THE *DE CHIAVANO* FAMILY BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF SICILY AND THE DUCHY OF SPOLETO (13TH-14TH CENTURIES)

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Throughout the 13th and 14th centuries, the border region between the Kingdom of Sicily and the papal territories underwent profound changes in the political, economic, and social landscape. The border itself, initially quite unstable in the inner mountainous areas, progressively settled due to the growing attention devoted by the Angevin kings and to the development of the Angevin new towns. In this evolving context, the members of the noble family of the de Chiavano, whose lands stretched on both sides of the border, were forced to rethink their political strategies and allegiances in order to adapt and survive. Initially part of the Umbrian Ghibellines, they swapped side and turned Guelphs, even entering the service of Charles II of Anjou, but after moving to Spoleto they went back into the Ghibelline faction, rising to the upper echelons of the party. These political transformations, however, forced them to gradually abandon their lands, thus losing their trans-border projection and the political freedom and the economic revenues it granted – ultimately anchoring them to the northern side of the frontier and to the precarious balance of power between the Umbrian cities and their political factions.

Tra il XIII e il XIV secolo, la regione frontaliera tra il Regno di Sicilia e i territori pontifici fu attraversata da profondi cambiamenti di natura politica, economica e sociale. Il confine stesso, caratterizzato da una sostanziale instabilità nelle aree montagnose interne, si stabilizzò progressivamente per effetto dell'attenzione crescente riservatagli dai sovrani della dinastia angioina e in seguito allo sviluppo delle fondazioni angioine. Per sopravvivere in questo contesto in rapida evoluzione, i membri della nobile famiglia dei de Chiavano*, in possesso di terre su entrambi i versanti del confine, furono costretti a ripensare le proprie strategie politiche e le proprie alleanze. Inizialmente parte dei ghibellini umbri, cambiarono schieramento e divennero guelfi, entrando al servizio di Carlo II d'Angiò, ma dopo essersi trasferiti a Spoleto tornarono nella fazione ghibellina, ascendendo ai vertici del partito. Queste trasformazioni politiche, tuttavia, li costrinsero ad abbandonare gradualmente le loro terre, perdendo così la loro proiezione transfrontaliera e la libertà politica e i proventi economici che essa garantiva, e trovandosi infine ancorati al lato settentrionale della frontiera e al precario equilibrio di potere tra le città umbre e le loro fazioni politiche.*

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Introduction

On 18 June 1156, the signing of the Treaty of Benevento between Pope Adrian IV and King William I[1] established the borders between the papal territories and southern Italy along a route that would remain substantially unchanged until the unification of Italy[2]. Although the agreement established in principle which territories belonged to the two parties, it did not offer detailed information for those regions that at the time lacked large urban centres or solid administrative structures. As a result, at least until the beginning of the 14th century, some areas remained of uncertain attribution, a condition that depended largely on the changing political circumstances. This phenomenon is particularly evident in the *Montagna d'Abruzzo*, that roughly corresponded to the area encased by L'Aquila, Rieti, Spoleto, and Arquata del Tronto. The region is characterised by a predominantly mountainous landscape: within it are both the Terminillo massif and the Monti della Laga, with the high valleys of the Velino, Tronto and Aterno[3].

Of the few towns in this area at the beginning of the 13th century, Rieti and Spoleto were part of the papal territories, and so were Cascia and Norcia, but where the Kingdom actually began was not as clear. Amatrice, Accumoli and Arquata, for example, for a long time oscillated between obedience to the sovereigns of southern Italy and the dominion of the papal city of Ascoli. Similarly, the entire region of the ancient diocese of Amiterno, one of the two counties that would give rise to the city of L'Aquila, was subject to the authority of the bishop of Rieti until the mid-13th century. Rieti itself, on the other hand, was still trying to expand its area of influence across the border at the beginning of the 14th century. This state of affairs would come to an end, gradually but inexorably, following the birth and development of the Angevin new towns[4], which together with the ever greater control exercised over the border crossings by the sovereigns of the Kingdom[5] would profoundly alter the social, political and economic landscape of the Abruzzi frontier[6].

While the aspects related to the populating process of the new urban centres were extensively investigated in recent times[7], the same cannot be said of the consequences of these transformations on the other inhabitants of the region. The territory was in fact characterised by small settlements, often controlled, in part or in full, by small family units or larger aristocratic *consorterie* residing close to or on the border[8]. In recent years, historiography has devoted itself to the study of some of these border families, with greater attention paid to the most eminent among them[9]. A lesser-known family, while of a certain importance, is that of the lords of Chiavano,

[1] *Pactum beneventanum*, p. 590.

[2] The northern border of the Kingdom of Sicily has been the subject of numerous studies, some of which very recent: see Antonetti - Casalboni 2025; Toomaspoeg 2014; Martin 2005; Ricci - Anselmi 2005; Hubert 2000; Cuozzo 2000; Martin 2000; Martin 1992; Clementi 1990; Clementi 1970; Rivera 1926.

[3] A similar problem also concerned other Apennine areas: see for example Pirillo 2013.

[4] Casalboni 2021a.

[5] Toomaspoeg 2017; Martin 2000.

[6] Casalboni 2025b.

[7] Casalboni 2025a; Casalboni 2023a; Casalboni 2018a.

[8] On the local nobility until the 12th century, see Rotellini 2025; Rotellini 2015.

[9] In particular, in the Kingdom, the Mareri, Camponeschi, Urslingen/*de Duce*, *de Machilone*, and *de Roio* families: see Casalboni 2024a; Casalboni 2023b; Casalboni 2021b; Leggio - Onori 2021; Casalboni 2019; Leggio 2016; Leggio 2002; Colapietra 2001; Leggio 2001; Mosca 2001; Leggio 1996; Cortonesi 1995. As for the dominions of Roman nobles in the frontier regions, see Allegrezza 2000; Pollastri 1998; and especially, Carocci

only examined by a brief essay by Agostino Serantoni[10] and an entry in the *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* by Luciano Miglio dedicated to its most famous exponent, Abrunamonte[11]. These studies, however, do not extensively analyse the relationship between the family and the territory of the *Montagna d'Abruzzo*, nor focus on border dynamics or their relations with southern Italy and the Guelph world, which nevertheless played a fundamental role in determining the political strategies of the *de Chiavano* family, whose territories lay right on the border of the Kingdom.

To fill this gap, in addition to the published and unpublished sources on the territory in question[12] and the above-mentioned studies on the *de Chiavano* nobles, this study will rely on the historiographical production relating to the events of main towns of the region. If the Kingdom's side of the border has been the subject of recent studies[13], the Umbrian side is less known, and the historiography is more dated[14]. Some recent contributions, however, are worthy of mention, as they highlight particular aspects of the border region. The volume *Ad fines regni* by Tersilio Leggio[15] illustrates the events of the border region showing how, while it was divided into different political entities, it remained interconnected. The volume *Gli Angiò in Italia centrale* by Pierluigi Terenzi[16] outlines the characteristics of the Angevin domination over the cities of the papal territories and the relations of the southern Italian sovereigns with local elites. Lastly, the volume *Istituzioni, relazioni e culture politiche nelle città tra stato della Chiesa e regno di Napoli (1350-1500 ca.)* edited by Terenzi and Federico Lattanzio[17] reveals the multiple points of contact at a cultural and political level between southern and central Italy.

The *Montagna d'Abruzzo* between the Swabian and the Angevin Dynasties

The area in which the *de Chiavano* family resided is currently delimited by the municipalities of Cascia, Monteleone di Spoleto, Leonessa, and Cittareale. Under the Swabians, however, there were no other large urban centres besides Cascia. In fact, this mountainous territory[18] characterised by narrow valleys only had small settlements until the late 13th century. There were two main routes that crossed the border in the area: one connected Spoleto to Rieti and allowed access to the Kingdom near the king-owned fortress of Ripa di Corno; the second descended from Cascia through the Radeto pass. The two routes converged at the castle of Machilone, then

2016, pp. 327–332 (Caetani), 353–369 (Colonna), 387–403 (Orsini), 415–422 (Savelli). On the Umbrian nobility, see Maire Vigueur 1987; Maire Vigueur 1980.

[10] Serantoni 1981.

[11] Miglio 1982.

[12] Santoni 2007; RCA; Morini 1941a; Sansi 1879a; Morini 1941b; Antinori, *Annali*; Antinori, *Corografia*. Alongside this documentation, the *Repertori Angioini* should be considered: these are collections of notes and transcriptions by Neapolitan archivists and librarians who kept fragments of the Angevin archives, which were destroyed during the Second World War: see Filangieri 1970, pp. 177-200. On this matter, the one by Sigismondo Sicola is particularly relevant.

[13] Casalboni 2021a; Casalboni 2025a.

[14] Morini 1941b; Sansi 1879b; Patrizi Forti 1869.

