Searching for the High Middle Ages. Past and present of a periodisation

by Giuseppe Petralia

This volume publishes the proceedings of a seminar that, in December 2022, brought together some of the leading scholars who, primarily with regard to the Italian context, have studied and continue to study the 11th and 12th centuries. The aim was, and remains, to sharpen the focus on the characteristics, complexities, timing, and dynamics of what many consider to be the greatest phase of transformation and internal turning point within the medieval millennium, linking it to the notion of the "High Middle Ages". The introduction outlines, in broad strokes, the evolution – within European and international medieval studies – of the main historiographical approaches connected to this crucial issue. It then argues for the necessity and timeliness of a new discussion freed from outdated narrative frameworks, and also attempts to define the complex set of questions to which such a discussion should respond. Central to the inquiry is the problem of establishing plausible connections and interweavings among the different levels of social reality and across the various spaces affected by change. In the final section, the analysis of each contribution is followed by an initial assessment of their impact on the debate.

Sono qui pubblicati gli atti di un seminario che, nel dicembre 2022, ha riunito alcuni dei principali studiosi che, prevalentemente per lo spazio italiano, si sono occupati e si occupano dei secoli XI e XII. L'obiettivo era, ed è, mettere a fuoco caratteristiche, complessità, tempi e dinamiche di quella che molti considerano la maggiore fase di trasformazione e di svolta interna al millennio medievale, collegandola alla nozione di "pieno medioevo". L'introduzione traccia a grandissime linee l'evolversi, nella medievistica europea ed internazionale, dei principali atteggiamenti storiografici connessi a questo nodo cruciale. Argomenta quindi la necessità e l'attualità di una nuova discussione affrancata da schemi narrativi superati, e prova anche a definire il complesso questionario a cui essa dovrebbe rispondere. Centrale appare il problema di riuscire a stabilire connessioni e intrecci plausibili tra i diversi livelli della realtà sociale e nei diversi spazi investiti

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Referee List (DOI 10.36253/fup_referee_list)
FUP Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (DOI 10.36253/fup_best_practice)

Giuseppe Petralia, *Searching for the High Middle Ages. Past and present of a periodisation*, © Author(s), CC BY 4.0, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-1076-8.02, in Alberto Cotza, Giuseppe Petralia (edited by), *In Search of the High Middle Ages. Change and Continuity in 11th-12th-century Italy*, pp. 1-55, 2026, published by Firenze University Press, ISBN 979-12-215-1076-8, DOI 10.36253/979-12-215-1076-8

dal cambiamento. Nella parte finale, alla analisi di ciascuno degli interventi segue un primo bilancio del loro contributo al dibattito.

Middle Ages, 11th-12th centuries, periodization, High Middle Ages, change, historiography.

Medioevo, secoli XI-XII, periodizzazione, pieno medioevo, cambiamento, storiografia.

> ...découper l'histoire en périodes, c'est-à-dire
> substituer à la continuité insaisissable du temps
> une structure signifiante.
> (Antoine Prost, *Douze leçons sur l'histoire*,
> Paris: Seuil, 1996, 115)

This book brings together the papers which were presented and discussed in Pisa from 5 to 7 December 2022 at an event entitled *Periodizzare il medioevo. Una discussione su continuità e cambiamento nell'Italia dei secoli XI e XII*. This formed part of a research project entitled *I tempi delle strutture. Resilienze, accelerazioni e percezioni del cambiamento (nello spazio euro-mediterraneo*) through which, over a five-year period (2018-22), the Dipartimento di Civiltà e forme del sapere at the University of Pisa was able to develop its scholarly activities within the framework of the first Italian national programme for "Departments of Excellence". In 2017, the department's medievalists – general historians, archaeologists, art historians, and historians of philosophy – chose to focus their attention on the 10th to 12th centuries, bringing their research together under the umbrella of a deliberately broad and ambitious formula: *Il farsi del (pieno) medioevo (secoli X-XII),* or *The Making of the (High) Middle Ages*.[1] At the programme's conclusion, those responsible for this specific line of research into medieval history – Simone Collavini, Mauro Ronzani, and Giuseppe Petralia – organised the final meeting, the proceedings of which have now been published here. More a seminar than a conference, it involved some of the leading scholars presently working on the issues of "change" and "continuity" in the 11th and 12th centuries, chiefly – though not exclusively – with reference to Italy. Alberto Cotza, this volume's co-editor, himself made an essential contribution which ranges from the development of the overall framework of the initial programme draft to the publication of all the papers collected here. The speakers generously agreed to take part – often at short notice – in an event that had no precedent in Italy at the time, apart from a now-distant period of scholarship. The book does not include the texts of the discussions which, as we had hoped and expected, took the form

I would like to thank Simone Collavini, Alberto Cotza and Mauro Ronzani for reading the final version of this introduction.

[1] See https://www.cfs.unipi.it/dipartimento/dipartimento-di-eccellenza/progetto-di-eccellenza-2018-2022/progetto-di-ricerca/medioevo/ (accessed on December 25, 2025), also for information on the other specific projects in the "Middle Ages" area.

of a lively and informal exchange of ideas, research, and reflections that were witnessed and shared by the many colleagues and friends who were either present in Pisa or took part online. It was undoubtedly a mistake not to have planned for their publication as well.

These introductory pages rework the seminar's opening address and reflect part of the preliminary discussions among its organisers. In this respect, they serve a practical purpose. They nevertheless express a personal point of view and – given the density of the issues raised – an inevitably schematic one, for which I am solely responsible. They do not represent a summary of those positions shared by the wider group of seminar participants. While there was and remains broad agreement on the relevance of the topics addressed as well as on the connections between them, the views of the authors, organisers, and editors differed and continue to differ: they reflect individual positions that are constantly evolving, as is the nature of historical enquiry.

1. *Periodising the Middle Ages*

The phrase *The Making of the (High) Middle Ages* was retained in the book's final title, albeit with a variation – *In Search of* – which emphasises this collection's non-conclusive and only weakly assertive nature. It is instead presented as a collective *Vorarbeit* which is oriented towards a not yet fully developed systematisation of knowledge. During the initial discussions, the possibility of investigating the intertwining of "resilience" and "accelerations of change" in relation to another phase of structural transformation – that preceding the medieval millennium, between the late Roman era and the world of the post-Roman *regna* – was also considered. It was thanks to Simone Collavini that we were persuaded to shift our focus to the transitional phase within the millennium, where historiography tends to locate the time frame in which the most distinctive features of that period we call the 'Middle Ages' are defined.

