

Framing the Beneventan aristocracy in the first half of the ninth century

by Giulia Zornetta

In 849 the factional struggle between Radelchis and Siconulf ended with an agreement, which was actively sought by Louis II, in order to stabilise the political competition in Lombard Southern Italy and to help lead a coordinated military campaign against the Muslims. It sealed the division of the principality of Benevento into two different political bodies, resulting in the transformation of the Beneventan political system and the weakening of the local aristocracy, who previously had a marked urban profile as well as properties spread throughout the territory of the principality. This paper aims to outline the profile of the Beneventan elite before the *pactum divisionis*, by focusing on its relationship with public power, military identity, and patrimonial dimension.

Middle Ages; ninth century; Lombard Southern Italy; competition; urban elite; patrimonial wealth; military identity.

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Abbreviations

- CDL IV/2 = *Codice diplomatico longobardo, IV/2: I diplomi dei duchi di Benevento*, ed. H. Zielinski, Roma 2003 (Fonti per la storia d'Italia, 65).
- CDL V = *Codice diplomatico longobardo, V: Le chartae dei ducati di Spoleto e di Benevento*, ed. H. Zielinski, Roma 2003 (Fonti per la storia d'Italia, 66).
- CS = *Chronicon Salernitanum. A critical edition with studies on literary and historical sources and on language*, ed. U. Westerbergh, Lund 1956 (Studia Latina Stockholmiensia, 3).
- CSBC = *Cronicae Sancti Benedicti Casinensis*, ed. L.A. Berto, Firenze 2006.
- CSS = *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae (cod. Vat. Lat. 4939)*, ed. J.-M. Martin, Roma 2000 (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores III serie, 3).
- CV = *Chronicon Vulturense del monaco Giovanni*, 3 vol., ed. V. Federici, Roma 1925 (Fonti per la storia d'Italia, 58-60).
- MGH, Capit. II = *Capitularia regum Francorum*, vol. 2, ed. A. Boretius, V. Krause, Hannover 1897 (MGH, Legum sectio, II/2).
- MGH, *Chronica monasterii Casinensis* = *Die Chronik von Montecassino*, ed. H. Hoffmann, Hannover 1980 (MGH, SS, 34).
- MGH, DD Karol. I = *Die Urkunden Pippins, Karlmanns und Karls des Grossen*, ed. E. Mühlbacher, Hannover 1906 (MGH, Diplomata Karolinorum, 1).
- MGH, Erchempert, *Historia = Erchemperti historia Langobardorum Beneventanorum*, ed. G.H. Pertz, G. Waitz, Hannover 1878, pp. 231-264 (MGH, SS rer. Lang., 1).
- MGH, LL 4 = *Leges Langobardorum*, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannover 1868 (MGH, LL, 4).
- MGH, SS 3 = *Annales, chronica et historiae aevi Saxonici*, ed. G.H. Pertz, Hannover 1839 (MGH, SS, 3).
- MGH, *Vita Barbati = Vita Barbati episcopi Beneventani*, ed. G. Waitz, Hannover 1878, pp. 555-563 (MGH, SS rer. Lang., 1).
- RPD = *Registrum Petri Diaconi (Montecassino, Archivio dell'Abbazia, Reg. 3)*, ed. J.-M. Martin et al., Roma 2015 (Fonti per la storia dell'Italia medievale, Antiquitates, 45).

1. Introduction

In 849, the *pactum divisionis* between Radelchis of Benevento and Sicoulf of Salerno brought an end to a long-standing struggle of factions in Lombard Southern Italy. The agreement was reached after ten years of internal conflicts within the Beneventan elite, which followed the death by conspiracy of Prince Sicard (832-839). The mediation of both Duke Guy of Spoleto and King Louis II of Italy, to whom Emperor Lothar had assigned the leadership of a military campaign against the Muslims a few years earlier¹, was crucial for reaching a settlement between the parties.

Finding a mutual arrangement for the Beneventan situation, which was traditionally characterized by competition and endemic conflict within the Lombard elite, was certainly a prerequisite for the Frankish military campaign to be successful. However, the mediating role played by Louis II and his agent was also functional in reframing Carolingian authority in this part of the Italian peninsula, whose relationship with the Frankish world remained deliberately ambiguous long after Charlemagne's conquest of the Lombard Kingdom in 774². Alongside the commitment to fight against the Muslims,

¹ MGH, Capit. II/2, pp. 65-67.

² Bertolini, *Carlo Magno e Benevento*, pp. 609-671; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 111-127; Zornetta, *Semper ero liber*, pp. 135-141.

in 849 Louis II secured peace and stability by promoting the division of Lombard Southern Italy into two separate political entities, the principality of Salerno and the principality of Benevento, thus presenting himself as an impartial and higher authority in this area³.

The names of the subscribers of the *pactum divisionis* are not reported together with the text of the treaty, which is transmitted exclusively through two Monte Cassino manuscripts, but they are included in the tenth century *Chronicon Salernitanum*⁴. Identification remains difficult for most of them, but it is possible to catch a glimpse of the members of Beneventan families who, in previous years, were the main players in the competition for power as narrated by the chronicles. The list includes the new Prince of Benevento, Radelchis (839-851), and his sons and future princes, Radelgarius (851-854) and Adelchis (854-878), along with one of the most important members of the urban elite, Dauferius the Mute, with his two sons, Maio and Guaiferius. Next to them appears a certain Roffrit, possibly a descendant of another important kin group of Lombard Southern Italy, that of Dauferius the Prophet and another Roffrit, who was Prince Sicard's *referendarius*, probably dead by 849⁵. According to the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, Count Radoald is to be identified with an ancestor of its anonymous author and a supporter of Sicard's brother, the new Prince of Salerno, Siconulf (839-851). The list also includes a Pandonulf, who may be associated to the kin group of the Landulfids, the counts of Capua, and a Sadutto, who probably also came from Capua. His family is to be identified with the powerful group related to Prince Radelchis, whose members were completely purged by Count Landulf the Elder of Capua (815-843) according to the ninth century Erchempert's chronicle⁶. Although the name is rather common, it is possible that Toto was precisely the *thesaurarius* to whom Prince Radelchis granted two diplomas between 839 and 840⁷.

³ Delogu, *Strutture politiche e ideologiche nel regno di Lodovico II*, pp. 178-181; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 226-231.

⁴ CS, 84b, pp. 86-87; Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne*, pp. 256-260. The text of the *pactum divisionis* is transmitted in ms Vat. Lat. 5001, ff. 143v-147v; ms. Casinensis 175, ff. 581a-586b and edited in MGH, LL 4, pp. 221-225; Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, pp. 201-217.