[15] Leggio 2011a.

[16] Terenzi 2019.

[17] Lattanzio - Terenzi 2021; Leggio 2021; Lattanzio 2021.

[18] Of the four centres, Cascia stands by far at the lowest on the sea level (650 metres); the other three are all above 950.

went on into the wide valley of L'Aquila. In addition to these two roads, the border could be crossed further east, at Arquata del Tronto, Accumoli and Amatrice, or further south, at Rieti, through the Antrodoco gorges (fig. 1).

In this region, the border was quite unstable: while there were some fixed points (on the

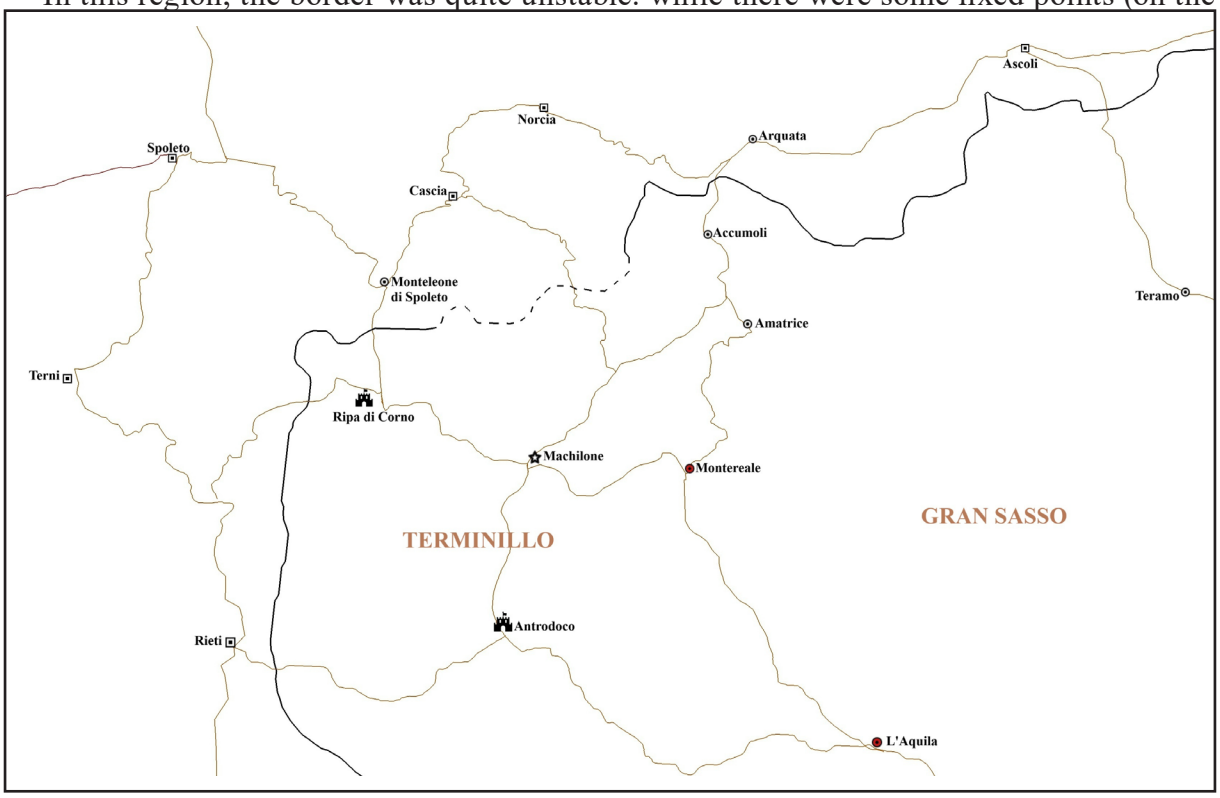

Fig. 1. The Montagna d'Abruzzo region after 1266 (map by the author). The fortresses of Ripa di Corno and Antrodoco controlled the main access routes to the Kingdom from the papal territories; L'Aquila and Montereale (shown in red), were founded by Conrad IV in 1254, destroyed by Manfred in 1259 and rebuilt by Charles I of Anjou after the battle of Benevento in 1266; the star represents the castle of Machilone, seat of a pro-Swabian noble consorteria whose power was greatly reduced after the advent of the Angevin dynasty.

papal side, the cities of Rieti, Spoleto, Cascia and Norcia; on the Kingdom side, a number of king-owned fortresses such as Antrodoco and Ripa di Corno, or the firmly Swabian *consorteria* of the *de Machilone*[19]), there were also great areas of variation, as shown by a comparison with other areas on the same frontier (e.g. the more studied areas between Terracina and Gaeta, on the Tyrrhenian Sea, or between Ascoli and Teramo, on the Adriatic[20]). In fact, while elsewhere the borders were the result of more ancient dynamics and retraced the diocesan delimitations of the Carolingian era[21], in the *Montagna d'Abruzzo* this correspondence between ecclesiastical circumscriptions and political borders is completely absent: the diocese of Rieti, in fact, largely extending into the Kingdom[22]. Also contributing to the uncertainty was the absence of large urban centres on the Kingdom side: sev-

[19] Casalboni 2019.

[20] Caciorgna 2008; Caciorgna 2000; Di Nicola 1990.

[21] Toomaspoeg 2025, pp. 91-92.

[22] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 266-322; Toomaspoeg 2025, p. 92; Leggio 2011b.

eral small settlements and border villages, lacking the possibility of defending themselves against external interference, were sometimes within the Kingdom's borders, sometimes in the pontifical dominions, depending on the political situation. This phenomenon is accentuated in the mountainous inner areas. For instance, to the east of Ascoli, it affected both scattered settlements such as those in the Valle Castellana and small to medium-sized towns such as Accumoli, Arquata del Tronto and Amatrice[23]; towards Rieti, on the other hand, instability took the form of border disputes and conflicts of various kinds that would last for a long time, even throughout the 14th century[24]; in between the two, villages such as Pianezza and Narnate paid the *fodro* in the papal lands in 1233[25], but by the end of the 13th century had become firmly part of the Kingdom, contributing to the foundation and population of Leonessa (which was built in 1278 under the fortress of Ripa di Corno[26]).

In the Swabian age, these tensions repeatedly erupted during the conflicts between the Swabian sovereigns and the Church, which led to invasions and counter-invasions[27]. Some families of the high nobility also played some role in the development of these tensions, rebelling against Frederick II or clashing and signing treaties with the cities of the papal territories[28]. Two more elements of instability were the revolts against the papal rectors of the Duchy of Spoleto and the ambitions of the urban centres in the area. It seems no coincidence that the inhabitants of the settlements that took part in the populating processes of the Angevin foundations often complained of security problems and aggression from their neighbours, both from within and outside the Kingdom[29].

The moments of greatest instability, apart from when hostilities between the two sides of the border were officially open, generally corresponded to dynastic crises in the Kingdom, when papal cities such as Rieti, Cascia and Norcia systematically tried to expand their areas of influence. The result of these attempts, even warlike ones[30], usually took the form of agreements and treaties that crossed borders and involved urban centres[31] as much as noble

[23] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 76-77, 102-103, 115-116, 118-130; Leggio 2011a, pp. 227, 233.

[24] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 140-143, 418-425.

[25] Sansi 1879a, pp. 252-256.

[26] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 95-106; Casalboni 2018b.

[27] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 56-75.

[28] The *de Lavareta* nobles rebelled against Frederick II in 1226, followed by the *de Poppleto* in 1228; between 1230 and 1233 it was the turn of the Urslingen, while in 1239 a second rebellion of the *de Poppleto* took place, and they were ultimately exiled: see Casalboni 2024a, pp. 56-57, 59. As for the relations between nobles and border towns, in 1216 Spoleto and Rieti allied against the *de Lavareta* (see Leggio 2011a, p. 158), while the Urslingen, when invading the Duchy of Spoleto in 1228, occupied Arquata del Tronto, Macerata, Norcia and Foligno before being pushed back by papal troops (Casalboni 2024a, p. 58); in 1261, two branches of the Camponeschi, the *de Monticelli* and *de Colle Torre*, signed a treaty with Norcia (Casalboni 2023b, pp. 130-131).

[29] Casalboni 2023a, p. 117; Casalboni 2018a, p. 293; Leggio 2011a, pp. 191-195.

[30] Between 1255 and 1256, when L'Aquila had just been founded, it was attacked by Rieti, whose army was however defeated in the Gole di Antrodoco (Casalboni 2021a, p. 70). In the summer of 1309, the people of Rieti also attacked the building site of Cittaducale and forced the inhabitants to change location, moving the site of the *fabrica* from the hill of Radicara to the hill of Cerreto Piano, which was further back and could be better defended (Casalboni 2021a, pp. 140-141).