The phases of change that historians seek to identify at the beginning and end of this millennium in order to differentiate it from the eras that delimit it are in fact insufficient to circumscribe and isolate its most original features. This does not mean that the fundamental questions concerning the temporal boundaries separating the 'Middle Ages' from the surrounding 'eras' are no longer important. On the one hand there is the problem of differentiation from antiquity, with the decisive issue of the margins, contents, and duration of what we have now come to identify as 'late antiquity.' On the other, there is the perhaps even more crucial question of its boundary with the modern age, the definition of which depends on no less decisive choices in terms of periodisation. To downplay the relevance of the threshold separating the 'late medieval' from the 'early modern' period (perhaps after likewise attenuating that which stands between the 'High' and 'Late Middle Ages') in fact means placing the entire weight of historical change on the rupture which took place

in the mid-18th century, within a long conception of the 'Middle Ages' that – for example, in Le Goff's work – comes to overlap with that of the *ancien régime*, or *Alteuropa* in Brunner's classic sense.[2] On the other hand, bringing together those centuries from the 13th or 14th through the 16th or 17th (perhaps under an extended periodisation of the Renaissance) in order to emphasise their shared and distinctive features has often been the most straightforward way of interpreting the genesis of modernity as occurring within at least part of the 'Middle Ages' itself.[3] Both perspectives are problematic: the latter pays the price of sacrificing the consideration of medieval societies 'in themselves' on the altar of the history of modernisation; the former, that of underestimating and flattening even structural changes in the name of the *longue durée*'s inertia as well as of the persistence of an organic and fundamental connection between land and power.

As Hans-Werner Goetz has observed, differences between the post-Roman societies of the early centuries and the European societies of the later Middle Ages are far more profound than the changes that occurred during the two transitional phases that conventionally delimit the 'Middle Ages.' It is for this reason that medievalists have tended to attribute primary importance to other turning points which unfolded within the 'Middle Ages' itself: *Die große Wende des Mittalters liegt wohl [and cannot but lie] im Hohen Mittelalter*.[4] In this sense, then, the meaning of 'the making of the High Middle Ages / *il farsi del pieno medioevo*' can legitimately shift towards that of 'the making of the Middle Ages / *farsi del medioevo*' itself, as the bracketing of 'High / *pieno*' in our project was originally intended to suggest.

2. *Shifting the 'High Middle Ages'*

The historiographical and methodological implications of these formulations extend to the entire history of our relationship with the general idea of the 'Middle Ages,' from its 19th and 20th-century elaborations through the first decades of the present century. The decision to focus on the 11th and 12th centuries reflects the results of a longstanding and ongoing search for the High Middle Ages. The major European historiographical traditions, largely independently, appear to have outlined a picture — although by no means exclusive or unique — in which the notion of rupture, or at least of decisive accelerations of change, comes to the fore mainly in those centuries.

[2] Le Goff, *Faut-il vraiment*; Brunner, *Sozialgeschichte Europas*.
[3] From a bibliography that could be expanded almost indefinitely, one might cite: Grendler ed., *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance* and Hamish ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750*. These are not exclusively Anglo-American perspectives: among leading European historians of the early modern period, see Hintze, *Staat und Verfassung*; Braudel, *Afterthoughts*; and Prodi, *Introduzione*.
[4] Goetz, *Moderne Mediävistik*, 44-5 (italics in the original), and more generally, 40-6.

In Italian historiography over the last fifty years, *pieno medioevo* has replaced the more traditional division between *alto* and *basso medioevo*. That earlier scheme was essentially consistent with the distinctly 19th-century, *Risorgimento*-era belief in the need to contrast a 'feudal' Early Middle Ages with a 'communal' Late Middle Ages within a grand national narrative based almost entirely on central and northern Italy. The category of *pieno medioevo* was adopted later, as a conscious imitation – and extension – of the concept of *Hochmittelalter* which was specific to the German historiographical tradition (and in part to the Anglo-Saxon notion of the High Middle Ages). In a more openly European – and distinctly Blochian – perspective, this category served to mark the central centuries, from the 9th to the 12th, as the *più caratteristici* of the medieval millennium insofar as they were seen as *ben distinti* from the worlds and societies that preceded and followed them.[5] The Italian qualification *pieno* ('full') refers not so much to centrality as to the period's completeness and full maturity. In this sense, it also recalls the original meaning of the adjective *Hoch* ('high' in the sense of 'elevated'), which conveyed the idea of a period and society that had reached the peak of their distinctive characteristics and were framed between a *Frühmittelalter*, conceived as a phase of ascent, and a *Spätmittelalter*, understood as one of decline, within the course of a single life cycle. Besides, the German notion of *Hochmittelalter* is commonly held to have its 20th-century roots in the work of Karl Hampe, particularly his classic 1932 book, in which the history of the Holy Roman Empire – from the 10th-century reign of the Saxon kings to the death of Frederick II – was elevated into the framework of a vast general fresco of Western European history.[6] In Hampe's work, however, the unity of space (Europe) and time (corresponding to the era of a kind of 'classical' Middle Ages) was achieved through a synthetic endeavour conceived entirely within the framework of political history – as Gerd Tellenbach, a distinguished former student, would critically observe some thirty years later – understood *im Sinne der grossen deutschen Tradition des 19. Jahrhundert*; that is, without any openness to the necessity – as well as to the possibility already evident at the time – of *die geistigen, religiösen, wirtschaftlichen, rechtlichen, und sozialen Grundlagen, Triebkräfte und Auswirkungen der politischen Dynamik, mitzuerfassen*.[7] To simplify greatly, in the German historiographical context one may retrospectively identify in Karl Bosl's vast bibliographical output – culminating in a 1980 volume devoted to the *Aufbruch* of the whole of Europe on the road to modernity – one of the principal channels through which the category of *Hoch-*

[5] See Sergi, *L'idea di medioevo*, 29-30. The simple division between *Alto* and *Basso Medioevo* was still common at the end of the 1980s, at the time when the volume edited by Delogu, *Periodi e contenuti*, was published. In that volume, however, the need for Italian historiography to adapt to the German (and English) tripartite division was already clearly acknowledged: Delogu, "Presentazione," 9.

[6] Hampe, *Das Hochmittelalter*.

[7] Tellenbach, "Nachwort," 420-2. Tellenbach was in Heidelberg, working under Hampe's supervision, during the writing of his *Habilitationschrift* on the *Zeitalter des Investiturstreits*.

mittelalter was transformed into an epochal threshold of overall dynamism, extending across all areas of social life.[8]

During the second half of the 12th century, however, German-language historiography did not confine itself to slowly pouring the new wine of a renewed conception of history into the old amphora of the period between 900 and 1250. Rather the concept of *Hochmittelalter*, in historiography as well as in the numerous German-language textbooks devoted to the European Middle Ages, gradually narrowed to the chronological span between the mid-11th and the mid- or early 13th centuries – at a pace even more rapid than the full reception of the socio-historical, institutional, and cultural orientations evoked by Gerd Tellenbach.[9] This temporal shift and contraction occurred not only without losing sight of the framework of a political history of the empire, albeit a profoundly renewed one, but also – under the clear influence of the success of Tellenbach's early work on *Libertas ecclesiae* – by grounding the choice of periodisation, to the point of nearly complete overlap, in the consolidation of a national meta-narrative of the *Investiturstreit* as an epochal turning point; that is, by turning the crisis of the relationship between empire and papacy into a Weberian *Entzauberung der Welt*, one readily translatable into terms of the genesis of modernity itself, or else of Europe's (and Middle Ages') contribution to that genesis.[10] In this regard, it can hardly be considered coincidental that one of the few voices to oppose – some forty years ago – the conception of the *Hochmittelalter* threshold in terms of *Aufbruch* ultimately sought to radically deconstruct the entire national narrative built upon the cornerstone of the Canossa event as well.[11]

[8] Bosl, *Europa im Aufbruch*, and Bosl, *Die Grundlagen*; Bosl, "Das Hochmittelalter." See also Haverkamp, *Aufbruch und Gestaltung*.

