

THIRTEENTH-CENTURY SEIGNIORIAL INSTITUTIONS AND OFFICIALS OF THE GUIDI COUNTS¹

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This paper illustrates some aspects of rural lordship in thirteenth-century north and central Italy, namely the territorial framework for the exercise of seigniorial powers and the seigniorial officials who administered the lords' dominions. How were seigniorial territories organized from an institutional point of view? How did the lords manage the adjustments and changes occurring in their lordships due to inheritance, purchases and sales of seigniorial rights? How was that framework connected to the institutional organization of rural communities? Who were the men who administered those lordships and how long did the connection between the families of those officials and the lords last? These are the questions I have tried to answer through the study of deeds (recorded in charters and notarial registers) regarding the Guidi counts, a family belonging to the upper aristocracy of north-central Italy. This study focuses on institutional matters, but in the section devoted to the relations between lords and seigniorial officials a prosopographical approach is adopted. The dynamics investigated in this study were fundamental in the historical evolution of the north-central Italian countryside, and their analysis provides useful material for further comparison with analogous phenomena in other parts of Europe.

Questo articolo illustra alcuni aspetti delle signorie rurali dell'Italia settentrionale e centrale nel XIII secolo, ovvero la struttura territoriale per l'esercizio dei poteri e degli uffici feudatari che amministravano le proprietà dei signori. Come erano organizzati i territori feudatari da un punto di vista istituzionale? Come gli amministratori conducevano le liquidazioni e i cambiamenti che occorreavano nelle loro signorie dovuti ad eredità, acquisti e vendite dei diritti feudatari? Come quella struttura era legata all'organizzazione istituzionale delle comunità rurali? Com'erano gli uomini che amministravano quei feudi e quanto a lungo duravano i legami tra famiglie di quegli ufficiali e i signori? Queste sono le domande a cui ho cercato di rispondere attraverso lo studio degli atti (registrati in documenti e atti notarili) riguardanti i conti dei Guidi, una famiglia appartenente all'alta aristocrazia dell'Italia centro-settentrionale. Questo studio si focalizza su questioni istituzionali, ma nella sezione dedicate alle relazioni tra i signori e gli ufficiali feudatari viene adottato un approccio prosopografico. Le dinamiche investigate in questo studio sono state fondamentali per l'evoluzione storica della campagna dell'Italia centro-settentrionale, e la loro analisi fornisce materiale utile per ulteriori confronti con fenomeni analoghi in altre parti d'Europa.

¹ List of abbreviations: ASF = Archivio di Stato of Florence. Charters from the following archive groups within the *Diplomatico* deposit of the ASF have been used: *Cam.SS.* = *Camaldoli, San Salvatore*; *Pass.* = *Passerini*; *Patr.Eccl.* = *Pistoia, Patrimonio Ecclesiastico*; *Prat.* = *Pratovecchio, San Giovanni Evangelista*; *Rif.AP.* = *Riformagioni, Atti Pubblici*; *S.Tr.Acq.* = *Firenze, Santa Trinita (Acquisto)*. Notarial registers: *Not.Ant.* = *Notarile Antecosimiano* (in the ASF). Libraries: BCRP = Biblioteca Comunale Rilliana of Poppi; BNCf = Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale of Florence.

INTRODUCTION

Rural lordships often provided the basic territorial structure and immediate political framework for a large part of the rural population of north and central Italy throughout the high and late Middle Ages, maintaining this role in some areas well beyond this period. Thus, as far as territorial organization was concerned, the rural lordships played an essential historical role, even though the seigniorial network did not cover the whole countryside and the lords themselves could be subject politically to city communes or urban-based lordships. This article investigates two aspects of rural lordship, taking source material from documents related to the Guidi counts, who were one of the most important families in north-central Italy throughout the high Middle Ages. It focuses on the institutionalized exercise of seigniorial powers and the social relations between the counts and the officials they put in charge of their lordships, with the aim of achieving a greater understanding of the problems encountered by the lords in ruling their dominions as well as in recruiting suitable people to staff them. Whenever sources allow for it, this study of the institutions of rural lordship reveals the lords' attitudes towards the problems they encountered in the exercise of power, their capacity to maintain it and their adaptability to change. Seigniorial officials also deserve more attention, since they were the men who kept these institutions working, and consequently represented the link between lords and rural society, to which the seigniorial officials themselves belonged. These issues lay at the core of some basic institutional and social dynamics at local level, and their investigation is essential for a better knowledge of rural society as a whole.

The thirteenth century, especially the years 1250–1300, was the period in which the city communes of north and central Italy made the greatest effort to gain control of the countryside, eliminating rural lordships or limiting the lords' powers. None the less, lordships were not wiped out. Leaving aside the peculiar cases of Piemonte and much of Friuli — where the cities were too weak to impose themselves on the great lords — as well as Latium — where some aristocratic families were able to exploit their connection with the papal *curia* and established very strong seigniorial powers — rural lordships usually survived at the frontiers of the territories ruled by the cities, mostly in the mountains but also on marshy and wooded plains. Lordships were widespread in the Apennines, from west Liguria to the Marches and Umbria, and in the Maremma in southern Tuscany. Between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, the conflicts in which the whole of north and central Italy became involved turned to the advantage of some lords, who could use their castles as military strongholds and draw recruits from subject rural communities. Later in the fourteenth century, the strengthening of some major city-based dominions created a situation less favourable to rural lordships; yet rural lordships still existed, and even flourished in some cases, especially in the districts of weak cities (for example Parma, Piacenza, Modena and Reggio in

Emilia), in the interstices between the territories ruled by the great powers of north-central Italy (like the Visconti and Florence), in areas contended for by those great powers, and in the papal state, where the popes were not always able to maintain a firm rule.² Rural lordship was thus the prevailing form of political organization in a large portion of north and central Italy, and under propitious political conditions and skilled leadership it could remain dynamic and capable of further development.³ As for the territorial extent of lordships and the prerogatives exercised by lords, the situation is complex; all that can be said here is that the lords' powers ranged from low-level jurisdiction and the appointment of local magistrates of small communities in weak lordships to full judicial powers in large and strong lordships and even the rule of small princely states in the most sensational cases, like the Montefeltro lordship, which encompassed four dioceses at the end of the fourteenth century.⁴

In the late fourteenth century, north-central Italy's great regional states were already taking shape. While in the thirteenth century the political geography of north-central Italy coincided for the most part with its network of cities, in the fourteenth century power became increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few princely families (Savoy, Visconti, Sforza) and some tenacious republics (Venice and Florence). Lords like the Montefeltro and Monferrato were at the head of small states; other lords, ruling over smaller dominions, were able to hold out against the great powers for a time due to their lordships' marginal position, but in the end were forced to capitulate, and their seigniorial powers were reduced or suppressed. Many lords had a connection with one of the hegemonic powers of that period, which recognized the lords' seigniorial rights or even supported the lords for a time. This connection took the form of allegiance to the prince in the territories subject to the Savoy, Visconti, Sforza, Scaligeri and Carraresi, support from family members in the papal *curia* in Latium, and full integration in the political life of a city, sometimes with a

² G. Chittolini, 'Signorie rurali e feudi alla fine del Medioevo', in G. Galasso (ed.), *Storia d'Italia* IV (Turin, 1981), 588–676, esp. pp. 602–6, 618–27, 631–3; on Piemonte, see A.M. Nada Patrone, 'Il Piemonte medievale', in G. Galasso (ed.), *Storia d'Italia* V (Turin, 1986), 3–362, esp. pp. 48–67; on Latium, see S. Carocci, 'La signoria rurale nel Lazio (secoli XII e XIII)', in A. Spicciati and C. Violante (eds), *La signoria rurale nel medioevo italiano* I (*Studi medioevali* 3) (Pisa, 1997), 167–98, esp. pp. 171–83; on southern Tuscany, see A. Giorgi, 'Il conflitto magnati/popolani nelle campagne: il caso senese', in *Magnati e popolani nell'Italia comunale* (Pistoia, 1997), 137–211, esp. pp. 174–8, and S.M. Collavini, 'Honorabilis domus et spetiosissimus comitatus'. *Gli Aldobrandeschi da 'conti' a 'principi territoriali' (secoli IX–XIII)* (*Studi medioevali* 6) (Pisa, 1998), 293–579; on Emilia, see G.M. Varanini, 'L'organizzazione del distretto cittadino nell'Italia padana nei secoli XIII–XIV (Marca Trevigiana, Lombardia, Emilia)', in G. Chittolini and D. Willoweit, *L'organizzazione del territorio in Italia e Germania: secoli XIII–XIV* (*Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-germanico, Quaderno* 37) (Bologna, 1994), 133–233, esp. pp. 219–23.

³ Chittolini, 'Signorie rurali e feudi alla fine del Medioevo' (above, n. 2), 631, and G.M. Varanini, 'Dal comune allo stato regionale', in M. Tranfaglia and M. Firpo (eds), *La Storia* II (Turin, 1986), 693–724, esp. pp. 695, 697, 699, 711.

⁴ On the Montefeltro, see J.-C. Maire Vigueur, 'Comuni e signorie in Umbria, Marche, Lazio', in G. Galasso (ed.), *Storia d'Italia* VII/2 (Turin, 1987), 321–606, esp. pp. 562–8, 575–82.

leading role, in Treviso, Siena, and the cities of Umbria, the Marches and Latium. The extent of the seigniorial rights the lords were allowed to retain depended on the local situation. The Savoyards gradually imposed their administration over the whole territory subject to their rule. In Treviso, the lords controlled the city government until the late thirteenth century, so the commune left their seigniorial rights almost untouched; the situation did not change when the da Camino gained power, since the alliance with the lords was vital for the new ruler. Thus in Treviso's district the lords consolidated their power over the countryside in the fourteenth century, maintaining their prerogatives even under Venetian rule (from 1338). In Siena, where city aristocrats belonging to the leading group had acquired rural lordships in the thirteenth century, seigniorial rights owned by citizens were not limited by the commune until the late thirteenth century, when the middle class gained control of government and began to restrict and eliminate seigniorial rights.⁵ Thus, the weaker the city, rural community or princely power, the more a lord could safely retain or acquire seigniorial rights. Some cities and, in most cases, the princes (Savoy, for example) recognized seigniorial rights, but in the long run they limited them. Substantial political independence was the best defence for the lords, but only large and continuous lordships or, above all, a marginal collocation in the political geography of north-central Italy could provide adequate conditions for it.

As for the Guidi counts, in the early thirteenth century their lordships dotted the Apennines between Romagna and Tuscany, from the Mugello to the Casentino, and other lordships subject to them lay in the lower Valdarno west of Florence (Empoli and some other castellanies), the upper Valdarno, the Pratomagno and the Val d'Ambra (Figs 1 and 2). This vast patrimony suffered serious losses throughout the century. After 1250 the Guidi appear to have committed themselves to their roles as political leaders, foreign officials in some city communes (*potestates*)⁶ and military chiefs in the conflicts that troubled central Italy. But none of them became a professional *condottiere*, nor settled in a city that could lay claim to their lordships, like Arezzo, in order to become a member of the ruling group or even the lord of the city. These choices could have provided them with better opportunities for strengthening their seigniorial

⁵ Chittolini, 'Signorie rurali e feudi alla fine del Medioevo' (above, n. 2), 625–7, 646–8; Nada Patrone, 'Il Piemonte medievale' (above, n. 2), 51–7, 65–7. On northern Italy also see the articles collected in F. Cengarle, G. Chittolini and G.M. Varanini (eds), *Poteri signorili e feudali nelle campagne dell'Italia settentrionale fra Tre e Quattrocento: fondamenti di legittimità e forme di esercizio (Quaderni di reti medievali rivista 1)* (Florence, 2005). On Treviso, see Varanini, 'L'organizzazione del distretto cittadino nell'Italia padana' (above, n. 2), 183–9, and D. Canzian, 'Signorie rurali nel territorio trevigiano al tempo della prima dominazione veneziana (1338–1381)', in Cengarle, Chittolini and Varanini (eds), *Poteri signorili e feudali* (above), 227–48, esp. pp. 227–9, 233–6, 238. On Siena, see Giorgi, 'Il conflitto magnati/popolani nelle campagne: il caso senese' (above, n. 2), 184–207. On central Italy, see Maire Vigueur, 'Comuni e signorie in Umbria, Marche, Lazio' (above, n. 4), 489, 504, 548–54, 562–8, 575–82.