[31] On 28 August 1287 Rieti signed an "asymmetrical" treaty with Leonessa (Archivio di Stato di Rieti, *Fondo membranaceo*, Q-286; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 111-112; Leggio 2011a, p. 239 note 1309), renewed with slight modifications between 3 and 5 May 1288 (Casalboni 2021a, p. 113). On 17 October 1289 another treaty was signed between Leonessa and Cascia, aimed at healing recent frictions and establishing a mutual aid pact: Archivio

families[32]. In other instances, members of the nobility on the papal side of the border put themselves in the service of Charles of Anjou, or were forced to surrender their castles, which were forfeited to the royal domain - this was the case of the Guiderocchi family, who owned Pietralta and Montecalvo, which were annexed to the Kingdom in 1280[33]. However, these occurrences were rare: in general, apart from the years immediately following the conquest of the Kingdom by Charles I, the papal side of the frontier seemed to be more stable, probably because the urban centres there were older and their control over the territory was better structured.

Of the papal cities, the most politically active seems to be Spoleto, which in the second half of the 13th century considerably expanded its area of influence, both through alliances (such as the one with Todi in 1259[34]) and through campaigns of acquisitions and pressure against noble families, who were forced to move into the city or to surrender their fortresses: on 9 December 1258, the Alviano family, one of the most powerful in the region, sold to the city half of the castles of Mevale, Giove and Belvedere, along with other possessions[35]; on 27 and 28 January 1259, the lords of Arrone, already in contact with Spoleto since 1228[36], officially submitted to the city and moved within its walls[37] – their possessions, destroyed or confiscated in 1263 in a clash between factions[38], were restored on 31 July 1266 when, together with the lords of Casteldilago, they renewed their pact of submission to Spoleto[39]. In the meantime, on 11 November 1265, the inhabitants of the *Terra de' Tiberti* had also placed themselves under Spoleto's protection, donating their possessions to the city and moving to Vetranula and Monteleone[40], built in those very years near the castle of Brufa[41]. The operation was met with opposition from Cascia, which was nevertheless defeated[42]. The expansion of Spoleto towards the south-east and its conflicts with Cascia represent a recurring theme in the affairs of the *de Chiavano* family, and one of the factors that most conditioned their political choices.

The family, however, was also affected by another phenomenon, taking place on the other side of the border. The year 1266, with the Angevin conquest of the Kingdom, marked a moment of transition for north-western Abruzzi: compared to their predecessors, Charles of Anjou and his descendants adopted a different approach to the management of the area, marked by the

Storico di Cascia, *Fondo diplomatico*, n. 6; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 114-115; Fabbi 1975, pp. 146, 488 n. I; Morini 1941a, pp. 20-23, n. V; Coppari 1993.

[32] For instance, in 1251 Rieti besieged the Urslingen's castle of Lugnano (Casalboni 2024a, pp. 60-63), while in 1286 it forced the *de Machilone* family into submission (Casalboni 2021a, pp. 110-111).

[33] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 76-77, 100-103, 116; Leggio 2011a, p. 227, 233.

[34] Sansi 1879a, pp. 310-312, n. 52.

[35] Sansi 1879a, pp. 300-305, n. 50.

[36] Maire Vigueur 1983, p. 497.

[37] Sansi 1879a, pp. 305-309, n. 51.

[38] Sansi 1879b, pp. 87-89, 96.

[39] Sansi 1879a, pp. 318-320, n. 55; Sansi 1879b, pp. 99-100. The lords of Casteldilago had already sworn allegiance in 1212: Sansi 1879a, pp. 218-219, n. 12.

[40] Sansi 1879a, pp. 314-317, n. 54.

[41] Cerone 2015, p. 184.

[42] As can be seen from Sansi 1879a, pp. 322-323, n. 57, dated 13 June 1269: in the document, Cascia asks to be absolved from bans and penalties imposed by Spoleto due to a conflict between the two towns, which was linked precisely to the control of Monteleone and which Spoleto must evidently have won.

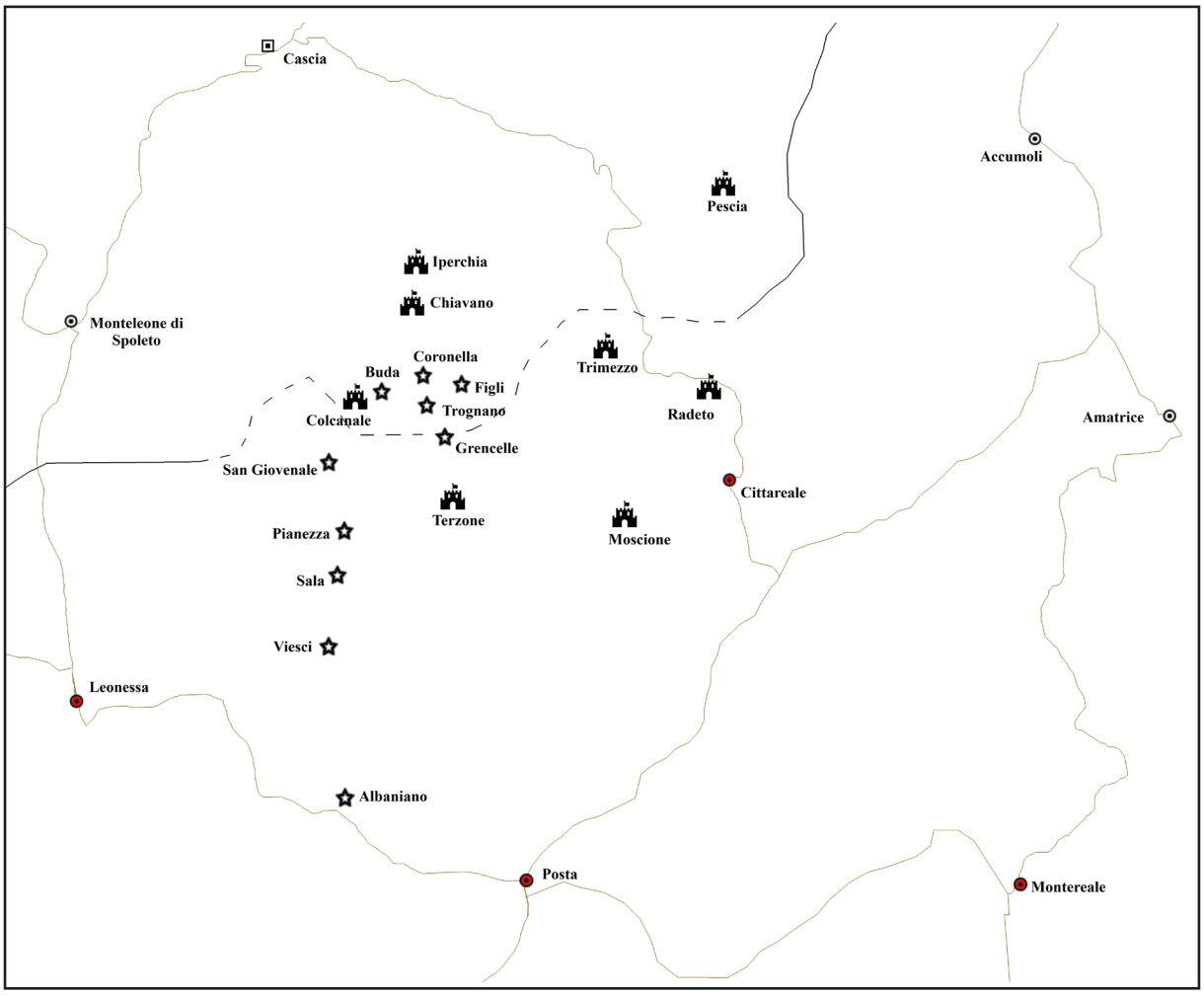

Fig. 2. The settlements traceable to the *de Chiavano* family (map by the author). The Angevin new towns (in red), the older towns of Accumoli, Amatrice, Cascia and Monteleone (in white), and the villages (stars) and fortresses (castles) of the *de Chiavano* family.

strengthening of border control activities through a greater supervision of the officers in charge of the management of the passes and the creation of a real border police force[43]. In 1273, the *Giustizierato d'Abruzzo* was divided into two parts (*ultra* and *citra flumen Piscarie*), at the same time the *giustiziere ultra* was entrusted with the task of «controllare rigorosamente Montereale, L'Aquila e Amatrice e di porre uomini di fiducia in Accumoli e Arquata, i più importanti centri sulla via per Ascoli»[44]. Just two years earlier, in 1271, a new captaincy had also arisen, that of the *Montagna*, which over time would see its boundaries expand to control the whole of the *Montanea Aprutii* and the prerogatives of its commander grow far beyond those usually re-

[43] Martin 2000, pp. 299-303; Toomaspoeg 2017, pp. 500-501; Casalboni 2025b, p. 188.

