative framework of a sharp change occurring around the year 1000. However, as we shall see in the following pages with specific regard to Tuscany, it is my claim that a change did take place, although this was later in time in comparison to France and quite gradual in its development (it is worth recalling again the remarkable resilience of the March in *Tuscia*, i.e. of the originally-Carolingian hierarchy of power, up to the very end of the 11th century). This is, moreover, the main reason that, to me, seems to justify the use of the word 'mutation' instead of 'revolution'; it accounts best for the length of the process. With regard to the other linguistic choice that the reader has met in the title of this section, the use of the adjective 'signorial' (an adaptation from the Italian *signorile*) in the place of 'feudal', it is sufficient to cite here the account on the meaning of the latter term given by Susan Reynolds in her acclaimed 1994 book, *Fiefs and Vassals*. In its

[17] Bloch, *La société*; Duby, *La société*.

[18] Cf. Barthélemy, 'La mutation' (1992) and more recently Id., 'La mutation' (2005), where the author contrasts the alleged feudal mutation of the 11th century with the (to him, more safely grounded) mutation of the following century. Opposite views are expressed in Bisson, 'The "feudal revolution" '(which is a direct response to Barthélemy); and in West, *Reframing* (albeit with notable nuances). For an overview (with regard to the terminology of lordship in the first place) cf. Wickham, 'Defining'.

restricted meaning, 'feudal' refers to the relations between lords and their vassals as determined by the concessions of lands and jurisdictional rights (often in return for military service) which go under the name of *feudum* or *beneficium*. As a result, the *feudum* can be regarded for the most part as an agreement concerning the aristocracy alone. Conversely, 'signorial' stresses the power that lords could exert over the rural population. Not only does it fit better the topic of this thesis, but it also appears to explain best the concrete prerogatives of local power as it was slowly established from the late 11th century onwards in Tuscany. What we need to do now is to understand how and when this process took place, and what it entailed for the relations between tenants and landowners. To this end, in the next pages I shall alternate general remarks on the development of the *signoria* with a discussion of the differences that existed between the countryside of Lucca and Florence in this respect.[19]

The first signs of the creation of more localised powers come from castle-building, *incastellamento*, which slowly began in the early 10th century. We need, however, to be very cautious in the assessment of its effects on social relations in the countryside. Medieval Tuscan *castelli* were indeed unimpressive structures, sometimes simple fortifications of pre-existing estate centres built on the initiative of marquises and bishops – who remained the main category who paid to erect *castelli* up to the second half of the 10th century. Lucca represents in fact a partial exception to this, for out of the twenty-two new castles attested for the first time in that century (one quarter of the total number of Tuscan *castelli* for the whole period, reflecting the greater density of Lucchese documentation) only nine can be classified as episcopal, whereas the other ones were private – that is, their construction can be ascribed to the members of the local lay aristocracy. It has to be noted, however, that aristocrats could be (and often were) tightly linked to the bishops, and that just four of those private *castelli* date before 950. It was only in the 11th century that rural aristocracies became the undisputedly predominant castle-owners, when the vast majority of the *c.* 100 new fortified settlements in the whole diocese of Lucca was built on their initiative – but only a small minority in the city-controlled Sei Miglia. As for the Fiorentino, the first phase of *incastellamento* was marked by the construction of fortifications placed on fiscal land, whereas from the 980s onwards castle-building was largely due to the 'private' entrepreneurship of medium and small aristocracies (this was the case with at least 100 *castelli* out of the *c.* 140 fortified settlements which are attested up to the 1080s). In the last twenty years of the 11th century, the erection of fortifications in the Fiorentino underwent a substantial acceleration (*c.* forty-four over two decades). In general, in order to get a sense of the scale of the phenomenon, it is worth noting that more than 1,000 castles were built up in Tuscany between 900 and 1200.[20]

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[19] For a recent example of the preference given to the words 'mutation' and 'signorial' in the Italian historiography, cf. Fiore, *Il mutamento*. On the restricted meaning of *feudum* cf Reynolds, *Fiefs*, pp. 1-3.

[20] General overviews of *incastellamento* in Tuscany are Francovich and Ginatempo, *Castelli* and, more recently, Bianchi and Collavini, 'Risorse'; see also Wickham, 'La signoria', p. 364; Id., 'Documenti'; Id., 'Archeologia'. For castles in

Castelli cannot be automatically regarded as a sign of the existence of 'private' signorial powers. As we have just seen, the first *castelli* may well have been the seats of the traditional – that is, public and episcopal – sources of authority, and indeed substantial and explicit mentions of jurisdictional rights deriving from the ownership of fortified settlements mostly date to the 12th century. It has to be pointed out, however, that for none of the castles founded in Tuscany do we have an imperial or royal grant authorising their construction; this might of course depend, to some extent at least, to the chances in the preservation of documents with which we have always to reckon, but we need to stress at the same time that grants of this type did survive for northern Italy.[21] By and large, it can be argued that Tuscan *incastellamento* was above all a bottom-up movement, one which did not require to be legitimised by any overarching power; and that, in this sense, *castelli* can certainly be interpreted as a visible sign of the increasingly important role played by material structures in strengthening the control over people at a local level.

It is time to ask what the effects of *incastellamento* on the peasantry could be. For a start, it was on tenants that the very concrete burden of the construction of fortifications weighed. One of the most famous and widely-commented texts on the birth of the *signoria* in Tuscany (dating to the years around 1100) tells us about the peasants of Casciavola, in the Pisano, who had been forced by the lords of the neighbouring village of S. Casciano to contribute to the construction of the local *castello* in return for the shelter provided within the *castello* itself; at a second stage, the Casciavolesi were required by the S. Casciano to pay rents in money and then, 'by way of false requests and deceit', to provide cartloads of wood; but the castle was destroyed at some point and the Casciavolesi thought it reasonable to assume that, as a consequence, they were by then free from the services performed in return for shelter. The S. Casciano, however (even before the destruction of the castle), started to perform acts of horrifying violence against the Casciavolesi (for example by beating pregnant women while they were sleeping at night) and this was the reason for the complaint the latter lodged with the cathedral church of Pisa. This text has been regarded, rightly, as one of the most explicit accounts of signorial violence; a violence which has been generally considered typical of the 'feudal world' as opposed to the relatively peaceful times of Charlemagne. When interpreting it, however, we need to be cautious at least in three respects. First of all, we only hear one side of the dispute, which was hardly unbiased, and it is thus legitimate to wonder whether what we are reading constitutes a true story or not. Second, the Pisano was in fact one of the least signorialised areas of Tuscany, and this should prevent us from regarding the Casciavola account as a narrative of the initial steps of a long-term change which finally led to the creation of an oppressive local lordship (in fact, there is no evidence of such a

Tuscany in the 10th century cf. Augenti, 'Dai *castra*', pp. 38-9 (table 3). For synthetic remarks on the Lucchesia during the 10th and 11th centuries cf. Quirós Castillo, *El incastellamento*, pp. 201-5; on the Fiorentino see the complete list in Cortese, 'Signori e castelli', Appendice 2; Ead., *L'aristocrazia*, pp. 145-154 and 219-20.

[21] Cf. Settia, *Castelli*, esp. pp. 161-7.

lordship in that village). And third, are we really sure that the example offered by the S. Casciano and the Casciavolesi – true or not – is really a good guide to the patterns of castle-owning – and of its effects on the peasantry – in an entire region? If some scepticism as to the opportunity to trust and generalise the content of our complaint cannot be avoided, it is nonetheless essential to note that the Casciavolesi had to elaborate a plausible representation of reality in order to make their claims credible in court; and that, consequently, their story can be regarded, at the very least, as one possible effect of *incastellamento* on local societies, which had indeed less-explicitly documented parallels elsewhere. To make just one example, throughout the 11th century the references to the armed clienteles of lords, composed of people of both free and unfree status – which went sometimes under the name of *masnada*, 'gang' – start to be attested, testifying to the existence of social groups that might have been quite similar to those who were commissioned to beat up the women of Casciavola.[22]

It took time, however, for this type of localised, and rather informal, pattern of power to develop into a set of signorial rights. Sometimes, this did not happen at all – in the Pisano, as I have just argued, it did not. One may conversely maintain that it was just the formal acknowledgment of such rights within the text of notarial charters, or else within the public diplomas granted by emperors, that took time, even when lordship was already exerted in practice. But what the complaint of the Casciavolesi reveals is that a connection between *castelli* and the possible crystallisation of lordships could and did exist, no matter whether this crystallisation was actually permanent. I can say in advance that an indirect proof of this is offered by the Lucchese Sei Miglia, where castles were almost totally absent and so were *signorie*; and that, conversely, the tumultuous construction of fortifications all throughout the Florentine diocese during the 11th century led to a tighter control over some sections of the local peasantry. All this will be discussed in detail in the following pages, however. Now it is time to leave aside the problem of *incastellamento* temporarily, and to try to define more precisely what lordship consisted in the periods for which we finally have less episodic accounts of the characteristics of local power. To do this properly, we need first to get an overview of the whole region, and second to clarify the main concepts we shall deal with.

In his 1996 synthesis on rural lordship after the break up of the March in *Tuscia* (1070s-1080s), Chris Wickham maintained that the region can be approximately divided into three main areas. The first one is constituted by the countryside of Lucca and Pisa, where signorial territories

[22] See the edition in *Lettere originali* I, 151-7, no. 18 (after 1098 July 24-before 1106 March 19); for a comment Wickham, 'Property', pp. 229-31; Id., 'La signoria', pp. 365-7; Fiore, *Il mutamento*, pp. 59-61, 233-4, 240-2; on the formation of *masnade* see Brancoli Busdraghi, ' "Masnada" '. In the 12th century, the word *masnada* could be associated with the status of unfree tenants (although I could find in fact only one example of this, among the charters of the Badia fiorentina; cf. *infra*, note 31); in other contexts, instead, it might have kept the meaning of people of minor military status, as in Figline; cf. Wickham, 'Ecclesiastical', p. 31. The two interpretations of the word, however, are not mutually exclusive.

were extremely rare – the main exception being represented by the Versilia and Garfagnana region, stretching north-west of Lucca. The remaining part of northern and central Tuscany, including Florence, was characterised by generally stronger *signorie* – although not strong enough to develop into territorial polities. Southern Tuscany, instead (the least urbanised and least populated part of the region), together with some areas in the eastern hilly slopes of the Apennines (such as the Pratomagno and the Romagna Apennines, under the control of the Guidi counts), represents the most-signorialised zone of all, and in the 13th century – when the amount of evidence is larger – patterns of lordship appeared to have been very oppressive there.[23] This subdivision is particularly interesting in that it shows how the collapse of a relatively coherent political unit, such as the March, could lead to quite different outcomes at the local level; moreover, and more importantly for the topic of this thesis, it gives us the opportunity to clarify two concepts that have been widely discussed in the historiography on the 'feudal revolution' and which I shall largely employ, those of land-based lordship (*signoria fondiaria* in Italian) and of territorial lordship (*signoria territoriale*). With the former expression historians refer to a type of signorial authority that could be exerted exclusively over the lords' tenants; this meant, for example, that rural dependants could not move out of their tenures freely, that they might have been required to perform extra-duties at their lords' will, that they had to pay in order to gain legal freedom, or else that they had to submit to their landowners's low justice. Conversely, the *signoria territoriale* is the equivalent of the French *seigneurie banale* examined by Duby with regard to the Mâconnais, and consisted in the exertion of rights over tenants and independent owners at the same time; castle-linked duties, for example (such as patrol and wall maintenance), taxation and high justice over entire villages all fall under this category. It is important to bear in mind that both land-based lordship and territorial lordship are principally ideal-types, for it is not always easy to tell whether the typologies of local power which our sources allow us to see can be best ascribed to one model or another; nor we can always understand, with regard to banal rights, if they originated from the devolution of the State or from the progressive extension of the prerogatives originally pertaining to land-based lordship. They are however useful descriptive items, as they let us set an indicative scale of the possible developments of signorial powers, and of their impact on local societies.[24]

To sum up, we can say that the Lucchesia and the Fiorentino were outside the areas of Tuscany in which rural lordship was strongest; *signoria fondiaria* prevailed in the countryside of both, albeit in different degrees (and those degrees I shall discuss at length). There are at least two reasons that might explain the existence and predominance of a type of *signoria* weighing, for the

[23] Cf. Wickham, 'La signoria', pp. 348-51; for a recent overview of the issue (extended also to Umbria and Marche) cf. Collavini, 'I signori'; on southern Tuscany cf. Id., 'Il prelievo'.
[24] A very important discussion on this topic in the Italian historiography is constituted by Violante, 'La signoria'; classic pages in Duby, *La société*, pp. 173-90; see now Fiore, *Il mutamento*, ch. 3.

most part, exclusively on tenants. First of all, as I have already suggested in chapter 2.1.1 with regard to early-medieval Lucchesia, the class of small owners never disappeared in Tuscany, thus strongly contributing to the longevity of the fragmentation in the patterns of landowning and landholding that characterised the region at least up to the late 14th century.[25] In principle at least, this should not have prevented the birth of territorial lordships, which concern – by definition – tenants and non-tenants at the same time; but in practice, in a society where power was based on the ownership of land, this situation surely made it difficult for rural lords to impose signorial exactions over large numbers of individuals, not to speak of entire rural communities. Furthermore, the settlement of disputes regarding the duties owed by tenants to their landowners, or else the leaseholders' legal status, do show that peasants' claims, in both the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia, were, on more than just one occasion, not rejected completely; and this appears particularly significant when we consider that it is possible to read only the accounts of the court-cases that have been preserved by major proprietors (churches and monasteries in this case), who arguably kept in their archives only the judgements that were, to some degree, favourable to them. One may guess that there might have been other court-cases in which tenants succeeded, and the very least we can say is that the peasantry did have some bargaining power, as well as the capacity to oppose lords – the access to courts is in itself evidence of this.[26] The second reason – in fact linked to the first one – that helps to explain the prevalence of land-based lordship in these two areas of Tuscany is the coexistence within rather restricted areas of competing proprietorial and signorial rights – sometimes side by side – which seem often to have been fairly similar in terms of economic and political power. This explanation appears to work well for the Fiorentino, and the Chianti region in particular, where castles – with the sometimes related control over parts of the peasantry – were sometimes so close to each other that none of their proprietors could have easily prevailed over the others, extending thereby their rights of lordship; and in the 12th century, the middle levels of the Florentine aristocracy subdivided among the ever-increasing number of

[25] And this in sharp contrast with one of the regions that have been regarded as evidence of a truly violent turn brought about by the signorial mutation – Catalonia, where the class of small and middle owners was largely absorbed into the group of signorial dependants. Cf. the classic study by Bonnassie, *La Catalogne* II, 576-80. On the Lucchesia cf. Wickham, *Community*, pp. 21-2; on the central Chianti cf. Conti, *La formazione* I, 4, 135 and *passim.*

[26] See some early-13th-century examples in ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1211 August 12 (I. 74) (this is a judgement given by the *consules treguani* in which a peasant, Pietro from Marlia, had to give back to the representative of the canons, the *advocatus* Morroello, one piece of land; Pietro was however exempted from one of Morroello's claims – that regarding the removal of a chestnut-tree), 1211 December 23 (D. 104) (this is an arbitration in which the priest and *camerarius* of S. Martino, Ubaldo, managed to obtain the two pieces of land he was claiming, but was also ordered to lease them out to his opponent), 1213 September 10 (O. 94) (another arbitration which took place in Massa Macinaia where the canons finally won the case, but had to pay quite a substantial sum of money – 20 *s.* and £3 – to their opponent, the peasant Giafferro – I shall come back to this in chapter 4.2.1.3). For a court-case in the Fiorentino where a highly-dependent tenant partially succeeded see *infra* the dispute involving the *colonus* Vitello.

their male members the originally-coherent family assets, thus leading to the fragmentation of the possibly greater signorial prerogatives that they might have exerted as a collectivity.[27]

On the top of all this, it has to be noted that there is very little evidence of the substantial exertion of judicial rights on the part of lay and ecclesiastical lords, and that collective acts of allegiance to *signori* were quite rare in both the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia (in the Fiorentino, indeed, the only large-scale oath we know of was sworn by the Figlinesi to the commune of Florence itself in 1198). In the former, the most-widely attested way to settle disputes was the local arbitration, and this is all the more telling about the prevailingly informal nature of lords' judicial powers (if they existed at all), when we consider that *signori* did not have to struggle with the expansion of communal justice up until the 1220s – hence there would have been potential room for the creation of formalised signorial courts. The only families who appear to have exerted substantial judicial rights – in a form largely modelled on the tradition of the *placita* – were those of the Guidi counts, in the Valdarno Superiore, and of the Cadolingi counts, whose male branch died out in 1113. As to the Lucchesia, we have already discussed the creation and increasing importance of city tribunals from the 1130s on inside the Sei Miglia. There were exceptions to this, however, which were constituted by the episcopal jurisdiction over Moriano – for which we have also a couple of 12th-century collective oaths to the bishops – that of the canons over Massa Macinaia and that of the lords of Vorno, south of Lucca, also entailing some judicial rights; and we must not forget that there were arbitrations there, too. Outside the Sei Miglia, instead, in that part of the Versilia region that fell under the lordship of the cathedral chapter (the so-called *Iura*, on which see chapter 4.2.1) high justice was in the hands of the city canons.[28] In very broad terms, this means that justice – whose administration was indeed the main prerogative of the holders of public powers in medieval Europe up to the 13th century, before taxation became again a structural feature of states – was formally controlled by clerical lords only in a few places in the Lucchesia, whereas it appeared to have been generally outside the remit of lay *signori*.

After the description of the characteristics and the limits of *signoria* in northern and central Tuscany, we need to discuss in what sense it is possible to speak of land-based lordship in the countryside of Florence and Lucca. By and large, we might say that the main feature of signorial control inside these two areas of Tuscany consisted in the possibility, for landowners, to exploit unfree tenants and dispose thereby of their legal status at their own advantage. But this is a

[27] Cf. the genealogical trees in the appendix of Cortese, *Signori*; for their interpretation see Ead., *L'aristocrazia*, pp. 219-20 and 289-91.

[28] On justice in general cf. Wickham, *Courts*, ch. 2 and 5; on the Figline oath cf. Id., 'Ecclesiastical', p. 31 ff.; on the Fiorentino cf. Cortese, *Signori*, pp. 176-90; on the Guidi's judicial rights cf. Collavini, 'Le basi'; an overview of the Lucchesia is Wickham., 'Economia', esp. pp. 411-2; on Moriano's collective oaths cf. Id., *Community*, pp. 89-90; on the Versilia region cf. Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 217-24; the Garfagnana, not too dissimilarly from the Sei Miglia, was mostly controlled by the city even when rights of lordship exerted by local lay aristocrats did appear between the 11th and the 13th centuries. Cf. Wickham, *The Mountains*, ch. 1.4.

problem that needs to be discussed at length, for various reasons. It has parallels in other Italian regions and elsewhere in Europe as well; it has strong links with the 'juridical Renaissance' of the 12th century (in England the birth of villeinage as a proper institution is largely due to the slow crystallisation of the Common law, strengthened in turn by the rediscovery of Roman law);[29] despite being widespread, it took different forms from place to place; and finally, it was one of the main factors affecting the relations between tenants and landowners, and so the transformations of economic patterns in the countryside.

2.3
Unfree tenancy
in the countryside of Lucca and Florence (12th-13th centuries)

To begin with, we must analyse a few problems of terminology. In the Lucchesia, the word which was most often employed to qualify the category of unfree tenants was *manens*, 'one who remains' on the land he cultivates. *Manentes* are indeed attested already in the early Middle Ages inside the privileges issued by the emperors, the kings of Italy or else the marquises of *Tuscia*, as well as within the inventories of lands, tenants and renders of the Lucchese bishopric that I have briefly discussed in chapter 2.1.1. *Manentes* seem to have been the tenant cultivators most tightly associated with the estates belonging to the kings and with the bulk of episcopal properties. No *manens* ever features as the addressee of any 'private' lease issued by the Lucchese bishops or canons, and this, due to the huge quantity of early-medieval charters preserved in the diocesan archives of the city, is statistically significant.[30] A change of this pattern will occur only in the 12th century, and this will be one of the main subjects of the following pages.

In the Fiorentino, the most-widespread term to identify highly-dependent tenants was instead *colonus* (often used together with *homo* in the formulaic expression *homo et colonus*), a label for dependent tenants drawn from the *Corpus iuris civilis* along with other adjectives belonging to the Roman legal tradition, such as *adscripticius* (or *glebae adscriptus*, literally 'listed with the land' he cultivated), *inquilinus* (the one 'stably occupying' the land) or *originarius* ('native'); but we often find also non-Roman characterisations like *villanus*, 'villager' or else 'peasant linked to the estate', *villa.*

[29] The most detailed account remains Hyams, *King.*

[30] I owe this finding to Paolo Tomei, with whom I gave a paper on Tuscan *manentes* at the European Social Science and History Conference (Belfast, 4-7 April 2018), whose title was 'Insecurity of tenure, desire for control. The long history of *manentes* in the light of Tuscan medieval sources (9th-12th centuries)'. Tomei is currently working on an article on early-medieval *manentes* in the Lucchesia. The same sort of connection between *manentes* and fiscal lands can be seen also in the Amiata archival set, although the relative scarcity of documents there (particularly in comparison to the abundance of the Lucchese materials) makes any statistical survey impossible. See Tabarrini, 'La "fine" del sistema curtense', pp. 40-1, note 46, and p. 47.

It has to be noted, however, that these expressions came to be employed quite often together, particularly when notaries seem to have been trying to avoid any uncertainty about the tenants' legal unfreedom by listing every possible word for such unfreedom (as happened frequently in the 13th century).[31]

After the few mentions in early-medieval sources that we have briefly outlined, *manentes* start to be attested in the late 11th century – namely in an agreement between the Lucchese bishop and the aristocratic family of the Montemagno, in which the *manentes* belonging to the latter in Moriano were excluded from the episcopal jurisdiction[32] – and then more frequently from the 1140s. So did *coloni*, even though the chronology of their appearance in the Florentine countryside is belated in comparison to Lucca (they became a standard feature in our charters only from the 1160s onwards). Their origin has been widely discussed, and is one of those historiographical issues that is hard to see in a truly fresh light. There have been, essentially, two major opposing views on this problem. *Manentes* and *coloni* have sometimes been seen as the heirs of early-medieval unfree tenants, who would have survived all through the 10th and the 11th centuries; they are hardly documented during this period, it is true, but this might depend on the scarcity of contracts with cultivators before the *tenimentum* charters (see chapter 2.1) began to be stipulated in the 12th century. This view undoubtedly has its strengths. Highly-dependent tenants always existed, and it is really hard to think that they were completely absent in the long era stretching from *c.* 900 to *c.* 1100; after all, *incastellamento* did imply, in some circumstances at least, the subjugation of rural communities and the creation of harsh ties of personal dependence, as the plea of the Casciavolesi vividly shows. In this sense, the documentation of the 12th century would simply be more precise in the description of long-standing relations between some groups of tenants and their lords.[33] Other scholars, conversely, have argued that the status of *manens* and *colonus* was a 12th-century creation, and that it derived from the birth of the *signoria*. Elio Conti, for instance, considered this socio-legal condition as a direct outcome of the fragmentation of the patterns of landownership and landholding, and of the subsequent attempt, on the part of lords, to strengthen the ties over rural dependants in order to increase agricultural production. Similarly, Francesco Panero has

[31] Statistical remarks on the use of each of these terms can be found in Collavini, 'La condizione', pp. 352-3, notes 59 and 60. As to the rather indistinct use of all the possible labels for the unfree status of tenants cf. some late 12th and 13th century Lucchese examples, taken at random: ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1192 June 29 ('de manentia videlicet omni [alia] colonaria et originaria seu asscripticia'); ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1202 December 12 (N. 137) ('iure manentitie et de omni manentia et qualibet alia colonaria originaria inquilina ascriptitia et omni censita condictione', and thereafter 'sicut manentes et coloni') and 1220 November 7 (M. 38) ('manens et colonus'). As to Florence cf. ASFi, *Badia*, 1216 October 13 ('ab omni vinculo et conditione colonarie, manentitie, adscriptitie, inquiline sive sedentitie aut de masnada') and 1224 March 3 ('ius hominagii et totam manentitiam et colonariam et abscriptitiam'); cf. also Wickham, 'Manentes', pp. 1069-70.

[32] On this document (dating to 1075-80) cf. Wickham, 'Manentes', p. 1067, note 1.

[33] See for example Vaccari, *Le affrancazioni*, pp. 29-64; a rather continuist view (indeed linked to the long-lasting presence of manorial forms of land management) has been expressed by Jones, 'From manor'; see also Cammarosano, *La famiglia*, pp. 43-61.

maintained, in more recent times, that such ties of dependency were mainly motivated by the threat of the tenants' flight from their holdings, particularly towards the cities.[34]

I do not think that these two interpretations are mutually exclusive. To some extent, the *manentia* and the *colonatus* certainly were the formalisation of pre-existent patterns of unfree tenancy, even though it is hard to determine when such patterns appeared for the first time – let alone if they really stretched back to the early Middle Ages. In a document preserved in the archive of the Lucchese canons and issued in 1112, we find the expression 'coloni, quod vulgo maneste dicuntur', which can be translated as 'peasants [*colonus* does not have here any technical meaning], who are commonly called *manentes* [*maneste* is a corruption of *manentes*]'. Thus, we can assume that there were groups of customary tenants (there are indeed no lease charters addressed to them in those years) who were regularly identified as *manentes* in the second decade of the 12th century, and so surely earlier (otherwise, how could it have become normal to use this word in order to define them?), even though we can see what it actually meant to be a *manens* only at a later stage. It is also worth stressing that the 1112 document shows that some people were thinking in terms of *manentia*-based agreements well before the period in which the Roman law developed into a standard feature of the notaries' training – that is, the late 12th century, when an ever-growing number of legal experts started to undertake periods of study in the university of Bologna;[35] and this seems to confirm that, when *manentia* became more formalised and clearly-defined (also thanks to the legal categories of the *Corpus iuris civilis*), this was just a way of framing already-existing relations of customary landholding. We can also get a little further with this. Indeed, even when the documentation on *manentes* increases, one cannot find many leases addressed to them; the new contract of *tenimentum*, albeit being stipulated with cultivators, was seldom stipulated with *manentes*.[36] People swore or declared to be *manentes*, were condemned to be *manentes*, were freed from being *manentes*, were expected to become *manentes* or their status of *manentes* was the object of a dispute, but they rarely entered this group as part of a proper lease agreement, such as those envisaged by *libelli* or *tenimenta*; and, moreover, many beneficiaries of lease charters in the Lucchesia were explicitly safeguarded from the possibility of being 'downgraded' to the level of *manentes*.[37] If we put all these observations together, it seems reasonable to conclude that the

[34] Cf. Conti, *La formazione* I, 179-92 and 216-7; Panero, *Terre*, in particular p. 255 (who however examines northern Italy); see also Wickham, 'Manentes'.

[35] RCL I, 304-5, no. 715 (1112 February 8). On the penetration of Roman law in Tuscany cf. Wickham, *Courts*, *Introduction*.

[36] A court-case dating to 1195 distinguishes indeed between landholding 'per manentiam' and landholding 'per tenimentum' (RCL III, 184-7, no. 1729, 1195 February 28, cited in Jones, 'An Italian', p. 25). But there were exceptions, and legislation was rather fluid on this point (cf. the following note).

[37] RCL II, 145, no. 1239 (1165 August 17), 201-2, no. 1329 (1174 September 2), 317, no. 1491 (1183 February 16) (this is not easy to interpret, for it is reported in a shortened version within a late *regestum*, but one may guess this was probably an oath), 352-3, no. 1540 (1186 June 25), III, 353-4, nos. 1541 and 1542 (1186 August 11), 195, no. 1737 (1195 May 20), 202, no. 1746 (1195 September 6), 229-30, no. 1774 (1196 September 12). Other references to *manentes* contained in the documents of the bishopric's archive are reported in Wickham, 'Manentes', p. 1068, note 3; as to the 'safeguard clause' cf. ibid., p. 1069, note 6. Other examples in Conte, *Servi*, pp. 106-7. *Tenimenta* addressed to

origins of this category have to be searched for in the unwritten rules that could make a customary tenant slip into unfreedom; and that these rules, at some point, began – quite simply – to be recorded. According to the Lucchese jurist Rolando, who wrote a legal treaty in the 1190s in which he described very polemically the conditions of local *manentes*, the main reasons for the limitation of their liberty lay in the tenure of land lasting more than thirty years, a limit beyond which a tenant and his family (as well as his heirs) were considered tied to their holding. Indeed, *manentes* tended not to have land of their own; in addition to this, they might have been characterised by the performance of specific duties, such as cutting wood or digging ditches, or else by the *albergaria*, a signorial obligation originally consisting in the provision of hospitality to the lord or his representatives (even though the *albergaria* was sometimes converted into a straightforward rent).[38]

Despite all these clues supporting the interpretation of *manentia* as the late formalisation of long-standing patterns of customary landholding which could lead to unfreedom, the discontinuist theory accounts best for some other aspects of land-based lordship in Tuscany – namely, for the ways in which unfree tenancies could be exploited from an economic point of view. Indeed, the acknowledgement that highly-dependent tenants always existed does not explain why their status and the related obligations became explicit only in the 12th century; and moreover, it does not help to understand why, in the final quarter of the same century, we see rural lords actively using their rights over tenants in order to obtain economic advantages. They did not do this before; not as consistently and as extensively as they would after *c.* 1170, at least. In both the Lucchesia and the Fiorentino we can observe, for example, landowners freeing their highly-dependent tenants over the period 1170-1200 – sometimes selling them the lands they had previously cultivated as tenants – in exchange for quite substantial sums of money; furthermore, highly-dependent tenants were also sold or pawned, along with the lands they cultivated, during the same decades. With regard to this point, however, some differences between the Fiorentino and the Lucchesia start to emerge. The sale and pawning of tenants appear to have been more widespread in the countryside of Florence than in the hinterland of Lucca. Moreover, the transformations of tenancy agreements across the Fiorentino (which we shall examine in chapter

manentes can be read in ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1206 October 22 and 1212 April 7 (original and copy). It is interesting to note that these charters contradict the 1195 judgment distinguishing between landholding 'per manentiam' and landholding 'per tenimentum' (cf. *supra*, note 36). For a lease charter addressed to a *manens*, which is devoid of any references to the *tenimentum* agreement and envisages the payment of a 'customary render' ('solitum redditum') cf. RCL III, 171-2, no. 1717 (1194 May 1).

[38] Cf. Rolando, *Summa*, C. 11.50; Wickham, 'Manentes', p. 1068; Conte, *Servi*, pp. 104-11; Collavini, 'Il "servaggio" ', pp. 778-9 (a different view is expressed in Panero, *Schiavi*, pp. 203-60, who believes that the origins of *manentia* lay in the spread of the *manentia* lease contract).

3) seem to have weighed exclusively on the shoulders of local *coloni*; the same does not apply to Lucchese *manentes*.[39]

Thus, land-based lordship surfaces as a harsher form of dominance around Florence than around Lucca, but on this I shall come back later on. For now, it is important to stress that both the Lucchese *manentia* and the Florentine *colonatus* appear to have been the tools of new forms of control over a part of the peasantry which developed throughout the 12th century and became fully explicit (and widely exploited) only towards the end of the same century. We can think in fact that such control existed, in more informal ways, already in the 11th century, the 'golden age' of Tuscan *incastellamento*, and I have proposed that to some extent it probably did. But it was only after 1170 that *manentes* and *coloni* became the main expression of a previously undocumented local power. Why was this so? It is convincing, on the one hand, what Maria Elena Cortese has put forward as a possible explanation for the birth – and the fragmentation – of signorial powers in northern and central Tuscany; such powers were subdivided, in the 12th century, among a very large number of people, and this made it necessary for their holders to increase the pressure on local peasant societies in order to preserve a stable political control and, jointly, a set of revenues that guaranteed a suitably aristocratic standard of living. This is consistent, moreover, with the argument about the Lucchese *manentia* as an alternative to territorial lordship, which has been proposed by Chris Wickham in relation to the Montemagno *manentes* in Moriano; since lords did not have the possibility of exerting rights over tenants and owners at the same time, they could just exploit (or overexploit) that part of the rural workers who held some land from them.[40] Hence the *manentia* and the *colonatus*, which were reinforced and formalised by the use of at least three sets of conceptual tools: first, the legal categories provided by Roman law; second, the lexicon employed to identify the tenants settled on episcopal and fiscal lands during the early Middle Ages; and now we need to add the terminology of proper feudal allegiance, based on the values of *fidelitas* and *hominagium*, which sometimes overlapped with that of highly-dependent tenancy. Local lords were indeed adopting the language of high politics to describe and frame the patterns of

[39] For manumissions in the Lucchesia cf. ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1192 June 29; ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1202 December 12 (N. 137) (cf. on these two documents note 30). For an example of manumission in the Chianti region cf. *infra* the documents regarding Zucco di Artovicco. For early examples of *coloni* in southern Chianti cf. Cammarosano, *La famiglia*, p. 56-7; on S. Michele di Passignano cf. Collavini, 'I poteri'; for references to unfree tenants in S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono's archive cf. the documents in *Regesto di Coltibuono*, p. 233, no. 521 (1193 January) (Bugno trades himself and his family to the monastery of Coltibuono), pp. 237-8, no. 530 [(1196) November], p. 238, no. 531 (1196 November) (the last two are sales of *homines* to Coltibuono), pp. 238-9, no. 532 (1197 August 30) (pawn of a *villanus* and *colonus*, together with the lands he cultivates, and of the services performed by two other people – although the Latin text is not totally clear in this respect), p. 244, no. 541 (119…) (here Alberto, probably a member of the da Cintoia family, is granted the 'dominium' over a house of tenants, the 'domo Falcinelli'). Sales and exchanges of *manentes* and their lands in the Lucchesia can be found in RCL II, 183, no. 1301 (1172 May 4) and 244-5, no. 1386 (1178 February 19). The commutations of old renders into new ones will be discussed at length in chapter 3.

[40] Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, ch. VI; Wickham, 'Manentes', p. 1079.

landholding in the countryside; and this could have very concrete effects, such as the obligation for leaseholders to swear oaths of fidelity and perform military or quasi-military services.[41]

These tools all supported the *de facto* rule of *signori* in a context of increased demand on rural communities. With regard to this, I will maintain in chapters 3 and 4 that Cortese's view on the fragmentation of signorial powers – and the subsequent economic pressure on the peasantry – can be further developed through the analysis of the economic transformations specific to the late 12th century. For now, it is sufficient to mention only one aspect of this process, since it is relevant to the issue of the birth of *manentia* and *colonatus*. Economic pressure on cultivators appears indeed to be confirmed by the so-called *secondo incastellamento*, the second wave of castle-building which hit Tuscany between *c.* 1150 and *c.* 1250, which was characterised in the first place by the growth in the number of stone fortifications. Furthermore, the *secondo incastellamento* was accompanied by the foundation of *terre nuove*, the 'new lands' created on the initiative of the cities' governing bodies and characterised by a quasi-urban structure (the presence of a central square, for instance, and of an orthogonal plan are evidence of this), which were aimed at favouring the influx of people from the pre-existing networks of mainly open villages.

The *secondo incastellamento* had quite a notable impact in some areas of the Fiorentino, especially the Chianti region, where it is possible to find new castles attributable to the investments made by the Florentine bishops (namely S. Pietro in Bossolo, Montacuto-Montecampolese and S. Stefano in Botena, built in the period 1155-1224 as part of a wider process of land-purchasing on the part of the bishopric), by monastic communities (as was the case with Poggio al Vento, whose *castrum* is attested for the first time in a charter of the archive of S. Michele di Passignano dating to 1179) and above all by lay signorial families: the Guidi counts founded the (now largely excavated) castle of *Podium Bonizi* in 1155, and the Alberti counts financed the construction of Semifonte in 1177 (on Poggio al Vento and Semifonte see chapter 3.2.2.3). Conversely, the *secondo incastellamento* was much less pronounced in the Lucchesia, whereas the first creation of *terre nuove* promoted by the Lucchese commune (regarding the well-studied localities of Castelfranco, Santa Croce, Pietrasanta and Camaiore) dates to the 1250s, about thirty years before the first Florentine 'new land' (i.e. Pietrasanta di Casaglia, whose creation was decided by the commune of Florence in 1284).[42]

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[41] On early medieval *manentes* cf. *supra*. Remarks on the use of the word *fideles* in the Tuscan documentation can be found in Collavini, 'La condizione', pp. 354-5, notes 68 and 69. Cf. two examples of this use (taken at random) in ASFi, *Montescalari*, 1194 March 2 ('fidelem et hominem'); ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1214 February 23 ('Gerarduccius qa. Domenichi de Buslagno confessus est quod est manens ecclesie et monasterii Sancti Pontiani. Item idem Gerarduccius iuravit fidelitatem suprascripto monasterio'); cf. also some of the documents from the Lucchese chapter house cited at note 36.

[42] See in general Cortese, 'Castra'; Farinelli and Giorgi, 'Fenomeni'. On Monte Acuto and S. Pietro in Bossolo see Dameron, 'Episcopal lordship', p. 144; on Poggio al Vento cf. ASFi, *Passignano*, 1179 September 29 and Cortese, 'Castra', p. 296; on *Podium Bonizi* see Francovich and Valenti, *Poggio Imperiale*; on Semifonte the essays gathered in Pirillo, *Signori, comunità*; on the Lucchese *terre nuove* see Ciampoltrini, 'Archeologia'. The *secondo incastellamento* appeared to have been less pronounced in southern Chianti, where no castle was built after 1150 – with the likely exception of

These structures were not necessarily imposing buildings, but sometimes they were – *Podium Bonizi* and Semifonte, in particular, were quasi-towns, and Poggio al Vento led to the abandonment of the two neighbouring *castelli* of *Callebona* and *Matraio*. Both the *secondo incastellamento* and the *terre nuove* indeed required money, and people to erect all the related buildings; lords could promote their construction for a variety of reasons, which went from strategic and military purposes to strictly economic ones. In this sense, what is relevant to our argument about highly-dependent tenants regards the intensity of castle-building in the Fiorentino in comparison to the Lucchesia, which appears to me as an indirect proof of the apparently higher level of exploitation of the Florentine *coloni* on the part of local *signorie* as we have sketched it out above – the creation of *terre nuove* being, instead, a mostly city-led process. It is at least plausible that the construction of these new castles weighed on the lower strata of the peasantry, as it weighed on people like the inhabitants of Casciavola during the first phase of *incastellamento*.

This brings to an end our excursus on origins. I would argue that unfree tenancy was a long-standing feature of the Tuscan countryside, but that its formalisation, and the exploitation which came with it, were a consequence of the new economic demand of local lords; and that, in this sense, it was a 12th century (and mostly late 12th century and indeed early 13th century) process. This analysis also constitutes a first outline of the basic features of *manentes* and *coloni*: they normally did not have land of their own; their status was hereditary; they were sold, donated, rented out and pledged as real estates; the bond to the land they cultivated is frequently attested, and was probably their most typical characteristic. Finally, the available evidence appears to suggest that in the Fiorentino *coloni* were, in general, more tightly bound to their lords than Lucchese *manentes*. Now it is time to flesh out this issue; we must ask whether highly-dependent tenants were also required to do something different from completely free tenants. Indeed, in the Florentine countryside the status of *colonus* entailed the performance of a set of rather standardised obligations and the compliance with lordly exactions; we lack examples of a similar level of fixity in the Lucchesia, and the duties we mentioned above (digging ditches, cutting woods or performing the *albergaria*) were indeed highly individualised. It has to be noted, nonetheless, that such a fixity probably was more an aspiration than a reality in some cases; it mostly surfaces from legal disputes, in which the owners of dependent tenants obviously wanted to demonstrate that their *coloni* were indeed *coloni* because they were used to doing all the things that *coloni* generally did – hence the creation of a model. But we do need to have a look at this type of source all the same, for this model was at the very least accepted by courts as a plausible representation of reality. I shall do this by quickly examining two court-cases that will let us see in greater detail what being a *colonus* in the Chianti region seems to have implied during the early 13th century.

Volpaia; on this cf. Wickham, 'Documenti', pp. 84-91; on the Sienese countryside cf. Farinelli and Giorgi, 'Fenomeni di accentramento'.

The first dispute has been preserved in the archive of the Badia fiorentina, and was held in S. Miniato (in the middle Arno valley) in 1213. It constitutes quite a rare account of the activity of the imperial court that was located there – the judge, Benedetto, had been appointed by a local representative of Emperor Otto IV (1209-15). It is also interesting in that it shows the complexity of the structures of local power in an age in which the *signoria* had reached the peak of its development. The accuser was the consul of the castle of Lucardo in Valdelsa, Azzo, who was acting on behalf of the local governing body (identified indeed as a commune). Azzo claimed that a group of more than twelve men (some of them are described only as 'sons', without further specifications, and so we do not know how many people were involved) had to live permanently on the estates and the jurisdictional territory of Lucardo; they also had to perform military and castle-guard services, to swear oaths of allegiance ('hostem et cavalcatam et guaitas et squaraguaitas et sacramenta') and to respect the local customs. The leader of the accused, Vitello, invoked some extenuating circumstances, *excpetiones*, belonging to the Roman law tradition (which had become quite common by the 1210s)[43] and then claimed to have been a *homo alterius* (and so not a man of the commune of Lucardo) 'for a great and longer period of time'. At that point the debate started. Azzo argued that the fathers of the accused lived in Lucardo and performed the above-mentioned services, but Vitello and his fellows denied it, with the exception of one peasant whose name was Bertolotto. According to the record of the dispute, '[Bertolotto declared that] his father came from Lucardo and resided there for the commune, but he denies that this applied to him too after he had entered the estate of the village of S. Donato [the church of Lucardo]'. Vitello and the others then claimed to be *homines* of the neighbouring monastery of Marturi. Azzo said that this was true for all of them but not for Vitello, who eventually admitted that he was a *homo* of Marturi 'to some extent, but not completely'. Then Vitello and his fellows said that the emperors Frederick I and Otto IV had exempted the *homines* of Marturi from every tax ('ab omni collecta et fodro et exactione') and, in order to demonstrate that they did not belong to Lucardo, they added that the *homines Lucardi* had damaged their goods during the conflict which opposed Florence and the Alberti counts for the control of the castle of Semifonte. In the end, Vitello and his fellows said that the commune of Lucardo had been demanding from them the *datium* and the *collecta*, two lordly taxes widely attested in Chianti, for twenty-five years, but Azzo replied that this had been happening only for ten years; one may guess that Vitello was probably endeavouring to demonstrate that the commune of Lucardo had been deliberately ignoring, and for a long time, the exemption from the *collecta* decided by Frederick I. The final verdict was complex. On the basis of the privileges issued by Frederick and Otto in favour of the abbey of Marturi, Benedetto exempted Vitello and his fellows from the *collecta*, the *fodrum* and the *albergaria*, but condemned

[43] On these *exceptiones* cf. Wickham, *Courts*, p. 55.

them in relation to the other claims made by Azzo. It is not fully clear whether Azzo was also representing the interests of the Badia fiorentina, the holders of signorial rights in Lucardo, in addition to those of the commune, even though this seems quite likely; otherwise, it would be hard to understand why the monks of the Badia kept in their archive a trial record which proved that the *homines* of Lucardo had to perform at least some services for the local commune (and thus arguably for the overarching lords).[44]

Before making some concluding remarks, it might be helpful to enrich our picture with a second text (which, unlike the first one, is well-known to scholars) concerning another dependent peasant of the abbey of S. Maria, Benivieni, who lived in the village of Novoli, close to the castle of Vico l'Abate. In 1219, Abbot Bartolo of S. Maria called to the Florentine court in S. Cecilia some witnesses in order to prove that Benivieni was a *homo* and *colonus* of the monastery. All the witnesses argued that Benivieni and his father, Rinucciolo, were *homines* and *coloni* of the abbey and had their *resedium* (what we might translate as 'permanent address') in Novoli. This was a crucial point for the accusers; Benivieni, three years before, had tried to move to Florence and this had resulted, as the witnesses argued, in another dispute. Furthermore, in order to establish whether Benivieni was a *colonus* or not, the judges asked the witnesses for how long he had been staying on the *resedium* of Novoli, what kind of services he had to perform in Vico l'Abate, who the owner of the *resedium* was, and under which legal subcategory of the *colonatus* Benivieni fell. The last question engendered some interesting answers, for – as Simone Collavini argued – the judges were certainly making use of a conceptual framework drawn from Roman law, which peasants were not familiar with at all. As a result, three witnesses replied that Benivieni was a *villanus* (a non-Roman definition, but also a perfect equivalent of *colonus*) of the abbey and one of them, when asked 'what kind of *colonus* is Benivieni?' said that Benivieni was a *colonus* – thus making a perfect tautology. As for the type of services owed by Benivieni, the people questioned by the judges made a sort of inventory of the 'ideal' highly-dependent tenant. Benivieni and his father used to build the walls of Vico l'Abate, to perform sentry duties, to swear loyalty to the abbot, to pay the *datium*, to perform labour-services and provide meals, to give chickens and eggs, and to respect the authority (in terms of both criminal and civil justice, *penae* and *banna*) of the monastery of S. Maria. The witnesses declared that they were able to say all this because they either had seen Rinucciolo and Benivieni performing their duties or had heard about them.[45]

[44] The document is in ASFi, *Badia*, 1212 March 13 (Florentine style). This document has been neglected by scholars so far, probably because it was not mentioned in the (otherwise very rich) appendix of the edition of S. Maria's charters.

[45] See Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 240-4, no. 22 (1218 January 1, Florentine style); cf. also *Badia* II, 336; Wickham, 'La signoria', p. 398; Collavini, 'Il "servaggio" in Toscana', pp. 789-90.

The depositions against Benivieni are not followed by a verdict and so we do not know, unfortunately, what his fate was. But this court-case, along with the first one, helps us to get a vivid picture of the Chianti's *colonatus* as an accepted framework for landholding. It shows that this status, in its main lines, resulted from a combination of unfree tenancy with a set of services which had to be performed for the lord; and that the two of them would have been passed on to the *colonus*' heirs. Benivieni's case, moreover, lets us see that Roman legal terminology was adapted quite artificially to a *de facto* condition of dependence, but it shows at the same time that some of the inhabitants of Novoli did know what kind of impositions made Benivieni a highly-dependent tenant – even though we need to remember that they all spoke in favour of the Badia fiorentina, and that therefore their depositions might not have been completely objective. What we can say is that, by the 1220s, unfree tenancy could and did work as a possible model to describe the relations between leaseholders and landowners in the Chianti region. At least two questions may arise at this point, however. So far, apart from the differences between the countryside of Florence and Lucca, I have described *manentes* and *coloni* as a homogeneous group, and it might be argued that what I have outlined is mostly an ideal-type; now, we need to examine the exceptions to this ideal-type. Secondly, we need to face, quite simply, a problem of quantity; how many tenants were *manentes* and *coloni*, that is, highly-dependent cultivators, out of the total number of leaseholders within a given region? Unfortunately, there is no easy answer to that, and the nature of our sources is indeed an obstacle, as I will argue. But we can at least get a sketchy picture of the apparent concentration of *manentes* and *coloni* in some specific places, as opposed to their high level of scattering in other places.

Some socio-economic differentiations among Lucchese *manentes* surely existed. For instance, tenants may have been holding land from many proprietors at the same time, even though they had to reside permanently on just one tenure-plot, and this implied, in all likelihood, that there were *manentes* whose income was more conspicuous than that of other *manentes*, and who were also more difficult to control.[46] However, it is again the Chianti region – and namely the monastery of S. Michele di Passignano – that provides us with the two clearest examples of apparently quite rich *coloni*. We owe to Johan Plesner and Daniela de Rosa the merit of having shed light on the history of Gianni di Giannello and his family. Gianni was a wealthy man from Passignano who owned a house in Florence and was a creditor of the abbot of S. Michele in the years straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. Despite this, Gianni was also a *colonus* of the monastery and was freed in 1202, when he purchased two demesnes of the abbey in exchange for the high sum of £160 of Pisan *denarii* – indeed, it is likely that the majority of the money was

[46] Cf. Wickham, 'Manentes', p. 1073 and particularly p. 1078 and note 24, where a court-case is cited dating to 1193 in which a *manens* was holding tenures from five people contemporaneously; for an overview cf. again Id., *Community*, pp. 21-2.

intended to pay off the price for the obtainment of legal freedom, since the two demesne-plots were described as being of average size, 'mediocres' (perhaps also less productive) in comparison to other properties of Passignano. A personal story which is not too dissimilar from that of Gianni has been studied in recent years by Simone Collavini, who examined the documentation regarding Zucco di Artovicco, another *homo* and *colonus* of S. Michele, who lived in the village of *Valle* (a locality arguably close to Passignano, even though it cannot be identified with precision). Zucco was far from being a poor tenant. The Florentine family of the Uberti freed him from the *colonatus*, along with five other people, in return for £228 in the year 1200, but the manumission was in fact a sale to S. Michele and Zucco came to fall, thereafter, under the lordship of Passignano. He himself was, however, the lord of some *homines* residing in *Valle*, thus sharing signorial rights with the abbot of S. Michele at a local level; moreover, he actively lent money and purchased land, and was also able to move out from *Valle* (presumably quite a marginal place) to the castle of Passignano, where he obtained a building plot (*platea*) from the monastery. All this seems particularly interesting when we consider that Zucco evidently preferred, for some time at least, to pay for the expansion of his landed properties rather than for his freedom. He was nonetheless freed for a second time, together with his wife Contessa, in 1206, in exchange for £28. We know that he continued to act as a moneylender thereafter, for in 1222 he had to defend himself from the accusation of being a usurer.[47]

Gianni's and Zucco's stories were not isolated, but fitted into an overall context of upward social mobility that characterised some Tuscan families of dependent cultivators throughout the 12th and 13th centuries.[48] What is relevant to our argument is that they do contrast with the otherwise gloomy image of the *colonatus* that surfaces from the sets of signorial obligations as recorded in the disputes involving Vitello and Benivieni; they show that *coloni* might have been quite well-off in some cases, and far from landless or harshly dominated by their lords. Indeed, one may guess that they might have even profited from the *signoria*, as long as this worked as a form of patronage which helped them to reinforce their social prestige, and perhaps to extend their own webs of clients – this might well have been the case with Zucco and his debtors, for instance. In other words, neither the *colonatus* nor the *manentia* (even though the latter is less well-documented in this respect) describe a homogeneous social group; internal differences did exist, and were sometimes quite substantial. Nonetheless, we need to wonder whether personal experiences such as those of Gianni and Zucco were not just a possible outcome of the *colonatus*,

[47] On Gianni di Giannello's family cf. Plesner, *L'emigrazione*, pp. 133-4; De Rosa, *Alle origini*, p. 47 and p. 64, note 98. On Zucco di Artovicco and all the related documents cf. Collavini, 'Signoria ed élites', pp. 488-9.

[48] The most recent and complete account on this issue, with regard to the Valdarno Superiore and the Chianti, is the doctoral thesis by Lefeuvre, 'La notabilité' (see for example pp. 62-3). Although it is outside the remit of this thesis, it is also at least useful to cite here the story of Ferretto, a *villanus* of the canons of Siena, whose father managed to buy a landed property and tried, thereby, to flee the tenure-plot he used to live on – it did not end well, unfortunately, and Ferretto was recognised as a *villanus* of the chapter house; cf. Collavini, 'Signoria ed élites', pp. 481-2.

but also a typical one; Gianni and Zucco showed an economic dynamism that is hard to notice elsewhere among the *coloni* of Passignano, and the court-case regarding Benivieni is evidence of the attempt to tame such dynamism on the part of the monks of the Badia fiorentina.

In order to analyse this issue in depth, it is worth discussing briefly the censuses of the population residing in the territories of the castles of Poggio al Vento and Passignano, which were conducted by the Florentine commune in March and May 1233 – the governing body of the city being in the process of consolidating its political and fiscal control over the countryside. As a result, the inhabitants of both territories were framed within the jurisdiction of the Florentine district (*sextus*) of Borgo dei Santi Apostoli, regardless of their legal status ('de quacumque et in quacumque sunt condictione'). Together with the above-cited oath sworn by the Figlinesi in 1198, these inventories constitute the most complete accounts of two single rural communities in the Fiorentino – a similar census was also conducted among the estates of the abbey of S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono in 1232, but listed only six *homines* and *coloni* of the monastery – and they will also help us to discuss the problems related to the percentage of highly-dependent tenants among the total number of leaseholders. After this, we shall move back to Lucca and examine the same issue with regard to the *manentes* of the Sei Miglia.

Let us begin from the two just-mentioned lists from the archive of S. Michele. They tell us that the male members of the twenty-nine families residing in Poggio al Vento were classified as *homines* of the monastery, whereas the majority of the Passignanesi (out of a total of sixty-nine families) fell under the category of *fidelis et fictaiolus perpetualis*. In Passignano there were also members of the military aristocracy: one *miles nobilis* and seven *milites* of the Florentine commune; one person, Dietinoro di Bullietto, was not classified neither as a *miles*, nor as a dependant of the monastery, and another one, Ricovero di Piero, was defined as a *cultaiolus* (tenant) of two other people, Silimanno and Filippo; the names of four widows were recorded too. Tommaso Casini argued that the words *homo*, *fidelis* and *fictaiolus* can be regarded as exact equivalents, and in broad terms he is certainly right – more than one Florentine document from the same period shows that those definitions were largely interchangeable. It remains nonetheless hard to explain why the same notary, Lothar, would have decided to use a different terminology (*homines* in Poggio al Vento, *fideles et fictaioli* in Passignano) in less than two months to describe the rural population of two neighbouring castles – a choice, moreover, that might have created confusion about the tenants' real legal status, thus making it more complicated to tax them accordingly. I would propose that Lothar was trying to distinguish the then-quite-recent lordship of S. Michele over the settlers of Poggio al Vento (it is worth remembering that the castle is attested for the first time in 1179, and that the gathering of people inside it took place in the following years) from its long-standing dominance over Passignano, even though this hardly points to any real difference in the socio-legal conditions of the inhabitants of the two *castelli* and their territories. Whatever the case,

only the Passignano list allows us to get a little further with the investigation of the tenants' personal status, for the archival material on Poggio al Vento is not as rich. This analysis has been made by Plesner, who calculated that, in addition to the four aristocratic families recorded as part of the *militia*, there were at least three other families who controlled some portions of the castle in spite of their classification as *fideles* and *fictaioli*; in other words, it is possible to find people who did not appear to have been as unfree as their formal definition seems to show. Furthermore, we need to consider that the overwhelming predominance of seemingly highly-dependent tenants might have been partly false; it may indeed reflect the attempt to lessen the quantity of taxes that could be demanded from them, in compliance with the graduated system of taxation that was in the process of being introduced in the same years.[49]

These examples bring us back to the issue concerning the presence of apparently wealthy *coloni*, and of their typicality. Plesner was right when he highlighted the socio-economic differences existing among the inhabitants of Passignano. He could not demonstrate, however, that all the other families who lived there and in Poggio al Vento were as well-off as those he examined in detail – actually, none of them seem to have been landowners of any importance. One may object, at this point, that we might simply lack a suitably rich documentation regarding them, but this argument does not work as well for the archive of S. Michele as it would for other monastic institutions; in view of the abundance of Passignano charters, we would reasonably expect to have some more evidence about these people. We can thus conclude that, out of a total of sixty-nine families who lived in Passignano in 1233, *c.* 60 were constituted by sporadically-documented inhabitants, and that the same applies to the twenty-nine families of Poggio al Vento. This does not automatically prove that all these tenants were poor and highly-dependent, but it gives some further credibility to the image of the *colonatus* as a world of potentially tightly-dominated cultivators, despite the counter-examples we have seen so far; and it also suggests that such a harsh *colonatus* could become, notwithstanding the possibly fictitious nature of references to it, the normal way (or, at least, a very plausible way in the eyes of the Florentine governing body) to frame tenancy relations in the heartland of S. Michele *signoria*.