⁵ According to Ulla Westerbergh, Roffrit's funerary epitaph was written before the conspiracy against Prince Sicard because it still describes him as an insider of the *palatium*. This scenario could not have taken place following the *pactum divisionis* of 849, when Radelchis definitively assumed the princely title in Benevento. Westerbergh, *Beneventan Ninth Century Poetry*, pp. 37-39. Consequently, the homonymous Roffrit mentioned among the witnesses of the treaty cannot be identified with this one, but possibly be a descendant of him. Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne*, p. 257.

⁶ MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, 15, p. 240. The *Rhythmus de captivitate Hludovici imperatoris* also mentioned a man named Sadutto as a participant in the Beneventan assembly: Russo Mailer, *La politica meridionale di Ludovico II*, p. 9. This may imply that those who survived the operation led by Landulf abandoned Capua and moved permanently to Benevento, where they could rely on their kinship with Prince Radelchis. On Landulf the Elder, see Cilento, *Le origini della signoria*, p. 82.

⁷ CSS III, n. 35 (839 XI, Benevento), pp. 542-544; n. 36 (840 X, Benevento), pp. 544-545. See also CS, 84, p. 85.

Moreover, some names of Frankish origin, and quite rare in the onomastic panorama of Southern Italy – for example, Ingeprandus – suggest there were also members of Louis II's entourage, or at least some Spoletans, among the witnesses of the *pactum divisionis*.

A major turning point in the history of Southern Italy, this treaty was the result of the first and only intervention of the Carolingian rulers in the political balance of the principality of Benevento, an intervention which had important consequences for its highly centralized political system and therefore for the regional elite that participated in it. This paper focuses precisely on the Beneventan elite during the first half of the ninth century, i.e. before Louis II's intervention in Southern Italy, and looks only briefly in conclusion at the consequences of the *pactum divisionis* for its members. It aims to offer an overview of the political, military, and economic dimensions of this social group, which also included those who witnessed the treaty in 849, especially by outlining its connection to public power and participation in local competition.

Three kinds of sources have been considered in this regard. First, the chronicles, especially Erchempert's *Ystoriola* and the anonymous *Chronicon Salernitanum*, which are both rich in information about the Beneventan elite, its relationship with the princes, and the competition that took place in the capital city. In contrast with Paul the Deacon, who illustrated the glorious history of the Lombards, Erchempert did not describe the Lombards' success, but their misfortunes, as an example to posterity⁸. Unquestionably, his pessimistic approach was related to the late ninth century military and political context, when Muslim presence was again putting pressure on the Lombard principalities and the abbey of Monte Cassino was plundered. As a monk of this community, Erchempert severely blamed the Beneventan elite for having become divided into factions, criticizing above all the unscrupulous strategy of the Landulfids, who were able to establish a personal dominion over Capua during the second half of the ninth century⁹. According to this author, the lack of unity was the main source of the Lombard political and military weakness and thus he provided a narrative of internal conflicts and competition for power.

On the contrary, the *Chronicon Salernitanum* does not present such an impassioned moral judgement. Its author, an anonymous monk living in Salerno during the second half of the 10th century, was remarkably well informed about what happened in Benevento in the previous century, possibly relying on both Erchempert's *Ystoriola* and other narratives of the events, which have not reached us¹⁰. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* gives an account of the pursuit of public resources, lucrative offices, and social prominence by the members of the local elite in the princely court. The Prince of Benevento

⁸ MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, I, pp. 234-235; Berto, *Erchempert, a Reluctant Fustigator of his People*, pp. 147-175.

⁹ Loré, *Uno spazio instabile*, pp. 341-360.

¹⁰ Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung*, pp. 63-67.

is frequently portrayed while mediating aristocratic competition in a society where the circulation of wealth appears to have been largely controlled and regulated by public authority. He carefully balanced out his gifts, thus stressing his higher political authority by preserving the symmetry between different parties while ensuring their loyalty¹¹.

However, chronicles also attested that Lombard princes actively participated in the internal political competition. This resulted not only in their ability to mediate becoming weaker the more they were involved, but also in the conscious use of conflict as a means to achieve their own political and/or contingent goals¹². For example, Grimoald IV (806-817) and Sicard failed to control the local competition and even triggered conflict by favouring one group over others. In the first half of the ninth century, therefore, Beneventan competition often escalated into violence and conspiracies against the prince, to rebalance the political arena by building new networks within the elite¹³.

While chronicles narrate episodes of both clashes and cooperation among the members of the lay aristocracy, who tried to gain influence and power in Benevento, they also recount the princes' strategies to strengthen their public authority in such a highly competitive political context. Some of these strategies can also be traced in diplomas, which are transmitted in the 12th century cartularies of the most important abbeys of the area – Santa Sofia di Benevento, Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno. The same three cartularies also transmitted some donations of land and/or private churches made by the members of regional and local elites, which provide an insight into the social practices and wealth of these groups.

2. *Dwelling in the City: Königsnähe and participation to public power*

During the first half of the ninth century, the Beneventan aristocracy was a group acting at a regional level while keeping a markedly urban profile. As recent research has already shown, the *palatium* had a leading role in structuring both political and social life in Lombard Southern Italy, thus becoming the stage for local competition. Vito Loré's extensive studies on public resources and their redistribution in this area revealed that fiscal assets were regularly shared by the public authority with the officials, who were appointed by the duke of Benevento, then by the prince, both for court and peripheral charges¹⁴. Loré explained in detail how the *palatium* maintained for a long

¹¹ Bougard, Bühner-Thierry, Le Jan, *Les élites du haut Moyen Âge*, p. 1103. See also Le Jan, *Les élites carolingiennes et le roi*, pp. 335-346.

¹² See, for example CS, 59, pp. 58-59; 61, p. 60.

¹³ Zornetta, *Competizione politica, congiure e violenza*, pp. 147-152.

¹⁴ Loré, *Beni principeschi e partecipazione al potere nel Mezzogiorno longobardo*, pp. 15-40; Loré, *Spazi e forme dei beni pubblici nell'alto medioevo*, pp. 62-68. See also Collavini, *Duchi e società locali*, pp. 150-153; Martin, *La Longobardia meridionale*, pp. 338-339, 344-345.

time a central role in the allocation of public resources, preventing in this way the emergence of local powers and, to a certain extent, also controlling local societies¹⁵. Although the language of the charters describes more the nature and size of fiscal land than its management and the jurisdictional rights of the officials appointed to its supervision, the identity of the Beneventan elite was certainly based not only on the enjoyment of these resources, but also on a range of other prerogatives, including military and political ones. Among them was certainly real participation in public power as described in the chronicles, in which the attendance at the palace and the relationship entertained directly with the prince played a preeminent role¹⁶.