[9] This is the case, for example, with the four editions and the repeatedly reprinted volume 7 of the Oldenburg Grundriss der Geschichte: Jakobs, *Kirchenreform und Hochmittelalter* (see in particular the third edition, 1999, Seite 1, where the *Hochmittelalter* period – between the Synod of Sutri in 1046 and the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 – is defined as the "geistige Mitte des Mittleren Zeitalten"). Other examples may be cited as well, however. Schieder, *Handbuch der europäischen Geschichte* still approaches the Middle Ages from a predominantly political perspective and divides them into two volumes (published in 1976 and 1987, respectively): 1. *Europa im Wandel von der Antike zum Mittelalter*, with a *terminus ad quem* in the mid-11th century; and 2. *Europa im Hoch- und Spätmittelalter*, with a clear internal threshold set at 1250. A similar chronology is adopted in the *Handbuch der Geschichte Europas* edited by Peter Blickle (more explicitly 'modern' in orientation and fully open to economic and social history as well as to the broader panorama of international medieval research). Its first volume was entrusted to Hans-Werner Goetz, *Europa im frühen Mittelalter, 500-1050*; the second to Michael Borgolte, *Europa entdeckt seine Vielfalt, 1050-1250*, a volume explicitly devoted to the *Hochmittelalter* (ch. 1: "Europa im hohen Mittelalter. Ereignisketten und historische Räume"). See also Borgolte, 337-56, for a full critical awareness of the methodological difficulties inherent in the concept, as well as for an excellent and pioneering discussion of the plurality of periodisation choices that emerged in the national historiographies of the second half of the 20th century.

[10] Weinfurter, *Canossa. Die Entzauberung*. See Johrendt, *Der Investiturstreit*; Kohl, "Einleitung," and Zey, "Der Investiturstreit."

[11] Fried, *Canossa: Entlarvung*. On Fried, see below.

The conclusion reached by German historiography at the end of the 20th century is ultimately not very different from that reached independently by much of British historiography. This convergence is already evident in one of the most influential syntheses devoted to the Middle Ages – which is also owing to the global reach of its language – whose title is directly (albeit unintentionally) echoed in the name of our own research project. "The formation of western Europe from the late 10th to the early 13th century is the subject of this book"; thus Richard William Southern opened his 1952 work, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, which brought together political and religious history, institutional and social history, and cultural and intellectual history.[12] Interpreted in terms of the genesis and construction of modern Europe, the Middle Ages found its keystone in a long central period spanning from 972 to 1204: between the probable year of Gerbert of Aurillac's move from Rome to Reims – prior to his election as Pope Sylvester II, and his role alongside Otto III – and the fall of Constantinople to Latin forces. This reference to Gerbert pointed to a guiding motif of the rebirth of reason intertwined with the renewal of the Church and the papacy, while the choice of the fall of Constantinople signalled a desire to make the formation of Latin Europe coincide with the very matrix of its progressive spatial and cultural expansion. With all due distinctions, this perspective is not far removed from the no less influential monograph by Robert Bartlett (a student of Richard William Southern), who in 1993 explicitly transformed the formula of "the making of the Middle Ages" into that of "the making of Europe", achieved through its expansion during the High Middle Ages and here conceived as extending from the mid-10th to the mid-14th century.[13] Nor is it far removed from the more idiosyncratic book by Alexander Murray on the emergence of modern reason itself which was published in 1978 and written in the conviction that "in studying Europe in the central middle ages we study the first recognizable ancestor of the society we still on" – a narrative in which the mathematician Gerbert of Aurillac figures as one of the principal protagonists.[14] In all three cases, these texts express a marked tendency within the Anglo-American historiographical tradition to gravitate towards the 11th and 12th centuries as a fundamental threshold of cultural separation between the "High Middle Ages" and the preceding "Dark Ages" (or in more neutral terms, the "Early Middle Ages"). In this respect, the influence of *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* by Charles Homer Haskins is clearly recognisable – an influence later taken up, and then translated into the sphere of ecclesiastical reform and renewal, by Giles Constable.[15] After emphasising the transition from antiquity to the Early Middle Ages in terms of the Roman

[12] Southern, *The Making*, 11.
[13] Bartlett, *The Making of Europe*.
[14] Murray, *Reason and Society*, 5-6.
[15] Haskins, *The Renaissance*; Haskins, *Renaissance and renewal*; Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century*. Within this historiographical tradition, though from a much broader perspective: Noble, and Van Engen, *European Transformations. The Long Twelfth Century*.

world's transformation, a clear internal break – set at 1050 – between the early and late Middle Ages is likewise present in the highly influential synthesis by the American historian Barbara Rosenwein.[16] It would nevertheless be misleading to extend the idea of a single High Middle Ages to the entire Anglo-American historiographical milieu. In the *Longman General History of Europe* series, which was edited in the mid-1960s and the early 1970s by Denis Hay – who was not coincidentally a historian who located the origins of the Renaissance in the 14th century – we find, in succession, a volume by Christopher Brooke devoted to a *Central Middle Ages* spanning 962 to 1154, followed by a volume by John Mundy entitled *High Middle Ages* covering the period from 1150 to 1309.[17]

3. *French imprint*

Confirming the leading role played by French historiography throughout the second half of the 20th century in shaping international historical research – and not only in medieval studies – the more extensive roots of this tendency to shift the decisive phase of transition forward within the medieval millennium, and consequently to transfer to the 11th century, the 12th, or both the burden of defining the 'original' and distinctive characteristics of the Middle Ages, are to be found in France. This shift had the effect of allowing the idea of an intermediate period corresponding to the millennium's four central centuries to wane. An early and emblematic sign of the primarily French origin of this reorientation – one that would later reverberate throughout continental historiography – can be seen in the decision, in Germany, to entrust Jacques Le Goff with the volume of the *Fischer Weltgeschichte* devoted to *Das Hochmittelalter*, which was published in 1965 and centred on the idea of the take-off of European society and its economy starting from around 1050. When translated into Italian in 1967 as *Il basso medioevo*, the title itself conformed to the long-standing national tradition of conceiving the medieval millennium as divided simply into two parts.[18] Le Goff was chiefly influenced, once again, by Bloch, who in *Société féodale* introduced the distinction between a first and a second feudal age, the latter overlapping with the "revolution économique" – primarily demographic – of the period 1050-1250.[19] It was nevertheless the grand narrative of the 'revolution' or 'feudal transformation' (or more precisely, the 'seigneurial transformation'), based on Georges Duby's 1953 monograph on the *Macônnais*, that made the 11th century the absolute