Similar examples of apparent concentrations of highly-dependent tenants are harder to spot in the Lucchesia; the main exception seems to have been represented by the *manentes* of Marlia, north-east of Lucca, where the bishops held signorial rights falling, in all likelihood, under

[49] The edition of the two censuses of Passignano and Poggio al Vento is Santini, *Documenti*, pp. 402-3, no. XXIX (1233 March 16 and 21, April 9) and ibid., pp. 403-5, no. XXX (1233 May 4). The census conducted at S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono is in ASFi, *Coltibuono*, 1232 April 26. On the first of the three documents cf. Plesner, *L'emigrazione*, chapter 3 (p. 88, note 26 on Dietinoro di Bullietto). On the interchangeability of *homo*, *fictaiolus and fidelis* cf. Casini, 'Signoria', pp. 83-4 (and also note 201). On Florentine taxation in general cf. Day, 'The early development', p. 101 ff.; for a discussion of the possible connections between the mentions of *coloni* and the attempt to avoid communal taxation (but also on other possible interpretations of the reasons that might have pushed people to proclaim themselves *coloni*) see the recent article by Lefeuvre, 'Sicuti', and the related bibliography at note 4.

the category of land-based lordship. Some clues might indicate that *manentes* were generally poor; it is indeed impossible to find in the countryside of Lucca, and particularly in the Sei Miglia, examples of wealthy *manentes*. It is certain, however, that not all the *manentes* were burdened with equal signorial duties or were equally easy to control, particularly because of the patterns of multiple landholding that I have described above. This appears to be confirmed by the fact that the governing body of the city had to endeavour to reinforce the *manentes*' ties of dependency towards their lords. The first statute of Lucca which has been preserved (1224), albeit in a fragmentary form, excluded *manentes* from citizenship – and thus from full freedom – even though the statute itself was aimed at attracting peasants into the city 'in order to increase the population' and to demand taxes from them at a later stage (immigrants were exempted for five years).[50] Moreover, it needs stressing that *manentes* were absent wherever lordship was territorialised, and thus more stable and arguably stronger. The bishops did not have any *manentes* in Moriano, nor did the canons call their dependants in Massarosa *manentes* (although there had been *manentes* there in the 10th century, as we shall see in chapter 4.2.1). It can be argued, following Wickham, that this is explained by the fact that there was no reason to distinguish *manentes* from signorial dependants within territorial *signorie* (however spatially restricted they were), since the lords' jurisdiction applied to both tenants and owners.[51] Overall, the best we can say is that, unlike in the Fiorentino, the correspondence between tightness of local *signoria* and ownership of highly-dependent tenants seems to have been less straightforward around Lucca.

This leaves the 'quantitative' problem – that of the quantity of *manentes* and *coloni* out of the total number of leaseholders in a specific region – open and probably unsolvable, essentially because our sources are not always reliable as to the real status of tenants, or else not sufficiently exhaustive to obtain proper data on the ratio between free and highly-dependent leaseholders. We can only observe that both categories certainly coexisted within the same places, even if the proportion between the two might have varied substantially. The analysis we can carry out remains therefore limited to the field of the forms of lordship and of their typicality; but such typicality, with its regional variants, is indeed relevant to our argument, as it had consequences on the forms of land-management and their change, as we shall see in the following chapters.

2.4
An overview

The two main historical and historiographical issues that frame the case-studies of chapters 3 and 4 have been set out, and such a framework will accompany us in the rest of the

[50] The statute is edited in De Stefani, 'Frammento'; cf. Vaccari, *Le affrancazioni*, pp. 83-6.
[51] Cf. Wickham, 'Manentes', and for an overview (mostly centred on the 11th century) Id., 'Economia'.

thesis. In a nutshell, we began from the Carolingian world and from the 'classic' *sistema curtense*, and then we moved on to the dissolution of that political-administrative system in order to see what the 'signorial mutation' in northern-central Tuscany was, and in particular what it meant for the legal status of leaseholders. It is now time to see what this entailed as to the transformations in the patterns of landholding, and the following pages will result, to a large extent, from the conflation of the two themes analysed here. Our starting points are not equally good, though. We know a lot about the manorial system on the estates of the bishopric of Lucca in the 9th century, whereas for the Fiorentino we have only extremely scattered and late information – dating only to the late 10th century, and not exhaustive at all as to the relations between proprietors and leaseholders. On the other hand, data on unfree tenancy in the countryside of Florence between the 12th and the 13th centuries are, in general, better than those at our disposal for Lucca – where they are far from absent, however. We have also seen that the Florentine *colonatus* appears to have been somehow more constrictive than the Lucchese *manentia* (notwithstanding some notable examples of upward social mobility in the countryside of Florence). To me, the reason for this difference appears to have lain in the different weight of the manorial forms of land management in the countryside of the two cities between the 12th and the 13th centuries; in broad terms, this is what the case-studies I have picked up will be focused on. As for now, I shall be satisfied if the reader has a sense of the early-medieval *sistema curtense* and of 12th-century unfree tenancy as two widespread (albeit not exclusive) *models* that could structure the leasing out of land on the part of ecclesiastical owners.

3

Florence and the Florentine countryside
Case-studies (11th-13th centuries)

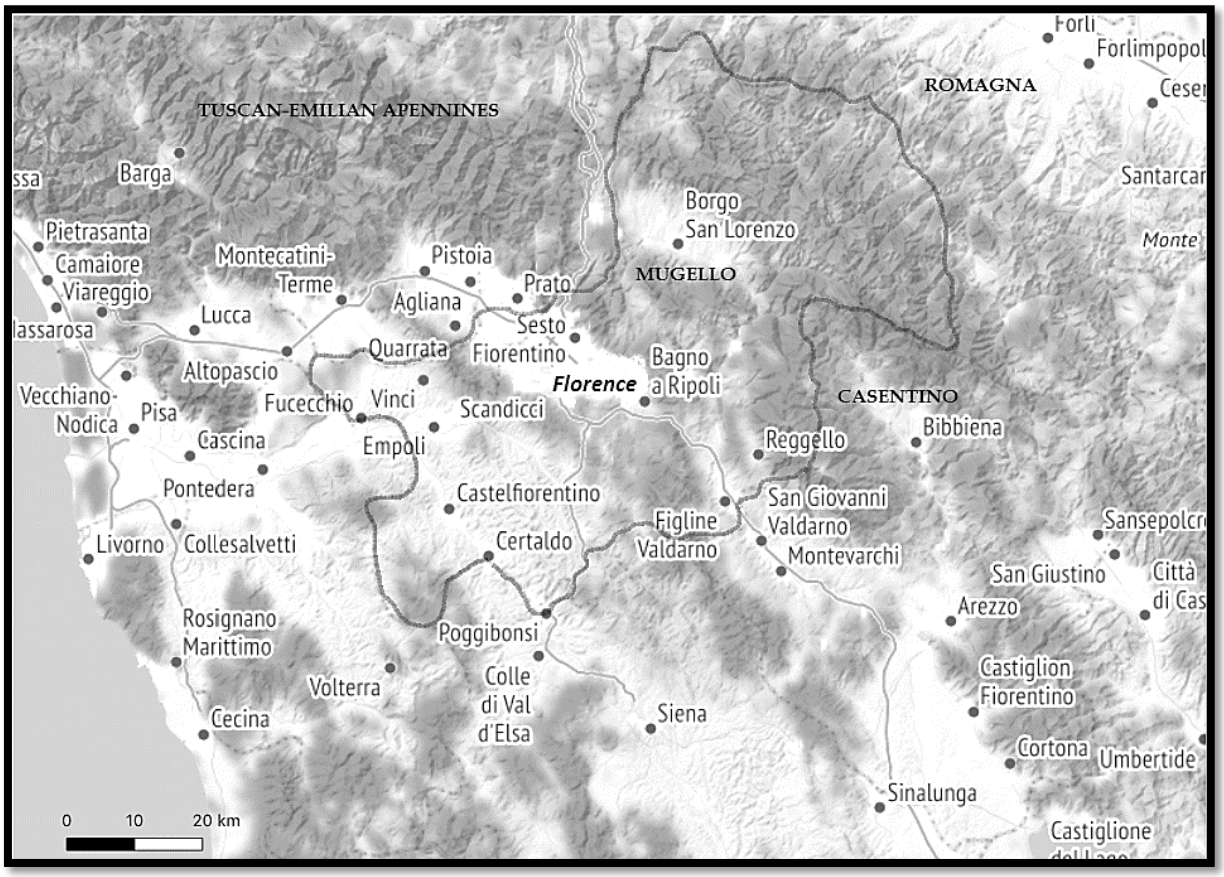
3.1
Introduction

3.1.1 Geography, historical ecology and demography

Up to this point, I have deliberately used in quite a flexible way the notions of 'Fiorentino' and 'Lucchesia' in order to describe the countryside of the two cities I am taking into consideration in this thesis. In chapters 1.2, 2.2 and 2.3, I employed those words so as to refer, essentially, to the rural areas which became part of the political and economic remit of the communal governments of Lucca and Florence. Here we need to discuss the physical and ecological characteristics of the geographical space we are examining, which is the background of any history of land management and of the socio-economic relations resulting therefrom. In this section, I shall do this with regard to the Fiorentino, in fairly broad terms, but I will provide some further details on specific localities as the analysis shifts to the individual case-studies which constitute the focus of this chapter.

In the early-14th century, the chronicler Dino Compagni wrote that Florence was 'poor in land, wealthy in good fruits' and 'rich in illicit earnings'.[1] The last sentence probably alluded to usury (a by-product of the concentration of credit activities inside the city), but what interests us more here is the first part of Compagni's description, which is a quite accurate snapshot of the main traits of the Florentine countryside as a whole. Compared to the population of the city – whose size can be ascertained for the first time, albeit with some degree of uncertainty, right at the beginning of the *Trecento* – this was a relatively small countryside, hardly able to feed the citizens of Florence, who had to import grain from other Tuscan cities and from southern Italy as well. After all, a quick look at today's 'metropolitan area' – which largely overlaps with the 14th-century *contado* and substituted the old *provincia* in 2015 – tells us quite clearly why this was so; plains represent 5% of the land, and the vast majority of the countryside consists of hills (*c.* 68%) and mountains (*c.* 27%).

[1] Compagni, *Cronica*, § I,1.



4. *The approximate area of the* Città metropolitana di Firenze

There were very few places where peasants could expect good returns from the seeds they sowed, which were mostly concentrated in the hinterland closest to the city and in the valley floors of the rivers – this was the case with at least some portions of the lands along the Arno, the Elsa or the upper reaches of the Arbia and the Ombrone, on the southern edge of the Chianti region. Everywhere else, it was almost impossible to ward off the spectre of hunger. Terrains were in general barely irrigated because of the absence of water reserves in the subsoil, and were covered at times with protruding rocks; on the hillsides the cultivation of grain, and wheat in particular, was a difficult task and thick sowing was often needed in order to obtain a sufficiently good agricultural output; tree crops such as vines, olive- and fruit-trees, on the contrary, could flourish more easily – one may guess that these were Compagni's 'good fruits'.[2] On the top of this, it is worth noting that Florence 'metropolitan area' lies in a climatic zone that is characterised by fairly light rainfall throughout the year, one which does not surpass 1,000 mm in Chianti and stays around 800-900 mm per year (reaching a minimum of 700 mm) in Florence, the Valdelsa and

[2] On all these aspects see Biagioli, *L'agricoltura*, pp. 148-56; Pinto, *Il libro*, pp. 73-5.

parts of the Mugello; this is certainly good enough for vines, olives and indeed grain, although wheat-farming could be in danger in case of moderate drought.[3]

This as a very general overview. Let us now have a closer look at physical geography, which has not varied significantly since the Middle Ages – apart from the notable effects of land reclamation, remarkably intense during the 18th century.[4] South of Florence, the natural landscape appears as a chain of hills threaded by relatively small watercourses, bounded by the river Elsa in the west and the upper Arno valley in the east. About 20 km east of Bagno a Ripoli, the range of mountains known as the Pratomagno, easy to cross and indeed almost completely devoid of cliffs, gives access to the Casentino region. North-west of the city a small plain of about 15 km as the crow flies leads to Prato, and one might want then to go through the by-now heavily-populated countryside between the valleys of the Bisenzio and the Ombrone up to Pistoia, just below the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines (and politically independent until the first half of the 14th century); north-east, behind Fiesole, hills bring one to the basin of the upper Sieve valley, known as the Mugello, which lies just south of the mountains that separate Tuscany from Romagna.

Crossing this area during the Middle Ages, until at least the 13th-14th centuries (we cannot be more precise than that), meant relying on a web of minor roads mostly centred on, and perhaps even maintained by, rural baptismal churches. The main axis inherited from Rome, around which long-range transports and communications revolved, was the Via Cassia, stretching from Rome itself to Arezzo and then flanked by the Arno until it reached Fiesole – the Via was thus external to the bulk of what would become the Florentine *contado*, and this is all the more telling for the relative isolation of the whole area when we also consider that the Arno is no longer navigable after Signa (cf. chapter 1.2). Johan Plesner argued that the *pievi* carried on – in some cases at least – the legacy of the system of local roadways created during the late-republican and high-imperial Roman age, but there is little evidence of this, and it seems that that system was rapidly decaying already in the 4th century; what is certain, instead, is that throughout the 13th century Florence became the centre of a new set of arteries which testified to its by-then indisputable political and economic dominance.[5]

It is almost impossible to know how many people lived in Florence and its *contado* before the first half of the 14th century, when the city may have reached the figure of 110,000 inhabitants.[6] We can just make hypotheses. Elio Conti emphasised the overpopulation of the area he was examining for his study – broadly defined by the valleys of the rivers Pesa and Greve, in the

[3] Barbieri, *Toscana*, p. 95.
[4] Cf. Barsanti, 'Le bonifiche', p. 71 and following.
[5] Plesner, *Una rivoluzione*, in particular pp. 68-9 and *passim*; the opposite view, stressing the breakdown of the Roman road system, has been expressed in Szabò, 'Il controllo', namely pp. 28-9; some degree of continuity with the Roman period, at least in the localisation of roadways, has however been proposed by Romby and Stopani, 'Strade', p. 158; an overview in Rombai, 'Per una storia'.
[6] Cf. La Roncière, *Prix*, pp. 628-35.

central Chianti region – already in the 11th century; according to him, this was the major cause for the fragmentation of the patterns of landowning and landholding he carefully described. The 'explosion of toponyms' employed by notaries in order to identify places and pieces of land that were close to each other, but had nonetheless to be distinguished because many different proprietors and leaseholders cohabited in the same zone; the extremely high number of land transactions preserved by the archive of S. Michele di Passignano, which Conti interpreted as a desperate attempt to boost an otherwise-poor agricultural output through the purchase, the lease and the exchange of (often small) rural properties, or parts of them; the construction of many neighbouring castles, probably aimed at implementing the exploitation of local resources; the thick web of villages – all this points to a demographic saturation which, without technical improvements or supplies of cereals from external markets, might have easily led to remarkable levels of mortality in years of bad harvests.[7]

The feeble clues that may be evidence of an increase in the number of people living in Florence date to the last quarter of the 12th century, and are in fact limited to the construction of a new circuit of walls (1172-5; see chapter 1.2) and to an oath undertaken by 519 Florentine adult males residing in the city district of Porta di S. Pancrazio in 1199. New walls, however, do not allow any safe quantification of urban inhabitants, whereas the number of people subscribing the oath may possibly suggest a bare minimum of 10,000 Florentine dwellers at the very end of the 1190s; in short, neither of the two sources of information is really helpful.[8] Calculations for the countryside are pure guesswork, since they can be made only by adding together two hypotheses that are unverifiable. We first need to apply to the Florentine *contado* the ratio of about nine to one between rural and urban population, which has been regarded as normal for medieval Europe and was employed by Giuliano Pinto in his analysis of 14th-century Florence (even though, in view of the high levels of urbanisation in northern-central Italy for that period, the ratio must in reality have been more favourable to the city); and then we need to use the figures provided by Giovanni Villani (1276-348) for the first half of the *Trecento*, which are however fairly incomplete. On this shaky basis, William Day proposed that demographic growth may have proceeded at a rate of 1% per year in the countryside and of 1.9% in the city between the years 1175 and 1325, but it is easy to see how much caution is necessary here.[9]

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[7] Conti, *La formazione* I, 124. General remarks on demographic growth in medieval Tuscany (and Umbria too) can be found also in Pirillo, 'Demografia'.

[8] Cf. Day, 'The population', p. 22, note 79. This hypothesis implies that the number of male adults who subscribed the oath in 1199 was close to the total number of males living in S. Pancrazio; that the number of the inhabitants of S. Pancrazio was similar to that of the people living in each of the other five districts of Florence; and that the coefficient used to calculate the members of a single family (3.5) is reliable. It has also been suggested that S. Pancrazio's male population might have been more than 50% greater than that recorded in the text of the oath (cf. for example Pardi, 'Disegno', p. 23). One can easily see how much conjectural these figures are.

[9] Cf. Day, 'The early development', pp. 120-47; Id., 'Population'; the most accurate and complete account remains Id., 'The population' (see note above).

Overall population did grow, however, throughout this long era, although its scale cannot be tracked down precisely. If we look at Florence alone, the increasing complexity of communal governing bodies and the expansion of commerce are matters of fact, and have to be explained by postulating the presence of a progressively higher number of people as a premise of their development. The discrepancy between city and countryside as to demographic growth is equally indisputable; the reason for it is likely to have lain, according to Day, in a massive migration from the latter to the former. Fertility rates would have been indeed offset by higher mortality rates – the ratio between them being probably one to four – and this implies that births cannot account, alone, for the expansion (which was indeed extraordinary) undergone by Florence in the late Middle Ages. In general, it seems at least plausible that a surge in the overall number of people was moving on faster and faster on the eve of the 13th century, as part indeed of a fully European trend;[10] but we cannot get any further than that, and we also need to consider that population might not have grown continuously. There might have been indeed moments of lower growth, if not actual halts. As we will see in the next section, one of them, however temporary, might have occurred just towards the end of the 12th century.

3.1.2 Famine and inflation in the late 12th century and in the early 13th century

Before analysing the case-studies concerning the Fiorentino, it is necessary to examine briefly two factors – which were, to some extent, interconnected – that affected the historical ecology as we have sketched it out hitherto, and which will be taken into account again when discussing Lucca; they indeed seem to have been phenomena regarding Tuscany as a whole, and played an important role in determining the characteristics of the 'economic conjuncture' of the period 1180-1230, which I have mentioned in chapter 1.1.

It seems that in 1181-2, due to a period of pronounced drought, a great famine hit Tuscany and that, as a consequence, prices of agricultural goods went up. We know this thanks to chronicles: that written by the pseudo-Brunetto Latini, for example, tells us of a 'great price increase' in Florence during the year 1182; a surge in prices, with the wheat costing 8 *s.* per *staium*, is recorded also in the late-medieval translation into the vernacular of the *Gesta Florentinorum*, under the same year; a similar piece of information (with the difference that 1 *st.* of wheat was said to be worth 7 *s.*) can be found in the earliest Lucchese chronicle at our disposal, the *Gesta Lucanorum* (which however can be read only through two vernacular versions redacted in the 14th century)

[10] Cf. Masschaele, 'Economic takeoff', pp. 93-4, in which the author provides an effective summary of the literature concerning demographic growth in Europe between the late 12th and the 14th century. Cf. also Id., 'The English economy'. On Tuscan urbanisation see also Malanima, 'Urbanisation', p. 101.

and in the *Croniche* by Giovanni Sercambi (dating to the first half of the 15th century), who used the *Gesta* as a source. It needs to be stressed that Sercambi explicitly mentioned Florence as the other place, besides Lucca, in which the rise of prices took place – the vernacular versions of the *Gesta Lucanorum*, instead, lack this reference to Florence, and it is thus likely that Sercambi and the translators of the *Gesta* drew from different branches of the manuscript tradition of this text[11].

One would like to know the precise, stemmatic relations between these accounts in order to draw safe conclusions based on them. For us, however, it is sufficient to observe that the charters of the Florentine archives appear to give some credibility to such accounts, namely when we look at the price of land in the Fiorentino during the final quarter of the 12th century. Through a careful study of the average quantity of cash employed in sale charters, Enrico Faini has shown that the price of land increased sharply between 1176 and 1200 in comparison to the previous twenty-five years, with particular intensity in the hinterland closest to Florence (+330%) and less vigorously in the more distant countryside (+220%). This trend, however, did not stop. During the period 1200-30, prices continued to go up, albeit at a slower rate (+150% in both the city and the countryside).[12]

These figures show that famine is likely to have been one of the causes for the rise in price of land, but was by no means the only reason for it. The rise appears to have started a few years before 1181-2, and nothing suggests that the effects of famine were durable; it is worth noting, indeed, that the price of wheat was significantly lower (around 2-3 *s.* per *staium*) at the beginning of the *Duecento* than in the 1180s.[13] Why did the price of land continue to grow, then? We must take into account also other causes, the most important of which appears to have been the debasement of the silver *denarii* of Lucca and Pisa – both used in Florence. Michael Matzke argued that public expenditure was in all likelihood the reason that pushed the governing bodies of the two cities to reduce the silver content of their *denarii* over the period 1170-1200, in order to make the public deficit more sustainable. The debasement slowed down slightly after 1200, but did not stop at least up to the 1240s; not only did it bring about a loss in the intrinsic value of coins, but it is also likely to have engendered, at the same time, a crisis of confidence in their purchasing power (as has been indeed proposed as a possible explanation for the almost contemporary English inflation).[14] This accounts best for what we can call, now, the long inflationary trend of land prices; immovable assets had become steadily more valuable. The surge in the price of lands

[11] For the pseudo-Brunetto Latini cf. Schiaffini, *Testi*, p. 208; then *Die Gesta Florentinorum*, p. 248 (on this two texts cf. also Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 21-2); *Gesta Lucanorum*, p. 297; Bongi, *Le croniche*, p. 9, sections XV and XVI.
[12] Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 111-6.
[13] For the price of wheat in the early *Duecento* cf. Conti, *Le proprietà*, p. XIV, note 13.
[14] The Lucchese *denarius* weighed 0.35-0.37 g. over the period 1160-1181/2; the Pisan *denarius* 0.37 g. in 1164. The former went down to 0.12-0-13 g., and the latter to 0.175 g., during the years 1181/2-1200. The basic analysis is Matzke, 'Vom Ottolinus', pp. 169-79. I take the data from Day, 'The early', pp. 530-2, Table 22. On England cf. Latimer, 'English inflation'.

close to Florence, moreover, does suggest that higher city demand for agricultural goods constituted another major cause for inflation. Owning landed estates close to Florence made it even more convenient to sell grain there, because transport costs were low – hence the particularly high price of landed estates in the environs of the city.

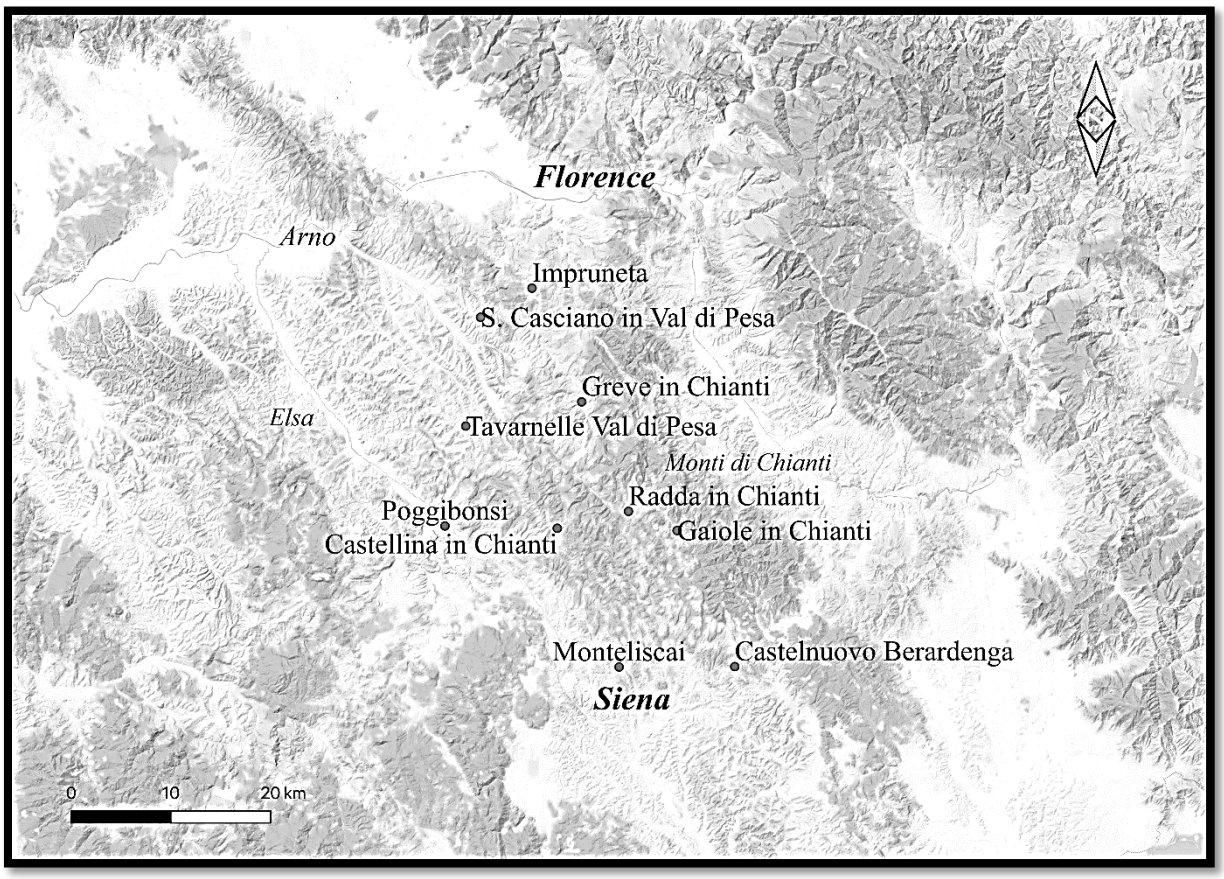
We have thus added other elements to the economic conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, which I have outlined when discussing the political history of Lucca and Florence in chapter 1.2. It is now time to see how this overall context reverberated at a local level.

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The reader needs to see this section as a background to the case-studies I will analyse after that. We shall begin from the hinterland of Florence, and then we will penetrate into the Chianti region in order to see in detail how land management changed throughout the central centuries of the medieval era inside the slowly forming *contado* of Florence and, more in detail, in the area where the first-known *mezzadria* contracts were stipulated. Here, as in chapter 4, we will have to focus on the extraction of agricultural surplus on the part of landowners, and not on the economy of actual cultivators, for our sources do not allow us to penetrate – if not occasionally – into the complex world of peasant activities. Before starting off, it is however necessary to spend some words on what the Chianti is; with the exception of Settimo, the ecclesiastical institutions whose documents I chose to examine are the ones which owned landed estates there – and this choice is indeed the consequence of my attempt to study the context in which *mezzadria* was born. It is all the more important to do so because Chianti does not have any fixed geographical or historical delimitations (it has not a 'main town' either) and is split, today, between the 'metropolitan area' of Florence and the province of Siena. The so-called League of Chianti, a military alliance which was created by the Republic of Florence in 1384, is evidence of the existence of a local identity during the late Middle Ages at the latest. The League comprised the three *terzieri* (localities) of Radda, Gaiole and Castellina along with their hinterlands, and was abolished only in 1774 by the Grand Duke of Tuscany Pietro Leopoldo (1765-90). A second way to look at Chianti is to consider the boundaries, as they were established in 1932 by the Fascist government, within which the famous wine, known as Chianti Classico, is produced. This means to widen the area we are examining, which would thus also include the municipalities of Greve, Castelnuovo Berardenga, S. Casciano in Val di Pesa, Tavarnelle Val di Pesa, Barberino Valdelsa and Poggibonsi. However, neither of these definitions is entirely satisfactory and the boundaries of Chianti are confused even

today.[15] Here, I shall keep closer to the second definition; I will use quite a generic delimitation, which goes from the town of Impruneta (about 10 km south of Florence) down to the castle of Monteliscai (*c.* 5 km north-east of the city centre of Siena) and encompasses the territories between the valley of the rivers Elsa in the west and the range of hills called Monti di Chianti in the east. Not that this definition is any more precise than the other two; it simply suits better the distribution of our sources.

This will frame our 'inland' case-studies. Our first example will be, however, the Badia a Settimo, not just because of its geographical proximity to the city, but also in view of its documentation, which – despite being quite restricted up to the 13th century, when the number of charters progressively increases – offers us a sort of snapshot of some of the main issues we will confront.



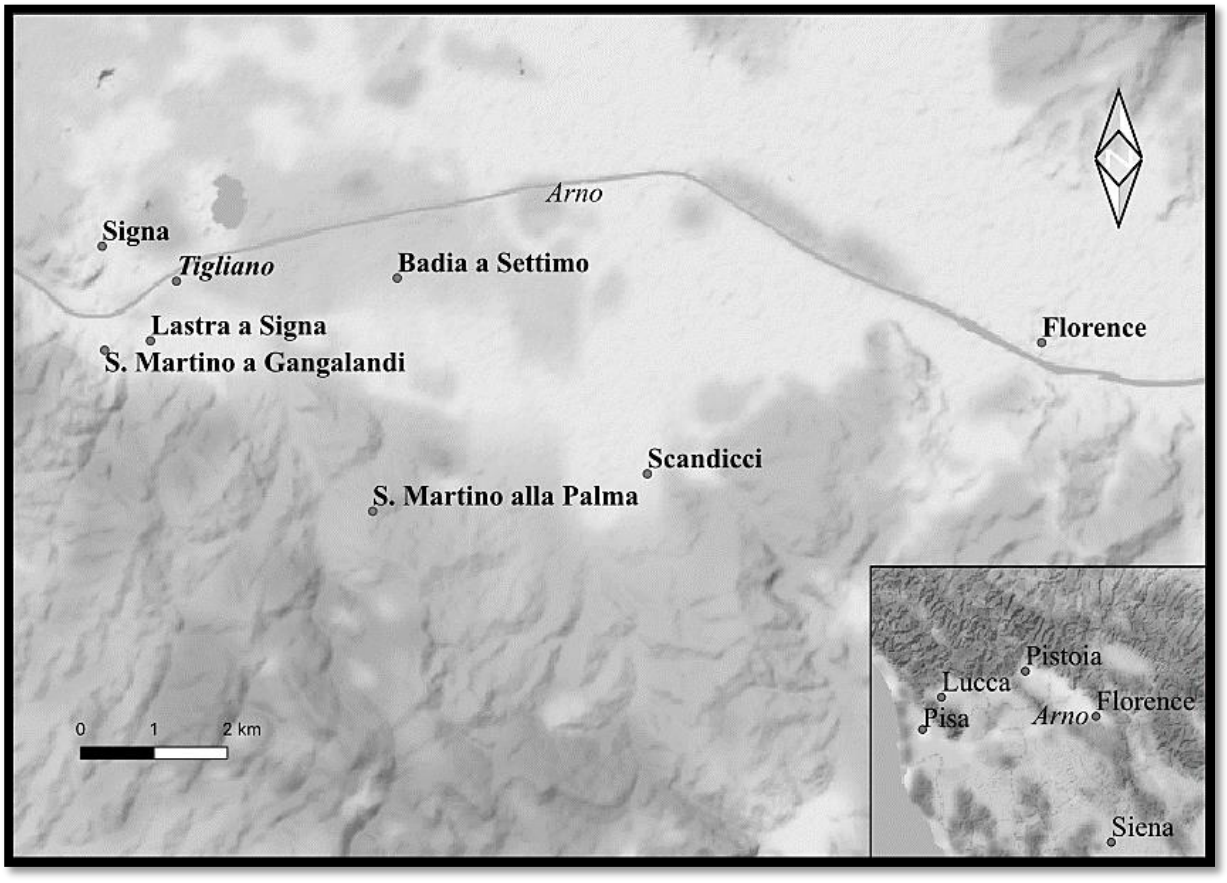
5. *The main municipalities of the Chianti region*

[15] On the League of Chianti cf. Parenti and Raveggi, *Lo statuto*. A lively description of the Chianti region (which, however, must not be regarded as a scientific account) is Flower, *The Land*.

3.2
Case-studies

3.2.1 Close to Florence: the Badia a Settimo

The monastery of S. Lorenzo and S. Salvatore a Settimo is located in the town of Scandicci, about 6 km west of Florence, not far from the southern bank of the Arno. Its charters have been preserved in the archive of another abbey, that of S. Frediano in Cestello (which gives its name to a square in Florence's city centre, now disgracefully occupied by a parking lot) where the majority of the monks of Settimo had to move in 1531, right after the siege of the city made by Charles V. This is a composite archive, for it also contains the documentation of a third Florentine monastery, that of S. Bartolomeo a Buonsollazzo (on the northern flank of Monte Senario, north of the city, within today's municipality of Borgo San Lorenzo). Settimo charters inform us about the two areas where the properties of the abbey were concentrated, which will be indeed the main focus of my analysis: one plain south of Scandicci, and another plain that is more difficult to locate but probably lay west of Florence, in an area now occupied by the town of Lastra a Signa.



The monastery was founded by Lotario I, a count belonging to the Cadolingi family, at the beginning of the 11th century and certainly before 1011, near the church of the same name (first attested in a copy of a document originally issued in 988) and in a zone that was quite important from a strategic point of view because of its proximity to Signa – that is, at the point where it becomes possible to navigate the Arno towards Pisa. The abbey was connected to some kind of fortification, for in 1015 Lotario himself was demanding a rent which had to be delivered in the 'curte et castello meo in loco Septimo'; however, the castle is never mentioned again thereafter and must have soon been destroyed. In all likelihood, Lotario gave Settimo the group of landed estates that constituted the bulk of the abbey properties in the following centuries, although the text of the donation has not survived – it is probably referred to, however, in a privilege issued by Emperor Henry II in 1014. In 1048, then, Count Guglielmo (son of Lotario) donated to the abbey another set of properties in the Apennines north of Florence, but the charter appears to have been invalidated at some point and indeed those properties do not feature in later documents as part of Settimo patrimony. At any rate, Settimo can be considered the monastery of the Cadolingi at least up to 1113, when the last member of the family, Ugo III, died without heirs and the abbey could gain a high degree of independence from aristocratic lay families – although more distant relations with the Alberti, the Adimari and the Guidi are also documented.[16]

Some *eruditi*, and also some academic scholars, have argued that the first community of Settimo was organised on the model of Cluny (with priories and dependent abbeys) but there is no evidence of this – Cluniac monasticism was indeed almost totally absent in Tuscany, and its alleged presence at Settimo surfaces only in the 17th and 18th centuries as part of a rhetorical and polemical scheme opposing the Cluniacs to the Cistercians.[17] We do know, however, that Settimo was a stronghold of the 11th-century ecclesiastical reform in *Tuscia.* One of its abbots, Guarino, made a public plea against the bishop of Florence Ildebrando at some time between 1014 and 1020, because the prelate was married and had children; and it was in Settimo that Bishop Pietro 'Mezzabarba' (half-beard), accused of simony, suffered humiliation from a monk belonging to the reformed congregation of the Vallombrosans (another Pietro) who was said to have walked through a trial by fire, set up against the bishop in 1068, completely unharmed. Links with Vallombrosa were particularly strong, as the redaction at Settimo of one of the five known hagiographies of the founder of the Order, Giovanni Gualberto, in the first half of the 12th

[16] For the document concerning the church cf. *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 3-8, no. 1 (998 July 8? 9?); for the *castellum* see Strà, *I più antichi documenti*, pp. 3-4, no. 2 (1015 May); for Henry's II diploma cf. MGH. DD H II, pp. 361-2, no. 295 (1014); for Guglielmo's donations cf. *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 23-8, no. 9 (1048 December 7) and, for the location of the estates listed within, see Zagnoni, 'I conti', pp. 191-2.

[17] Cf. *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, p. XL, note 120 for bibliographical references.

century, appears to indicate. It was however the Cistercians who took over the abbey later in time, in 1236, on the initiative of Pope Gregory IX, as was happening indeed in other Tuscan abbeys at that time.[18]

This short overview is aimed at providing the reader with the basic information about the monastic institution whose estates will be analysed in the following pages; but these notes are also intended as a brief underpinning of one of the arguments I shall develop as we reach the other case-studies – that there is little evidence to maintain that different monastic orders adopted different forms of land management, perhaps transforming them accordingly. It seems to me that the overall economic and political context was more important in determining the characteristics of agrarian regimes, and also their mutation, than the specific congregations to which monastic communities belonged. This will emerge as we proceed, however, and indeed will need some attention in the discussion of Badia a Settimo itself; as for now, let us get a sense of its documentation as a whole.

For a start, it is not abundant at all. There are at most sixty-six charters that originally belonged to the archive of Settimo, forty-seven of which came for sure from Buonsollazzo (but these may have been more; it is not always possible to establish the provenance of some documents) up to 1200. Furthermore, up to the very end of the 12th century there are just eleven *libelli*, plus two renewals of *libelli*, issued by the members of the monastic community or by lay people belonging to its clientele (and, in one case, by people ceding an estate *to* the monastery) that we can use as a guide to the patterns of land management. But they only start in 1114, and one may guess that at least some of them testify to the efforts made by the monks of Settimo to strengthen the relations with their clients immediately after the end of Cadolingi patronage. *Libelli* envisaged exclusively the payment of low rents in money, arguably little more than a purely symbolic obligation; in only one document do we find mention of a relatively heavy rent, consisting in the demand for the tithe of all the grain cultivated on the land (the right to collect tithes was first conceded to the Badia by Pope Leo IX in 1049).[19] Moreover, we can seldom identify the addressees of *libelli* – with the notable exception of Ugolino dei Nerli, member of a rich Florentine family of landowners. It can be proposed, on a general level, that they were not simple cultivators with no lands of their own; for instance, two charters mention sub-lessees and we also encounter among the *libellarii* of Settimo a priest, the rector of the parish of S. Martino alla Palma (south-west of the abbey) who was charged with the administration of a group of properties which were quite big and widespread. Even though we do not know whether the same social status applies for sure to all the other beneficiaries of *libelli*, the very least we can say is that

[18] On the history of Settimo cf. Lasinio, *Un antico*, pp. 3-5; Pescaglini Monti, 'I conti cadolingi'; the introduction to *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*; Faini, 'Le fonti', pp. 13-4.
[19] *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 29-32, no. 10, 1049 April 18.

libelli offer us a very fragmentary and incomplete view of land management on the estates of Settimo.[20]

Tenimenta are barely mentioned at all in the documentation of Settimo (the same applies to Buonsollazzo) and there is no charter, among those that have been preserved, explicitly defined as a *tenimentum* contract.[21] We have, however, one document that gives us a sense of the working conditions of the lower strata of the peasantry, a 14th-century copy of a charter dating to 1133, which the editors of Settimo and Buonsollazzo notarial deeds have labelled as a 'notice (*scriptum*) of *colonatus*'. The words *colonus* and *colonatus* in fact do not appear in the original text; they are recorded in a note on the left margin of the parchment that was written, in all likelihood, shortly after the copy of the original document had been redacted. This contract is however very different from a *libellus*; it is much shorter and less elaborated, and the penal clause that has to be paid – should one of the two contracting parties break the terms of the agreement – is far lower than that which was envisaged, for example, by a *libellus* issued only two years before (respectively, 10 *s.* in the *scriptum* and 100 *s.* in the *libellus*). I would assume that the reason for this difference lay in the economic status of the two addressees of the *scriptum*, Vivolo and his son Martino, who would have not been able to pay a high penal clause; they received two lands in the locality of *Farnito* (close to Settimo) from the dean of the the hospital of *Curticelle*, a dependency of the Badia, in return for the performance of one labour-service per year, the delivery of a third of the grain, a third of the juice pressed from grapes before and during fermentation (wine must, as I shall call it from here on), 1 *d.* 'annuntiatico' (to be given to the *nuntius* of the abbey entrusted with the collection of rents) and finally half of the olives.[22] This is by no means a purely symbolic obligation, and is evidence, on the contrary, of the existence of a burdensome share-tenancy relationship regarding leaseholds clearly characterised by polyculture – an aspect that I have already mentioned

[20] Ibid., pp. 103-5, no. 44 (1114 November), pp. 106-8, no. 45 (1122 January 25) (this is one of the two documents where sub-lessees are cited; the brothers Guido and Rainerio receive a group of lands 'sicut recte et detenute sunt per presbitero de ipso loco Luntjano et per Iohanni Morandi et per homines qui vocati sunt Asinelli'), pp. 106-8, no. 45 (1122 January 25), pp. 119-21, no. 51 (1131 May 21) (this is the document where the manorial tithe is mentioned: 'decimam de blada eiusdem terre'), pp. 121-3, no. 53 (1131 May 25), pp. 152-4, no. 68 (here the abbot of Settimo, Serafino, receives one land as a *libellus*), pp. 154-6, no. 69 (1154 April 30), pp. 180-2, no. 81 (1172 October 29), pp. 229-30, no. 105 (precisely an *instrumentum venditionis iure libellario*, in which priest Angelo buys from Ottobuono and Inghilesca a group of lands which the spouses held as a *libellus* from Settimo), pp. 232-4, no. 107 (1196 January 2) (another *instrumentum venditionis iure libellario*, in which Tignoso Amizelli sells to the abbot of Settimo, Ambrogio, all the lands that he and his wife, 'vel alius pro nobis' – a vague but nonetheless unequivocal reference to sub-lessees – held as *libelli* in S. Martino alla Palma), pp. 234-6, no. 108 (1196 March 30) (another *instrumentum venditionis iure libellario*, this is the *libellus* whose beneficiary is Ugolino dei Nerli; on the Nerli cf. Faini, 'Uomini', p. 33); the two *renovationes libelli* are ibid., pp. 214-5, no. 98 and pp. 215-6, no. 99 (both dated to 1190 June 13). One may also want to include pp. 225-6, no. 103 (1194 November 3), which however mentions a *servitium* which was not owed to Settimo.

[21] Indirect references to *tenimenta*: *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 151-2, no. 67 (a donation concerning, among other properties, lands held as *tenimenta*), pp. 186-8, no. 84 (1177 March 13) (here the *libellus* appears to have been, curiously, a way to change – and possibly increase – the rent envisaged by a preexisting *tenimentum*: from 21 *d.* and a couple of chickens per year to 28 *d.* – we do not know, unfortunately, the price of a chicken at that time), no. 98 and 99 (see again note above; both these *renovationes libelli* regarded lands bordering on leaseholds held as *tenimenta*), pp. 232-3, no. 107 (here the concepts of *libellus* and *tenimentum* simply overlap: 'hoc instrumento libellario seu tenimenti nomine vendimus').

[22] *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 126-8, no. 55 (1133 January); the *libellus* is ibid., no. 53 (cf. note 20).

in chapter 1.1 as typical of the areas in which the full *mezzadria* agreements developed, and that we shall take into account later on.

However isolated, this document is important. It seems to indicate that, beneath the blanket of apparently unprofitable *libelli*, mostly addressed to small owners – or even to rich landowners such as Ugolino dei Nerli – and probably aimed at reinforcing the web of the abbey's clients, rather than at exploiting land, there was a lower level of rural society in which tenants were burdened with heavy rents. Right or wrong, this remains pure guesswork in the absence of further documentation. But, quite luckily, this situation changes in the years around 1200, when a completely new set of sources makes a sudden appearance in the archive of the Badia a Settimo. I shall start from the westernmost estates of the monastery, namely in the plain of *Tigliano*, and then I will move back towards Florence.

Tigliano has been identified, wrongly in my view, as lying within the *comune* of Pontassieve, about 13 km north-east of Florence; but the localities mentioned in the charters of the Badia as being close to *Tigliano* seem to tell us that it was located in the Valdarno, in all likelihood close to (perhaps just north of) the town of Lastra a Signa, in the small but fertile plain on the southern bank of the river;[23] I would guess that the toponym has disappeared because it was enveloped, at some point, by the settlements of Lastra and Porta a Signa – this is indeed one of the most-densely inhabited areas along the Arno. Up to the very beginning of the 13th century, *Tigliano* is barely mentioned at all in Settimo charters, but the scattered evidence at our disposal tells us unequivocally that it was the seat of a monastic demesne. For a start, a 'donicato' is cited for the first time in 1136; moreover, every time a land parcel in *Tigliano* became the object of a transaction it appears to have bordered on, or even to have been completely surrounded by, 'land of the monastery and the church of Settimo', *terra ecclesiae et monasterii* (or other equivalent expressions).[24] This is an important piece of information, and it is worth explaining its meaning right now, even if this means we have to set aside *Tigliano* for a moment; we shall refer to it again in the next section, while discussing the estates of the abbey of S. Michele di Passignano.

How can we interpret the mentions of *terra ecclesiae*, without further specifications, in a list of the borders of a piece of land which was in the process of being (for instance) sold or rented

[23] For *Tigliano* as lying close to Pontassieve cf. *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, p. 323. Evidence showing that *Tigliano* lay, instead, in the environs of Lastra a Signa can be found ibid., pp. 126-8, no. 56 (1133 May 6) (among the people holding some land in *Tigliano* we find an Azzetto di Sant'Ilario – Sant'Ilario is a parish located in Lastra a Signa); pp. 196-7, no. 88 (1181 February 7) (similarly, *Tigliano* is said to have bordered on both the lands of a Grullo di Gangalandi and of the church of S. Stefano di Calcinaia – both Gangalandi and S. Stefano are in Lastra a Signa today. Moreover, the deed was stipulated in 'Septimo, a Tiliana', which means that they almost were the same place – it is highly unlikely, after all, that the contracting parties, the witnesses and the notary moved from the Valdarno to Pontassieve on the same day).

[24] Cf. the documents cited at the note above: no. 56 (a vineyard in *Tigliano* is surrounded by 'terra de suprascripto monasterio', which is divided in turn into the 'donicatum monasterii' and the monastic vineyard held by Azzetto di Sant'Ilario), to which we can add pp. 172-4, no. 77 (1160 May 3) (a piece of land in *Tigliano* is surrounded on three sides by 'terra predicte ecclesie et monasterio', and by a road on the fourth side); cf. also no. 88 (there is an in fact an isolated mention of the monastery's land: '…huiusmodi sunt confines: ex uno latere est predicti monasterii…').

out? That is, how can we interpret the fact that only the full property is mentioned? We could think that notaries simply did not know the names of leaseholders in some circumstances, and thus avoided writing them down. I doubt, however, that this may have occurred very often; it is sufficient to consider that the witnesses of a notarial deed often came from the villages closest to the estates which were being transferred, and this made it relatively easy to trace back the names of local tenants; I also doubt that uncertainties could be simply ignored by using quite ambiguous formulae like 'land of the church' – notaries were used to leaving a blank space whenever it was not possible to pin down the name of a person or an estate. I would argue, instead, that the mentions of *terra ecclesiae* and the like are a good guide to the presence of estates which, in general, were not held by any tenants, or which at least had not been granted permanently to anyone – that is, which had not been ceded away *libelli*-style; just to make one example, notaries might have thought that there was no point in recording the lessees' names if their tenure was only temporary and possibly short-term. We can thus conclude that references to the full property can be taken as potential evidence of the existence of demesne farming.[25]

Coming back to *Tigliano*, the presence of *terra ecclesiae et monasterii* standing just next to the *donicatum* indicates that *Tigliano* was indeed a place where the monastic community did not usually rent out the bulk of its landed properties, or – more cautiously – where land was managed in a different way than that which seems to surface from the series of *libelli* (in fact just a handful for Settimo, as we have seen). We have, in fairness, no idea about the characteristics of estate management at *Tigliano* before 1200, when Abbot Ambrogio issued nine leases, all meant to last seven years and all regarding pieces of the *donicatum* of the abbey, on October 6 and 7 of that year.[26] Was the stipulation of temporary leases the ordinary, long-standing way in which *Tigliano*'s demesne had always been cultivated, with the difference that this time such a stipulation was written down (or, at least, that the related charter has been successfully preserved in the archive)? Or was it, on the contrary, a form of land management that was introduced in 1200 for the first time? There is no definitive answer to these questions because of the lack of evidence; we do not even know whether the nine leases covered the whole extent of the demesne or not, although a comparison with later sources suggests that *Tigliano*'s *donicatum* – provided that its overall size stayed more or less the same, which is far from clear – was much bigger than the parcels involved in the early-13th-century leasing out.[27] It has to be noted, at any rate, that no *corvée*-obligation is ever attested in Settimo documentation, even when, as we shall see in detail in the following pages, the monks of the Badia did begin to write down this kind of due in the 1200s; nor do we have

[25] The identity of full property and demesne farming was acutely proposed by Conti, *La formazione* I, 112 and 149-50.
[26] *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, pp. 241-4, no. 112.
[27] Cf. the inventory of Settimo estates redacted in 1338 and published by Philip Jones, where *Tigliano* is said to have been made of 251 *st.* of land (Jones, 'Le finanze', p. 339, no. 30); in 1200, instead, the parcels of the *donicatum* in our sources amounted to a total of 66 ½ *st.* (cf. Table 1).

clues about the existence of wage labour at *Tigliano*, which is indeed very rare in Tuscany up to the 15th century and even then quite marginal (to this I shall return in chapter 5). All in all, I am inclined to think that the demesne at *Tigliano* may well have been ordinarily cultivated through the concession of some type of temporary lease agreements; and that the reason for their recording in 1200 may have lain in the remarkably burdensome renders that were requested on that occasion, as well as in the need to secure their regular delivery.

Rents were indeed heavy in 1200, and the series of leases is particularly important because it allows us to assess it with a good degree of certainty. All the seven *locationes* were granted in exchange for a fixed rent in wheat, and each of them indicates the precise size of the demesne's plot which was in the process of being rented out. By comparing these two data, it is possible to make an estimate of the average agricultural output of the *donicatum* in *Tigliano*. Let us have a look, first, at the following table summarising the content of the *locationes*:

Table 1 – Rents in wheat from the donicatum *of* Tigliano

Size of the pieces of *donicatum* in *Tigliano* leased out in 1200 (*ad rectum st. florentinum*)	Rents in wheat (*ad rectum st. florentinum*)	Ratio between rents and the seed-corn that could be sown on each plot
16	55	3.4
7 ½	24	3.2
12	45	3.7
5	15	3
4	10	2.5
6	24	4
6	24	4
4	14	3.5
6	24	4

It is easy to see that Abbot Ambrogio demanded from tenants between two and a half and four times the quantity of seed-corn that could be sown on each plot of the *donicatum*. We would need to know, at this point, how much of the overall produce a tenant could keep for

himself after paying rent – which we cannot, unfortunately, for the gross yield of the single parcels of *Tigliano* is totally unknown. Nevertheless, we can make hypotheses; and it seems rational to assume that the gross output probably was twice the rent, since this would point to a seed-yield ratio between 1:6 and 1:8 – indeed very high, but not impossible figures by medieval standards.[28] The best argument in favour of this solution is that other scenarios appear even less likely. If the gross output was, for instance, three times the rent, yields would have been between 1:9 and 1:12, and this is for sure far too high a return; if, on the opposite end of the spectrum, Abbot Ambrogio was demanding more than half of the produce, the tenants' final share would have been very restricted. This last possibility is in fact not to be ruled out completely, since it is not impossible that particularly poor peasants might have accepted to keep for themselves just a small fraction of the agricultural output if this meant to get at least some land, and possibly make a living from that; but still, it remains very hard to believe that there were people willing to abide by such unfavourable conditions for a seven-year period. We might formulate a further hypothesis; tenants might have resorted to credit in order to pay rent, by adding to the harvest of their holding(s) the wheat they had borrowed, or an equivalent sum of money. This, however, seems unlikely too. If tenants were poor they were also credit-averse, and thus probably unable to find someone who was willing to lend them agricultural products or money; and if they were not poor, why did they rent out land at such harsh conditions?

The issue of rural credit will be fleshed out in the next section. For now, it can be concluded that the risks entailed by years of bad harvest must have seemed low at *Tigliano*, because otherwise such high rents could have easily left the tenants with nothing. It follows that *Tigliano* well suited the intensive cultivation of wheat, which would indeed be quite an exception in the panorama of the Florentine countryside. The particular type of tenancy relation emerging here was thus clearly determined, or at least strongly influenced, by the conditions of the soil – evidently productive, well watered by the Arno but arguably protected from its floods as well. At the same time, it also seems that at the very beginning of the 13th century we are starting to see, for the first time, the working conditions of the social group to which people like Vivolo and Martino, the peasants of the above-cited *scriptum colonatus*, probably belonged – even though, again, the words *colonus* and *colonatus* do not feature in the 1200 series of leases. With regard to all this, the early-13th-century archive of Settimo is particularly interesting in that it gives us the possibility of investigating what was happening to a group of cultivators explicitly labelled as *coloni* in a rather different ecological environment, more or less in the same years in which the parcels of *Tigliano*'s demesne were being rented out. We need to go back along the Arno in the direction of Florence, and then move south for about 2 km until we reach the already-cited parish of S. Martino alla

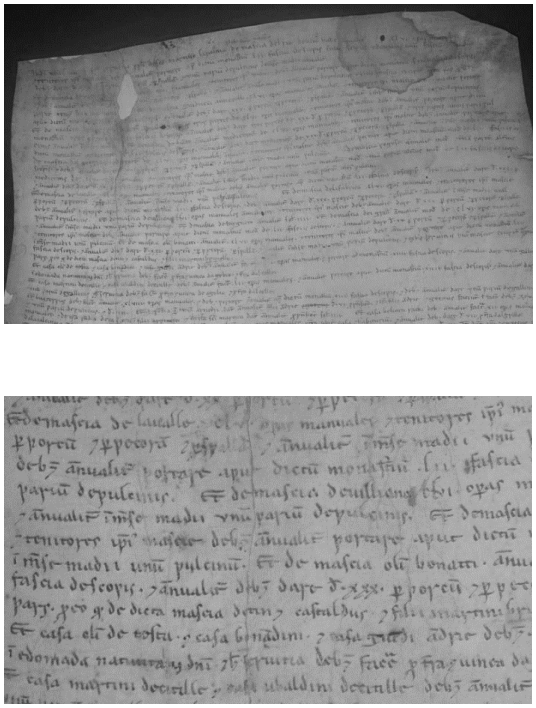
[28] A recent overview (albeit focused on the early Middle Ages) is Jarrett, 'Outgrowing'.

Palma, west of Scandicci, which constituted a dependency of the Badia from the late 10th century and where the monks exerted some forms of lordship whose creation had been certainly favoured, if not determined, by the collection of tithes.[29] S. Martino alla Palma was a rather marshy area, undoubtedly less productive in comparison to the terrains bordering on the Arno at *Tigliano*, and more suitable to tree crops (fruit trees and vineyards are clearly dominant even today) than to wheat.

Settimo has preserved three lists of customary rents and services regarding S. Martino and dating, broadly speaking, to the first twenty or thirty years of the *Duecento*. In 1968, Philip Jones referred to them in a footnote of his landmark essay on the passage from the manorial system to *mezzadria* in medieval Tuscany, without making, however, an in-depth analysis of their content.[30] They have also been excluded from the edition of the charters of Settimo and Buonsollazzo made by Antonella Ghignoli and Anna Rosa Ferrucci, which stops in 1200; one of them dates to 1211, whereas the other two have been attributed, on the basis of palaeography (as well as of the correspondences between the names recorded in the lists and those featuring in other charters from Settimo) to the 'first decades of the 13th century'.[31] If we also consider that there have not been many publications on Settimo – as a result, in part at least, of the fact that the edition of its charters was published in 2004, and so fairly recently – it becomes easy to understand why those lists have not received much attention until now. They do deserve to be examined carefully, however, for they are evidence of the existence of a type of demesne farming which appear to have been – differently from *Tigliano* – quite 'classically manorial', that is, quite close to the model of the early medieval *sistema curtense*.[32]

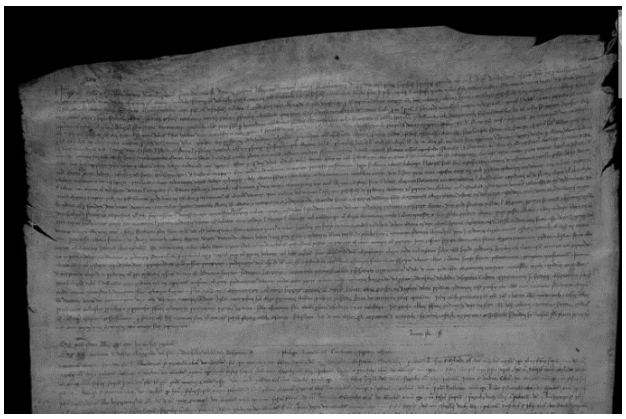
The list I shall start with (which I will call *A* from now on) has been classified by those who put in order the material of the archive of S. Frediano in Cestello as generically belonging to the 'Sec. XIII' (13th century), but there is reason to think that it was redacted at the beginning of the century, and possibly around 1210-1, as I shall argue. The writing, in fact, could well indicate a later dating, but it falls under the remit of what palaeographers used to call (and sometimes still call) 'transition minuscule', the style bridging Carolingian and Gothic script. The transition minuscule was employed in Tuscany throughout the first half of the 13th century – Carolingian script was indeed remarkably resilient in the region – and is therefore risky to use it as a guide to date documents precisely.[33]

[29] Rights of *decimatio* at S. Martino alla Palma surface from the three inventories I am going to examine (see note 32 for full references).
[30] Cf. Jones, 'From manor', p. 210, note 7; see also Id. 'Le finanze', pp. 318-9, note 5.
[31] *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, p. XVII, note 14.
[32] ASFi, *Cestello*, 'Sec. XIII' (ph. 27400) (*A*); ibid., 1211 September 14 (*B*); ibid., 'Sec. XIII' (ph. 27403) (*C*).
[33] For a basic but highly reliable textbook account cf. Petrucci, *Breve*, p. 122.