[44] Casalboni 2021a, p. 84 in note; the document is published in RCA, vol. 11, pp. 6-9 n. 18. The division was established after years of revolts along the northern border, the most important of which, led by Rinaldo *de Maccla*, had seen the military occupation by the rebels of the fortress of Castel Manfrino, conducted also with the help of Ascoli, which claimed possession of the castle and the surrounding territory; Charles of Anjou first forced the people of Ascoli to stop supporting Rinaldo, thus reconquering the castle, and then in 1274 obtained the submission of Ascoli itself (Leggio 2011a, pp. 244-246).

served for royal captains[45]. At the same time, the birth of L'Aquila and the other Angevin foundations brought slow but inexorable changes on the political, economic and social levels, linked to the development of a merchant class but above all to the definition of the areas of influence of the newborn urban centres[46]. The border therefore gradually stabilised[47], in a process that came to completion in the late 1330s, with the birth of the last of the Angevin foundations, Cittareale (first attested in 1328 and completed in 1332[48]), placed to guard the Radeto pass. Both this centre and Leonessa were located right next to the territories controlled by the lords of Chiavano[49], and the processes of populating these two urban centres therefore represent the second important piece of evidence for understanding the happenings of the *de Chiavano* family: a cross-border family (fig. 2) that found itself facing the transformation of the border region and was therefore forced to drastically rethink its strategies.

The *de Chiavano* family from its origin to the end of the Swabian dynasty

According to Agostino Serantoni, Chiavano allegedly originated from a monastic cell which, following the Saracen invasions, was transformed into a castle at the beginning of the 10th century[50]; at the beginning of the following century, its territory would have been part of the Narnate *gastaldato*, and ultimately it was donated to the abbey of Farfa[51]. The power of the lords of Chiavano should however be traced back to Frederick Barbarossa: after the destruction of Spoleto in 1155, the emperor is said to have taken as hostages the sons of several noble families in the area, including Petruccio and Abrunamonte *de Chiavano*, who would then enter the service of the sovereign, being appointed respectively count of Chiavano and count of Serrano and Scopoli[52]. Abrunamonte, in particular, became an official of Conrad of Urslingen, Duke of Spoleto, assisting him in the expansion of the ducal authority over the Valnerina and Casciano and obtaining in return control over Pianezza, Terzone and Trimezzo[53], as well as the hand of his daughter, Agnese[54]. In 1198 Conrad of Urslingen was forced to surrender the Duchy to the Pope, but his sons remained in the service of the Swabians: both Rinaldo and his brother

[45] Casalboni 2025b, pp. 191-194; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 33, 85-87.

[46] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 209-213, 245-265, 426-438. On the economic growth in the region, see Casalboni 2024b; Pinto 2013.

[47] Also thanks to intentional efforts by the Angevin kings: in 1307 Charles II requested the city of Rieti to verify their shared borders, and in 1309 a second verification was requested of the bishop of Rieti, who sent the sovereign a list of his churches located in the Kingdom (Casalboni 2021a, pp. 135-137).

[48] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 148-150.

[49] Miglio 1982, pp. 166-169 and Maire Vigueur 1983, p. 496, speak of unspecified fortresses on the border between Abruzzo and Umbria; Sansi 1879b, p. 121, identifies the family properties with Chiavano and Colcanale and the villas of Coronella, Trognano and Buda; Serantoni 1981, pp. 7-8, further extends the list to include the castles of Radeto, Moscione, Iperchia, Terzone and Trimezzo and the villages of S. Silvestro, Figli, Grencelle, Ruzzo, S. Giovenale, Sala and Viesci. Albaniano and Pescia are mentioned as part of the family possessions in 1277 and 1300 respectively.

[50] Serantoni 1981, p. 5.

[51] Serantoni 1981, p. 7.

[52] Serantoni 1981, p. 14.

[53] Sansi 1879a, pp. 251-253; Serantoni 1981, p. 15.

[54] Serantoni 1981, p. 15; Miglio 1982, p. 166.

Bertoldo held important positions at the court of Frederick II[55]. In 1228, however, the two, who continued to claim the ducal title that had been their father's, decided to take advantage of the emperor's departure for the crusade and of Rinaldo's position as imperial vicar to attempt and reconquer the Duchy by invading the papal territories in arms[56]. In this context, it is conceivable that among the Umbrian families prepared to support the Urslingen offensive[57] were also the *de Chiavano* family, due to their dynastic ties - the absence of sources on the family at this time, however, does not allow for certainty[58]. Similarly, there is no way to know whether the emperor's banishment of the Urslingen brothers on his return from the crusade - which led to Bertoldo returning to Germany and Rinaldo settling in the family estates in the Rieti region[59] - also affected the *de Chiavano* nobles.

There is however more evidence on later generations of the family. At the time of Frederick II's death in 1250, Enrico son of Ruggero was head of the *de Chiavano* family. The inhabitants of Radeto entrusted him with their castle in order to remove it from the dominion of Cascia, which, like other papal towns such as Ascoli, Rieti, and Norcia, was taking advantage of the imperial throne vacancy to expand its area of influence[60]. It is not clear whether the family played a role in the conflicts between the papacy and the heirs of Frederick II, nor whether they took sides at the time of the Angevin conquest of southern Italy, culminated in the battle of Benevento in 1266, but the military campaign led by Charles of Anjou brought forth a partial redefinition of the border in the area: Usigni, Chiavano and Monteleone remained territories of the Duchy, while Pianezza, Narnate and Radeto became part of the Kingdom[61]. It is no coincidence that in 1271 Radeto sent four soldiers to contribute to the supply of men for the royal officer in charge of guarding the roads «da Machilone a Rieti, e da Montereale a Rocca di Corno e Valle di Narni, col distretto di Matrice ed il passo di Radico [i.e. Radeto]»[62]; nor is the appointment of royal officials in Pianezza and Narnate, against whom the two communities rebelled between 1273 and 1274[63]. The rebels of Narnate, attacked by Angevin soldiers, abandoned their settlement and occupied the fortress of Ripa di Corno, where they were besieged by the troops of Charles of Anjou[64]. In that same year, hostilities broke out beyond the border between the Guelph Spoleto and the Ghibelline Cascia, assisted by the nobles of Usigni and the

[55] Casalboni 2024a, pp. 52-57.

[56] Casalboni 2024a, p. 58.

[57] Serantoni 1981, p. 16.

[58] In fact, Serantoni 1981, pp. 31-34 contains a long and articulated family tree that also covers this period, but the author does not mention any sources for these years and traces the origin of the family back to the Lombard king Liutprand, elements that leave space for some doubt about the accuracy of this reconstruction.

[59] Casalboni 2024a, pp. 59-60.

[60] Casalboni 2021a, p. 65; Di Nicola 2013, p. 7; Leggio 2011a, p. 174; Leggio 2009, p. 118; Minieri Riccio 1877, p. 183. Similarly, pope Innocent IV also attempted to take advantage of the absence of Conrad IV, who was in Germany when his father died. Between 1251 and 1252, the pope appointed new bishops for the dioceses of southern Italy; however, due to the arrival of the new king, they were not able to take office: Leggio 2011b, p. 7.

[61] Casalboni 2021a, p. 76; Fabbi 1973, p. 81.

[62] RCA, vol. 6, p. 259, n. 1400.

[63] Zelli 2003, p. 3; Zelli 1997, p. 29. In the same year, Amatrice too rebelled against Charles of Anjou and was subject to a long siege: Leggio 2011a, p. 248.

[64] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 91-92.

de Chiavano family[65]. After damaging Usigni, Chiavano, and Colcanale, the Guelphs of Spoleto and Perugia besieged Cascia in 1276, but were forced to abandon the ground due to the revolt of the Terre Arnolfe[66].

The *de Chiavano* family and the Guelph party

In the first book of his *De rebus gestis atque antiquiis monumentis Spoletini*[67] *(early 16th century), in chapter X, entitled De nobilibus Spoletinorum families*, Severo Minervio, historian and nobleman from Spoleto, wrote the following about the *de Chiavano* nobles: «Gibellini vero fuerunt Nobiles a Clavano»[68]. This concept also emerges from the above-mentioned historiographical works on the family by Agostino Serantoni and Luciano Miglio. It is true that the family owed its power to its proximity to Barbarossa and Conrad of Urslingen, and that in the 14th century it played important roles among the Umbrian Ghibellines, but at the end of the 13th century, for around twenty years, its fortunes were tied to the Guelph party, and in particular to the Angevin kings and to two popes, Nicholas III and Nicholas IV.