⁶ The word *potestas* is used also for the chief magistrate of a rural community (see below, pp. 167 and 173).



Fig. 1. The main Guidi lordships in Tuscany and Romagna. (Map: author.)

powers in the countryside. The main threat came from Florentine expansion and the ambitions of regional hegemony, since Florence was among the cities that adopted the most hostile attitude towards rural lordships. While the Guidi counts' seigniorial powers were still strong in the thirteenth century, they were progressively eroded — not only by Florence — in the fourteenth, and the last lordship, Poppi in the Casentino, was surrendered to the Florentine army in the mid-fifteenth century.⁷

⁷ M. Luzzati, 'Firenze e la Toscana nel Medioevo', in G. Galasso (ed.), *Storia d'Italia* VII/1 (Turin, 1987), 561–828, esp. pp. 675–8; E. Sestan, 'I conti Guidi e il Casentino', in E. Sestan, *Italia medievale* (Naples, 1966), 356–78, esp. pp. 362–4, 373–4. On relations between the Guidi and Arezzo, see J.P. Delumeau, 'I conti Guidi e Arezzo: un ravvicinamento incompiuto?', in F. Canaccini (ed.), *La lunga storia di una stirpe comitale. I conti Guidi tra Romagna e Toscana* (*Biblioteca storica toscana* 57) (Florence, 2009), 105–17, and G.P. Scharf, 'Le intersezioni del



Fig. 2. The Guidi's lordships in the Pratomagno, the Val d'Ambra and the Casentino.
(Map: author.)

From the 1970s on, Italian historiography has taken a deep interest in rural lordship, mainly examining its legal aspects, its effects on settlement structures, and the rents collected by lords.⁸ Greater attention should now be devoted to

potere: i Guidi e la città di Arezzo nella seconda metà del Duecento', in Canaccini (ed.), *La lunga storia* (above), 119–38.

⁸ A good basic bibliography on rural lordship in Italy, by P.G. Embriaco, can be found at <http://www.repertorio.retimedievali.it>, click on 'I poteri signorili (Regno italico: secoli IX–XIII)' (last consulted 06.06.2012).

the way seigniorial powers were actually exercised, which means dealing in detail with both territorial organization and seigniorial officials. The reader will not find herein an examination of the Guidi counts' seigniorial rights; this topic has been addressed by Simone Collavini in his study of the Guidi's power in the twelfth century, but further investigation leads to the conclusion that there is not much to be added on this issue as far as the thirteenth century is concerned. In the last fifteen years, the history of the Guidi counts has received considerable attention, both within studies specifically devoted to this family and in works focusing on territories under their seigniorial rule.⁹ As a result, the main aspects of this family's history from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries are now well known; furthermore, for the tenth century, there is a detailed study by Currado Curradi,¹⁰ which dates back to the late 1970s. Thus we have a good knowledge of the Guidi up to their division into branches, which began in the

⁹ For a very good bibliography on the Guidi counts, see M. Bicchierai, *Ai confini della repubblica di Firenze. Poppi dalla signoria dei conti Guidi al vicariato del Casentino (1360–1480)* (*Biblioteca storica toscana* 50) (Florence, 2005), 8, n. 9. This is an almost complete bibliography, so only the most important studies since 2003, when that bibliography stops, are mentioned here. Articles devoted to the most important members of the family, some written by M. Bicchierai and others by M. Marrocchi, can be found in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* LXI (Rome, 2003) [hereafter *DBI* LXI], and some of them will be referred to below. Then we have: N. Rauty (ed.), *Documenti per la storia dei conti Guidi in Toscana. Le origini e i primi secoli (887–1164)* (*Documenti di storia italiana*, new series 10) (Florence, 2003), whose shortcomings have been pointed out by S.M. Collavini in a review published in *Società e Storia* 103 (2004), 155–7; G. Francesconi, 'La signoria monastica: ipotesi e modelli di funzionamento. Il monastero di Santa Maria di Rosano (secoli XI–XIII)', in G. Pinto and P. Pirillo (eds), *Lontano dalle città. Il Valdarno di Sopra nei secoli XII–XIII (Valdarno medievale: studi e fonti 1)* (Rome, 2005), 29–65; M. Bicchierai, 'La signoria dei conti Guidi in Valdarno. Osservazioni ed ipotesi', in Pinto and Pirillo (eds), *Lontano dalle città* (above), 83–116; M.E. Cortese, 'Signori di castello: gruppi aristocratici ed assetti del potere nel Valdarno di Sopra (secoli XI–XII)', in Pinto and Pirillo (eds), *Lontano dalle città* (above), 119–40; S. Taddeucci, 'Un castrum e la sua comunità alla metà del XIII secolo: Loro Ciuffenna', in Pinto and Pirillo (eds), *Lontano dalle città* (above), 313–42; P. Pirillo, 'Montevarchi: nascita, sviluppo e rifondazione di un centro del Valdarno', in Pinto and Pirillo (eds), *Lontano dalle città* (above), 343–77; M.E. Cortese, *Signori, castelli, città. L'aristocrazia del territorio fiorentino tra X e XII secolo* (*Biblioteca storica toscana* 53) (Florence, 2007), 7–22, 116–25; S.M. Collavini, 'Le basi materiali della contea dei conti Guidi tra prelievo signorile e obblighi militari (1150 c.–1230 c.)', *Società e Storia* 115 (2007), 1–32. This latter article was re-published under the title 'Le basi economiche e materiali della signoria guidinga (1075 ca.–1230 ca.)', in Canaccini (ed.), *La lunga storia* (above, n. 7), 315–48: the journal article of 2007 has always been quoted in this paper. Also see the other articles in Canaccini (ed.), *La lunga storia* (above). On the Guidi's title, see S.M. Collavini, 'Comites palatini / paladini: ipotesi sulle forme di legittimazione del principato dei Guidi', *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo* 110/1 (2008), 57–104. See also G. Vannini (ed.), *Rocca Ricciarda, dai Guidi ai Ricasoli. Storia e archeologia di un castrum medievale nel Pratomagno aretino (Media aetas 3)* (Florence, 2009), especially C. Molducci, 'L'incastellamento dei conti Guidi nel Valdarno superiore fra X e XII secolo' (pp. 53–69), and V. Cimarrì, 'La Rocca e la domus Guicciardi. Strutture del paesaggio tra XII e XIV secolo' (pp. 71–87).

¹⁰ C. Curradi, 'I conti Guidi nel secolo X', *Studi Romagnoli* 28 (1977), 17–64.

1220s; for the following centuries, the outline we can draw on the basis of historiography is rather more fragmentary.

In the thirteenth century, the exceptional genealogical linearity that had so far characterized the Guidi came to an end, and about ten years after the death of Guido Guerra III in 1214,¹¹ the patrimony, including seigniorial rights, began to be divided among his sons. The division gave rise to a variety of different local situations that were subject to change by hereditary successions, transactions and agreements within a family that had suddenly become much more numerous and complex. At least in some places, different branches of the family maintained seigniorial rights in common throughout the thirteenth century. Five branches sprang from the sons of Guido Guerra III: the counts of Romena, descendants of Aghinolfo;¹² the counts of Dovadola, descendants of Marcovaldo;¹³ the counts of Modigliana (also called the counts of Porciano), descendants of Tegrino;¹⁴ the counts of Bagno and the counts of Battifolle, descendants of Guido's sons,¹⁵ that is, respectively, Guido Novello¹⁶ and Simone,¹⁷ who kept their rights and assets in common until they broke apart in 1274 (Fig. 3).¹⁸

Guido Guerra III was a major figure in the twelfth-century kingdom of Italy and a faithful ally of Frederick I. The diploma issued by the emperor to the count in 1164 records all the count's lordships, describing a seigniorial dominion that maintained its size until the early thirteenth century. None the less, the Florentine expansion had begun to affect the Guidi's lordships as early as the mid-twelfth century,¹⁹ and in 1219 the sons of Count Guido Guerra III had to subdue to Florentine superior political control over the castellanies of Montemurlo in the lower Valdarno, and Montevarchi, Loro Ciuffenna, Viesca and all their lordships in the upper Valdarno, apparently as securities for the payment of some debts. The division of the counts' patrimony began shortly afterwards, in 1225, but one of Guido Guerra III's sons, Ruggero, died the same year and a quarrel broke out among the other brothers, with the result that the partition was completed only in 1230.²⁰ In the second half of the

¹¹ M. Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra III)', in *DBI LXI*, 239–43, esp. p. 242.

¹² M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Aghinolfo', in *DBI LXI*, 199–201.

¹³ M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Marcovaldo', in *DBI LXI*, 281–3, esp. p. 282.

¹⁴ M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Tegrino', in *DBI LXI*, 304–7.

¹⁵ M. Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra IV, detto il Vecchio)', in *DBI LXI*, 243–5.

¹⁶ M. Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido Novello', in *DBI LXI*, 257–60.

¹⁷ M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Simone', in *DBI LXI*, 294–6.

¹⁸ Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Simone' (above, n. 17), 295.

¹⁹ Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra II)', in *DBI LXI*, 236–9, esp. p. 237; Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra III)' (above, n. 11), 239–40.

²⁰ Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra IV, detto il Vecchio)' (above, n. 15), 244; Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Aghinolfo' (above, n. 12), 199–200; Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Marcovaldo' (above, n. 13), 282–3; Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Tegrino' (above, n. 14), 305–6; Pirillo, 'Montevarchi' (above, n. 9), 349–50, 352. The 1219 deed was published in P. Santini (ed.), *Documenti dell'antica costituzione del comune di Firenze (Documenti di storia italiana 10)* (Florence, 1895), section 'Capitoli del comune di Firenze', document no. 67 (24 April 1219).