7. ASFi, *Cestello*, 'Sec. XIII' (ph. 27400) (*A*), *recto*

In order to date this inventory, we need to start from its layout, which is highly informal. The list lacks both an introduction and a notarial subscription. It is, nonetheless, the most complete of the three inventories at our disposal, and is carefully divided into three parts, enumerating first the rents and services demanded from the *mascie* (a vernacular word for the Latin *mansus*), then from the *casae* (tenant-houses) and finally from some individual peasants. This combination of informality and completeness suggests that *A* was regarded as a premise to something else, as the second of our lists, dating to 1211 (*B*) seems to show.



8. The preamble to ASFi, *Cestello*, 1211 September 4 (*B*), *recto*

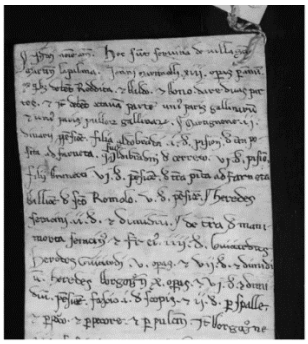
B is a document with full legal validity, with an introduction and subscriptions, which however records only a part of the tenants' dues that can be found in *A* (around two thirds, as if the notary had extrapolated from the first inventory only the pieces of information he needed; cf. *infra* for name correspondences). Interestingly, all tenants are identified here as highly-dependent cultivators of the monastery: 'homines et colonos et colonas et servos et ancillas', then 'hominibus et colonis' and finally just 'coloni' (*servi et ancillae* represents here a mere imitation of a formal expression referring to servitude largely employed in public diplomas, which is formulaic and by no means gives us evidence of the presence of real slaves).[34] Furthermore, the preamble to the list allows us also to discover the reasons for its redaction; the Badia a Settimo was mortgaging for six years a large proportion of its tenants at S. Martino alla Palma, along with the lands they cultivated and the services they owed to the abbey; the beneficiaries of the pawn were Ubertino di Guido Guernieri, probably a member of the Florentine family of the Giandonati, and Bernardo, son of Gianni della Filippa (Gianni had been consul in Florence in 1183).[35] There were however some notable exceptions to this cession, for Settimo retained the church of S. Martino with the collection of the tithes ('decimationibus') connected to it, as well as the exaction of the *datium* and of a rent consisting in half of the products on some estates; moreover, the beneficiaries of the pawn were prevented from imposing any form of signorial allegiance (namely *fidelitas* and *comanditia*) on tenants. The whole operation was to pay off the debts of the monastery, including their interest ('pro expediendo debito et debitis usurariis'), whose causes are unfortunately not specified. In return for the pawn, Abbot Martino received £300 of *denarii*.

I would thus argue that *A* was redacted short time before *B*, probably in 1210 or 1211; the former was the basis for the latter. On the top of this, indebtedness needs to be emphasised, in that it appears to have been a problem for Settimo already in the very first years of the *Duecento*. In 1202, indeed, a group of tenants of the Badia was exempted for ten years from the rents and

[34] On the mentions of *servi* within public diplomas cf. Collavini, 'La condizione', pp. 338-40.
[35] Cf. Faini, 'Uomini', p. 23 and 49.

services (*servitia*, *redditus*, *prestationes pensiones*, *exactiones* and *operae*) they owed to the abbey in exchange for quite a high sum of money (£255, minus 3 *s.* and 6 *d.*), which was used to pay off the debts of the monastery. Two of the people mentioned in 1202, moreover, appear also in *A*, and this fits the fact that their renders were ceded as a pledge in 1211, when the ten-year exemption was about to expire and those renders were coming back to the Badia.[36] Indebtedness is a crucial point for the overall argument of this chapter and I will discuss it further – it was indeed quite common among the ecclesiastical institutions of the Fiorentino at the beginning of the 13th century; but the fact itself that it was widespread makes it necessary to postpone its overall explanation, until our case-studies have been set out.

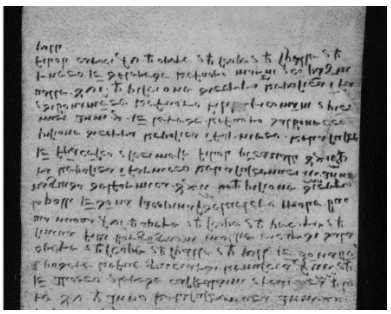
The third list (*C*) was nothing more than a little private note, more similar to the first inventory than to the second one; it has neither a date, nor any other element giving legal validity to its content. Luckily, a *terminus post quem* is provided by the mention of the daughters of one of the peasants named in it, the late Rodolfino di Vitolo, who is recorded as still living in the 1211 list.[37] *C* was thus certainly written after that date. In addition to this, we also need to consider that some of the other people enumerated in the text (who thus were not dead yet) feature in both *A* and *B*, but more frequently we find mention of the heirs of the tenants recorded in *A* and *B*. Overall, it can be assumed that the redaction of *C* is likely to have occurred at some time in the 1220s or the early 1230s.[38] *C* has no clear relationship with *A* and *B*, but it is nonetheless an important document; on the *verso* of the parchment there is a short note written in vernacular (in a period for which examples of early Italian in notarial charters are rare, and this makes this *verso* interesting also from a purely linguistic point of view) whose content will retain our attention in a moment.



[36] ASFi, *Cestello*, 1201 March 6 (Florentine style). The two people who can be safely identified as being mentioned both here and in *A* are Piero di Ghianderino and Buzzero; other correspondences, such as that regarding a peasant called Benincasa, are less certain because names like 'Benincasa' were indeed very common.

[37] Cf. again *Settimo e Buonsollazzo*, p. XVII, note 14.

[38] Correspondences of names: *A* 'filii Octobuoni', *B* 'filiis Octobuoni' (in the preamble); both *A* and *B* contain the names *Guidus Rubertinus*, *Benincasa*, *Saracinus*; *A* 'Casa Ianni Martinelli', *B* 'filii Ianni Martinelli', *C* 'Ianni Martinelli'; *B* 'Quintavalle', *C* 'filii Quintavalle'; *B* Saraceno and Borgognone, *C* 'heredes Seracini' and 'heredes Borgognoni' (but in the same list it is possible to read the names of two namesakes); *B* 'filii Riccomanni', *C* 'filii Riccomanni'; *A* 'Caroccius […] faber', *B* 'Caroccius filius Perini fabri', *C* [*verso*] 'filioli Caroci'; *B* 'podere de Villiano', *C* 'Masia de Villiano'; *A* and *B* 'Masia del Fargneto', *C* 'Masia de Farneto'.



9. ASFi, *Cestello*, 'Sec. XIII' (ph. 27403) (*C*) *recto* and *verso*

Let us now analyse the text of these three documents. I have already said that S. Martino alla Palma offers us an example of a classic manorial system still existing in the first half of the 13th century. This appears to be proved by the number of *operae*, labour-services, listed within them: a total sum of 2,200 in *A*, 1,400 at least in *B*, although just thirty-five in *C*. The relative scarcity in the last inventory is in part explained by the presence of only nineteen entries, against (respectively) forty-five and *c.* 100 in the first two. We would like to know what an *opera* precisely consisted in, but this is not easy to tell. If we take into consideration the cultivators residing on the *mascie* of the first inventory, we find out that they typically had to perform a specified quantity of manual labour-services – about 150 per year, which is a high number, even if *corvées* were presumably divided among the members of the family residing on each *mascia*; in addition to this, they had to provide bundles of twigs and to deliver a small quantity of money. In the second inventory, requests for labour could swing from seven to fifty-two annual *operae*, whereas in the third the maximum was thirteen *corvée*-services. It seems reasonable to assume that the *operae* were a combination of full-time days of labour to be spent on the monastic demesnes of S. Martino during the most intense phases of the annual agricultural cycle, and of some one-off services that may have occupied only a part of a day – such as transport or haymaking, which can both take place several times during a single year and may last potentially only a few hours. It is also interesting to note that, in one case at least, we find mention of *corvées* that could be demanded at the will of the abbot, which were thus explicitly linked to a high degree of signorial dependence of local tenants. Those who lived in the houses of Robori and Andria had to

> …go where the abbot told them to go, and go with him where he wants them to go, and stay with him and serve him at his will, and cut the grass and till the soil where the bailiff told them to do so…[39]

[39] Cf. *A*: 'debent ire ubi eos abbas mittere voluerit et cum ipso abbate ire ubi eos ducere voluit et cum ipso morari et servire ut ipsi abbati placuerit et etiam erbam facere et ire ad presandum ubi castaldus voluerit'.

We need now to try to get an overall picture of the data analysed so far, and to put in perspective what the early *Duecento* lets us know (for the first time) about the estate-management forms among the properties of the Badia a Settimo. At the beginning of the 13th century something was happening on the demesnes of *Tigliano* and S. Martino alla Palma; at least a part of the first one was leased out in return for high fixed rents in kind, whereas a large part of the second one was ceded away, albeit temporarily, with its tenants and their dues (mostly labour-services) in order to pay off the debts of the Badia. Are we seeing here the decline of *corvée*-work, and of a fairly coherent manorial system, as part of a general process of reform of land management? In fact, we only have scattered evidence of this. The *verso* of the third inventory I have mentioned above shows that labour could be converted into rents in money. Two entries tell us that

> … Aliotto and the heir of Castaldino and the heirs of Vita [have to provide], in exchange for the *podere* previously owned by Guicciardi Renuscia, 4 *s.* instead of [*per*] labour-services, bundles of twigs and chickens […] Then, in return for the inheritance of Martino and Compagno, sons of Caroccio, [they have to provide] 6 *s.* instead of [*per*] labour-services, bundles of twigs and chickens.[40]

This is definitely not enough to draw general conclusions on the fate of the manors of Settimo in the central Middle Ages. Moreover, it is worth repeating that the 1202 charter and the 1211 inventory regarding S. Martino alla Palma show clearly that the Badia was pawning its lands and tenants only temporarily; it might be thought that it managed to get them back later (along with the *corvées* they owed to the abbey) and also to keep hold of them. Indeed, the documents of the 1230s and 1240s – even before the Cistercians took over Settimo in 1236 – testify to some degree of economic dynamism, with the monks contracting new debts to purchase land at S. Martino alla Palma and investing in mills, harbours and weirs along the Arno. As to *Tigliano*, it kept its status as a monastic demesne for wheat-farming up to the 1290s, and after that date it was simply leased out with short-term agreements – as in 1200 – but not lost to other proprietors.[41] Despite all this, it has to be noted that there is no further mention of *corvées* in the later documentation of Settimo (I have looked at all the single-sheet charters up to the year 1310, and also at the early-14th-century notarial registers). It can be assumed that indebtedness in the early

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[40] Cf. *C* (*verso*): '…Item Aliotto et l'erede Casstaldini et eredi [Vi]ta per lo podere ke fue Guiciardi Renuscia s[olidi] IIII et per opere et per scope et per spalle et per polli […] Item de l'erede ke fuoro Martini et Compagni, filioli Caroci, s[olidi] VI per opere et per scope et per spalle et per polli'. Unfortunately, the text is made unclear by the Italian preposition 'per', whose meaning shifts between 'through' and 'instead of'. However, to think that each tenant had to provide money through labour-services, twigs and so on would be to say the least puzzling, and this is the reason why I opted for the second possibility of translation.

[41] See Pirillo, 'Il fiume' (and, for a later period, La Roncière, 'A monastic'). For some examples of purchases at S. Martino alla Palma cf. ASFi, *Cestello*, 1230 January 18, 1230 March 12, 1230 October 17, 1237 June 9, 1243 May 20, 1244 February 28, 1244 October 26, 1244 November 4, 1245 June 23, 1245 July 2, 1249 October 2. On *Tigliano* in the 1290s cf. Jones, 'Le finanze', p. 320 and note 4, and also the 1338 inventory published by Jones himself at the bottom of his essay, pp. 337-44 (p. 339 for *Tigliano*); and also ASFi, *Compagnie religiose soppresse*, no. 480, fols. 58r and 58v (1318 March 26), 64r (1319 September 28), 64v and 65r (two deeds dated to 1319 November 3).

13th century, and the subsequent cession of signorial dues (however temporary), put at danger the coherence of the manorial system at S. Martino alla Palma, making it necessary to modify the forms of land management which had been adopted up to that point. This can be inferred from the commutation of days of labour into rents in money recorded in *C*, which can be probably explained with the will to get readily-available cash to pay off debts. Unfortunately, the archive of Settimo does not allow us to place the decline of *corvée*-work chronologically with more precision than this, but there is no doubt that it happened.

That rents in cash were regarded as a temporary solution is proved by the 13th- and 14th-century charters of Settimo, in which the demand for kind largely prevailed; I would guess that the reason for this lay in the steadily growing size of the urban market, which landowners wished to exploit directly. But what types of tenancy agreements were adopted on the estates of S. Martino between the central and the late Middle Ages? Philip Jones argued that in the first half of the 14th century S. Martino alla Palma was a *podere mezzadrile*, or at least an area consistently cultivated through share tenancies close to the *mezzadria* ideal-type (as we have outlined it in chapter 1.1). This becomes clear thanks to the notarial protocols of that period recording short-term lease agreements, a category to which the sharecropping contracts regarding parcels of land at S. Martino belonged (they lasted five or six years). Moreover, deeds of this type envisaged all the other standard clauses of late medieval *mezzadria*, such as the delivery of half of all the produce (which was sometimes rendered further complicated by the request to give more than half of the wine if the harvest was particularly good), the provision of seeds on the part of both tenants and landowners (not constantly mentioned, though; an inconsistency to be ascribed, probably, to a lower level of formalisation of *mezzadria* leases in comparison to their future development in the 15th century) and in general a high level of detail in describing the terms of the tenancy relation (which can be interpreted as an effort towards control over land and the improvement of its productivity). Besides this, the importance of wine needs to be stressed as being the main part of the rents that were demanded at S. Martino; the reason for this will be an important element in the understanding of the rationale of share tenures, and of the development of *mezzadria*.[42]

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Some important questions have not yet been answered here: where the debts of the Badia came from and why the subsequent pledge of lands and tenants – and the likely, slow beginning of change in the forms of land management – was necessary. I have barely hinted at a possible connection between *corvées* and the later development of share tenancies and *mezzadria* (even

[42] Cf. again some examples in ASFi, *Compagnie religiose soppresse*, no. 480, fols. 67v and 68r (1320 November 24), 133r and 133v (1326 December 14), 168r (1332 November 10); no. 482, fol. 114r (1334 June 29).

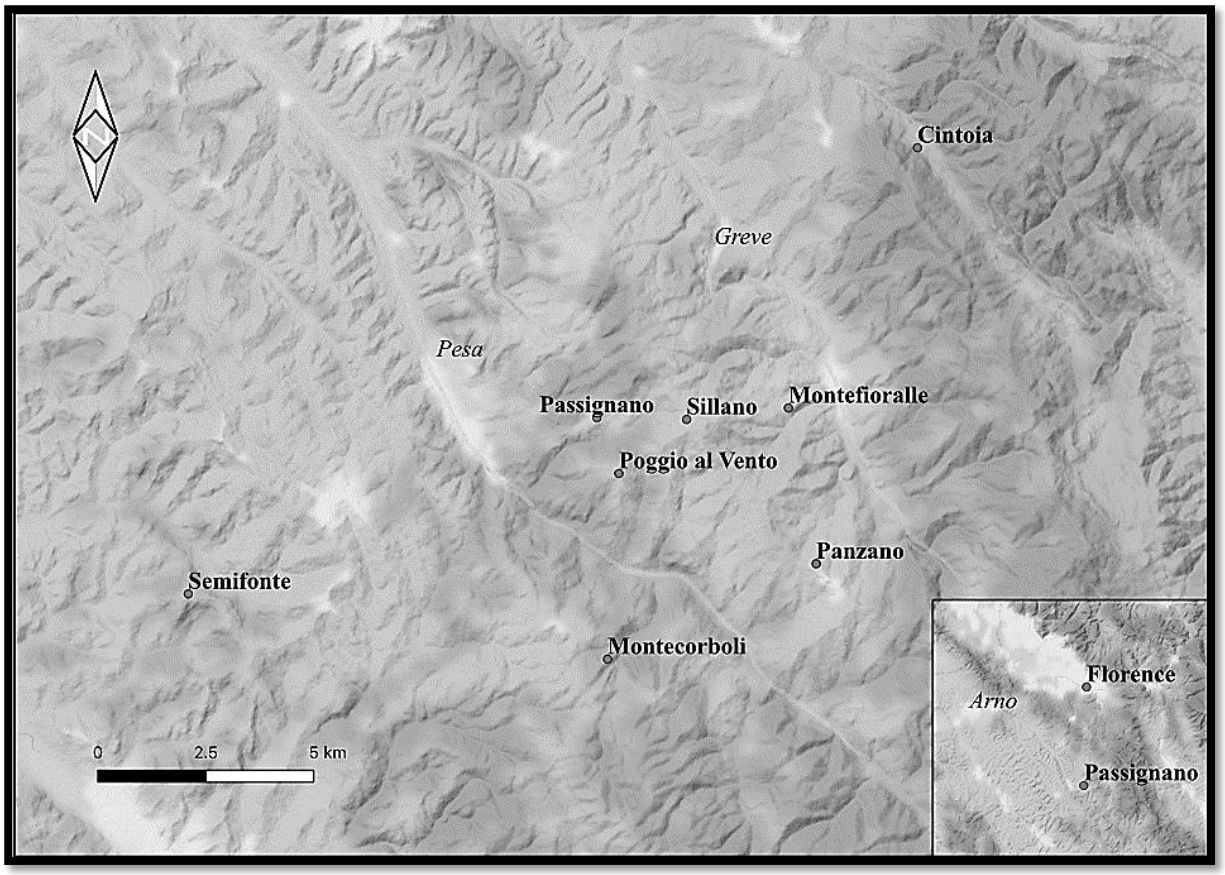
though we did see that the monks of Settimo were certainly familiar at least with sharecropping, given the *scriptum colonatus* of 1133 and, a bit less clearly, the 1211 inventory recording the demand for half of the produce from some of the estates that the monastery excluded from the mortgage). Before we come to this, we need to fill in the gaps left by the relative scarcity of Settimo documents with an archive which is far richer, since it has preserved more than 1,000 charters for the 12th century alone, that of S. Michele di Passignano. This will allow us to give some statistical credibility to assertions that are bound to be confined in the remit of mere hypotheses if formulated only on the basis of a relatively restricted group of documents; we will thus be able to enrich our set of interpretations that might explain the transformations in the forms of land management in Tuscany during the central Middle Ages.

3.2.2 The Chianti region: S. Michele di Passignano

3.2.2.1 Customary labour-services (1180s)

We do not know much about the origins of the monastery of S. Michele (*c.* 20 km south of Florence, although at least twice that by road), traditionally placed in the late 9th century; the number of its documents sharply increases only from the 980s, and we need to wait until 1049 to find mention of the Vallombrosans at Passignano, that is, of the congregation that holds the abbey even today. Passignano played a central role within the Order, for it was even richer than the head monastery of S. Maria di Vallombrosa and in a sort of spiritual competition with it, since the mortal remains of the founder of the Order, Giovanni Gualberto, rest at S. Michele. Moreover, it was one of the abbots of Passignano, Gregorio (1191-7) who actively promoted the cult of Giovanni, probably wrote one of his five known *Vitae* and finally managed to obtain his canonisation from Pope Celestine III in 1193.[43]

[43] On the origins of Passignano cf. Kurze, 'Passignano' and Salvestrini, 'San Michele'. On Abbot Gregorio as the likely author of one of Giovanni Gualberto's hagiographies cf. Angelini, 'Gregorio'.



10. *S. Michele di Passignano in the central Chianti region*

The documentation of Passignano mainly covers the areas corresponding to the *pievi* of Sillano and Campoli, plus the valleys of the rivers Pesa and Greve and a small section of the Valdarno between Incisa and Pianalberti. We shall concentrate above all on the territory falling under the remit of the parish of S. Biagio, just below the monastery; a zone of *c.* 730 ha, constituted by the southern-western slopes of the hills separating the basins of the Pesa and the Greve; and a zone where terrains are mostly calcareous, and therefore suitable for vineyards and olive-trees but generally poor in nutrients. Arable lands are – as is indeed typical of the Florentine countryside as a whole, as we have seen – confined to the valley floors of the rivers.[44]

The rich archive of Passignano has attracted over the years the attention of many important scholars, but the one whose studies are most relevant to this section is Elio Conti with his *Formation of the Modern Agrarian Structure in the Florentine Countryside*. Conti magisterially depicted the relations between tenants and landowners in the 11th century, but his analysis also covers (albeit in less detail) the 12th century. Here, it is worth recalling one aspect of his research which I have not stressed so far – that is, the strikingly low level of the rents demanded by the abbey from its tenants throughout the centuries he examined. These were mostly mixed rents, consisting in a

[44] Cortese, *Signori*, p. XVII; Conti, *La formazione* III/2, 143-4.

few *staia* of grain, wine and a few *denarii* along with the performance of some labour-services.[45] This was a fundamental part of Conti's pessimistic view of Chianti medieval peasantry, who could not have complied with any heavier demands, if they were to stay above the line of self-subsistence. To me, Conti was certainly right; he had the merit to highlight the negative effects of overpopulation during a historical phase in which the Smithian division of labour simply could not take place, probably because the city manufacturing sector was neither large nor fully developed, and furthermore the connections between Florence and its countryside were weak. It is however important to make at least two observations regarding Conti's work: first of all, as Chris Wickham argued, renting out land did not necessarily serve an economic (that is, profit-oriented) aim, for it could have also fulfilled a mainly social function by reinforcing relations between families – indeed, the history of Passignano 'feudal' networks is neglected in Conti's book.[46] Second, the question that we discussed in the previous section – are *libelli*, and even *tenimenta* addressed to cultivators, a good guide to the patterns of land management? – needs to be examined here too. I shall do this with regard to the second half of the 12th century, the period in which the monastic community of Passignano started to modify the working conditions of its tenants, and which will be the core of the following analysis. I shall take the demand for *corvée*-work as my standpoint, for it will help us to distinguish between the content of written and customary dues, and to set out the background for their subsequent transformation.

There are *c.* 500 charters in the archive of Passignano from 1150 to 1199, among which we can find eighty-four *libelli* and *tenimenta*; only seven of them include a demand for labour. The total quantity of days resulting from this set of agreements is 30 ½, an average of roughly a third of a day per lease.[47] It is thus easy to see that *corvées* were not usually part of *libelli* and *tenimenta*, and we could easily conclude that they represented a very marginal form of exploitation of the rural workforce if our only evidence were constituted by written contracts of this type. But again, similarly to Settimo, Passignano has also preserved a couple of inventories of customary rents and services which change the picture offered by the commonest, ordinary written deeds such as those encapsulated within *libelli* and *tenimenta*. Here, moreover, the discrepancy between lists of customary renders on the one hand, and *libelli* and *tenimenta* on the other, is of particular interest in that we cannot invoke the scarcity of documents as a possible explanation for the almost complete absence of *corvées* among the latter group of sources; such an absence becomes here a statistical fact, which might indirectly prove, by way of analogy, what emerged from the comparison between lease charters and inventories of customary dues at Settimo – essentially,

[45] Cf. Conti, *La formazione* I, 125-33.
[46] Cf. Wickham, 'Vendite'.
[47] See the charters in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1151 March 10, 1151 September 20, 1154 January 24, 1158 June 12, 1166 February 12, 1168 October 18, 1195 January 12, to which we can add the four labour-services that are listed in an inventory written at the bottom of a sale: ibid., 1178 February 13.

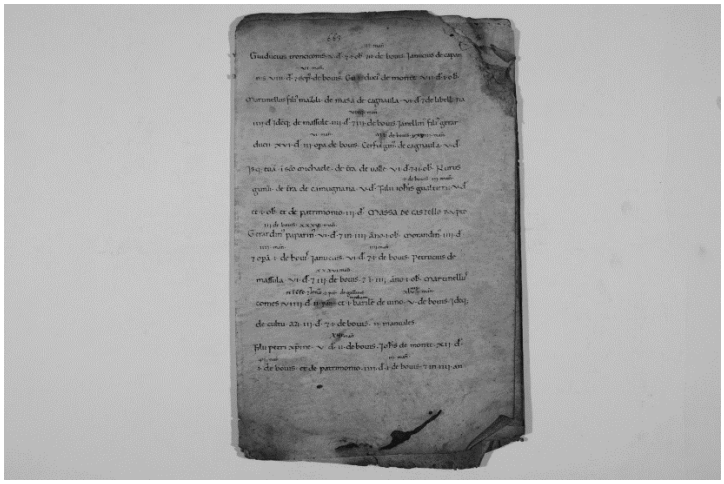
that the two were very different. Let us now see these two inventories in detail (I shall basically summarise here the observations I made about them in an article regarding their palaeographical characteristics, and how these were related to their content).[48]

On 19 September 1179, Rinaldo di Malapresa (member of the Firidolfi, a family of local landlords) and his wife Berta sold to the abbot of S. Michele, Ugo, the holdings of two people, Boncio and Rognoso, located in the village of *Rovenzano*, together with other lands nearby; moreover, they promised not to damage the castle of Poggio al Vento, to respect the rights of the abbot in the *curia* of Passignano and to remedy the damages caused by their men from the *castrum* of *Roffiano*. The document ends with the return promises made by Ugo to Rinaldo.[49] This charter constitutes the first extensive agreement between S. Michele and its aristocratic lay neighbours regarding the control over landed properties and the exertion of signorial rights in the area encompassing the Val di Pesa and the Val di Greve – indeed, this is the first document unequivocally pointing to the existence of a *signoria* of the monks of S. Michele. If we also consider that this was the period in which prices were rising, it becomes easy to see that these two factors – a clear definition of the abbey signorial rights together with inflation – may have rendered it necessary to draw up an inventory of the annual rents and services owned by the monks, probably aimed at recording – and possibly extending – S. Michele sources of income in the zone where it was in rivalry with the Firidolfi. Our first list, actually a folder made up of six parchments, has in fact no date, which may have been written on the initial *folium*, or else on one of the initial *folia* that have unfortunately gone lost; an analysis of the names included within it, however, indicates that its redaction is likely to have taken place at some point during the 1180s, and probably not after the year 1190.[50]

The folder constitutes an exceptional documentary type in the rich panorama of Passignano 12th-century sources. Because of the loss of one or more opening *folia* we do not know whether it was validated by any notaries, but I would assume that it was not; the entries abruptly stop on the *verso* of the final page, without either a subscription or a list of witnesses, and in general the *mise-en-page* of the text is accurate but informal. The document seems to belong, therefore, to the same typology of the two undated inventories of Settimo – that is, to the group of purely private accounts. We can also get a little further with the examination of the list's outward appearance. The handwritings show that it was redacted, for the most part, by a single scribe – perhaps the 'treasurer' (*camerarius*) of the abbey, Olivo – who was however helped by other people, arguably five or six monks. Moreover, the text was double-spaced, so that extra information could be added between the lines – as it often was, as we shall see in a moment. All this appears to

[48] Tabarrini, 'Le "operae" e i giorni'.
[49] ASFi, *Passignano*, 1179 September 29. On this document cf. Collavini, 'I poteri', pp. 185-6.
[50] See the *regestum* in Conti, *La formazione* I, 277-82 and the remarks in Tabarrini, 'Le "opere" ', p. 386 and note 15. The folder is in ASFi, *Strozziane Uguccioni*, *a quaderno*, 'Sec. XII' (cited henceforth as *Quaderno*).

demonstrate that the folder was the result of local surveys taken by different members of the monastic community, who were in all likelihood entrusted with the collection of different pieces of information on the behalf of the abbot, and with their successive gathering on a single document. The folder enumerates *c.* 250 individuals and families.[51]



11. ASFi, *Strozziane Uguccioni*, *a quaderno*, 'Sec. XII' (*Quaderno*)

All this is relevant to our argument, for one of the most interesting 'pieces' was *corvée*-work. Let us have a look first, however, at a typical entry recorded on the main lines of the list:

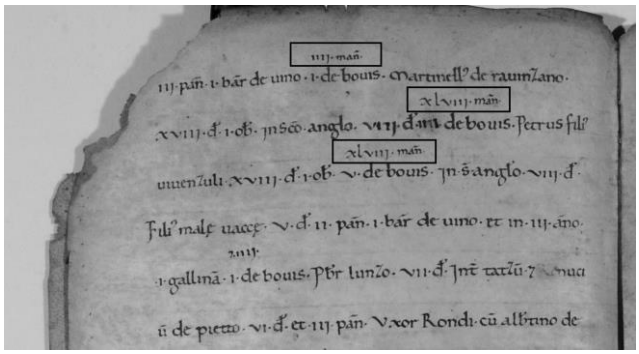
> Mancone [must give] 9 *d.* and one offering [*oblia*] and one barrel of wine, three loaves of bread and one labour-service with oxen. Vivolo Boccacampana [must give] 3 *d.*, one loaf of bread and half a barrel of wine. The sons of Giovanni the blacksmith [must give] 10 *d.*, three loaves of bread and a pair of chickens.[52]

These were very moderate requirements, which could have become a substantial source of income for S. Michele only when all put together. But even then, this list clearly tells us that the monastery could not have relied only on those rents, although – it has to be stressed – not all of the abbey properties, with the related revenues, were recorded there and the folder is incomplete. It remains close to impossible, at any rate, to think that the monastic community could count only on 20 *st.* of cereals (a sum that can be obtained by putting together the renders in wheat, barley and spelt mentioned in the folder), on little more than thirty barrels of wine and *c.* twenty-six *urcia* (probably jars) of must from what certainly constituted an important part of its landed properties in this area of the Chianti region. 20 *st.* with the *staium* of Passignano (= *c.* 160 kg)[53] was a quantity with which one could feed a single person for a little more than three months

[51] Tabarrini, 'Le "operae" ', p. 386 and following.
[52] *Quaderno*, fol. 1v, lines 10-1.
[53] The 'ancient *staium* of Passignano' was *c.* 8 kg. Cf. Conti, *La formazione* I, 101-2.

– not much at all, then – and, even though we do not know the dimensions of barrels and *urcia*, it seems really unlikely that less than sixty containers per year were enough to provide nourishment to a monastic community composed, hypothetically, of twenty to thirty people; not to speak of sale, which would have been impossible.[54] All this fits well with the remarks made by Elio Conti, who argued that the 12th-century leases from the archive of Passignano barely envisaged high rents in kind, and the vast majority of them shows a low level of extraction of the agricultural surplus in general. Conti also noted, however, that when rents were high they were exclusively in kind, and this is a point which we will discuss further.[55]

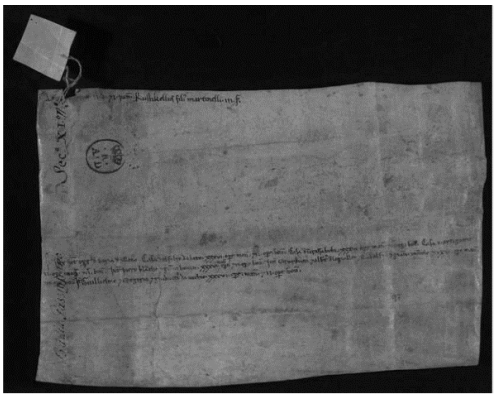
In view of this, the information registered between the lines of the text appears to be of particular interest, for it is there that we find the vast majority of mentions of manual labour-services (*operae manuales*). For a start, their total sum was quite high, consisting in 710 days of labour per year. It is not easy to tell, here, whether these manual *corvées* referred to agriculture (to activities such as harvesting and threshing, for instance) or signorial duties (those linked to castle defence, such as guard service and wall maintenance). There is no doubt, however, that at least a part of them regarded the cultivation of monastic demesnes; 122 ½ days of labour had to be performed with oxen, *cum bovis*, an explicit reference to ploughing. It can be reasonably argued, as a result, that tenants contributed also 'manually' to demesne farming during the most intense months of the agricultural year. This was certainly true for the most-burdened tenants of all: just to make a few examples, a certain Brunetto di Rappolo and a certain Alfieri had to provide seventy-two workdays each (of which six *cum bovis*), the sons of Giovanni di Domenico 106 (seven *cum bovis*) and Martinello di *Rovenzano* fifty-two (four *cum bovis*).[56]



12. ASFi, *Strozziane Uguccioni*, *a quaderno*, 'Sec. XII' (*Quaderno*)
I have highlighted three examples of manual *corvée*-duties

[54] It is at least plausible to assume that monks might have been between 1/7 and 1/10 of the total population of the castle of Passignano, which can be estimated in *c.* 210 people in 1233; cf. Plesner, *L'emigrazione*, pp. 87-8.
[55] Conti, *La formazione* I, 125-6, note 3. The documents envisaging high rents in kind mentioned by Conti are in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1134 July 21 (where the rent consisted in 24 *st.* of cereals), 1144 June 18 (28 *st.*) and 1170 January 30 (28 *st.*), to which we can add 1192 March 15 (33 *st.*) and 1194 January 21 (33 *st.*) – with modern units of measurement, rents swung between 194 and 264 kg.
[56] *Quaderno*, fol. 1v, line 1 (Brunetto), line 4 (sons of Giovanni di Domenico), fol. 2v, line 1 (Martinello), fol. 2r, line 9 (Alfieri).

The second inventory of the abbey dependants that we need to examine here tells us a similar story. It is undated, but was certainly redacted during the 12th century; the names of two tenants recorded within it, moreover, seem to suggest that this list was more or less contemporary to the folder we have just discussed. On the *recto* of the parchment we find mention of thirty-nine individuals or groups of people (but it has to be noted, for the sake of precision, that seven entries were cancelled – perhaps at a later stage, due to the death of some tenants) who lived in or close to *Monteficalle* (now Montefioralle), the core of the Firidolfi's *signoria,* not far from the source of the river Greve. They all had to give the monastery of S. Michele low rents in money and kind. On the *verso* there is, however, a short note regarding the *operae* that had to be performed at the monastic estate-centre (*curia*) of Sillano, north-east of the abbey, by three tenant-houses and by nine people gathered in three groups. Each of these units had to provide thirty-six days of manual labour plus two with oxen, with the exception of the 'house of Martignone', who owed only four days. The total number of workdays was 194.[57]



13. ASFi, *Passignano*, 'Sec. XI' (ph. 2902), *verso*

The same difficulties that we encountered while discussing the folder apply here too; apart from ploughing services, how many of these manual *operae* were destined for agriculture? Again, the most sensible answer is that some of these certainly were; it is worth noting that each of the tenant-units recorded on the *verso* of the parchment was supposed to perform services for little more than one month, and it can be proposed that workdays were concentrated during the weeks straddling May and June, when the harvesting of wheat takes place. Whatever the ratio between 'manorial' and 'signorial' duties was, however, the folder and the *verso* are both clear on three

[57] ASFi, *Passignano,* 'Sec. XI' (ph. 2902). The total number of workdays has been calculated by Conti, *La formazione* I, 278; for the dating of the two lists (those on the *recto* and the *verso* of the parchment) see Tabarrini, 'Le "operae" ', pp. 394-5.

fundamental points. First, the existence of *corvée*-labour can be detected only thanks to 'eccentric' documents recording customary dues, as was also the case with Settimo inventories for S. Martino alla Palma. Second, such dues are utterly different from those surfacing from the very rich series of Passignano lease agreements, composed of *libelli* and *tenimenta* – 1,026 ½ days of labour in two lists against 30 ½ in eighty-four leases. Third, this remarkable quantity of *corvée*-work is interesting in that it appears to tell us that the monastic community of S. Michele relied on demesne farming as its major source of agricultural produce for consumption and sale; indeed, we have seen above how low the rents in kind coming from tenures were, and the demand for labour is therefore an essential element to fill out the picture of monastic incomes as a whole.

Passignano demesnes appear to have been highly fragmented. There are indeed many references, among Passignano charters, to *indominicata* and *terrae monasterii*, which often bordered on lands owned or held by other people. There were only few places in which the demesne might have been fairly compact. Here, it is worth discussing two examples of this, for they constitute further evidence of labour as a means to cultivate land. One of the tenants recorded in the folder whom we met before, Martinello, had to perform fifty-two days of *corvée* per year; Martinello came from the village of *Rovenzano*, which was involved in the agreement between S. Michele and the Firidolfi in 1179. The documents from Passignano inform us about the presence of an administrator of monastic estates at *Rovenzano* – a *gastaldus* – who may have possibly been entrusted with the supervision of *corvée*-work there. This would not be enough, though, to be certain of the presence of a demesne at *Rovenzano*; safer evidence comes from a charter dating to 1195, where a parcel of land was said to be located 'under the road of the *donicato* of the afore-mentioned monastery' and was surrounded on three sides by land of the abbey (the fourth boundary is not indicated). The second example is related to the *operae* to be performed at the *curia* of Sillano. The *curia* included the *curtis* of *Matraio*, where two administrators of S. Michele managed to obtain (again in 1195) 'all the land and the landed goods […] in the *culto donicato* of *Matraio*, in the place called *Campomagio*', surrounded on every side by the 'land of the afore-mentioned monastery'.[58] These two examples not only show that the use of the full property as a way to detect the presence of demesnes, which we have employed for Settimo, works here too; what is more, they suggest that the *operae* recorded on the folder and the *verso* of our second inventory encapsulated in all likelihood some agricultural duties, as demesnes were indeed present in the same places for which we have evidence of the demand for customary labour-services.

To conclude, Passignano is quite similar to Settimo in that it shows that manorial forms of land management played an important role among the estates of a rich monastery of the Florentine countryside. But there are also further similarities, since not only were labour-services

[58] For the *gastaldus* cf. ASFi, *Passignano*, 1182 April 5 (ph. 6310). The two documents regarding monastic full property at *Rovenzano* and *Matraio* are ibid., 1195 April 8 (ph. 7083) and 1195 April 8 (ph. 7084).

written down for the first time on the eve of the *Duecento*, but this was also the moment in which the existing patterns of relations between landowners and tenants started to be transformed into something new. This brings us to the 1190s, and to the first signs of reforms among the estates of S. Michele.

3.2.2.2 The first commutations (early 1190s)

Ljubov Kotel'nikova identified (rightly) the 1180s as the decade in which the Florentine documentation started to show unequivocally that ecclesiastical landowners were demanding rents in kind more consistently than any other type of rent; this applies to Passignano, too, and it is evidence of the proprietors' desire to take part directly in the market of agricultural products, and probably to meet the needs of a growing urban demand. As a result of the price surge analysed at the beginning of this chapter, selling grain was certainly becoming increasingly profitable; Enrico Faini has estimated that, in the last quarter of the 12th century, the abbey of S. Michele di Passignano spent £1,400 on the purchase of land; since the monastery could collect £150 in a single year from the sale of wheat, it becomes plausible to predict an income of £3,750 in twenty-five years, with a return on the invested capital of +63.7% (*c.* 2.5% per year). We need to be cautious with these figures, however, for the variability in the number of purchases of land from year to year (and, subsequently, of the potential sales of the produce) and the instability of prices make an assessment of Passignano real incomes quite risky. Nevertheless, Faini's figures have undoubtedly the merit of demonstrating that land was indeed a good investment; not as good as credit (with interest rates at 20% per year, as we shall see), but still a profitable one – all the more so for a rural monastery owning many landed properties.[59]

As I have argued in the previous section, we can reasonably think that the monastic community of S. Michele could have managed to get marketable grain from its demesnes; the two inventories of customary labour-services seem to tell us that this system was still in operation in the 1180s, and there is no reason to believe that this was unprofitable or even irrational, as manorial organisation has sometimes been labelled in the existing historiography. Why so much care in writing down *corvée*-work, otherwise? Why not lease out the lands that notaries defined as *terrae monasterii*? Nor should we forget that labour was a very concrete representation of signorial subordination; briefly, it was something that landowners would have not ceded away happily. But they did, as we shall see, and the explanation of this fact will be the core of this section.

[59] Cf. Kotel'nikova, *Mondo*, pp. 23-4; see also Conti, *Le proprietà*, pp. XVIII-XIX; on the profit resulting from the sale of wheat cf. Faini, 'Passignano', p. 140 and 142.

The first thing we need to consider is that, like Settimo, Passignano appears to have been highly indebted in the final decade of the 12th century. The abbey had to spend a lot of money for various reasons; it was involved in an exhausting dispute with the bishop of Fiesole and the parish church of Figline over the ownership of two Figlinese churches (1170-95); the contrasts with the lay rivals of the monastery escalated, thus becoming what Passignano charters overtly (and quite unusually) call *guerra* ('war') in the years 1192-5; and in the period 1195-8 Passignano had to deal with another dispute, this time with a local landowner named Borgnolino di Borgno, over the restitution of money loans and the ownership of lands and cattle. Here we are not concerned with the details of these conflicts, which have been already investigated by Chris Wickham; what we know is that they cost money, and indeed they were the likely motivation behind the indebtedness of Passignano in the 1190s. It is significant that, in 1197, according to a list of debts and credits (which I shall analyse at length in the following section) three of the main opponents of S. Michele featured as its creditors; and indeed we know that in 1193 Passignano had to pay a very high fine for the murder of one member of the Firidolfi, amounting to £430.[60] These examples make it reasonable to think that the push towards change in the forms of land management did not merely derive from a profit-oriented attitude of the abbot and the monks of Passignano, trying to make the most out of a context in which grain had become expensive, but that it was (also) a reaction, an attempt to increase monastic revenues in order to gather enough money to pay off the debts of S. Michele. I would argue that these two motivations actually coexisted. We need to analyse, now, how this change took place, and how the abolition of *corvées* which I hinted at before fits into the matrix.

The first commutations of labour into new types of renders date to the early 1190s, and involved people living close to Poggio al Vento. In 1191, Diotaiuti and Olivieri di Grigotto agreed to give 33 *st.* of grain per year in substitution of the previous rent of 10 ½ *d.*, four loaves of bread, a small quantity of wine, four *operae manuales* and two *cum bovis*, plus a donkey-load of grapes in the period of vine-harvest; for this commutation, Abbot Alberto received 40 *s.* In 1193, then, Domenico, Albertinello, Consiglio and Ugieri, sons of Cillone, were exempted from a rent consisting in the performance of seven annual workdays and the delivery of a pair of chickens; from then on, they had to give the abbey 3 *st.* and one *emina* (probably one third of a single *staium*)[61] of grain. They also gave Abbot Gregorio 20 *s.* for the stipulation of the contract. The beneficiaries

[60] On the Figline disputes cf. Wickham, 'Ecclesiastical', pp. 7-93; on the other conflicts see Id., *Courts*, pp. 201-2 (see in particular note 77). The document concerning the murder is ASFi, *Passignano*, 1193 June 30. Chris Wickham doubted that this was a murder, and read 'propter necē' as *propter necessitatem* (cf, Id., *Courts*, ch. 5, note 83); I am inclined to agree with Simone Collavini, who read *propter necem* (cf. Collavini, 'I poteri', p. 200, note 49). The list of credits and debts has been recently published in Tabarrini, 'When', *Appendix*, pp. 423-34 (cf. *infra*).

[61] It is impossible to know how much grain could be contained in one *emina* in 12th-century Passignano. The term, which appears in the *Regula* of St Benedict, is discussed by many interpreters of the rule itself. See Du Cange, *Glossarium* IV, col. 183b. It is likely that its capacity was around 1/3 of a single *staium*.

of both deeds, despite the change in their tenancy agreements, would remain *homines* and *coloni* of S. Michele.[62]

These documents are not so easy to interpret. We can say for sure that the abbots of Passignano were collecting, via the entry-fines, some money that could be perhaps used to pay off a part of the debts of S. Michele; to this end, Alberto and Gregorio appear to have thought it rational to abolish the traditional dues owed by tenants, and in particular a handful of labour-services which, despite being just a few, might have been particularly loathsome for cultivators, in that they forced them to leave their holdings to work on the monastery's demesnes. But the abbots of S. Michele did not give up land-based lordship, since the addressees of these two commutations kept their status as highly-dependent tenants of the abbey; in other words, the *signoria* was simply diminished, not cancelled. This is important for our understanding of *corvée*-work, which appears as a significant marker of social subordination, given that it was necessary to specify that the *colonatus* would last even if labour was no longer required. What about the economic implications of such commutations, however? In the first contract, Abbot Alberto seems to have obtained a higher rent in comparison to the previous one. 33 *st*. means *c*. 264 kg of cereals, definitely much more than what was necessary to make four loaves of bread (Conti estimated that one *staium* of Passignano might have been sufficient to make ten average-size loaves). The monastery renounced, it is true, money, wine and *operae*, but all of them were demanded in remarkably small quantities; it is sufficient to consider that in the early-13th-century Fiorentino a single *staium* of wheat appears to have cost 2.2 *s*. (which means that 33 *st*. = 72.6 *s*. vs the 10 *d*. envisaged by the older lease of Diotaiuti and Olivieri).[63] As an aside, it needs to be stressed that the effects of inflation, with the *staium* peaking at 7-8 *s*., were brought under control in the 1190s; but what interests us more, here, is that the disproportion between the old renders and the new ones is evident. As to the second commutation, it is more difficult to determine whether the newly-introduced renders were more burdensome than the traditional ones, for we would need to know what precisely the seven days of labour were for, and also the size of the holdings of Domenico and his brothers; nonetheless, we can say at least that also this second document testifies to the push, on the part of the monastic community, toward the collection of readily-available marketable wheat from rents, and not from demesne farming. And this is part of an overall trend whose explanation will emerge as we move on to the years bestriding the two centuries.

On a general level, it is worth noting that the beneficiaries of these charters do not feature inside the two inventories we have analysed in the previous section; this is further evidence of their incompleteness – it is worth remembering that the folder lacks at least one *folium* – and of

[62] The two documents are in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1192 March 15 (but the archivists got the date wrong; this is in fact 1190 March 14, which becomes 1191 in the modern style) and 1193 June 23.
[63] For the price of grain in the early *Duecento* cf. Conti, *Le proprietà*, p. XIV, note 13.

the spread of *corvée*-work among the estates of Passignano. Second, the two commutations constitute a clear example of the use of the *signoria* as an economic tool; a part of lordly power was consciously given away in order to avoid indebtedness. We might think, indeed, that this solution would have never been adopted if the financial disarray of Passignano had never taken place, and that the changes in the forms of land management that we are beginning to see here were a pure reaction to contingent difficulties. I am not against this view, but I think, at the same time, that we have to assume that such difficulties were also perceived by landowners as an occasion to rethink the way their estates had been managed up to that point, and therefore to maximise profit out of their leaseholds. Moreover, it is also plausible that the rents of the new lease agreements were not negotiated on equal terms, and that the abbots of Passignano managed to impose on their *coloni* – whose bargaining power must have been quite limited – disproportionate renders in comparison to what the monastic community had been demanding since then. Indeed, the abolition of the most humiliating request, that concerning *corvée*-work, may have even been a sort of excuse to justify the imposition of high fixed rents in kind.

Two commutations are of course too few to speak of a pattern of change. But it was necessary to set out the logic underpinning them in order to frame what would happen a few years later, when an abbot of Passignano, Uberto, intervened in land management with distinct vigour – a vigour which engendered massive opposition from a part of the monastic community of S. Michele. The section that follows will focus also on the political context of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, and therefore on topics that are basically outside the remit of this thesis. We shall need to give some space to them, however, because it is necessary to demonstrate that the opposition to Uberto was the result not only of factional struggles and of the bid for power they embodied, but also of the economic policy pursued by the abbot.

3.2.2.3 Abbot Uberto (1197-1205)

3.2.2.3.1 The abbot's political network

In May 1197, Uberto became the new abbot of Passignano; seven years later he was brought to trial with the accusation of having incurred too many debts, thus ruining its monastery; in 1205 he was removed from office and, as a result of papal intervention, even excommunicated. His abbatiate is of particular interest because some of the depositions against him have survived, along with a list of the credits and debts with which the monastery was burdened at the beginning and the end of Uberto's office. This provides us with an exceptional account of a single abbot's activities, as well as with an insight into the political and economic conjuncture of the years

straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. But it has to be stressed, all the same, that the trial record contains only the declarations of the people accusing the abbot, and we never hear Uberto's voice, the other side of the story. We may well think, as a result, that Uberto's alleged responsibilities in the worsening of S. Michele indebtedness were a pretext used by a part of the monastic community to get rid of an unwelcome abbot, and that the whole trial was motivated by internal factional conflicts. Even though it is beyond doubt that political divisions played a role – and an important one – in determining Uberto's ousting, I would argue that the abbot did pursue an economic policy which resulted in new debts for S. Michele; the reasons for it did not lie, however, in a mere lack of morality, as Uberto's accusers maintained, but in the (failed) attempt to take advantage of the opportunities offered by the increased demand for cereals in the Florentine countryside. This attempt included also a reform of land management, which probably was the most successful part of it, and it is thus worth having a close look at all these issues.[64]

We do not know anything about Uberto's election, but it is likely that the competition for the abbatiate had been tough in 1197, since the retiring abbot, Gregorio, had probably left behind him a long shadow, as can be deduced from his high level of education and his commitment to the promotion of Giovanni Gualberto's cult (see section 3.2.2.1). Uberto's background is in fact quite obscure. Enrico Faini suggested that he may have belonged to the rich Florentine family of the Uberti, whose most famous member, Farinata, is well-known as the protagonist of the tenth *canto* of Dante's *Inferno*. Faini has good reasons to claim this. For a start, even the abbot's name may point to a family link with the Uberti; but what is certainly more significant is that the Uberti reappeared within Passignano charters in the years 1199 and 1200, right after Uberto's election and after a century-long absence from S. Michele documents. The deed of the year 1200 is of particular interest, for the Uberti sold some of their tenants to the monastery in exchange for the very high figure of £228, and this might be evidence of the existence of a sort of partnership between the abbey and the aristocratic family.[65]

However, according to the witness records, Uberto's links with the city of Siena appear to have been, at the very least, as important as those with Florence. Two of Uberto's accusers, the lay brother Rodolfino and the monk-and-priest Angelo, maintained that Uberto was responsible not just for the financial disarray of S. Michele, but also for that of the abbey of S. Donato di Siena, which was one of Passignano dependencies. Another witness, the monk Ranieri, added that Uberto went to Siena in order to take out a money loan just after he had sworn not to exceed the

[64] Basically, I shall follow here what I wrote in Tabarrini, 'When', albeit paying more attention to the commutation of old rents into new ones made during Uberto's abbatiate. The essay includes also an edition of the trial roll (made up of four parchments) at pp. 423-34, which I will refer to as *Appendix* (followed by the number of the parchment) hereinafter.

[65] Faini, 'Passignano', pp. 141-2. The documents are in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1198 February 15 (Florentine style) and 1200 October 25.

expenditure ceiling of £20 without the consent of the monastic community – this was the second of three oaths that were aimed at setting a maximum budget for the abbot's expenses, and which Uberto had to subscribe to (I shall come back to this). Finally, it might be of some significance – although, it is true, this is a weaker piece of evidence – that Uberto's nephew, Guidalotto, is said to have sold a horse (presumably belonging to the monastery) in Siena in exchange for £7, in order to collect money for S. Michele.[66] To find safer evidence about Uberto's Sienese provenance, however, we need to turn our attention to the private charters of Passignano, which give credibility, to some extent at least, to the content of the witness records. In one of the court-cases in which the abbey of Passignano was involved during the 1190s – in 1192 – we find among the arbiters of the dispute one Uberto, abbot of S. Donato di Siena; if we consider that Uberto is quite an uncommon name within Passignano charters, we can conclude that 'our' Uberto is the same person who features, as arbiter, in the 1192 document, and that therefore Uberto had been the abbot of S. Donato di Siena before being elevated to the head monastery of S. Michele. This does not exclude that he might have belonged to a Florentine family, and we could assume that, after entering the community of Passignano, Uberto was sent to Siena in order to administer one of the monastery's dependencies – but this is mere speculation.[67]

The dialectic between the information included in the trial record and Passignano private charters is indeed what can shed light on Uberto's abbatiate, for it allows us to overcome, in part at least, the bias of the witnesses' depositions. Such a dialectic, unfortunately, is often not enough to solve all the interpretative problems we might encounter. What we have analysed so far, for instance, constitutes evidence of Uberto's links with Siena, but nothing confirms the core of his accusers' claims – that Uberto caused the financial ruin of the monastery of S. Donato; and we shall see other examples of this interplay of correspondences and discrepancies between the trial record and the charters of Passignano in a moment. As for now, it is important to keep in mind Uberto's connections with Siena not just for the sake of completeness of information, but because this constitutes the first warning against an interpretation of Uberto's abbatiate (and of Uberto's ousting) as principally influenced by Florence, Florentine families and Florentine political struggles – which is one of the 'political explanations' of the trial that has been offered by scholars, into which indebtedness, and the accusations regarding Uberto's excessive expenses, would fit only (or mainly) as an excuse used to back up the accusers' claims.

There is no doubt that the years around 1200 marked a phase of political turmoil in Tuscany. We have discussed in chapter 1.2 how the death of Henry VI in 1197 and the subsequent formation of the anti-Empire League of *Tuscia* weakened substantially the authority and

[66] *Appendix* I, 'Rodolfinus conversus', lines 29-30; 'Presbiter Angelus et monacus', lines 45-6; 'Rainerius monacus', line 51. As for the horse, see the copy of the third manuscript which is part of the trial roll ibid., III, critical apparatus, note as (where Guidalotto is qualified as *nepos eius*) and also III, line 34.
[67] ASFi, *Passignano*, 1192 December 21; cf. Wickham, *Courts*, p. 202.

effectiveness of the imperial power in the region, thus favouring a reconfiguration of local political factions and also, with particular regard to Florence, a renewal of the city expansionism into the countryside. One of the outcomes of the creation of the League was the siege of the castle of Semifonte, in Valdelsa, until then a real stronghold against Florentine armies. This was bad news for Passignano, for Abbot Gregorio had made an important investment there in 1192, which was probably aimed at eroding the influence of the patrons of the castle, the Alberti counts, and – in the long run – at replacing them with Passignano.[68] But there is more to that. Thanks to the reading of the list of Uberto's creditors and of Passignano charters, Enrico Faini has convincingly shown that the families who lent money to the abbot or acted as his guarantors in the first years of the 13th century (Scolari, Lamberti, Macci, Ubriachi)[69] all joined the pro-Empire Ghibelline party in the following decades, when the break with the Guelf bloc, traditionally dating to the year 1216, was formalised. Faini thus suggested that such a seperation may have existed also at the very beginning of the 13th century, precisely when Uberto was taking out money loans from this 'pre-Ghibelline' group.[70] When we put all these considerations together, we would not be surprised if the capitulation and destruction of Semifonte, which took place in 1202, resulted in a de-legitimisation of Uberto; his creditors were the pro-Empire families who, arguably, did not share the benefits of the victory, and Semifonte certainly engendered new economic losses for S. Michele. Not only did Passignano lose a conspicuous investment there, but – as we learn thanks to a charter dating to 1203 – Uberto was also forced to contract new debts, as he owed money to Uguccione degli Ubriachi 'in order to pay the *libbra* to the commune of Florence for the restoration [which, however, was never completed] of Semifonte'.[71]

It seems reasonable to conclude that Uberto's political relations, along with the war of Semifonte, were an important factor in determining his ousting. Yet I doubt that they were the main reason for it. The first thing we need to consider is that Uberto was able to keep his position for about three years after the end of the siege, which is quite a long time, and this suggests that the effects of the war of Semifonte on his position as abbot of Passignano should not be overestimated. Even more telling, however, is the analysis of his web of creditors. This was not exclusively composed of citizens, and we may well say that the abbot's fate did not only depend on Florence, nor on one of the city political factions. For a start, Uberto's main money lenders were two rural creditors: Alberto di Cintoia, who gave Uberto £600, and Gianni di Giannello, whom we met in chapter 2.3; in particular, Gianni expected to receive most of his money back

[68] See Faini, 'Firenze'.
[69] On the Macci and the Ubriachi cf. ASFi, *Passignano*, 1203 May 29. The *filii de Ebriaco* were also creditors of Abbot Gregorio, i.e. Uberto's predecessor; Gregorio owed them £6 and 40 *s.*; cf. *Appendix* III, line 12; for the Scolari and the Lamberti cf. ibid. II, line 9.
[70] Faini, 'Passignano', pp. 146-7.
[71] See again ASFi, *Passignano*, 1203 May 29.