Although there is no mention of large assemblies on the same model as described in the sources of Northern Italy, the higher members of the Beneventan elite definitely participated in the decision-making process in a restricted council, as attested by the narrative sources¹⁷. This council took place in the palace and assisted the prince, including in the passing of new laws, as occurred during the reign of Adelchis. Dated to 866, the prologue of Adelchis' laws indicates that he was accompanied by Bishop Aio of Benevento, who was his brother, as well as by counts, abbots and «caeteros magnates nostros»¹⁸. By contrast with other early medieval *regna*, and first and foremost with the tradition of the Lombard Kingdom, there is no mention here of an assembly of armed freemen, nor of a *populus*, nor even of *iudices*, i.e. those who held public office¹⁹. Although the idea of a broad council was part of the very representation and ideology of the Lombard assembly, nevertheless narrower circles are also mentioned in the eighth century laws. Both King Liutprand's and King Aistulf's prologues describes a similar, reduced council, generally involving only the *iudices* and the king's *fideles*²⁰. Likewise, the Prince of Benevento is only attested by a group of selected individuals, to whom a distinctive position in the social hierarchy is attributed and for whom the personal connection to him is emphasised.

Narrative sources suggests that the link between social status and participation in the public sphere resulted in a certain tendency for elite members to reside in Benevento, as they were well aware of the dangers when spending

¹⁵ Loré, *Spaces, power and local societies*, p. 126.

¹⁶ Martin, *La Longobardia meridionale*, p. 344; Bougard, Bühner-Thierry, Le Jan, *Les élites du haut Moyen Âge*, p. 1091.

¹⁷ In addition to the episodes reported in the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, see also the *Rhythmus de captivitate Hludovici imperatoris* in Russo Mailler, *La politica meridionale di Ludovico II*, pp. 9-10.

¹⁸ MGH, LL 4, p. 210.

¹⁹ MGH, LL 4, *Edictus Rothari*, 386, p. 89; *Leges Liutprandi regis*, 1/1, p. 108; 14/VIII, p. 113; *Incipit de anno XIX*, p. 155; Cortese, *Thinx, garethinx, thingatio*, p. 38; Wickham, *Consensus and Assemblies*, p. 401-402.

²⁰ MGH, LL 4, *Leges Liutprandi regis*, Incipit de anno V, p. 109; Incipit de anno IX, p. 116; Incipit de anno XII, p. 128; Incipit de anno XIV, p. 135; Incipit de anno XVI, p. 141; Incipit de anno XVII, p. 150; Incipit de anno XXII, p. 169; *Leges Ahistulfi regis*, De anno V. Incipit prologus, p. 198.

too much time outside the city²¹. Both these aspects are especially underlined in the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, which narrates a significant episode in this regard. One of the main protagonists of the political life in Benevento in the early ninth century, Count Radelchis of Conza, realised that Prince Sico (817-832) wanted to cut him off from the game of politics, a fact made visible not only when the latter chose to give his daughters as brides to other parties, but also when he deliberately took important decisions in council while Radelchis was out of the city settling administrative issues in his district²². The members of the Beneventan elite who were appointed to be in charge in peripheral seats, such as count and gastald, were thus probably not residing in the territory they administered, but only received an income from it, while staying for most of their time in the capital city²³. Similarly to them, the holders of court offices also obtained a revenue from a specific fiscal unit, such as *Marpahis* Arechis, who is attested in a diploma recalling the landed estate assigned to him, while it is describing the boundaries of a *gualdo* granted to Monte Cassino by Prince Sicard in 837²⁴.

Another episode reported in the *Chronicon Salernitanum* narrates the choice of Gastald Sico, an outsider who would later become prince, to reside in Acerenza as something atypical. This was motivated by the tensions that arose in the Beneventan palace following his appointment to one of the most important centres of Lombard Southern Italy. Located in modern-day Basilicata, Acerenza was prominent for both its strategic position and the opportunity it granted to maintain a large retinue by means of distribution of rich fiscal assets²⁵. Consequently, Sico's position was coveted by other members of the Beneventan elite, who complained about the choice made by Prince Grimoald IV, and even tried to put the new gastald in a bad light under the

²¹ On the dwelling of Lombard aristocracies in the cities of Central and Northern Italy: Wickham, *Aristocratic Power in Eighth-Century Lombard Italy*, pp. 158-159; Gasparri, *The Aristocracy*, pp. 82-84; Castagnetti, *Le aristocrazie della Langobardia*, pp. 540-547; Cortese, *L'aristocrazia toscana*, pp. 54-62.

²² CS, 54, pp. 54-55. Thomas, *Jeux lombards*, p. 117; Zorretta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, p. 161-165.

²³ Collavini, *Duchi e società locali*, pp. 150-153; Loré, *I gastaldi nella Puglia longobarda*, pp. 256-257. Although some peripheral officials of the first half of the ninth century are called *comes* by the chronicles, this seems to have been an honorary title, which referred to those appointed to the most important centres, such as Capua and Conza, who had greater prestige and power. Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, pp. 114-115. See also CS, 47, pp. 48-49.

²⁴ RPD II, n. 197, p. 578 (837 V, Benevento). It is not clear what kind of public role the *marpahis* had in the Southern Italy, but probably he originally looked after the Duke of Benevento's horses. Martin, *La Longobardia meridionale*, p. 344. Gasparri argued that later he could have managed the fiscal resources allocated to the princes' relatives and closer collaborators, while Loré underlined that the *marpahis*, as well as other public officers in the eighth and ninth centuries, had probably less to do with the actual administration of a territory than with an income on certain fiscal assets. Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, pp. 121-122; Loré, *I gastaldi nella Puglia longobarda*, p. 256.

²⁵ CS, 43, pp. 44-45; Loré, *I gastaldi*, pp. 266-268. Concerning the strategic role of Acerenza and Conza see also: Taviani-Carozzi, *La principauté lombarde de Salerne*, pp. 291-293; Di Muro, *Dinamiche insediative*, pp. 197-198; Filippone, *L'alta valle del Sele*, pp. 28-44.

pretext of a hunting campaign conducted beyond the allowed boundaries²⁶. In the long run, however, Sico's choice to retreat to Acerenza was deemed as a provocation by the prince himself, who requested his presence back in the capital city to help negotiate a dispute with Count Radelchis of Conza, and even moved the Beneventan army against him. This episode suggests that attendance at the palace was not only considered essential by members of the elite, who based their status and political role upon the *Königsnähe* and participation to public power, but also by the prince, who needed to retain close ties with the highest Beneventan aristocracy to prevent coups and regulate political competition.