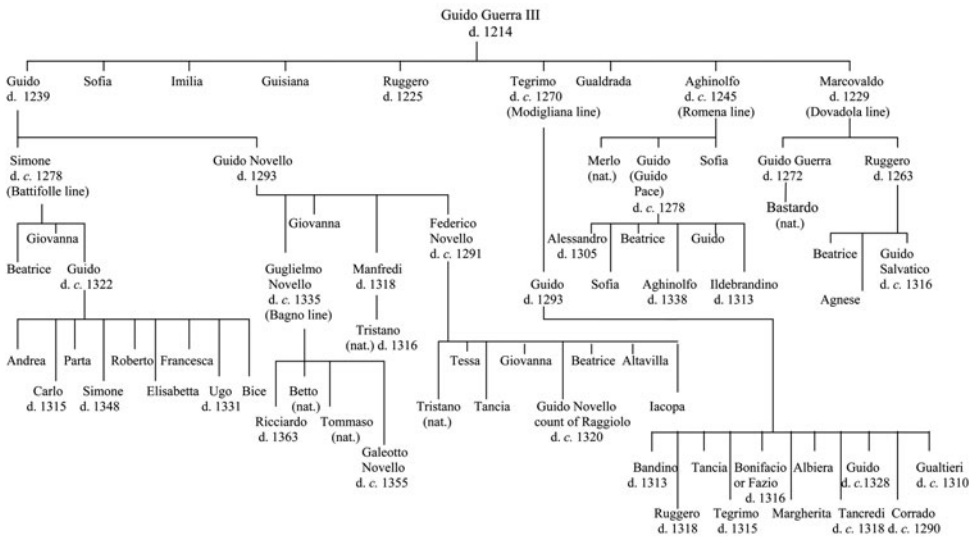


Fig. 3. The Guidi counts in the thirteenth century (based upon data published by Bicchierai, *Il castello di Raggiolo* (below, n. 81), 88–9, and the articles devoted to the members of the Guidi family in *DBI LXI*). Nat. = natural son, illegitimate. (Diagram: author.)

century the counts' financial difficulties had serious consequences on their dominion. This was seen first in 1254–5, when, due to excessive debt, the Guidi sold to Florence most of the rights and assets they had in Empoli, Vinci, Collegonzi, Petroio, Cerreto, Musignano, Colle di Pietra, Monterappoli and Montemurlo in the lower Valdarno, and in Montevarchi. However, this last castellany remained largely under the control of Guido of Dovadola, the son of Marcovaldo, who was an ally of Florence. In 1255 the counts of the Modigliana line also had to recognize the superior political authority of the city of Arezzo over their lordships situated in the Val d'Ambra, although this did not prevent them from strengthening their local hegemony over that small valley. Guido of Romena (Guido Pace), the son of Aghinolfo, did the same in 1257, when he recognized the superior political authority of Arezzo over his castellanies of Ragginopoli, Partina, Lierna and Corezzo in the Casentino. Since the Guidi were heavily involved in the political strife in central Italy, it is not surprising that the agreement through which Pope Gregory X tried to reconcile the guelphs and ghibellines of Florence in 1273 contained several sections regarding Guido Novello and Simone, both strenuous enemies of Florence at that time. Simone's position became less burdensome after he became an ally of Florence in 1274.²¹ Financial difficulties continued to trouble the Guidi: it was

²¹ M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Pace)', in *DBI LXI*, 245–7; M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido', in *DBI LXI*, 247–9 (the son of Tegrino); M. Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido Guerra (Guido di Dovadola)', in *DBI LXI*, 255–7; Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido Novello' (above, n. 16), 258–9;

due to debts that in 1273 Guido Salvatico sold the rights he still had on Empoli, Vinci, Montemurlo, Monterappoli, Cerreto and Monteverchi, and in 1280 surrendered his share of the family's assets in Florence to his creditors, the powerful Cerchi, one of the leading Florentine families. Also Guido of Modigliana, the son of Tegrimo, asked the Cerchi for a loan in the early 1280s, and at the close of the century Guido, the son of Simone, was in a situation similar to that of Guido Salvatico 30 years before, so much so that in 1300 he had to surrender to the Scali, another Florentine family, the castellany of Vespignano, in the Mugello. Even Guido Novello the Younger, whose grandfather had been the fiercest enemy of Florence within the family, owed money to Florentine creditors in the early fourteenth century.²² In the following decades, Florence continued to increase its control over the countryside to the detriment of the Guidi; in 1292 the city purchased Ampinana (in the Mugello) from Manfredi, the son of Guido Novello, and in 1306 the Florentines took Loro Ciuffenna, in the Pratomagno; in addition, in 1316 Aghinolfo of Romena, the son of Guido of Romena, sold his Pratomagno lordship of Rocca Ricciarda to the Pazzi of Valdarno, maybe due to his debts. From the early fourteenth century, the conflicts between different lines of the Guidi family made the situation even more difficult for the counts, and these clashes sometimes offered the city further opportunities for intervention.²³

THE OFFICIALS OF THE GUIDI COUNTS AND THEIR DISTRICTS

For the twelfth century and the first 25 years of the thirteenth, that is until the division, nearly all we know about how the counts organized the territories under their rule comes from the depositions for the 1203 lawsuit regarding the counts' patronage rights over the monastery of Rosano.²⁴ The witnesses described a district subject to the political authority of the counts and

Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Simone' (above, n. 17), 294–5; Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Tegrimo' (above, n. 14), 306. On the upper Valdarno and the Val d'Ambra, also see Bicchierai, 'La signoria dei conti Guidi in Valdarno' (above, n. 9), 97–110, and Pirillo, 'Monteverchi' (above, n. 9), 355–6, 359–60.

²² Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido' (the son of Tegrimo) (above, n. 21), 248; M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido', in *DBI LXI*, 249–52 (the son of Simone); M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido Novello (Guido Novello il Giovane, Guido Novello di Raggiolo)', in *DBI LXI*, 260–3; M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido Salvatico', in *DBI LXI*, 263–5.

²³ M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Aghinolfo', in *DBI LXI*, 201–3 (the son of Guido of Romena); Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido' (the son of Tegrimo) (above, n. 21), 248; Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Guido Novello (Guido Novello il Giovane, Guido Novello di Raggiolo)' (above, n. 22), 261; M. Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Manfredi', in *DBI LXI*, 279–81.

²⁴ C. Wickham, *Legge, pratiche e conflitti. Tribunali e risoluzione delle dispute nella Toscana del XII secolo (I libri di Viella 23)* (Rome, 2000), 347–51, and Francesconi, 'La signoria monastica' (above, n. 9), 46–54.

administered by an official styled ‘vicecomes’,²⁵ who had military and judicial powers and resided in the castle of Monte di Croce. These documents do not provide evidence that the rural communities of the district had any sort of autonomous organization at that time, not even on an informal basis; thus we can surmise that such organizations did not yet exist in the district of Monte di Croce in the early thirteenth century, and that the *vicecomes* exercised all the powers of a public nature within the district, that is, above all, military defence and justice.²⁶ After the partition, administration of lordships was complicated by two factors: the entanglement of rights belonging to different branches in some districts, and the development of rural communities’ organizations. The latter phenomenon sometimes produced a division of duties between a seigniorial official managing the counts’ estates and exercising some public-type powers (the *vicecomes*), and the chief magistrate of the community (the *potestas*). This magistrate can be considered a seigniorial official when he was appointed by the lords, even when he was elected by the community and the counts merely ratified his election. This is probably the case in the districts where we find both *vicecomites* and *potestates*. Obviously, the seigniorial nature of the *potestas* is most evident when this magistrate was the only representative of the counts in one of their lordships.

In the variety of situations that originated from the partition and developed in line with purchases and sales, inheritances and agreements, we find the simplest institutional arrangement in the lordships where the seigniorial powers belonged to one branch of the family, even if members of other branches had properties within those districts. However, there were also more complex cases in which different branches owned shares of seigniorial rights over a castle and its district. Several situations of this kind were recorded in the thirteenth century and some of them are rather well documented, but the same is not true of the seigniorial officials serving in those places. Let us begin with the clearest and most interesting case.

In a deed drawn up in Corzano in 1276,²⁷ Prior Onorato of the hermitage of Pian di Fazzolo put himself and the hermitage under the protection of the Guidi counts, in the hands of the following officials: *dominus* Gozzello, *vicecomes* of Count Guido Novello; Bonencontra, *vicecomes* of Count Guido of Modigliana; Semprebono, *vicecomes* of Count Guido of Romena; and Ranieri di Cavallone, *vicecomes* of Count Guido Salvatico. Then, a man named Dente, a herald of the counts (‘plazarius in Corzano dictorum vicecomitum’), declared that,

²⁵ The word *vicecomes*, in a seigniorial context, usually designates a lord’s agent with large administrative powers, though not always including defence and justice.

²⁶ On the Guidi’s *vicecomites* between the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, see Collavini, ‘Le basi materiali’ (above, n. 9), 15–18. By the phrase ‘powers of a public nature’ or ‘public-type powers’ I mean the prerogatives of the civil authority: military defence, justice, taxes and tolls.

²⁷ *Cam.SS.*, 3 March 1276. In case of discrepancy between the chronological style used in a charter and current style, the charter date is quoted as is, and current style is used in the text.

according to the *vicecomites*' instructions, he had publicly announced the drawing up of the deed and the order they had given not to harass the hermitage. There is no mention of a *potestas* in the document, but this cannot be taken as definitive proof that there was none in the district.

Four branches of the Guidi family jointly owned the seigniorial rights on Bagno di Romagna and Corzano, presumably in equal shares: they collectively exercised judicial powers and protected the hermitage through their officials, and together they received the new submission deed through the same officials. This situation had arisen in May 1225, when the counts divided the rights they had over certain tenants who resided within the districts of Bagno and Corzano, and who were certainly the counts' *coloni*, although the text is not explicit on this point. On the other hand, the seigniorial rights over those same districts were not divided and continued to be owned in shares by the five sons of Guido Guerra III: Guido, Tegrimo, Ruggero, Aghinolfo and Marcovaldo.²⁸ After Ruggero's death, the arbitration of March 1230²⁹ and the deed drawn up that same day to specify the details³⁰ established that the rights and assets that the late Ruggero had owned in these districts were to be divided among the surviving heirs: Guido, Tegrimo, Aghinolfo, and the two sons of the late Marcovaldo. Each of the three surviving sons of Guido Guerra III had a quarter of it, while the remaining quarter was to be assigned to the sons of Marcovaldo. Shortly afterwards, in April, the heirs of Guido Guerra III divided the late Ruggero's *coloni* in Bagno and Corzano; the document records the names of the *coloni* assigned to the sons of Marcovaldo, but does not mention their seigniorial rights over the two districts.³¹ A quarter of the castles and districts of Bagno and Corzano appears in the inventory of the rights and assets of Guido Novello and Simone written in 1239,³² and can be found also in the diplomas issued by Frederick II to the two brothers in 1240³³ and 1247,³⁴ as well as in another diploma issued by the same emperor to Guido of Romena in 1247.³⁵

Since a split between Simone and Guido Novello occurred in 1274, in the document from 1276 the official who represented the latter did not represent

²⁸ *Rif.AP.*, 28 May 1225.

²⁹ P. Santini, 'Nuovi documenti dell'antica costituzione del comune di Firenze', *Archivio Storico Italiano* series V, 19 (1897), 276–325, document no. 10 (19 March 1230).

³⁰ Santini, 'Nuovi documenti' (above, n. 29), document no. 11 (19 March 1230).

³¹ Santini, 'Nuovi documenti' (above, n. 29), document no. 13 (17 April 1230).

³² BNCF, MS II,X,101, pp. 141–8 (5 March 1239), esp. p. 145.

³³ F. Schneider (ed.), *Toscanische Studien*, 5 vols (Rome, 1908), II, document no. 20 (September 1240).

³⁴ J.L.A. Huillard-Bréholles (ed.), *Historia diplomatica Friderici secundi*, 6 vols in 12 (Paris, 1852–61), VI, part 1, 518–24 (April 1247).

³⁵ The text of this diploma, issued by Frederick II to Guido of Romena in April 1247, was recorded in a diploma issued by Henry VII, published in F. Bonaini (ed.) (published posthumously), *Acta Henrici VII Romanorum Imperatoris et Monumenta quaedam alia suorum Temporum Historiam Illustrantia*, 2 vols (Florence, 1877), I, document no. 146 (7 June 1312).

Simone. Count Simone apparently did not have castellany-level seigniorial rights over the two districts. In the agreement drawn up at the end of August 1274 between Simone and the commune of Florence, reference was made to a preliminary arrangement between Simone and his brother in view of a division that had not yet taken place, and that would certainly concern the rights and assets they owned in common. A few days later, the commune of Florence cancelled all condemnations against Simone, and the same document³⁶ mentions some places as belonging to him alone; this suggests that the division had already taken place, or that there was a rather precise agreement on this matter, even if not yet written in legal form. In this division, the share of seigniorial rights over Bagno and Corzano owned in common by the two brothers probably had been assigned entirely to Guido Novello.