(£370) in Passignano and only a smaller amount (£100) in his city house – hence it might be assumed that Gianni was planning to spend or reinvest the bigger part of his credit in Passignano or its surroundings, which is a very indirect, but nonetheless intriguing, hint at the fact that credit was indeed available in the countryside, and that Uberto could resort to it without necessarily going to Florence.[72] Second, if we simply identify the provenance of each of the abbot's creditors as they are recorded in the list of credits attached to the witnesses' depositions, we can calculate that the money loans granted by Florentine citizens reached a maximum of £480 – less than one third of the total quantity of debts, as we shall see. But there is further evidence to suggest that we should look at Passignano local society as much as we should look at Florence in order to understand Uberto's story. According to the testimonies of the trial, Uberto also imposed a *datium* or *acattum* on the inhabitants of the castles of Passignano and Poggio al Vento, as well as of other neighbouring localities, so as to collect money to pay off the debts of the monastery.[73] The *datium* was worth £617, according to the list of Uberto's incomes during his first year as abbot, or £700, according to one of the witnesses (the lay brother Tignano). The latter figure is one of the many roundings that one can spot in the depositions, and this makes it sensible to put more trust in the former. But the important point is that a signorial exaction – indeed, the use of the *signoria* as an economic tool – appears to have been more profitable than Florentine credit. It was certainly advantageous in that the *datium* did not burden the abbey with the interest rates implied by money loans, which were 20% per year.[74]

In conclusion, it would be wrong to read Uberto's story as a simple reflection of the political situation in Florence; this certainly influenced the balance of power inside the monastery of S. Michele, but was not determinant. However, another possible way of interpreting the trial against Abbot Uberto has also been proposed, and the alleged worsening of the financial disarray of Passignano, as an excuse to remove a political opponent. More in particular, Francesco Salvestrini has focused his attention on the relations between the monastery of S. Michele and S.

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[72] On Alberto di Cintoia see *Appendix* III, lines 15-7; see Plesner, *L'emigrazione*, p. 110; on the family 'da Cintoia' see Lefeuvre, 'La notabilité', pp. 207-15. On Gianni di Giannello see *Appendix* II, line 3 and line 6; see also De Rosa, *Alle origini*, p. 47 and p. 64, note 98.

[73] The estimate cannot be completely exact. First, for one of Uberto's creditors the figure is missing ('Item Grasso nescio quot'; see *Appendix* II, line 19); second, it is not possible to identify all the people named in the inventory. For example, Faini thinks that *Mainectus* is Manetto di Chiarissimo, whose son would become a member of the Florentine political *élite* (see *Appendix* II, line 9; Faini, 'Passignano', p. 146, note 70), but he might also be Manetto di Bailitto, who appears in Passignano charters as the lender of £42 to Orlandino di Figline (see ASFi, *Passignano*, 1201 October 28). However, considering that Manetto's guarantor was the Florentine Bernardo Scolari, I have classified Manetto as a city-based creditor. A similar problem occurs with Odarrigo di Ugolino; his family owned goods in the city, but apparently did not reside there – and this is why I put him among 'rural' creditors; see Faini, 'Passignano', p. 146, note 67. Finally, in order not to overcomplicate the text, I took into account, here, only the debts reckoned in money – we shall examine those in kind later.

[74] Cf. *Appendix* I, lines 2-3 (in which the lay brother Tignano speaks of an *acattum* worth £700, but the figure is probably one of the many roundings made by the witnesses, as we shall see); the figure of £617 is recorded ibid., lines 16-8; III, line 33. On signorial powers in Passignano see Collavini, 'I poteri'; on the 20% annual rate see the document in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1201 May 5; and cf. Faini, 'Passignano', p. 142.

Maria di Vallombrosa, the head-monastery of the congregation to which Passignano belonged, and particularly on Abbot Benigno. Benigno was a cleric from Figline who became first the abbot of the Vallombrosan monastery of S. Salvi and then the abbot major of the whole congregation between the end of 1201 and the beginning of 1202. From then on, Benigno endeavoured to reassert S. Maria's authority over the dependent abbeys of the congregation, in an attempt to 'centralise' the administration of the Order. In view of this, Salvestrini argued that the trial against Uberto might be interpreted as a phase of this process; Benigno would have used the indebtedness of Passignano as a pretext to remove the abbot of the rich, and so relatively independent, monastery of S. Michele, thus paving the way for his substitution with a more easily-manageable person.[75] It is beyond doubt that Benigno played an important role in determining Uberto's ousting because of his close contacts with Innocent III, whose intervention, in turn, strongly contributed to bringing to an end Uberto's abbatiate. At the same time, however, it is worth pointing out that the opposition to Uberto and his financial management preceded Benigno. Between 1197 and 1205 Uberto had indeed to take three oaths in which he promised not to exceed a maximum budget for his expenses; he swore first in front of Abbot Martino (Benigno's predecessor at Vallombrosa), then in the presence of the monastic community of Passignano in 1199 (this is the oath I mentioned above) and finally before Benigno himself in 1204.[76] It seems thus reasonable to assume that, even though Benigno is likely to have tried to take advantage of the monastic discontent towards Uberto, the reasons for it had deeper roots and must be searched elsewhere.

This brings us, in the end, to the analysis of Uberto's management of the finances of Passignano, and to the fundamental question of this section – were Uberto's accusers right?

3.2.2.3.2 Uberto's financial strategy

To provide an answer, let us look first at what his accusers claimed with regard to the size of the debt of S. Michele. They gave very discordant figures. The lay brother Tignano said that the initial deficit was £760; another lay brother, Rodolfino, reported the figure of £700, but he admitted that he had only heard of it ('ut audivit'). By 1204, after about seven years since Uberto had become the abbot of Passignano, the debt of S. Michele had increased significantly, but –

[75] Salvestrini, 'San Michele', p. 122.

[76] The oath in front of the monastic community is in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1199 November 20; that in front of Benigno is ibid., 1204 July 6. The one before Abbot Martino, instead, has not survived; we learn of it thanks to the trial record and to a letter sent by Pope Innocent III. For references to the oath sworn in front of Martino within the trial record see *Appendix* I, lines 5, 12, 20, 36, 53; for Innocent's letter see the edition in Alberzoni, 'Innocenzo III', Appendice, no. 2 (the original document is in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1205 April 1).

again – its exact quantity remained unclear. According to the lay brother Buongianni, Uberto ruined the assets of the abbey 'for £1000 and more'; the priest and monk Angelo raised the bar ('more than £2000'), whereas the monk Ranieri was halfway between the two ('the monastery is burdened with a new debt of £1500 and more').[77] Due to such evident inconsistencies, it seems all the more sensible to doubt the content of our depositions. There are however two ways to test their reliability. One is to look at the list of credits and debts attached to the trial record, which reports a debt of £653 and 55 *s.* in 1197 and of £1169, 2 *s.*, 5 *d.*, 125 *modii* and 10 *st.* of wheat, plus 6 *st.* of barley in 1204 (the presence of rents in kind is important, and I will discuss it in a moment);[78] briefly, the debt of Passignano certainly increased (+£516 in seven years), but not as much as the abbot's accusers maintained. We can thus assume that the witness records might be a good guide to indebtedness as such, but not to its scale. The second way is to resort, again, to the private charters of Passignano in order to see whether they tell us that Uberto actually spent more than he earned. The answer is yes: £489 and 14 *s.* on the purchase of lands and tenants over (approximately) seven years and ten months – and it is worth noting that, during an equivalent period of time, Uberto's successors (the abbots Otto and Geronimo) later made a profit of £345 and 5 *s.* out of sales. One could object that £489 is far less than £1,169, and that therefore the figures provided during the trial were certainly biased, if not simply invented. This was hardly the case, however; the reason for this difference in the size of debt is more likely to have lain in the fact that, however rich the archive of Passignano is, its private charters are mainly deeds recording perpetual transfers of land, in the form of sales or leases – as is indeed the case with almost all our archival materials before the appearance of notarial protocols. We should not expect that the information included within the list of credits and debts attached to the witnesses' depositions could match exactly the data provided by private charters; all we can ask from the latter is to confirm or deny the general trend which surfaces from the trial's documentation; that Uberto spent more than he earned, thus increasing the debt of S. Michele – and they do confirm it.

In at least one case, in fact, Uberto tried to pay off the debts of the monastery by simply selling off Passignano landed properties. In 1201 he issued a sale charter concerning the vast estate of *Piscille*, which he was planning to cede away in exchange for the very high figure of £820. The operation, however, was never concluded, and it is not clear whether it was Abbot Benigno who refused to subscribe to the charter (although it would remain difficult to explain why, unless we assume that Benigno's desire to strengthen the political control of Vallombrosa over Passignano was such that he was ready to let Passignano sink into debt) or whether it was Uberto who changed his mind as to the opportunity to actually sell *Piscille*. As we shall see, such turnarounds were part

[77] *Appendix* I, § Tingnanus conversus, line 2; § Rodolfinus conversus, line 14; Buongianni conversus, line 32; § Presbiter Angelus et monacus, line 47; § Rainerius monacus, line 57.
[78] The figure which is reported in *Appendix* III, line 14, is the result of a rounding (maybe not by chance): £660. The sum I wrote in the text is the one I calculated by adding up the figures of each entry.

of Uberto's character, and the text of the sale concerning *Piscille* only reports that the deed was not validated within the prescribed time; in brief, this possibility cannot be ruled out.[79] The main point is that, at any rate, all this does not alter the overall picture I have sketched out so far; Uberto thought it worthwhile to spend on lands and tenants, and indeed this engendered an opposition to the abbot which both preceded the sale of *Piscille* – as is shown by the oaths before Martino and the monks of Passignano – and followed it – for Uberto also had to take an oath in front of Benigno. All in all, if we do not want to believe that Uberto became somehow the victim of a real conspiracy, orchestrated by different people over many years, we do have to give some credibility to his accusers, and accept that he actually increased the debt of Passignano by way of purchasing lands and tenants. What remains to be explained is why he behaved like that and whether we also have to believe that he was a squanderer, as the witnesses depicted him during the trial.

In fact, I have already suggested an answer to this question. Selling grain on the market delivered good margins on the purchase of land during the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. Uberto may have tried therefore to pay off the debts of S. Michele by investing money rather than by cutting the abbey assets. This is consistent with the fact that, unlike his predecessors, Uberto also stipulated a conspicuous quantity of debts in kind; this means that he was buying grain on credit, or else that he was granting future harvests in security for money loans. All this is the likely motivation behind the opposition he faced inside Passignano – which, however, probably involved only a part of the monastic community; after all, someone must have supported his election as abbot of S. Michele in 1197. Nonetheless the opposing party, the one which probably judged Uberto's investments (we can now use this word) too risky, which was reinforced in its claims by the defeat of Semifonte, by Benigno's 'interventionist' approach and (as Faini rightly argued) by the spiral of debts created by the high interest rates that Uberto was in all likelihood forced to pay, prevailed in the end.[80] In 1204 Uberto was called to S. Maria di Vallombrosa by Benigno himself, who wanted to examine his management personally. Uberto went there and apparently promised to follow the orders of the abbot major – even though we do not know what their content was. On his way back from Vallombrosa to Passignano, however, Uberto stopped at the monastery of S. Salvi, where he decided not to honour his commitments and instead to appeal to a papal tribunal. A few days later, Benigno went to S. Salvi, where Uberto seemed to regret his own change of mind. Pope Innocent III entrusted the settlement of the dispute to Benigno and two other abbots belonging to the Vallombrosan Congregation; but

[79] For the sale of *Piscille* see ASFi, *Passignano*, 1201 May 16; on the missing subscription of the charter see ibid., 1206 November 20. See Faini, 'Passignano', pp. 142-3. It is worth noting that in the fourth manuscript of the trial roll (i.e., the copy of the third one: see *Appendix* III, c.a., note bi), there is mention of the sale of an 'estate in Panzano in exchange for £800' – an expression which might refer to *Piscille*. However, the person who wrote down these lines was probably working with the archival documents of Passignano and must have come across the charter concerning *Piscille*, without knowing that it had been invalidated in the meantime.

[80] Cf. again Faini, 'Passignano'.

Uberto asked for a deferment and, after that, he did not show up (these are indeed the turnarounds I was referring to before). Therefore, on the 1st of April 1205, in the cloister of S. Michele, Uberto was condemned, removed from the office and then excommunicated.[81] There would be much more to discuss here, for Uberto's story really is at the meeting-point of many interesting historical problems, such as those regarding the transformations of the Vallombrosan Order and of the papacy under Innocent III. For our purpose, however, it is important to examine closely what probably constituted the most important form of implementation of Uberto's investment-based economic policy, and which is indeed what interests us most here – the changes in farming-regimes he actively promoted.

3.2.2.3.3 Uberto's reforms of land management

Uberto's abbatiate was marked by a sharp acceleration in the commutation of old rents and services into new ones. Between 1198 and 1204, he issued ten charters in which *operae*, *antiqua servitia* and *pensiones* were abolished in return for a fixed rent in kind, which was always constituted by *staia* of wheat. Unfortunately, some essential pieces of information, such as the size of each holding, the quantity of labour or what a *pensio* precisely consisted in, were not recorded in the charters, which makes it difficult to assess whether the new renders were more burdensome than the old ones. In three cases at least, however, we get the impression that this was the case, for the rent was quite high (15, 12 and 16 *st.*). It needs to be stressed, moreover, that only in three agreements did Uberto demand an entry-fine, an *introitum*, for the stipulation of the new contract (of, respectively, 40, 4 and 10 *s.*); the relative marginality of this type of request has two possible explanations. On the one hand, we can think that Uberto did not want to impose any fines, in order to make commutations more acceptable to peasants; and this was indeed convenient for Uberto too, since a permanent rent in wheat would have certainly contributed better than a one-off payment in money to lowering the debt of Passignano. But on the other hand, we may also think that commutations were addressed to particularly poor peasants, who simply did not have much readily-available cash. A clue in this sense is that they all were *homines et coloni* of the monastery – not a determinant clue, however, when we consider that the highly-dependent tenants involved in the first two commutations we have analysed above did have money of their own. What is more important is that, once again, the addressees of the commutations had to remain *homines et coloni* of S. Michele despite the abolition of their traditional dues; there is only

[81] See Alberzoni, 'Innocenzo III', pp. 298-301; Salvestrini, 'San Michele', p. 122.

one contract which does not include explicitly this clause – the first one, dating to 1198. Its beneficiaries probably were a bit better-off than other *coloni* from Passignano – as seems to be confirmed by the fact that the payment of the highest of the three entry-fines I have just discussed was from them. All the same, they appear to have had quite restrictive ties of dependency towards the abbey, since they were required to build their new permanent house, the *resedium* (one of the markers of the *colonatus*, as we have seen in chapter 2.3) on the holding that was being granted to them. It is certain, at any rate, that Uberto was using the tools of signorial control and the demand for labour-duties (and thus the 'classic manorial' form of land management *par excellence*) as the starting point to modify the then-extant agrarian regimes – similarly to the abbots Alberto and Gregorio, but more intensively.[82]

One might conclude, at this point, that Uberto simply took part in a trend characterising at least some parts of the Fiorentino; changeover in the forms of land management regarded *corvée*-work, which was abolished and used as part of a financial strategy aimed at cutting off debts, as at Settimo. It is easy to object, however, that marketable grain could have been collected from the already-existing monastic demesnes, cultivated through the days of labour performed by tenants. As I will argue in chapter 5, I believe that this shift from labour to fixed rents was mainly motivated by the will to give tenants a stake in the quality and the quantity of the produce coming from their holdings – something they evidently did not have in a *corvée*-based regime, in which all the agricultural output goes to the landowner. For now, it is sufficient to stress that Uberto did commit himself to such commutations, in a way that is not paralleled by his successors, Ottone (1205-1207/8) and Geronimo (1207/8-1219); there was indeed a significantly lower number of lease agreements including a commutation of old rents into fixed rents in wheat during their abbatiates: two (at most, as the Latin text is not fully clear) for Ottone and three for Geronimo, which means – at best – half of Uberto's conversions over a period which was double his office.[83] And we have seen in section 3.2.2.2 that only two commutations can be attributed to Uberto's predecessors.

However, this difference between Uberto, his predecessors and his successors as to land-management reforms was probably simply one of intensity. Uberto's accusers stated clearly that the abbot was a bad manager in that he was a squanderer, and nobody mentioned the

[82] The lease agreements envisaging commutations are in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1198 May 27 (ph. 7311, original and 7312, copy), 1201 November 11 (ph. 7624, original and 7623, copy), 1202 January 28, 1202 March 10, 1202 July 28, 1202 November 18, 1203 January 8, 1203 February 15 (ph. 7759, original and 7758, copy), 1203 December 21, 1204 March 17 (ph. 7865, original and 7866, copy).

[83] For Geronimo's commutations see ibid., 1212 December 10, 1213 December 11 and 1214 December 10 (ph. 8927). As for Ottone, the Latin text of the documents ibid., 1206 June 29 and 1207 May 30 is a bit tricky. The beneficiaries of the charters had to deliver their rents in kind 'through [*intra*, but also *per* is used later in the text] rent [*pensione*], money, chicken, labour-services' and 'through [*intra*] labour-services with oxen and manual labour-services, money and offerings'. We may wonder whether *intra* and *per* mean that the renders which followed the two prepositions had been abolished, or whether they signify that the leaseholders had to deliver their rent 'through' a combination of labour-services, money and so on – which I think is more sensible.

transformations of lease agreements as further evidence against him; on the contrary, even the witnesses at the trial admitted that Uberto did something good for Passignano, for instance by leasing out the tenants of the monastery – in fact a likely reference to the use of those tenants as a pledge for money loans – even though any improvement was obscured by the damage he had caused. It cannot be excluded that reforms of tenants' dues were indeed the most widely-accepted part of his (so to speak) 'economic policy', and the witnesses may have been thinking of them when talking about improvements.[84] In this sense, Ottone and Geronimo (as also Alberto and Gregorio) probably were simply more reluctant to cede away a considerable part of the abbey signorial authority, which was more difficult to wield once *corvées* and other *servitia* were abolished. The process thus probably slowed down a bit, but it hardly stopped – and we must always keep in mind, on the top of this, that labour may have also been replaced with other dues in an informal way, one which did not necessarily envisage the issuing of charters. Whatever the case, by the beginning of the office of Abbot Rodolfo (1219) I could not find further mentions of *corvée*-work among Passignano documents.[85]

It is worth summarising, at this point, the two major changes that we have met in chapter 3.2.2 so far: that highlighted by Kotel'nikova, consisting in the prevalence of rents in kind over money from the 1180s onwards in the whole Fiorentino, including Passignano; and the abolition of *corvée*-work from the 1190s in Passignano, which was replaced with fixed rents in wheat. The demand for cereals proves their high level of marketability, but leaves one major question open. We have observed that wheat-growing fields constituted only a part, and quite a restricted one, of the Florentine landscape. We need to bear in mind that tree crops, such as vineyards and olive-trees, still were the most suitable to the soils of the Chianti region, despite all the efforts towards wheat-production and wheat-sale. What happened to polyculture?

[84] The lay brother Buongianni declared that 'in one thing [Uberto] improved the monastery, that is, he leased its men' (*Appendix* I, line 33). The Latin expression ('afictavit homines monasterii') is tricky. It may have been referred to the issuing of new leases for the monastery's highly-dependent tenants (*homines*), but might have also regarded the pawning of some of them in exchange for money loans – and the Latin wording makes the second interpretation more plausible. In addition to this, the notary Gerardo recorded that the priest and monk Angelo, when asked if Uberto enhanced the abbey, replied 'no, he does not think he improved it, unless one puts the worsening aside, which is double the improvements' (*Appendix* I, line 48-9). Again according to Gerardo, Ranieri's answer to the same question was 'yes, but he says that the worsening caused by Uberto was double, and that for the aforementioned improvement he should not have incurred any debts' (*Appendix* I, lines 63-5).

[85] Moreover, the document in ASFi, *Passignano*, 1208 September 13 is to my knowledge the last one in which labour-services were quantified (two *corvées* with oxen were recorded at the bottom of a donation made by Priest Simeone to Passignano).

3.2.2.4 The infancy of *mezzadria* in the Chianti region through the evidence of Passignano

The division of the harvest in two halves, or in shares, as a way to frame the relations between landowners and tenants was quite common during the early and central Middle Ages; in northern Italy it can be traced back to the 9th century (cf. the example of eastern Lombardy in chapter 5). In the archive of Passignano sharecropping is documented very occasionally, and does not seem to have constituted anything like a best-possible option either for the monastic community of S. Michele, or for the lay aristocrats who were part of its clientele, during the 11th century and most of the 12th. Robert Davidsohn found only nine share tenancies for the period 1030-1170 among the charters of Passignano, and fourteen in total for the Florentine countryside as a whole – which is evidence of the marginality of this type of agreement for much of the high Middle Ages in the Fiorentino. In 1965 Elio Conti discussed the early sharecropping contracts of the abbey of S. Michele, which included some of the characteristic clauses of the later *mezzadria* leases, such as the joint provision of seeds on the part of landowners and tenants and the obligation for leaseholders to manure the land, in the attempt to improve its productivity (see chapter 1.1). The former clause, in particular, will be used in the following pages as a benchmark to speak of *mezzadria*, and not of simple sharecropping; together with the formation of *poderi* – which is, however, a late medieval phenomenon – it is indeed the most distinguishing feature of *mezzadria*. If we broaden our horizons, and leave Passignano for a moment, we can find other *mezzadria* elements in the documentation of the Fiorentino. In a lease from S. Miniato al Monte, dating to 1149, there is a clause regarding cost-sharing for livestock, another typical characteristic of *mezzadria*. From the late 12th century, moreover, the word *podere* progressively substituted *mansus* – even though, as Oretta Muzzi and Maria Daniela Nenci noted, the *podere* was not at that stage the farming unit to which *mezzadria* was applied, as would be the case in later centuries, but rather a way to stress the proprietorial rights, and indeed the power (*potere* in Italian), that the landowner wielded over his land.[86]

To sum up, it is quite easy to identify some of the elements typical of late medieval *mezzadria* in the Tuscan documentation of the central centuries of the Middle Ages, but they are very scattered and incoherent. Can we spot a moment in which such an incoherence slowly began to fade? To provide an answer, this section will discuss share tenancies and early *mezzadria* agreements at Passignano in the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries, for the archive

[86] As for sharecropping deeds in Tuscany during the 11th and the 12th centuries see Davidsohn, *Forschungen* I, 150-2; see also Conti, *La formazione* I, 131-2; on the word *podere* see Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II, 55; see also Leverotti, 'Scomposizione', p. 213, who argued that *podere*/*potere* might have been a reference to the provenance of landed properties, originally belonging to the public domain or to the bishops. On the S. Miniato contract cf. Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II, 95-9 and Faini, *Firenze*, p. 99.

of Passignano is the only one in the Fiorentino that has preserved a documentation that is not intermittent, and which is therefore suitable to a proper contextualisation of those agreements. We shall try to understand, more in detail, whether this particular type of lease, and the farming regime that will result from it in later centuries, fits into the matrix of the transformations in land management that we have analysed so far (and also, more specifically, into the 'economic policies' of Abbot Uberto and his successors). To this end, it will be necessary to dedicate much space to the analysis of the single clauses of each lease contract, since it is there that we need to look for the progressive development of *mezzadria*; afterwards, I shall discuss the reasons that might have favoured such a development.

We have seen in chapter 1.1 that scholars have mostly focused on *mezzadria* as applied to *poderi* – understood, here, as the vast and concentrated tenant-plots created throughout the late Middle Ages which could guarantee self-sufficiency to a peasant and his family. As a consequence, the examples of early *mezzadria* in the central Middle Ages have been relatively less debated; and when such a discussion has taken place, it has mostly been orientated toward the outlining of the high-medieval premises of the *mezzadria poderale*. An exception to this approach, indeed an attempt to explain the origins of *mezzadria* in their own right (that is to say, not teleologically), was made recently by Enrico Faini, who focused on another important aspect of *mezzadria* contracts – the fact that they were mostly short-term. In view of this, Faini argued that one of their antecedents can be found in the money loans granted in return for pledges of land, which generally lasted only a few years and envisaged, as a form of interest, the provision of the harvest collected from the estate that had been pawned; significantly, in some cases the interest paid by the beneficiary of the loan consisted in half of the harvest, that is, the ordinary *mezzadria* rent. Through indebtedness, cultivators became tightly tied to major landowners, and this laid the basis for the development of *mezzadria* contracts, in which proprietors were in a particularly strong position towards their tenants – in view of the short duration of the contract, and of the control they exerted over the holdings.[87] This is a really intelligent and original explanation, but I do not find it entirely convincing. First, short-term credit loans granted in exchange for land pledges can be found in regions where *mezzadria* did develop, as well as in regions where it did not;[88] this suggests that they cannot be considered as the ancestors of a particular type of tenancy agreement. Furthermore, temporary leases were not necessarily sharecropping ones (as the early example of *Tigliano*, parceled out through seven-year leases given in exchange for fixed rents in wheat, shows; see chapter 3.2.1); they characterised late medieval farming regimes in general, and we would thus need to conclude that the pledges of land were the ancestors of *almost all* late medieval lease

[87] Faini, *Firenze*, pp. 97-109.
[88] Such as southern Latium (cf. Toubert, *Les structures* I, 608-19), but it is worth also citing eastern Lombardy, where the peasants' indebtedness, which is documented from the middle of the 12th century, did not pave the way for *mezzadria* (cf. Menant, *Campagnes*, pp. 301-7 and also *infra*, chapter 5).

contracts. Third, the provision of half of the harvest in interest appears to me as purely incidental; it surfaces from *c.* fifteen contracts out of a total of 120 documents mentioning land pledges between 1000 and 1200 in the whole Fiorentino, as Faini himself shows, and this is probably explained by the need to provide the beneficiary of the loan with a part of the harvest he could make a living on. In the end, I do not believe that land pledges provided a model for the future *mezzadria* contract. Faini is instead totally right when he stresses that the origins of *mezzadria* resulted from the attempt to strengthen control over land and cultivators; this is a fruitful line of analysis I shall stick to in this section.

Let us address these issues from the standpoint of Passignano documentation in the late 12th century. The main problem with the evidence from S. Michele, and from the Fiorentino of the central Middle Ages as a whole, is that it comes from a religious institution, and we cannot rule out the possibility that lay estates worked in a different way than ecclesiastical ones. We might want to look at the first Florentine notarial protocols (dating to 1237-8), that is, at the books in which notaries recorded legal deeds in an abbreviated form, and which usually include more information about the laity than single-sheet charters (I shall discuss this type of source in the next section); but unfortunately, they do not contain many references to share tenancies – indeed, they do not contain many lease agreements at all, and so they cannot be used as anything like a full guide to the patterns of landholding. The documents from Passignano at best suggest that, in the last quarter of the 12th century, some lay people did resort to share tenancies including clauses that would be part of the later *mezzadria* contracts. In 1174 two local landowners, Carpapallia and Corso, granted to Traino di Giraldo two pieces of land located, respectively, in *Summovico* and *Ruscillo*, both close to the castle of Poggio al Vento. Carpapallia and Corso demanded 1 *st.* of wheat from *Summovico*

> …and from the other piece half of the cereals ['medietatem de blada'] which the Lord will give each year on this land, so that the aforementioned men [Carpapallia and Corso] will provide half of the seed-corn, whereas the other half will be provided by Traino.[89]

In 1189 two other landowners, Olivieri and Bonisiro (together with their wives) leased out to a certain Gerardino one piece of land in *Aialta*, near Poggio al Vento again. In return for this, Gerardino had to

> … sow this land every year, and at the time of harvesting he must collect the seeds in advance. Then, they [the landowners and the tenant] must

[89] ASFi, *Passignano*, 1174 August 28.

> split the harvest in half. [Olivieri, Bonisiro and their wives] must be present during threshing and harvesting, and for this [lease agreement] they receive 12 *d.*[90]

These two contracts fit the interpretation already proposed by Conti, Muzzi, Nenci and Faini with regard to the Florentine documentation of the central centuries of the Middle Ages taken as a whole; we still have, in the last quarter of the 12th century, only very scattered and piecemeal examples of the clauses that would make up the late-medieval *mezzadria* contract. Such clauses did exist, however, and the four landowners (apparently small ones, for – insofar they can be safely identified – they do not feature very often within the archive of Passignano)[91] who conceded these leases included either the joint provision of seed-corn, or the right to control directly some important phases of the agricultural work (namely harvesting and threshing) as part of the agreements. This is not *mezzadria*, of course – in the second document seed-corn was provided by the tenant alone and the text does not even specify what the rent was, as the 12 *d.* represented an entry-fine – but we can at least say that the few traces concerning land management by lay people testify to the use of share tenancies, and to their 'enrichment' through *mezzadria* elements, on the eve of the *Duecento*.

Let us turn our attention to ecclesiastical owners. We need to await Uberto's abbatiate to see the first signs of a slight acceleration in the issuing of sharecropping contracts containing *mezzadria* clauses. It is important to stress, however, that such an acceleration was by no means as pronounced as that regarding the commutation of labour into fixed rents in wheat; and this is a discrepancy which is a key to the understanding of the economic conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries in Tuscany as a whole (as we shall see in chapter 5). Indeed, Uberto issued only four share tenancies, two of which encapsulated *mezzadria* elements. Not many, but still a high number if compared to the nine Passignanese share tenures for the whole period 1030-1170. It is worth looking more closely at the two deeds including *mezzadria* clauses. The first of them was addressed to Gianni di Giannello, the wealthy *colonus* we have already encountered twice (cf. chapter 2.3 and 3.2.2.3.1) and who, not surprisingly, was not supposed to work himself on the holding, but was stipulating this contract on the behalf of Ricciolino di Riccio di Raulino, the real cultivator. Here are Ricciolino's dues:

> Every year, at the time of sowing, they [the landowner and the tenant] must provide half of the seed-corn each, and at the time of harvesting

[90] Ibid., 1189 March 30.

[91] If we limit ourselves to Carpapallia (who, due to the atypicality of his name, can be identified more easily than the others) we find that he owned some land, for he features in the lists of boundaries of the lands in the process of being alienated, and that he also witnessed notarial deeds; his social and economic prestige, however, does not seem to have gone further than that; cf. ibid., 1204 March 17, 1205 June 16, 1205 July 22, 1207 March 24, 1207 June 27.

> they must give half of every type of cereals ['medietatem de quacumque blada'] that the Lord will give on this land. If olive-trees are planted, they must share them and their fruits; and they must provide the manure. And the representatives of the monastery must be present during harvesting and threshing.[92]

The second agreement dates to 1202, and was addressed to Buonaccorso and his heirs, who had to

> …provide twelve loads of manure, and the two of them [the landowner and the tenants] must provide half of the seed-corn. And at the time of harvesting they [Buonaccorso and his heirs] must collect the seed-corn in advance. And half of what remains must be given to the representative of the monastery, whereas they can keep the other half for themselves. And the representative of the monastery must be present during threshing and harvesting.[93]

The reader has certainly noticed that, apart from the isolated mention of olive-trees, all the contracts examined so far fall within the remit of cereal farming, but also that these contracts are different from those envisaging fixed rents in one important aspect. The demand for *granum/frumentum* has been substituted with that for the more generic *blada*, which designates all types of cereals, arguably including 'minor' ones. The fields, for which share tenures with *mezzadria* elements were adopted, were not destined to the exclusive cultivation of wheat. It can be guessed that this depended on the quality of the soil, which could deliver good yields only if sown with a variety of grains; hence the mixed cropping of cereals (which means that different grains are mixed before sowing, and then grown together on the same land).

Let us get back to the monastery of S. Michele, and examine the sharecropping tenancies issued by Uberto's successors. It is indeed possible to find in the archive of Passignano one share tenure for Ottone's abbatiate dating to 1206, issued in fact by Truffetto di Signorello (a long-standing small-scale lay patron of the abbey) and addressed to a certain Ildebrandino di Gianni (Gianni Malavacca, as later documents tell us) in exchange for 'half of the cereals ['medietatem de blada'], the tithe, half of the olives and of the fruits of the trees', together with the promise to manure the land. The estate was located in the 'Culto Burati' ('the land of Burato'), not far Passignano – as we will see in some detail in a moment.[94] During the abbatiate of Geronimo it is possible to find two share tenancies including *mezzadria* elements, although both of them do not

[92] Ibid., 1198 August 18.
[93] Ibid., 1202 October 10. The other two share tenancies issued by Uberto are ibid., 1199 June 30 and 1201, March 18 (ph. 7585, original and 7586, copy).
[94] The document is ibid., 1206 April 3; cf. Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II, 16.

entirely fall under this category. Let us see why. On 19 July 1211, Geronimo granted the brothers Talento and Ubaldo, sons of Rodolfino from *Monteficalle* (another member of the Firidolfi family) a piece of land in the locality of *Lacu* (Sillano). The brothers had to

> …give twenty-five bags ['sacca'] of good manure every year and every year, after putting aside the seed-corn, they must provide half of everything ['de omnibus'] God will give on this land and of all cereals ['medietatem postea de omnibus quod Deus ibi dederit et de tota blada'], which has to be delivered to the monastery or its representative.[95]

This contract resembles the 1189 charter addressed to Gerardino di *Aialta*, in that seed-corn was to be provided only by the leaseholder, and not by both the contracting parties; as a consequence, this can hardly be considered as an early *mezzadria* agreement. All the same, it fits into a context in which the attention to seed-corn was gaining space in lease charters. Maybe *Lacu* had particularly bad land, which needed thick sowing in order to be productive – hence the putting aside of seed-corn before the delivery of the produce. More probably, however, the abbey was making a generous concession to the Firidolfi by excluding a part of the seed-corn from the rent – it is worth noting that, on the same day as this lease, S. Michele reached quite a complex agreement with the same family regarding the exchange, the restitution and the leasing back of many landed properties.[96] On the top of this, it needs stressing that from 1206 polyculture starts to surface in ever-increasing clarity from the contracts, as results from the references to olives, fruits and to 'de omnibus' that God will concede. There is not *only* grain, here.

The second share tenure issued under Geronimo's abbatiate dates to 1215. The abbot gave to the just-cited Ildebrandino di Gianni Malavacca a piece of land located in a place called 'Vignale quondam Buratti' ('the vineyard of the late Buratto'), which probably was near the *Culto Burati* granted by Truffetto nine years before; the *Vignale* bordered on Ildebrandino's lands on two sides, and it can be guessed that at least one of those lands was close to the *Culto*, if not the *Culto* itself. This lease has the same clauses as the 1211 charter, with the difference that manure had to be provided every three years and that one representative of S. Michele had to supervise both harvesting and threshing.[97] We have good reasons to believe that Ildebrandino was a poor peasant (such reasons will become clear in a moment, in the discussion of the social profile of the addressees of sharecropping agreements), and that setting aside the seed-corn before rent was delivered constituted a way to secure the fair yields that only thick sowing could guarantee.

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[95] Cf. ASFi, *Passignano*, 1211 July 19 (ph. 8570).
[96] Cf. ibid., 1211 July 19, three charters (ph. 8567, 8568, 8569).
[97] Cf. Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II, 125, no. 1 (1215 September 29; this charter included also the lease of another piece of land, indeed called *podere*, in exchange for a fixed rent consisting in little more than 10 *st.* of grain; this constitutes further evidence of the fact that a *podere*, in the early 13th century, was not necessarily a *podere mezzadrile*).

This leads us, in the end, to the first contract that really gets closer to the ideal-type of *mezzadria*, which was issued by Abbot Rodolfo in 1220. It was, in all likelihood, the renewal of the 1215 agreement, and was addressed again to Ildebrandino di Gianni.[98] Let us have a close look at it.

> …so that every year, of all the seed-corn (should he provide all of it or just a half), he will give half of the cereals ['medietatem blade'] and the tithe to the monastery and its representative Bonaguida, the blacksmith, who has the right to collect it all; and he [Ildebrandino] must invite the monastery during the phases of harvesting and threshing, and give half of the fruits from all the trees; in addition to this, by order of the abbot himself, the monastery will collect figs and pears at the abbot's will; and so that he [Ildebrandino] cannot sell or grant this land to other people; and if Ildebrandino dies without any sons or male heirs, [the land] must return to the monastery; and so that the land must never be divided among heirs through hedges, moats or walls; and so that [Ildebrandino] has no power or will on this land which is not aimed at serving the monastery in Poggio al Vento and Passignano; and so that he provides eighteen loads [*salma*] of manure on that land; and so that, if he decides not to keep it, he should leave it to the monastery for free.[99]

The level of detail in the fleshing out of Ildebrandino's dues is striking, and is indeed one of the elements that makes it legitimate to speak of *mezzadria* here. We do not have, it is true, any indications about the temporary nature of the lease, but the fact that this contract probably constituted the renewal of a previous agreement may suggest that the leases issued to Ildebrandino already had an informal expiry date. There were no clear instructions as to the provision of seed-corn, too. One may guess that the monastery contributed to it only when the harvest had been very bad, which means that Ildebrandino may have needed an extra-provision of seed-corn by the monks of S. Michele in order to obtain good yields in the following year. However, it is control over the holding, and the increased emphasis on it from 1215 to 1220, which stands out as the

[98] Ibid. II, 125-6, no. 2 (1220 December 15). The deeds dating to 1215 and 1220 were copied by the notary Sinibaldo on a single parchment (erroneously catalogued in the archive under the year 1215; cf. ASFi, *Passignano*, 1215 September 29). Thanks to the *completio* of the two documents, we come to know that both those leases were originally recorded on a notarial protocol belonging to the judge Bonavia. In the second deed, the boundaries of the tenant-plot were omitted; maybe Sinibaldo avoided writing them down because the reader could easily find them in the text of the 1215 tenancy, located right above the 1220 agreement. Naturally, it may also be that they were absent in the original document from which Sinibaldo was copying. It has to be noted, moreover, that the land was identified in 1220 as 'Campum qui dicitur Burati', and not *Vignale*, as in 1215. At any rate, the fact that those two leases were copied together *and* that the boundaries of the second agreement were not specified makes it very likely (but not certain) that we are dealing with the same tenant-plot.

[99] See note above for the reference.

most important thing that the abbey of S. Michele was trying to secure, with regard not just to harvesting and threshing, but also to sale, inheritance and division among heirs. The collection of the tithe, too, seems to suggest that the monks of Passignano held various rights on that land; it is likely, however, that what we are observing here is not an ecclesiastical tithe, but a simple tenth of all the produce coming from the holding (we shall see another example of this in chapter 4.2.1). I would propose that such tenth was mentioned here to clarify that Ildebrandino had to give that too in addition to the rent – which means, in turn, that Ildebrandino had to pay an overall rent that was really burdensome. Finally, we need to emphasise the coexistence of *blada*-growing fields and fruit-trees within the holding that was granted, an aspect that recalls the late medieval *podere mezzadrile*.

We can stop here with the analysis of the single clauses included within contracts. Indeed, share tenures with *mezzadria* elements can be considered as the end-point of our study of sharecropping in the Fiorentino; its further development in the following decades would bring us outside the scope of this thesis, and of the economic conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries. It is worth repeating that we still lack an explicit indication of the expiry date of the contracts, even though the likely renewal of Ildebrandino's lease testifies to the precarious status of this type of concessions, and indeed to the possibility, for the abbot of S. Michele, of further clarifying (and worsening) the terms of the tenancy agreement. We also lack a proper *podere*, for these early contracts of *mezzadria* concerned isolated pieces of land, but I would not attach too much importance to this aspect. Without a doubt, the *mezzadria* as a coherent system of land exploitation needs the *podere*, that is, it needs a reasonably large farming unit that can guarantee self-sufficiency to tenants, and to their families as well. Nevertheless, the clauses that we have examined so far are new enough to conclude that, from the 1210s at the latest, we are no longer dealing with simple sharecropping tenures, and this is a change that deserves an explanation in its own right.

For a start, we get the impression that the contracts we have might have been the formalisation of pre-existing customary sharecropping agreements. A charter dating to 1206 informs us that a certain Bonifacio di Bernardino owed to S. Michele a rent of 20 *st.* of grain coming from various estates, including his 'terre driterite et mezericie', which we can translate as 'lands from which ⅓ or ½ of the produce was demanded';[100] and in 1215 another son of Gianni Malavacca, Angiolieri, received from Abbot Geronimo some lands close to Passignano and Poggio al Vento in return for a fixed rent in wheat, but the charter specifies that Geronimo had excluded from the deed the lands that Angiolieri 'holds in return for ½ or ⅓ of all the products ['de omni eo'] that God will give there every year'.[101] Being so unclear about what the rent precisely

[100] Ibid., 1206 June 29.
[101] Ibid., 1215 August 10.

consisted in was odd; I would propose that the reason for it lay in the fact that both Bonifacio and Angiolieri were holding more than just one customary sharecropping tenure-plot at the same time, and that the difference in the size of the rent was determined by the average annual productivity of each plot. What is more interesting, however, is that such casual references to the presence of customary share tenancies may suggest that the leases we have been discussing hitherto were the tip of an iceberg, the few examples in which customary share tenures were regulated through a written charter. Hence there is reason to think that S. Michele was writing down – and probably tightening, as is suggested by the clauses concerning control over the leaseholds – a customary tenancy regime employed on landed estates in which wheat was not the only crop – either because other types of *blada* were cultivated, or because fruit trees were part of the holding. This raises a further question: who was willing, or forced, to subscribe to such unfavourable lease agreements?

With regard to this, it has to be noted that all the beneficiaries of Passignano share-tenancy contracts seem to have belonged to quite low strata of the peasantry (for our purpose, it is legitimate to take into consideration, here, also the addressees of lease charters granted by lay people; their preservation in the archive of S. Michele strongly suggests that the holdings involved in those charters were purchased, at some point, by the monks). Gianni di Malavacca and his brother Rodolfo were explicitly described as *homines* and *coloni* of Passignano in a charter dating to 1214, in which the 'traditional services' ('usitata servitia') they owed to the abbey were converted into the burdensome demand for just over 31 *st.* of grain – this was one of the three commutations issued under Abbot Geronimo.[102] Since the *colonatus* was a hereditary status, it can be safely argued that Ildebrandino and Angiolieri, Gianni's sons, were also *coloni*. The available evidence about the other early sharecroppers is not, unfortunately, as clear, but it can be reasonably proposed that they were highly-dependent tenants of S. Michele too. The majority of them were mentioned within lists of Passignano dependants: Ricciolino was the nephew of a Raulino who featured in the 1180s folder that we have discussed in section 3.2.2.1. In the same inventory, we can also find one of the sons of Malavacca (without further specifications) and Gerardino from *Aialta*. Traino di Giraldo is mentioned in a short list containing the names of some of the abbey's tenants (renders were not specified), in which it is also possible to identify Riccio's father.[103] In general, it

[102] Ibid., 1214 December 10 (ph. 8927).

[103] For Raulino cf. *Quaderno*, fol. 3r, line 6; *Riccius Raulini* is mentioned in ASFi, *Passignano*, 'Sec. XI' (ph. 2909) [cited henceforth in this note as 'Sec. XI'], line 18 (the handwriting and the names listed within this inventory are consistent with the mention of the son of Raulino, in that they induce to shift the dating to the second half of the 12th century); the last mention of Ricciolino's father is *ibid.*, 1197 August 8. Ricciolino is mentioned also *ibid.*, 1190 August 18, within the list of the boundaries of a land granted in the charter; and ibid., 1193 June 30 (and this is the deed which allows us to know where his father lived; the charter was redacted 'in loco Buecotto, prope ubi quondam habitavit Ricius Raulini'). For the 'Filius Malę Vaccę' cf. *Quaderno*, fol. 2v, line 4 and again 'Sec. XI', lines 14 and 20. For Gerardino from *Aialta* cf. *Quaderno*, fol. 2r, line 5 (here he is identified with the equivalent diminutive *Gerarducius*). For Traino di Giraldo cf. 'Sec. XI', line 8.

does appear as if the social milieu to which sharecroppers belonged was not very different from that of the *coloni* whose obligations were turned into the delivery of fixed rents in grain – and in at least one case, that of the Malavacca family, we know that the two categories indeed overlapped.

We can also get a little bit further in our search for the connections between the dues linked to the *colonatus* and the issuing of share tenures including *mezzadria* elements. This brings us back to the already cited *Vignale* and *Culto Buratti*. This place-name probably derives from a certain Buratto, who appears in a charter dating to 1188 in the act of purchasing a piece of land belonging to S. Michele 'in fundo et donicato de Curteveckia' the 'old *curtis*', perhaps one of the old estate-centres of Passignano; that plot of land was completely surrounded by *terra monasterii.*[104] One may suggest that, in the area where the estates of Buratto are likely to have lain, S. Michele had demesnes, even if fragmented (the share-tenancy agreements issued in 1215 and 1220 show that there were other owners there), and this prompts, in turn, further reflections on the origins of *mezzadria*. It may be assumed that the attention to seed-corn, which marks the passage from simple sharecropping to *mezzadria*, suggests a link with demesnes. Demesnes were the only type of property for which the provision of seed-corn certainly weighed on landowners, and the fact that early *mezzadria* agreements specified who was to be in charge of it can be interpreted as a way of defining such an important part of the tenancy relation once the demesne had been leased out.

This is guesswork to a large extent, for there is not enough evidence to be certain that share tenancies including *mezzadria* clauses were applied to lands that had been part of the monastic *indominicatum*. We do not know, either, whether sharecropping substituted for labour service. Only a couple of early sharecroppers appear to have been required to perform *corvée*-work for the monastery; furthermore, according to the 1180s folder, such services were only a few.[105] Still, it appears to me as plausible guesswork when we consider that this type of contract is above all found in the heartland of Passignano landed estates, that is, the areas closest to the abbey itself and Poggio al Vento, where monastic demesnes certainly existed. It can be at least proposed that the first contracts of *mezzadria* were part of a general process characterised by an effort towards the reframing of the dues owed by monastic *coloni*; indeed, of a process in which the *colonatus* was the main recipient of a reform of land management. It is very tempting to see in the early *mezzadria* the second outcome of the abolition of labour; that concerning the mixed cropping of cereals, and polyculture in general, as opposed to the monoculture of wheat, usually demanded in fixed quantities. So far, we have not met sharecropping applied to vineyards; if the vineyard of Buratto actually included vines, they were not the object of the lease. This was going to change, however. A reference to vineyards seems to surface from a share tenure dating to 1236,[106] when a land close

[104] ASFi, *Passignano*, 1188 September 19.
[105] According to the *Quaderno*, Gerardino di *Aialta* had to provide just one labour-service *cum bovis* and the 'son of Malavacca' one labour-service *cum bovis* and four manual *corvées* (see note 103).
[106] Muzzi and Nenci, *Il contratto* II, 127, no. 4 (1235 January 27, Florentine style).

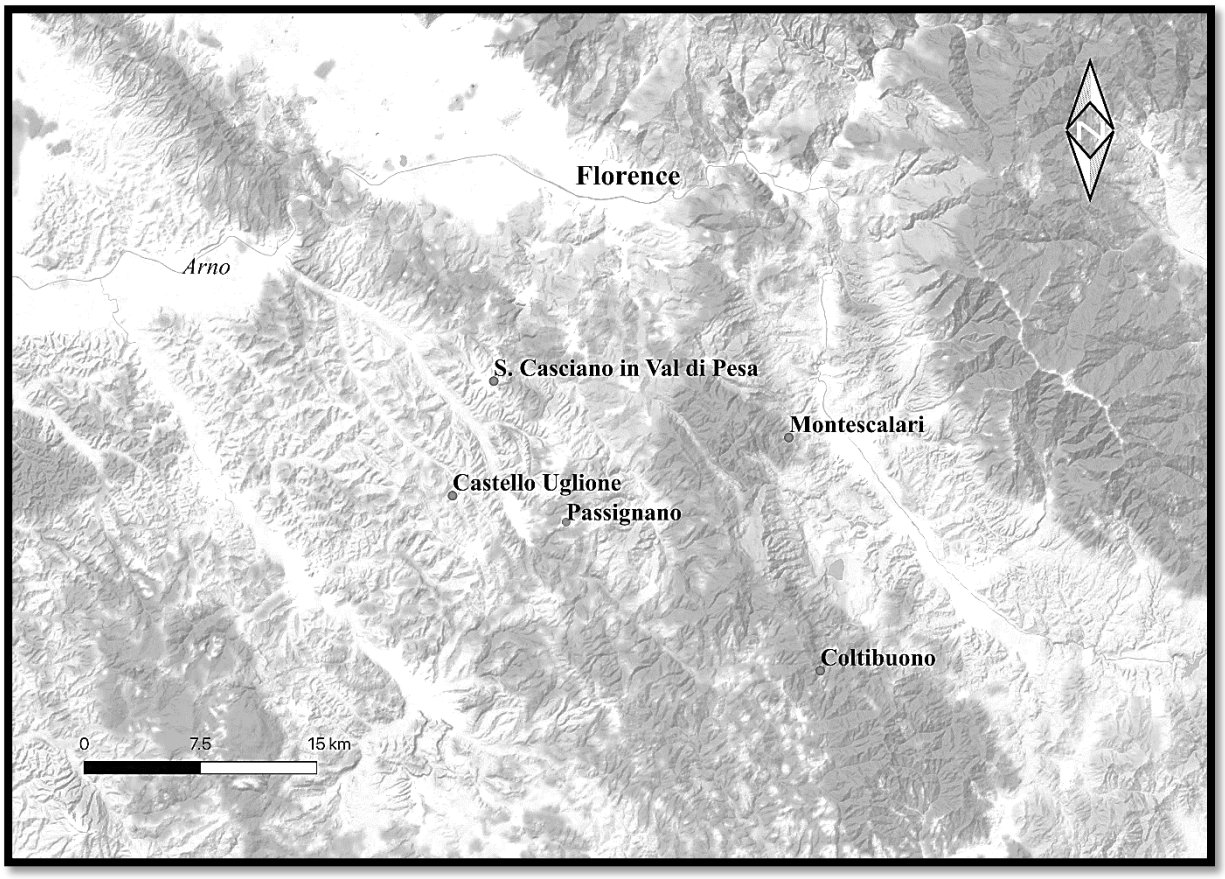
to Pianalberti, called again *Vignali*, was leased out in return for 'half of cereals and of the fruits ['mediam partem totius blade et fructuum']'; the combination of the place-name ('vineyard') and of the explicit reference to *blada* and *fructus* in the description of the rent makes it plausible to imagine the coexistence of grain crops and tree crops on the same holding. We have observed, too, that the *poderi mezzadrili* at S. Martino alla Palma included vineyards in the 14th century (cf. section 3.2.1). Can we think that the formation of *poderi mezzadrili* throughout the late medieval period constituted an expansion of a type of lease agreement that had, from the start, a 'propensity' to polyculture?

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It is apparent that land management was in the process of being transformed in the decades bestriding the 12th and the 13th centuries among Passignano estates; and that these transformations were due, in part at least, to the indebtedness of the monastery, from which S. Michele seems to have partly recovered only from 1214 onwards.[107] But choosing an option instead of another, when it came to the type of lease agreement that could be adopted, hardly was a pure matter of chance, and I shall set out an overall hypothesis to explain this difference in choices in the conclusions of the thesis. For now, I will look at the other case-studies regarding the Florentine countryside and the Chianti region, in order to test whether the examples of Settimo and Passignano fit into an overall context of change of estate management, and I shall pay particular attention to *corvée*-work and its role.

[107] Cf. Faini, 'Passignano', p. 147.

3.2.3 The Chianti region: other case-studies



14. The Chianti region: localities mentioned in chapter 3.2.3

In this section, I shall gather all the other pieces of information concerning reforms of land management in the Chianti region between the 12th and the 13th centuries. I will be more schematic than I have been so far, either because the case-studies I intend to focus on have been already studied (which implies that my own work is mostly based on the already existing literature) or because, quite simply, the documentation of the landowning ecclesiastical institutions that I am going to take into account here is not as clear as that of Settimo and Passignano about the characteristics of estate management and its change. Such a (relative) silence is important in itself, in that it prevents us from the risk of overgeneralising; transformations were not uniform – when they happened at all – and local patterns tend to contradict – as they often do – attempts to establish overall explanations. Still, we will be able to see some aspects of the developments that we have analysed so far with regard at least to the Florentine bishopric and, to a lesser extent, also in other sets of sources. To this end, I will not follow here a topographic, but rather a thematic scheme of exposition; the criterion I shall adopt will be constituted, in the first place, by the quality of our evidence about land management.

The case-study that best fits the matrix of the transformations in the patterns of tenancy agreements as I have depicted them comes from the Florentine episcopate, and regards some of its Chianti estates. In 1236 the bishop of Florence, Ardingo, issued a series of lease contracts with some of the dependent tenants of the bishopric who lived in two villages, Ripoli and Montecampolese, which fall within today's municipality of S. Casciano in Val di Pesa, about 20 km south of Florence; it can be argued that Ardingo could do so because he was backed by the pro-episcopal *podestà* of Florence, Rubaconte Rossi, who had been appointed just that year. We do not have the original documents of those contracts because, as mentioned early, the episcopal archives of the city were hit by a fire during the 16th century, which destroyed all the charters preserved there. We can however read them in a shortened version thanks to the *Bullettone*, the 14th-century copy of all the charters issued by the bishopric of Florence from the late 9th century to the year 1321. The *Bullettone* tells us that Bishop Ardingo converted the ancient dues (*antiqua servitia*) and the labour-services (*operae*) owed by tenants into the demand for fixed rents in grain, from a minimum of 1 to a maximum of 28 *st.* per person every year, for a total of fifty-three commutations addressed to individual peasants. It is really unfortunate that the brevity of the deeds recorded in the *Bullettone* does not allow us to know what the *servitia* and *operae* actually were. What we can say for certain is that the archive of the bishops of Florence must have been characterised by the same sort of discrepancy between written lease agreements and customary duties that we have observed at Settimo and Passignano, for there is not a single mention of labour within the *Bullettone* before 1236; we are thus able to read about *corvée*-dues only when they were in the process of being abolished. The similarities with the patterns discussed in relation to Passignano (and, although the documentation is far less abundant and the whole process less clear, to Settimo) does not stop here. If we assume – as seems absolutely reasonable – that at least a part of *servitia* and *operae* was constituted by agricultural works, it follows that Bishop Ardingo was doing very much the same thing that the abbots of Passignano had done between 1191 and 1215; customary *corvée*-work was substituted with the demand for cereals. This phase of commutations was examined, and fleshed out in detail, by George Dameron in his landmark study on the bishopric of Florence during the central centuries of the Middle Ages.[108] The American scholar proposed that such commutations responded to the need for the collection of readily-available grain, which could then be sold on the city markets. Even though I am fully convinced that boosting the production of cereals in order to meet city demand is a key factor for our understanding of why the relations between tenants and landowners had to change, it still remains to be explained why grain could not have been simply collected via the 'ancient *servitia*' and the *operae* with which demesnes had been cultivated up to that point. A partial answer comes (again)

[108] Dameron, *Episcopal Power*, pp. 114-5; cf. also Id., 'Episcopal lordship'.

from a long-lasting situation of indebtedness (which Dameron rightly highlighted), whose first traces dated back to the 1150s. In this context, leasing out demesnes might have been part of a spending-review plan, aimed at getting rid of maintenance costs and of the expensive supervision of the tenants' work on the part of the representatives of the bishopric. This happened (again) at the price of less signorial control over dependent tenants, by then freed from *operae* and *servitia*. We can also assume, however, that the shift from a *corvée*-based regime to a rent-based one was accompanied by an increase in the extraction of the agricultural surplus. Otherwise, it would be hard to understand why, in spite of the lightening of signorial power resulting from the abolition of labour, the bishop had to demand oaths of fidelity in Monte Campolese in 1238, and in general to face the opposition of local communities.