The most profitable positions in administrative districts, such as Conza and Acerenza, could also be assigned to the prince's relatives. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* narrates that Ursus and Radelmondus, who married two of Prince Sico's daughters, were appointed gastalds of precisely these fortified centres²⁷. Although the sources are lacking in information about them, their marriage possibly provided a ladder of social ascent since both these officials enjoyed extensive power and could rely on many armed men²⁸. The diplomas prove that members of the prince's kin group frequently intervened to request his generosity on behalf of others, resulting in a certain political influence within the palace. Among them was Gastald Azzo of Lucera, who was the husband of another of Prince Sico's daughter, Sichelenda, and appears as an intercessor during the early years of the reign of his brother-in-law, Sicard²⁹. His role as an intermediary to the ruler's largesse probably triggered the competition with another official, Roffrit, who served as *thesaurarius* during the same period³⁰.

First attested in ducal diplomas from the mid-eighth century onwards, the *thesaurarius* also played a key role in supervising the prince's use of his wealth³¹. It is thus likely that this position allowed the creation of extensive personal clientele due to its proximity to the centre of power, clientele that could end up supporting the *thesaurarius* in gaining access to the political summit. During the first half of the ninth century, this happened in at least two cases, that of Grimoald IV and Radelchis, who both held this office before their accession to the princely title³². The *Chronicon Salernitanum* ascribes to Grimoald another role, that of *storesayz/stolesayz*, i.e. «qui ante obtutibus

²⁶ CS, 43-46, pp. 43-48. Zornetta, *Competizione politica, congiure e violenza*, pp. 144-145.

²⁷ CS, 55, pp. 55-56; Thomas, *Jeux lombards*, p. 117; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 167-168.

²⁸ The military role of gastalds in Southern Italy is attested in some episodes of the *Chronicon Salernitanum*: CS, 44-47, pp. 45-49; 130, pp. 142-143; 183, p. 184.

²⁹ CSS VI, n. 32, pp. 766-767 (833 IV, Benevento); Thomas, *Jeux lombards*, pp. 114-117.

³⁰ CS, 59, pp. 58-59.

³¹ CDL IV/2, n. 15, pp. 51-53 (740 III, Siponto) and n. 33, pp. 112-114 (751 I, Benevento): Ursus *thesaurarius*.

³² MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, 7, p. 237; CSS I, n. 28, pp. 382-385 (835 III, Benevento); III, n. 14, pp. 503-504 (832 X, Benevento); III, n. 32, pp. 536-538 (833 X, Benevento).

principis seu regibus milites hic inde sedendo perordinat³³». According to the same narrative, Grimoald first earned the prince's favour during the war against King Pippin and the Franks thanks to his personal merit in battle³⁴. Only occasionally attested in documentary sources³⁵, the *storesayz* could thus have been linked with the military sphere, but most probably played a role in approaching the prince's person, thereby achieving a significant authority in the palace. Such a prominent position was then confirmed some years later by giving Grimoald the prestigious office of *thesaurarius*.

Although the prince's relatives had considerable influence in the palace, in the first half of the ninth century the most important court positions, those of *thesaurarius* and *referendarius*, were never in their hands, and were instead assigned to other members of the Beneventan elite, who belonged to the most powerful Lombard families and already had political and social weight in the capital. The title of *referendarius* is also attested in the previous century and has been traditionally associated with the head of the chancery³⁶. In the first half of the ninth century, however, it more likely referred to the highest dignity of the court. From a cross-analysis of both diplomas and chronicles, it seems that this office was granted to people who already had a leading role in Beneventan politics and who were chosen as the prince's main advisors in this position³⁷. This was the case with Roffrit, who provides an example of a genuine career development inside the palace offices during the first half of the ninth century. He was first *thesaurarius* and was then appointed *referendarius* by Prince Sico³⁸. In 821, Radelchis of Conza was also mentioned in this post, an earlier document referring to him simply as a gastald and *fidelis* of Prince Sico³⁹. According to Erchempert, in 817 Radelchis organised a conspiracy against Prince Grimoald IV and replaced him with Sico, who was gastald of Acerenza at that time⁴⁰. The *Chronicon Salernitanum*, however, narrates that other members of the Beneventan elite also took part in the conspiracy, including Sico himself and Roffrit. Although Radelchis had previously had a conflicting relationship with Sico, the organisation of the conspiracy proves the ability of elite members to cooperate when faced with the need to rid themselves of a controversial prince⁴¹. According to this chronicle, since the majority of the Beneventan *populus* supported Radelchis's election, it was

³³ CS, 38, p. 39; Martin, *La Longobardia meridionale*, pp. 338-339.

³⁴ CS, 51-52, pp. 52-54.

³⁵ CSS III, n. 25, pp. 520-522 (752 XII, *Ad Rosito*).

³⁶ CDL IV/2, n. 3, pp. 11-15 (715 [730?] VII, Benevento): Ursus *duddus* and *referendarius*; n. 4, pp. 15-20 (718 X, *in gualdo ad Biferno in palatio*): Persius *vicedominus* and *referendarius*; n. 5, pp. 20-24 (719 I, Benevento): Ursus *referendarius*; Zielinski, *Introduzione diplomatica*, pp. 35-46; Bertolini, *Actum Beneventi*, pp. 175-188.

³⁷ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 169-170.

³⁸ CSS III, n. 8, pp. 493-494 (821 VI, Benevento).

³⁹ CSS I, n. 26, pp. 379-380 (821 VIII, *Saba*): *referendarius* and *fidelis*; II, n. 21, pp. 473-474 (817 XI, Benevento): gastald and *fidelis*.

⁴⁰ MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, 9, p. 238.

⁴¹ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 147-160.

only the pressure from Roffrit that would have brought Sico to the head of principality⁴². Both these accounts attest that Radelchis acted as the most influential member of the aristocracy, possibly not only because he was appointed *referendarius* but also because he already had a prominent position in the city, which ensured him a wide network of supporters.

3. *Fidelitas and military duties: some notes on Beneventan warrior identity*

As attested by the examples of Azzo of Lucera and Radelchis of Conza, the relationship between the prince and his officials was not only restricted to the grant of both charges and fiscal revenues within the administrative framework, but was also strengthened by personal bonds, such as kinship or fidelity. Even if recent research underlined the centrality of public authority in the political and social configuration of Lombard Southern Italy⁴³, these personal bonds were also necessary to confirm the prince's preeminence, especially when established with players that were already prominent in the arena of Benevento. According to the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, for example, Prince Sico was encouraged to engage in intermarriage with the Capuan elite after the Landulfids, who held the comital office, founded a new city, Sicopolis⁴⁴. Both kinship and fidelity ties were thus crucial to regulate social and political hierarchies in a context marked by intense competition such as the Beneventan one.