Thus in these two districts, in 1276, each branch of the Guidi family owning a share of seigniorial rights was represented by an official; together these officials granted the lords' protection over the hermitage and ordered a subaltern official, a *plazarius*, to announce the prior's submission. The document therefore outlines a unitary apparatus with a collegial direction. The issue of the territorial boundaries within which these *vicecomites* exercised their authority is discussed later on in this article; for the moment it is sufficient to say that this territory was wider than the two districts of Bagno and Corzano. Even though this is perhaps the only explicit testimony of an institutional framework of this type in the territories subject to the Guidi counts, it seems admissible that this was the way seigniorial rule worked in the districts where several branches held equal shares of seigniorial rights, at least when conflicts between the different branches were not too serious. On the other hand, it is not so likely that the system was the same in districts where seigniorial rights were owned by different branches in unequal proportions, and obviously the hypothesis of several officials working in a collegial way becomes less and less probable with the increase of the disparity among the shares held by each branch. The *vicecomites*' subordinates were apparently a unitary group: indeed, in that same document, three subaltern officials, one charged with gathering transit customs (*passagerius*) and two heralds (*plazarii*), appear as witnesses, and the fact that one of the heralds was styled 'plazarius in Corzano dictorum vicecomitum', that is herald of the *vicecomites* in Corzano, suggests that the other *plazarius* performed his functions in Bagno.

A similar institutional organization is apparently attested in a document from 1236 concerning the district of Modigliana,³⁷ half owned by Count Guido and half by his brother Count Tegrimo, both sons of Guido Guerra III. The document, written in Modigliana, is a lease for land belonging to Count Guido and situated in Galliana, a village (*villa*) falling within the district of Modigliana. The lease was granted by a man named Mercatello, styled *vicecomes* and proxy of Count Guido. Before the definitive division of the

³⁶ ASF, *Capitoli, Registri*, XXIX, fols 228r–229r (28 August 1274), and 229v–232r (3 September 1274).

³⁷ *Pass.*, 18 April 1236.

patrimony among the sons of Guido Guerra III, the castle and district of Modigliana, including Galliana, were owned in common by all the count's heirs; with the division of 21 March 1230, these places became common property of two brothers only, namely Guido and Tegrino.³⁸ Upon Guido's death in 1239,³⁹ the inventory of the patrimony he left to his sons Guido Novello and Simone mentioned half of the castle and district of Modigliana,⁴⁰ and the same situation was attested also in the diplomas issued by Frederick II to Guido Novello and Simone in 1240⁴¹ and 1247.⁴² Neither the inventory nor the two diplomas mention Galliana, and this fact suggests that it fell within the district of Modigliana. We do not have any other documents concerning the rights belonging to Tegrino in Modigliana and its district for these years, but Guido the son of Tegrino (Tegrino died in 1270⁴³), together with his cousins, was recorded as one of the owners of seigniorial rights over Modigliana in late 1271.⁴⁴ Thus in 1236 Modigliana and its district were subject to the lordship of Guido and Tegrino, each owning half of the seigniorial rights over the castellany. Among the witnesses to the same document we also find another *vicecomes* named Reda, and the *potestas* of Modigliana, Maurino. Clearly, *vicecomes* Mercatello acted alone on this occasion because the land concerned belonged solely to Count Guido, and it is highly probable that the other *vicecomes* was the agent of Count Tegrino, even though the text does not provide an explicit indication. Therefore, the board of *vicecomites* of Modigliana seems to have worked in much the same way as that of Bagno and Corzano, and we can maintain that in similar situations the *vicecomites* acted as a body where the rights or the assets owned in common by the different branches of the family were concerned, whereas each *vicecomes* acted separately in the other cases.

The 1236 document mentions another official: the *potestas* of Modigliana. Subsequent records provide more detail on this magistrate and allow us to outline an institutional structure that reasonably can be extended also to Bagno and Corzano. A deed from 1271 shows that the *potestas* of Modigliana was then appointed jointly by the Counts Guido Novello, Simone and Guido: an arbitration of that year indeed confirmed the three counts' right to appoint the *potestas*, denying a request presented by the inhabitants of the district, who wanted to elect the *potestas* in full autonomy and leave to the counts only the right to confirm him.⁴⁵ Another document dating back to the same year records

³⁸ Santini, 'Nuovi documenti' (above, n. 29), document no. 12 (21 March 1230).

³⁹ Marrocchi, 'Guidi, Guido (Guido Guerra IV, detto il Vecchio)' (above, n. 15), 245.

⁴⁰ BNCF, MS ILX,101, pp. 141–8 (5 March 1239), esp. p. 146.

⁴¹ Schneider (ed.), *Toscanische Studien* (above, n. 33), II, document no. 20 (September 1240).

⁴² Huillard-Bréholles (ed.), *Historia diplomatice* (above, n. 34), VI, part 1, 518–24 (April 1247).

⁴³ Bicchierai, 'Guidi, Tegrino' (above, n. 14), 307.

⁴⁴ V. Ragazzini, *Modigliana e i conti Guidi in un lodo arbitrale del secolo XIII* (Modigliana, 1921), 55–76 (29 December 1271).

⁴⁵ Ragazzini, *Modigliana e i conti Guidi* (above, n. 44), 57, 58, 59, 62. The arbitration of 1271 does not mention any *vicecomes*.

an identical situation in Tredozio, where the two branches owning the seigniorial rights over the castle and district, namely the Romena and Dovadola branches, jointly appointed the *potestas* without any interference from the community.⁴⁶ The cases of Modigliana and Tredozio clearly show that there was only one *potestas* in a district, even when the seigniorial rights over the district belonged to different branches. The counts were not always free in the choice of a *potestas*. For instance, according to an agreement made in 1257 between Count Guido of Romena and the commune of Arezzo,⁴⁷ the districts of Lierna, Ragginopoli, Partina and Corezzo, all in the Casentino, would be administered from then on by *potestates* chosen by the count from among Aretine citizens; unfortunately we have no evidence as to how the appointments were carried out. We do not even know whether there was to be one *potestas* for all the communities or one for each community, but the former seems more probable, since a similar organization could be found in the Val d'Ambra. The commune of Arezzo obviously was trying to limit the count's power: indeed, the same agreement took away his jurisdiction over high crimes within the districts of Partina and Corezzo, transferring it to the city commune itself. In the 1236 document concerning Modigliana, we observe the simultaneous presence of both a *vicecomes* and a *potestas*, and a similar situation can be observed in another territory subject to the Guidi counts in the second half of the thirteenth century, that is Loro Ciuffenna (or simply Loro), in the Pratomagno. Leaving aside cases in which the roles of *vicecomes* and *potestas* were covered by a single official, certain similarities can be observed in the Guidi's lordships in the mountains between Tuscany and Romagna: that is a board of *vicecomites* in Bagno, Corzano and Modigliana, and a single *potestas* in Modigliana and Tredozio. These parallels lead to the conclusion that the seigniorial institutional framework on a local level followed the same patterns in all lordships owned in common by different branches of the Guidi counts, with a group of *vicecomites* or a *potestas* appointed by the counts in full autonomy.

Lordships in Romagna were not the only Guidi lordships where *vicecomites* and *potestates* coexisted, though institutional organization could be different. At Loro in the second half of the thirteenth century, seigniorial rights over the district belonged to a single branch of the family, the counts of Romena. Loro and its district formed part of a lordship comprising several rural communes: Sagona, Poggio, Trappola, Renaccio and Anciolina are indeed recorded alongside Loro,⁴⁸ but evidence of *potestates* has been found for Loro and Sagona only,⁴⁹ while mention is made only of councillors, usually styled

⁴⁶ A. Brentani, *Tredozio sotto la dominazione dei conti Guidi* (Faenza, 1930), 75–85 (13 May 1271).

⁴⁷ U. Pasqui (ed.), *Documenti per la storia della città di Arezzo nel Medio Evo*, 3 vols (*Documenti di storia italiana* 11, 13–14) (Florence, 1899–1937), II, document no. 603 (12 October 1257).

⁴⁸ Taddeucci, 'Un castrum' (above, n. 9), 318. For the list of communes, see pp. 314, 332–3. The boundaries of the lordship have been recognized in Cimarri, 'La Rocca' (above, n. 9), 73–4.

⁴⁹ Taddeucci, 'Un castrum' (above, n. 9), 333.

rectores, for the others. It is possible that each *potestas* had authority over more than one commune within the lordship. The documents that mention the *potestas* of Loro or Sagona all refer to the same person, Count Alessandro of Romena. The election of the lord as *potestas* was surely exceptional, as individuals of a far lower social level were the usual candidates for such a position.⁵⁰ This group of districts as a whole had one *vicecomes*, who was both the administrator of the count's assets and an official exercising public-type powers on behalf of the lord. Documents record him taking care of the counts' business, receiving fealties⁵¹ and subjection deeds,⁵² as well as administering justice in the local seigniorial tribunal,⁵³ collecting the poll-tax (*datium*) owed to the count,⁵⁴ issuing contracts for the gathering of tolls in the Montelungo market (*curatura* and *passagium*),⁵⁵ and granting exemptions from military services.⁵⁶

The situation is much less clear in Ragginopoli, where we find a castellan and bailiff (*castellanus et balitor*) in 1244 and, according to the agreement of 1257, a *potestas* from then on. As in Loro, seigniorial rights over Ragginopoli's district belonged to a single branch of the Guidi family in this period, namely the counts of Romena. It is possible that the titles mentioned in the two documents from 1244 and 1257 refer to one official exercising all the prerogatives elsewhere shared between *vicecomes* and *potestas*, which simply changed its name over time.⁵⁷ While no further evidence of Ragginopoli's *potestas* has been

⁵⁰ *Not.Ant.*, 21110, fols 87v (20 May 1286) and 88r (22 May 1286) on Sagona; fol. 94r (4 June 1290) on Loro.

⁵¹ Sometimes we find a *vicarius*, a temporary substitute of the *vicecomes*: see *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fols 29v (three deeds from January 1269) and 45r (10 May 1271), and *Not.Ant.*, 21110, fols 72v (15 January 1285), 107v (8 November 1291) and 122v (6 June 1293). The parish priest (*plebanus*) of Gropina, Guido, who in some deeds was styled 'vicarius domini comitis Alessandri de Romena' or similar forms, is a different case, since he was the temporary substitute of the count when the latter personally administered the lordship: see *Not.Ant.*, 21110, fols 126r (6 November 1293), 131r (8 August 1294), 135v (30 December 1294), 139r (3 and 18 May 1295), 143r (11 September 1295), 146r (28 October 1295), 147v (25 November 1295), 149r (18 December 1295), 151r (28 January 1296), 151v (12 February 1296), 152v (19 February 1296), 153r (18 March 1296), 154r (29 March 1296) and 155r (29 April 1296). In those years the count presumably resided in the lordship and did not appoint *vicecomites*.

⁵² *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fol. 137r (18 December 1278), and 21110, fols 5r (25 November 1280), 5v (30 November 1280), 12r (10 and 14 May 1281), 12v (8 June 1281), 86v (6 May 1286) and 157r (9 July 1296).

⁵³ *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fols 54v (February 1272), 97r (13 January 1274), 90r (30 January 1274) and 93r (24 April 1274).

⁵⁴ *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fol. 90r (27 January 1274).

⁵⁵ *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fol. 104v (9 December 1274).

⁵⁶ *Not.Ant.*, 21110, fols 88v (11 June 1286), 90r (13 July 1286) and 105r (8 October 1292). It is possible that the official mentioned in the two deeds from 1286 was a *vicarius* and not a *vicecomes*, since the count was probably residing in the lordship in these years.

⁵⁷ L. Schiaparelli, F. Baldasseroni and E. Lasinio (eds), *Regesto di Camaldoli*, 4 vols (*Regesta Chartarum Italiae* 2, 5, 13–14) (Rome, 1907–22), IV, document no. 2314 (25 July 1244), and Pasqui, *Documenti* (above, n. 47), II, document no. 603 (12 October 1257).

found, Count Aghinolfo of Romena's castellan is shown in the 1244 document in the exercise of his judicial functions: a plaint against the prior of Camaldoli having been submitted to him, he summoned the prior to answer before him, but the prior's proxy stated that he was not going to answer to the count's official.