The clash between Cascia and Spoleto in the years 1274-1276, although not decisive, did in fact have among other consequences a drastic change in the political strategies of the *de Chiavano* family. At the beginning of 1277, following the unsuccessful outcome of their alliance with Cascia, they took an oath of loyalty to Charles of Anjou[69] to obtain in return the protection of royal troops. However, this was not enough to stop Cascia from retaliating, and its reaction was brutal and violent: the town's army «assalì il castello di Chiavano custodito dai soldati angioini distruggendolo e devastò l'intero territorio sino a Trimezzo e Terzone»[70]. For this, Cascia was excommunicated by Nicholas III, of whom Abrunamonte and Niccolò *de Chiavano*, sons of Enrico, were *domicelli*[71]. The ties between the family and the pope, born Giovanni Gaetano Orsini, are obscure, but it is possible that they originated during the latter's stay as papal legate in Sabina in 1262[72] or during the *podestariato* of the his nephew, Gentile Orsini, in Spoleto in 1269[73]; this relationship nevertheless does not sit well with the support provided by the *de Chiavano* family to the Ghibelline Cascia against the Guelph Spoleto. The excommunication on Cascia would only be lifted by Nicholas III in 1280, following the city's commitment to pay the papal coffers two thousand *libre* of *denari ravennati* and to compensate Abrunamonte, Niccolò, and their nephew Bartolo (also known as Bertolduccio) with the sum of 429 florins[74]. In that

[65] Zelli 1997, p. 29; Casalboni 2021a, p. 91.

[66] Serantoni 1981, p. 8; Sansi 1879b, p. 113. It was following these clashes that, on 23 October 1276, the lords of Usigni donated their castle to Spoleto (Sansi 1879a, pp. 334-336, n. 64).

[67] Sansi 1879a, pp. 9-194.

[68] Sansi 1879a, p. 46.

[69] Casalboni 2021a, p. 92.

[70] Zelli 1997, p. 30; Serantoni 1981, p. 9.

[71] Leggio 2011a, p. 258.

[72] Allegrezza 2013.

[73] Leggio 2011a, pp. 258-259.

[74] Morini 1941a, pp. 11-14, n. 1; Leggio 2011a, p. 258; Serantoni 1981, p. 10; Casalboni 2021a, p. 129. Cascia convinced Rieti to act as warrantor for the payment, but the sum was never given, and on 5 May 1286, pope Honorius IV released the Sabine city from its commitment (Prou 1888, p. 349, n. 496). Three *libre* of *denari ravennati*

same year, the good relations between the papal Curia and the *de Chiavano* family also played a role in the obtaining by Abrunamonte, *podestà* of Norcia at the time, of the revocation of the sanctions imposed on the city by the rector of the Duchy for certain acts of rebellion during the war between Cascia and Spoleto[75].

In the late 1270s, meanwhile, Charles of Anjou also intervened to strengthen his control over the border region: on 1 October 1277 he ordered an inspection of the border castles of Rocca de Intro and Ripa di Corno[76]. The second fortress had recently been returned to the royal officers by the rebels of Narnate after a long negotiation[77], for which the same sovereign congratulated the *Giustiziere d'Abruzzo* on 9 October[78]. The agreements provided for the settlement of the rebels in a new urban centre, to be set up right under the fortress, in a place identified by a special commission; the name of this foundation, Gonessa, would later be changed to Leonessa[79].

In 1285, the *Montagna d'Abruzzo* region faced a new crisis: following the death of Charles of Anjou, a long interregnum began for southern Italy, which would only end in 1289, with the return of Charles II from the Aragonese captivity[80]. Already on 21 March 1286, Rieti made a treaty with the *de Machilone* nobles[81]; on 28 August 1287, it was the turn of an "asymmetrical" treaty between Rieti and Leonessa[82]. Then, in the spring of 1288, clearly convinced that the protection that the *de Chiavano* family had hitherto enjoyed had failed, Cascia attacked the family again by occupying and demolishing the castle of Radeto, despite Pope Nicholas IV's intervention in its defence, who had urged Amatrice, Accumoli and Leonessa to come to its aid[83]. The *de Chiavano* nobles, unable to oppose Cascia's army, sold the castle and the Chiavano hill to Spoleto on 21 July 1289, presumably to protect themselves against further attacks from Cascia[84]. Cascia then made a peace treaty with Leonessa on 17 October 1289 to heal the friction

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were worth one silver florin; five *libre* one gold florin.

[75] Santoni 2007, pp. 66-70, docc. 52-54.

[76] RCA, vol. 50, p. 294, n. 703: the *Giustiziere d'Abruzzo* and his *erario* were called upon to visit the two fortresses and ensure that the castles were manned by trusted men, as well as to have any repairs carried out by the inhabitants of the nearby *loca*, availing themselves of the collaboration of Simone *de Bonis*, the *provisor castri* appointed by Charles of Anjou (see Casalboni 2021a, p. 93).

[77] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 91-92.

[78] RCA, vol. 50, pp. 294-295, n. 704.

[79] From the French city of *Gonesse*: see Casalboni 2021a, p. 158.

[80] See Casalboni 2021a, pp. 109-120 on the effects of the *interregnum* on the border region.

[81] Archivio di Stato di Rieti, *Fondo membranaceo*, P-9/274; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 110-111. See also Leggio 2011a, pp. 239-240, note 1309; Leggio 2001, p. 38; Caciorgna 2000, pp. 322-323; Leggio 1995, p. 63.

[82] Archivio di Stato di Rieti, *Fondo membranaceo*, Q-286; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 111-113; Leggio 2011a, p. 239 note 1309.

[83] Serantoni 1981, p. 10; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 114, 424; Leggio 2009, p. 118; cfr. Zelli 2003, p. 8. It is not surprising that Nicholas IV paid particular attention to the border region, since he was native of Lisciano, a small village south of Ascoli, close to the border of the Kingdom. It is also possible that the pope fined Cascia for this aggression against the *de Chiavano* family, like his predecessor Nicholas III: in 1291, in fact, Cascia paid the treasurer of the Duchy of Spoleto one thousand one hundred and sixty-five gold florins, part of a total sum of two thousand three hundred and thirty gold florins owed to the Church for reasons unspecified in the document (Morini 1941a, pp. 23-25, n. 6).

[84] Archivio di Stato di Spoleto, parchments nn. 59-62; Sansi 1879a, pp. 50, 350-351, n. 71; Casalboni 2021a, p. 114; Miglio 1982, p. 167; Sansi 1879b, pp. 121-122; Maire Vigueur 1983, pp. 496-497. The sale included the castle and the mount of Chiavano, the mount of Colcanale, the villages of Coronella, Trognano and Buda, with «ville, terre colte e incolte, boschi, prati, acque e molini con le loro pertinenze e tutti gli uomini e vassalli e loro

between the two cities[85]. One clause of the treaty in particular specified that the *de Chiavano* family was excluded from the peace and that the two towns were not to give hospitality either to them or to their relatives and partisans. While it is not known whether the agreement was linked to Cascia's attack on the *de Chiavano* nobles, nor whether the hostilities between the two towns broke out as a consequence of actions taken by Leonessa in defence of the family, the *Montagna d'Abruzzo* was now undoubtedly hostile to the *de Chiavano* family, who as a result of the treaty seemed to lose even the minimal support that might have been guaranteed to them by Leonessa at the pope's request.

In spite of the undoubtedly complicated situation, the *de Chiavano* family managed to get out of it by once again availing themselves of their contacts in the Guelph party: on 2 December 1290, Abrunamonte *de Chiavano* is attested in the service of Charles II of Anjou as captain of the *Montagna*[86], a circumstance from which we learn that he is a *miles* and is referred to as *dilectus* of the king. Significantly, the *capitanìa della Montagna d'Abruzzo*, for which Abrunamonte is responsible with the *mero et mixto imperio*, included the entire frontier region from Amatrice to Antrodoco and reached as far as the border with Rieti, and from 1289 onwards had expanded to include Leonessa[87] - which therefore finds itself under Abrunamonte's authority despite the agreement made with Cascia just one year earlier. Then, in 1293, when Abrunamonte no longer held the office, he and his brother Nicola sold the castle of Radeto «con pertinenze, vassalli, servigj e demanj»[88] to Amatrice in a transaction perhaps conducted with the consent of the sovereign[89]. In 1295, however, when Amatrice expanded its authority over other neighbouring localities, including Alegia, Spogna di Capri, Macchia and Roccasalli[90], in order to control the fertile mountain pastures in the area and the mountain pass that led towards Cascia and Norcia, the *de Chiavano* family once again placed themselves under the protection of Spoleto: in a new treaty transcribed in the *rubrica L* of the Spoleto "Constitutum", they promised to settle within the city and swear allegiance to the *podestà*[91].

discendenti, registrando i nomi di cento ventinove capi di famiglia; vendevano l'*imperio*, le giurisdizioni, e tutte le ragioni che avevano nei servigi, mansi, tenute, tenimenti, beni e cose di detti uomini e vassalli» (Sansi 1879b, pp. 121). See also Serantoni 1981, pp. 11-12, who, however, reverses the two events, recognising in the sale of Chiavano to Spoleto the reasons for Cascia's attack on the family, in fear of Spoleto's interference, which in those years was also expanding to the south-east through the purchase in 1291 of the castle of Arrone from the lords of the same name, who had already moved to the city some time before (Sansi 1879a, pp. 352-355, n. 72; Sansi 1879b, p. 121).