Although the specific content of *fidelitas* in Southern Italy remains unknown⁴⁵, it was certainly common for the members of the prince's retinue to be the beneficiaries of his generosity and to act as intermediaries for it, as is shown by the Lombard diplomas transmitted to us in the *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae*⁴⁶. Jean-Marie Martin pointed out that a greater number of *fideles* is attested in documentary sources from the second half of the ninth century, whereas the charters of the earlier period feature people largely defined by public charges⁴⁷. Although there is no lack of earlier evidence of bond of *fidelitas*, this remark appears significant considering the transformation of the Lombard elite in Southern Italy after 849, when the *pactum divisionis* led to a duplication of the princely court in Benevento and Salerno, and perhaps also

⁴² CS, 53, p. 54.

⁴³ Loré, *Spaces, power and local societies*, pp. 119-129; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 73-78.

⁴⁴ CS, 58, p. 58; Marazzi, *Città scomparse*, pp. 264-267.

⁴⁵ Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, pp. 113-114; Martin, *Éléments préféodaux*, pp. 563-566.

⁴⁶ The *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae* contains a certain number of diplomas attesting a prince's *fideles* acting as intercessors: CSS I, n. 35, pp. 395-396 (858 III, Benevento); II, n. 5, pp. 437-439 (808 I, Benevento); II, n. 17, pp. 466-468 (882 II, Benevento); II, n. 21, pp. 473-474 (817 XI, Benevento); n. 22, pp. 475-476 (876 II, Benevento); III, n. 19, pp. 509-510 (882 VII, Benevento); n. 20, pp. 511-512 (881 VII, Benevento); III, n. 38, pp. 547-548 (881 I, Benevento).

⁴⁷ Martin, *Éléments préféodaux*, p. 565.

to a devaluing of palatine offices. In the second half of the ninth century, social players qualified themselves above all as the ruler's kin or *fideles*, proving a shift in the relationship between public authority and local elites, as well as an overall change in the functioning of the political arena.

During the first half of the ninth century, among those who had a personal link with the prince were also the *gasindi*, one of them being attested in a diploma granted by Sicard in 833⁴⁸. According to the Lombard laws, they were bound to the ruler by a formalized relationship of patronage, which is also attested by gifts from eighth century documentary sources from northern Italy⁴⁹. Since Sicard's diploma represents the last evidence of a prince's *gasindius* in Lombard Southern Italy, however, this specific relationship could have gradually disappeared after the first half of the ninth century. Certainly, it was not replaced by other bonds of fidelity borrowed from the Frankish world, such as vassalage. In 849, the reference to the princes' «*honorati ac vassalli*»⁵⁰ attested in the *pactum divisionis*, appears to have been more the result of the Frankish mediation to the treaty than an accurate description of the relationship between the Lombard princes and their followers. As argued by Jean-Marie Martin, the language used in the pact could reflect the attempt by Louis II and Guy of Spoleto to instill vassalage into Southern Italy, an attempt that did not, however, prove successful⁵¹.

The bond of *fidelitas* could also bear a military connotation, such as a *charta convenientiae* from June 766 seems to suggest. It contains a dispute between the abbey of San Vincenzo al Volturno and the heirs of Alahis, a *fidelis* of Duke Gisulf II (731-732, 742-751), over certain landed estates that had previously belonged to Duke Godescalc (739-742). The charter narrates, without entering into much detail, that Gisulf *fideles* acted as an armed retinue when Duke Godescalc was dethroned and killed in 742⁵².

Since evidence of military service rendered by laymen is scarce in this area, it is not easy to define the role of either the urban elite or of the prince's retinue in the Beneventan army. The aristocracy probably shared a military identity and supplied the army with the largest part of the horsemen, i.e. those who were trained in military practice⁵³. The *Vita Barbati episcopi Beneventani*, a hagiographical text possibly written during the ninth century, specif-

⁴⁸ CSS III, n. 14, pp. 503-504 (832 X, Benevento); Martin, *Éléments préféodaux*, p. 561.

⁴⁹ MGH, LL 4, *Leges Ratchis regis*, 14, p. 193; Tabacco, *La connessione fra potere e possesso*, pp. 152-154; Gasparri, *Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza*, pp. 680-681, 699-700.

⁵⁰ Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, c. 27, p. 214; Leicht, *Gli honorati*, pp. 98-102.

⁵¹ Martin, *Éléments préféodaux*, pp. 561-563.

⁵² CDL V, n. II/7, pp. 362-367 (766 VI, Benevento); Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 67-73. On the military function of Lombard retainers, see: Gasparri, *Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza*, pp. 676-678.

⁵³ As pointed out by Giovanni Tabacco and Stefano Gasparri, the armed freeman, the *arimanus*, was essentially a horseman in eighth century Lombard Italy: Tabacco, *Dai possessori*, pp. 254-255; Gasparri, *Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza*, pp. 674-675. Explicit mentions of horsemen in the Beneventan army can be found in narrative sources, see for example: CS, 80b, p. 79.

ically stressed the horsemanship of members of the urban elite, providing a fascinating narrative of a competitive race, which started and ended under a sacred tree located just outside the wall of the capital city⁵⁴. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* also describes a close association between aristocracy and horses, which often represent a visible expression of honour⁵⁵. An episode concerning Dauferius, one of the most powerful men in Benevento during the reign of Grimoald IV, is especially revealing on this point. According to the chronicle, a serf spilled the water Dauferius used to wash himself out of the window and hit some noblemen's horses. Since these men were members of the prince's kin-group and could afford to face someone of his social status, they decided to take revenge and save their honour by cutting the tail of Dauferius' horse, which was perceived as a great offence⁵⁶. The *Chronicon Salernitanum* contains other significant episodes concerning the equestrian and military vocation of the Beneventan elite, such as the public performance of horseriding exercises⁵⁷. Equally interesting is the narrative of a gift exchange that took place between Prince Sicard and Roffrit, who asked for a complete armour, including sword, helmet, lance and shield, after successfully collecting tributes in Calabria and Apulia⁵⁸.