[16] Rosenwein, *A short history*.
[17] See Brooke, *Europe in the Centrale Middle Ages* and Mundy, *Europe in the High Middle Ages*, followed by Hay, *Europe in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century*. See also Hay, *The Italian Renaissance*.
[18] Le Goff, *Das Hochmittelalter*, and Le Goff, *Il basso medioevo* (ending at 1350).
[19] Le Goff, *Das Hochmittelalter*, 14; Bloch, *La société féodale*, 95-7, 111-5.

protagonist of medieval change. Centred on the year 1000 and the following decades, this narrative focused, on the one hand, on the crisis of 'public' power in the royal tradition as exercised by counts and their courts of justice; and on the other, on the rapid and often violent assertion of local and territorial ('private') powers embodied in the *seigneurie banale*, the castellan lords, and their knights.[20] The so-called 'mutationist paradigm' has pushed into the background the central centuries' earlier unified periodisation, which Bloch – while introducing an internal distinction between a first and a second feudal age, separated by a phase of economic recovery – had nevertheless retained in 1939 by reconstructing a coherent 'social structure' spanning from the ninth to the mid-13th century, and situated at the heart of the Western Middle Ages.

In French historiography, the success of the feudal transformation model proved to be both complementary to and contemporary with ideas of an equally accelerated phase of economic take-off – indeed, in a process of mutual reinforcement – understood as a unified and comprehensive momentum affecting society as a whole. Building on an observation by Duby, this take-off was readily attributed to an increase in rural production which had been induced by the pressure exerted on peasants by the new banal lordship. In 1980, the influential synthesis by Poly and Bournazel elevated the *mutation féodale* to the status of a paradigm.[21] Two years later, in the same PUF textbook series, Fossier's synthesis devoted to *L'essor de l'Europe* appeared. It opened with Rodulfus Glaber's description of the "radiant morning" and was structured around the concept of *encellulement*: the channelling of growing populations into the primary spatial frameworks of the *castrum*, the parish, and the village.[22] The 1980s concluded with Guy Bois's radical *Mutation de l'an Mil* (1989), a controversial experiment in microanalysis conducted on one of the villages of the Mâconnais. This work radicalised Duby's thesis by arguing that ancient forms of slavery persisted until the end of the 10th century, and that feudal structures and serfdom emerged abruptly in the 11th century, following the "birth of the market" and ushering in an immediately feudal, commercial, and pre-capitalist Middle Ages.[23] Bois's interpretation entailed the elimination of any meaningful notion of an early Middle Ages – or of an *alto medioevo* – and paradoxically, also of the very idea of *pieno medioevo*.

The impact of these historiographical developments, together with their generalising and universalising ambitions, was also promptly felt in Italian medieval studies. Until then, the field had largely been content with a broad notion of the High Middle Ages – *à la* Bloch – and in any case was less inclined to engage directly in major debates on periodisation pertaining to the central centuries, except those specific to the topic of Church reform. Significantly,

[20] Duby, *La société*.
[21] Poly, et Bournazel, *La mutation féodale*.
[22] Fossier, *Enfance de l'Europe*.
[23] Bois, *La mutation*. For the heated French debate surrounding Bois' book, see Guerreau, "Lournand;" Guerreau, "L'an Mil. Rythmes."

it was Cinzio Violante, a scholar of both 'feudal' society and ecclesiastical reform, who in 1990 (also the year of the Italian translation of Poly and Bournazel's *Mutation féodale*) felt compelled to organise, together with Johannes Fried, a conference in Trento bringing together German and Italian scholars on *Il secolo XI: una svolta? / Das 11. Jahrhundert: Eine Wende?*, whose proceedings were published in 1993.[24] Fried did not personally contribute a paper to the published proceedings, but a few years earlier – again in Trento – he had spoken about his research on expectations of the end of time around the year 1000. He had just completed a *Handbuch* devoted to a *Formierung Europas* spanning the years 840 to 1046, and was at the time working on a long-term project on the origins of German history, as reconstructed up to the year 1024.[25] All of these studies had been preceded, in 1987, by a bibliographical review published in the *Historische Zeitschrift* in which he openly expressed his opposition to the fascination exerted by the metaphor of *Aufbruch* – whose creation he unequivocally attributed to the French scholars Duby and Le Goff – on much of the most recent historiographical work on the High Middle Ages by some of his own country's leading medievalists, most prominently and unsurprisingly Bosl.[26] Violante, for his part was accustomed to interpreting the transformations of the 11th century as a dialectical tension between an old and a new order; and he had earlier and originally linked them to economic dynamism, feudal society, religious renewal, and ecclesiastical reform.[27] He was certainly motivated by having Bois' work on the year 1000 before him, and he was in close dialogue with several leading European historians. He remained cautious about identifying sharp breaks or sudden accelerations in processes of economic growth and change, which – like Toubert (see below) – he tended to conceive as unfolding over longer chronological spans. At the same time, he was acquainted with Carlrichard Brühl's ongoing research on the post-year 1000 birth not only of France and Germany, but of Europe itself. Given his long-standing personal acquaintance with Duby and his sustained interest in the work of Karl Bosl (who is not cited), he had long been aware of the major proposals within European historiography concerning a 'turning point' around the turn of the millennium – an idea for which he liked to invoke Gioacchino Volpe's image of the 11th century as a period 'rich in origins.'[28] Nor does it seem entirely coincidental that, just one year before the Trento conference, the turning point *par excellence* occurred unexpectedly in Germany and Europe: *die Wende*, which effectively brought the second millennium to a close and put an end to what would soon be termed the 'short

[24] Violante, e Fried, a cura di, *Il secolo XI: una svolta?*
[25] Fried, "L'attesa della fine dei tempi;" Fried, *Der Weg*.
[26] Fried, "Deutsche Geschichte," 645: *Die deutschen Historiker erfanden freilich die Aufbruchs-Metapher nicht: ihre Schöpfer heißen J. Le Goff und G. Duby*.
[27] See the concluding sentences of a famous report delivered at a 1958 conference on *spiritualità cluniacense*: Violante, "Il monachesimo cluniacense," 67.
[28] Violante, "Il secolo XI," 11.

century.'[29] I will return later to Violante's position, insofar as it may still be relevant today, but it is worth noting from the outset that the Italian historian was at that time attempting – through a deliberately wide-ranging interpretative effort – to reopen the question and to extend it to every dimension of ecclesiastical and civil life, and thus of social life as a whole. He was dissatisfied with the proceedings of the 1986 Mendola conference on *novità e tradizione nella cultura dei secoli XI e XII*, because, in his view, they had concentrated primarily on the latter century, effectively limiting themselves to an updating – without much originality – of the theses advanced by Haskins, Ullmann, and Constable on the 12th-century Renaissance.[30]