Maybe in Ragginopoli a single official was both the chief magistrate of the community and the only agent of the counts. This was surely the case in the Val d'Ambra, where, in the second half of the thirteenth century, the counts of Modigliana held all the seigniorial rights at castellany level and there was a single *potestas* for all the rural communities within the lordship. In a document from 1299 the counts' official was styled *potestas et vicecomes* of the counts in Val d'Ambra.⁵⁸ The statute of the Val d'Ambra, completed in 1268, only used the term *potestas* to indicate the chief magistrate,⁵⁹ and we must observe that the same official mentioned in the document from 1299 quoted above also appears in another deed of the same year bearing the title of *potestas* only.⁶⁰ On the other hand, in these same charters, as well as in another from 1299, we find officials styled only *vicecomites*.⁶¹ Apparently, there was a single position of seigniorial official and chief community magistrate in the Val d'Ambra in the late thirteenth century, and his title did not always appear in the documents in its complete form.

At this point, the territorial spheres of action of *vicecomites* and *potestates* can be dealt with. As far as a *potestas* is concerned, we can maintain confidently that, as in the Val d'Ambra, he administered justice within a district (or group of districts) by enforcing the statutes, as was generally the case in thirteenth-century Italian rural communes. As we have seen above, the extent of his judicial powers was smaller in lordships where the counts were represented by one or more officials holding the title of *vicecomes*. The institutional nature of a *vicecomes* was slightly different: this official was the agent of a single branch of the Guidi within the area assigned to him; he was entrusted with the administration of all its assets and rights, including the counts' judicial powers. When the *potestas* and *vicecomes* were two distinct officials within a lordship, the *vicecomes* was not the only one to exercise justice on a local level. He also had other duties: he leased the counts' lands, received subjection deeds on behalf of the counts, granted the lords' protection (*bannum*) and collected taxes

⁵⁸ *Rif.AP.*, 5 May 1299.

⁵⁹ M. Ceppari, E. Jacona and P. Turrini (eds), 'Statuta et ordinamenta vallis Ambre', in M. Ascheri (ed.), *Bucine e la val d'Ambra nel Dugento. Gli ordini dei conti Guidi (Documenti di storia 11)* (Siena, 1995), 29–74. The early nucleus of this statute dates back to 1208 but the extant text was completed in 1268: see M. Ascheri, 'Lo statuto di val d'Ambra: un testo complesso di difficile datazione', in *Bucine e la val d'Ambra* (above), 11–21, esp. p. 20. For attribution to the year 1268, see Bicchierai, 'La signoria dei conti Guidi in Valdarno' (above, n. 9), 101–6, and on the Guidi counts and the Val d'Ambra, see pp. 101–9. Also see M. Resti, *Il Viscontado d'Ambra. Archeologia e storia dell'insediamento di un territorio di confine nel medioevo* (San Giovanni Valdarno, 2001), 31–47.

⁶⁰ *Rif.AP.*, 13 February 1299.

⁶¹ *Rif.AP.*, 13 February, 5 and 21 May 1299.

and tolls. Although the documents cited above are not explicit, it seems highly probable that the toll gatherers in Bagno and Corzano (*passagerii*) depended solely or mainly on the *vicecomites*, since the counts' legal prerogatives on their lordships included the right to impose tolls on markets and the transit of merchandise.⁶² It is impossible for us to outline the hierarchical relations between *vicecomites* and *potestates* when both were present in a district. At most, it can be assumed that the counts communicated with the *potestates* and gave them orders through the *vicecomites*, who presumably were linked more closely to the counts, but there is no documentary evidence to support this hypothesis.

Another interesting issue, unfortunately scarcely documented for the Guidi's lordships, is authority over *coloni*. The word *coloni* is used to designate twelfth- and thirteenth-century tenants whose dependent status was marked by the perpetual and hereditary obligation to reside on the land granted them, in theory without any right to leave that land on their own initiative. Sometimes a landlord also exercised — or claimed — public-type powers over his *coloni*, such as the power to judge them (*placitum*), to coerce them (*districtus*), to impose taxes connected with food supply and lodging rights (*albergaria*) and, in some cases, the power to impose some forms of military service. In some areas of Tuscany, according to Chris Wickham and Simone Collavini, these seigniorial obligations were constitutive elements of the *coloni*'s dependence as much as their bond to the land,⁶³ and they did not derive from the evolution of early medieval serfdom, since they were 'mainly the result of applying seigniorial relationships to individuals and families, independently of the larger frameworks of estate lordship and territorial lordship'.⁶⁴ Since the relationship

⁶² See the imperial diplomas mentioned above, pp. 164, 168 and 170.

⁶³ See C. Wickham, 'Manentes e diritti signorili durante il XII secolo: il caso della Lucchesia', in *Società, istituzioni, spiritualità. Studi in onore di Cinzio Violante II* (Spoleto, 1994), 1,067–80, and C. Wickham, 'La signoria rurale in Toscana', in G. Dilcher and C. Violante (eds), *Strutture e trasformazioni della signoria rurale nei secoli X–XIII (Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-germanico — Quaderno 44)* (Bologna, 1996), 343–409, esp. pp. 396–401. See also S.M. Collavini, 'Il "servaggio" in Toscana nel XII e XIII secolo: alcuni sondaggi nella documentazione diplomatica', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome. Moyen Âge 112* (2000) (monographic issue entitled *La servitude dans les pays de la Méditerranée occidentale chrétienne au XII^e siècle et au-delà: déclinante ou renouvelée?*), 775–801. Collavini's text also can be found on the web at: http://fermi.univr.it/RM/biblioteca/scaffale/Download/Autori_C/RM-Collavini-Servaggio.zip (last consulted 06.06.2012). The digital edition is always quoted in this paper. On pp. 9 and 12 Collavini referred to the seigniorial burdens in a generic way, although nevertheless he did mention military services (p. 12).

⁶⁴ Collavini, 'Il "servaggio"' (above, n. 63), 9: Collavini stated that *coloni*'s dependent status in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries was 'frutto in primo luogo dell'applicazione dei rapporti signorili a singoli individui e gruppi famigliari, autonomamente dai quadri più ampi costituiti dalla signoria fondiaria e da quella territoriale'. The expressions 'estate lordship' and 'territorial lordship' are used in the text to translate, respectively, the Italian phrases *signoria fondiaria* and *signoria territoriale*, which represent the main categories commonly used in Italy to classify lordships, distinguishing those in which the lord only exercised seigniorial powers on the people living on

between a *colonus* and his lord was a personal one, the exercise of justice over *coloni* (and *servi*) presumably did not belong to the local *potestas*, but to their lord's *vicecomes*, when these officials were two distinct individuals. Thus, it seems clear that the *vicecomes* of whichever branch of the Guidi counts was never a simple estate manager: this title always seems to imply some public-type powers, even if limited to the exaction of some taxes and to jurisdiction over the lords' *coloni*.

In referring to the areas where these officials carried out their duties, the word 'district' has heretofore been used in this paper to translate the terms *curtis*, *curia* or *districtus*. This is only one level in a more complex territorial framework that can be investigated starting from the term *comitatus*. With reference to the lordships of the Guidi counts, this word appeared for the first time in a document from 1195 and denoted the whole of the territories under the Guidi's seigniorial power,⁶⁵ when those territories were still part of one patrimony. It carries the same meaning in the depositions of Rosano's 1203 lawsuit, relating to matters in the second half of the twelfth century. Afterwards, it appeared again in this sense in a document from 1209⁶⁶ and in the diploma issued in 1219 by Frederick II, not yet crowned emperor, to the five sons of Guido Guerra III.⁶⁷

With the divisions of 1225 and 1230, a part of the assets and rights was actually divided while the rest remained in common, with Guido Guerra III's heirs holding shares. The situation that resulted from the 1230 division was modified by subsequent transactions, hereditary successions and agreements, and there was another major split before the end of the thirteenth century as a result of the disagreement between Guido Novello and Simone. After the division of 1230, the clearest use of the term *comitatus* is to be found in the statute of the Val d'Ambra (1268), when this territory was under the counts of Modigliana. In this statute, the word *comitatus* indicates the whole lordship of the Val d'Ambra,⁶⁸ composed of the districts (*curie* or *districtus*) of the rural communes of Bucine, Caposelvi, Torre Santa Reparata, Pogi, Galatrona and Rendola. Therefore it has the same meaning as the terms *potestaria* and *vicecomitatus*, which are used in this same statute to indicate the lordship as a whole.

his land from those in which the lord exercised such powers on the whole population of an area, even though not all the land belonged to him.

⁶⁵ A. Messeri (ed.), *Chronica Breviora aliaque Monumenta Faventina a Bernardino Azzurrino Collecta (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, second edition) XXVIII, part 3/1 (Città di Castello, 1905–21), 132–3 (9 January 1195).

⁶⁶ G. Rossini (ed.), *Magistri Tolosani Chronicon Faventinum (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, second edition) XXVIII, part 1 (Bologna, 1939), appendix 2, document no. 23 (5 June 1209).

⁶⁷ BNCF, MS II,X,101, pp. 173–5 (March 1219). On this as yet unpublished diploma, see P. Zinsmaier (ed.), *Die Regesten des Kaiserreiches unter Philipp, Otto IV, Friedrich II, Heinrich (VII), Conrad IV, Heinrich Raspe, Wilhelm und Richard, 1198–1272*, part 4: *Nachträge und Ergänzungen (J.F. Böhmer Regesta Imperii 5)* (Cologne/Vienna, 1983), summary no. 159.

⁶⁸ Ceppari, Jacona and Turrini, 'Statuta' (above, n. 59), 46.

In other documents, ‘comitatus’ is defined only through its connection with the name of the owner (or owners) of the seigniorial rights over the area, but without any reference to a specific area. None the less, in these cases it can be maintained that a reference to the group of districts in which the document was drawn up is always implicit. Let us look at some examples. The 1236 document discussed above (pp. 169–70) mentions the *comitatus* of Count Guido, son of Guido Guerra III,⁶⁹ and another from 1281 refers to the *comitatus* of the Counts Guido and Aghinolfo of Romena, sons of Guido of Romena.⁷⁰ The 1276 document (the subjection deed of prior Onorato) already cited (p. 167) is less precise, since the term *comitatus* is used without any specification.⁷¹ Now, supposing that reference to the group of districts in which a document is drawn up is implicit, it follows that in these three cases the word *comitatus* refers to the following areas:

— in the document from 1236, drawn up in Modigliana: all the territory situated in Romagna and assigned in common to Guido and his brother Tegrino with the partition of 21 March 1230.⁷² It was a large area of an elongated shape, that stretched approximately from Scavignano (about 4 km south of Faenza) to Marradi, and comprised various districts subject to the two counts, including Modigliana;

— in the document from 1276, drawn up in Corzano: the districts of Bagno, Corzano, *Mons Clusa* and Castellina. The vicissitudes of Bagno and Corzano from 1230 to 1276 have been outlined above; those of *Mons Clusa* and Castellina were identical. Among the documents on Bagno and Corzano mentioned above, *Mons Clusa* appears in those from March 1230, 1239, 1240 and 1247, while Castellina appears from the inventory of 1239 onwards, but it is possible that the area comprising Bagno, Corzano and *Mons Clusa* in the division of 1230 was intended as including Castellina as well;⁷³

— in the document from 1281, drawn up in Ragginopoli: the districts of Ragginopoli, Lierna, Partina and Corezzo.⁷⁴

Therefore a *comitatus* usually comprised several districts. The case of Modigliana illustrates the Guidi’s seigniorial territorial structure in its most elaborate form. On the basis of imperial diplomas issued in 1240⁷⁵ and 1247⁷⁶ to Guido Novello and Simone, sons of that Guido who had obtained that castellany in common with Tegrino, the district of Modigliana can be called a complex district, that is a *districtus* that comprised subdistricts. According to the two diplomas, other territories under Guido Novello and Simone (Poppi, Battifolle, Dovadola and perhaps others) were also complex districts in those

⁶⁹ *Pass.*, 18 April 1236.