Besides these allusions to a military identity, however, the sources for Lombard Southern Italy remain remarkably elusive in relation to the involvement of the elite in the army, and do not provide any insight into recruitment, which could still follow the model that had been established by King Aistulf around the mid-eighth century⁵⁹. As attested in a Carolingian diploma from 871, public officials certainly played a role in it⁶⁰. After the fall of the Emirate of Bari, Emperor Louis II released the *gastaldani* of Monte Sant'Angelo from their military obligations and they entered Bishop Aio of Benevento's service to rebuild a castle which had been sacked by the Muslims⁶¹. They were freemen, who had been previously recalled to their public duties under the local gastald's leadership. According to Jean-Marie Martin, the recruitment of the Beneventan army remained fully functional only until the first half of the ninth century, when it started to decline, mostly because of

⁵⁴ MGH, *Vita Barbati*, 1, p. 557; Martin, *À propos de la Vita de Barbatus*, pp. 137-164. The date of its has been recently rediscussed in Corrubolo, *Una nuova ipotesi di datazione*, pp. 47-62.

⁵⁵ Provesi, *The Longue durée of a Symbolic System*, pp. 1-24; La Rocca, Zornetta, *Quanto erano longobardi*, pp. 54-55. See also: CS, 38, p. 39.

⁵⁶ CS, 49-50, pp. 50-52; MGH, LL 4, *Edictus Rothari*, 338, p. 77; Zornetta, *Competizione politica, congiure e violenza*, pp. 141-143.

⁵⁷ CS, 81, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁸ CS, 69, pp. 66-67.

⁵⁹ MGH, LL 4, *Leges Ahistulfi regis*, 2-3, p. 196. Gasparri, *Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza*, pp. 674-675. Recently, on the Lombard army: Berndt, *Military organization*, pp. 63-79; Gasparri, *Gens germana gente ferocior*, pp. 152-164.

⁶⁰ The role of Lombard *iudices*, i.e. public officials, in both recruitment and exemption from military service is attested in the eighth century Lombard laws: MMGH, LL 4, *Leges Liutprandi regis*, 83/XIV, pp. 140-141; *Leges Ratchis regis*, 4, pp. 184-185; *Leges Ahistulfi regis*, 7, p. 197. See also, Gasparri, *Strutture militari e legami di dipendenza*, pp. 672-675.

⁶¹ *Le più antiche carte*, 3, p. 10-12 (871 V 29, Benevento).

the division of the principality in 849⁶². On the contrary, narrative sources, especially the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, record the Lombard princes' ability to gather troops at least until the beginning of the 10th century⁶³. Louis II's diploma also proves that the downturn of extensive employment of freemen in the army did not necessarily occur with the division of the principality but could have been gradual.

Nevertheless, the use of Muslim mercenaries during the early ninth century factional struggle, and the inadequacy exhibited on many occasions by the Beneventan army, which are widely attested in the chronicles, may be the sign of a major difficulty in recruitment⁶⁴. Since freemen were still required to do military service, this difficulty probably related to the decrease in number of war specialists⁶⁵. Despite claiming a warrior identity, or at least an equestrian identity, the aristocracy of Lombard Southern Italy was probably not capable of satisfying its military needs. Undoubtedly, this could depend on the regular and therefore expensive war efforts required of them. During the first half of the ninth century alone, the Beneventan army carried out several campaigns against the Neapolitans, and repeatedly faced attacks first from the Frankish army led by King Pippin and then from the groups of Muslims who attempted to conquer Southern Italy for more than a century between the ninth and the tenth centuries. Although successes were not inconsiderable, first against the Frankish army and, on several occasions, against the Neapolitans, the military effort needed was probably beyond Beneventan means⁶⁶. Maintaining large retinues of armed warriors in battle, especially horsemen, required extensive economic resources as well as an overall social effort, which could have been difficult to coordinate in the increasingly competitive and violent milieu of ninth century Lombard Southern Italy.

4. *Distributing wealth, forging relationships: the patrimonial basis of the Beneventan elite*

Alongside their proximity to public power and military identity, an important feature in the definition of the early medieval elites was wealth, and especially land possession⁶⁷. According to the *Chronicon Salernitanum*, be-

⁶² Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, pp. 46-47.

⁶³ CS, 72, pp. 70-71; Sob, p. 79; 93, p. 93; 95, p. 95; 155, p. 162; Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁴ MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, 17, p. 241; CS, 81, p. 80; CSBC II/7, pp. 20-21; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 269-270.

⁶⁵ Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, pp. 46-47.

⁶⁶ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 173-180; Zornetta, *Semper ero liber*, pp. 149-152.

⁶⁷ On the interplay between social status, wealth and the relationship with public power in the aristocracy of the Lombard kingdom: Wickham, *Early medieval Italy*, pp. 129-136; Gasparri, *Il regno longobardo in Italia*, pp. 82-88. See also Tabacco, *La connessione fra potere e possesso*,

fore becoming Prince of Benevento, Sico openly expressed this weakness by saying to Roffrit «the land is yours, therefore I am in your power⁶⁸». As a refugee in Southern Italy, he could only rely on the fiscal assets granted to him by the prince as gastald of Acerenza, but this was not sufficient to turn him into a member of the Beneventan aristocracy, since ownership of extensive land patrimonies was also required. Due to the relative scarcity of documentary sources transmitted to us, however, this aspect is difficult to investigate for the Principality of Benevento in the first half of the ninth century, but it is possible to draw a general outline by slightly broadening the chronology. The most influential kin-groups could rely on an economic background consisting of family properties, often large in number and distributed throughout the territory of the Lombard principality, as well as of income from fiscal assets, which were allocated by the prince through public charges⁶⁹.

Both public officials and *fideles* often benefited from donations of landed properties, slaves or buildings in Benevento. For example, in 858 Adelchis granted to his *fidelis* Ursus both the properties of a man who had died without any heirs and a tower located in the city, near the Porta Summa, which had previously been held by Audoald, a notary and judge⁷⁰. Besides, some episodes narrated by Erchempert and the *Chronicon Salernitanum* attested to the practice of exchanging gifts between the prince and the aristocracy, which seems to have had less of an economic value as a social one⁷¹. However, grants such as those recorded in the *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae* reveal the princes' concern to strengthen their bond, not only with the highest elite of the city, but also with other members of Beneventan society, who seem to belong to a middle or, at least an upper-middle, class and maybe be less involved with political competition and struggles.

In a fairly similar way to the prince, the members of the elite also distributed either fiscal or personal goods to consolidate their retinue. For example, the relationship between Gastald Sico and the men of Acerenza previously mentioned was established precisely via the distribution of fiscal properties. On the contrary, Abbot Alfanus was able to gather an extensive following in the capital city probably using his own resources or those related to his religious office⁷². His blatant attempt to build a clientele by

pp. 133-168; Gasparri, *Grandi proprietari e sovrani*, pp. 429-442; Gasparri, *Mercanti o possessori?*, pp. 157-162; Wickham, *Aristocratic power in eighth-century Lombard Italy*, pp. 161-162.