4. *The resilience of a 'Year 1000' turning point…*

The Trento conference took place just before the debate on the feudal revolution and the forceful challenge launched to the French paradigm of a sudden transformation in the 11th century. On the more strictly economic front, the holistic image of that change had already been undermined in the 1980s by Pierre Toubert – whose work on the structures of medieval Lazio and the *incastellamento* around the year 1000 is, moreover, rightly regarded as an essential articulation of the mutationist paradigm[31]. Toubert was a staunch advocate of a long and sustained phase of growth, albeit one marked by periods of lesser and greater intensity, beginning as early as the Carolingian age.[32] It cannot, however, be said that his theses have displaced the model – still prevalent today – of an economic take-off situated beyond the threshold of the year 1000, between the 11th and 12th centuries. In particular, for central and northern Italy (long regarded as the forerunner of medieval economic development) there is now a tendency to push that starting point even further forward, bringing it closer – without in any way reviving older theories of direct causality – to the resumption of long-distance Mediterranean trade, now generally dated to the second half of the 12th century[33]. The most serious challenge to the mutationist paradigm emerged in the 1990s from the political-institutional (and social) sphere, when Dominique Barthélemy and other scholars interpreted the image of a rapid (and violent) collapse of the old Carolingian order – derived from Duby's research on the Mâconnais – as little more than an illusion produced by a change in documentary language.[34] As

[29] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes*. Curiously enough, on 3 June 1987, the University of Pisa awarded honorary degrees in history to both Gerd Tellenbach and Eric Hobsbawm.
[30] Violante,"Il secolo XI," 7-8, with reference to *L'Europa dei secoli XI e XII*.
[31] Toubert, *Les structures du Latium*.
[32] Toubert, *L'Europe dans sa première croissance*. The volume brings together studies spanning more than twenty years, some of which had already appeared in Italian a decade earlier: Toubert, *Dalla terra ai castelli*.
[33] Wickham, *The Donkey*. See also Saggioro, e Varanini, "Una discussione."
[34] Barthelemy, "La mutation féodale."

was remarked during the ensuing debate (drawing on a brilliant and revealing expression by Duby himself), this would have been a feudal "revelation" rather than "revolution."[35] Yet it is equally clear that, however extensive and heated the discussion proved to be, it – prior to the more recent signs of revival to which I will return shortly – soon lost momentum through a kind of natural exhaustion, without producing any unequivocal winners.

The impulse to locate the 'making of the (High) Middle Ages' after the year 1000, in the wake of an epoch-making rupture, has by no means abated; on the contrary. Building on the persistence of the notion of *Aufbruch*, an even more comprehensive formula has emerged: that of the "first European revolution". The expression already appears in a short essay by Karl Leyser which was published posthumously in 1994 under a title of striking programmatic force: *Am Vorabend der ersten europäischen Revolution. Das 11. Jahrhundert als Umbruchszeit*. In a renewed version of the usual German historiographical focus on ecclesiastical reform, the "eve of the first European revolution" is presented as having been essentially determined by the mobilisation of all social strata – including *den bisher scheinbar passiven Unterschichten*, then forcefully brought onto the stage of grand history by the advance of *die materielle Expansion* – in the struggle for the *libertas ecclesie*.[36] The decisive actors were therefore those communities experiencing demographic and economic growth, with their political and religious zeal, and the struggle itself remained what Gerd Tellenbach had defined as *ein Ringen um die rechte Ordnung in der Welt*, with which he had opened his seminal 1936 book.[37] *The First European Revolution* then became the title and central theme of the book published in 2001 by Robert Ian Moore as part of the international series *Faire l'Europe* edited by Le Goff (at a moment when, from the *Wende* of 1989 to the adoption of the single currency, the advent of a new Europe seemed imminent). Within that series, Moore offered a programmatic synthesis that located the 'true' birth of Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries, between 970 and 1215 – almost exactly the same chronological framework earlier proposed by Southern (of whom Moore, like Bartlett, had been a student at Oxford). Updating his teacher's perspective after half a century, and bringing to bear the full weight of the new social history – British as well as French – of the second half of the 20th century, Moore depicted

[35] Duby, *Les trois ordres*, 185-6, on which White, "Tenth-Century Courts," 67. The basic bibliography is well known, and the secondary literature is vast. It may suffice here to refer to the *Past &Present*'s discussion: Bisson, "The 'Feudal Revolution';" Barthélemy, "The 'Feudal Revolution';" Reuter, "The 'Feudal Revolution';" White, "The 'Feudal Revolution';"; Wickham, "The 'Feudal Revolution';" Bisson, "Reply." But see also, for Italy: Barbero, "La polemica;" Carocci, "Signoria rurale;" and for a very recent revival, the essays in *After the feudal revolution*.

[36] Leyser, *Am Vorabend*, 6, 19-20.

[37] Tellenbach, *Libertas*, 1 (and 151, in the title of Chapter 5: "*Libertas ecclesiae*. Der Kampf um die rechte Ordnung in the cristlichen Welt"). A phrase taken from Leyser (cited by him as *der Kampf um die rechte Ordnung der Welt*) and since destined to be repeated with increasing frequency, until the most recent contributions that interpret the Gregorian reform as a general factor of transformation.

the birth of Europe as coinciding with the emergence of a world of entirely new forms across all domains of social life: a world that, even as any trace of antiquity was being swept away, constructed the narrative through which modern 'dwarfs' would claim the legacy of ancient 'giants' for centuries to come. The old order was swept away by a revolution capable of transforming every dimension of historical reality: social stratification, religion and culture, politics, and the economy.[38]

In Moore's account, one of the principal pivots – if not *the* pivot – of the revolution of the 11th and 12th centuries is identified in the division of labour and the subsequent urban revolution.[39] The overarching and inescapable need to construct a new order – considerably more than in Leyser – appears to be fundamentally driven and sustained by economic change, in this case explicitly by the uninterrupted growth of surplus from the mid-10th to the mid-13th century.[40] As in every perspective in which the changes following the year 1000 are made functional to the 'birth of Europe' – understood as the incubator of the West's primacy over the modern world – in this insistence on the urban revolution, it is not difficult to recognise an older interpretative choice, one laden with strong teleological implications, which – since Henri Pirenne (and Max Weber) – has tended to closely associate economic change and the city. The "urban revolution" – the rebirth of the city in the 11th century – marks, in many classic syntheses of Western economic historiography, the beginning of Europe's (and thus the world's) pre-industrial economic development, as illustrated, among others, by Carlo M. Cipolla.[41] Such outdated and ideologically charged interpretations of the turning point after the year 1000 – which are essentially framed in terms of the first appearance of the bourgeoisie and the market on the world stage – are difficult to sustain today. Abandoning them does not eliminate the need to define the scope and role of economic change within the intertwined transformations that shaped the High Middle Ages, however. Since Marc Bloch's distinction between a first and a second feudal age, economic and material rupture has remained a constant point of reference – if often only in the background – in virtually every discussion of change at the midpoint of the medieval millennium.[42] In a per-

[38] Moore, *The First European Revolution*. Moore's tone is not entirely comparable to that of Leyser. In outlining the 'medieval modernisation' of the old order, Moore did not lose sight of the fact that he was also the historian of *The Formation of a Persecuting Society*, in which the formalised violence of the powerful and the legally sanctioned violence of ecclesiastical and secular institutions extended from individuals to entire social categories. Moore thus gathered and amplified – within a framework already widely circulated in the debate – the connotations of the feudal revolution as a transition towards new forms of segmentation, exclusion, and coercion within the social body.