⁷⁰ Pasqui, *Documenti* (above, n. 47), II, document no. 657 (19 February 1281).

⁷¹ *Cam.SS.*, 3 March 1276.

⁷² Santini, ‘Nuovi documenti’ (above, n. 29), document no. 12 (21 March 1230).

⁷³ For references to the documents, see above, nn. 29–30 and 32–5.

⁷⁴ Pasqui, *Documenti* (above, n. 47), II, document no. 657 (19 February 1281).

⁷⁵ Schneider (ed.), *Toscanische Studien* (above, n. 33), II, document no. 20 (September 1240).

⁷⁶ Huillard-Bréholles (ed.), *Historia diplomatica* (above, n. 34), VI, part 1, 518–24 (April 1247).

years. Such a subdivision is found also in other areas: in 1263, Counts Guido and Ruggero, sons of Count Marcovaldo, split a group of tenants residing in the district of Tredozio with Count Guido of Romena, son of Count Aghinolfo, in a deed that testifies to the fact that the district was composed of five *balie*.⁷⁷ The use of the term *balia* to designate each of the subdistricts within a complex district is typical of Romagna: we know, for instance, that the district of Dovadola, which was still under the counts of Dovadola in the first half of the fourteenth century, was divided into eight *balie*, while the lordships owned by the counts in the Casentino in the same period, on the Tuscan side of the Apennines, were composed of subdistricts each styled *populus sive villa*.⁷⁸

As for the complex district of Poppi in the Casentino, a deeper investigation was required to single out references to subdistricts, and some evidence regarding two of them has been found: Porrena and Bucena.⁷⁹ This limited information is nevertheless sufficient to argue that subdistricts were not mere names, as one could be tempted to suppose at first; they had an actual role at the lowest level of the local institutional organization, as revealed by the presence of heralds (*nuntii*) who performed their duties within the subdistricts where they resided. It is also reasonable to suppose that Poppi, besides being the chief town of a complex district, was also the centre of a subdistrict. This can be hypothesized on analogy with the situation of Tredozio in 1263: the castle of Tredozio was indeed the chief fortified place of both a complex district and one of its *balie*.⁸⁰ To complete the picture, in the first half of the fourteenth century Poppi was included in a *comitatus*. Indeed, the last will of Count Guido Novello the Younger, drawn up in 1320, mentions two *comitatus*, both situated in the Casentino, that is the ‘comitatus Porciani, Stie, Lonnani’ and the ‘comitatus Puppi, Cuorle, Garliani et Ragioli’.⁸¹ It is worth noting that Guido Novello the Younger had held the totality of seigniorial rights only over *some* of these areas, namely the districts of Garliano and Raggiolo,⁸² both situated between the upper course of the Arno and the watershed of the Pratomagno;

⁷⁷ Brentani, *Tredozio* (above, n. 46), 49–74 (24 April 1263).

⁷⁸ G. Cherubini, ‘La signoria del conte Ruggero di Dovadola nel 1332’, in Canaccini (ed.), *La lunga storia* (above, n. 7), 407–44, esp. pp. 410–11 on lordships in Romagna, 412–14 and 441 on lordships in the Casentino.

⁷⁹ The subdistrict of Porrena is mentioned in a 1262 deed recorded in the register of Ubaldino of Fronzola, the notary who drew it up: BCRP, MS 36, fol. 3r (16 September 1262). The subdistrict of Bucena is attested in a document from 1258: *S.Tr.Acq.*, 20 April 1258, and in another from 1264 where a *nuntius* of the subdistrict of Porrena is also mentioned: *Cam.SS.*, 16 April 1264. Another *nuntius* of the same subdistrict is mentioned in a document from 1269: *Prat.*, a deed dated 20 May 1269 on a charter marked 7 February 1269.

⁸⁰ Brentani, *Tredozio* (above, n. 46), 9–10, 51.

⁸¹ M. Bicchierai, *Il castello di Raggiolo e i conti Guidi. Signoria e società nella montagna casentinese del Trecento* (Raggiolo/Montepulciano, 1994), document no. 13 (15 March 1320). On Guido Novello the Younger, see Bicchierai, ‘Guidi, Guido Novello (Guido Novello il Giovane, Guido Novello di Raggiolo)’ (above, n. 22).

⁸² Bicchierai, *Il castello di Raggiolo* (above, n. 81), 90–1.

but apparently this fact had not compromised the institutional unity of the *comitatus*.

The territorial organization of the Guidi's lordships was not always structured on three levels (from top to bottom: *comitatus* or *vicecomitatus*, complex districts, subdistricts). All of these can be found in Modigliana in the thirteenth century and in Poppi in the first half of the fourteenth, but the situation was different in the Val d'Ambra in the second half of the thirteenth century: there were only two levels there, and the *vicecomitatus* was divided in non-complex districts styled *curie*, which were not divided into subdistricts.

Thus, after the division in branches the term *comitatus* was used to indicate a substantially continuous lordship, composed of a number of districts that varied from case to case. The territorial continuity of a *comitatus* was not always absolute, as in some of the Guidi's lordships situated in the Mugello and the Casentino.⁸³ Within each district, the seigniorial rights at castellany level might belong to a single branch or be divided into shares belonging to different branches. In any case, the district, not the *comitatus*, was the basic unit; it formed the basis for the division of seigniorial rights into shares that were always fractions of rights over a district. Even when a district was complex, that is when it was divided into subdistricts, the complex district as a whole remained the basis for the division into shares. The Guidi's various *comitatus* took shape in the course of the thirteenth century, and the increase in the use of this term with the meaning illustrated above may well have coincided with their actual formation; judging from the spread of the word, this process reached an advanced stage only in the second half of the century. Moreover, these territorial frameworks were subject to change, as seems to have happened in some lordships in the Mugello.⁸⁴

SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GUIDI COUNTS AND THEIR OFFICIALS

Besides institutional aspects, relations between the Guidi counts and their officials involved social and political issues. The counts' concern for the maintenance of their local power, achieved through strict control over their officials, had decisive consequences, determining the general attitude of the officials' families towards the counts. In this section, these topics are addressed through the

⁸³ On Mugello, see P. Pirillo, 'Due contee ed i loro signori: Belforte ed il Pozzo tra XII e XV secolo', in *Castelli e strutture fortificate nel territorio di Dicomano in età medievale. Storia e archeologia* (Borgo San Lorenzo, 1989), 9–56, esp. the map on p. 12.

⁸⁴ Pirillo, 'Due contee' (above, n. 83), 22: 'la creazione della contea di Belforte sembra essere stata operata mediante la sua separazione da quella di Ampinana. I due territori, in effetti, sembrano riuniti, almeno prima degli anni ottanta del XIII secolo' ('the creation of the Belforte castellany seems to have been executed through its separation from that of Ampinana. The two districts seem indeed united at least before the 1280s').

investigation of a limited number of families, all from the Casentino. These few cases are the only ones that allow some genealogical reconstruction for the thirteenth century; nevertheless, the results that emerge from this study allow us to identify a number of trends.

The small number of families and the limited timeframe illuminated by extant documents could raise doubts about the representativeness of the pattern outlined below. Obviously these cases cannot be regarded as fully representative from a statistical point of view, and the problem is not to be concealed. At any rate, while the preservation of the documents used in this section was not due in any way to these families and their peculiarities, such documentary evidence, accidental as far as the officials' families were concerned, actually outlines a trend in the tenor of their relations with the counts. This certainly cannot be a random fluke, and interpreting it as pure coincidence would be the least reasonable explanation.

Before embarking on an analysis of the *vicecomites*' families, there is a substantial and diverse set of documents that merits notice, as it brings to light the career of a notary who was a subaltern official of the counts of Romena at least twice and in two different areas, namely Pagno di Dato of Ragginopoli. As a general rule, we know next to nothing about the individuals who served the several branches of the Guidi in the thirteenth century as *vicecomites*, *potestates* or subaltern officials. The case of Pagno is a rather sensational exception: in the State Archive of Florence there are about twenty charters drawn up by Pagno during a period stretching from 1274 to 1309⁸⁵ as well as the small fragment of a notarial register of his own regarding the years 1278–80,⁸⁶ to which the summary of a deed he drew up in 1295 should be added.⁸⁷ Furthermore, in the archive of the monastery of Camaldoli there is a parchment quire composed of four folios, into which 53 entries originally written by Pagno were copied in 1334; the originals were written in 1275 and regard lands belonging to Camaldoli situated in twelve different places in the Casentino.⁸⁸ Moreover, Pagno is mentioned in three deeds drawn up by Vigoroso di Paradiso of Loro in 1278, 1279 and 1280.⁸⁹ The overall activity performed by Vigoroso, who was also a subaltern official of the counts of Romena for a time, is incommensurably better documented than that of Pagno: we have three notarial registers recording deeds drawn up by Vigoroso, for a total of about 4,000 deeds drawn up between 1259 and 1299, almost all of

⁸⁵ For the charters' references, see below.

⁸⁶ *Not.Ant.*, 15968.

⁸⁷ This summary was produced in the eighteenth century, and was published in F. Torraca, 'A proposito di Aghinolfo da Romena', *Bullettino della Società Dantesca Italiana. Rassegna Critica degli Studi Danteschi*, new series 11, issue 3 (1904), 97–108, esp. pp. 103–4.

⁸⁸ The quire is in Camaldoli, Archivio del Monastero di Camaldoli, MS Camaldoli 262 [hereafter C.262], fols 237r–240v. The whole manuscript is varied and of great interest; it is composed of 244 folios, containing documents mostly dating back to the years 1265–85.

⁸⁹ *Not.Ant.*, 21108, fols 128v (16 April 1278) and 156v (17 December 1279), and 21110, fol. 5r (25 November 1280).

them in the area of Loro Ciuffenna.⁹⁰ This mass of documents is obviously invaluable to the study of local society; but the fact that Vigoroso apparently worked within a rather limited area makes his professional vicissitudes less interesting than the case of Pagno. More than half of the extant charters written by Pagno were drawn up at Ragginopoli, and almost all of them concern assets or rights belonging to Camaldoli or other Camaldolite monasteries. This is not surprising if we consider that all these charters, with one exception, were kept in the archive of Camaldoli until they were transferred to the State Archive of Florence. As for the register fragment, it consists of four parchment folios, containing a total of 63 deeds; they were all drawn up in the Loro area, some of them on behalf of the *vicecomes* of the counts of Romena. These sources allow us to attempt a reconstruction of Pagno's career.

Pagno belonged to a Casentinese family, probably not exactly from Ragginopoli.⁹¹ The earliest extant deeds written in his own hand date back to 1274: they are two documents drawn up in Florence on behalf of the monks of Camaldoli.⁹² In 1275 and 1276, he was in the Casentino;⁹³ afterwards, thanks to the register fragment, he can be traced in the area of Loro between February 1278 and January 1280. For the years 1278–80 we do not have charters written by him; after the 1276 document, the next charter is from January 1281, and this significant interval suggests that Pagno moved to the area of Loro perhaps as soon as 1277 and worked there until the end of 1280. The deeds recorded in the fragment are of various kinds: they mostly regard dowries, purchases and sales (involving land for the most part), appointments of arbitrators and arbitral decisions. However, the largest category — fifteen out of 63, almost a quarter of the total — consists of deeds drawn up on behalf of Daddo of Ragginopoli, *vicecomes* of the counts of Romena in Loro during the years 1278, 1279 and 1280.⁹⁴ The fact that both Daddo and Pagno came from Ragginopoli cannot be a chance occurrence: it is reasonable to suppose that Pagno followed Daddo, presumably because the newly-appointed *vicecomes* knew and trusted him. All the documents written by Pagno on Daddo's behalf concern the management of the count's estates, except one,

⁹⁰ *Not.Ant.*, 21108, 21109 and 21110. The codicological and formal aspects of these registers are examined in A. Ghignoli, 'I quaderni di ser Vigoroso', in *Studi in onore di Francesco Magistrale*, soon to be published. The folios of the register marked 21108 are unnumbered: in the present paper, they are referred to using a continuous ad hoc numeration (with dates), but since this numeration does not correspond to actual marks on the manuscript, the reader would have to count the folios.