⁶⁸ CS, 48, pp. 49-50.

⁶⁹ Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, p. 114.

⁷⁰ CSS I, n. 35, pp. 395-396 (858 III, Benevento). The *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae* also transmitted other diplomas on behalf of a prince's *fidelis*: CSS III, n. 6, pp. 489-491 (793 VIII, *in curte Saba*); n. 20, pp. 511-512 (881 VII, Benevento); n. 34, pp. 540-541 (839 X, Benevento); n. 37, pp. 545-546 (855 V, Benevento).

⁷¹ MGH, Erchempert, *Historia*, 9, p. 238; CS, 28, pp. 30-31; 38, pp. 39-40; 51, p. 53; 54-55, pp. 54-56; 68, p. 65; 85, p. 87; 91, p. 91.

⁷² CS, 62, p. 60; Thomas, *Jeux lombards*, p. 120; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 166-173. On the members of the elite's largesse: Le Jan, *Prendre, accumuler, détruire les richesses*, pp. 365-382; Patzold, *Noblesse oblige?*, pp. 139-154.

distributing food and clothing led him to enter into rivalry with one of the most influential personalities of Beneventan society, Roffrit. Even if his entourage belonged to the urban middle-lower class, Alfanus, a man not otherwise attested and whose profile remains enigmatic, was perhaps trying to exhibit a social status which the highest members of the palatine elite would not recognize, leading these to complain about his behaviour in front of the prince. As attested by Roffrit's funerary epitaph, which portrayed him precisely as someone able to sustain a large entourage thanks to his generosity and friendliness, the Beneventan aristocracy distinguished itself by being able to maintain retinues, which meant having enough financial resources to bind a group of people to them⁷³.

A dossier of donations on behalf of two of the most important monasteries in the area, Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno, allows us a glimpse of the patrimonial wealth of the Beneventan elite in the first half of the ninth century. Between the late eighth and mid ninth century, both abbeys became particularly attractive to lay society, probably because of the increased prestige they gained from Carolingian patronage⁷⁴. Such interest towards these monasteries did not arise immediately after the conquest of the Lombard Kingdom, but slowly developed after Charlemagne's grants of immunity in 787⁷⁵. As suggested by Chris Wickham, it is likely that the economic growth of San Vincenzo al Volturno, which is confirmed to have occurred at this period also by archaeological findings, was based more on these lay endowments than on gifts and rights granted by public authorities⁷⁶.

Early ninth century land donations greatly varied in size and geographical distribution. The most conspicuous ones concerned estates disseminated in various areas of the principality, thus not necessarily concentrated in a specific location, suggesting potentially large and widespread family patrimonies. Such are for example, those of Radeprandus, Alahis and the Gastald Stephanus to San Vincenzo al Volturno, and that of the *Marpahis* Peter, who made a grant for the benefit of all the three major monasteries of the Lombard Southern Italy, Santa Sofia in Benevento, San Vincenzo al Volturno and Monte Cassino⁷⁷. The significant investment made by these individuals, as well as the broad geographical horizon in which they acted, places them among the

⁷³ MGH, SS 3, p. 469. On the contrary, the *Chronicon Salernitanum* portrays Roffrit as a non-benevolent person and an oppressor of the poor: CS, 48, p. 49.

⁷⁴ Del Treppo, *La vita economica e sociale*, pp. 35-37.

⁷⁵ MGH, DD Karol. 1, n. 158, pp. 213-216 (787 III 28, Rome); n. 159, pp. 216-217 ([787]). Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno were among the first religious foundations to be granted immunity by Charlemagne in the Italian peninsula. The only other monastic foundation to receive it in the earlier Carolingian period was the Novalesa abbey, which is located in a major transit area in the Western Alps. West, *Charlemagne's involvement*, pp. 350-361; Davis, *Charlemagne's practice of empire*, pp. 219-229.

⁷⁶ Wickham, *Monastic lands and monastic patrons*, pp. 142-144.

⁷⁷ CV I, n. 34, pp. 249-251 (800? I 31); n. 36, pp. 253-254 (815 IX); n. 43, pp. 263-265 (817 III, Benevento); n. 47, pp. 269-270 (802 X, Benevento). See also the elite's patrimonies in Apulia: Martin, *La Pouille du VI^e au XII^e siècle*, pp. 177-179; Loré, *I gastaldi*, pp. 262-264.

upper ranks of the Lombard aristocracy⁷⁸. They probably were at the same social level as Poto, whose landed estates were organised into no less than 48 *curtes*. Although it is difficult to locate all the properties enlisted in his *breve recordationis*, which probably dates to the mid-ninth century but is transmitted through a later manuscript, it turns out that they were distributed throughout the territory of the whole principality⁷⁹.

Among the goods gifted to Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno by lay people, there are also private churches. As recent historiography has largely highlighted, these foundations were closely linked to the devotional and social practices of the early medieval elites through being a major investment in the preservation of family memory and patrimony⁸⁰. In Lombard Southern Italy, many of them were offered either to the palace or to major monasteries by their founder or his immediate successors, thereby establishing an association with prestigious regional and lay institutions⁸¹. One of the earliest donations of a private church to Monte Cassino dates to the mid-eighth century and relates to San Cassiano *in Cingla*. This church was founded in the territory of Alife by a *sculd-hais*, Saracenus, and then offered to the abbey⁸². In 797, Gastald Guacco also donated the church of San Benedetto in Benevento to Monte Cassino to strengthen the relationship he had already established with the abbey a few years earlier, following his call to the army and the oblation of his son Guachipert⁸³.

The offerings made by Guacco are also relevant in that they show an official who owned residential buildings in Benevento, thus confirming the idea that the Beneventan aristocracy resided in the city while having landed properties located elsewhere. Other documents reveal a similar situation for other people dwelling in Benevento during the eighth and ninth centuries. For example, a certain Wadulf, who left some of his belongings to the Beneventan palace *per thingatio*, had at least a house and a piece of land in the capital city while also owning livestock and landed properties near the river Saccione, in eastern Molise⁸⁴. In 820, Trasemundus also offered to Monte Cassino both the houses he had inherited in Benevento and numerous landed estates distributed in the modern-day territories of Caserta, Benevento and Avellino⁸⁵.

⁷⁸ On the widespread land holdings and mobility of early medieval elites: Le Jan, *Conclusions*, pp. 399-406; Bougard, Bühner-Thierry, Le Jan, *Les élites du haut Moyen Âge*, pp. 1088-1089.