[39] Moore, 31: "the first European revolution – that is… Europe's first authentic and autonomous urbanization" (in northwstern Europe).

[40] Moore, 30-3: "the 'sustained increase in real income per head' which economists regard as the condition necessary for the transformation of social structure".

[41] Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution*.

[42] See note 20 above.

sonal assessment of half a century of French regional *thèses d'État* following Duby's *Mâconnais* – thus returning one last time to the 'feudal debate' – the mutationist Bisson insisted that 12th-century societies, despite any possible continuity with their Carolingian or even earlier past, were nonetheless "new", since "old traces [were] remodelled and overwhelmed" not only by seigneurial pressures, but also "by demographic growth".[43] This latter factor, together with the overall economic transformation, is indeed one aspect about which it is perhaps more difficult to harbour doubts. Although increasingly relegated to the background today by factors of change manifesting themselves at the political-institutional, social, and ideological levels – which are often easier to assess – the economic dimension acquires essential importance when we seek to revisit the medieval turning point from as broad a perspective as possible, within a panorama composed of multiple and overlapping areas of structural transformation. For this reason it occupies a place of no small significance among the contributions that make up this volume, even though no chapter is specifically devoted to demography.

5. *…and of a long Late Antiquity*

Criticism of Guy Bois' *Mutation de l'an mil* focused primarily on his handling and interpretation of the sources. Medievalists devoted far less attention to the implications of his theses in terms of periodisation – specifically, the postulated continuity of ancient slavery, which implied a continuity of ancient modes of production, and by extension, of antiquity itself. In this respect, Bois' argument shared the fate of more extreme claims concerning the persistence throughout the Early Middle Ages of late Roman fiscal institutions and fiscal language as advanced (again in the lively early 1990s) by Jean Durliat, and later, by Elisabeth Magnou-Nortier.[44] The supposed thread of continuity of ancient slavery has since been decisively severed, reshaping the problem at its roots and leading to a thorough revision even of Bloch's own views on early medieval servitude.[45] By contrast, the research and arguments of Karl Ferdinand Werner – who during those same years was also a key figure in reassessing the degree of rupture between the late Roman and post-Roman worlds in the West – have met with greater acceptance with regard to elements of continuity in public functions and institutions, as well as in the self-perception and identity of early medieval Frankish aristocracies.[46]

It is nevertheless neither necessary to pursue this aspect of the broader problem of medieval periodisation, nor to reopen old debates. The theme

[43] Bisson, "La terre et les hommes," 332.
[44] Durliat, *Les finances publiques* (against which see Wickham, "La chute de Rome"); Magnou-Nortier, *Aux origines de la fiscalité moderne*.
[45] Rio, *Slavery after Rome*.
[46] Werner, *Naissance de la noblesse*.

of continuity between the late empire and the successor kingdoms has re-emerged with a very different methodological awareness.[47] As a result, the obvious difficulties of a periodisation in which late antiquity and the Early Middle Ages end up overlapping have not deflected what appears to be the dominant mainstream. On the contrary, the overall sense of a persistence of Romanness beyond its political collapse in the West between the 5th and 6th centuries appears to have expanded rather than diminished. It follows that the renewed impetus to push the 'original characteristics' of the Middle Ages towards – and even beyond – the year 1000 rests not only on the enduring notion of a millennial turning point, one corresponding to a High Middle Ages inaugurated by the transformations of the 11th and 12th centuries, but also on a parallel and symmetrical historiographical movement: the expansion of research into the persistence of late antiquity.

Despite the caveats raised against the 'explosion' of late antiquity,[48] a historiographical fabric and a set of research practices have taken shape in which the sense of the prolonged survival – across time and at multiple levels – of the legacies of the late Roman age has become firmly established. This persistence has nevertheless been articulated more readily in terms of history understood in a broad cultural sense – within which political and institutional dimensions can converge – than in terms of social history conceived in a broadly material sense. As one of the leading historians of the early Middle Ages has long commented: *Heute hat man sich daran gewöhnt, dass eine bis ins 8. Jahrhundert reichende Spätantike ins Blickfeld der Altertumskunde geraten ist, während Mediävisten die Voraussetzungen des Mittelalters bis weit in die römische Kaiserzeit zurückverfolgen*.[49] Moreover, the temporal extension of the processes grouped under the rubric of the "transformation of the Roman world" – the title and intellectual core of a major European international research project – did not come to a halt with the Carolingian age.[50] The periodising significance once attributed to the age of Charlemagne has faded, and in historiographical approaches to the Carolingian era there is now an increasingly marked emphasis on the theme of the metamorphoses

[47] For a renewed focus on forms of continuity rather than on a clear break with respect to the complex institutional transition undergone by the Merovingian world and transmitted to the Carolingian one, see: Morsel, *L'aristocratie médiévale*, on the prominence of the nobility; Esders, "'Öffentliche' Abgaben und Leistungen", for a refined analysis that also clarifies the relevance of recent research on public goods and the royal fisc for an understanding the turning point of the High Middle Ages with respect to the Carolingian reception and transformation of Roman instruments of government (see below, note 52). More generally, the *Oxford Handbook of the Merovingian World*.

[48] Giardina, "Esplosione;" Giardina, "Gli spazi del tardo antico;" Marcone, "A long Late Antiquity?". See Bowersock, Brown and Graber, *Late Antiquity. A Guide*, ix, where the *terminus ad quem* of "a distinctive and quite decisive period of history that stands on its own" is fixed at 800 A.D., the same final chronological point used by Wickham in his *Framing the Early Middle Ages*.

[49] Pohl, "Die Anfänge," 364-5. Now, the advantages and risks of this development are discussed by Patzold, "Der lange Schatten" (see also below, note 59).