We can see here that the *Bullettone* seems to confirm the general pattern seen at Settimo and Passignano (although here the whole process appears to have taken place a few decades later); south of Florence, demesnes and labour-services were still an important part of land management in the first half of the 13th century, when they were converted into the demand for fixed rents in grain. We must, however, now look at the exceptions to such a pattern; for the other ecclesiastical institutions owning properties in the Chianti region have indeed kept almost no record at all of the demand for *corvée*-work. There are only two charters in the archive of the Benedictine monastery of S. Maria in Florence for the whole 11th and 12th centuries that record labour.[109] Then, in a list of *servitia* owed by some tenants who lived in Vico l'Abate and Novoli (1209) there is mention of purely symbolic labour-services *cum bovis* (four in total, three of which to be performed every four years) and only one manual *corvée*. All the other renders were also low, consisting in a small quantity of eggs, wine, olives, cash and some flax.[110] The demand for labour was not totally absent, for the court-cases involving the *coloni* of S. Maria in 1213 and 1219 (see section 2.3) mentioned the *operae* as part of the highly-dependent tenants' obligations. All the same, these might have been castle-linked dues, without any connection to agriculture, and furthermore nothing suggests that they were heavy. In one respect, however, the Badia fiorentina clearly resembled Settimo and Passignano: it had debts to pay back in the late 12th and early 13th centuries. But it seems to have done this by way of collecting high entry-fines in return for the concession of *libelli*, or else by renouncing some of its claims in legal disputes in exchange for the cancellation of debts, and not by changing the patterns of estate management.[111]

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[109] Cf. *Badia* I, 144, no. 53 (1060 May 22), II, 18-20, no. 157 (1112 June 19); we may want to add the document ibid. II, 57-9, no. 178 (1154 September), which is a donation made by Rodolfo di Azzone to the monastery of S. Salvatore and S. Giovanni del Sasso in which 'operas' are mentioned as part of the duties which were being granted.

[110] ASFi, *Badia*, 1208 February 22 (Florentine style). For another mention of *operae* and *servitia* see ibid., 1224 March 3.

[111] Cf. *Badia* II, 144-5, no. 228 (1189 May 24), 149-51, no. 232 (1192 February 8); ASFi, *Badia*, 1214 August 2. References to the debts of other churches in the archive of the Badia are ibid., 1218 July 27 (S. Martino di Maiano), 1221 July 1 (S. Nicolò di Campochiarenti), 1224 April 1 and 1225 August 7 (ph. 10227, S. Bartolomeo di Ripoli).

Almost no references to labour-dues surface, too, from the documentation preserved by the Vallombrosan abbey of S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono, located in southern Chianti, on the north-eastern border of today's province of Siena. The monastery was founded in the first half of the 11th century by the Firidolfi and by another family of local aristocrats, the *nepotes Rainerii*, and then submitted voluntarily to Florence in 1239.[112] Only one labour-service, 'operam unam', in a charter dated to 1155, exists among all the *c.* 550 documents of the period from the late 10th century to 1200.[113] The absence of *corvée*-work surfaces also, significantly, from three inventories of customary rents and services which have been studied by Philippe Lefeuvre.[114] One of them was redacted during the 1180s (I will call it L1 hereinafter) whereas the other two (L2 and L3) can be generally ascribed to the 12th century; palaeographic analysis suggests that they are likely to have been written down at some time between 1150 and 1200 – indeed, they are all characterised by the late, roundish Carolingian minuscule which was widely used in Tuscany over that period.[115] These are not particularly easy sources to use; two of them are incomplete and part of the text of the third one has almost completely vanished; moreover, the names of the tenants listed within cannot be found elsewhere in the charters of Coltibuono (although this is important in itself, in that it proves, as Lefeuvre rightly noted, that those documents for sure concerned customary tenancies). We do not know whether they were aimed at recording all the people who held some land from S. Lorenzo or just a part of them. We do not know, either, what the reasons for their redaction were. One may think, once again, of indebtedness; the monastic community of Coltibuono had to take out quite a high number of money loans, although only between the 1230s and the 1260s – and so at a later stage.[116] On the other hand, the monks of S. Lorenzo were quite consistently committed to money-lending in exchange for land pledges between 1113 and 1177,[117] an activity that suddenly stopped from then on; this might suggest that the monastic community was no longer in the position to grant loans because it needed money itself – because it was, in other words, indebted. It is thus tempting to consider the three inventories as the outcome of financial disarray, for this would fit much of the argument about Settimo and Passignano. But this is speculation to a large extent, and it is more fruitful to get back to the analysis of rents. Those

[112] On the foundation cf. Cortese, *Signori*, pp. 94-7; on the submission to Florence cf. Day, 'The early', p. 113, note 201.
[113] *Regesto di Coltibuono*, pp. 195-6, no. 434 (1155 February 1).
[114] Lefeuvre, 'La notabilité', pp. 297-9.
[115] Ibid., pp. 230-1, no. 515 (118…) [L1], pp. 245-6, no. 545 ('Sec. XII') [L2], p. 248, no. 549, ('Sec. XII') [L3]; the original documents are in ASFi, *Coltibuono*, 118… (ph. 6736), 'Sec. XII' (ph. 7503) and 'Sec. XII' (ph. 7508).
[116] Cf. Majnoni, *La Badia*, pp. 43-6.
[117] On this cf. again Faini, *Firenze*, p. 98. See *Regesto di Coltibuono*, pp. 127-8, no. 278 (1113 April 17), p. 129, no. 280 (1113 June), p. 136, no. 296 (1118 May 17), pp. 142-3, no. 311 (1121 May), pp. 144-5, no. 315 (1123 May), pp. 145-6, no. 317 (1123 December 23), pp. 147-8, no. 321 (1125 January), pp. 150-1, no. 329 (1127 April), pp. 157-8, no. 348 (1131 March), pp. 164-5, no. 363 (1136 July 19), p. 167, no. 371 (1137 July), pp. 168-9, no. 374 (1138 March), p. 171, no. 379 (1139 February), pp. 171-2, no. 380 (1139 March), pp. 175-6, no. 390 (1144 May), pp. 178-9, no. 397 (1146 February), p. 180, no. 400 (1146), pp. 182-3, no. 405 (1148 April 13), pp. 186-7, no. 412 (1150 December 18), p. 196, no. 436 (1156 January 26), p. 217, no. 483 (1172 April 21), pp. 220-1, no. 492 (1177 February).

in grain largely dominated; L1, moreover, specifies that renders had to be delivered with the *st. Florentinum*, whereas L3 mentions rents to be given with local *staia*. The tenants in L2, instead, had to provide mixed rents in cash and kind. There was a great variability in their quantity. In L2, for instance, they shifted from a minimum of 1 *st.* to a maximum of 2 *modii* (that is, 48 *st.*) of grain and, if we put together the data from all the three inventories, we notice that in twenty-five entries out of 228 a single person had to deliver quite a burdensome rent consisting in more than 10 *st.* (although the impossibility of determining the size of the local *staia* listed in L3 makes any attempt to assess the weight of tenants' dues highly risky). What we can say is that, similarly to Passignano, the demand for grain from a polyculture-oriented zone such as southern Chianti seems to be further evidence of the will to meet growing city demand; indeed, the use of the *staium* of Florence – quite distant from Coltibuono – is consistent with this hypothesis, and proves that the influence of the city predated the formal submission of Coltibuono to the commune in the 1230s. The key point for our argument, however, is that, unlike in the inventories of Settimo and Passignano, there are no references to labour in these texts.

The absence of *corvée*-work surfaces also from the documentation of another Vallombrosan monastery, that of S. Casciano di Montescalari, located on the eastern edge of the Chianti region, within the range of hills known as the Monti di Chianti, and founded by the 'da Cintoia' family in the first half of the 11th century.[118] What is striking about it is the remarkable resilience of small rents in cash, with just one lease agreement granted in return for kind during the entire 12th century – the charter is significantly labelled as *fictum* ('rent') and not as *libellus*; the turn towards kind dates as late as the 1230s, and it can be argued that it was only from then on that the monks of S. Casciano started to write down, and possibly modify, the dues of some of their highly-dependent cultivators. A sharecropping agreement, without *mezzadria* clauses, was made in 1237; and a short-term lease (lasting six years) granted in exchange for the very high rent of 3 *modii* and 4 *st.* of grain was made in 1245.[119] I would propose that this shift towards kind may have been motivated by the fiscal impositions of the Florentine commune, which was extending its authority over the Chianti over the 1230s, as we have just seen. This may have happened at Montescalari too, thus prompting a reaction on the part of the monks; they endeavoured to exploit the agricultural workforce by imposing high rents, and they also tried to participate directly in the food market by demanding rents in kind. We lack, however, positive evidence here, and it has to be made as clear as possible that this is a mere hypothesis.

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[118] On the early history of the abbey see Santos Salazar, 'Nascita'; and for the 13th century cf. Lefeuvre, 'La notabilité', *passim*.

[119] Examples of lease charters (one for each decade) from the archive of S. Casciano di Montescalari which were granted in exchange for rents in money can be found in ASFi, *S. Vigilio*, 1114 May 31, 1123 February 6, 1132 April, 1145 March 18, 1155 April 23, 1163 May 5, 1175 May 4, 1181 March 21. The only exception is represented by the charter ibid., 1176 October 10. The sharecropping agreement is ibid., 1237 November 15. For the short-term lease cf. ibid., 1245 February 2.

This excursus through the poverty of information on land management needs to end with the first notarial protocols we can dispose of for the Florentine countryside, those redacted by the notary Palmerio di Corbizo from Castello Uglione (halfway between S. Casciano in Val di Pesa and Tavarnelle), including 275 deeds dating to the years 1237 and 1238, and stipulated at Uglione or in other neighbouring villages and castles of the Valdelsa.[120] Notarial protocols constitute a particularly precious type of source. They were books with full legal validity, in which notaries started to write down, from the 12th century onwards, various types of deeds in an abbreviated form (which is the reason why they are also called registers of *imbreviature*).[121] These deeds consisted, for the most part, in credit operations and other short-term contracts, whereas perpetual grants continued to be recorded on single-sheet charters. We can say that *imbreviature* are important for two main reasons: not only do they let us see typologies of deeds that are hardly visible in single-sheet parchments, but they also allow us to observe the notaries' clienteles, which were mostly composed by medium lay *élites*, both urban and rural. This social category can thus be studied in great detail, something that would not be possible without *imbreviature*.

This potential will become evident in chapter 4.2.3, in the analysis of the protocols of the Lucchese notary Ser Ciabatto. Palmerio's *imbreviature* are less numerous than Ciabatto's and contain very few lease agreements, which means that they can hardly be used for the study of land management forms. It is interesting to note, however, that quite a high number of deeds concerned the purchase of grain on credit – something that Uberto is also likely to have done at the beginning of the 13th century, as I have proposed in chapter 3.2.2.3.2 – or payments in kind in return for money loans; and there are also four manumissions of *coloni*, which brought about the abolition of their traditional dues (*usaria*) and *servitia* in exchange for extremely high sums of money: respectively £45, £72 and £102 of Pisan *denarii* (the fourth deed was apparently for free), including the price for the sale of the leaseholds of the *coloni* to the *coloni* themselves; and to these deeds we can add the receipt of payment for the manumission of one *colonus*, amounting to £30.[122] It is striking that highly-dependent tenants could have so much money of their own, but one *imbreviatura* informs us that they had to find suitable guarantors,[123] which might mean, in turn, that *coloni* were likely to have had to take out money loans so as to pay for their freedom. This appears to confirm, and also to bring to a higher level, what we have been discussing so far; the *signoria* could be a real business, and economic ties of dependency engendered by credit could substitute for the pre-existing forms of juridical servitude – in a way that resembles what happened to Afro-American slaves after the end of the US Civil War. For our purposes, though, the point is that Palmerio's *imbreviature* do not allow us to link this process to a change in the forms of land

120 The edition is Mosiici and Sznura, *Palmerio*.
121 The basic book on *imbreviature*, and notaries in medieval Italy in general, is Meyer, *Felix*, esp. pp. 119-75.
122 On credit operations involving grain cf. ibid., pp. 62-3; on the manumissions of *coloni* cf. ibid., pp. 29-30.
123 Cf. ibid., pp. 163-7, no. 102 (1238 March 26).

management. There are only two short-term contracts (three years each) that the editors have labelled as *mezzadria* agreements, but which are in fact temporary sharecropping deeds, which do not include any clause regarding the joint provision of seeds and are simply granted in return for half of all the produce (here called *logoria*, the vernacular for the Latin *lucrum*, profit); and two other short-term agreements (four years each) given in return for 4 and 8 *st.* of grain respectively. All the same, the correspondence between share tenures and polyculture on the one hand, and fixed rents and grain on the other can be pinned down here too.[124]

3.3
Conclusions

For some landowning institutions of the Florentine countryside and the Chianti region, customary labour-services constituted an important part of the relations between tenants and proprietors still at the end of the 12th century. We would like to know whether the demand for labour dated back to the early Middle Ages – if it was, in other words, the long-standing legacy of the Carolingian *sistema curtense* – or else if it resulted from the crystallisation of signorial powers throughout the central centuries of the Middle Ages. There is no definitive answer to this question, since sources regarding land management during the early medieval period are practically absent for the Fiorentino; it can be argued, however, that these two interpretations have not to be mutually exclusive. We have seen in chapter 2.1.2 the clues concerning the presence of demesne farming among the estates of the Badia fiorentina; and, in chapter 2.3, that such clues overlapped with the later evidence of the exertion of signorial powers, as resulted from the court-cases of the *coloni* Vitello and Benivieni. The Badia, it is true, has not preserved anything like the lists of customary dues we have for Settimo and Passignano, but I think that the connection between the manorial system, and the possibility it offered to build rights of land-based lordship on it, can be generalised. To take another example, we could guess that the traces of *operae* in the tenancy agreements of 11th- and 12th-century Passignano might have been the tip of the iceberg of (mostly customary) agricultural services which were written down only from the 1180s on, at a time when local lordship was fully developed; it seems to me indeed hard to believe that the demand for labour was intensified at some point, and that such intensification did not leave the smallest documentary trace. In short, my hypothesis is that the high medieval examples of the demand for days of labour from tenants are likely to have had some roots in the early Middle Ages, and that labour was passed on hereditarily from generation to generation. But it is beyond doubt that, at a later stage, labour was incorporated within a larger set of duties which made up the *signoria fondiaria.*

[124] Cf. respectively ibid., p. 92, no. 27 (1238 January 12) and p. 298, no. 254 (1238 August 30) for sharecropping deeds, and pp. 308-9, no. 264 and p. 310, no. 267 (both dated to 1238 August 24).

Corvée-labour and the *signoria* were real assets that could be used – and disposed of if need be – during periods of change, as was the late 12th century. A famine in the early 1180s, then a surge in prices, the last phases of Barbarossa's wars, the expansion of the commune into its future *contado*, scattered but unequivocal references to growing taxation (see chapter 1.2.1.2) and a widespread indebtedness – these are all the elements of the socio-economic conjuncture I have examined so far. Debt, in particular, has been one of the cores of this section. We see it in the documentation of Settimo, Passignano, the Florentine bishopric and the Badia fiorentina, and, at a later stage, of S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono. It is not necessary to find a monocausal explanation for it. There might have been quite incidental reasons, such as the legal disputes and the wars in which Passignano was involved in the 1190s, as well as more general ones, such as the taxes that Florence was starting to demand, occasionally at first (I think here of the *libbra* for the reconstruction of Semifonte) and more regularly from the 1230s (when the representatives of the city are attested in the steadily-forming *contado*). What is certain is that, as Faini rightly argued with regard to Passignano, taking out a money loan could easily trigger a spiral of debts, all the more so because annual interest rates were 20% of the invested capital. Interest expenses to be paid to private lenders are, after all, the main reason for the public debt of many modern States, Italy in the first place; and one may guess that the creation of such lucrative credit operations did not create indebtedness, but at least contributed to *stabilising* it. The difficulties in getting free of debts appear to be all the more evident when we observe that not even the debasement of the *denarius* and inflation – two phenomena which, in theory at least, should favour debtors, in that the real value of debts diminishes (the nominal value staying the same) – seem to have been of any help.

All this proves that indebtedness was a real burden that needed to be dealt with. One possible solution to this was a *de facto* lightening of signorial dues, including also their conversion into the demand for marketable cereals; this made it possible to cut maintenance costs for demesnes, and supervision costs over the regular performance of tenants' *corvées*. There were of course other possible ways to face indebtedness. The Badia fiorentina seems to have simply collected high entry-fines when stipulating *libelli*; and in places where labour-services were absent, and so where manorial obligations could not be used as a bargaining chip, transformations of land management might have been smoother – if they happened at all. The documentation of Coltibuono suggests, at best, that the monastic community of S. Lorenzo may have been converting the old units of measurement into those of the city, thus making the sale of grain on urban markets (but arguably also on rural ones) less complicated – one may imagine that Florentine *staia* increasingly worked as a sort of common currency in the Chianti region. What seems to be evident is that it would be misleading to analyse the differences between the institutions we have been examining hitherto on the basis of the monastic congregation to which they belonged; or else to give much importance to the fact that we are dealing with secular or

regular clergy. I would guess that approaches to land management were much more influenced by the 'starting-points' from which reforms could be promoted, that is, by the set of proprietorial rights that each institution had accumulated through time.

Briefly, even though some clues seem to indicate that the conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries prompted a general reaction on the part of all the ecclesiastical landowning institutions we have analysed so far, albeit in different degrees (it is worth recalling also the slow shift towards rents in kind at Montescalari during the 1230s), we should not overgeneralise the impact of such a conjuncture, nor think that the responses to it were univocal. For the purpose of this thesis, what interests us more is that this historical phase appears to have offered the occasion to rethink the way landed properties had been managed up to that point, and possibly to make land management more efficient even in a situation in which social control over dependent tenants was progressively ceasing to count on labour, one of its most concrete and indeed humiliating expressions (let us think again of the vivid text of one of the three inventories from Settimo, where dependent tenants were told to serve the abbot at his will, to go wherever he wanted them to go, and so on). This is the background to another major aspect of the economic conjuncture stretching from *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230; landowners *chose* how to reform estate management. Their first option was, without a doubt, the demand for fixed rents in grain; but the increasing number of references to sharecropping including *mezzadria* elements suggests that, at Passignano and possibly at Settimo and Montescalari, ecclesiastical owners were experimenting with new ways to cultivate tenures characterised by the mixed cropping of cereals and by polyculture, showing a concern for control over leaseholds which has no parallels in other types of lease agreements.

We shall see signs of this duality in the Lucchesia too; and indeed, the comparison with Lucca will give us further elements to understand such a duality, and to offer, in the end, an overall explanation for the choices of landowners; for their decision to abandon demesne farming; and hopefully for the transformations of land management between the 12th and the 13th centuries as a whole around both Florence and Lucca.

4

Lucca and the Lucchesia
Case-studies (11th-13th centuries)

4.1
Introduction

4.1.1 Geography, historical ecology and demography

The political and economic remit of Lucca varied substantially between the medieval and modern era. For example, the signs of the political control of Lucca over the Garfagnana – that is, broadly speaking, the basin in the upper reaches of the river Serchio, north of Lucca, which came to encompass the whole Serchio valley in the 12th century – date to the early medieval period, but the Garfagnana fell under the Estensi of Ferrara in 1429 and was reunited with the province of Lucca only at the beginning of the Fascist dictatorship, in 1923. In a similar way, the diocese of Lucca – as well as the proprietorial and signorial rights of the bishops – stretched down to the Valdarno Inferiore, including the estate centre of S. Maria a Monte, which now lies within the province of Pisa and has been part of the diocese of S. Miniato since 1622.[1] Except for this distant appendix, however the medieval diocese of the city provides the best framing for the case-studies examined in this chapter; it represented, indeed, the long-standing area of influence of Lucca (see chapter 1, Map 2). Here, I shall examine the geographical and ecological traits of each of the areas that will be taken into account in the following sections of this chapter. Even though none of my case-studies concern Garfagnana, I will describe it too, for reasons that will be clarified in due course; and I shall provide further details on specific localities as I get down to individual case-studies. Before starting off, a short remark on climate is needed – indeed, this is an element of unity for the whole region, apart from the mountain ranges in the north. The Lucchesia lies in a climatic zone that suffers less from the thermal excursions which are typical of inland Tuscany – including Florence – because of its proximity to the sea; in comparison to the Fiorentino it is also more rainy. The maximum level of annual precipitation is around 1,500 mm per year in the north, on the boundary between Tuscany and Liguria, and it is only a little lower when we move south

[1] On the Garfagnana cf. Barbieri, *Toscana*, pp. 359-60; Wickham, *The Mountains*, pp. 16-39. On S. Maria a Monte as part of the diocese of S. Miniato cf. Ughelli and Coleti, *Italia Sacra* III, 269-78.

and get closer to Lucca; annual rainfall is as low as 1,200 mm only south of the Arno.[2] All this means that, in normal conditions, a regular provision of water was available in the whole countryside of Lucca, and this was matched by the presence of a hydrogeological setting which was very favourable to agriculture, at least in the immediate environs of the city.

It seems reasonable to start our excursus from the Sei Miglia, the plain of *c.* 300 km^2 that rings Lucca and is crossed by the Serchio, in that it has constituted the stable political remit of the city – formally from Henry IV's diploma of 1081 (but a more informal political control had been probably established earlier; see chapter 1.2.1.1) up to the present-day *provincia*. The Sei Miglia were a major centre of communication, since they are located on the route of the Via Francigena, the main road from France to Rome. They are, today, quite a densely-inhabited and industrialised area; one can get a glimpse of that, for example, by simply looking out of the window on a train from Prato to Lucca just after the town of Altopascio, on the south-eastern edge of the plain. The Sei Miglia, moreover, also appear to be unusually clearly bounded. If we follow the river course of the Serchio northwards we end up amid the mountain ranges of the Garfagnana, which are separated from the sea by the steep Alpi Apuane raising abruptly on the west (the highest mountain of the Apuane, the Monte Pisanino, is 1,946 m high). South of the city, instead, right after Verciano, woodland and low hills suddenly begin to characterise the landscape that brings to the slopes of the Monte Pisano, on the boundary between the provinces of Pisa and Lucca. East, some vine- and olive-bearing hills mark the end of the Sei Miglia, and indeed of the province of Lucca; the plain used to be further defined by the Lago di Bientina, which lay south-east of the city and was surrounded by the most extensive marshy area of the whole Lucchesia before a massive drainage scheme took place in the middle of the 19th century.[3] West, finally, the range of low hills known as the Monti d'Oltre Serchio divides the Sei Miglia from the Versilia region (see again chapter 1, Map 2).

The Sei Miglia are small, but very fertile; indeed, they appear to have always been intensively cultivated. Very little of the area was waterlogged during the medieval period; marshland and woodland are almost completely absent from our documentation; and land-clearances never surface as an important part of the agricultural works that tenants were required to perform.[4] It is likely that the peasantry had always tended to exploit heavily the productive potential of the plain, as will emerge also from the examples I shall discuss later on; it is only from the modern age onwards, however, that it becomes possible to get a more vivid picture of such an intense exploitation. Marino Berengo wrote that in the 16th century it was absolutely normal, in the Sei Miglia, to cultivate wheat for three years in a row, and to sow seeds suitable to the

[2] Barbieri, *Toscana*, p. 95.
[3] Onori, *L'abbazia*, p. 41.
[4] Wickham, *Community*, p. 49.

recovery of the soil (such as turnips and lupins) only in the fourth year – 'an effort', in Berengo's words, 'to tear out from the land as much produce as possible'.[5] And an effort that could have easily exhausted the soil, had this been only slightly unproductive or barely irrigated. In the 19th century, the *Giornale agrario toscano* (a periodical that was published in Florence from 1825 to 1867, and was aimed at educating rural communities in the attempt to modernise agriculture in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, and then in the Italian State) lamented that Lucchese peasants were used to *ringranare*, that is, to sow grain for two consecutive years. This practice was condemned by the *Giornale* as it could have compromised the productivity of the soil in the long run;[6] but again, it also testifies to the confidence – perhaps excessive, but not groundless – in the rapid restoring of land fertility on the part of the peasants living in the Sei Miglia. It is interesting to note, with regard to fertility, that the cultivation of rice – which requires much water, and never took off in Tuscany – developed throughout the 19th century only in the province of Lucca, namely in the Sei Miglia and on the northern edge of the Lake of Massaciuccoli (west of Lucca) and covered almost 600 ha at the beginning of the 20th century.[7]

Wheat was mostly sown on the plain, vineyards and olive-trees mostly planted on the hill slopes – combined together, the two of them formed a veritable economic unit which had its centre in the city of Lucca, indeed the main market for the sale of agricultural products (rural markets being, on the contrary, quite unimportant in the Sei Miglia). We must note all the same that Lucca, like Florence, could hardly rely on its *contado* alone for food self-sufficiency, and depended also on grain imports from southern Italy during the early modern and modern period (at the latest). Between the 1440s and the 1480s, the city government imposed restrictions on, or even prohibited, the export of grain outside the jurisdictional territory of Lucca.[8] In the 16th century, the 'Ufficio dell'Abbondanza', the competent body for food supply in Lucca and its State, was massively buying Sicilian wheat (from Ragusa in particular) which reached the city via the port of Viareggio, in the Versilia region. And so, however fertile their *contado* was, the Lucchesi needed to be fed also through long-distance imports of grain. This does not alter the overall picture, however, of a small but rich countryside. Indeed, many Lucchese mercantile families of the modern age were used to investing part of their capital in landed estates located within the Sei Miglia and in the building up of rich *villae* there – which were both a safe source of revenue and a representation of social status.[9]

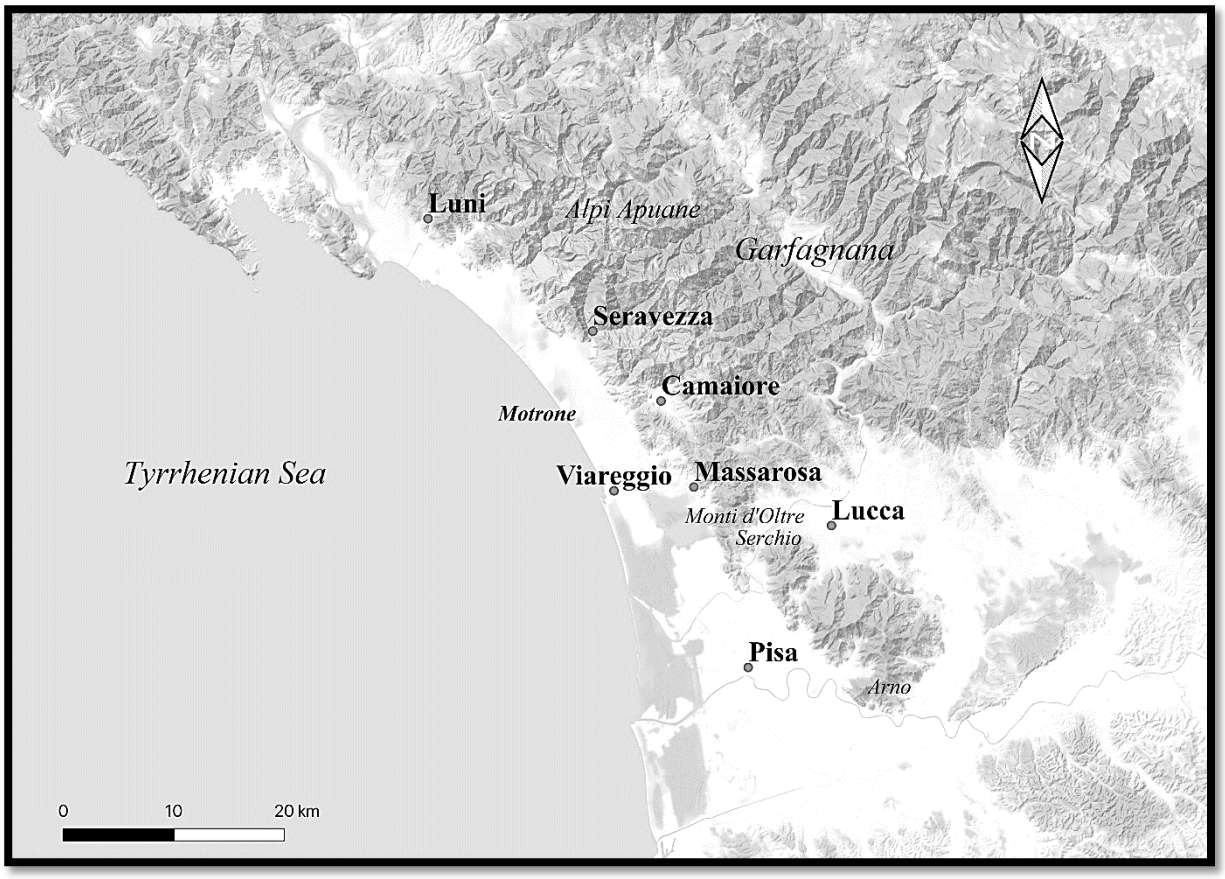
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[5] Berengo, *Nobili*, p. 307.
[6] Porisini, *Produttività*, pp. 11-2.
[7] Barbieri, *Toscana*, p. 221.
[8] Bratchel, *Lucca*, pp. 209-210.
[9] Berengo, *Nobili*, pp. 292-3. As Berengo noted, the choice of Sicily was also (and perhaps mainly) due to political reasons; Lucca did not want to rely on its rival neighbouring States for food supplies. This does not change the fact that Lucca needed supplies from other places than the Sei Miglia alone.

The reference to Viareggio takes us on to Versilia, which owes its name to the river flowing through the provinces of Lucca and Massa Carrara; this is the coastal region standing just on the western side of the Alpi Apuane, which separate it from the Garfagnana, and of the Monti d'Oltre Serchio, which separate it from the environs of Lucca. The Versiliese territory varied greatly in size during the Middle Ages, and apparently the term was used to cover in the early medieval period a wide area stretching from the diocese of Luni to that of Pisa; it is now encompassed by the municipalities of Seravezza in the north, Viareggio in the south and Camaiore in the east. Versilia was in the Lucchese political orbit from the early Middle Ages; a late confirmation of this comes from the privilege issued by Henry IV in 1081, in which we find mention of the now-disappeared port of *Motrone* (west of Camaiore) and the prohibition, for everyone doing business there, to damage the Lucchesi and their activities. In a similar way to the concession of the city jurisdiction over the Sei Miglia, it is likely that Henry's diploma was in fact ratifying the already-existing Lucchese control over the port (at any rate, *Motrone* never managed to become as important a commercial gateway as the neighbouring Porto Pisano; it was often destroyed by the Pisani, then it was pawned to Genoa in 1430 and in 1437 the Florentines took almost complete control of it, forcing the Lucchesi to increase their investments in Viareggio).[10] The presence of the Lucchesi in inland Versilia preceded the development of *Motrone*, however, as shown for example by the rural lordship wielded by the city canons over the estate-centre (and later on the castle) of Massarosa and some neighbouring localities. Massarosa was ceded to the cathedral chapter of S. Martino by King Hugh and his son Lothar in 932, as we shall see in section 4.2.1. This coastal area was largely occupied by marshlands and woodland, probably belonging to the royal domain, and Massarosa has to be understood as part of this context. It was (and is) placed right above a small plain where it is at least rational to assume – in view of the absence of positive evidence – that the canons promoted land-clearance, as the rather heavy tithes in kind owed to the chapter in the late 12th century probably also imply.[11]

[10] On the Versilia region cf. Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 187-9. On Motrone cf. Pelù, *Motrone*, particularly pp. 37 and 194-5; and also Wickham, *Community*, p. 13.

[11] On tithes cf. *infra*. Very small clues about land-clearances in Massarosa and the neighbouring localities between the 10th and the 12th centuries are discussed in Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 206-7.



15. The Versilia region

This excursus ends with a brief description of the already-mentioned Garfagnana region, the upper basin of the river Serchio, north of Lucca. As I said before, none of the case-studies I have used for this thesis regard Garfagnana, essentially because the documentation of the cathedral chapter of the city is poor in references to it, and the episcopate did not own any manors there during the central centuries of the Middle Ages. But there are a few aspects of this region that need stressing all the same. For a start, Garfagnana was a land of inferior grains, rye in particular, and wheat-farming was extremely marginal; this was due to the rather colder temperatures characterising the valley in comparison to the rest of the Lucchesia. Unlike wheat, the silvo-pastoral economy was very important. This was the case with chestnut trees, which were abundant already in the 9th century, as the inventories of the episcopate show (on the inventories see chapter 2.1.1). We need to wait until the last thirty years of the 12th century, however, to see the first clues pointing to the use of chestnuts as a cash crop – namely an oath sworn in 1170 by the consuls and the people of the castle of Gragno, who promised to give the canons of S. Martino 6 *st.* of chestnuts per year (not many, in fact) in return for the defence of the local castle and of the neighbouring *Monte Gragnanese*; the plantation of chestnut trees would then become a systematic profit-oriented activity in the later Middle Ages. A similar pattern comes to light when we look at the transhumance of sheep from the valley southwards. It was practised already during

the early medieval period, but it escalated – indeed turning into an institutionalised economic system – after 1150. All this constitutes further evidence of the ecologically-composite nature of what we call Lucchesia, and also adds up with the image of overall economic growth in Tuscany throughout the second half of the 12th century, for the transhumance of sheep points to the development of wool production, documented after 1200 as important in the city.[12]

With regard to Lucca, however, this image of growth appears far more complicated when we turn our attention to demography. One might reasonably think that the wealth of Lucchese ecclesiastical archives for the early medieval period could be of some help in shedding light on demographic trends, but this is not the case, unfortunately. The very best we can say is that the documentation of the Lucchese episcopate seems to suggest that the Sei Miglia were quite densely populated already during the early Middle Ages, but this is mainly a plausible impression derived from the apparent intensity of land exploitation – as results, for example, from the inventories of the bishopric. If we jump to the late 12th century (the moment for which we start to have some figures for Florence, thanks to the oath subscribed by the dwellers of the Florentine district of S. Pancrazio in 1199 that we analysed in chapter 3.1.1) the only, small, clue pointing to an increase in the number of people living in Lucca is represented by the construction of a new circuit of city walls (cf. chapter 1.2.1.1). Indeed, we need to wait for the first half of the 14th century to get some numbers on demography in pre-Black-Death Lucca. By then, we can rely on a tax register, an *estimo*, referring to the years 1331-2 and covering Lucca and its whole jurisdiction (that is, including both the Sei Miglia and the *vicarie*, subject territories which preserved a certain degree of autonomy), and also on an oath sworn by all the people living in the Lucchese State to John of Bohemia, son of Emperor Henry VII, in 1331. Both these sources require further investigation, since scholars have provided profoundly diverging interpretations of the data contained within them; all the same, the *estimo* and the oath make it likely that the population of the region was around 17,200-22,000 people, with *c.* 9,400-12,000 residing in the Sei Miglia and *c.* 7,700-10,000 in the city.[13] Such low figures are consistent with the fact that Lucca was for sure, by the early

[12] I summarise here Wickham, *The Mountains*, pp. 22-5 and 131-7.

[13] Figures about 14th-century population have been discussed at length for the first time by Meek, *Lucca*, pp. 21-7; on the 1331-2 *estimo*, and for a comparison between Lucca and the rest of Tuscany, cf. Leverotti, 'La crisi' and also Ead., *Popolazione* (indeed, we owe to Leverotti the discovery of the *estimo* among the materials of the Archivio di Stato di Lucca). The whole issue remains very controversial. For a start, Meek and Leverotti provided different interpretations as to the number and the categories of people who took the oath in 1331. Meek proposed 4,746 people and Leverotti 4,083 as the number; moreover, Meek wrote that the subscribers were 'adult sons as well as fathers, groups of brothers and some widows, not just heads of households', whereas Leverotti reports only 'adult male dwellers' (see for references Meek, *Lucca*, p. 24 and Leverotti, 'La crisi', p. 75, note 29). Also, Leverotti does not propose a sum total of Lucca's inhabitants for the first half of the 14th century – neither on the basis of the oath, nor of the *estimo*. On the top of all this, it is not even clear what multiplier would be best to adopt to calculate the whole population of the Lucchese State on the basis of the figures of those two sources. For my own calculation I have taken into consideration the number of people recorded in the *estimo* (4,929 according to Leverotti) because the oath does not register individual oath-takers for some *pivieri*; and I employed two different multipliers: a small one (3.5), which appears to be justified by the fact that the *estimo* reports not only the heads of households, but also the names of wives, sons, brothers, widows, mothers-in-law and nephews; and a bigger one (4.5) which appears to be equally

Trecento, far smaller than Florence (possibly peaking at 110,000 inhabitants by 1300, as we have seen in chapter 3.1.1) and Pisa (perhaps larger than Lucca already at the beginning of the 12th century, with 24,000-27,000 people in 1228).[14] This brings us back to the problem of the number of inhabitants in Lucca during the central centuries of the Middle Ages, and namely during the historical phase that interests us most, that is, the conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries, when we do not even have, for Lucca, anything like the uncertain figures that can be drawn from the Florentine oath of S. Pancrazio. Despite this lack of positive evidence, the late medieval demographic disproportion between Lucca and Florence makes it plausible to propose that, even if Lucca surely took part in a general trend of demographic growth which was almost-fully European on the eve of the *Duecento*, this almost certainly was not as pronounced as elsewhere, and that Lucca was subsequently losing ground to other cities. It is my guess that the difference between the population of Lucca and Florence may have had deep roots, possibly dating to the late 12th century, when the evidence for the military and political expansion of the latter city starts to become progressively – and relentlessly – extensive.

Safer evidence about the socio-economic history of Lucca in the conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries comes from the analysis of prices. As we did for Florence, we need to examine this in some detail before getting down to individual case-studies.

4.1.2 Famine and inflation in the late 12th century

I have discussed in chapter 3.1.2 the famine which, according to late-medieval chroniclers, hit Tuscany in the early 1180s, and we have seen how the price of grain appears to have surged in both Florence and Lucca over that period. The main lines of the process have been thus already outlined, but we need to add something more here. It has to be noted, first of all, that for Lucca we can resort to an extremely precise and complete analysis of inflation from 1100 to 1200, that written by Arnold Esch in his (unfortunately unpublished) *Habilitationsschrift* regarding the city and its countryside throughout the 12th century. Drawing from all the Lucchese documents of that period, Esch demonstrated that a slow increase in the price of land was already under way in the mid-1160s; in the 1170s, then, grain shortages due to a series of local wars pushed up the prices

justified by the fact that the exact number of members composing some of those groups is not specified (for instance, we find mentions of *filii* or *heredes* without further clarifications). By and large, I tend to think that the rather pessimistic view of Lucca's population expressed by Beloch, *Bevölkerungsgeschichte* II, 165-6, is the most convincing one; for a different opinion cf. Russell, *Medieval*, p. 45 (who, however, resorted to very unreliable data on annual wine consumption); Ginatempo and Sandri, *L'Italia*, p. 106 and p. 260; and Pinto, *La Toscana*, p. 77, note 350 (but none of them took into account the *estimo* – this was discovered by Leverotti later in time). It is however clear that the whole issue of the population of Lucca in the early *Trecento* will need to be reconsidered again. As to the ratio of 45:55 between city and urban inhabitants in the 14th century cf. Wickham, *Community*, p. 17 and note 16.

[14] On Pisa cf. Salvatori, *La popolazione*, pp. 119-20.

of cereals. But a notable (and quite sudden) upsurge in the price of both land and cereals took place in the early 1180s, thus pointing to a direct connection with the famine of 1181-2 – and giving thereby credibility to the accounts of late medieval chronicles. More in detail, Esch carefully showed that land became particularly expensive in the countryside closest to the city, within a radius of 1.5 km from its walls (+125-150% of real increase, and another +150% due to the debasement of coins, over the years 1165-95); it might be argued, as I did with regard to Florence, that the possibility of cutting transport costs to the urban market, the only market in the region, raised the price of land located in the immediate environs of Lucca.[15]

Esch examined rents, too. If one follows the evolution of rents in kind during the second half of the 12th century, it is easy to notice that its upward trend was very similar – indeed, nearly identical – to that of the prices of land and agricultural goods. The two phenomena were interrelated. According to Esch, prices started to be calculated on the basis of the rents that landowners could 'really' ('wirklich') expect from the land – that is, the rents that reflected the real productive potential of the soil. On the other hand, the rents that could be 'really' extracted from leaseholds were calculated by keeping an eye out for the possible rise in prices in the near future more than on current prices; for example, when the price of grain fell temporarily down in 1184, rents in grain remained high, as if that drop did not occur at all. Not only did the crisis of confidence in the stability of prices, together with demographic growth, reinforce the rise of prices that had begun in the mid-1160s, but it also had long-lasting effects on the relations between tenants and landowners. Esch argued that ecclesiastical institutions (the only ones whose landed properties can be studied in some detail before the *Duecento*) started for the first time to invest in land, and to exploit it 'economically' – that is, as part of a profit-oriented attitude.[16]

I have argued in chapter 3.2.2.3 that investments in land, as well as the opposition to them (an opposition probably engendered by the fact that investments were perceived merely as excessive expenses), were the main reason for the removal of Abbot Uberto in the early 13th century. Here, we are seeing quite a similar approach to land economics on the part of Lucchese landowners in almost the same period; also, the annual margins on the capital invested on land, around 4-6%, appears to have been higher than Florentine ones (around 2.5%; cf. chapter 3.2.2.2).[17] In view of this, it becomes easy to see why Esch's study of prices and rents frames the pages that follow; it demonstrates that land management changed in the final decades of the 12th century, in that landowners began to demand steadily higher quantities of the agricultural surplus through rents in kind.

[15] Esch, 'Lucca', pp. 13-9.
[16] Ibid., p. 83; cf. also Wickham, *Community*, pp. 23-4.
[17] Esch, 'Lucca', pp. 45-51, 77, 83-6.

In the next sections, I shall extend parts of Esch's analysis up to the 1230s; indeed, each of the case-studies I will analyse discusses agricultural renders and their weight. It would be desirable to build up a proper table of prices also for the first thirty years of the 13th century – a huge task, which is outside the scope of this thesis, since it could be carried out only through the complete reading of all the charters of the bishopric and of the State archives. All the same, I have collected a few benchmark prices of wheat and land over the period 1201-41; they are certainly insufficient to demonstrate overall trends, but they do show (consistently with Esch's tables) that prices were very high in the early *Duecento*, whereas in the 1220s they seem to have settled at a slightly lower level, although by no means as low as it was before 1160; furthermore – and this is an important point – there was quite a significant degree of instability from year to year, and variability from place to place.[18]

More in detail, I will try to flesh out Esch's argument with regard to three further aspects. First of all, we need to wonder again how a relatively circumscribed crisis brought about by wars and famines could cause long-term transformations in the relations between landowners and tenants, with the former steadily endeavouring to make profit out of their holdings from the late 12th century onwards. The crisis of confidence in the stability of prices could be long-lasting, but by no means ever-lasting; and Esch did not fully solved the problem when he argued that the effects of demographic growth, with the subsequent need to feed a growing population, were bound to offset those of isolated or cyclical crises.[19] Population growth is in fact almost impossible to ascertain before the 14th century, as we have seen; and apparently, the inhabitants of Lucca were not many around 1300 either. I think that the reason for the permanence of high rents might lie in the growing scale of communal taxation, which accompanied the formation of the *Comune di Popolo* (see chapter 1.2.1.1) and prompted a reaction from landowners; and in the development of credit activities, which gave tenants the possibility of borrowing what they needed to pay rent when the agricultural output of their holding was not sufficient (I will flesh out this point in chapter 5).

Credit partly explains another point for which Esch does not fully account: how high rents could be imposed by landowners and accepted by landholders without engendering resistance. In fact, disputes did arise. I have already discussed in chapter 2.3 how Lucchese trial records of the period from *c.* 1170 to *c.* 1230 show that the judgments given by the city tribunals, and by groups of arbiters as well, concerned tenancy agreements; we have observed, furthermore, that such judgments were not always completely unfavourable to tenants, and this is all the more telling about the peasants' ability to resist proprietors if we consider that all our documents have been preserved by the proprietors themselves. Here we need to add that sometimes judgments

[18] Cf. the 'Appendix on prices (1201-41)' at the end of chapter 4.
[19] Esch, 'Lucca', p. 88.

regarded, specifically, failure in the provision of rents, the so-called *afficta retenta* (withheld rents). Cultivators were not always able to meet the harsh requirements of landowners, who were subsequently entitled by judges and arbiters to dispossess them of their holdings until all the pending rents were returned (in one case a landowner, namely the canon of S. Martino Uguccione, could even dispose of the person of his tenant: a certain Gherardino of the late Omicciolo, who would be from then on *manens et colonus* of Uguccione because he 'ceased maliciously to pay rent').[20]

The *afficta retenta*, thus, show that credit was not always available for tenants; we might think that the lowest strata of the peasantry were hardly able to get loans. This brings us to the final point I will examine, that of forms of land management. Indeed, they did not receive much attention within Esch's work. The German scholar simply argued that the economic growth of the late 12th century was a premise to the development of *mezzadria*, but his *Habilitationsschrift* could not take into account all the studies stressing how controversial the issue of *mezzadria*, and of its development in the Lucchesia, was.[21]

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Each of the following sections will be dedicated to a single landowning institution, except for the notarial registers written by Ser Ciabatto, which will let us penetrate into the social milieu of Ciabatto's numerous clients (more specifically, this will also give us the opportunity to get a glimpse of the landed properties owned by the medium urban lay *élites*, a social stratum barely visible in the documents of ecclesiastical owners). I shall start with the canons of the cathedral chapter of Lucca, and I will discuss, in a comparative perspective, the reforms of land management they promoted in the Sei Miglia and in the Versilia region, by focusing on the two localities where they held signorial powers (in very different degrees, as we shall see): Massa Macinaia, located in the plain south-east of the city, and Massarosa, north-west of Lucca. Thanks to the inventories of renders written down in the 1180s and in the 1220s, we will be able to study customary tenancy agreements, and to get some sense of their evolution over time.

We can state right now that the major difference with Florence consists in the absence of *corvée*-work (with only one exception I will discuss in section 4.3), and that customary rents and

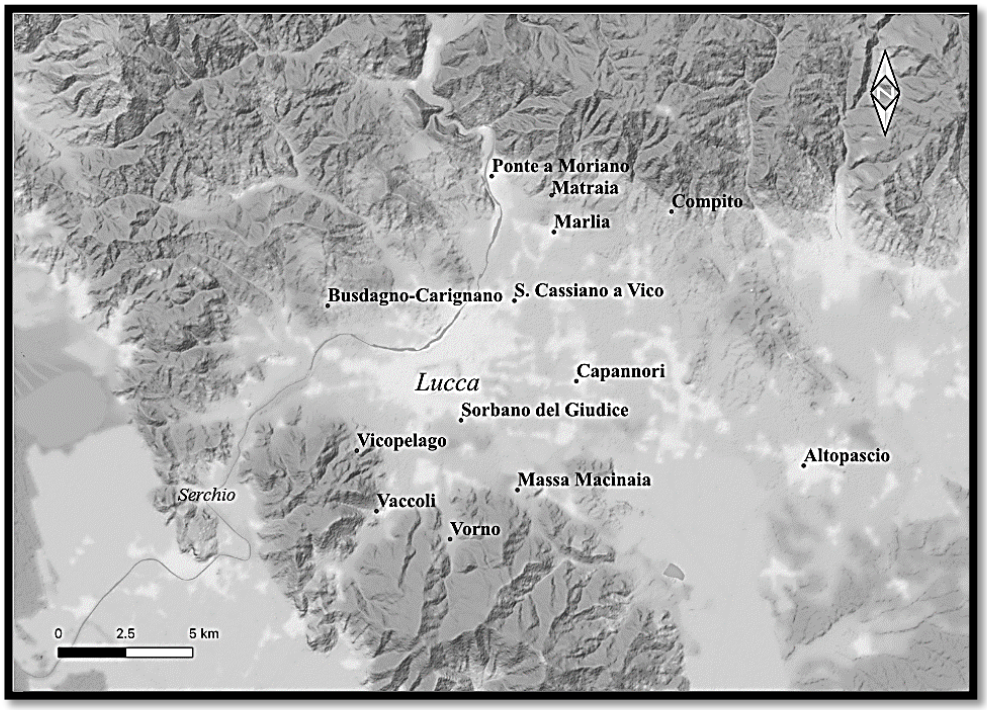
[20] References to, or judgments on, *afficta retenta* in the 12th century have been listed in Wickham, *Community*, p. 27, note 32 (it is important to stress that all the references recorded by Wickham date to the period between the 1170s and the 1190s). Cf. also Id., *Courts*, pp. 45-7, notes 60 and 69. For the 13th century cf. some examples in ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1201 April 13 (R. 47), 1203 March 20 (E. 171) (here the rent is reduced because the leaseholder is unable to deliver what he was initially demanded to), 1207 May 12 (R. 206) (*idem*), 1213 April 16 (I. 6), 1214 May 2 (D. 182), 1217 November 12 (S. 83) (here the rent in grain is reduced, because the tenants were not able to deliver it), 1220 November 7 (M. 38) (the document about Uguccione and Gherardino), 1222 October 10 (D. 154), 1228 May 9 (D. 72); ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1212 April 4, 1219 March 29; *Ser Ciabatto*, p. 251, C 131 (1230 February 10), p. 286, C 202 (1230 March 30), p. 295, C 216 (1230 May 3). Cf. for other examples sections 4.2.1.3 and 4.2.2.

[21] Esch, 'Lucca', p. 22 ('to this lease agreement [that is, short-term *mezzadria* contracts] belonged the future').

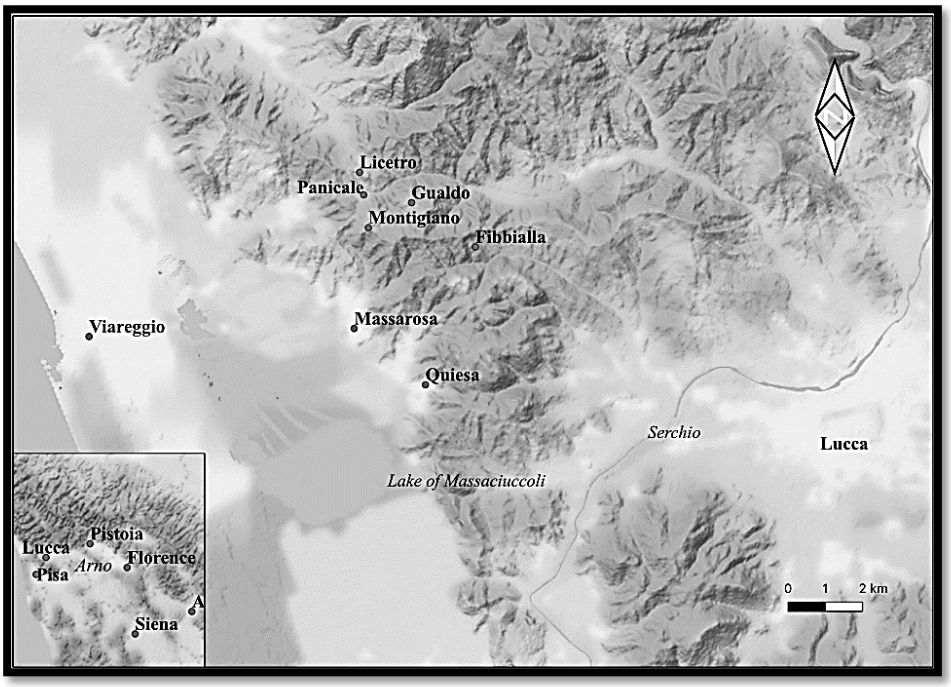
rents recorded in *tenimentum* agreements were very similar. The example of Massa Macinaia, moreover, challenges one of Esch's assumptions, in that rents in kind remained low for a long time, and it is only in the 13th century that some signs of rent increases can be detected; in order to understand the reasons for this, I shall also extend my analysis to the landholding patterns of the Sei Miglia, as they emerge from the charters of the cathedral chapter.

The documentation on Massarosa will let us explore the interconnections between the (likely) presence of manorial forms of land management during the early medieval period, the later development of the *signoria*, and the role of the two in shaping the wider relations between landowners and tenants. I have argued in chapter 2.1.1 that the classic *sistema curtense* had disappeared among the estates of the Lucchese bishops already in the 10th century, but Massarosa shows that a *curtis dominica* probably existed in the 930s, and that manorial organisation is likely to have influenced (indeed, shaped) the social and economic history of Massarosa in the following centuries. After this, the lease contracts from the richest city monastery, S. Ponziano – together with the leases recorded within Ciabatto's protocols – will contribute to fleshing out the characteristics of sharecropping tenure in the Sei Miglia; and Ciabatto will also allow us to get a quick glimpse of wage labour in Lucca.

4.2
Case-studies



16. Places in the Sei Miglia mentioned in sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.3.3



17. The lordship of the Lucchese canons in Massarosa, and the neighbouring localities

4.2.1 The canons of S. Martino: Massa Macinaia (Sei Miglia) and Massarosa (Versilia)

4.2.1.1 From the 10th century to 1150

Massa Macinaia is now a hamlet of the town of Capannori, about 5 km south-east of Lucca, whereas Massarosa lies *c.* 10 km north-west of the city, beyond the Monti d'Oltre Serchio. Drawing a comparison between the two of them appears to me as a potentially fruitful operation, in that they both fell under the *signoria* held by the Lucchese canons – that is, in a nutshell, the chapter's dependants of both places were subject to some obligations (with regard to justice, or to the services they had to perform in return for the lease of land) which distinguished them from completely-independent peasants; this allows us to observe what strategies the canons of S. Martino could adopt in order to control lands and men in different geographical settings and, at a later stage, to increase the extraction of agricultural surplus. The similarities between Massa Macinaia and Massarosa, however, stop here. The former is indeed largely representative of the fragmented patterns of landowning and landholding characterising the Sei Miglia as a whole, whereas the latter stands at the opposite end of such patterns, in that the canons appear to have been, by far, the major landowners of the area. This is a crucial point for the understanding of wider historical processes, such as the differences in the forms of land management between the

two localities, the particular shapes taken by local lordship, and the overall social framework in which the relations between tenants and landowners have to be placed. In the following pages, I shall concentrate on all the charters mentioning Massa Macinaia and Massarosa from the 10th century to the 1230s, but I will also discuss the documentation of S. Martino cathedral chapter as a whole, in order to set the canons' *signorie* against the general context of which they were part.

Let us start from the beginning; that is, from the moment in which the estate-centres of Massa Macinaia and Massarosa were donated to the canons of S. Martino. At some time between the end of the 9th century and 925 (it is unfortunately impossible to be more precise than that because the original document has not been preserved; it has survived in abbreviated form within a cartulary that was probably redacted in 1216 or 1217), Berta 'of Tuscany', mother of the future king Hugh of Arles and wife of the marquis of *Tuscia* Adalbert II, donated to the canons of Lucca twenty *mansi* 'in Massa Macinaria', two in 'Colognora' (Colognora di Compito, south-east of Lucca and more distant from Capannori than Massa Macinaia), some grasslands, and the church of S. Petronilla inside Massa Macinaia.[22] This appears to have been quite a substantial block of landed properties, all the more so if we consider that, as we noted above, landowning and landholding in the Sei Miglia are likely to have been fragmented already in the 9th century. We do not know, it is true, the precise size of the tenant-plots here defined as *mansi* – indeed, *mansi* never had a fixed size. Since a common measure of a Carolingian *mansus* was, at least in northern Europe, 16.5 ha, it might be proposed that Berta donated to the canons an area of very roughly 330 ha (= 3.3 km^2).[23] This is a lot, however, and, even though the figure is not completely implausible, it seems all the same sensible to presume that the *mansi* of Massa Macinaia were smaller than 16.5 ha each. At any rate, the overall picture does not change, and the estate-centre of Massa Macinaia was certainly meant to constitute the bulk of the canons' landed properties in the Sei Miglia; in all likelihood, at the time of the donation, the twenty *mansi* of Massa Macinaia represented an exception in the panorama of the heavily scattered rights of ownership in the plain of Lucca.