⁷⁹ Pohl, *Werkstätte der Erinnerung*, pp. 53-55; Feller, *L'économie des territoires de Spolète et de Bénévent*, p. 227; Di Muro, *Curtis, territorio ed economia*, p. 119.

⁸⁰ Le Jan, *Il gruppo familiare di Totone*; La Rocca, *Le élites, chiese e sepolture familiari*.

⁸¹ Wood, *The proprietary church*, pp. 28-30; Zornetta, *La società beneventana allo specchio*. See also Collavini, *Spazi politici e irraggiamento sociale*, pp. 327-328.

⁸² RPD II, n. 172, pp. 527-529 (745 X, Benevento); n. 173, pp. 530-531 (743 VIII, Alife); MGH, *Casinensis*, 6, pp. 28-29.

⁸³ RPD II, n. 179, pp. 543-546 (797 I, Benevento); MGH, *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, 14, pp. 50-52; 18, pp. 60-62; Di Muro, *Economia e mercato*, pp. 34-37.

⁸⁴ CDL IV/2, n. 16, pp. 54-59 (742 II, Benevento); n. 25, pp. 86-90 (745 IX, Benevento); Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 37-46.

⁸⁵ RPD II, n. 187, pp. 557-558 (820 V 5, Benevento). See also Suabili's donation to the abbey of Monte Cassino in the second half of the ninth century: RPD II, 200a, p. 597.

Alongside these generous offerings, monastic cartularies attested to other kind of donors, who seem to have had a lower profile, that of landowners rooted mostly at a local level⁸⁶. However, their offerings to Monte Cassino and San Vincenzo al Volturno reveal the integration of people of a lesser social and economic background into the same broad, regional network to which the Beneventan aristocracy also belonged. Both the nature and scarcity of the deeds only allow a glimpse of what must have been a scattered panorama made up of landed estates of different distribution and size⁸⁷. Beside ecclesiastical properties and the fiscal domain, which was extensive and, in some cases, grouped into large blocks, the Beneventan elite's landed properties must have been mostly dispersed across different sites and divided into several units, whereas those of local landowners were comparatively smaller and mainly located in the same area.

Several studies have pointed out the inadequacy of taking only the holders of public charges into account when studying the elites⁸⁸. However, not a few of the donors attested in these charters are qualified precisely as public officers: *marphais*, *gastald*, *sculdahis*⁸⁹. Although their public functions did not necessarily mark these people out as members of the highest aristocracy of the capital city, it still means that being appointed to a charge by the public authority represented one of the defining factors for both palatine and local elites in Lombard Southern Italy, together with the possession of considerable landed property.

5. Conclusions

Despite the presence of certain members of the Carolingian elite among the witnesses to the *pactum divisionis* of 849 and during the military campaigns of Louis II in Southern Italy, the Beneventan aristocracy did not have a close relationship with that of the central and northern part of the Italian peninsula, and stayed almost isolated, especially during the first half of the ninth century. If its remoteness was somewhat balanced during the eighth century by the marriages between the local dukes and the female members of

⁸⁶ RPD II, n. 305 [*Sculdahis Forti*], pp. 915-916 (807 X, Taranto); n. 396 [*Sculdahis Aripertus*], pp. 1126-1127 (809, Taranto). See the profile of minor officials outlined for Apulia and Nocera, in the Salerno area: Loré, *I gastaldi nella Puglia longobarda*, pp. 260-265; Loré, *Sculdasci e gastaldi*, pp. 125-128.

⁸⁷ Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 293-301; Martin, *La Longobardia meridionale*, pp. 348-352; Di Muro, *Curtis, territorio ed economia*, pp. 111-138.

⁸⁸ See at least Gasparri, *I gruppi dominanti nell'Italia longobarda e carolingia*, pp. 39-46; Collavini, *Spazi politici e irraggiamento sociale*, pp. 319-322.

⁸⁹ Beside those already mentioned see: RPD II, n. 188, pp. 559-560 (830 VII, Benevento): *Gastald Rodegarius*; n. 194, p. 572 (795 or 810 IV, Taranto): *Gastald Rodegarius*; CV I, nn. 40-41, pp. 257-259 (812 I, Benevento): *Gastald Maio*. Loré, *I gastaldi nella Puglia longobarda*, pp. 260-265; Di Muro, *Curtis, territorio ed economia*, pp. 120-123. On these public charges in Lombard Southern Italy see Gasparri, *Il ducato e il principato di Benevento*, pp. 121-122.

northern Lombard aristocracy, the period following the Carolingian conquest broke such connections⁹⁰. During the first half of the ninth century, both the princes of Benevento and the urban elite focused on consolidating their role by taking part in competitive dynamics as well as in a circuit of redistribution of public resources, which both appeared to be highly centralized up to 849.

The division of the principality of Benevento and the *de facto* crystallisation of the factional struggle that arose from competition within the palace had important consequences not only for the political geography of Southern Italy but above all for the social dimension of the Lombard regional elite. The *pactum divisionis* caused the dissolution of a centralized political system by splitting it in two smaller networks, one of them centred on Benevento and the other one on Salerno, from which a third pole, Capua, then emerged during the second half of the ninth century. Even leaving aside the issues linked to the Muslim attempts at conquest and Louis II's later military campaigns, the birth of a second capital city, Salerno, and the participation to a circuit of redistribution that was only half of the previous one⁹¹, led to the weakening of Lombard Southern elite, at least from a political and military standpoint. On the contrary, its patrimonial wealth, which relied on landed estates distributed throughout the whole of Lombard Southern Italy, was guaranteed by the *pactum divisionis*⁹². Political competition also underwent some major transformations. Since the circuit of players became split across many centres and thus restricted, the conflict became progressively less violent. In the second half of the ninth century, both in Benevento and Capua, political struggles seem to have been played out exclusively between members of the kin-group in power, leaving other players aside, mostly acting in peripheral or ancillary roles⁹³.

During the second half of the ninth century, the higher Beneventan aristocracy, which had previously been marked by a distinctive urban profile and an intense participation in public power, thus fragmented into a tripartite political system, where the most important link with public authority started to become that of kinship.

⁹⁰ Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 24-25.

⁹¹ Martin, *Guerre, accords et frontières*, c. 21, pp. 210-211.

⁹² *Ibidem*, c. 14, p. 207.

⁹³ Loré, *Uno spazio instabile*, pp. 341-360; Zornetta, *Italia meridionale longobarda*, pp. 293-294. See also: Martin, *Éléments préféodaux*, pp. 570-571.

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