[85] Archivio Storico di Cascia, *Fondo diplomatico*, parchment n. 6; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 114-115; Serantoni 1981, p. 12; Fabbi 1975, pp. 146 e 488, n. I; Morini 1941a, pp. 20-23, n. 5; Coppari 1993, p. 22. The treaty was guaranteed by the nearby town of Accumoli, in charge of supervising the implementation of the agreement and of the resolution of quarrels and disagreements that might arise, also about the borders of the two centres.

[86] RCA, vol. 35, pp. 191-192, nn. 133-135. See also Casalboni 2021a, pp. 121, 378; Leggio 2011a, p. 238 Leggio 2009, p. 118. On the *capitanìa della Montagna*, see Casalboni 2025b, pp. 191-194.

[87] Leggio 2011a, p. 249; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 117, 190.

[88] Antinori, *Corografia I*, p. 158; Antinori, *Annali*, vol. X/1, p. 280 (whose source is cited as «Instr. r. N. Iacob. de Amatric. ib. A. 1293. Ind. 6 die 5 Iul. Sed. Rom. vacant. Carol. II Reg. A. 9 in Archiv. Conv. S. Francisc. Min. Convent. Amatric. n. 1»). See also Zelli 1997, p. 107; Di Nicola 2013, p. 43; Massimi 2001, p. 22.

[89] It was in fact the royal *capitano della Montagna* at the time, the *miles* Guiberto *de Clavasone*, who summoned the assembly of Amatrice to appoint the representative of the *universitas* in charge of signing the treaty: see Casalboni 2021a, pp. 121-122; Leggio 2011a, pp. 272-273.

[90] Leggio 2011a, p. 273; Leggio 2009, p. 119; Di Nicola 1990, pp. 141-143.

[91] The *Constitutum* is the first of the three fragments that make up the *Statuto del comune di Spoleto*, and dates back

In 1297, Spoleto, Assisi and Rieti undertook to participate in the expenses for the maintenance of the army of the Kingdom[92], but soon afterwards hostilities in the *Montagna d'Abruzzo* region resumed: in 1299, Monteleone di Spoleto attacked the nearby castle of Vetranola[93], which had possibly participated in the population process of Leonessa[94]. In 1300, a group of women from Norcia were attacked while on their way to Leonessa: Abrunamonte *de Chiavano* intervened to protect them and was rewarded by Norcia with the dominion over the castle of Pescia (but the town retained control over the fortress) and asked *de Chiavano* nobles for «la presentazione del *pallio* nel giorno della festa di S. Benedetto»[95]. According to one version of this anecdote, the women were attacked by men from Leonessa, while another one identifies the inhabitants of Cascia as the aggressors:

> L'avversione tra Cascia e Norcia era cosa normale. Allorché per ragioni di commercio molti nursini erano andati alla fiera a Leonessa furono aggrediti dai Casciani e derubati. Quelli che potettero sfuggire all'aggressione, si rifugiarono nel castello di Chiavano. I signori del castello si sentirono onorati da questa fiducia, e presero la loro difesa vendicando l'oltraggio con rappresaglie contro i Casciani. Norcia concesse loro il castello di Pescia[96].

In the complicated context of alliances in the region, Leonessa was nevertheless politically close to Cascia: in 1300 the Leonessan Gualtiero *de Simonis de Gonisia* was in fact *podestà* of Cascia[97]. On 23 June 1301, in what may be interpreted as a sign of détente, Cascia borrowed two thousand *libre di ravennati* from the Spoleto merchant Simone di Fidanza, paying a portion of it to Abrunamonte and Nicola *de Chiavano* and another portion to Vivarello son of Nicola[98], perhaps in settlement of the compensation fixed in 1280. Also in 1301, however, despite the oath they swore to the *podestà*'s vicar sent from Spoleto, the inhabitants of Chiavano revolted, abandoning their lands. It is not clear whether the *de Chiavano* family, who had been in the city for a few years, played a role in this revolt, but the issue would only be resolved in 1307, after a long negotiation that led to the emancipation of the vassals, who in exchange for their return obtained the same rights as the citizens of Spoleto. The only ones exonerated from the agreement were the rebels who had moved to Leonessa, accepting a petition from the royal city[99].

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to 1297; it is currently kept in the Archivio di Stato di Spoleto, *fondo Comune di Spoleto*, *Statuti*. Di Nicola 1990, pp. 141-143; Casalboni 2021a, p. 122; Serantoni 1981, p. 10.

[92] Sansi 1879a, pp. 359-360 n. 75.

[93] Sansi 1879a, pp. 371-373 n. 80.

[94] Or so it happened according to Antinori, *Corografia*, vol. XXXII/2, pp. 805-806, whose source was the 17th century jurist from Leonessa Giovambattista Ciucci.

[95] Patrizi Forti 1869, pp. 161-162. See also Serantoni 1981, p. 8.

[96] Fabbi 1975, p. 143. See also Zelli 1997, p. 112. Insecurity on the mountain roads was in any case endemic. For instance: in 1271 Florentine merchants were robbed near Rocca di Cambio (Clementi 1990, p. 69); in 1296 on the road to Rieti the bishop of Soissons was killed together with his two chaplains (Di Nicola 2007-2008, pp. 453-454); in 1303 Cascia had to pay compensation to the family of a Neapolitan merchant murdered in its territory (Morini 1941a, p. 4).

[97] As shown by an inscription on the main bell of the tower of the townhall of Cascia: Zelli 1997, p. 112; Giorgetti - Serantoni 1989, p. 59; Casalboni 2021a, p. 129. On the political growth of Leonessa in those years, also sanctioned by a boundary treaty signed in 1299 with Posta, a *universitas* recently founded in the Kingdom: Gentile 1915, pp. 28-30, n. 17; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 122-123; Clementi 1992, p. 33.

[98] Serantoni 1981, pp. 13-14; Morini 1941a, p. 4.

[99] Sansi 1879b, pp. 121-122; Serantoni 1981, p. 12; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 129, 221-222; Maire Vigueur 1983, pp. 496, 507; Zelli 1997, pp. 105-106.

The definition of the border on the *Montagna d'Abruzzo*

The political landscape of the Duchy of Spoleto and that of the border region had changed significantly in the meantime due to the election of Pope Clement V in 1303 and, above all, the departure of the papal Curia for Avignon in 1305. In that year, the government of Spoleto passed into the hands of the Ghibellines, supported by the Montefeltro family[100]. Abrunamonte *de Chiavano* quickly ascended to the leadership of the new order. In exchange for surrendering the castle of Chiavano to Cascia, he obtained economic and military support for the occupation of Spoleto and the war against the Guelph party[101]. Good relations with Cascia were on the other hand in the interests of the *de Chiavano* family, who still held fiefs in the region, particularly in Trimezzo[102]. In 1309, the death of Charles II of Anjou triggered new conflicts, in particular a battle in the Maiano plain between Guelphs and Ghibellines from Spoleto, which ended with heavy losses on both sides[103]. The rector of the Duchy was able to mediate a truce between the two factions, and it is probably in this context that the news of the sale in 1310 of the castle of Terzone and part of Pianezza by Abrunamonte's nephew, Bartolo *de Chiavano*, to King Robert of Anjou[104] should be seen. At the same time, the castle of Chiavano was confirmed under the control of Cascia[105]. This was presumably an attempt to stabilise the region by removing potential problems at the root (such as the control of border castles inside the Kingdom by an Umbrian family, especially one at the top of the local Ghibelline party) and establishing a new boundary line.

However, the descent of Emperor Henry VII into Italy, which began in October of that year, revealed how ephemeral the pacification was: hostilities in Umbria resumed immediately[106]. Robert of Anjou, returning from his coronation as sovereign of southern Italy in Avignon, suffered the theft of some beasts of burden while crossing the border near Cascia[107]. For this reason, on reaching L'Aquila, the king sent a contingent of troops led by Corrado d'Acquaviva against the Umbrian town, forcing it to return the stolen goods and pay a fine; the clashes also involved the castle of Chiavano, defended by the Cascians and sacked by Angevin troops[108], who on this occasion possibly occupied Terzone and Pianezza (already part of the sovereign's possessions[109]).

[100] Serantoni 1981, p. 16.

[101] Serantoni 1981, pp. 12-13; Sansi 1879b, pp. 174, 182, 185; Miglio 1982, p. 167; Casalboni 2021a, pp. 129-130.