Much the same function was fulfilled by Massarosa in the Versilia region. The *curtis* of 'Massa Grausi' had been first purchased by Berta, and was then donated to the church of S. Martino by King Hugh and his son Lothar in 932. In this case, the text of the donation gives us more information about tenants than about tenures. As part of the concession, the document lists a group of forty-five *manentes*, highly-dependent cultivators – who cannot, however, be safely

[22] RCL I, 4, no. 6 (898-925). The chronological range is defined by the year in which Berta is first attested as wife of Adalbert, and by her death. The cartulary in which the text of the donation concerning Massa Macinaia has been preserved is ASDLu, *Capitolare*, LL. 1. In the same chartulary a purchase (*emptio*) of three *mansi* close to S. Petronilla on the part of Berta from a certain Giovanni, son of the late Teuzo, is recorded; similarly to the donation, it has no date (RCL I, 4, no. 5, 898-925). It can be guessed, however, that Berta purchased the three *mansi* just before donating them to the canons of S. Martino – indeed, this would explain why the *emptio* was preserved in the cathedral chapter archive, although it was lost at some point. The church of S. Petronilla has been restored in recent times; a picture taken prior to the restoration can be seen in Dinelli, E., 'Massa Macinaia', p. 13.

[23] On the measure of a *mansus* in the Carolingian period cf. Verhulst, *The Carolingian*, p. 45.

considered as the ancestors of the 12th-century *coloni* and *manentes* (cf. chapter 2.3 on this, and also *infra*). Ten of those *manentes* were associated with Massarosa itself, three with neighbouring villages (Montigiano, *Cerri* and Panicale), whereas the rest of them resided in other localities of the Lucchesia. Massarosa, however, was explicitly indicated as the estate-centre for the most distant places mentioned in the privilege as well. The donation also includes the concession of some pieces of land located along the rivers Versilia and Serchio; it ends with the guarantee that, if the bishops tried to put at danger the canons' rights of ownership, thus violating the king's will, Massarosa would return to Hugh's relatives until a more obedient prelate was found.[24]

The deeds of donation of Massa Macinaia and Massarosa are of particular importance, in that they testify to the creation of a landed patrimony which the canons were supposed to hold independently from the bishopric. This was part of a more general process in which the priests of the cathedrals of Tuscany became, in the first half of the 10th century, the beneficiaries of generous cessions of land made by King Hugh (and sometimes also by lay people, under the impulse of Hugh's politics), who was attempting, thereby, to counterbalance the power wielded locally by hostile bishops.[25] The fact that both the estates had been donated by members of the reigning family means that they were probably regarded as part of the fiscal domain over time. One can object that the text regarding Massarosa seems to allude, in fact, to purely private proprietorial rights in the process of being ceded away to the Lucchese canons; the reference to Hugh's relatives strongly points in that direction. At the same time, the boundaries between 'public' and 'private' are far more clear-cut to us than they will have been for the canons of Lucca, and moreover the dynastic discontinuities of the 10th century probably made it quite easy to detach the full property over Massarosa from Berta's own line of descent. It also needs stressing that the mention of *manentes*, who featured only within public privileges throughout the early medieval period, and appear indeed to have been linked to royal lands, further suggests that the estates and the people ceded away in 932 might have been soon considered as part of the fiscal domain. Finally, it seems again consistent with this that the rights of the cathedral chapter over both Massa Macinaia and Massarosa would be confirmed, later in time, in public diplomas, for this might prove that the connection with the early-medieval kingship of Italy was the basis of the canons' power over both the localities.[26]

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[24] Schiaparelli, *I diplomi*, pp. 94-8, no. XXXI (932 July 1). The centrality of Massarosa for the other villages mentioned in the donation emerges from two expressions: that referred to the *manentes* 'qui omnes iam dicte corti vicini esse videntur', and that introducing the list of *manentes* scattered over the Lucchesia, who were said to come from 'aliis locis et villis' which however were 'ad ipsam cortem pertinentes'. See for a comment Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 203-4.

[25] The formation of a landed patrimony of the canons separated from that of the bishops in medieval Italy between the 9th and the 10th centuries is mentioned in Leicht, *Studi*, p. 136; on Lucca cf. Jones, 'An Italian estate', p. 19; for an overview of Tuscany in the 10th century cf. Ronzani, 'Vescovi', particularly pp. 7-13.

[26] For the diplomas cf. Schiaparelli, *I diplomi*, pp. 166-9, no. LVI (941 March 26), issued bu Hugh and Lothar; Stumpf-Brentano, *Die Reichskanzler* III, 103-4, no. 92 (1123 February 10), issued by Henry V; Muratori, *Delle antichità* I, 297-8 (1160 April 11) issued by Welf VI (cf. also RCL II, 109-10, no. 1186); MGH, DD F I/3, 264-6, no. 727 (1178 January

What interests us more, here, is that even the very scattered information about Massa Macinaia and Massarosa, as it is recorded within the surviving texts of the acts of donation, may point to a difference in the type of control that the canons were able to exert over the two localities. Namely, we come to know that the canons had *manentes* in and around Massarosa, and quite a high number of them, which means in turn that the sum total of people with some ties of dependency (and plausibly tight ones) towards S. Martino may have been *c.* 200 (if we use the fairly prudent multiplier of 4.5 for each *manens*). It cannot be completely excluded that highly-dependent tenants were residing on the *mansi* of Massa Macinaia too, of course – to repeat, we can read the act of donation concerning Massa Macinaia only in abbreviated form. One may guess, however, that the compiler of the 13th-century cartulary was unlikely to miss such an important piece of information, since the possibility of demonstrating that the priests of S. Martino owned *manentes* in Massa Macinaia could have been helpful whenever the chapter's rights of ownership were contested. The absence of *manentes* at Massa Macinaia during the early medieval period is best shown by another privilege issued by Hugh and Lothar, dating to 941, in which all the concessions previously made to the canons were confirmed, and in which no *manens* was associated with Massa Macinaia. We need to wait for the late 12th century to find mention of highly-dependent tenants there, in the new legal and social context that laid the basis for the birth of high-medieval unfree tenancies (on which see again chapter 2.3). Twenty-one *manentes*, who were said to reside in Massa Macinaia and Compito, were linked to the *curtis* of S. Petronilla in two diplomas, issued respectively by Emperor Henry V in 1123 and by Marquis Welf VI in 1160; and a similar number of *manentes* in S. Petronilla (twenty-five) was the object of a legal dispute with the lords of Vorno during the 1180s – although this probably was a different group from that granted to the canons through imperial privileges.[27]

How can we interpret these rather different characteristics of the canons' landed assets in our two villages, with highly-dependent tenants emerging from the sources at different moments? For a start, it can be at least proposed that the presence of *manentes* in a web of settlements scattered over the Versilia region, and the Lucchesia as a whole, all linked to the estate-centre of Massarosa at the same time, may recall a fairly classic manorial type of organisation, in which tenants were required to move from their houses and to perform labour-services on the canons' demesnes; but, of course, this is guesswork to a large extent. The earliest piece of evidence which may point to the existence of this farming regime is late, for the definition of Massarosa as a *curtis*

25), issued by Frederick I; Winkelmann, *Acta*, pp. 27-9, no. 34 (1209 December 14), issued by Otto IV; and Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia diplomatica* II/2, 672-4 (1226 August, on Massarosa alone) issued by Frederick II (I shall discuss some of them in detail *infra*).

[27] For the 941 and 1123 diplomas cf. the note above. For the dispute with the lords of Vorno cf. RCL II, 338-9, no. 1521 (1184 November 20) and *infra*.

dominicata dates to 1018,[28] and there is no mention at all of *corvée*-work among the charters regarding Massarosa – although this silence is also part of a more general scarcity of documentation for this locality, as we will see in a moment. As a result, we cannot be sure that any form of the *sistema curtense* was already in place here in the 10th century, nor indeed that labour-services framed the relations between the canons and their *manentes* at any point in the history of medieval Massarosa. But it is interesting to note that Massa Macinaia was never associated with a demesne – significantly, it was never called *curtis dominicata* – whereas further clues about the existence of a bipartite estate at Massarosa, however late, do exist, and I shall discuss them in detail. It can be concluded that Massarosa is definitely more likely to have been a 'classic manor' during the early-medieval period than Massa Macinaia. With regard to the latter, moreover, there is little doubt that control over a heavily-dependent section of the peasantry did not stretch back to the 10th century. The *manentes* of S. Petronilla in the 12th century were quite simply a new development; no document suggests that they were ever employed in demesne farming, and even their importance in the development of the canons' *signoria* at Massa Macinaia must not to be overestimated; but to this I shall come back later on.[29]

What we know for sure is that the control of the canons over Massarosa – probably favoured by an ancient and long-standing provision of highly-dependent tenant-families, and possibly reinforced by some kind of 'manorial framing' of the tenants' work – appears to have been remarkably stable throughout the central centuries of the Middle Ages. If one simply skims through the charters of the cathedral chapter of Lucca of the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries (and the same goes for the first half of the 13th century), it is easy to notice the low number of documents regarding Massarosa and, as a consequence, the extremely low level of land mobility there. Indeed, it can be said that the history of Massarosa is, for a very long time, a history marked by the absence of any substantial documentary record. One might presume that the environs of Massarosa hardly attracted many people who were willing to buy or rent there, for there probably were not many arable lands in that area; in the early 1120s and in the 1160s, the diplomas issued by Henry V and Welf VI still described the landscape as mostly composed by 'woods, pastures, marshlands and lands close to the sea [*marinis*]', along with 'fish-weirs [*piscariis*]'.[30] But we have good reasons to think that the canons were also endeavouring to preserve the coherence of their estate while land-clearances were on their way; and that, as a consequence, the lack of land mobility did not depend

[28] RCL I, 35, no. 96 (1018 February 12).
[29] I could find only two references to *donicati* in the documents concerning Massa Macinaia, respectively a donation and a sale, made by small owners in favour of the canons in the second half of the 12th century. Those references, however, feature within purely formulaic lists of the landed goods composing the estates in the process of being ceded away: 'cultis et incultis, donicatis et massariciis, mobilibus et inmobilibus' (cf. RCL II, 84, no. 1143, 1156 February 22, and ibid. II, 110, no. 1187, 1160 June 5); by no means do they point to the existence of a 'classic', bipartite manor.
[30] Cf. note 26 for the references.

exclusively on a lack of demand (as an aside, it can be suggested that Welf's diploma was not describing Massarosa, but simply copying the words from Henry's text; we shall see that in the second half of the 12th century arable lands were more abundant than one might think on the basis of imperial privileges). Let us proceed chronologically, and set out thereby a comparison with Massa Macinaia.

It is legitimate to examine the second half of the 10th century and the 11th century altogether, since they offer us a fairly homogenous picture of both Massarosa and Massa Macinaia. One can find information only on the surroundings of Massarosa throughout all this period, whereas the estate itself is almost invisible: namely, a donation of a tenant-plot in Montigiano in favour of the canons dating to 1058, plus a purchase of land made by the canons in 1077, regarding another tenant-plot in Montigiano, and finally the donation of a *casalinum* (the space on which a house can be built up), in Montigiano again, to the hospital of S. Martino, owned by the canons.[31] Sales on the part of the cathedral chapter are, instead, totally absent. When we turn our attention to Massa Macinaia, the situation appears to have been fairly similar: one purchase of land by the canons, and two donations, both in favour of the hospital of S. Martino, over two centuries.[32] The major divergence between the two villages emerges when we turn to leases conceded through *libellus* charters. Up to 1100, only five *libelli* concerning landed properties in Massarosa or its environs were granted by the priests of S. Martino, all to people who cannot be ascribed to any major landowning family or religious institution of the Lucchesia (they probably were local medium-size owners);[33] just to take one example, the aristocratic family of the Cunimundinghi, who were said to own thirty *manentes* near Massarosa in the 890s (presumably as a result of a concession of other fiscal properties in Versilia) never entered the canons' clientele; only one branch of them, the 'da Bozzano', did, but later in time (the 1070s) and not in return for lands in Massarosa.[34] The *libelli* parceling out the canons' estates at Massa Macinaia were more numerous – sixteen in total. Furthermore, this second group of *libelli* seems to have entailed the leasing out of relatively substantial properties, including in one case one *masium Berte* (presumably one of the

[31] RCL I, 104, no. 270 (1058 May 4), 169, no. 423 (1077 January 27), 170, no. 424 (1077 January 27) (this is the donation). On the hospital of S. Martino cf. its first mention ibid. I, 164, no. 414 (1076 March 12). To these deeds we can add those ibid. I, 178, no. 434 (1077 December 10), which is a donation involving lay people and concerning landed goods in Massarosa; and ibid. I, 208-9, no. 494 (1087 March 27), which is a donation of a *casalinum* located in Massarosa in favour of the monastery of Quiesa. Probably, these goods came to be part of the patrimony of the cathedral chapter later in time, and this is why the corresponding documents ended up in its archive.

[32] Purchase of land: RCL I, 232, no. 547 (1097 February 7). Donations to the hospital of S. Martino: ibid. I, 183, no. 445 (1078 July 2), 198-9, no. 473 (1084 March 23). To these, we can add a couple of sales involving only lay people: ibid. I, 55-6, no. 147 and 56, no. 149 (1034 November 18).

[33] *Libelli* conceded by the canons regarding Massarosa, or its environs, during the 10th and the 11th centuries: RCL I, 11-2, no. 29 (982 May 28), 12-3, no. 31 (986 June 9), 35, no. 96 (1018 February 12), 48-9, no. 130 (1031 November 20). None of the beneficiaries of these *libelli* appear to have been aristocratic, as emerges from a quick look at Tomei, 'Alle radici'.

[34] The Cunimundinghi's *manentes* are mentioned in the *breve de feora* (cf. chapter 2.1.1); see Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, p. 123; on the 'da Bozzano' cf. Tomei, 'Alle radici', in particular p. 225.

twenty *mansi* originally part of the donation by Berta 'of Tuscany'), to which we can add another cession of landed goods and other *mansi* close to the churches of S. Petronilla and S. Lorenzo (the second church of Massa Macinaia). It is also worth noting that Massa Macinaia lease charters show that the social profile of the ecclesiastical institutions, and of the lay families, receiving landed goods from the canons of S. Martino (or else owning alongside them, as we see from the lists of land-boundaries) appears to have been high; we meet among them the abbey of S. Salvatore di Sesto (perhaps the largest religious landowner in *Tuscia* during the 10th century, which however has not preserved an archive)[35] and three important families of Lucchese legal experts: the sons of Leo *iudex*, the Flaiperti and the Rolandi.[36] In both Massarosa and Massa Macinaia rents were in cash, sometimes added to by purely recognitive renders such as one pork shoulder, and a pair of chickens during Easter time. The presence of sub-tenants, and the frequent references to the right of possession and usufruct over land (*potestas habendi et usufructuandi*, as opposed to the expression *ad laborandum*, usually employed in contracts addressed to cultivators) further suggest that the beneficiaries of *libelli* were, in most cases, at least medium owners. As a conclusion, it needs stressing that in Massa Macinaia there appears to have been a slight turn to rents in produce, wine must in particular, towards the end of the 11th century.[37]

As to the type of rents, Massarosa and Massa Macinaia fit well into the pattern described by Kotel'nikova for the Lucchesia as a whole, in which rents in money prevailed throughout much of the 11th century before a conversion to kind, as testified by Massa Macinaia documentation, started to become progressively evident from the end of the same century (cf. chapter 1.1.1; this pattern will emerge clearly from the documents of S. Ponziano). For us, here, it is particularly important to observe how the canons' landed properties in Massa Macinaia were soon divided among a numerous group of tenants, in a context in which other rich proprietors (S. Salvatore di Sesto in the first place) were likely to challenge the local hegemony of the canons, or at least to prevent its further expansion. With regard to farming regimes, one can conclude that the coherence of any 'classic' bipartite model of land management in Massa Macinaia – if this ever existed, which I doubt – was soon compromised by the leasing out of the *mansi* owned there by the clergy of S. Martino. In Massarosa, on the contrary, this process hardly happened; and indeed, the almost complete absence of evidence concerning the leasing out of the cathedral chapter's

[35] Cf. Collavini, 'I beni'.

[36] *Libelli* conceded by the canons regarding Massa Macinaia during the 10th and the 11th centuries: RCL I, 3, no. 2 (possibly first half of the 9th century), 5, no. 8 (before 918 September), 13, no. 34 (987 December 21), 18, no. 50 (10th century?), 19, no. 52, 53 (this is the lease regarding the 'masio Berte'), 55 (10th century?), 25, no. 74 (1008 December 2), 141, no. 359 (1069 November 2), 179, no. 439 (1078 March 16), 199-200, no. 475 (1084 July 8), 250, no. 584, 251, no. 589, no. 591, 255, no. 610 (second half of the 11th century?). See also the note below.

[37] Rents in wine must (sometimes together with money): RCL I, 250, no. 585-6-7-8 and no. 590 (all recorded within the cartulary in ASDLu, *Capitolare*, LL. 1, and probably dating to the second half of the 11th century).

estate-centre in Versilia is matched by another clue pointing to an effort, on the part of the canons, towards the preservation of their patrimony: the construction of a castle.

The first mention of a *castrum* in Massarosa is contained in one of the donations I have discussed above, dating to 1087. At that stage, the *castrum* probably was a just a fortification surrounding the *curtis* of the canons, but including also some private properties at the same time – indeed, the donors excluded from their concession some small pieces of land (*petiolae*) located within the castle.[38] Considering that Massarosa constituted the major estate-centre in Versilia of the clerics of S. Martino, it is easy to understand why they sought to fortify it in the first place, but the efforts of the Lucchese canons were directed towards other Versiliese localities too. A document dating to 1099, well-known to the historians of medieval Tuscany, informs us that the canons tried to build a castle on the hill of Licetro, about 1 km north of Massarosa. Apparently, they had to do so because the neighbouring aristocratic family of Montemagno was responsible of assaults and thefts in Licetro, Gualdo and Montigiano. The text, which describes the terms of the agreement between the cathedral chapter and the Montemagno, is surely biased – it is sufficient to consider that the canons' attempt to create a castle in Licetro was flanked with the adverbs 'fortissime mirifice'. But, as we argued in relation to the plea of the Casciavolesi (see chapter 2.2) the overall picture offered by the document had at least to be plausible in order to be believed, and this is why it is legitimate to follow the main lines of its narrative. We come to know, thus, that the Montemagno strongly opposed the construction of a *castrum* in Licetro, and appealed to Matilda of Tuscany for help in stopping it. Matilda indeed sided with the Montemagno, provided that they agreed to cease the assaults on the canons' landed properties. In the end, the priests of S. Martino agreed to take down the castle, and the pact was further sealed through the concession, on the part of the guarantors of Ildebrandino II 'da Montemagno', of some pieces of land which were given to the priests of S. Martino as pledges.[39] This document is interesting in many respects. It is evidence of the signorial mutation in Versilia, with local aristocratic families attempting to seize the estates of ecclesiastical institutions – presumably at the expense of the local peasantry, in a way that must have resembled the S. Casciano's violences against the Casciavolesi; but it is also evidence, almost contradictorily, of the authority still wielded by the marquise in *Tuscia* at the end of the 11th century.

What is more important for us, however, is that this document further confirms that the canons did appear to have put considerable efforts into the preservation and defence of their Versiliese estates; and there is more evidence for this. About twenty years after the agreement concerning Licetro, in July 1123, we discover that they had built a castle in Fibbialla, now a hamlet

[38] Cf. note 31.
[39] RCL I, 238-40, no. 562 (1099 June); for comments on this text cf. Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', p. 224; Wickham, 'Economia' pp. 391-3 and 418-20; Tomei, 'Alle radici', pp. 309-12; Cortese, *L'aristocrazia*, p. 302.

of Camaiore located on the hills east of the Monte Ghilardona; in order to do so, the priests of S. Martino divided the expenses with Gualando of Vorno, possibly the co-owner of signorial rights over the settlement at that time (see *infra*). The *curtis* of Fibbialla had been donated to the canons at the beginning of the same year by Waldo III and his wife Ghisla, members, respectively, of the Lucchese families of the Rolandinghi and the 'da Bozzano'; this implies that the fortification was erected quite fast.[40] Not all of the canons' estates in Versilia, it is true, were involved in this process of *incastellamento* – in particular, Gualdo and Montigiano never had a castle. All the same, it can be argued that the low level of land mobility, as it emerges from the documentation of the cathedral chapter of Lucca regarding the Versilia region (lease charters in particular), was consistent with *incastellamento*. The priests of S. Martino could have chosen to concede *libelli* to the lay landowning families who lived not too far from Massarosa, who would have thereby entered the canons' clientele. This, however, would have led to the parceling out of the canons' Versiliese estates. On the contrary, they consciously endeavoured to preserve the coherence of their landed properties there, and were able to do so to an extent that was probably unattainable in the plain of Lucca. This was a rational way to allocate resources; Henry IV's diploma of 1081 had explicitly prohibited the construction of castles within the Sei Miglia (cf. on this chapter 1.2.1), which means, for instance, that the workforce of the *manentes* attached to the church of S. Petronilla in Massa Macinaia from the 1180s could have not been employed to this end, and, more in general, that the priests of S. Martino were prevented from defending their Sei Miglia properties with any type of *castrum*; any effort in this direction would have simply been illegal. By contrast, the heirs of the early-medieval *manentes* in Versilia must have provided the canons with the group of highly-dependent tenants who actually built the castles of Massarosa and Fibbialla, and who attempted to do the same in Licetro; outside of the Sei Miglia this was, if not fully legal, for sure more easily feasible. Finally, one may guess that in the Sei Miglia the higher level of leasing out was due to the pressure of a dense stratum of medium owners with whom the priests of S. Martino had to establish good relations by way of alienating part of their properties through *libelli*; this, at least, will appear with ever growing clarity from the documents of the 12th and 13th centuries.

In conclusion, it is definitely significant that some of the canons' estates in Versilia were involved in the process of *incastellamento* between the end of the 11th century and the beginning of the 12th century; *incastellamento* indicates where the canons could (and wanted to) build up a cohesive control over lands and people. If we move on to the charters of the first half of the 12th

[40] Cf. in general Dinelli, 'Il castello'. The mention of Fibbialla as a *curtis* is contained in the diploma issued by Henry V (cf. note 26 for the reference); the word *castrum* appears in RCL II, 344, no. 800 (1123 July 20). Not all the lords of Vorno must have agreed on a policy of collaboration with the church of S. Martino. Another member of the family, Enrico di Sigefredo (cf. *infra*), reached an agreement with the canons in 1126; he promised to cease to lay claims over Fibbialla and to provide military aid to the canons, in return for lands and an annual render of £10 of *denarii*. Cf. ibid. II, 357, nos. 826-7 (1126 April 3); cf. Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', p. 207 and 211; Id., 'La origine'; Tomei, 'Alle radici', pp. 133-4, note 373.

century, we immediately notice that such a policy had not changed over that period; land mobility was still almost non-existent. There are just three documents mentioning Massarosa up to 1150: a purchase of land between lay proprietors, another purchase on the part of the canons, and an exchange involving the *pievano* of Elici (Elici was the *pieve* whose boundaries included Massarosa) and the canons of S. Martino.[41] No *libelli* or *tenimenta* regarding Massarosa or its environs can be found amid the charters of the Lucchese cathedral chapter between 1100 and 1150. In Massa Macinaia, however, a higher number of transactions can be tracked down over those fifty years. We find three leases addressed to cultivators and granted in return for rents in kind (namely oil and wine), and in one case added to by the demand for a burdensome entry-fine (48 *s.*).[42] In addition to this, the charters of that period show that other religious institutions, such as the monastery of S. Pietro di Pozzeveri (close to Altopascio) came to own land in Massa Macinaia;[43] and also that quite a large group of lay owners was buying, selling and renting out olive- and vine-growing estates there.[44] One does not have to go too far to guess that this sort of political overcrowding was setting the stage for the development of conflicts over the ownership of men and lands, and such conflicts did break out between 1150 and 1230; the same goes in fact for Massarosa too, but in a very different way, as we shall see. It is because of this context that, as for Florence, the second half of the 12th century was the period in which the patterns of land management start to become more visible than in previous periods; and this was due, in turn, to the writing down of inventories of rents and services. We need now to put them into their context, and then to analyse them in detail.

4.2.1.2 The second half of the 12th century

Let us start with a short political narrative. One branch of the family of Leo *iudex*, whom we met as part of the group of *libellarii* holding land from the canons of S. Martino at Massa Macinaia, moved out of Lucca in the late 11th century and controlled the castle of Vorno, south of the city, already in the 1120s. The lords of Vorno remained in good relations with the canons for some time; indeed, we have seen that they contributed to the construction of the castle in Fibbialla. But in the 1140s they decided to side with Pisa in one of the many wars opposing Pisa and Lucca. This was not a wise choice. The Lucchesi managed to destroy the castle of Vorno in

[41] RCL I, 379-80, no. 877 (1131 March 26), II, 5, no. 1004 (1146 February 6), 25-6, no. 1043 (1148 July 19).
[42] Ibid. I, 292, no. 690 (1109 February 14), 350, no. 812 (1124 April 5) (this is the document with the entry-fine), 426, no. 970 (1143 February 20). We have also one purchase of land on the part of the canons: ibid. I, 373, no. 863 (1129 September 13). Donations: ibid. I, 427-8, no. 973 (1143 October 13), II, 24-5, no. 1041 (1148 May 23).
[43] Ibid. I, 259, no. 619 (1102 March 27).
[44] Ibid. I, 421, no. 959 (1142 March 21), 441, no. 996 (1145 May 14), II, 33-4, no. 1058 (1150 May 13).

1150, after having besieged it three times. In the end, the lords of Vorno agreed to come back to Lucca, but they promised not to rebuild their *castrum*. In return, the commune of Lucca confirmed to them the signorial rights they owned over some tenants in Massa Macinaia, as we shall see in a moment. It is likely that the members of the Vorno family came to exert lordship over time, by virtue of their position as *libellarii* of the canons of Lucca. Such lordship, however, would slowly slip away from the Vorno family, along with the political power they wielded locally; their local dependants came to be *manentes* of the priests of S. Martino from 1184, and in 1188 another Gualando of Vorno – probably the nephew of the Gualando we met above as the financier of the Fibbialla castle – was ordered to give up his claims over Massa Macinaia (I will return to this).[45] This political framing shows how the fragmentation of the patterns of landowning and landholding at Massa Macinaia, which I have outlined hitherto, was matched by a similar fragmentation of lordship, in the age in which (in the Lucchesia as well as in the rest of Tuscany) the contours of the *signoria* came to be defined with ever-increasing precision. For the historian, this context is particularly fruitful; the re-allocation of the tenants' dues, and their takeover on the part of the Lucchese canons later in time, meant that these dues had to be recorded and preserved. We are thus able to understand what the *signoria* could actually imply for the peasantry in this area of the Sei Miglia.

Let us look at all this in more detail. In 1160, thirty-seven tenants at Massa Macinaia declared what services they owed to Enrico di Sigefredo, member of the Vorno family (these were, presumably, the same services that tenants would owe to the canons about twenty-five years later or so). They consisted in the performance of guard-duties and transport-services, the requisition of animals, the provision of flax and of a small quantity of money, plus the obligation to abide by the private justice of the lords of Vorno. All in all, they appear to have been fairly heavy, but also highly individualised. Some tenants said that they were not burdened with the same dues as their peers; and in one case, we learn that guard-duties had been 'gracefully' abolished, 'ob amorem'.[46] This is very telling about the nature of lordship around Massa Macinaia – but the same applies indeed to the Sei Miglia as a whole. It appears as if the *signoria* was imposed, and possibly negotiated, on an (almost) individual basis, for the fragmentation of landowning prevented the development of any territorial control over the totality of the rural population. We are at the opposite end from Georges Duby's *seigneurie banale*. It is worth noting, however, that this *signoria* was very clearly distinguished from pure tenancy relations; agricultural works and agricultural products are almost completely absent in the 1160 list, except for linen – which was not part, significantly, of the typical renders in kind demanded in the Lucchesia.

[45] Wickham, 'Property', pp. 233-4; Id., *Community*, p. 107; cf. note 27 for the 1184 document; on the 1188 document cf. RCL III, 32-3, no. 1575 (1188 March 18).
[46] RCL II, 110-3, no. 1188 (1160 June).

This is important, in that it allows us to draw a comparison with Massarosa, and to acknowledge (again) the existence of significant differences between the landed estates of the canons in the Sei Miglia and the Versilia region. But first, we need to briefly outline the general characteristics of the documentation of the cathedral chapter of Lucca for the period we are going to examine. By describing the inventory of signorial dues redacted in 1160 we have entered the crucial fifty years going from 1150 to 1200, the ones which Esch identified as marked by a steady increase in the extraction of agricultural surplus in the whole Lucchesia. Philip Jones observed that, during this period, the number of *libelli* issued by the canons of S. Martino started to go down; contemporarily, the number of purchases of land went up. Then, in the last twenty years of the 12th century, the cathedral chapter issued more than forty *tenimenta*, for the most part in return for fixed rents in kind.[47] One can assume that the progressive abandonment of *libelli* and the parallel increase in the number of *tenimenta* responded to a precise policy, on the part of the canons, aimed at establishing direct relations with cultivators; and this entails that the class of medium owners and magnates who used to be the addressees of *libelli* was no longer the main interlocutor of the priests of S. Martino. It needs stressing, nonetheless, that already in the early 12th century the growing demand for kind showed the landowners' attempt to participate directly in the food market.[48] What characterised the sudden increase in the number of *tenimenta* between 1180 and 1200 was that *tenimenta* had become, sometimes, temporary leases, and that they were accompanied by the exaction of entry-fines in some cases. 'These practices were new', in Jones' own words.[49] It is in this context that the takeover from the lords of Vorno of the signorial rights over the highly-dependent tenants of Massa Macinaia in the 1180s can be fully understood; this was part of a more general process in which the canons of Lucca were investing in land and tenants. The *signoria* over cultivators, it is true, was apparently unrelated to the extraction of the agricultural surplus, and I will argue that it did not necessarily put landowners in the condition to impose harsher working conditions on their subjects than those weighing on completely free peasants; but the *signoria* could at least create the personal ties of dependency laying the ground for such a harshening, and trying to get hold of it was certainly considered as useful.

It was the overall economic and political context of the 1180s (see section 4.1.2, chapter 1.2.1.1 and also *infra*) that pushed the canons to survey their estates, and this led to the redaction of more inventories. I will take into account three lists of rents here, two regarding Massarosa (1183) and another one concerning the Sei Miglia as a whole (1187). I shall start from the first two, for they will allow us to flesh out the characteristics of signorial powers in Versilia, as

[47] Jones, 'An Italian', p. 24.
[48] Cf. Wickham, *Community*, ch. 2.
[49] Jones, 'An Italian', p. 25.

opposed to the plain of Lucca; and we shall outline, this way, the patterns of relations between tenants and landowners.

Some framing is needed here too. In 1181 (probably), the bishop of Lucca Guglielmo (1170-94) acknowledged that the people (*homines*) of Massarosa and Gualdo had ceased to pay the tithes, consisting in bread, wine, chestnuts and other fruits, which they owed to the canons of S. Martino. As a consequence, Guglielmo reconfirmed to the clergy of the cathedral church its right to collect the tithes coming from the two localities.[50] The document tells us that the *homines* of Massarosa and Gualdo had kept on refusing to abide by their obligations for a long time, but I doubt this. The chronological correspondence between the bishop's privilege and the breakout of the famine in Tuscany makes it plausible to discount the canons' claims about their *homines* having for long been in arrears as a mostly rhetorical tool. But even if we want to believe the priests of S. Martino, it can still be assumed that the peasants' unwillingness to comply with their requirements had been intensified by the early-1180s famine. Bishop Guglielmo's privilege is interesting in another respect too; it testifies to the collection of tithes in Massarosa and Gualdo. We do not know when this started, nor on what grounds tithes were exacted. Giovanni Dinelli proposed that these might have been the so-called 'manorial tithes'; that is, not the ordinary, ecclesiastical tithes paid to the *pieve*, but a simple tenth of agricultural produce that was demanded in return for the (customary) lease of land.[51] This suggests that the relations between tenants and landowners, which we are not able to see because of the lack of lease charters, might have been framed exactly in this way; and the two inventories redacted in 1183 appears to give further confirmation to such a hypothesis.

The first of them has been preserved in a 14th-century book in which various deeds concerning the landed resources of the cathedral chapter were copied (accurately, as results from a quick check of the deeds whose original documents still exist).[52] It contains a list of renders owed by the *homines* of Massarosa, in view of the signorial rights held by the canons over the jurisdictional territory (*districtus*) of the *castrum*: these rights consisted in the exercise of high justice (*placitum*), in the collection of revenues deriving from justice (*banna*), in the possibility of exacting entry-fines (*masciamenta*) and to lease out lands (*locamenta*), and finally in the jurisdiction over common lands (*boschi* and *paludes*). The *homines* of Massarosa had to declare their rents in front of five local notables, who swore on the Gospels before the whole *populus* of the castle, and who can be considered as the first example of a rural commune in Massarosa – that is, of a group of local

[50] RCL II, 287, no. 1442 (before September 1181?).
[51] Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 219-20. They were also called *decimales affitales* in ASDLu, *Biblioteca Capitolare*, no. 24, fol. 4r (a list of rents redacted in 1220-1 and used as a flyleaf, cf. section 4.2.1.3; in order to identify the *folia*, I shall number them according to the order in which they appear in the *codex*).
[52] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, *cod.* P † XXXI, ff. 6 and 7; cf. the *regestum* in RCL II, 321-3, 1497 (1183 May 9).

representatives who had the right to mediate between lords and peasants.[53] It is of particular interest for our argument that rent-payers were subdivided into two groups: those 'de donicato', and those 'de alia parte'. This is the clearest indication of the existence of a bipartite estate at Massarosa, indeed the first (and only) insight into the inner structure of the *curtis dominicata* already attested in the 11th century. The *donicatum*, moreover, appears to have been big; seventy-four people were said to reside there, against twenty-three living on the *alia pars*. There is no trace, however, of labour-services linking demesne and tenures; one may guess that *corvée*-work had been demanded from the canons' tenants up to a certain point in the history of Massarosa, but that it had disappeared by the time the inventory was redacted. At the end of the 12th century, the distinction between the two parts of the estate probably was little more than geographical, as the analysis of the rents that were collected appears to confirm. All the people listed in the inventory had to deliver small rents in cash, swinging from a minimum of 1 *d.* to a maximum of 5 *s.* per person. The total sum was high, amounting to 995.5 *d.* (=£4.1).[54] Rents were far lower for the people on the *donicatum* (seventy-four people owing, as a whole, 577 *d.*) than for those on the *alia pars* (twenty-three people owing 418.5 *d.*). The most substantial render collected from the *homines* of Massarosa, however, was tithe. It consisted in 100 *st.* of grain in August and 100 *st.* of wine must in September, to be delivered with the *iustum starium* of Lucca. The tithes of chestnuts and fruits recorded in Bishop Guglielmo's privilege do not feature here; one can presume that their abolition was a relatively small concession made by the canons in order to make their *homines* more willing to pay what was left – which indeed was not negligible. We cannot convert, unfortunately, the Lucchese *staia* of that period into modern units of measurement. It can be observed, however, that individually rents did not appear to have been particularly high – little more than 2 *st.* per person; but as a whole, they did represent an important source of income for the cathedral chapter of S. Martino. Considering that the price of cereals was between four or six *solidi* per *staium* between 1182 and 1184, it follows that the canons could have earned at least £20 from the sale of grain alone (and they could also sell wine, although we do not have data on its price for the early 1180s).[55]

The second Massarosa inventory written down in 1183 requires only a short description. It was redacted the same day as the first one (May 9), but in Lucca, inside the cloister of S. Martino itself. One can imagine that the first document was solemnly written down early in the morning,

[53] The classic text on the Lucchesia, mostly centred on the Sei Miglia, is Wickham, *Community*.
[54] Or 999.5 *d.* The rent of Martino di Grimaldo was 4 *d.*, but 'octo' has been written right above 'quatuor' (cf. ibid., p. 323, note 1).
[55] Esch, 'Lucca', p. 76 (on cereals). See also p. 77 on wine/must. Esch was able to calculate, here, only the potential annual returns on the investments made on specific lands, as these may have resulted from the sale of wine collected (via rents) from those lands themselves. It is however worth noting that in 1182 such returns could be 10 *s.* per *staium*, a very high figure when we consider that they had peaked, in previous years, at 5.9 *s./st.* (1179); and that they would go down again later in time (2.5 *s./st.* in 1187). Clearly, on the wake of the 1181-2 famine, the price of wine had surged, not very differently from that of grain.

and that then a group of Massarosesi followed the canons along the Via Francigena and reached Lucca. Indeed, this list includes only some of the people who were recorded in the first charter as rent-payers of the cathedral chapter of S. Martino; in other words it concerns, for the most part, another group of Massarosa villagers, amounting to *c.* 100 people (the frequent references to unspecified groups of *consortes* do not allow any safe quantification). These were subdivided according to the single priests they owed services to, which can explain why it was rational to conduct the survey right inside S. Martino. Such services were hospitality services, *albergariae*, going from a minimum of half an *albergaria* (meaning, in all likelihood, the provision of half of the supplies needed by a single person for one day) to three *albergariae* per person.[56]

It is now time to take a step back and have a look at the two inventories as a whole, so as to flesh out what they can tell us about the characteristics of lordship and the relations between landowners and tenants at Massarosa in the final twenty years of the 12th century. Some level of individualisation in the dues with which the inhabitants of Massarosa had to comply evidently existed; some had to give rents in money, some had to provide hospitality, some had to do both – and everyone in different degrees. In general, however, rents were highly standardised, and tithes – the most substantial exaction – were recorded in the first list as a collective obligation, together with the canons' rights of *placitum*, *districtus*, *masciamenta* and *locamenta*. It can be noted that none of the people who were required to pay rent was labelled as a *manens* of the canons; the compiler of the inventory used the expression 'omnes homines' to convey the idea that the inhabitants of Massarosa were subject to signorial justice, and this is all the more significant when we consider that *manentes* were indeed attested in and around Massarosa during the early 10th century. We have already observed that, in the 12th century, the term *manens* designated a new form of subjection in comparison to the early medieval period, and that it appeared wherever rights of lordship were heavily fractioned; this is consistent with the fact that the priests of S. Martino owned *manentes* in Massa Macinaia. It seems thus reasonable to assume that what we are seeing in Massarosa is a form of territorial lordship. We cannot completely exclude, it is true, that the canons had, quite simply, very many customary tenants who held some land from them on the vast estates of the cathedral chapter. But the standardisation of rents and the exertion of justice are quite clear indicators of the territoriality of power – an expression which, to me, appears to describe best the nature of the canons' *signoria* over Massarosa. It also needs stressing that the bipartite estate, albeit no longer a 'classic' manor, still retained some importance; one may guess that the *donicatum* was the oldest part of the manor, probably including also the main settlement, where customary rents in cash were low and stayed low because the canons remained fairly 'conservative' there, whereas

[56] RCL II, 323-5, no. 1498 (1183 May 9). Examples of people mentioned in both the inventories are 'Veghius de Mallio', 'Ubertellus de Debbio', 'Martinus de Rio', 'Guido Marcolfi', 'Grancius', 'Manente', 'Dominicus Taffani-Taffata', 'Ubertellus de Podio' and 'Perusius'.

the *alia pars* had been leased out more frequently, thus allowing for an increase of renders over time. This may explain why, in proportion, the clergy of S. Martino collected more money from the latter; but this is mere speculation. Finally, it is worth noting that the quite high quantity of agricultural produce encapsulated in the provision of tithes may testify to the efficacy of land-clearances in an area which, according to imperial diplomas, had been occupied (and in fact still was, up to a point) by marshlands and woodlands.

We need now to return to Massa Macinaia, and see how land management and signorial powers developed in the more fragmented context of the Sei Miglia. A few years after the redaction of the two Massarosa inventories, in 1187, another list of the canons' renders was written down. It was the result of a survey that this time concerned, for the most part, the immediate environs of Lucca and the Sei Miglia – even though there are two sections dedicated, respectively, to the Versiliese localities of Quiesa and Licetro – and was made village by village.[57] The reasons for its redaction can be only guessed at. One might suppose that the survey was promoted by Bishop Guglielmo after King Henry VI had issued the famous diploma for Lucca the year before, acknowledging the urban jurisdiction over the Sei Miglia, in exchange for the quite heavy annual payment of sixty Marks (= *c.* £300; see chapter 1.2.1.1, note 54). There is reason to think that this exaction partly weighed on ecclesiastical assets, for, from the mid-12th century onwards, churches and monasteries in and around Lucca were required to pay the *datium* to the city and, on a general level, to contribute to its financial needs.[58]

This list is incomplete; the surviving parchments were employed as flyleaves for one of the two 13th-century cartularies in which many deeds of the cathedral chapter archive were copied or registered.[59] The dismembering of the original document probably came about in the 17th century, when the rearrangement of the archival material entailed the reuse of medieval documents for book-binding on quite a large scale; lists of customary rents were regarded as particularly suitable to this end. Furthermore, the text is difficult to read sometimes; the margins of the parchments have been cut out in order to adapt them to the size of the *codex*, and there are extensive humidity stains here and there. The insertion of some of the rents that tenants had to pay between the lines of the main text creates, in a few cases, uncertainties about who had to pay what.[60] Despite all this, the 1187 inventory remains a very important source; it lists around 300

[57] The list is in RCL III, 18-24, no. 1568 (1187).
[58] On taxes cf. again Savigni, *Episcopato*, pp. 91-4.
[59] That is ASDLu, *Capitolare*, LL. 1; the other one is LL. 2.
[60] Cf. RCL III, 18-24, no. 1568 (1187), p. 24, namely the section concerning the locality of *Scopiccio* (probably close to Vaccoli), where the same people seem to have been demanded to pay two rents in grain. This was probably due to the fact that they owed such rents from two different holdings; still, it is not clear why the compiler decided not to write them as one single render, considering that the number of the leaseholds held by a single tenant was never specified within our list. One could formulate other hypotheses; for instance, that the *afficta* written between the lines were paid by other members of the family to which the person recorded on the main lines of the text belonged. This is, however, pure guesswork.

people, and provides us with an invaluable insight into the patterns of customary landholding in the Sei Miglia, at least among the estates owned by the canons of S. Martino. I shall first discuss it as a whole, and then look more closely at Massa Macinaia.

First of all, no collective obligations – that is, services performed by all the dependants of S. Martino – can be found in this list. It is interesting to consider, in this context, that we do read here the names of three groups of people paying tithes (they were called 'decimales'); in view of the absence of any positive evidence regarding the collection of ecclesiastical tithes by the canons of S. Martino, it is likely that the *decimae* recorded in this inventory were, as in Massarosa, 'manorial' ones – that is, they simply indicated the provision, on the part of some tenants, of the tenth of agricultural produce in return for the lease of land.[61] But this is where the similarities between the Versilia and the Sei Miglia stop. These *decimales* were apparently scattered over different areas of the plain of Lucca, as is indeed suggested by their grouping in three different sections of the inventory.[62] It is thus reasonable to assume that 'manorial' tithes represented an individual duty, by no means weighing on the entire population of a territory. Nor were tithe-payers necessarily cultivators, if we consider that we find among them also Paganello da Porcari, the first Lucchese *podestà*.[63] More in general, the subdivision of the inventory into groups of leaseholders, on the basis of the locality where they resided, suggests that those who were in charge of surveying and recording rents registered the canons' tenants village by village, and that, at a later stage, the compiler of the list gathered together the pieces of information at his disposition. In view of all this, it seems possible to argue that even the layout of our document points to a context of fragmented rights of landholding. Let us now have a look at the renders listed here as a whole.

Rents consisted, for the most part, in the delivery of a fixed quantity of wheat, legumes and millet, usually only a few *staia*. Whenever the type of *staium* used to pay rent was not indicated, it can be safely assumed that this was the *rectum Lucense*; indeed, the compiler made sure to specify in which cases tenants were supposed to employ the *staium antiquum*, and so to deviate from the norm. There were, however, some exceptions to this pattern; cash was also demanded, and it is

[61] This tenurial regime may have taken different shapes at a local level; also, it may have applied to all the holdings of a single tenant, or just in some of them. For instance, one of the sections of the inventory listing people labelled as *decimales* includes men who had to pay an individual, fixed, rent in wheat, millet and broad beans; one may guess that this rent was added to the demand for the tenth of all the agricultural produce, or else that the two rents (the individual one and the tithe) were supposed to come from two different holdings. Another section of the inventory enumerating *decimales*, instead, does not contain any indications regarding the delivery of additional renders; these *decimales* were evidently required to pay just the tithe.

[62] The villages where the *decimales* resided are not specified, but it can be proposed that they lived close to the localities mentioned in the sections of the list coming right before, or right after, the groups of *decimales* themselves. This would point to the immediate environs of the city (the *porte* of S. Donato and S. Frediano) or the Sei Miglia (possibly *Arquata*, certainly the localities of S. Pietro and S. Cassiano a Vico, north-east of Lucca) as their places of residence. The last group of *decimales* was unfortunately registered on the margin of one of the parchments of the inventory, and is now hardly legible. Cf. ibid., p. 18 and 20.

[63] Cf. ibid., p. 20 and chapter1.2.1.1.

interesting to note that it was even preferred to inferior grains, such as millet.[64] Furthermore, it has to be noted that rents in kind were high in a few cases. Ardiccio from S. Bartolomeo in *Gello* (Moriano) had to deliver a rent consisting in one *modius* of grain (= 24 *st.*); Angiorello from the Via Mezzana (the road running close to the boundaries of the medieval city) owed 16 *st.* of broad beans and 21 *st.* of wheat; in *Turingnana* (not far from Massa Macinaia), 'Pucus' was required to give 38 *st.* of grain to the priests of S. Martino. Even if we do not know, here, the size of tenures, we get the impression that the canons were extracting a substantial part of the agricultural surplus from their leaseholders. And when we do know the size, this impression appears to be confirmed; a tenant-plot located in *Savalliana* (possibly not far from Altopascio), measuring one *cultra* (= 4 *st.*), and ostensibly sown with mixed crops, was supposed to provide the canons with 12 *st.* – four of wheat, four of millet and four of broad beans. In proportion to the cultivable soil, this represented quite a high rent. Finally, sharecropping is almost totally absent in the 1187 inventory, except for two tenants who were said to hold lands, respectively, *ad medium* and *ad tertium*.

This leads us, in the end, to a closer inspection of Massa Macinaia. We cannot be fully sure that the canons had already reestablished their *signoria* over all the local *manentes* in 1187, for the dispute with Gualando of Vorno would be settled only in the following year (cf. *supra* and also *infra*); but we do know that some of the people that had been already reassigned to the church of S. Martino in 1184 as *manentes* of S. Petronilla (cf. *supra*) feature in our list.[65] This is important, in that it allows us to read the rents owed by some of the canons' highly-dependent tenants at Massa Macinaia; and to conclude that there does not seem to have been a great difference between Massa Macinaia and non-signorialised areas of the Sei Miglia with regard to agricultural renders. Indeed, these consisted in the provision of fixed quantities of wheat and millet – apparently small ones (one or two *staia* of cereals per person, with two exceptions of respectively 6 and 11 *st.*). As the 1160 list of signorial dues appeared to suggest, lordship was a simple addition to the already-existing patterns of landholding, and an addition which did not necessarily entail a hardening of the tenants' working conditions. It needs stressing, however, that the canons had a mill there, and that they were expecting small rents in cereals from the lands surrounding it; namely mixed grains, *mixture*, but also sorghum and alfalfa (*medica*) – the last two mostly used as fodder. Since tenants are not mentioned here, it can be argued that those lands constituted a newly-created small demesne around the mill, whose plots were possibly leased out for short periods. By no means was this something like a structured *donicatum*, however; it must have been simply impossible to rent out permanently lands cultivated, for the most part, with crops used to feed animals. At any rate, the presence of a mill proves that some investments had been certainly made in Massa Macinaia at some point of the 12th century, and indeed they will continue in the last twenty years

[64] See for instance ibid., p. 21 (20 *s.* in the place of 10 *st.* of millet).
[65] See *infra*, note 67 for the list of the names' correspondences.

of the same century, as we shall see in a moment. But in general, the canons' *signoria* here did not bring about a higher level of extraction of the agricultural surplus.

Let us now take a step back, and look (again) at the overall picture emerging from this inventory. First of all, it is most striking that customary rents concerned exclusively the provision of cereals, whereas wine and oil never appear, albeit certainly being part of the agricultural landscape of the Sei Miglia. One may suppose that the canons were exclusively interested in surveying their renders in cereals, and this might show, in turn, their particular concern for the sale of grain, in much the same way as around Florence, where most interventions in estate management on the part of landowners were aimed at boosting the collection of wheat from tenures. Rents in wine and oil did exist, however, but appear to have been regulated through the issuing of *tenimentum* charters, as we shall see in a moment. Second, the complete absence of references to labour-services has to be noted, as well as the absence of reference to coherent bipartite estates (whose legacy, at least, survived in Massarosa). The traditional picture of the 'manorial system' as having completely vanished from the Lucchesia in the central centuries of the Middle Ages holds. Third, share tenancies are almost completely absent too, and the canons appear to have consistently resorted to the demand for fixed quantities of grain in order to frame the work of their dependent tenants; this conclusion can only be provisional here, however, for we lack substantial evidence for wine and oil.

We can thus conclude that the 1187 inventory lets us see an array of customary tenancy relations in which individual rents seem not to have been very high (even though, it is worth repeating, we do not know the size of tenures in the vast majority of cases), but in which it is possible to identify, at the same time, some apparently burdensome renders. As for Massa Macinaia, the canons' *signoria* was evidently unable to overcome the limits imposed by the fragmentation of landholding; except for the presence of mills, there does not seem to have been much difference between Massa Macinaia and the non-signorialised areas of the Sei Miglia. We have to wonder, however, whether the priests of S. Martino judged this situation as irreversible. Is it possible that the 1187 list was intended as a basis for the subsequent creation of a territorial power, at least where the canons already held some signorial rights?

This leads us back to the agreement between the priests of S. Martino and Gualando of Vorno, in which the latter was enjoined not to hinder the canons' lordship over Massa Macinaia. The pact was sealed in March 1188, so not long time after the general survey of the revenues of the cathedral chapter; it is worth analysing it in detail. On that date, the *consules treguani* of Lucca invested the representative of the cathedral chapter, Schetta, with the power to 'rule over [*distringere*] all the people [*homines*] of Massa Macinaia, males and females', and to wield a power that was defined as almost territorial ('quasi de placito et districtu'); Gualando, who did not show

up in court, was prevented from interfering with this.[66] We may think, therefore, that Massa Macinaia was on its way to become similar to Massarosa, or at least that these were the canons' intentions. But at a closer inspection, we notice that the Lucchese magistrates intended their concession to the priests of S. Martino as only temporary. Had Gualando come to court, this investiture would have reverted to him; and the use of *quasi* on the part of the notary is telling, for it must be considered as a mitigating expression, the acknowledgment that the power to *distringere* all the villagers was incomplete in reality; nobody could effectively exert territorial rights over Massa Macinaia. There is no evidence that Gualando claimed back his lordship at any point, but the canons' signorial jurisdiction appears indeed to have been limited to restricted groups of tenants. Some months after the 1188 agreement, in December, the priests of S. Martino managed to make fifteen people from Massa Macinaia take an oath on the Gospels, and swear they would abide by the canons' orders; they were, for the most part, the same tenants who were taken over from the Vorno family in 1184 and in March 1188.[67] This gives us an insight into the actual remit of the canons' *signoria* there, one that was limited to individual tenants.

There was only one way to possibly extend lordly powers over the inhabitants of Massa Macinaia: by purchasing land, so as to create the conditions to claim from new tenants the same type of signorial exactions demanded from the other dependants of the cathedral chapter. There is evidence of this. In 1191, the canons purchased from Spina of the late Bambacello, arguably a medium owner, thirteen pieces of land in exchange for £83; and five years later they bought from Arrigo of the late Onesto, another landowner of the Sei Miglia, thirty-eight tenant-plots in Massa Macinaia and its surroundings, along with the rents coming from them, paying the unprecedentedly high sum of £200.[68] These purchases certainly represented an attempt to make the scattered landowning of S. Martino in Massa Macinaia more coherent, in order to achieve that sort of control *quasi de placito et districtu* that Lucchese judges had granted to the canons in 1188, albeit temporarily. The takeover of renders that local tenants originally owed to other landowners of the Sei Miglia was matched by the stipulation of *tenimenta* and other lease charters, and was consistent with this policy.

It is at these documents that we need to look at now. For a start, we need to observe that, in comparison to the customary rents in grain recorded in the 1187 inventory, the charters of the 1190s which contain information on renders at Massa Macinaia show an agricultural landscape

[66] RCL III, 32-3, no. 1575 (1188 March 18).
[67] Ibid. III, 37, no. 1582 (1188 December 31). Here is the list of the names' correspondences between the three deeds dating, respectively, to 1184 (one) and 1188 (two). I cite them in abbreviated form (see *supra* for full references): RCL II-III, nos. 1521-78-82: Guidotto, Orsello, Guittone, Aldebrandino/Ildebrandino; 1521-78: Fridiano, Fieri, Geminiano; 1521-82: Viviano, December, Bellando, Ruspilio.
[68] Ibid. III, 79-84, no. 1627 (1191 February 8) and 209-13, no. 1755 (1195 December 31). On Spina as a medium owner cf. ibid. II, 137-8, no. 1228 (1165 January 20-30), 208-9, no. 1337 (1174 December 1); ibid. III, 357-8, no. 1549 (1186 December 10), 12-3, 1561 (1187 August 28); on Arrigo/Arrighetto cf. again no. 1627 (p. 80).

marked by polyculture, and the subsequent demand for mixed rents: the provision of fixed quantities of wine, oil, chestnuts and fruit, together with small sums of money, is largely prevalent. Rents do not appear to have been high, but it has to be noted that in two charters fixed-term agreements (one of which was stipulated by the abbot of S. Pietro di Pozzeveri) make their appearance; the attempt to tighten control over land, preventing tenants from becoming *de facto* proprietors, emerges here quite clearly (S. Ponziano will offer better evidence of this trend). Finally, there are also three cases in which share tenancies (*ad medium* and *ad tertium*) are mentioned, and in one document it is explicitly stated that the delivery of half of the harvest applied, like in Florence, to all the products of the land ('medietatem totius fructus').[69]

One may wonder, however, whether this attempt to render lordship territorial (to some degree, at least) was successful. Not only do the documents of the cathedral chapter itself show the enduring presence of independent owners in Massa Macinaia, who were not absorbed into the group of leaseholders and clients of S. Martino; but the canons of the cathedral church of Lucca were also involved in legal disputes concerning the restitution of lands and rents, which do show that it was close to impossible to tame a peasantry which, for the most part, had landed estates of its own. It is also interesting to note that one of those disputes regarded a *manens* of S. Martino, Bellando, whose rent in wine must was claimed (unsuccessfully) by the abbot of the monastery of S. Michele in Guamo (Capannori). The resilience of the long-standing patterns of fragmentation of landholding ultimately impeded any evolution towards the territoriality of signorial powers, even when the threat posed by the Vorno family had vanished, and even if the canons did endeavour to become the hegemonic landowners at Massa Macinaia.[70]

The documentation about legal conflicts at Massa Macinaia is interesting also in another respect; it shows that court-cases concerned this or that tenant, or else this or that tenure; like signorial rights, they appear to have been highly individualised. This is the point at which it might be useful to move back to Massarosa and to draw, thereby, a comparison with Massa Macinaia during the final decade of the 12th century. We saw earlier that peasant resistance towards the canons' tithes was here collective, as indeed was the obligation to pay them; and later documentation tells us that the recording of the duties weighing on the peasants of Massarosa in 1183 was not enough to end their opposition to the exactions imposed by the clergy of S. Martino.