⁹¹ Schiaparelli, Baldasseroni and Lasinio, *Regesto di Camaldoli* (above, n. 57), III, documents nos. 1957 (22 June 1231) and 2093 (2 March 1236). Also see *Cam.SS.*, 7 May 1276 and 2 July 1301.

⁹² *Cam.SS.*, 29 September 1274 (two deeds).

⁹³ C.262, fols 237r–240v (year 1275), and *Cam.SS.*, 7 May 1276.

⁹⁴ *Not.Ant.*, 15968, fols 1r (two deeds from 20 January 1279 and two from 4 February 1279), 1v (5 February 1279 and 23 April 1279), 2r (12 March 1278 and 2 April 1278), 3r (18 November 1279), 3v (13 and 19 January 1280), 4r (two deeds from 25 April 1278 and one from 6 June 1278), and 4v (11 September 1278).

namely the assignment of a guardian to two minors.⁹⁵ Even though Pagno did not style himself as a subaltern official of the counts in this register fragment, in some deeds drawn up by Vigoroso di Paradiso of Loro this is declared explicitly.⁹⁶ Pagno, like Vigoroso, carried out these duties while continuing to draw up deeds for other people: their engagement in seigniorial administration was not at all an exclusive commitment. When, in those years, the counts of Romena happened to be in the area and needed a notary to draw up some deeds of considerable political importance, it was Pagno who did it. This is worth noting because there is no reason to suppose that his position as a subaltern official made him the natural choice of the counts.⁹⁷

The next extant document written by Pagno after the fragment dates to January 1281 and was drawn up in Caprese (the present-day Caprese Michelangelo).⁹⁸ At this point, we lose all trace of him for about ten years, until January 1290, when he appears as author of a document in Ragginopoli.⁹⁹ In 1294, Pagno was once again in service as a subaltern official of the counts of Romena in the castle of Ragginopoli.¹⁰⁰ The following year, he was still in Ragginopoli,¹⁰¹ where he drew up a deed in which the wife of Count Aghinolfo of Romena gifted a Florentine judge some land.¹⁰² Afterwards there is a six-year gap, until 1301: in that year, he drew up a deed in Moggiona in the Casentino regarding a plot of land owned by the hermitage of Camaldoli.¹⁰³ From 1304 on the gaps are smaller and the documents written by Pagno follow one another at shorter and more regular intervals.¹⁰⁴ It seems that in the last period of his activity, Pagno practised his profession within a rather limited area of the Casentino, probably living in Ragginopoli.

We can now draw some conclusions. First of all, the whole length of Pagno's documented activity, that is 36 years (1274–1309), is long enough to suppose that it represents approximately the entire period in which he practised his profession. The wide gaps pointed out above, and the fact that during one of those periods Pagno resided in Loro, suggest that he worked outside the Casentino for most of his life. It is even possible that all the non-documented periods were spent in the service of the counts of Romena, either as one of their trustworthy notaries

⁹⁵ *Not.Ant.*, 15968, fol. 3v (19 January 1280).

⁹⁶ See above, p. 000.

⁹⁷ *Not.Ant.*, 15968. On fol. 3r, we find a deed from 14 August 1279, in which the three sons of Guido dei Pazzi swear to the captains of the Parte Guelfa of Arezzo, as well as to the Counts Guido Salvatico, Guido of Romena and Guido of Battifolle, to support the same Parte Guelfa.

⁹⁸ *Cam.SS.*, 20 January 1281.

⁹⁹ *Patr.Eccl.*, 28 January 1290.

¹⁰⁰ *Cam.SS.*, 3 April 1294.

¹⁰¹ *Cam.SS.*, 2 October 1295.

¹⁰² Torraca, 'A proposito di Aghinolfo da Romena' (above, n. 87), 103–4 (11 December 1295).

¹⁰³ *Cam.SS.*, 2 July 1301.

¹⁰⁴ The charters drawn up by Pagno after 1301 are the following: *Cam.SS.*, 12 March 1304 (two deeds), 7 March 1305, 28 March 1305, 21 May 1307, 29 November 1307, 2 April 1308, 15 August 1308, 3 December 1308, 24 February 1309, 17 May 1309 and 20 October 1309.

or as a subaltern official. With regard to this matter, one point must be considered. Vigoroso too held the position of subaltern official of the counts several times in the course of the 40 years covered by his registers. If we follow the hypothesis that Pagno did the same, these two notaries, who served the counts as subaltern officials for a considerable amount of time, apparently remained at the lowest level of the hierarchy, since they were never documented as *vicecomites* or *potestates*. It is true that Vigoroso was appointed *vicarius* of the local *vicecomes*, but this was a temporary position and he was almost at the end of his career by that time. Since he is mentioned with this title in one document only within his registers, he probably exercised this office for a very short period.¹⁰⁵

In dealing with the *vicecomites* and their families, the chronological order of their appearance in the sources is followed here. The first candidate for study is Guido di Lotterio, who served the Counts Guido Novello and Simone when they were still minors, being styled ‘vicecomes in Casentino’ in a document from 1239.¹⁰⁶ In 1280, in the deed in which Guido Novello emancipated his sons Federico and Manfredi, among the witnesses we find a man named Vinci, son of the late Guido di Lotterio *de Glanzolo*,¹⁰⁷ who was probably the official cited in the 1239 document.¹⁰⁸ The patronymic and the place of origin allow us to identify Vinci as the Vincino who appears, again as a witness, in a document from 1286 recording an exemption from some seigniorial obligations granted by Count Guido Novello.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, a man named Vincino *de Glanzolo* is mentioned as the owner of a house in the castle of Poppi in a document attributed to the year 1248. It seems too early for him to be the same person, but the date is uncertain;¹¹⁰ in any case, this Vincino could be the member of another family, documented around the middle of the century, that provided the counts with an official.

In Pratovecchio in 1240 or 1242,¹¹¹ Count Ruggero, son of Count Marcovaldo of Dovadola, transferred some land to the abbey of Santa Maria situated in Poppiana, receiving other land in exchange from the same abbey; among the witnesses there was Adatto, *vicecomes* of Count Ruggero. In Empoli in 1246, the same Count Ruggero granted the monastery of Pratovecchio a

¹⁰⁵ *Not.Ant.*, 21110, fol. 122v (6 June 1293). On *vicarius*, see above, p. 172.

¹⁰⁶ *Pass.*, 1239. The month and day are illegible.

¹⁰⁷ *Glanzolum* is the ancient name of Castel San Niccolò, in the Casentino.

¹⁰⁸ Messeri, *Chronica Breviora* (above, n. 65), 191–2 (22 August 1280). The published text reads ‘de Glauçolo’, but it is surely an error made by the editor or the notary.

¹⁰⁹ *Pass.*, 24 August 1286. Vincino is defined ‘de Glanzolo’, and son ‘quondam Guidonis Luttieri’.

¹¹⁰ *S.Tr.Acq.*, December 1248. The charter is badly damaged. Florentine archivists attributed this charter to the year 1248 on the grounds of a note written on the dorse of the document, possibly in the sixteenth century.

¹¹¹ Schiaparelli, Baldasseroni and Lasinio, *Regesto di Camaldoli* (above, n. 57), IV, document no. 2200 (15 October 1240). The document bears the date 1240, but the indiction indicated is the fifteenth, which coincides with the year 1242.

half-share of the rights over his *coloni* residing in the Pratovecchio district;¹¹² among the witnesses were Tancredi and Giovannino, sons of Adatto *de Casentino*, who can be identified as the *vicecomes* mentioned as a witness at the exchange between Ruggero and the abbey of Poppiana. In 1286 near Pratovecchio, Count Guido Salvatico, son of the Count Ruggero who appeared in the two documents already mentioned, appointed his *vicecomes* in Bagno, Ranieri di Cavallone, as proxy for the purchase of all the estates and rights belonging to the bishop and cathedral chapter of Sarsina, in the area of Vessa, for the price of 200 gold florins;¹¹³ among the witnesses, there was a *dominus* Tancredi, styled *miles et familiaris* of Count Guido Salvatico, who could be Adatto's son. Chronological distance between the 1246 and 1286 documents permits this hypothesis, and in this case, we could even suppose that Tancredi remained all his life in the entourage of the counts of Dovadola.

In Poppi, in 1269, three laymen sold a plot of land to the monastery of San Fedele:¹¹⁴ among the witnesses there is Bonavia, son of the late Giunta di Mercatello. Some years later, in 1277, Bonavia appeared together with his brother Iacopino among the witnesses in a deed drawn up in Arcetri (just outside Florence), at the house of Gualterotto dei Bardi: Count Simone, Guido Novello's brother, promised not to harass the monastery of San Fedele; he also promised to defend it and pay compensation for the damages he had inflicted on the monastery.¹¹⁵ The fact that Bonavia and Iacopino's family was well-established in the Casentino can be seen from the fact that the 1269 deed was drawn up in Poppi and referred to a strictly local context: the purchaser was the monastery of San Fedele in Poppi, the land concerned was in Tennano, near Poppi, and one of the sellers, Domenico di Giannello, together with his wife Sobilia, probably lived in Tennano or was from there. Bonavia and Iacopino's grandfather may have been the same Mercatello who served as *vicecomes* and proxy of Count Guido the son of Guido Guerra III in Modigliana in 1236 and leased some land for 60 years to a man who promised to reside there, submit to the count and pay a rent.¹¹⁶ The identification of Bonavia's grandfather as the Mercatello cited in the 1236 document is based not only on his rather uncommon name, but also on the fact that the Count Guido who appears in the same 1236 document was the father of Guido Novello and Simone; it was Simone who ordered the drawing up of the 1277 deed referred to above. Thus we can infer some continuity in this family's relations with Count Guido and his son Simone.

Let us now examine a family whose relations with the counts substantially fitted the pattern outlined above, but with some interesting differences. In 1253,

¹¹² *Prat.*, 11 February 1245. Florentine *ab incarnatione* style is employed in this document, and the indication is the fourth.

¹¹³ *Rif.AP.*, 10 February 1286. Vessa is less than 10 km from Bagno di Romagna.

¹¹⁴ BCRP, 36, fol. 16r (1 December 1269).

¹¹⁵ *S.Tr.Acq.*, 30 November 1277.

¹¹⁶ *Pass.*, 18 April 1236.

Counts Guido Novello (acting also on behalf of his brother, Count Simone), Guido of Romena, Guido Guerra and Ruggero came to an agreement on certain rights and assets situated in Romagna and certain revenues from Pratovecchio in the Casentino.¹¹⁷ The following witnesses are mentioned: a notary styled *magister*, two more notaries, *dominus* Tebaldo son of the late Tebaldo *de Glanzolo*, another individual styled *dominus*, then Vinci, Boninsegna and Gozzello, the three sons of the late Tebaldo *de Glanzolo*, and finally two other witnesses. It is likely that *dominus* Tebaldo son of the late Tebaldo was the brother of Vinci, Boninsegna and Gozzello; otherwise we would have to assume there were two persons bearing the name Tebaldo, both from Castel San Niccolò (*Glanzolum*), both dead before 1253 and whose sons were all present as witnesses at the drawing up of the same deed, which seems rather unlikely. The four brothers might have been expected to be mentioned in a single entry, but it is evident that the notary who wrote the deed chose to list the witnesses according to qualifications and titles: thus we find the notaries, the *domini*, and finally the individuals without titles.