[50] *Transformation of the Roman World*; Wood, "Report."

and legacies of Romanness. In the *Penguin History of Europe*, which a dozen years ago replaced the Longman series of the 1970s, its second volume – by Chris Wickham – covers the period from 400 to 1000 and is entitled *The Inheritance of Rome*. At the same time, the third volume, *Europe in the High Middle Ages*, opens with a prologue focusing on the journey to Rome undertaken in 1049 by the newly-elected Leo IX in the company of Hugh of Cluny and Hildebrand of Soana.[51]

The classic French association of the decline of the Carolingian legal order with the emergence of local seigneurial developments – a connection that Italian scholarship has progressively shifted towards around 1100 in recent decades – has more recently been complemented by the interpretive fruitfulness of the theme of the parallel persistence and resilience, up to the same chronological threshold, of traditional 'public' and Carolingian modes of managing royal and fiscal assets.[52] The same academic divide – which is particularly rigid in the Italian milieu – between scholars of late antiquity and those of the Early Middle Ages has weakened, finally leading to a rapprochement between the two even in Italy. This convergence has been fostered by a succession of research projects that link the Carolingian and late imperial periods through the history of the post-Roman *regna*.[53] The Carolingian Empire, both in the phase of its construction as well as in that of the resilience of its political and social, 'public', structures – which is now increasingly prolonged to the 11th century – appears indeed to have assumed, as Robert Ian Moore already argued in 2001, the features of a "successor state, the greatest of many in the crumbling peripheries of the Roman Empire".[54]

The recurrence of various positions favouring a long Early Middle Ages – often extending to the threshold of the year 1000 and imbued with elements of a greatly expanded second, or late, Romanness – thus reinforces the need to re-examine the stages and ways in which the features of a break with that heritage, namely the legacy of distant centuries transmitted into the structures of a "long" Carolingian order, emerged. To search for this new High Middle Ages does not, of course, mean seeking to essentialise a historiographical construct. Rather, it involves examining – and at last en-

[51] Wickham, *The Inheritance*; Jordan, *Europe*, where the High Middle Ages is extended into the early 14th century; and Anthony Grafton's forthcoming *The Renaissance*, where it ends in 1517. See also the chronological framework, 500-1000, adopted by Smith, *Europe after Rome*.
[52] Bougard, et Loré, *Biens publiques, biens du roi*; and see comments in Marazzi, "Beni pubblici;" Lazzari, e Tabarrini, "Beni del fisco regio;" Loré, "Dalla *Res privata*;" Collavini, "'Mutazione signorile' e trasformazioni economiche." See also the essays by Simone Maria Collavini and Paolo Tomei in this volume.
[53] *Between Ostrogothic and Carolingian Italy*; Internullo, and Tomei, "Writings the structures;" Internullo, e Tomei "Le parole e il potere."
[54] Moore, *The First European Revolution*, 4, and continuing further: "It had yet to develop permanent or characteristic forms of its own". "Crumbling", which is highly evaluative, emphasises the weight given in the interpretation to the judgement on economic simplification and the quality of life in the post-Roman era: see above.

couraging the joint discussion of – the principal factors of what appears to be an overall acceleration, the degree and intensity of which still need to be measured, within the normal historical dialectic of change and continuity. This acceleration generated new structures in which we recognise familiar historiographical objects, albeit now endowed with more clearly-defined contours and formed through compressed temporal frameworks and intensified processes of development and consolidation during the more or less extended 11th and 12th centuries. On the one hand, these objects coincide with much of what modern historiographical tradition initially identified as being peculiar and characteristic of the medieval era as a whole. On the other hand, they also encompass elements long regarded as essential factors in the internal overcoming of the Middle Ages itself. Hence, on the one side, the expansion of lordship and dependence, peasants and knights, castles and villages, churches and kingdoms, the papacy and the empire, fiefdoms and vassalage; on the other, new cities and communal movements, new forms of economic production and exchange, new law, and new culture. The crucial difference lies in the fact that these elements now appear – ever more clearly – interacting all together, within an overlapping and intersecting sequence of transformations: a veritable 'traffic jam' of competing and intertwined developments. In such a configuration, any attempt to distinguish neatly between progressive or 'modernising' structural elements and traditional or 'medieval' ones is bound to dissolve. Untangling this intertwining has become essential if we are to improve our understanding of a crucial phase of the European Middle Ages.

6. *After two decades in low profile: the rising of a new debate*

Other considerations relating to the organisation of research rather than to its strictly scholarly content likewise contributed to the event in Pisa from which this volume emerged. Unlike what has occurred over the past fifty years in studies on the transformation of the Roman world, historiographical debate on medieval transformation has never succeeded in establishing a consolidated arena – let alone stable (and perhaps even competing) forums – for structured and open discussion. This absence was strikingly evident from the outset of our departmental project, particularly in the Italian context. All the scholars represented in this volume (a group that also includes two non-Italian colleagues and friends who were invited) share – and already shared prior to the December 2022 seminar – a conviction that has been tested in their own research, and which was conducted across different fields and on diverse subjects: namely, that in the 11th and 12th centuries a fundamental turning point can and must be identified, irrespective of whether its premises may already be discerned in the 10th century (or even the 9th), or whether its fully realised outcomes are to be located only in the thirteenth. In short, regardless of their views on the degree of the turning point's curvature or the

speed at which it was traversed, all these scholars have contributed to identifying turning points – or at least moments of renewed momentum and acceleration – within their respective fields of research. Most, if not all, regularly share not only the results of their investigations but also their work in progress, within a system of mutual and open exchange that is already functioning during the research process itself. Most of them willingly, productively, and freely circulate within one another's workshops and studies. To a large extent this exchange now also operates across generational lines, thanks above all to increasingly frequent collective projects that are funded through competitive schemes, initially at the national level and now also at the European one. Despite this, however, such evident professional solidarity and the wide and fruitful sharing of tools, techniques, and models have thus far struggled to generate a renewed, open, and public debate on the general problem of medieval transition considered in all its variety and complexity.

When our departmental project took shape eight years ago, in 2017, the lack of a general debate on the transition to the High Middle Ages did not only concern Italian historiography or research on Italy. The transformation of the High Middle Ages was generally far from becoming a multipolar scholarly and academic field in Europe, one capable of sustaining itself and developing in a lasting way. The very issue of the 'feudal transformation' had arisen in 1992 entirely within the French historiographical tradition. After the intense but brief period of international debate, however, it proved unable to give rise to a permanent forum for discussion. Such a forum would allow new research to be developed alongside the exchange of ideas while openly and programmatically involving an entire body of experts, a transnational scientific *koiné* of specialists in the High Middle Ages (or the early High Middle Ages). Not even the substantial convergence between the challenge to the paradigm of feudal (or more properly, seigneurial) transformation and the proposal to deconstruct the paradigm of the feudal-vassalic relationship advanced by Susan Reynolds in 1994[55] was sufficient to constitute such a scholarly community. Despite the participation of some of the leading European historians of the central centuries of the Middle Ages, not even the timely Spoleto study week of 1999 – which was again strongly supported by Cinzio Violante and devoted to *Il Feudalesimo nell'Alto Medioevo* – succeeded in bringing together a stable forum of discussion capable of systematically disentangling the complex of fundamental issues that had by then so clearly come into focus.[56] Perhaps what was lacking was the opportunity for a collective European project comparable to that on the *Transformation of the Roman World*, funded by the European Science Foundation – a powerful intergovernmental body that was active at a time of strong political interest among governments in the construction of a new European history, and which then ceased to exist in 2010.

[55] Reynolds, *Fief and vassals*. See Albertoni, *Vassalli, feudi, feudalesimo*.
[56] *Il feudalesimo nell'alto medioevo*.