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[69] Examples of share tenancies (*ad medium* and *ad tertium*) are ibid. III, 138, no. 1680 (1193 April 11) and can also be found in the sale ibid., no. 1755 (see note above). Other lease charters: ibid. III, no. 1556, no. 1700 (1193 November 4), 275, no. 1827 (1200 April 16) (this the lease issued by the monastery of S. Pietro di Pozzeveri). Will in favour of the priests of S. Martino: ibid. III, 1698, 153-4 (1193 November 4). Investiture, again in favour of the priests of S. Martino: ibid. III, 154-5, no. 1699 (1193 November 4).

[70] On the presence of independent owners cf. for instance ibid. III, 87-8, no. 1631 (1191 April 5), 89-90, no. 1633 (1191 June 5), 90-1, no. 1634 (1191 June 5), 257, no. 1810 (1199 March 6). On a general level, the presence of small- and medium-size proprietors in Massa Macinaia, and in the Sei Miglia as a whole, becomes apparent when one looks at the boundaries of land-plots leased out, donated or sold within charters; they mention a high number of independent owners. As to legal disputes: ibid. II, 316, no. 1488 (1182 December 30), III, 33-4, no. 1512 (1184 April 34), 67, no. 1614 (1190 August 22) (this is the dispute regarding Bellando).

In February 1191, the then-king of Germany Henry VI addressed a letter to the canons of Lucca, in which he stated that the *homines* of Massarosa had repeatedly sought Emperor Frederick I's help against the obligations they were burdened with, but he added that they had done this mendaciously. Therefore, Henry abrogated all the privileges that his predecessors had conceded to the people of Massarosa, and acknowledged the signorial rights of the canons over the castle and its surroundings.[71] Indeed, these privileges have not survived (if the priests of S. Martino were entrusted with their preservation, they might have been particularly eager to destroy them at some point), but the fact that they existed testifies unequivocally to the presence of conflicts between the population of Massarosa and its lords also after 1181-3 as well, and to the attempt, on the part of the canons' dependants, to address the imperial authority. What is more, such resistance must have been strong and effective, for, despite Henry's intervention, the canons apparently surrendered to their dependants' demands only a few months after the king's letter. In August 1191, the canons of S. Martino freed four people of Massarosa, who acted on the behalf of the whole community (three of them were the same persons entrusted with the recording of the Massarosesi's dues in 1183), from the collection of the tithes destined to the canons; the tithe was indeed abolished, except for the ancient one ('excepta antiqua'), arguably the one that the clergy of the cathedral used to demand before trying to increase it, in the context of the overall surge of rents in the late 12th century. That the priests might have attempted to do so appears to be proved by other sections of this document itself; they promised not to demand what they could have demanded from the people of Massarosa 'in view of the debasement of the Lucchese coin', and declared they would collect rents only 'on the basis of the ongoing currency'. Hence there is very good reason to think that they had imposed rent increases aimed at offsetting the effects of inflation on their overall income – in the way Esch described – but that they were faced with the opposition of the local population. One may conclude, at this point, that the abolition of tithes meant a full victory for the inhabitants of Massarosa, but the agreement informs us that they had to pay the canons the high sum of £200 and that, moreover, this money would be used to purchase lands in and around Massarosa, whose rents would compensate the loss of tithes.[72] It seems thus reasonable to argue that the canons were attempting to turn this loss into a new opportunity to raise their revenues; and this sort of compromise appears to have led, for some time at least, to a peace between the canons and their Versiliese dependants.[73]

[71] Ibid. III, 85-6, 1629 (1191 February 28); Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria'.
[72] Ibid. III, 98-100, no. 1642 (1191 August 23). See again Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria'.
[73] That the conflicts in which Massarosa was involved regarded the whole community of the castle and its representatives is further confirmed by a dispute dating to 1197, in which the representatives of Massarosa and two small Versiliese aristocratic families fought over rights on woodland. The text of the arbitration (both the original and a copy) has been preserved in ASFi, *Strozziane Uguccioni*, 1197 July 23; cf. Wickham, *Community*, p. 173.

To conclude, it can be argued that the attempts to extend the *signoria* at Massa Macinaia were not effective; like in the Sei Miglia as a whole, the fragmented patterns of customary landholding and lordship forced the canons to interact with local society on a case-by-case basis. This made the transformations of customary agreements a difficult process, and the *general* increase of rents identified by Esch should not hide the fact that *individual* tenancy agreements could not be transformed all at once. This certainly happened, however, as the next section will show, but in ways that we are not always able to see; possibly when the lease was stipulated, through the payment of an entry-fine, or when a contract was renewed, or else at the death of a tenant. It is at least possible to guess that the redaction of a list in 1187 fulfilled the same function as the inventories written down at Passignano and Settimo; the political and economic context of that period made it necessary to 'take a picture' of the rents in cereals owed to landowners, in order to enforce their payment and eventually modify their quantity. This certainly was the case with the 1183 inventory of Massarosa, with the difference that the collective obligations deriving from territorial lordship allowed the clergy of S. Martino to raise the rents paid by all the Massarosesi, as a collectivity. The main disadvantage for the canons was that, as a result, peasant resistance was collective too, and tenants and landowners had to reach a compromise in the end. We need now to see how all these elements played out in the early 13th century.

4.2.1.3 The early 13th century (1200-30)

An almost absolute silence falls over Massarosa in the early *Duecento*. No signs of conflicts emerge up to the end of the period considered here. The castle is mentioned only twice in the first quarter of the 13th century, on the occasion of the leasing out of a house with an oven to a local baker, named Bifolco, and of the subsequent dispute which arose between Bifolco and the canons when the former refused to pay rent after a fire had destroyed the house.[74] One may think that we simply lack the relevant sources about larger conflicts with the priests of S. Martino, but this seems unlikely; conflicts will indeed be documented again in the late 1220s, thanks also to the direct interventions of Emperor Frederick II in 1226 (and to the very different stance he took on the clashes between the clergy of S. Martino and the *populus* of Massarosa in comparison to his father, as we will see) and of Pope Honorius III in 1227; also, the rivalry with the Montemagno family revived over exactly the same period, for the first time since 1099. It can be concluded that the 1191 agreement does appear to have worked well for a long time – more than thirty years. In view of this, from now on I shall shift my focus to the other localities of the Versilia region where

[74] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1207 April 27 (N. 177) and 1211 January 9 (N. 179).

the canons owned substantial landed properties, for the early 13th century saw the slow construction of the *Iura*, the signorial territory centred on Massarosa, which would remain the jurisdictional territory of the canons up to the Italian Jacobin Triennium (1796-9); and I will then set out a comparison with the Sei Miglia and Massa Macinaia. In fact, the basic features of the interplay between the structures of land management, the characteristics of signorial power and overall economic change did not vary much with the passage to the new century, at least up to the late 1220s. All the same, the general socio-economic processes of the period deserve to be discussed in order to get a full picture of the relations between tenants and landowners over the first thirty years of the 13th century; this will get us very much into the arena of local politics, in that they appear to have been inextricably linked to the ways in which agricultural surplus could be extracted from rural communities.

Let us start with the Versilia region, and namely with Fibbialla, which we discussed as an example of rapid *incastellamento* taking place in the early 1120s. In the last quarter of the 12th century, the canons divided their judicial rights over the people of Fibbialla with the Vorno family, as results from the text of an arbitration held in 1175; in that year, the priests of S. Martino and the three sons of Tignoso of Vorno agreed not to purchase land in Fibbialla, unless they decided to split it into two; moreover, the collection of signorial dues had to be similarly shared. These dues consisted of the *datum/datium*, the exaction probably weighing on landed properties, which we already met when discussing Florence; the *bandum/bannum*, held by the canons in Massarosa too, as we saw in the previous section; and finally the *toltum*, probably a form of personal taxation.[75] The balance of local political power, as outlined by the text of the 1175 agreement, remained stable for almost thirty years. But it was going to change in the early 13th century.

In 1203, the priests of S. Martino endeavoured to render their Versiliese lordship more coherent by buying out the signorial rights owned on the hill and the castle of Fibbialla by one of the three sons of Tignoso whom we met in 1175, himself named Tignoso. The text of the purchase informs us that Tignoso 'junior' controlled watercourses and mills; he was also the recipient of rents in wine must (plus one rent in money), and had nine *decimales* paying tithes to him; in addition to this, the representatives of the local community of Fibbialla, the *comune*, were required to collect a small rent in cash, amounting to 17 *d.*, on the behalf of Tignoso. This gives us a further insight into the role played by the rural commune in Versilia; in a similar way to the group of people entrusted with the collection of tithes in Massarosa, the representatives of the local community in Fibbialla acted as intermediaries between lords and tenants.[76] What interests us more here, however, is that the canons paid £70 to purchase this array of rights and rents, the

[75] RCL III, 217-8, no. 1352 (1175 October 24); Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria'. pp. 221-2.
[76] This sort of relatively smooth relations between lords and rural communes is typical of most of Tuscany; besides the already-cited Wickham, *Community*, see also Id., 'Ecclesiastical', section iii).

highest sum for a single transaction in Versilia throughout the first three decades of the 13th century.[77] It can be argued that the priests of S. Martino were trying to achieve the same degree of control they had managed to obtain in Massarosa – that is, a territorial lordship centred on a castle and based on the extensive, albeit not exclusive, ownership of land. This engendered resistance, however, although on a smaller scale in comparison to Massarosa.

In July 1204, the consuls of Fibbialla and the canons appointed two arbiters in order to settle the disputes (the document does not tell us what they consisted in) between the priests of S. Martino and the community of the castle.[78] Some months later, in December, the dispute was indeed settled, and we come to know what was at stake. The canons had demanded feudal allegiance (*fidelitas*) from the whole community of Fibbialla, and the right to run justice ('causas seu placita') over the jurisdictional territory of the castle; they had also claimed that the inhabitants of Fibbialla should perform duties linked to the maintenance and defence of the castle, and that they should cease to league together and to conspire against the cathedral chapter of Lucca (the words employed in the document are *coniuratio* and *conspiratio*). The representatives of the community of Fibbialla, on the other hand, attempted to prove that the canons' claims were groundless, and asked for a compensation of £100 for the damages caused by the canons. After hearing both sides, the arbiters deliberated that the priests were entitled to wield signorial powers over Fibbialla and accepted all their requests, but postponed the decision about the compensation owed to the rural commune (and we do not know how this ended). It is interesting to note that this sentence was motivated by the acknowledgment of the ancient proprietorial rights exerted by the canons over the estate centre of the castle, 'maxime ex antiquo usu curtis eiusdem castri', here regarded as the basis for the subsequent holding of judicial prerogatives.[79]

Giovanni Dinelli argued that the reason for this dispute has to be looked for in the attempt, on the part of the rural commune, to obtain jurisdictional rights over the population of the castle, in addition to the collection of tributes as recorded in the sale charter of 1203; this would have led to a clash with the cathedral chapter of Lucca over those rights.[80] It is however likely that the *comune* had already been in place for some time by 1203, and that it had been carrying out exactions on the behalf of the lords of the castle; the 1203 sale describes, in all likelihood, an already-existing reality, possibly going back to the 1175 agreement. So why did the *comune* of Fibbialla protest against its lords only at the beginning of the 13th century, just when the lords of Vorno ceased to be the co-owners of signorial rights over the castle? To me, the reason appears to lie in the fact that, with the buying out of the rights and the lands owned by the Vorno family, the cathedral chapter was coming to be the sole *signore* of Fibbialla, and by far the major

[77] Ibid., 1203 February 24 (A.9); Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 247-8.
[78] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1204 July 29 (A. 1); cf. Dinelli, G., 'La origine', pp. 140-2.
[79] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1204 December 1 (A. 10).
[80] Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 249-52

landowner. In this sort of monopoly, making profit out of the rights connected to justice, and indeed intervening in land management through the increase of rents, would have been easier (which, of course, is not synonymous with uncontested; the example of Massarosa does show that opposition against lordly demands could take place even when the overarching authority of those lords was widely accepted). It can be concluded, however, that the priests of S. Martino were intelligent enough not to overexploit their newly-acquired signorial powers, for there is no document indicating new conflicts between the rural commune of Fibbialla and the canons during the whole 13th century. But at least, the *potential* for such an overexploitation now existed, and the people of Fibbialla appear to have been well aware of that, as the need for an arbitration shows.

Outside their *castra* of Massarosa and Fibbialla, and so outside their ostensibly largest landed estates and their most coherent lordships, the clerics of S. Martino could tighten their control over the peasantry only on an individual basis – not just in the Sei Miglia, as we already saw in the previous section, but also in the Versiliese localities which the canons did not manage to fortify. It is likely that they tried to impose high rents sometimes, as can be inferred by two charters informing us about *afficta retenta* at Licetro, dating to 1206 and 1207; later in time, the priests of S. Martino demanded oaths of fidelity and vows of obedience from single persons – to be taken, in one case, by touching the Gospels – in Montigiano (1214), Gualdo (1217) and Quiesa (1220).[81] Despite being only a few, these examples seem to show that the canons could only act at the level of single dependants outside the two castles of Massarosa and Fibbialla, since that was the real extent of their power there.

Not surprisingly, this same pattern applies to the Sei Miglia too, and to Massa Macinaia in particular. Indeed, discussing the plain of Lucca will shift the focus of our analysis from the territorial *signoria*, and its implications for the relations between tenants and landowners, to the case-by-case attempts put in place by the canons aimed at intervening in land management, through the single working agreements of some of their tenants. Rights of lordship will appear, in the context of the plain of Lucca, relatively unimportant.

For a start, it is useful to have a look at the only extensive inventory of customary rents and services I know of[82] dating to the first thirty years of the *Duecento*, in order to get an overall picture of landholding on the estates of the clergy of S. Martino over that period. Like the list

[81] On Licetro cf. ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1206 December 12 (R. 209), 1207 January 2 (R. 195). On Montigiano cf. ibid., 1214 June 5 (C. 31) and 1214 December 1 (C. 31). On Gualdo cf. ibid., 1217 November 12 (N. 137). On Quiesa cf. ibid., 1220 February (L. 128). An oath on the Gospels is recorded also in Fibbialla (ibid., 1216 March 10, A. 22), but this is by no means an act of allegiance; it concerns the payment of a debt, and the subsequent *tenimentum* of land.

[82] It is worth pointing out that a complete survey of all the *codices* preserved in the 'Archivio capitolare' and the 'Biblioteca capitolare' of the diocesan archives of Lucca would probably bring to light other inventories of rents and services that have been used as flyleaves. Such a survey is a huge task, and is outside the scope of this thesis. I would like to signal, however, that fragments of another inventory can be found in ASDLu, *Biblioteca Capitolare*, no. 25 (1228); but they would need a specific research project to be fully exploited. I owe these findings to the archivists Valentina Cappellini, Tommaso Maria Rossi and Elisabetta Unfer Verre, whom I warmly thank for their help.

dating to 1187, its parchments have been used to bind a book, and we do not know what its original size was. It has no date, too, but it is possible to make at least a plausible guess about the year of its redaction. We owe this to a single tenant listed within the inventory; his name was Accorso di Simone Bambella/Barbabella, who was the addressee of a *tenimentum* charter (as an aside, he was from Massarosa, and indeed was the first Massarosese to get a *tenimentum* for the cultivation of land; but I shall come back to this later on). The *tenimentum* was stipulated in December 1225; the rent recorded within it consisted in 5 *st.* of grain to be delivered to the canons of S. Martino in the following year (1226), and in 5 *st.* of grain and 2 *s.* to be given thereafter (from 1227 onwards). The rent recorded in the inventory, instead, informs us that Accorso had to provide 5 *st.* of grain for six years, and then ('postea') 5 *st.* of grain and 2 *s.* As a result, it can be proposed that the *tenimentum* enforced an agreement that had been kept customary up to that point, and that the moment in which such an enforcement was more likely to be felt as necessary was one year before the rent increase, scheduled for 1227, came into being. I would thus place the redaction of the inventory in 1220-1. To sum up (and to repeat, for the sake of clarity), Accorso delivered 5 *st.* of grain for six years (1221-6, including of course 1221) before switching to 5 *st.* and 2 *s.* from 1227; and the *tenimentum* charter was stipulated at the end of 1225, about one year before the scheduled rent increase.[83]

Let us now have a look at the content of the list. It enumerates, for the most part, the dues owed to the canons by their tenants in the Sei Miglia (Massarosa was indeed an exception, and Accorso was the only tenant recorded in the section concerning the canons' castle in Versilia), and offers us an image that is fairly similar to that of the late 12th century. All leaseholders owed to the cathedral chapter of S. Martino a fixed quantity of wheat, millet and broad beans; there is just one case of a tenant, living close to the churches of S. Pietro and S. Cassiano a Vico (north of Lucca), who was required to deliver half of the products (*ad medium*) from his holding.[84] What is more interesting is that, even though the type of tenancy relations envisaged by this inventory resembles closely that of 1187, rents were seemingly higher; out of a total of 104 surviving entries, about 1/5 of tenants delivered more than 10 *st.* of wheat with the *rectum starium Lucense* (the unit of measurement can be inferred by the fact that the use of the *staium antiquum* had to be specified, probably because it represented an anomaly).[85] One of them was required to give 32 ½ *st.* alone, and if we take into account also millet and broad beans, we find out that some others owed large quantities of cereals and legumes altogether, amounting to 41 *st.* or 54 *st.* per person.[86] A comparison with the late 12th-century list cannot be but impressionistic, not least because the size

[83] ASDLu, *Biblioteca Capitolare*, no. 24 (on Accorso di Simone Bambella cf. fols 2v and 4r); his *tenimentum* is ibid., *Capitolare*, 1225 December 23 (N. 123).
[84] Cf. ASDLu, *Biblioteca Capitolare*, no. 24, fol. 2r, (this is the second rent paid by 'Guido de le Mura', cf. note 86).
[85] Cf. ibid., fol. 2r, rent paid by 'Deotisalvi'.
[86] Cf. ibid., fols 3r ('Aldibrandinus quondam Scotti'), 2r ('Bonacursus Agnelli' and 'Guido de le Mura').

of holdings is not specified here either; however, it seems that high renders were increasingly less episodic in the early 13th century, and that the extraction of agricultural surplus had thus become more intense from the late 1180s. At the same time, it is also worth stressing (and I shall come back to this) that the canons continued to prefer fixed rents in kind to share tenancies; and that *corvée*-work was again completely absent.

Let us now turn our attention to lease charters. The trend emerging from the inventory of customary renders appears to be confirmed by the average quantity of produce encapsulated in the rents in kind demanded by landowners. And when the documents tell us not just what the rent consisted in, but also the size of the land leased out (which does happen in lease charters, albeit rarely), we get the impression that tenants were left with a very small portion of the harvest. Just to make a couple of examples, in 1212 the monastic community of Pozzeveri was collecting 32 *st.* of wheat and millet from a holding in Lunata (now a *frazione* of Capannori) measuring only two *cultrae* (= 8 *st.*), and in 1213 the clergy of S. Martino was demanding three *modii* of grain and millet (= 72 *st.*) from three *cultrae* (= 12 *st.*) of arable land in Silice (just outside the medieval walls of the city);[87] to repeat, the demand for cereals was indeed burdensome, in a way which recalls the high rents in kind described by Berengo as typical of the Sei Miglia in the 16th-century (cf. the introduction). Land productivity had to be exceptionally good, for landowners were demanding, respectively, four and six times the quantity of seed-corn that could be sown. Arguably, tenants did not keep much produce for themselves, and it is likely that in bad years they had to borrow grain in order to pay rent.

Some other documents redacted in the same years contribute to further flesh out this concern over agricultural profit on the part of Lucchese priests. In 1212, the canon Tolomeo paid, respectively, £10 for a rent increase of 4 *st.* of wheat and millet (so that the total rent went from 2 *st.*, plus the purely recognitive delivery of one chicken, to 6 *st.* of cereals alone) and £8 for another increase of 2.5 *st.* of wheat and 1.5 *st.* of millet (from 5 *st.* to 9 *st.* in total). Less than one year later, in April 1213, the same Tolomeo imposed a very small increase (amounting to 0.25 *st.* of millet) on a render collected from Marlia, in return for which the two leaseholders, Vitale and Ventura, were freed from their pending rent, the *affictum retentum* – whose equivalent in cash was estimated as 4 *s.*[88] Unfortunately, I could not find data about the prices of cereals for the years 1212-3, but one can reasonably suppose that Tolomeo was paying sums of money that were higher than the then-current market value of the two increases of renders he managed to obtain; arguably, Tolomeo had to compensate tenants for an increase that was set to be perpetual with an adequate one-off payment.

[87] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1212 January 30 (E. 131) and 1213 August 17 (F. 160).
[88] Ibid., 1212 July 30 and 1213 April 16 (I. 6).

Rent increases could result also from the use of larger *staia*. The document from Pozzeveri cited above informs us that tenants were safeguarded from the possibility that the render they had to give to the monks could be calculated with a bigger unit of measurement, should this unit be adopted at some point by the commune of Lucca.[89] The importance of Lucca as the main market for the agricultural produce of the Sei Miglia must have pushed landowners towards the progressive abolition of ancient and local *staia*, since the use of the Lucchese units of measurements – the 'common currency' of the region – made the sale of grain easier, and defused the potential controversies arising from the coexistence of many capacity measures within the same area. In 1218, indeed, the legal representative of the canons of S. Martino, Morroello, demanded from a tenant of Silice various rents he owed to the local monastery of S. Bartolomeo (which was under the jurisdiction of S. Martino from the 9th century)[90] and wanted to have them delivered 'ad presens starium Lucense'. In order to make the contending parties reach an agreement, the *consules treguani* of Lucca had to compare the ancient *staium* of Silice with the one employed in Lucca (and they did this 'with great care, and establishing the ratio precisely'); once this had been done, the dispute was finally settled.[91] After all, in this respect, the interests of the city governing bodies and those of landowners coincided. In August 1219, Armanno di Portante, notary and chancellor of the Lucchese *podestà* Rodolfo, was entrusted with the recording of the 'ancient and various' units of measurement still used inside the jurisdictional territory of the city, in order to 'translate' them into the 'rectum Lucensem starium' employed for wine, cereals and oil;[92] the integration between the city market and its *contado* was made thereby ever tighter.

This array of examples shows that individual relations of landholding constituted the only space within which proprietors could endeavour to increase their revenues in the Sei Miglia. No collective obligations, such as those performed by the rural communities of the Versilia region, can be found here. This is the point from which we can restrict our geographical scope, and focus on Massa Macinaia alone. For a start, we notice that it was by no means an exception in itself; indeed, it even appears as though the canons of S. Martino experienced more problems in controlling their tenants there than elsewhere. There is reason to think that their most stable and substantial landholding was confined to the *manentes* of S. Petronilla – who, significantly, are never mentioned in the charters of the cathedral chapter during the first thirty years of the 13th century, probably because the canons' rights of ownership were uncontested there. Apart from this, the documentation of the period tells us about endless disputes between the legal representative of the chapter, the already-cited Morroello, and two local landowners, Ranieri di Primicerio and Gonnella, over rights of property and the exaction of rents at Massa Macinaia, which lasted for

[89] Cf. the first of the two documents cited at note 86.
[90] Cf. on this Pescaglini Monti, 'Le dipendenze', p. 41.
[91] ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1218 September 12 (F. 156) and 1218 September 13 (F. 156/1).
[92] Ibid., 1219 August 8 (O. 28).

more than a decade (1207-18).[93] Furthermore, failure in the provision of rents occurred there too, as in most of the Sei Miglia; more in detail, we come to know that the canon Tolomeo, whom we met before while discussing rent increases, was involved in 1212 in an arbitration with a local tenant, Giafferro of Verciano, accused of having fled his *maseum* in Massa Macinaia, thus ceasing to deliver what he owed to the priests of S. Martino. Eventually, Giafferro was condemned to come back and pay rent, but it has to be noted that Tolomeo was demanded to give him, in two tranches, a sum total of £4, so that Giaffero could 'have and collect all the products of the *maseum*' and then pay rent.[94] The provision of capital is important, in that it testifies to the canons' interest in the quality and the quantity of the final agricultural output; moreover, it has to be emphasised that the *affictum retentum* suggests that some rents had been increased at Massa Macinaia, thus making their payment more difficult.

This leads us to the analysis of tenancy agreements at Massa Macinaia in the early *Duecento*. Customary rents in wheat, millet and broad beans were recorded in the 1220-1 inventory that we discussed at the beginning of this section; unfortunately, the margin of the parchment containing the *staia* of cereals and legumes demanded from tenants has been cut out, and we cannot get a sense of their average quantities.[95] Only written lease agreements can help us to fill in the gap. Concerning them, it needs stressing, for a start, that some rents in money were collected in peripheral areas by both the canons of S. Martino and lay owners, namely in the portions of woodland surrounding the village and the neighbouring arable lands; cash also featured as part of mixed renders – that is, money and kind together – which were indeed the prevailing form of tenure at Massa Macinaia. The main difference between cash and kind regarded quantity; money always embodied quite a limited purchasing power – from a minimum of 12 *d.* to a maximum of 15 *s.* – and it appears, thus, to have constituted little more than a purely recognitive render, coming from woodlands presumably used for pasture and so unsuitable for farming. As to rents in kind, these consisted in wheat, millet, wine must and oil for the most part; in one case we also find chestnuts, in another one grapes. They were always collected in fixed quantities, and they were almost always demanded as part of perpetual leases, except for two contracts (lasting, respectively, twenty-eight and twenty years).[96] Furthermore, it appears as if rents in wheat and millet had become quite high, even in comparison with the 1180s; except for two documents, they were all

[93] Ibid., 1207 August 21 (S. 91), 1209 May 2 (S. 12), 1209 August 19 (O. 82), 1213 May 20 (O. 82), 1214 September 23 (O. 18), 1218 August 6 (O. 3).
[94] Ibid., 1213 September 10 (O. 94).
[95] ASDLu, *Biblioteca Capitolare*, no. 24, fol. 3v.
[96] Cash rents in Massa Macinaia: ibid., 1213 March 27 (O. 36), 1214 February 27 (O. 109), 1217 July 30 (O. 98), 1219 July 7 (S. 102). Mixed renders: 1212 August 14 (O. 15), 1214 June 23 (S. 97), 1215 May 16 (S. 98) (preceded by an oath of *fidelitas*; cf. ibid., 1215 April 21, S. 98), 1229 April 8 (S. 110), 1233 April 23 (O. 62), 1233 May 10 (two charters, G. 6 and O. 12; the second one mentions also sub-tenancies). Rents in wine must: 1213 September 28 (O. 100). Other rents: 1213 March 27 (two charters, O. 41 and S. 13) (it needs stressing that, in this document, the tenant could choose to deliver 1 *st.* of chestnuts or, alternatively, 1 *st.* of millet).

more than 10 *st*. I conclude that, because of the impossibility of turn Massa Macinaia into a territorial lordship, intervening at the level of individual tenures continued to be the only way in which the canons could increase their income, and this they did. The pattern of landholding resulting from the extremely long-standing fragmentation of agricultural units had not changed significantly in the first thirty years of the 13th century; what slowly changed was the intensity in the extraction of the agricultural surplus.

There are two further issues that need to be sketched out before we move on to the other case-studies of the Lucchesia, for the two of them represent the end-points of this section. The first regards Massarosa. It is only after the interventions of Frederick II and Honorius III that we begin to see written lease agreements there. As we have seen at the beginning of this section, Frederick's diploma of 1226 appears to have reversed the opposition towards the inhabitants of Massarosa, as resulting from Henry VI's letter sent in 1191. Indeed, Frederick renewed the 'good customs' and the 'liberties' that his father had abolished, and granted to the Massarosesi the right to elect their consuls. He also acknowledged, it is true, the canons' rights over the castle and its district; but he also prevented the priests of S. Martino (as well as any lay people) from burdening their subjects with heavy demands ('gravare' is the verb used in the diploma) and from bringing any type of damages to them ('molestare', 'perturbare').[97]

One year later, in March, Pope Honorius III sent a letter to the Lucchese church of S. Michele, in order to ask its priests to settle the disputes between the commune of Massarosa and the canons of S. Martino; such controversies were motivated by the impositions of undue exactions on the part of the canons. In July 1227 the arbitration took place – Honorius had died in the meantime, but his successor Gregory IX committed to continuing the work of Honorius, and to bringing the dispute to an end. Unfortunately, we only have the requests made by the representatives of Massarosa to the clergy of S. Martino, but these are sufficient to get a sense of what was at stake. Among other things, the Massarosesi claimed their rights to jurisdictional autonomy (with regard to the election of consuls and castellans, as well as to the exercise of justice) and to the use of common lands, namely woodland; they also demanded that the priests of S. Martino ceased to impose undue rents and taxes, among which we find mention, for the first time, of a toll (*pedagium*); and finally they asked for a compensation for damages.[98]

It is possible that imperial and papal support, and the augmented bargaining power of the rural commune resulting therefrom, forced the canons to begin to write down – but very slowly, as we shall see – some of the tenancy agreements that had been kept customary up to that point, and to demand oaths of fidelity from their dependants in Massarosa. To this, the renewed clashes between the lords of Montemagno and the priests of S. Martino, concerning rights of lordship

[97] For the diploma's edition cf. above, note 26.
[98] Cf. on all this ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1227 March 21 (N. 190); Dinelli, G., 'Una signoria', pp. 236-41.

over Montigiano and Licetro, must have further contributed; they lasted for more than a decade (1225-36) and – even though Massarosa was not directly involved – are likely to have destabilised the canons' signorial authority in Versilia.[99] Hence the need to reframe some of the customary relations with the local peasantry, and the subsequent redaction of lease charters; I would place in this context the *tenimentum*, envisaging a small rent increase, in favour of Accorso di Simone Bambella, which we have examined above; probably, the canons needed to make sure that Accorso complied with the priests' (heightened) demands in a moment in which their authority was questioned. It has to be stressed that such a reframing does not seem to have occurred very often, for *tenimenta* are only a few over the period considered here; all the same, they had never been stipulated before in Massarosa – they were a *new* thing there, and so it is worth getting them straight. For a start, it is interesting to observe that, paradoxically, rent was not the core of interest of some lease charters; in three documents out of five (redacted in the years 1228-37) tenants were demanded to deliver their 'usual renders', *consueta reddita*, without further specifications. On the one hand, this is evidence of the stability of the canons' rights of ownership in and around the castle of Massarosa, since rents and services were arguably passed on from one generation to the next and neither the notaries, nor the contracting parties, felt the need to clarify what they precisely were; on the other, one can deduce that individual rents may not have been so important economically. Indeed, when the rent is specified, we notice that it was extremely low (respectively, 6 *d.* and 1 ½ *st.* of barley in two documents out of five), and it appears to have been high only on the occasion of the leasing out of an oven (£7 per year) located inside the castle, possibly the one already rented out in 1207 and 1211, which we discussed at the beginning of this section. What seems to have mattered most for the canons, whenever they leased out land, was the oath of allegiance and the exaction of entry-fines demanded in return for the issuing of the contract – which, contrary to rents, were high, amounting respectively to £4 and £14 in the two agreements where they are mentioned. This was a substantial revenue; but in general, the low number of lease agreements does show that these remained relatively unimportant in comparison to the rents and dues attached to territorial lordship. The formalisation of the canons' *Iura* over Massarosa and the neighbouring localities in the second half of the 13th century will testify, once again, to the enduring economic prevalence of collective obligations over single tenurial relations.[100]

The second aspect that needs further discussion concerns share tenancies. As we have seen, some mentions of *ad medium* agreements can be found in the two inventories (1187 and

[99] Cf. Tomei, 'Alle radici', pp. 324-5.

[100] Cf. ASDLu, *Capitolare*, 1228 December 31 (N. 117), 1229 February 20 (N. 185), 1230 May 30 (N. 158), 1234 October 3 (N. 118) and 1237 January 6 (N. 134); see also ibid., 1237 July 29 (N. 144) (this is the rent of the oven). Another lease charter conceded in return for 'consueta reddita et servitia' concerns Licetro (ibid., 1232 March 7, C. 17). It is legitimate to speak of the *Iura* over Massarosa when the first notarial protocols concerning its administration appear in 1271; cf. for a list Meyer, *Felix*, p. 201.

1220-1) we have examined, but by no means do we get the impression that share tenures were widespread, let alone that *mezzadria* elements were starting to be included within them. There is however one exception to this, and it is worth fleshing it out because it sets the ground for some of the themes I will touch upon in the next case-studies. One of the lease charters issued by the canon Tolomeo in 1213 (cf. *supra*) included a section concerning three *cultrae* of land, which was additional to the three other *cultrae* that Tolomeo had leased out in return for heavy fixed renders in wheat and millet. The leaseholder, Bonamico, was required to manure ('sucerare') half of those three *cultrae* and to plant vines there ('pergolare') for three years; he was supposed to hold *ad medium*. Three observations must be made here. For a start, even though this part of the contract does not include clauses related to cost-sharing, it is worth noting, all the same, that it is evidence of the need to specify who was in charge of the provision of resources (manure in this instance), and what improvements had to be made (namely, the plantation of new vines), in a way that resembles the early Florentine share tenancies including *mezzadria* elements; second, the *ad medium* agreement regards vineyards, as opposed to the fixed rents in cereals coming from the first three *cultrae* recorded in the contract; third, this agrarian regime was short-term, since it was set to last only three years. Share tenure thus emerges as a temporary agreement, concerning vineyards and aimed at improving the productivity of the holding; some of these characteristics will surface, in greater detail, from the archive of S. Ponziano and from the notarial protocols of Ser Ciabatto.

4.2.2 The monastery of S. Ponziano (10th century - 1230s)

The archive of the city monastery of S. Ponziano is the richest among those housed by the State archives of Lucca. The abbey, which had been founded as a nunnery in the southern part of the city by the deacon Iacopo of the late Teutperto (brother of the bishop of Lucca Giovanni, 791-800, and himself a future bishop) at the end of the 8th century, was converted into a male monastery, and reconstructed in the western suburbs of the city, in the late 10th century – when Marquis Ugo of *Tuscia* and his mother Willa endowed it with new landed estates belonging to the fiscal domain. Subsequently, from 1158 to 1378, S. Ponziano became a dependency of the Cluniac abbey of S. Benedetto di Polirone, located near Mantua, thus coming to constitute one of the few examples of Cluniac monasticism in Tuscany; indeed, the others were equally concentrated within the diocese of Lucca, which seems to have favoured the gathering of Cluniac communities from the mid-11th century thanks to Bishop Anselmo II (1073-86), one of the leaders of the ecclesiastical reform movement.[101]

[101] The most recent account is Collavini and Tomei, 'Beni fiscali'; on Cluniac monks at S. Ponziano cf. Pescaglini Monti, 'Le dipendenze'.

In 1513, S. Ponziano took over the monastery of S. Salvatore di Sesto (see the previous section) and preserved the documents of the latter up to 1801, when S. Ponziano was suppressed and its entire archival patrimony moved to the State archives of Lucca. Overall, however, the number of charters from Sesto – which can be found not only among the documents of S. Ponziano, but also within other archival groups of the Lucchese State archives, where they ended up by pure chance – for the period analysed in this thesis is quite restricted, which is all the more disappointing when we consider that Sesto was the greatest ecclesiastical landowner of the whole Lucchesia during the early Middle Ages, and probably one of the richest in the whole of northern and central Italy. For these reasons, I will not examine its documentation here; quite simply, it does not allow us to discuss land management and its change between the 11th and the 13th centuries. We can refer, however, to the very detailed analysis of Alberto Maria Onori on Sesto centred on the period 1250-1300, when Lucchese notarial registers do permit us to look at the relations between tenants and the monastery – indeed, I will take into consideration Onori's findings in my general conclusions.[102]

The documents of S. Ponziano are fairly consistent with the overall picture surfacing from the charters of the cathedral chapter of S. Martino, at least as concerns the Sei Miglia, where the abbey owned all its landed estates. One of the main differences in comparison to S. Martino regards signorial powers, which, except for some – indeed rather rare – records of *manentes* belonging to the monastic community of S. Ponziano, were almost completely absent, and do not appear to have played any crucial role in shaping tenurial relations. As a result, my analysis will be mostly centred here on the extraction of agricultural surplus alone, devoid as it was of any signorial framing. But this type of analysis has its problems as well; here too, it is almost impossible to study estate management until the 12th century, when the increased number of leases and the presence, among them, of *tenimenta* addressed to cultivators allow us to get some information on the relations between tenants and landowners. Up to that point, instead, the beneficiaries of *libelli* were, as elsewhere, almost exclusively the members of a second-or-third-level urban *élite*, mainly judicial experts and clients of the Lucchese bishops, who did not cultivate any lands themselves. Not surprisingly, rents in money largely prevailed throughout the first half of the 11th century[103] and a move towards rents in kind – however partial at that stage – began only during the 1060s and the 1070s; the demand for agricultural produce became more and more frequent all

[102] Onori, *L'abbazia*.

[103] See ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1022 November 12, 1026 September 7, 1030 January 23, 1031 March 6, 1045 August 26, 1048 May 26, 1048 November 10, 1050 September 19 (cf. the *regesti* of the documents in Italian in Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 39, no. 54, 48-9, no. 68, 52, no. 72, 53, no. 74, 86, no. 121, 95, no. 133, 96, no. 135, 99, no. 139); there is also one case in which the abbot of S. Ponziano is the beneficiary of the *libellus*, granted in exchange for an annual rent of 2 *d.* (ibid., 1040 November 10; Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 70, no. 97). See also the *libellus* stipulated by lay people (in return for a rent of 24 *d.*) ibid., 1040 December 27 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 70-1, no. 98). Exceptions to rents in money: ibid., 1022 May 12 and 1022 October 3 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 37, no. 51, 38, no. 53). Cf. in general Stoffella, 'Il monastero' and Id., 'Riforma'.

throughout the 12th century, whereas renders in money were confined, by then, to leases of urban properties or portions of forests.[104] This shift towards kind shows, in a way that closely recalls S. Martino, that the monks of S. Ponziano wished to take control of the production process on their leaseholds by stipulating contracts directly with peasants – thus dismissing the medium-*élite* intermediaries who used to be the typical beneficiaries of *libelli* in the early 11th century – and thereby to exploit directly a growing city market through the supply for agricultural products.

A second, major change in tenancy relations is recognisable from the 1190s onwards. This consisted in the issuing of a high number of fixed-term leases, which points to the attempt, on the part of the monastic community of S. Ponziano, to strengthen their control over land. It needs stressing that fixed-term leases are completely absent from our documentary record up to the second half of the 12th century; a contract with an expiry date (it was set to last twenty-four years) was issued for the first time in 1168, but it seems to have been an isolated exception in a panorama of perpetual grants.[105] The situation changed radically from the year 1186, since fixed-term leases came to constitute 57.8% of all the tenancy agreements stipulated over the period 1186-1200, 26% during the years 1201-10, 50% between 1211 and 1220 and reached the peak of 75% in the decade 1221-30. The average duration was twenty years, from a minimum of two to a maximum of thirty – plus three contracts addressed 'only to the first heirs', *heredes primi tantum*, i.e. for two lives.[106]

I would not attach too much importance to fluctuations in percentages from one decade to another, for they may well have depended on the chances of the preservation of charters in the archive of S. Ponziano, and cannot be ascribed, for instance, to the personal initiative of this or that abbot. What is significant, here, is the general trend, with fixed-term contracts becoming an important part (and even the prevailing part) of written agreements between tenants and landowners over the fifty years going from 1180 to 1230. This trend can be partly explained by

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[104] *Libelli* given in exchange for a rent in kind: ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1062 August 31, 1066 December 6, 1067 January 18, 1068 December 24, 1071 September 17, 1071 October 18, 1072 September 16, 1075 March 22 (two documents), 1076 September 8, 1076 November 11 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 121, no. 184, 129, no. 202, 130, no. 203, 133, no. 210, 138, no. 224, 139, no. 227, 142, no. 235, 149, no. 248, 150, no. 249, 154, nos. 260 and 261). Examples of 12th-century leases (not just *libelli* at this stage, but also *tenimenta* and *investitiones*) granted in return for an annual rent in kind: ibid., 1154 February 4 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* II, 230, no. 672), 1164 May 8, 1186 September 4, 1194 July 10. Rents in money: ibid., 1179 October 18 (*libellus* concerning a portion of a forest) and 1189 May 19 (lease concerning a *casa solariata* near the church of S. Genesio in Lucca).

[105] Ibid., 1168 December 1.

[106] Ibid., 1186 September 4, 1189 October 1, 1191 November 9, 1192 March 25, 1193 May 2, 1193 September 5, 1194 July 10, 1194 September 29, 1194 November 5 (1), 1194 November 12, 1201 June 9, 1203 October 26, 1205 January 1, 1206 October 22, 1208 December 14, 1210 December 3, 1210 December 4, 1210 December 14, 1211 March 19, 1211 August 28, 1211 November 22, 1212 October 22, 1213 February 12, 1213 February 12 (1), 1213 July 21, 1214 May 25, 1216 April 13 ('suos heredes primos tantum'), 1216 May 9 ('suos heredes primos tantum', two documents), 1218 February 28, 1222 January 26, 1223 August 11, 1224 November 11, 1225 April 13, 1225 September 14, 1225 September 17, 1226 February 1, 1226 October 28. I included leasing-back contracts, as well as leases involving only lay people and leases stipulated by members of churches dependent from S. Ponziano; I excluded, instead, the rents we know of because they were mentioned within sale charters or exchanges – since, in this case, S. Ponziano was not issuing new leases, but only writing down the renders which came along with the land.

the overall instability of prices, which made it convenient, for landowners, to get back their holdings at a certain point, so that they could lease them out again in return for higher rents – or else sell them in exchange for higher prices. It is consistent with this hypothesis that some fixed-term agreements were explicitly linked to the need to improve landed estates – by building a new house or planting trees, for instance, in a way that recalls the 1213 contract issued by the canon Tolomeo, which we discussed in the previous section. It remains to be explained, however, why the monks of S. Ponziano stipulated many more temporary leases in comparison to the canons of S. Martino, who seem to have done this only occasionally. One may guess that one reason can be found in the debts with which the monastery appears to have been burdened in the early *Duecento* (there is indeed no evidence of indebtedness in the documents of S. Martino), which might have made more urgent the need to strengthen control over leaseholds, and subsequently over the marketable grain coming from them. However, the documents mentioning debts are not many,[107] and it can be argued that they could be paid off quite easily, by ceding landed properties or by buying grain that could be sold at a higher price at a later stage. More probably, the monastic community of S. Ponziano had to be consistent in the issuing of temporary leases because it could not count on substantial signorial powers, as those exerted by the canons in Massarosa, as a way to increase rents.

This brings us to the discussion of the type of rents envisaged by lease contracts in the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. S. Ponziano fits, on a general level, the pattern of the whole Sei Miglia, characterised by the prevalence of fixed rents in wheat, millet and broad beans (sometimes together with a small quantity of money); wine, oil, chestnuts, as well as figs and spelt, are sometimes documented.[108] It needs stressing, however, that I could find only a couple of rent increases over the first thirty years of the 13th century, and this is matched by the almost complete absence of *afficta retenta* during the same period (only two).[109] One can assume that the monks did not have enough economic and bargaining power to impose such increases on a large scale – less even than the cathedral canons in Massa Macinaia. This, in turn, may explain the relatively small amount of resistance on the part of peasants. But *some* rents, at least, were certainly high. As for S. Martino, when we are able to calculate the ratio between the size of a holding and the rent extracted from it, we get the impression that some contracts did not allow tenants to keep much produce for themselves. For example we know that, in 1213, Abbot Ugo of S. Ponziano was expecting to get 128 *st.* of wheat and millet from a little less than 24 *st.* of land;

[107] References to debts: ibid., 1203 December 4, 1218 January 26, 1224 December 30.
[108] For example, cf. for wine ibid., 1203 April 8; for figs and spelt ibid., 1203 September 2; for oil and chestnuts ibid., 1208 December 14.
[109] Rent increases: 1211 March 13 (39 *st.* of wheat, millet and broad beans; the charter tells us that a previous charter, envisaging a rent of only 27 *st.*, had been abolished) and 1224 November 11 (from 8 *st.* of wheat and 16 *st.* of millet to 14 *st.* of wheat and 14 *st.* of millet; cf. also the following note). On *afficta retenta* at S. Ponziano cf. note 20.

in another charter, he demanded 16 *st.* of wheat, millet and broad beans every 4 *st.* of land.[110] An exception to these examples comes from the southern section of the Sei Miglia, close to the former castle of Vorno, where one contract tells us that the number of *staia* demanded from tenants was less than the number of *staia* that could be sown.[111] The geographical location of this fairly 'unprofitable' agreement was no chance, for the region of Vorno and Vaccoli was the one where, as Esch demonstrated, land prices grew the least during the final quarter of the 12th century. Demand was scarce, possibly because the soil was not very productive there, as this contract appears to suggest; but there might have been further reasons for this, as we are about to see.[112]

This is the background against which we need to set the analysis of the main alternative to fixed rents, that is, share tenancies. Let us start by clarifying that, unlike fixed-term leases, there is not a specific chronological phase in which their number increased significantly. On the contrary, the issuing of sharecropping contracts seems to have always been occasional, and was probably due to the need to secure a rent to landlords who were not in a situation in which they could calculate the agricultural output of their holdings. It has to be recognised, moreover, that the most original clause of proper *mezzadria* contracts – that is, the division of seed-corn and, in general, cost-sharing between tenants and landowners – never features in the documents of S. Ponziano. It is thus worth examining some of those agreements in detail, so that we can begin to set out the first elements for a comparison with the Florentine countryside. The pages that follow, together with the next section on Ser Ciabatto, are indeed intended to mirror those on share-tenancy agreements among the charters of S. Michele di Passignano.

The first surviving evidence for share tenure dates to 1092, when Abbot Leo of S. Ponziano granted a piece of land in *Fondalliore* (Vaccoli, south of Lucca) to Bellone di Rustico in return for an annual fixed rent of 32 *st.* of wine must. However, if the armies of the King or the Marquis devastated the land, or if a storm ruined the crops, Bellone should deliver just half of what was left.[113] The same logic underpinned another lease stipulated in 1102 and concerning, this time, a vegetable garden, an arable field and a vineyard in Vicopelago, in the southern suburbs of Lucca; this was a fixed-rent agreement, 'except for the year in which [the land] will be damaged

[110] I converted the units of measurement recorded in the documents into *staia*. Cf. ibid., 1213 February 12 (1) (size of the holding: six *cultrae* minus one *quarra*. Rent: five *modii* and 8 *st.* of wheat and millet) and 1213 February 12 (2) (size of the holding: three *cultrae*. Rent: 16 *st.* for each *cultra*). Two further examples of a rent that appears to have been high when compared to the size of the holding are ibid., 1224 November 11 (size of the holding: 22 *st.* Rent: 14 *st.* of wheat, 14 *st.* of millet, plus £10 of oil) and ibid., 1226 December 4 (size of the holding: one *quarra*. Rent: 2 *st.* of grain). Another seemingly high rent (but here we do not know the size of the holding) is ibid., 1223 August 11 (28 *st.* of grain, 36 *st.* of broad beans and 37 *st.* of millet).

[111] Ibid., 1225 September 14 (size of the holding: 25 *st.* Rent: 14 *st.* of wheat, 3 *st.* of millet and 3 *st.* of broad beans).

[112] Esch, 'Lucca', p. 17.

[113] ASDLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1092 January 18 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* I, 21, no. 61). On the location of *Fondalliore* cf. ibid., *S. Giovanni*, 1124 March 30 (Degli Azzi Vitelleschi, *Pergamene* II, 108, no. 327).

by an army or by a storm, since in that year [you will deliver] half of what will be left according to the customs of that place'.[114]

These 'devastation clauses' became quite common throughout the 12th century, and are evidence, as Chris Wickham argued, of both legal precision and a desire to calculate carefully agricultural profit.[115] They seem to have been associated with exceptional (and unfortunate) events, and to have worked as a safeguard against them; even if something bad happened, landowners could get part of the harvest out of their properties. Also, share tenancies were stipulated in order to begin a lease – perhaps associated with re-clearing the land – and were not supposed to be permanent. Let us see all this in greater detail. In 1157, the abbot of S. Ponziano Enrico stipulated four contracts on the 1st of December – two concerning Vaccoli and two Busdagno (which is located in a hilly area in the north-western environs of Lucca). Three of those contracts ruled out explicitly the possibility that tenants could be regarded as *manentes* (the fourth one was instead silent on that point). This clause must have been particularly important for one of the lessees, a certain Barile, who was required to reside on his holding even if he was not a *manens*, and could not leave it 'unless a war breaks out between Lucca and Pisa'; in view of these obligations, Barile could have been easily mistaken for a *manens*, and it was thus necessary to specify that he was not. As to his rent, Barile had to give S. Ponziano 2 *s.* of Lucchese *denarii*, 4 *st.* of figs and half of the wine must for two years; the rent would stay the same after this period too, except for the must, which would then be delivered in the quantity of seventeen donkey-loads per year together with the *pascioraticum*, a tribute paid to lords in exchange for the use of pastures.[116] Another leaseholder of S. Ponziano in Vaccoli, Ugolino, had to give the monastery half of the produce for the first two years of tenancy before switching to a mixed rent, and was also supposed to build a house on the field he was granted. As to the two leases regarding Busdagno, share tenancy was envisaged only as an emergency solution. 'For every year in which the afore-mentioned lands will be devastated by bad weather ['celi furore'] or by any earthly power ['per potestatem'], we will deliver half of the fruits that God will give on those lands'.[117] The two-year duration of share tenancies occurs also in another lease granted by Abbot Enrico in 1158 and concerning seven pieces of land in Vorno; the leaseholder was required to give half of the agricultural produce until 1160, then Enrico could decide whether to keep up this regime, or else shift to the delivery of a fixed render of £7 of oil.[118] All in all, it appears that Enrico was quite committed to share tenures, but by no means did he trigger a trend; indeed, we need to wait ten

[114] ASDLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1102 October 13.
[115] Wickham, *Community*, p. 20.
[116] On the *pascioraticum* cf. Kotel'nikova, *Mondo*, p. 48.
[117] ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1157 December 1 (cf. the edition of one of them in Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, pp. 82-3). There is also a fifth contract in the archive, which is the copy of the fourth one.
[118] ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1158 March 6 (two documents).

years to find another contract of this type in the archive of S. Ponziano. This charter was issued by Moreco, rector of the hospital of S. Ponziano, on behalf of Abbot Giovanni. Moreco leased out three pieces of land in Vaccoli for twenty-four years, in return for a rent consisting in half of the wine must, half of the young wine (*picciolo*) and of the chestnuts, the third part of the barley and half of the oil, plus 3 *s.* and 2 *d.* for each cart of must. The addressee, Rosignolo, had to rebuild a rural house and to deliver the third part of all the cereals ('de omni blava') harvested in the second piece of land he had been granted. Moreover, the charter included a clause – which we will find also in Ciabatto's notarial registers – concerning *melioramenta* and *peioramenta*; if the land was improved, Moreco would compensate Rosignolo, whereas Rosignolo would compensate Moreco if the land was worsened.[119]

As we move into the final twenty years of the 12th century, the number of share tenancies does not increase – quite the opposite, in fact. In 1184, Abbot Ugo leased to Riccio of the late Volta three pieces of land in *Plagia* (which is impossible to identify) in return for an annual rent of 13 *st.* of wheat, 12 *st.* of broad beans and 12 *st.* of millet; however, 'was the land to be devastated by the army of the Emperor or by bad weather, which must be real and credible ['per furorem celi iustum et credibile']', Riccio would deliver only 'half of all the fruits of lands and trees'.[120] Specifying that the damages which could be caused to a holding by unfavourable climatic conditions had to be proved true is important, since it testifies to the risk that tenants could cheat on the quantity of the harvest; they might have lied, in other words, about the agricultural produce they had managed to obtain, claiming that heavy rains destroyed the crops. Landowners were thus entitled to ascertain that the portion of agricultural products they were about to collect corresponded to the real annual output of the holding.

This pattern does not change as we get into the years straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. In 1194, Abbot Guinizo issued a short-term lease in favour of a certain Panuccio in which he gave him a field in *Ripaia* (whose meaning is close to 'bank', which makes it impossible to identify the locality) for thirteen years, in return for a fixed rent consisting in 12 *st.* of wheat, broad beans and millet; during the first year of tenancy, however, Panuccio would deliver only 'medietatem de omnibus fructibus'.[121] And, over the period 1200-30, I have found only three share tenures. In 1210, a *masium* in Carignano (now a *frazione* of Lucca, which borders on Busdagno) was leased out 'in return for the third part of all the cereals ['blave'] and half of all the other products', plus 10 *s.*; after one year, however, the rent would be commuted into a fixed render consisting in 4 *st.* of grain, 4 *st.* of broad beans, 4 *st.* of millet, 10 *s.* and one cart of wine must.[122] The same logic recurs in a perpetual lease issued in 1212 and regarding three land-plots in

[119] Ibid., 1168 December 1.
[120] Ibid., 1184 June 3.
[121] Ibid., 1194 September 29.
[122] Ibid., 1210 January 21.

Cantignano, close to Vorno. The tenant, a certain Piero, was required to provide a mixed render in kind and money, but, as was written on the text right after the notarial *completio* (that is, the notary's signature), he was supposed to deliver only 'medietatem et non plus de fructibus' from two of the three pieces of land he had been granted for the first year of tenancy.[123] Here, then, the status of share tenure as a temporary regime was in a way mirrored by its unusual location in the margin of the charter; clearly, the contracting parties were above all interested in securing the fixed render that would be delivered perpetually from all the plots of land included in the *tenimentum*. Finally, an agreement of 1212 concerns Moriano, located outside the areas for which the other share tenancies were recorded. Here Abbot Ugo gave two Morianesi, Bonasera and Orsello, all the pieces of land that the monastery owned in the nearby locality of *Settoia* for six years, in exchange for one *staium* in four of all the grain harvested there – which is quite an unusual formula, showing that the produce that landowners could collect was here rather difficult to predict. Uncertainty was hovering, as seems to be confirmed by a clause freeing tenants from rent-paying for the part of the holding that may have been seized by other people.[124]

No sharecropping contracts survive for the 1220s, and this further demonstrates that share tenures were far from being a first choice for the monastic community of S. Ponziano. With the exception of Moriano, they came from a relatively infertile area of the Sei Miglia (the slopes around Carignano and Busdagno), from the southern suburbs of the city (Vicopelago) and from the hilly countryside between Pisa and Lucca (Vaccoli, Vorno), ravaged by the endless frontier wars between the two cities (cf. chapter 1.2.1.1). The long-term plan in the mind of the monks of S. Ponziano was to demand fixed renders from their holdings, but they could opt for a share of whatever could be collected from the land until the average agricultural output could be reasonably predicted. No cost-sharing ever surfaces from these documents. This does not imply, naturally, that the community of S. Ponziano had no interest in making the most out of its leaseholds, as can be inferred by the clauses regarding the rebuilding of a rural house, or else the *melioramenta* and *peioramenta*; but it certainly did not intend share tenure, at least in our period, to be a stable framing for its tenants' working obligations. This is the array of issues that will be further fleshed out as we move on to the notarial registers by Ser Ciabatto.

[123] Ibid., 1212 December 4.
[124] Ibid., 1212 November 22.