The Tebaldo di Tebaldo who appears in this document was probably the same Tebaldo di Tebaldo *de Glanzolo* listed as a witness in the 1239 deed briefly mentioned above, recording the surrender of a family of *coloni* to the monastery of San Fedele in Poppi; this deed was drawn up on behalf of Countess Giovanna, mother of Guido Novello and Simone, together with Uberto Pallavicini, guardians of the two pupils.¹¹⁸ In this same document, the aforementioned *vicecomes* Guido, son of the late Lotterio, also appears as a witness. Moreover, our Tebaldo is without any doubt the *dominus* Tebaldo *de Ghianizuolo* (another form of the toponym *Glanzolum*) who appears as a witness in a deed drawn up in Florence in November 1254, when Count Guido Novello offered himself as a guarantor for Count Guido of Romena in relation to the sale of rights and estates owned by the latter in the castellanies of the lower Valdarno.¹¹⁹ Tebaldo was mentioned again as a witness and styled *dominus* in the emancipation deed of Guido Novello's sons, drawn up at Poppi in 1280; beside Tebaldo, his brother Gozzello was also present as a witness and styled *dominus*.¹²⁰

Let us now consider more closely Tebaldo di Tebaldo's brothers. Vinci di Tebaldo *de Glanzolo* is the other person (besides Vinci di Guido di Lotterio *de Glanzolo* — see above) who could be identified as the Vincino *de Glanzolo* mentioned as the owner of a house in Poppi in a document attributed to

¹¹⁷ P. Santini (ed.), *Documenti dell'antica costituzione del comune di Firenze. Appendice (Documenti di storia italiana 15)* (Florence, 1952), section 'Miscellanea diplomatica', document no. 77 (24 March 1253).

¹¹⁸ *Pass.*, 1239.

¹¹⁹ Santini, *Documenti dell'antica costituzione ... Appendice*, section 'Capitoli del comune di Firenze' (above, n. 117), document no. 22 (10 September and 10 November 1254).

¹²⁰ Messeri, *Chronica Breviora* (above, n. 65), 191–2 (22 August 1280). The published text reads: 'presentibus domino Tebaldo et domino Doççolo fratribus, filiis olim Tebaldi de Glauçolo'; as for the toponym 'Glauçolum' and the name 'Doççolus', either the editor or the notary was mistaken.

1248.¹²¹ He almost certainly was the Vinci di Tebaldo mentioned as a witness in three documents regarding Camaldoli, all of which date from the 1240s.¹²² In one of them, Vinci is indicated as ‘*filius Tebaldi vicecomitis*’, but there is no further evidence that his father held this position, and we do not even know who the lord was he served.¹²³ After this, Vinci is mentioned only in the document from March 1253 referred to above, and after that we lose all trace of him. The same 1253 document also contains the only documentary evidence of Boninsegna.

As for Gozzello, he is perhaps to be identified as the Gozzello *de Kianzolo* (another form for *Glanzolum*) mentioned among the witnesses to a deed drawn up in Poppi in July 1253, recording the election of the abbot of the San Fedele monastery. The election was carried out ‘*ad honorem et reverentiam*’ of the pope, the abbot of Vallombrosa, all the Vallombrosan order and Counts Tegrimo, Guido (Tegrimo’s son), Guido Novello and Simone; Count Simone was also present as a witness.¹²⁴ In 1280, as noted above, a certain *dominus* Gozzello di Tebaldo *de Glanzolo* was among the witnesses of the emancipation of Guido Novello’s son; he was probably one of the four brothers and also the *dominus* Gozzello *de Glanzolo* mentioned in 1299 as the late father of a notary named Braccio, who witnessed the ten-year lease of a mill granted by the abbot of San Fedele in a deed drawn up in Poppi. This lease was relevant to the counts, since half of the annual rent in wheat was to be paid to Count Guglielmo Novello (son of Guido Novello) and Count Alessandro of Romena.¹²⁵

The connection between this family and the Counts Guido Novello and Simone is thus evident, though Boninsegna’s involvement seems minimal and Vinci apparently preferred to maintain relations with Camaldoli. As for Braccio di Gozzello, we cannot suppose he had a similar connection with the Guidi on the basis of the 1299 document alone, especially considering that the deed was not drawn up on the counts’ behalf. It is none the less worth noting that Count Guglielmo Novello the son of Guido Novello held rights over the mill, and this connection with Guido Novello’s branch perhaps reveals its significance if we consider the whole history of Tebaldo’s family.

There is more. We have seen that a certain *dominus* Gozzello, styled *vicecomes* of Count Guido Novello, was one of the officials who received the oath of subjection to Counts Guido Novello, Guido of Modigliana, Guido of Romena and Guido Salvatico sworn by the prior of the Pian di Fazzolo hermitage in 1276.¹²⁶ If we consider the identical name and title of *dominus*, the date of the

¹²¹ *S.Tr.Acq.*, December 1248.

¹²² Schiaparelli, Baldasseroni and Lasinio, *Regesto di Camaldoli* (above, n. 57), IV, documents nos. 2259 (15 September 1242), 2260 (29 September 1242) and 2304 (13 February 1244). The two deeds from 1242 were drawn up at Fontebona, not far from the hermitage of Camaldoli, while the deed from 1244 was drawn up in Poppi.

¹²³ Schiaparelli, Baldasseroni and Lasinio, *Regesto di Camaldoli* (above, n. 57), IV, document no. 2260 (29 September 1242).

¹²⁴ *S.Tr.Acq.*, 24 July 1253.

¹²⁵ *S.Tr.Acq.*, 9 May 1299.

¹²⁶ *Cam.SS.*, 3 March 1276.

document and the connection with Guido Novello, we reasonably can identify this *vicecomes* Gozzello as our Gozzello di Tebaldo *de Glanzolo*. The *vicecomes* Gozzello attested in 1276 cannot be Gozzello of Bagno, official of the counts of Modigliana in the Val d'Ambra in 1299, since the latter was connected to a different branch of the Guidi.¹²⁷ If this supposition is correct, after the break-up between Guido Novello and Simone in 1274, Gozzello chose to follow the former.

CONCLUSION

Further investigation would be necessary for an extensive study of the relationship between the territorial framework and the boundaries of the Guidi officials' authority, and thirteenth-century documents suitable for the analysis of this topic are so few that sources from the fourteenth century would have to be considered. Nevertheless, certain results emerge from the documents used above. The positions of *potestas* and *vicecomes* could be either separate or integrated. The same person held both charges when two conditions were met: (1) the seigniorial rights at district level belonged to one branch, and (2) the counts could appoint one chief magistrate for all the rural communities within a certain area. Such a situation obviously limited the communities' political autonomy, since it is reasonable to suppose that each of them aspired to having a chief magistrate elected by its members alone, while the existence of a single *potestas* for several communities probably means that this official was chosen by the counts without the communities' participation. At least in some cases, where seigniorial rights over a district belonged to different branches, the counts chose the *potestas* jointly, but it is not clear whether or not other solutions were employed also. As regards the *vicecomites*, when the Guidi (one or more branches) owned all seigniorial rights over several neighbouring districts, this complex as a whole was subject to a single authority, that is one *vicecomes* or a board of *vicecomites*. This outline is probably incomplete; for instance, it cannot be excluded that a branch of the Guidi could put a *vicecomes* chosen by its members only in a castellany where a minority share of seigniorial rights on the district belonged to another branch or even another family. At any rate, the relations between *vicecomites* and *potestates*, when these two institutional positions were separate, remain obscure. Each *vicecomes* was directly responsible to the count he represented; when he was alone at the head of one or more districts, he had a small group of subaltern agents at his disposal, but when he was not the only *vicecomes* in the lordship, he had to share this authority with the other *vicecomites*.

As for the relationships between the Guidi counts and the families of their seigniorial officials, the first three families examined in this study apparently

¹²⁷ *Rif.AP.*, 13 February and 5 May 1299.

maintained relations with the Guidi for two or three generations: the sons or the grandsons of men who held a position as counts' officials are mentioned as witnesses in deeds concerning the same Guidi branch, but without holding any position within the seigniorial institutions. In two cases, a progressive loosening of the connection with the counts seems to have taken place, and service as an official of the Guidi does not appear to have offered any opportunities for social advancement. The case of Adatto's family could be different in some aspects: like the other two, it can be traced for only a few generations, but if the *dominus* Tancredi who was styled *miles et familiaris* of Count Guido Salvatico in 1286 actually was Adatto's son, we could argue that his social ascent was in fact due to his connection with the counts. None the less, the fact that it appears relatively rare for somewhat closer bonds to be maintained between a local family and the counts, together with the fact that this case is limited to two generations, should induce us to consider Adatto's family as nothing more than a slightly different case within the pattern that fits the other two families. At any rate, the identification of *dominus* Tancredi as the son of Adatto is far from certain.

The 'de Glanzolo' family substantially fits the pattern outlined above, although with some peculiarities. This family maintained a connection with three generations of a Guidi branch, that is Giovanna, widow of Count Guido, their sons Guido Novello and Simone, and Guglielmo Novello, son of Guido Novello. The main difference from the pattern lies in the fact that it was a member of the second generation of that branch who appointed Gozzello as *vicecomes*; afterwards, evidence points to the same loosening of relations already observed in the other cases. We would be confronted with a much more significant difference if the title of *vicecomes* attributed to Gozzello's father referred to an office held on behalf of the counts: in this case, three consecutive generations would have been linked to the Guidi, and the first and second generations would have supplied the counts with *vicecomites*. This is only a supposition, but context suggests that it is the most probable.

If we consider the relations between the Guidi and their officials and look for the causes of this state of affairs, two factors stand out. On the one hand, the tenure of office of seigniorial officials lasted only one or a very few years,¹²⁸ and it is reasonable to suppose that the Guidi usually avoided assigning the positions of *vicecomes* or *potestas* in a castellany to members of one family for more than one generation, since this would have involved the risk of creating a potentially rival local power. On the other hand, it is likely that only the prospect of establishing themselves in a castellany through the exercise of a seigniorial office could have kept these families in the service of the counts for several generations. Apparently, their horizon was exclusively local, so they were probably not interested in a career that would have taken some of their

¹²⁸ In Val d'Ambra the service term was one year: see Ceppari, Jacona and Turrini, 'Statuta' (above, n. 59), 39.

members from castle to castle, thus separating them from the core of their family business without allowing them to recreate a similar situation and consolidate it in a different place. These were probably the prevailing dynamics operating between the counts and the families of their officials throughout the thirteenth century, since there is no reason to suppose that any of the Guidi branches was less concerned about its capacity to maintain control of its castellanies. The short-term service system, widespread in the cities and countryside of thirteenth-century Tuscany, was thus the key feature of this set of dynamics. The Guidi took great care in maintaining strict control over their lordships through the appointment of short-term officials, but were not able to create career profiles that could be sufficiently attractive to members of suitable families in order to persuade them to remain in their service for several generations. This incapacity, or the counts' lack of interest in enduring connections of this kind, represented a major factor in the more general phenomenon of the Tuscan lords' difficulty in recruiting reliable, steady adherents among the middle stratum of thirteenth-century rural society.

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Acknowledgements

I wish to thank Chris Wickham for reading a draft of this article, Antonella Ghignoli for allowing me to read her unpublished work on Vigoroso di Paradiso, and Dawn Winterhalter for her assistance with drafting this paper in English. I also wish to thank Silvia Leporatti for helping me with the maps.