[102] On 10 November 1308, when Cascia sold its properties in the territory of Trimezzo to Gennarone di Gualtiero di Fogliano, retaining for itself the jurisdiction over the inhabitants, the right to toll and the rights over the church of S. Cataldo, Cascia's properties are described as bordering on the properties of Abrunamonte and Niccolò *de Chiavano*: Archivio di Stato dell'Aquila, *fondo Famiglia Rivera*, *secondo versamento*, n. 639/R. The document is published, albeit with some inaccuracies, in Rivera 1911, n. 5, pp. 59-61; Casalboni 2021a, p. 130; Leggio 2011a, p. 275.

[103] Sansi 1879b, p. 182. Serantoni 1981, p. 16, reports that at the head of the Guelphs was the Roman noble Gentile Orsini.

[104] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 143-144; Zelli 2003, p. 13; cfr. Fabbi 1975, p. 152.

[105] Serantoni 1981, pp. 14, 19.

[106] Serantoni 1981, p. 16. Sansi 1879b, p. 181, writes that in Umbria «si formarono due coalizioni: quella ghibellina includeva Todi, Narni, Terni, Amelia e San Gimignano; quella guelfa includeva Perugia, Gubbio, Città di Castello, Camerino, Assisi, Foligno, Spello e Trevi e il supporto di re Roberto».

[107] Casalboni 2021a, p. 144; Di Nicola 2013, p. 8; Serantoni 1981, p. 19.

[108] Fabbi 1981, p. 7; Serantoni 1981, p. 20.

[109] Serantoni 1981, p. 20.

The people of Spoleto also provoked Robert's wrath by refusing to pay him homage, and for this reason in January 1311 the king forbade his subjects to trade with Spoleto and decreed the expulsion of the people from Spoleto living in Abruzzo[110]. While the Umbrian city hastened to make amends, trying to get back into the sovereign's good graces, that very year Abrunamonte *de Chiavano* was appointed by the Ghibellines of Spoleto as *podestà* of Monteleone[111], the main fortress on the road to the Kingdom.

In the meantime, a second battle had taken place between the Umbrian Guelphs and Ghibellines, near Montemolino in the province of Todi, which was also inconclusive[112]. On 28 February 1312, a third clash, on the plain of San Brizio, north of Spoleto, finally saw the Guelphs triumph: Abrunamonte *de Chiavano*, who had led the Ghibellines in the battle, died in the course of the clash[113]. His brother Enrico took command of the escapees, who were forced to abandon the city, and retreated towards Cascia[114]. The following year, a new clash took place between the kingdom troops and the Cascians, which ended with a victory for the Angevin soldiers[115]. In 1314 there was a temporary pacification between the Umbrian factions[116], while the following year a great earthquake struck the border region, presumably contributing to prolonging the pause in the fighting, since the local populations had to engage in reconstruction[117]. Anyway, this did not prevent Leonessa from expanding its area of influence over Pianezza, Terzone and Chiavano itself, attracting their inhabitants to the city[118].

One of the consequences of the peace between the Umbrian factions was certainly the intervention of the *priore delle arti* of Perugia who, on behalf of the *de Chiavano* family, asked King Robert in 1316 for the restitution of the castle of Radeto[119]; the request was, however, in all probability rejected, since the following year the sovereign entrusted Radeto to Ruggero *de Mattafellone*, declaring it part of the royal *demanio*[120]. Although the castle had been purchased by Amatrice in 1293, control over it must not have been stable at the time: between 1317 and 1318, the Radeto pass and the surrounding mountains were a battleground between L'Aquila and Amatrice[121], and in 1320 the settlement was aggregated to the *Vallis Falagrina* (and not to

[110] Casalboni 2021a, p. 144; Minieri Riccio 1882, pp. 224-225.

[111] Sansi 1879b, pp. 182-185; Leggio 2011a, p. 276.

[112] Sansi 1879b, p. 182.

[113] Sansi 1879b, pp. 182-185; Sansi 1879a, p. 39; Serantoni 1981, p. 17.

[114] Serantoni 1981, p. 17. In the same year, in September, Gualfreduccio d'Alviano, one of the generals of the Umbrian Guelphs and member of one of the most important noble families of the region, died on the field while leading a group of knights from Perugia aiming to prevent the Umbrian Ghibellines and their allies, three hundred German mercenaries provided by emperor Henry VII, from heading towards Florence (Sansi 1879b, p. 185).

[115] Leggio 2009, p. 119. See also Leggio 2011a, p. 282, after Minieri Riccio 1877, p. 183.

[116] Serantoni 1981, p. 11.

[117] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 144, 201, 219; Terenzi 2018, pp. 95, 101; Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronica*, stanze 240-247, pp. 75-77.

[118] Casalboni 2021a, p. 197. Fabbi 1975, p. 418, writes instead that Pianezza and Terzone were given to Leonessa by Giovanni *de Chiavano* (†1350) upon entering the Order of S. Agustine, while «Clavani cum suis villis ligavit terrae Cassiae» (see also Zelli 1997, p. 98).

[119] Di Nicola 2013, p. 8.

[120] Sicola, *Supplementum ad repertorium Roberti*, p. 331, writes «Radeci terre in Aprutio reductio ipsius in demanium».

[121] Antinori, *Corografia I*, pp. 160-161, writes that Amatrice, with the help of Ascoli, sieged and burned the castle of Radeto, imprisoning its inhabitants and bringing them to Amatrice asking for ransom; L'Aquila reacted by

Amatrice) in the Angevin taxation lists[122]. Then, in 1322, Charles Duke of Calabria, son and heir of Robert of Anjou, claimed «Chiavano, Trimezzo, Radeto e Albaniano in quanto feudi *in capite* della regia Curia, segno che non erano ancora saldamente parte del demanio regio»[123], but between 1323 and 1324 new clashes between L'Aquila and Amatrice affected the area[124]. In 1327, therefore, Robert of Anjou began operations to build a new settlement close to the Radeto pass: Cittareale, populated by the communities of *Falacrinae*, Terra Camponesca and Valle di Radeto[125]. The new *universitas*, part of the royal *demanio*, was supposed to stabilise the region, but its development proved slow, also because it was linked not only to the castles that had belonged to the *de Chiavano* nobles, but also to the possessions of the Camponeschi – a family moreover, who was in a phase of notable political ascent thanks to their inclusion in the Angevin official circuits and their settling in L'Aquila[126]. In 1332 Radeto was still under the control of Amatrice[127], while between 1337 and 1339 it fell directly under the royal domain[128]. In any case, the castle and its pass were now considered firmly within the Kingdom.

In 1319, the clashes between the Umbrian factions had resumed: the Ghibellines from Spoleto, with the support of Assisi and of the Count of Montefeltro, decreed the expulsion of the Guelphs in an assembly attended by several nobles, including Enrico di Abrunamonte *de Chiavano*, made *gonfaloniero* by the Ghibellines, who would remain in government until 1324, when the city was conquered after a two-year siege by the Guelph coalition[129]. Between 1330 and 1331, Norcia and Cascia were involved in a new conflict, when the castle of Usigni defected from Norcia to Cascia. In response, Norcia, supported by a large coalition of small settlements (including Belvedere of the Alviano family and Pescia of Tommaso *de Chiavano*[130]), burnt Usigni and the village of S. Fortunato to the ground[131]. In these years, the *de Chiavano* family concentrated their activity on Spoleto and other towns in southern Umbria[132], their castles in the

attacking Campotosto and other settlements subject to Amatrice, with the same approach. Both cities were sanctioned by the king: L'Aquila in particular was fined six thousand golden *once* which were later reduced following a plea by some representatives of the city (Tommaso, abbot of Collebrincioni, Domenico di Massimo di Bazzano, Edoardo Camponeschi and the two merchants Riccardo and Gaglioffo) to Charles, son of Robert of Anjou and Duke of Calabria: Rivera 1901, pp. 8-9, n. 7. See also Faraglia 1893, p. 20.

[122] Leggio 2009, p. 119; Leggio 2011a, p. 282.

[123] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 146-147. See also Di Nicola 2013, p. 8; De Rensis 1910, p. 24.

[124] Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronica*, stanza 287, p. 89; Antinori, *Annali*, vol. XI/1, p. 195.

[125] Casalboni 2021a, p. 149.

[126] In the years when Cittareale was built, one Camponeschi, Mattia, held the position of *capitano della Montagna* and was therefore responsible for the population process of the new town, Casalboni 2021a, pp. 151-152, 498-499.

[127] Sicola, *Supplementum ad repertorium Iohanne II*, p. 5.

[128] Sicola, *Supplementum ad repertorium Roberti*, p. 349.