4.2.3 The notarial protocols of Ser Ciabatto (1222-32)

This section is dedicated to the registers written by the best-documented notary of 13th-century Italy, the Lucchese Ser Ciabatto. He is the author of twenty-seven books redacted between 1222 and 1272, which have been all preserved in the cathedral chapter's archive of Lucca – Ciabatto died without heirs, and it is likely that the canons were particularly interested in buying out his protocols in view of the high number of deeds regarding the chapter assets, that Ciabatto was asked to write down over the years. In relation to this, it is also worth noting that Ciabatto spent the final years of his life in a presumably small shop placed right inside the bell tower of S. Martino, and this makes it all the more plausible to think that he was in close contact with the church priests.[125]

I have already outlined the reasons that make notarial protocols a particularly precious type of source in chapter 3.2.3, when we discussed the deeds sealed by the Florentine Palmerio di Uglione over the years 1237-8. To repeat, protocols give us the opportunity to read a remarkable number of short-term agreements, recorded in an abbreviated form – credit operations above all – which are hardly visible in single-sheet parchments; and they also allow us to study the medium lay *élites*. The main difference between Palmerio and Ciabatto is that the latter has left us much more documentation; the four registers edited by Andreas Meyer in 2005 (so only a small part of Ciabatto's overall production), covering the years 1222-32, contain 927 deeds alone, against the *c.* 200 we have for Palmerio. It has to be noted, however, that Ciabatto, like Palmerio, recorded a relatively small number of lease charters (some fifty) by comparison to notifications of debts or payment receipts, which make up the largest part of his registers. I shall examine this restricted group of edited leases, for the unpublished registers would need specific research, postdating 1230, which is therefore outside the scope of this thesis; and I will put particular emphasis on share tenancies. Not because they were widespread – quite the contrary, for there are only six of them – but because they contrast with the prevailing pattern of fixed rents as we have outlined until now; and it is only by looking close at exceptions that we can get a proper understanding of the general rule. In respect to this, the pages that follow will be to a large extent the continuation of S. Ponziano's section.

Within Meyer's edition of Ser Ciabatto's registers we mostly meet, once again, fixed rents in wheat, millet and broad beans, which were demanded by both clerics and laymen; cash rents were confined to the leasing out of rural houses and their annexes. The majority of leases lasted

[125] For a complete list of Ciabatto's registers cf. Meyer, *Felix*, 199-202; *Ciabattus*, p. 84. For an overlook of their content cf. Id., 'I registri', 'Charters' and 'La critica'. Notarial registers have been studied by Thomas W. Blomquist, as results from his 'Variorum' collection of studies, *Merchant*.

only a few years, but this should not surprise us too much; it is worth repeating that people were likely to prefer single-sheet charters (that is, the deeds that we have been discussing throughout this thesis) over *imbreviature* whenever they had to seal perpetual agreements; the former remained the most detailed form of recording for permanent rights of usufruct or ownership.[126] By and large, the overall picture emerging from the charters of S. Martino and S. Ponziano does not change. It needs to be added, however, that the prevalence of kind over money is made even clearer in Ciabatto's protocols, since the high number of credit operations registered within them informs us that money-lenders were used to demanding cereals in return for cash loans. Evidently, the instability of prices in the early *Duecento* made it more convenient to demand agricultural produce in the place of coins whose purchasing power was regarded as highly volatile.[127]

Let us now turn our attention to sharecropping contracts. First, it has to be observed that they were all issued by lay landowners. This is significant, in that the historiography on share tenures and *mezzadria* has largely stressed the pivotal role played by non-clerics in adopting and extending the use of these types of tenancy regimes (cf. chapter 1.1.1). Furthermore, the wealth of information provided by Ciabatto's deeds allows us to gain some insight into the status of landlords who chose to lease out their estates in exchange for a share of the harvest; in view of this, I will first sketch out the landlords' social and economic profile, then single out the most important clauses of the sharecropping agreements they stipulated, and finally consider the general implications of this whole discussion.

One of those landlords was Francesco of the late Cacciaré, who appears twice as a lessor in Meyer's edition. He belonged to a high-status family who lived in Lucca[128] and was involved in commercial activities. His brother, named Buongiorno, is mentioned for the first time in a deed dating to 1227, when he declared that he owed, together with Rinaldino of the late Lamberto, £24 of Genoese *denarii* (*Genovini*) to three money lenders who gave them £41 of Lucchese *denarii*; Buongiorno promised to return the money 'safe and sound in Genoa' and pledged 'all his weapons and horses and all his goods'[129] – indeed, in another contract Buongiorno features as the buyer of a horse.[130] As to Francesco, one may suppose that he was involved to some degree in the Lucchese food market, as he is recorded purchasing ten pounds of olive oil in 1227; this quantity, however, could have been consumed within the Cacciaré's household alone, and it is impossible to know

[126] Some examples taken randomly: *Ciabattus*, pp. 111-2, A 28 (1225 February 9), p. 119, A 43 (1224 October 27), pp. 169-70, B 79 (1227 March 31), p. 173, B 84 (1227 November 20), pp. 314-5, C 253 (1230 July 22), p. 352, C 352 (1230 October 8), pp. 417-8, D 64 (1231 March 5), pp. 488-9, D 212 (1231 November 23).
[127] Examples (among others) ibid., p. 162, B 63 (1227 April 21), p. 294, C 214 (1230 April 30).
[128] Cf. Meyer, 'Der Luccheser Notar', pp. 199-200, note 152 (which refers to ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1236 July 16, where we find mention of the location of Buongiorno's house – Buongiorno was Francesco's brother, as we shall see in a moment; 'Luce eadem die in piastra lisciata ante domum Bongiorni').
[129] *Ciabattus*, p. 139, B 18 (1227 March 27) and cf. also p. 140, B 19 (same date).
[130] Ibid., p. 149, B 38 (1227 April 11).

whether it was marketed or not.[131] What we know for sure is that Francesco and Buongiorno were endeavouring to live up to their *élite*-status aspirations. Another document reveals us that they were indebted because of the expenses they had to meet 'for the members of their house' ('pro comunitate sue domus', an expression that probably includes domestic servants too), and that some of those expenses concerned the dowries of their wives and daughters.[132]

Even though we cannot unveil the characteristics and the scale of the Cacciaré's commercial network – nor can we tell whether landed wealth or commerce was their main source of income – it is clear that Francesco and Buongiorno were part of a well-off urban milieu involved in mercantile activities. They lived in Lucca, had ties with Genoa (similarly to many Lucchese merchants),[133] spent money, and incurred debts in order to mark their high social rank. In this sense, they fit into the image of a burgeoning bourgeoisie which, when it came to land management, opted for share tenancies – we will come back again to this in the general conclusions.

The Cacciaré are not the only lessors for whom we have some extensive information. We can cite, for a start, the example of *domina* Lucia, wife of a certain Malagallia, belonging to a family of money changers who apparently owned more than one bureau de change in Lucca, and indeed were able to lease them out in return for rent. We know that another lessor, Melanese, was an artisan – he is defined as *arcorarius*, literally arch-maker, probably a sculptor; that another landowner, Riccomanno, was a legal expert (*advocatus*); and that Soldano of the late Gerardo was a landlord of some importance, as he was collecting rents from four different houses in and outside Lucca between 1229 and 1231. Unfortunately, we cannot get any further than that, but a preliminary conclusion can be already proposed right here: the lessors of share-tenancy agreements, except for Soldano, were involved in non-agricultural activities, thus benefiting from sources of income other than land.[134]

Let us now look at the content of our contracts, starting from the location of share tenures. All of them lay in the southern hinterland of the city (Vicopelago, Sorbano del Giudice, Via Mezzana),[135] with the exception of a *podere* in Matraia, north of Lucca, on the slopes of Monte

131 Ibid., p. 146, B 33 (1227 April 9).
132 Ibid., p. 152, B 44 (1227 April 11).
133 Cf. Poloni, *Lucca*, ch. I.2.
134 For Lucia cf. *Ciabattus*, pp. 356-7, C 333 (1229 October 24) and Concioni, 'Aspetti'. For money-changers in 13th-century Lucca the most complete account is Blomquist, 'The dawn', who made extensive use of Ciabatto's registers. For Melanese cf. *Ciabattus*, pp. 304-5, C 305 (1230 September 15); for Riccomanno cf. ibid., p. 183, C 11 (1229 October 28); for Soldano cf. ibid., p. 184, C 13 (1229 October 28), p. 250, C 130 (1230 February 8), pp. 379-80, C 374 (1230 December 5), p. 424, D 80 (1231 March 13 - 1232 January 7), p. 464, D 167 (1231 October 31).
135 It is not possible to locate the estate mentioned ibid., pp. 551-2, D 336 (1231 April 26) 'quem tenuit Michele et que fuit S. Michaelis' (probably the church of S. Michele in Foro). However, the deed was 'Actum Luce in suprascripto loco terris', which makes it likely that the landed property involved here was very close to the city boundaries. One may want to add to this list p. 231, C 90 (1230 January 17), which concerns a portion of woodland in Vorno rented out for half of the chestnuts. This cannot be regarded, however, as a sharecropping agreement, since it appears to have simply regulated the conditions for pasturing on the part of the tenant in that part of the *silva*.

Pizzorne. Not a single deed concerned lands in the central and eastern part of the Sei Miglia, where wheat-and-millet-growing fields tended to prevail. As with S. Ponziano, in Ser Ciabatto's registers share tenancies always regarded holdings characterised by polyculture, and namely by vineyards, a constantly recurring element. All the contracts were short-term, lasting from a minimum of four to a maximum of twelve years.

What characterised share-tenure agreements in comparison to fixed-render ones? For a start, it can be argued that the former did show a greater concern for the improvements, *melioramenta*, that had to be made on lands, and we might indeed say that *melioramenta* played a crucial role in determining the preference for share tenancies over other types of lease contracts. It is thus useful to analyse *melioramenta* in some detail. One tenant of Francesco of the late Cacciaré, Michele of Vicopelago, was required to manure (*sucerare*) his lands with dung and lupins; at the same time, Francesco had to cover all the costs due to the plantation of new vineyards (*mallioli*), if he decided to do so (*si… vellet*). The *advocatus* Riccomanno and his brother Paganello were demanded to provide their tenant, Orsello di Masseo, with timber to be used to repair (*aptare*) the farmhouse; Orsello also had to prepare and/or repair (*conciare*) the casks, provided that the two lessors gave him the hoops. Two other tenants, Guido and his wife Matilde, had to cultivate a piece of land where other *mallioli* had been placed, retaining its usufruct for three years and then sharing it *per medium* with the landowner Soldano. As was in fact quite normal with new vineyards, Guido and Matilda were allowed to keep all their output only when vines were young, before starting to deliver their product as rent. In addition to this, Guido had to sow one third of the vineyard with lupins and manure, to plant there four *novellas* – again young vineyards – and to cover up and repair the farmhouse.[136]

Cost-sharing thus emerges in these contracts, and appears to have been strictly connected to *melioramenta*. One might expect, at this point, that the joint provision of seed-corn on the part of landowners and tenants was included too. But, as in S. Ponziano, this clause is almost completely absent. The agreement between Soldano and Guido is the only contract including it: 'and if he [Guido] sows cereals ['blavam'] in the vineyard, this must be *per medium*, and the same applies to lupins' (this may be, moreover, an example of intercropping, with cereals and vines cultivated on the same plot in specific row patterns).[137] However, Ciabatto's share tenancies do show the same concern for control over leaseholds that was so evident in Florence, and that is possible to spot among the charters of S. Ponziano too. Share tenures entailed the risk of cheating on the harvest on the part of tenants; and in decades during which landowners were collecting from tenures the produce that could be 'really' collected, in Esch's own words (that is, the

[136] For these three contracts cf. ibid., pp. 151-2, B 43 (1227 April 14) and the already-cited C 11 and D 336.
[137] Cf. ibid., D 336: 'et si seminaverit blavam in vinea, debet esse per medium, et si seminaverit lupinos [*the same will apply to lupins*]'.

maximum quantity of produce that could be extracted from a land; cf. section 4.1.2) this risk had to be forestalled. This was why Guido and Matilda had 'to ask the afore-mentioned Soldano to come in order to oversee the threshing and the pressing of grapes',[138] a measure which was clearly intended to avoid fraud over the quantity of grain and grapes, and which recalls similar regulations included within Passignano sharecropping contracts, where the monastic *nuntius* held the right to supervise threshing.[139] But control over land could simply consist in the right, for proprietors, to claim back the holding they had previously leased out. For example, Riccomanno and Paganello were authorised to take back the *podere* given to Orsello before the end of the contract, provided that they compensated him for the *melioramentum*; and the same clause recurs in the contract issued by Melanese *arcorarius*.[140]

This brings us to the analysis of rents themselves, which is in turn linked to the issue of control in quite an original and interesting way. All the share tenancies recorded within Ciabatto's registers envisaged the delivery of half of the products – cereals, legumes, fruit, oil, wine and also timber, although we find rents consisting in $^2/_3$ of the wine in two documents. In addition to this, the lessees or the lessors were entitled (in all contracts but two) to set aside a part of the agricultural output (mostly wine, but also olive oil), which was thereby excluded from the provision of a share of the harvest. This clause probably worked like a 'deposit' or 'insurance'; perhaps it was aimed at limiting potential cheating on the part of leaseholders (when the 'deposit' was for the landowner), or else at containing the negative effects deriving from the unpredictability of the harvest (when the 'deposit' was for the lessees, since a poor harvest might have put the self-sufficiency of tenants at risk). Also, the social and economic status of tenants is likely to have been important in determining the terms of the agreements, as we will see in a moment.[141]

What can we say about tenants? Sketching out their social profile is hard, since the evidence at our disposition is remarkably scarce. Half of them are recorded only within the share-tenancy agreements which we have just discussed. Their documentary invisibility suggests that they were not proprietors of some importance; if they were medium owners, for instance, we could reasonably expect to see them renting out land from the bishopric, the cathedral chapter or other laymen. Hence there is reason to think that they belonged to the landless (or almost landless) strata of the peasantry. Their bargaining power was limited, and this explains why they accepted

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[138] Cf. again ibid., D 336: 'teneantur ipsi iugales inquirere suprascriptum Soldanum, ut veniat ad videndum battere blavam et calcare vinum'.
[139] Cf. the analysis of share tenancies in chapter 3.2.2.4.
[140] Cf. ibid., C 11 and C 305.
[141] Cf. ibid., B 43 (Francesco di Cacciaré – the lessor – will keep for himself 8 *st.* of wine), C11 (Riccomanno and Paganello – the lessors – will keep 8 *st.* of wine must and £2 of oil), C 23 (Francesco di Cacciaré – the lessor – will keep one *asinata* consisting in 8 st. of wine and cereals), C 305 (Bonaccorso and Salvetto – the lessees – will keep 8 *st.* of wine must, then Melanese will have 2/3 of wine must), D 136 (Bonaccorso and Salvetto – the lessees – will keep 8 *st.* of wine and half of the *vinum piccolum*). The two contracts in which the 'insurance' is absent are ibid., pp. 317-8, C 259 (1230 July 25) and D 336.

agreements whose terms were essentially unfavourable to them. At the same time, however, the other half did feature in our documentation; it is interesting to note, in this sense, that the clause concerning the 'deposit' or 'insurance' discussed above, i.e. the part of the harvest which was set apart from rent, was destined to tenants only when they seem to have been slightly better-off – in other words, when their bargaining power was probably higher than that of the poorest sharecroppers. This was the case with Salvetto di Pugnetto, who is mentioned three times as a money-lender and who was allowed, along with his brother Buonaccorso, to keep 8 *st.* of (respectively) must and wine in addition to 'his' half of the harvest in two contracts. Two other tenants, Bonomo and Guido, are both recorded as small creditors, and neither Bonomo nor Guido had to deliver any extra-rent, any 'deposit' to their landlords. Naturally, the absence of the 'insurance' might have depended on factors, such as the size and the productivity of the single tenures, that the texts of our documents do not specify; but it is likely that the leaseholders' status played some role in the negotiation of the terms of their contracts (we might suppose, for example, that wealthier sharecroppers had enough bargaining power to refuse a deal which they judged too disadvantageous).[142]

Let us now take stock, and summarise the content of the contracts examined so far, in order to get an overall picture of this section. Share tenancies were a very small part of the lease agreements that we can find among Ciabatto's registers, and were mostly applied to lands that needed improvements – not by chance, we again find references to the relatively infertile and war-ravaged lands in Vicopelago or Sorbano del Giudice, in the southern outskirts of Lucca. By no means did they appear as a best-possible option for those who decided to rent out their landed estates. Landowners seem to have belonged to the middling strata of urban society, among whom we can find, for instance, artisans (such as Melanese) or businesswomen (such as Lucia); and tenants were, in half of the contracts at least, apparently poor.

I shall come back again to these summary remarks in the general conclusions, but we can observe right now that they do fit what had already emerged from S. Ponziano; share tenures were a temporary, second-best choice in the mind of Lucchese landowners. As a conclusion of this section, it has to be stressed that Ciabatto's registers also allow us to get a glimpse of the 'great absentee' of Tuscan farming regimes during the 13th century, that is, wage labour. Indeed, wage labour is recorded in eleven *imbreviature*, but, significantly, it is never attested as an option for estate management in the countryside. Salaries were paid in return for specific jobs: in Ciabatto's

[142] 'Invisible' tenants: ibid., B 43 (Michele di Vicopelago), C 11 (Orsello di Masseo) and C 23 (Giunta di Inghilego). On Salvetto di Pugnetto as money lender cf. pp. 156-7, B 54 (1227 April 17), p. 182, C 8 (1229 October 23), p. 198, C 34 (1229 November 24); see also p. 451, D 141 (1231 October 2). On Bonomo of the late Baroncio cf. p. 317, C 258 (1230 July 24). On Guido di Lombardo cf. p. 277, C 183 (1230 April 2), pp. 478-9, D 191 (1231 November 13) and also p. 391, D 8 (1231 January 4), where Guido shares a horse ('in accomandisia') with Buongiorno of the late Cacciaré. For the 'deposits' or 'insurances' cf. note 141.

protocols we meet three bakers, three carpenters, the representative (*procurator*) of the cathedral chapter of S. Martino, a wetnurse and a tailor. Two contracts, however, do not specify the type of activity which was to be performed; they simply envisaged that the addressees should stay at their employers' service ('ad serviendum') in the house or outside it ('in domo vel ['et' in the second contract] extra').[143] Even then, we can safely exclude that these two documents concerned rural labour; the only clue we have in this respect is the generic expression 'in the house *vel/et extra*', which, however, can be regarded as a purely formulaic one, as it occurs also in the deeds regarding domestic or artisanal jobs (and therefore non-rural for sure) that I have just mentioned.

What we cannot rule out completely is the possibility that seasonal rural works were carried out in the form of customary agreements, entailing perhaps the payment of a small salary to cultivators – this would happen for certain in the 15th century.[144] Nonetheless, since notarial protocols contain many short-term agreements, the *complete* absence of holdings cultivated by salaried workers can be taken as good evidence of the marginality of wage labour, particularly as a way to organise estate management. The reason for this is likely to have lain in the purchasing power embodied by Lucchese *denarii*; this was indeed volatile, as the Lucchesi had learnt well at the latest after the 1180s, on the wake of the upsurge in prices and of the debasement of the *denarius* (see section 4.1.2). The crisis of confidence that followed makes it easy to understand why peasants were reluctant to accept, and why landowners were unable to impose, contracts in which the workers' real income was impossible to predict with a reasonable degree of certainty.

4.3
Conclusions

The legacy of the manorial system in the Lucchesia was certainly not as vital as it was in the Fiorentino, for one simple reason. The demand for labour-services as a way to frame the relations between tenants and landowners was almost completely absent, as is shown by the lists of renders concerning the villagers of Massarosa in the 1180s. The only exception is represented by S. Maria a Monte, the episcopal *curtis dominicata* located in the Valdarno Inferiore, where, according to another list of renders dating to 1187, the local peasantry was burdened with 349 ½ workdays, to be performed on the bishopric's demesnes.[145] For reasons of space, I cannot discuss S. Maria at length here. Furthermore, the available documentation does not allow us to say with

[143] Ibid., pp. 158-9, B 59 (1227 April 27), pp. 219-22, C 73, 74 and 75 (1230 January 4), pp. 289-90, C 208 (1230 April 24), pp. 305-6, C 237 (1230 October 10), pp. 307-8, C 241 (1230 June 28), pp. 513-4, D 262 (1231 December 16), pp. 527-8, D 288 (1231 April 4), p. 544, D 321 (1231 April 21) and pp. 549-50, D 333 (1231 April 26)
[144] Cf. Luzzati and Simonetti, 'Un "sommerso" medievale'.
[145] ASDLu, *Arcivescovile*, * N 92 (1187 August 23) an edition (which, however, is full of inaccuracies) can be found in LEM III/2, 387-91.

certainty whether those *corvée*-duties had been completely abolished or not on the eve of the *Duecento*; the only thing we know is that they could be converted, sometimes, into cash rents.[146] The court-cases of the 13th century regarding S. Maria testify, however, to the conflicts between the bishops and the local lay aristocracies over the control of resources other than *corvées*; namely the toll, *pedagium*, which was particularly profitable in the Valdarno (an area that constituted a major centre of communications and trade networks); the *pedagium*, moreover, appears to have weighed on all the villagers of S. Maria.[147] S. Maria a Monte seems to confirm, thus, the pattern emerging from the documentation of Massarosa. By Lucchese standards, the two of them were unusually compact landed properties, an impression reinforced by the fact that they were defined in the charters as *curtes dominicatae*. I would thus propose that this was the basis upon which the exaction of collective obligations – respectively, manorial tithes and *pedagia* – rested. We have observed that such obligations had a clear territorial dimension at Massarosa, where collective agreements between the canons and the Massarosesi had to be sealed in order to fix the quantity of renders that lords were entitled to collect. On the top of this, it has to be noted that neither Massarosa nor S. Maria a Monte were characterised by the presence of *manentes* during the central medieval period, and this is further evidence of the territoriality – or, at least, of *some degree* of territoriality – of local signorial powers, for, as we have seen (chapter 2.3), *manentes* tended to appear when signorial rights were highly fragmented.

It was no chance that Massarosa and S. Maria were both eccentric, outside the remit of the Sei Miglia. In the environs of Lucca, the fragmentation of the patterns of landowning and landholding made it impossible to build up any form of territorial lordship and thus to exact any form of collective dues. There, landowners could only increase individual rents – sometimes unsuccessfully, as is shown by the high number of withheld rents preserved in ecclesiastical archives from the 1170s, or by the long-standing permanence of many low rents at Massa Macinaia. Landowners could also strengthen their control over land by issuing fixed-term leases, as the charters of S. Ponziano and the registers of Ser Ciabatto show. In other words, anyone who owned land in the Lucchesia reacted to the effects of famine, increased warfare, debasement, inflation and imperial tributes by dealing with the social, economic and ecological characteristics and constraints of the environment where his estates were located. This does not explain, however, why a steadily increasing number of rents appears to have remained high after 1200 too. We can look at political history, for a start. Indeed, the first years of the *Comune di Popolo* in Lucca (the end-point of our analysis in chapter 1.2.1) were a remarkably unstable time, marked by internal conflicts (between the city factions of *militares* and *populares*) as well as by external wars;[148]

[146] As results from ASDLu, *Arcivescovile*, †† E 1 (1201 April 17).
[147] Cf. Morelli, 'La "signoria" '.
[148] On the early rise of the *populus* cf. Poloni, *Lucca*, pp. 21-7; see also Ead., 'Strutturazione'.

even though we do not know how the army was organised at that time, it is at least reasonable to guess that grain shortages due to warfare, together with the payment of salaries to soldiers and the possible hiring of mercenaries, contributed to debasement and inflation, as they certainly did during Barbarossa's wars. This has an important implication; as has been argued with regard to early-13th-century England,[149] the outcome of political and monetary instability would have been a crisis of confidence in currency, which pushed landowners not only to demand kind instead of cash (in fact, this process stretched back to the late 11th century) but also to demand a higher quantity of agricultural produce in order to compensate possible losses in the value of their savings. Hence rents and prices, albeit variable, tended to remain around their post-1160 values.

I shall add further elements to this matrix in chapter 5, with particular regard to the way in which proprietors *managed* to impose higher rents. What we need to stress now is that Lucchese landowners clearly made a choice as to the issuing of lease agreements, opting, in most cases, for fixed rents in kind, very much like the Florentine ones. Unlike in the Fiorentino, however (on which cf. chapter 3.2.2.4), share tenures appear to have been confined to a few peripheral areas of the Sei Miglia and cost-sharing surfaced only when sharecropping agreements were made for the start of a lease; the joint provision of seed-corn is, instead, almost totally absent. It is now time to take all these elements together, and propose an overall explanation for the forms of land management and their change in the countryside of the two cities during the central medieval period.

[149] Cf. Latimer, 'English inflation'.

Appendix on prices (1201-41)

Wheat

Document	**Price per *st.***
ASDLu, *Capitolare*, R. 47 (1201 April 13)	54 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, B 31 (1227 April 13)	36 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, B 31 (1227 April 17)	47 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, B 64 (1227 April 22)	37 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, B 56 and 57 (1227 April 17 and 20)	36 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, C 352 (1230 November 13)	36 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, D 28 (1231 January 31)	50 *d*.
Ser Ciabatto, D 40 (1231 February 15)	37 *d*.

Wheat prices per *st.* recorded for the 1190s in Esch, 'Lucca', p. 77: 38.4 *d.* (1191), 39.6 *d.* (1193), 60 *d.* (1195), 85.2 *d.* (1195), 90 *d.* (1198), 30 *d.* (1200)

Land

Document	**Size of the land**	**Location**	**Price per *st.***	**Landowner**
ASDLu, *Capitolare*, P. 41 (1202 June 10)	/	*Alle Mura*	£12.2 of *denarii*	Canons of S. Martino
ASDLu, *Capitolare*, P. 44 (1202 June 10)	/	*Stermalliatico*, *Alle Mura*	£18.2 of *denarii*	Canons of S. Martino
ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1207 May 15	1 *st*. of arable land with fruit trees close to it (*campus cum arboribus*)	near the *pieve* of S. Paolo	£4 of Lucchese *denarii*	Truffetto of the late Truffetto
ASLu, *S. Ponziano*, 1226 December 4	1 *quarra* (*campus cum arboribus et vitibus*)	Capannori (*locus ubi dicitur in Lappeta*)	£20 of Lucchese *denarii*	Members of the 'fraternitatis Luminarie ecclesie et monasterii' of S. Bartolomeo in Silice
ASDLu, *Arcivesco-vile*, †† E 137 (1241 July 30)	1 *st*., including a vineyard	S. Maria a Monte	£4 of *nigrum conium*, whether Pisan or Lucchese	Bortolotto and Enrico of the late Vitale

Land prices per *st*. recorded for the late 1190s in Esch, 'Lucca', p. 30: £2.9 (1197, *campus cum arboribus, ortale cum arboribus, puteo* in Tempagnano), £4 (1197, *campus cum arboribus et vitibus* in *Selce*, close to Lucca), £2.5 (1199, *campus* in *Litiano*), £0.4 (1199, *campus cum arboribus* in Capannori), £2.8 (1199, *campus cum arboribus et vitibus* in Capannori), £1.1 (1199, *campus cum duobus arboribus* in Capannori), £2.6 (1199, *campus cum arboribus, puteo, duobus capannis* in *Magritula*), £2.5 (*campus cum arboribus* in S. Vito).

5

An economic conjuncture (and a *longue-durée* divergence?) Land management in the countryside of Florence and Lucca during the central medieval period

5.1
An economic conjuncture in a comparative perspective

European economic growth during the central centuries of the Middle Ages has sometimes been regarded, mostly in local historiography, as an axiom, the unquestioned background of wider social transformations. This thesis does not deny this overall pattern of growth, but calls for the need to combine a long-term perspective with a close look at more circumscribed periods of time, in which things appear to have been changing faster than before. We have indeed met throughout this study many centuries-long mutations, such as *incastellamento* and the slow development of the *signoria;* or else we have discussed the effects on the *longue durée* of early medieval structures, such as the manorial system, and its influence on tenancy relations and signorial powers, during the high medieval period (on all this, cf. chapter 2). The importance of the phase going from *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230 derives from the acknowledgement that many different factors gathered together at almost the same point in time. None of them would have sufficed, alone, to determine substantial changes in the forms of land management; we would look in vain for a single cause leading to general mutations in tenurial patterns. But we can look for a *series* of causes, which in turn define the context that made change possible. It is useful to summarise them briefly**.** First of all, the state of almost constant warfare that marked the early history of Tuscan communes and was exacerbated by Barbarossa's wars (1154-83) entailed that the cities governing bodies had to meet growing expenses for the maintenance of the armies; they had to pay salaries, too – for certain to mercenary troops, and probably to their own citizens; new circuits of walls were built up, encompassing an enlarged urban territory (cf. chapter 1.2). As a result of this overall increase in public expenditure, the mints of Lucca and Pisa – whose currencies were employed all across Tuscany – began to cut the quantity of silver within coins at the latest from the 1170s, in order to make their payments more sustainable. This is likely to have engendered a crisis of confidence in the value of money, which pushed up the prices of agricultural goods. The inflationary trend resulting therefrom was reinforced by the ostensibly severe famine that took

place in 1181-2, which made landed estates and foodstuffs more expensive (cf. chapters 3.1.2 and 4.1.2). In 1183, the peace of Constance put an end to the conflicts between the Italian communes and the Empire. The influence of the latter over Tuscany, however, was far from negligible. In the wake of the policies pursued by Frederick I and Marquis Welf, Henry VI imposed quite burdensome annual tributes on Lucca (1186) and redefined the jurisdictional remit of the Florentine city government (1187). The administrative, judicial and fiscal structure of the communes became increasingly complex – a process further reinforced by the slow emergence of the *Popolo* in Lucca and Florence from the late 12th century. Moreover, the political crisis that followed Henry VI's death in 1197 renewed the conflicts between city factions and, with regard to Florence, made it possible for the city to further expand into the countryside – laying the ground for the taxation of the rural communities of the Chianti region, as is testified by the lists of rural dependants written down at Coltibuono, Passignano and Poggio al Vento in the early 1230s (cf. chapter 2.3). One can safely conclude that overall aggregate demand, and particularly urban demand, grew remarkably over the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries. To this, an overall trend of demographic expansion must have contributed, too, although I have repeatedly stressed how much caution is necessary for us to speak of increase in the number of people over the period considered here: in all likelihood it was occurring, but by no means can we assess its scale. The main outcome of this context was not only a generalised increase in the extraction of the agricultural surplus, but also, for the historian, the possibility of studying in some detail peasant societies in their relation with landowners, thanks to the lease contracts addressed to cultivators (*tenimenta*) and above all to the lists of customary rents and services which became more and more common from the 1180s onwards.

The reader may wonder, at this point, whether this framing applies to the countryside of Florence and Lucca alone, or has parallels elsewhere. We need to provide at least a short answer to this, before moving on to the main points of these conclusions – why one form of land management was preferred to another one, and how any transformation implying harsher conditions for rural workers could be accepted by them. Indeed, if one looks at other regional economies in Italy and Europe it is possible to observe similarities and differences with northern Tuscany. Rome, to start with, showed a remarkably high degree of economic dominance over its surrounding countryside (the Agro Romano, extending for *c.* 20-25 km outside the city) from the early Middle Ages, due to the extensive ownership of land on the part of Roman churches. In the early 11th century signs of economic specialisation appeared, in the form of a belt of orchards and vineyards surrounding the city; but the agrarian economy then seems to have moved on quite slowly and the 12th century was, in comparison to the previous period (and to Tuscany as well), more stable. It is only from *c.* 1185 that some change in the relations between tenants and landowners becomes visible; thenceforth, large portions of ecclesiastical lands, called *tenimenta* or

casali, began to be leased out in return for increasingly substantial fixed rents in kind.[1] As to Milan, which was, in the 12th century, the largest city of Latin Europe, it needs stressing that its economic development appears to have stretched back at least to the late 10th century, when a rise in the prices of land and urban houses took place; by the beginning of the 12th century, then, chestnut woods were extremely reduced in size and converted into arable lands. It was only in the years after 1150, however, that systematic irrigation in the countryside – an unequivocal sign of the need for a more pervasive form of agricultural exploitation – began to appear, along with short-term leases, high rents, land-clearances and the plantation of new vineyards.[2] The *contadi* of Bergamo, Cremona and Brescia, in eastern Lombardy, were marked by two major moments of transformation throughout the 12th century: the first occurred over the years 1110-30, and was characterised by the creation of the first coherent irrigation systems; the second dates to the period 1170-1200, when irrigation was matched by extensive land-clearances, which would be further developed in the 13th century. According to François Menant, however, such an expansion did not cause any substantial change in the relations between tenants and landowners: share tenures, mostly applied to vineyards, were a Carolingian legacy, which was not enriched by *mezzadria* elements during the *Duecento*; *corvée*-work was marginal in the 12th century, and was progressively abandoned; short-term leases were extremely rare; the only real novelty was represented by the demand for fixed rents in grain proportional to the extent of the land (the same occurred with money rents), which became increasingly common between the 12th and the 13th centuries. Menant even speaks of 'désengagement' to describe the attitude of Lombard landowners towards the management of their estates, and ascribes the intensification in the extraction of the agricultural surplus mostly to independent peasants.[3] Further east, the countryside of Padua, which has been carefully studied by Gérard Rippe, appears to have had quite a different history from eastern Lombardy. Rippe attributes indeed a pivotal role to urban capital in paving the way for a veritable economic takeoff after 1183, the year of the peace of Constance; sums of money were spent, for instance, on irrigation canals and bridges. Over the same period, commercial crops and agricultural specialisation surface from the available evidence, in the form of the plantation of vineyards and olive-trees. Which kind of tenancy agreements were adopted in this context? Labour had almost completely vanished, together with the coherence of any long-standing, 'classic' manor, by the end of the 12th century – although *corvée*-work could still be burdensome at the beginning of the same century. Proprietors mostly resorted to lease-farming, and were used to demanding a share of the harvest in return for the lease of vineyards and olive-trees, whereas fixed rents, as in Tuscany, tended to prevail on grain-fields.[4] Finally, Piacenza needs a short

[1] Wickham, *Medieval Rome*, pp. 86-7 and 108-9.
[2] Violante, *La società*, pp. 100-10 on prices; Rapetti, *Campagne*, pp. 57-9; Grillo, *Milano*, pp. 91-3.
[3] Menant, *Campagnes*, pp. 333-4, 363-6 and 385-8.
[4] Rippe, *Padoue*, pp. 464-72, 489 (where the author mentions burdensome *corvée*-work abolished in 1116) and 561-9.

mention, in that sharecropping contracts including *mezzadria* elements (in particular, the joint provision of seed-corn on the part of landowners and tenants) started to become increasingly common from the 1240s onwards; they were largely applied to lands including vineyards – both close to and far from the city – but there are also many examples of share tenures for grain and flax. Early *mezzadria* seems to have spread among the vineyards planted across the southern outskirts of Bologna, too, during the 13th century – but the Bolognese would require a great deal of further study.[5]

These are, so far, the best-studied cases of integration between urban and rural economies in northern-central Italy over the 12th and early 13th centuries, accompanied as they were by agricultural specialisation and, sometimes, increased pressure on dependent peasants. We could of course further extend the number of case-studies to Europe as a whole, but I shall just mention here a pair of examples that point to the decades following 1150 as a turning point in the economic history of at least some European areas – one of regional and one of 'national' scale. The first one regards the Ardennes. In recent years, Nicolas Schroeder has argued that it is possible to observe a fairly high level of continuity of Carolingian forms of land exploitation among some estates of the abbey of Stavelot-Malmedy up to the middle of the 12th century. From then on, they were progressively transformed. The monks started to collect money-fines on land transactions between tenants, who could also buy out their *corvées*; and the 13th century was marked, among other things, by the appearance of short-term leases.[6] The second example concerns England, which has been the object of a long and lively debate. It is generally accepted that the period between *c.* 1000 and *c.* 1180 was marked by an overall shrinkage of demesne farming all across the Kingdom, but the final fifth of the 12th century saw instead a revival of direct management, with ecclesiastical and lay landowners returning to *corvées* or else employing servants or other dependants to manage their demesnes. This was the result of both long-term and short-term processes. Richard Britnell, for example, stressed the importance of the rise in domestic and foreign demand over the period 1155-1260; James Masschaele emphasised the role played by the foundation of new towns, the acquisition of commercial privileges by some cities and the development of commercial networks in general. Inflation must have contributed to overall change too, although its effect appears to have been felt with distinct vigour only over quite a restricted period of time, from 1199 to 1205. All in all, it looks as though hiring wage labourers or estate administrators was here already, at least sometimes, convenient for landlords; it gave them the possibility of paying salaries through a currency exposed to inflation risk, while disposing

[5] Racine, *Plaisance* II, 549-63. On the Bolognese cf. Palmieri, 'Lotte agrarie' and Pini, 'Forme di conduzione' (I thank Filippo Ribani for stimulating discussions on the countryside of Bologna).
[6] Schroeder, *Les hommes*, pp. 267-78 and *passim.*

of all the agricultural produce collected from demesnes, which could then be sold on a growing food market.[7]

This overview is relevant to this study as it shows that Florence and Lucca were participating in a wider process of rising demand which involved Italy and Europe over the period 1100-1200, and which could bring about transformations (whether substantial or not) in the pre-existing patterns of tenurial bonds.[8] Two observations have to be made, however. First, change could have a lot of local outcomes, hingeing on the preexisting social and economic conditions of each region; second, the conjuncture of the late 12th and early 13th centuries represented for Florence and Lucca a moment of particular acceleration, much more than in the two most populous and economically-complex cities of Italy, Rome and Milan. It can be argued that what we have seen reflected in the case-studies analysed in this thesis is northern Tuscany catching up with the most advanced areas of northern and central Italy. The reasons why this process had long-term effects are outside the scope of my research (apart from what concerns farming regimes, of course). But we can suggest that aggregate demand in Tuscany remained high over the decades (indeed, the centuries) thanks to another factor, which we can now add to our matrix in that it surely reinforced an ongoing process of change: the development of the manufacturing sector, which favoured the gathering of people into cities, with the subsequent need to feed them. There is some evidence of this for the period that we have considered here; in both Florence and Lucca, the earliest evidence of a local cloth industry – regarding wool and silk – dates to the 1180s-1190s.[9] It thus seems plausible to suppose that the first years of the *Duecento* saw the early rise of the cities' secondary sector, which, in the long run, would make Tuscany one of the most industrialised regions of late medieval Europe.

It is time to get back to land management, and answer our two final questions. How did landowners manage to keep rents high from the final quarter of the 12th century? And why did they opt for this or that lease agreement?

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[7] Classic pages on the shrink of demesne farming in Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society*, ch. 6. Christopher Dyer stressed that the demesnes of the bishopric of Worcester were reduced in size for much of the 12th century, but in the 1180s the first signs of a movement in the opposite direction began to appear; cf. Dyer, *Lords and Peasants*, pp. 61-4. As to the rise in foreign and domestic demand see, among others, Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, p. 297. On commercial development cf. for instance Masschaele, 'The English economy', p. 153. On inflation cf. Latimer, 'English inflation' (for an opposite view, claiming that a long inflation took place during the second half of the 12th century, cf. Harvey, 'English inflation').

[8] Farming regimes in the countryside of Siena over the 12th and 13th centuries would require further study, all the more so because the Senese was an area in which *mezzadria* developed early. Cf. Cammarosano, 'Le campagne'; on the political history Redon, *Uomini*; Pinto and Pirillo, *Il contratto*; and recently, on the origins of *mezzadria*, Ascheri and Dani, *La mezzadria*. But it could not easily have been used as a case-study here, because Senese documentation does not begin to be strong until as late as *c.* 1200.

[9] On Florence cf. Day, 'The early', particularly pp. 206-8; Poloni, *Lucca*, particularly p. 47.

5.2

Copying with change: credit markets and the forms of land management

We need to stress, for a start, the similarities between the countryside of Florence and that of Lucca with regard to the forms of land management during the central centuries of the medieval period; in many respects, they were more important than differences. It has to be noted, above all, that we have met, in the environs of both cities, a group of 'interventionist' landowners, who endeavoured to modify the working conditions of their tenants: Abbot Uberto di Passignano and the bishop of Florence Ardingo, for instance, but also the canons of S. Martino and the monks of S. Ponziano in Lucca. Apparently, we are at the opposite end of Menant's *désengagement*; this further confirms that social and economic change in Tuscany during the late 12th and early 13th centuries was radical enough to push some landowners to react promptly. As a second point, both Florentine and Lucchese ecclesiastical owners (and, as far as we can tell, also lay ones) mostly resorted to fixed rents, above all when they demanded cereals, and share tenures seem to have been comparatively marginal. Third, not only did a steadily increasing number of renders *become* high in the final quarter of the 12th century in the countryside of both cities, but rents also *remained* high thenceforth, thus leading to the overall growth in the extraction of the agricultural surplus that we have just discussed. We need to explain this before we can move on to the individual forms of tenancy agreements that were adopted, for it is not clear how landowners managed to make tenants accept renders that became increasingly burdensome – all the more so when we acknowledge the absence of visible technological improvements over our period, which could have boosted agricultural yields. Sometimes landowners did not reach their goal, in fact, as is testified by the Lucchese withheld rents; or else they had to face overt peasant resistance, for example at Massarosa and, albeit less conclusively, at S. Casciano in Val di Pesa (cf. chapters 4.2.1.2 and 3.2.3).

To me, the factor that contributed to establishing a fairly stable equilibrium between landowners' demands on the one hand, and tenants' (and/or land) productivity on the other appears to have been the development of credit markets, which supplied cultivators with the cash and the agricultural produce they needed in order to pay part of a high rent – the part for which the annual harvest of a holding was not sufficient. I have argued in chapter 3.2.2.3 that the documents concerning Uberto's trial show that rural credit was widespread in the Chianti region already in the very first years of the 13th century, and rural creditors were indeed the people on whom Abbot Uberto mostly relied in order to pay off the debts of S. Michele; the charters of S. Lorenzo di Coltibuono, moreover, reveal that loans guaranteed by land pledges were quite common in Chianti already in the previous century (cf. again chapter 3.2.3). Some peasants, such as the *colonus* of Passignano Zucco, could even build up a career as local money lenders, thus

improving their social and economic status (cf. chapter 2.3). As to Lucca, we do not only have to recall the high number of credit operations recorded by Ciabatto during the 1220s and the 1230s (the same applies to the few deeds of the Florentine Palmerio; cf., respectively, chapters 4.2.3 and 3.2.3). Here we need to add that, according to Andreas Meyer, the first Lucchese protocol whose fragments have been preserved dates to 1204, but the first clues about the existence of notarial registers in Lucca stretch back to the early 12th century.[10] Meyer maintained that protocols originated from the quick notes taken by notaries, which summarised the content of the charters they sealed;[11] I think we can assume, too, that the redaction of *imbreviature* mirrors the development of credit, the 'protagonist' of the vast majority of transactions recorded within protocols. Hence it is definitely plausible that the early *Duecento* was characterised by the presence of fairly mature credit markets, to which tenants could resort whenever the output of their holding(s) was not sufficient to pay their annual rent. One may suppose that the debt (in the form of produce or cash) cumulated thereby by defaulting tenants was carried over to the following year – thus creating, furthermore, ties of economic dependency between leaseholders and their creditors.

The question we need to pose now is whether the peasantry of the Lucchesia and the Fiorentino really had access to credit; indeed, the fact that credit was available does not imply that all tenants – in particular the poorest ones – could easily obtain it. The discussion of the different forms of land management that were chosen by landowners is strongly related to this. I shall propose an explanation that can account for the reasons why landowners preferred one type of tenancy agreement over another one; the possibility of accessing credit on the part of tenants played a central role in this respect, but other factors were as important, and will be analysed in due course. Such explanation is to some extent theoretical and has limits, which I will highlight at the end of this section. Still, it is my hope that the reader will consider it as a suitable framework for the data analysed in this thesis.

To start with, let us assume that the cultivators living in the countryside of both Florence and Lucca were in general regarded as creditworthy. If tenants could borrow produce and money quite easily, it becomes possible to explain why high fixed rents in kind were the first choice for both Florentine and Lucchese landowners over our period – either as an outcome of the abolition of *corvée*-work (Florence) or in the form of a burdening of the already-existing system of fixed rents (Lucca). Fixed rents implied two important advantages. First, they gave an incentive to supply more labour, because tenants could keep for themselves all the income that exceeded the rent. Let us suppose, for example, that a *manens* of the canons of Lucca had to deliver 5 *st.* of wheat every year; this means that all the output going beyond those 5 *st.* was his, hence it was in the *manens*' best interest to make the most out of his holding, particularly in the event of a high

[10] Meyer, 'Die ältesten', p. 563.
[11] Meyer, 'I registri', pp. 341-2.

rent – either to guarantee subsistence to himself and his family, or to store enough produce that could be marketed at a later stage. As a second point, fixed rents appear to have been convenient in terms of supervision of the tenants' work, if one wanted to save time and money over this, because they prevented leaseholders from telling lies about the quantity of the harvest. Once the unit of measurement was established, there was no way for our hypothetical *manens* to deliver anything less than the agreed rent of 5 *st*. No monitoring of his work was therefore needed. On top of this, as an option of last resort, tenants could borrow what they needed in order to pay rent, if the harvest of their holding(s) was not sufficiently good. It can be proposed, thus, that the main reason for the adoption of high fixed rents in kind lay in the attempt, on the part of landowners, to boost agricultural productivity by giving their tenants a stake in the final output of their holding(s) – something that was all the more necessary over a period of growing aggregate demand – while cutting, at the same time, the costs deriving from the monitoring of the tenants' work. Let us think, for instance, of the supervision of *corvée*-work on the manorial demesnes of the Florentine countryside. Demesnes required the presence of local *gastaldi*, who had to be paid; abolishing demesne farming was, in this sense, a way to save money.

Giving incentives to supply labour and cutting supervision costs have been regarded as two of the objectives that share tenures – and one of its later forms, the *mezzadria poderale* – make it hard to achieve. In a sharecropping regime, tenants knew that they would leave to proprietors a very high proportion of the harvest – particularly when half of the products was demanded – and were probably pushed to work to the full extent of their possibilities *only if* they had no other land to cultivate except for the sharecropping holding itself. Otherwise, they might have sought to work other plots of land belonging to other proprietors, thus neglecting perhaps their share tenure (there is evidence that this did happen on the 15th-century *poderi mezzadrili* in the Fiorentino).[12] As to the supervision problem, it is sufficient to recall, here, the clauses related to the rights landowners had to monitor their leaseholds surfacing from the early *mezzadria* agreements of Passignano dating to the late 12th and early 13th centuries (cf. chapter 3.2.2.4). They show that tenants' cheating on the harvest was regarded as a real problem by landowners – and one that could have been easily sorted out through the demand for a fixed rent, we may add. The unreliability of *mezzadri*, who were used to hiding part of the agricultural produce they had managed to collect, was a *Leitmotiv* of the *satira del villano*, the literary genre characterised by the harsh mocking of peasants, which became particularly widespread in what are now Italy and France after the Black Death.[13] Peasants were no longer numerous after the Plague and could therefore negotiate better working conditions with landowners. This timing, therefore, does

[12] Cf. Herlihy and Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans*, p. 274 and the bibliography at notes 11 and 12. On the tendency to undersupply labour in a sharecropping regime cf., among others, Reid, 'Sharecropping'.
[13] For a recent overview cf. Ribani, 'Il contadino ladro'. On sharecropping in 16th- and 17th-century France cf. Hoffman, 'Sharecropping'.

suggest that the *satira* was also an ideological reaction due to the relatively high bargaining power of the peasantry. Still, it is certainly true that sharecropping and *mezzadria* did make cheating on the harvest possible, if not likely.

At this point, one might conclude that high fixed rents in kind should have always been preferred to share tenures. But they only just prevailed. In order to understand why, we need to get back to the issue of credit, and of the possibility, for the rural population, of accessing it. We started from the hypothesis that the peasantry of the countryside of Florence and Lucca was, in general, creditworthy. This was not always the case, however. We have met throughout this thesis highly-dependent tenants, *manentes* and *coloni*, and it was possible to argue that one of their most recurrent features was that, normally, they did not have landed property of their own (cf. chapter 2.3). In Passignano at least, *coloni* were also the addressees of rent commutations, and a family of *coloni* (the Malavacca) emerged as the first identifiable group of sharecroppers – a type of sharecropping including *mezzadria* elements too (cf. chapters 3.2.2.2, 3.2.2.3.3 and 3.2.2.4). It must have been risky to impose burdensome fixed rents on highly-dependent cultivators; not only could a bad year entail failure in the provision of rent (and it did, as is proved by the Lucchese *afficta retenta*; cf. chapter 4.1.2), but tenants also were unlikely to find lenders who could help them to compensate the negative effects of meagre harvests. In view of this, one reason that probably pushed landowners, in some circumstances, to prefer sharecropping contracts over high fixed rents is that, in a share-tenure regime, tenants no longer needed to resort to credit, as the rent was fixed as a proportion of the harvest; so, in no case could a tenant fail in the payment of his (or her) share.

In addition to this, another factor that can help to explain the choice of sharecropping contracts is to be found in the type of crops that were cultivated. We have observed in chapters 3.2.2.4, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 that both share tenures and early *mezzadria* contracts were mostly applied to lands characterised by the mixed cropping of cereals, and by polyculture in general. It is no chance that the terms employed within these agreements in order to describe the rent due to landowners are *blada* (which refers to all types of grains), *fructus* and *logoria* (which label all the products of the land); and that we have found, quite frequently, mention of fig-trees, olive-trees and vineyards as part of sharecropping holdings. Conversely, fixed rents were mostly – albeit not exclusively – employed in the monoculture of wheat (*granum* or *frumentum*) or else in fields in which different crops were cultivated separately, in specific patterns (the so-called intercropping, as results from many Lucchese lease contracts and inventories of renders envisaging the delivery of fixed quantities of *frumentum*, *milium* and *fabae*; cf. chapter 4.2.1 and, on intercropping, chapter 4.2.3). It can thus be argued that another reason for the stipulation of share-tenancy contracts was the attempt to cope with overall yield uncertainty, as posed by tenures in which the mixed

cropping of cereals and tree crops coexisted (it is worth noting that the final output of vineyards and olive-trees, in particular, is utterly unpredictable).[14]

It is of course perfectly plausible to think that polyculture-oriented regions are compatible with a high-fixed-rent regime, as different crops are unlikely to fail in the same year. This compatibility, however, strongly depends on the productive potential of individual areas, and on the average agricultural risks resulting therefrom. In this respect, tenants and landowners in the countryside of Lucca and Florence had to deal with the different ecological constraints of their local environments, which constitute the final point we need to analyse in our explanation of sharecropping; this, moreover, gives us the possibility of examining another *mezzadria* element which I have excluded so far: that regarding the joint provision of seed-corn. We have observed in chapters 3.2.2.4, 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 that this clause – or, at least, a clause specifiying who was in charge of seed-corn – began to appear in the early *mezzadria* contracts of Passignano from the 1170s, whereas it was almost completely absent in the share-tenancy agreements issued in the countryside surrounding Lucca between the late 12th and the early 13th centuries. Other forms of cost-sharing in Lucchese contracts (such as those regarding the plantation of new vines, the restoration of farmhouses or the construction of casks, as they are recorded within Ciabatto's *imbreviature*; cf. again chapter 4.2.3) were linked to the improvements to be made on the holding at the start of a lease.

To me, the reason for this difference lies in the relatively low agricultural yields of a high number of areas of the Florentine *contado* (cf. chapter 3.1.1), and in the fact that the Fiorentino is mostly suitable to the cultivation of tree crops. It is no surprise, thus, that our late-12th- and early-13th-century sharecropping contracts specified how seed-corn was to be provided. Thick sowing and the mixed cropping of various types of grains (*blada*) were indeed needed in order to obtain satisfying yields in most of the Fiorentino, and this goal must have been particularly urgent to achieve over a period in which landowners endeavoured to increase the extraction of the agricultural surplus. In most of the Lucchese countryside, instead, soil productivity was high, and this allowed landowners to 'bet' on the demand for fixed rents in that the risk of failure in the provision of all the agricultural products was much less pronounced than in the Fiorentino. In this sense, it looks as though Lucchese landowners never conceived sharecropping agreements in terms of a systematic partnership between leaseholders and proprietors (which could be renewed for decades, as will be the case with the late-medieval *poderi mezzadrili* in the Fiorentino). As we have seen, Lucchese share-tenancy contracts tend to appear in peripheral and war-ravaged territories or else at the start of a lease, as temporary solutions (cf. chapters 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). One can propose, thus, that the absence of the joint provision of seed-corn in Lucchese share tenures

[14] Cf. Galassi, 'Tuscans' (in particular pp. 81-2) and the subsequent debate: Epstein and Galassi, 'A Debate'; Epstein, 'Moral hazard'.

mirrors the lack of interest, on the part of local landowners, in using this type of contract as a stable, long-term option to frame tenancy relations. In this respect, I agree here with Alberto Maria Onori, who studied the landed estates of the Lucchese abbey of Sesto over the second half of the 13th century and the first half of the 14th (cf. again chapter 4.2.2). Onori defined the share tenures issued by the monastery of Sesto as 'robbery' sharecropping, which means that these agreements were employed to make the most out of unproductive lands – a relatively rare situation in the Lucchesia. Indeed, the properties of Sesto were concentrated, for the most part, in the marshy terrains close to the lake of Bientina, frequently crossed by the armies of Lucca and Pisa.[15]

To sum up, I believe that the combination of those three elements (a credit-averse peasantry; the coexistence of the mixed cropping of cereals with tree crops; and a relatively unproductive environment) can help to explain why landowners might have opted for share tenures, and why Florentine share tenures were provided, more consistently than in the Lucchesia, with *mezzadria* clauses. We must not forget, however, that fixed rents prevailed over our period, and that this applies to the countryside of both Florence and Lucca. As I have argued above, the reason for this probably lay in the fact that high fixed rents in kind must have appeared to rural proprietors as the most profitable tenancy agreement of all in order to give tenants a stake in the output of their holding(s) and to cut monitoring costs over labour. The necessity to increase production must have led landowners to force the limits posed by the productive potential of the local environment, and by the difficulties that tenants could encounter in gaining access to credit; it pushed, for example, the rural owners of Chianti to exploit – and perhaps overexploit – the relatively few terrains of their region which were suitable to the monoculture of wheat.

With regard to Florence, we have already noted that this goal was achieved through the abolition of demesne farming, even though it entailed a lessening of signorial control – as encapsulated in *corvée*-work – over rural dependants. Indeed, it can be assumed that one element that made cultivators accept, in the end, higher rents was the cancellation of their most hateful and humiliating duty, together with the possibility of working exclusively on their holding(s). Leasing out demesnes, or at least pledging them away (as was the case with the Badia a Settimo; cf. chapter 3.2.1), was also a response to widespread indebtedness, which appears to have affected Florentine ecclesiastical landowners more than Lucchese ones. The reasons for this difference are not very clear. Debt might have been rooted in mostly (but not exclusively) local conflicts, as in Passignano, but we can at least suppose that more general factors contributed to it: possibly, an increase in taxation by the city governing body over ecclesiastical assets, which may have occurred already before the 1250s, when it was positively attested (cf. chapters 3.2.2 and 1.2.1.2).

[15] Onori, *L'abbazia*, p. 50.

The interpretative framework I have built up so far has limits; it reduces to an intellectual model a series of historical processes and individual situations that can hardly be portrayed in a single picture. Indeed, during the period that we have analysed it does appear as if landowners provided a variety of responses to the problem of social and economic change, and the rationale behind each of those responses cannot always be easily detected. In relation to this, we have to include into our matrix money rents, too, and discuss them briefly. As results from the *verso* of one of Settimo inventories, and also from the documentation of S. Maria a Monte (cf. chapters 3.2.1 and 4.3), labour-duties could also be converted into the demand for rents in cash. It can be assumed that money was collected whenever an ecclesiastical landowning institution needed readily-available cash, but I would doubt that this represented anything like a long-term solution to frame tenancy agreements in the countryside. The debasement of coins and the crisis of confidence in the value of currency resulting therefrom (cf. chapters 3.1.2 and 4.1.2) must have made cash an option of last resort – possibly the easiest to handle, but also the least convenient one for rural proprietors. For the same reason, it was practically impossible to have an estate cultivated in return for a salary; I would assume that no peasant of the Florentine and Lucchese countryside, however poor he or she was, was disposed to accept a wage over periods of enduring inflation if he, or she, had alternative options.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the economic conjuncture of the decades straddling the 12th and the 13th centuries made it necessary, apparently for the first time, for some major rural landowners of Tuscany to rethink the ways in which their estates had been managed up to that point; to repeat, the necessity to give incentives to tenants led proprietors to impose, for the most part, high fixed rents in kind. At any rate, the amount of evidence about the many efforts towards a profit-oriented exploitation of land – at the expenses of customary tenancy agreements, and even of signorial power – are the elements that characterise in the first place the central medieval period and, in particular, the years between *c.* 1180 to *c.* 1230.

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