[129] In seizing power, the Ghibellines drove the Spoleto Guelphs from the city, slaughtering large numbers of them, and for this and for his relations with Guido da Montefeltro († 1322) Enrico *de Chiavano* was excommunicated by Pope John XXII (Serantoni 1981, pp. 20-21). The Guelph alliance that regained control of Spoleto included Perugia, Florence, Siena, Orvieto, and Camerino and was led by Ugolino Trinci. On the topic, see Sansi 1879b, pp. 190-199.

[130] Serantoni 1981, p. 21.

[131] Patrizi Forti 1869, pp. 167-170.

[132] In particular, as they resided in Spoleto, they were for a long time involved in the struggles between factions within the city (see, for example, the crypto-lordship of Pietro Pianciani: Sansi 1879b, pp. 209-225) and held various offices and positions there (one of Abrunamonte's sons, Ruggero, was prior of the church of S. Pietro *fuori le mura* in 1339: Serantoni 1981, p. 22).

Montagna having been sold or lost. Along with these, the *de Chiavano* nobles had also lost their political freedom of movement across the frontier, which on the other hand was becoming better defined thanks to the emergence of Cittareale and the development of Leonessa – the latter, in particular, stipulated a peace and fixed its borders with Monteleone di Spoleto in 1333 and signed a non-aggression treaty with Cascia and Norcia in 1341[133]. On the *Montagna d'Abruzzo*, the border was finally established.

Conclusions

The parabola of the *de Chiavano* family begins and ends in Spoleto. Their rise coincides with service to the Swabians, and the decline of their fief appears an inevitable consequence of the Swabian defeat in southern Italy and of the family's involvement in the clashes between Umbrian factions. In between, however, the Guelph parenthesis is significant, as it was during these years that the *de Chiavano* family experienced prolonged periods of peace and proved capable of winning the favour of some of the most important political figures of the time, from the popes Nicholas III and Nicholas IV to Charles I of Anjou. Nevertheless, the abandonment of traditional alliances had long-lasting consequences that would considerably weaken the family's power base, forcing it to move to Spoleto and completely rethink its strategies.

If Andrea Di Nicola could describe the *de Chiavano* family of the origins as representatives of the *feodalité montagnarde*, characterised in the middle of the 13th century by great autonomy and the ability to contend with urban centres for control of the territory[134], this definition becomes completely inadequate at the beginning of the 14th century. In fact, the family patrimony, at first spread over a wide mountainous area, progressively shrank, first with the loss of Chiavano (sold to Spoleto in 1289), then of Radeto (sold to Amatrice in 1293), and finally of Pianezza and Terzone (sold in 1310 to Robert of Anjou). One way or the other, the castle of Chiavano apparently remained at the disposal of the family for a long time, also thanks to its role within the Ghibellines of Spoleto and Cascia; but the one castle that the family did not easily accept losing was Radeto, for which they came to terms with the Guelphs of Perugia, asking them to intercede with Robert of Anjou in order to obtain its restitution in 1316. Pianezza and Terzone, while fortified centres, were villages of a few dozen inhabitants and had little strategic importance: they were not worthy of a clash with Leonessa, a city capable of making treaties with Cascia, Norcia and Monteleone. Radeto, on the other hand, allowed access to rich mountain pastures (for these, L'Aquila and Amatrice would keep fighting up to the 15th century) and, above all, its pass hosted a border crossing. Therefore, Radeto was a source of tax revenues thanks to the *ius passagi*[135], and would have guaranteed a constant and considerable income for the family, which

[133] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 145, 425; Zelli 2003, p. 18; Fabbi 1975, p. 158. In 1341 Cascia and Norcia also sealed a peace agreement: see Morini 1941a, p. 4, n. 3. A verification of the borders between Leonessa and Monteleone took place in 1371 under the supervision of the captain of Leonessa and the commissioner of the papal legate, consulting the most respected and the elderly men and the representatives of the two communities (Gentile 1915, pp. 21-22, n. 13; see also Zelli 2003, p. 30). This practice was already widespread in the 13th century but was gradually perfected during the 14th century: see Caciorgna 2008, p. 83.

[134] Di Nicola 2013, p. 7.

[135] A very important income for the mountain nobility: see Maire Vigueur 1983, pp. 498-503, who identifies it as the main source of income for the lords of Alviano, Casteldilago and Arrone. The *ius passagium* must also have been very useful to richer and more important entities, such as Spoleto: when the city bought the domains of the

after the death of Abrunamonte probably desperately needed it to carry out its policies between Cascia and Spoleto.

The failure of the initiative exposed the family to the risk of impoverishment, which was very common among the secular aristocracy of the time[136], especially when, like the *de Chiavano* family, they were deprived of their incomes and forced to rely only on indemnities and on the sale of their possessions, to be reinvested wisely[137]. As much as it is true, as Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur writes, that the *de Chiavano* nobles «occupano indiscutibilmente nella gerarchia delle potenze signorili un gradino inferiore a quello degli Alviano»[138], it should nevertheless be acknowledged that this family was far from being politically irrelevant. Even after their *inurbamento* and the loss of their traditional power sources, in fact, the *de Chiavano* family succeeded in the feat of ascending twice to the top ranks of the Ghibellines of Spoleto, first with Abrunamonte and then with his son Enrico, and on both occasions ousted the Guelph government from the city, availing themselves of the support of important allies and taking skilful advantage of favourable political circumstances in the international context.

Ultimately, what limited their freedom of action and deprived them of the cross-border projection they had enjoyed (shown by the ability to approach both the sovereigns of the Kingdom and the Umbrian cities) was, more than anything else, the development of the Angevin new towns: first of all Leonessa, which extended its influence over some of the villages that had belonged to the *de Chiavano* family and made pacts with Monteleone, Cascia and Norcia, fixing the border; then Cittareale, which attracted the attention of L'Aquila and Amatrice, which would fight for its control until well into the 15th century – when the small urban centre would also fall within the dominions of the Camponeschi family, the most important family from L'Aquila at the time[139]. The definition of the border would deprive the *de Chiavano* family of any room for manoeuvre, forcing them to abandon any claims on the settlements located within the Kingdom, and would perhaps also lead to the fragmentation of the family unit. The bishop of Rieti from 1347 to 1378, Fra' Biagio, also known in contemporary documentation as Biagio da Leonessa[140], may have been a member of the family[141]. If this were the case, the fact that he bore the toponym of the royal city in which he had settled[142] might indicate a separation from the main family nucleus, which resided in Spoleto. This break could be explained if Biagio was a descendant of Bartolo, the exponent of the family who in 1310 had sold the castle of Terzone and his part of Pianezza to Robert of Anjou, but these are hypotheses that can be hardly verified. The family, nevertheless, would remain an important player in the border region for a long time,

lords of Arrone in 1291, not only did it obtain the right for its inhabitants to transit the territory, but it also secured the right to collect tolls (Sansi 1879b, p. 122). The loss of this income, due to the increasing control exerted by Angevin kings over the border and to the growing projection of the Umbrian cities and the Angevin new towns on the frontier territories, must have contributed to the weakening of the *de Chiavano* family.

[136] Fiore 2010, p. 341.

[137] Fiore 2010, p. 174.

[138] Maire Vigueur 1983, p. 496.

[139] Casalboni 2021a, pp. 406-416.

[140] Vedi Brentano 1994, pp. XXIII, 52, 145; Di Flavio 2011.

[141] Zelli 2003, p. 21. The bishop's seal, kept at the Archivio Diocesano di Rieti, reads «Blasii De C…vano Episcopi Reatini»: see Casalboni 2021a, pp. 431-432.

[142] On 14 July 1349 an act signed in presence of Biagio himself by Francesco di Angelo di Leonessa, *notarius*, *familiaris et scriba* of the bishop, is dated *Gonessa in palatio nostro*: see Brentano 1994, p. 136.

even though it was now located further from the border, in Spoleto, where the descendants of Abrunamonte *de Chiavano* would continue to side with the Ghibelline party[143] and, in light of their role and their possession of Pescia, to take part in the border skirmishes[144].

[143] Sansi 1879a, p. 119 reports that Tommaso di Pietruccio *de Chiavano* was among the Ghibelline *fuoriusciti* that re-entered Spoleto on 7 September 1390.

[144] In 1397, in Pescia, Tommaso di Pietruccio *de Chiavano* signed a truce between Montereale, Cascia, Monteleone di Spoleto and Pescia itself (Serantoni 1981, p. 24). The clashes between the cities of both sides of the border were, if not frequent, at least common during the late 14th century: in 1382 Leonessa suffered a raid by some exiles from Spoleto, aided by the inhabitants of Monteleone and Cerreto, in which one hundred and seventy people from Leonessa died and just as many were taken prisoner, together with approximately five thousand among bovines, horses and sheep (Gentile 1915, pp. 37-38, n. 25; Casalboni 2021a, p. 425); in 1394 a peace treaty was signed between L'Aquila and Cascia (Morini 1941a, p. 5, n. 6).

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