This state of affairs has begun to change only in recent years, above all following the Pisa seminar of December 2022. The embers of the debate on the feudal (or seigneurial) 'revolution' (or 'transformation') had already been rekindled in 2013 by Charles West's reformulation of the problem. Focusing on the region between the Marne, Meuse, and Moselle – an area straddling the western and eastern parts of the Frankish kingdom – his research deliberately avoided opposing the emergence of the new banal lordship of the 11th century to the earlier Carolingian order. Instead, it interpreted the former as the development and outcome of processes of formalisation and redefinition of power that had been set in motion by the latter.[57] Other embers were stirred in 2017 with Alessio Fiore's proposal to revive, for the space of the *Regnum italicum* and with a chronological shift of roughly a century, the original 'mutationist' perspective.[58] Not even this intervention did immediately ignite a renewed general debate on the "feudal revolution", however, nor did it lead at once to a reopening of discussion on an overarching *Wende* in the 11th – or 12th – century.[59]

Between 2016 and 2017, it was even possible to ask – at conferences later published in 2020 – whether the *Hochmittelalter*, and more broadly the period between the 11th and 13th centuries, had not become a neglected era (*eine vernachlässigte Epoche*) in historical research, to the advantage of growing interest in the phases of transition from late antiquity to the Early Middle Ages, and from the Late Middle Ages to the early modern period.[60] This was undoubtedly a case of excessive pessimism. A concrete indication of the changes already underway can be found in the volume edited by Thomas Kohl and published in Germany also in 2020: *Konflikte und Wandel um 1100. Europa im Zeitalter von Feudalgesellschaft und Investiturstreit*.[61] The book's principal merit lies in its comparative examination – aimed explicitly at exposing their heuristic limitations – of the three major paradigms that continue to be regarded as valid and even hegemonic within their respective national historiographies for interpreting medieval change: the narrative of feudal transformation in France, the *Investiturstreit* in Germany, and 'communalism' in Italy (whose actual predominance is, in truth, open to debate). Kohl was thus able to extend and disseminate the results of his earlier *Habilitationsschrift*, in which a comparative analysis of conflicts and processes of reconciliation in the counties of Anjou and Maine as well as in the south-western regions

57 West, *Reframing the Feudal Revolution*.
58 Fiore, *Il mutamento signorile*.
59 Although see Tabarrini, "The 'Feudal Revolution'After All;" Barthélemy, "La mutation de l'an 1100." As will become evident, our call for discussion – as the contributions to this volume also make clear – does not advocate any division between specialists of the 9th and 10th centuries, on the one hand, and specialists of the 11th and 12th centuries, on the other – a development legitimately feared by Patzold, "Der lange Schatten" (in Italy, moreover, the disciplinary unity of medieval history is to this day guaranteed by state university legislation).
60 Lubich, "Einleitung," 7.
61 Kohl, *Konflikte und Wandel*.

of present-day Germany, together with the identification of shared patterns of development in the 'French' and 'German' areas, had led him both to relativise the significance of the transition between the 11th and 12th centuries as *Wendepunkt* and to question the actual heuristic value of the two "grand national narratives" of 'feudalisation' and the 'Investiture Controversy'.[62] As in the case of West, some of the most substantial advances in research have thus emerged from studies that are, in a sense, borderline, both in terms of the regions examined – located at the heart of the Carolingian space – and in their deliberate effort to break free from the constraints of nationally bounded historiographical traditions.

Yet once again, the truly decisive occasion for a new, broad international discussion appears to have emerged within French historiography – almost as if to compensate, as has been observed, for the growing fatigue of the seigneurial/feudal paradigm.[63] In 2021, just over twenty years after the Moore's synthesis, the need to address the scope and rationale of a mid-millennial turning point from a general perspective became particularly evident with the publication of the *Nouvelle Histoire du Moyen Âge*, edited by Florian Mazel. In Mazel's periodisation, an Early Middle Ages – extending *jusqu'au XIe siècle* and conceived as *héritier de l'Empire romain chrétien* (in terms of ideological rather than material or economic continuity) – is followed by a second Middle Ages. During the long 12th century, this latter phase structured the entire social order under the dominance of the new *Église-institution*, which emerged from the unprecedented differentiation between the secular and the sacred spheres which was introduced by ecclesiastical reform into the ancient unity of the Christian *ecclesia*.[64]

Somewhat ironically, the new and more ambitious French paradigm of an epochal break situated in the middle of the Middle Ages was thus placed in the same framework as the so-called *Investiturstreit* – the phenomenon long privileged by German historiography as the marker of the beginning of the *Hochmittelalter*. In Italy as well, before the notion of a long and central *pieno medioevo* became firmly established, movements for the reform of the Church functioned as a prominent periodising criterion in the transition from *alto* to *basso medioevo*, especially from the 1950s onwards. This was due in large part to the influence exerted on the national community of medievalists by that generation of scholars who, in one way or another, had been associated with the school led in Rome by Raffaello Morghen.[65] That long 'Gregorian moment', extending from the mid-11th to the early 13th century (rather than the 'Investiture Controversy' in the strict sense), has now become the cornerstone of historical change in Mazel's *Nouvelle Histoire*. This new explanatory model effectively supplants that of the 'feudal revolution/transformation,' which had

[62] Kohl, *Streit, Erzählung und Epoche*.
[63] Boucheron, *Ce que peut l'histoire* (paragraph 31 of the online edition).
[64] Mazel, *Nouvelle histoire du Moyen Âge*; Mazel, "Introduction," 8.
[65] Violante, *L'età della riforma*; Capitani, *L'Italia medievale nei secoli di trapasso.*

concentrated change within a relatively brief phase of seigneurial violence. Within this framework, even the development of banal lordship is relegated to a corollary of Gregorian transformation, and is presented as the outcome of processes of redefining local dominion which were brought about by the separation – within pre-existing forms of lordship – of those secular and ecclesiastical elements that had remained undifferentiated during the so-called "early feudal age".[66] Charles West's monograph, which likewise proposed a longer genesis for seigneurialisation, appears to have found little place in this reconstruction: the book does not appear among the explicit references in Mazel's work, nor is it included in the bibliography. Instead, the process of transformation of the *ecclesia* is elevated to the status of a *fait social total* – with explicit reference to Marcel Mauss – and becomes the dominant vector of a change presented as a "révolution", whose reconstruction is thus seen as the reopening *la voie d'un retour à l'histoire totale*.[67] The complex roots of this approach are both recognisable and, for the most part, explicitly acknowledged. They derive only in part from strands within French historiography: from the concept of total history – as theorised by Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Toubert in 1980, and understood as accessible through regional analyses that reconstruct, by means of a *phénomène globalisant*, the links between coexisting structures – to the historical anthropology of Alain Guerreau, through the decisive contributions of Dominique Iogna-Prat and Michel Lauwers. They also recall foundational moments in German scholarship – not only the work of Gerd Tellenbach, but in fact also the discernible later influence of Otto Brunner – as well as in Italian research, ranging from the aforementioned school of Raffaello Morghen to Cinzio Violante.[68]

Nouvelle Histoire du Moyen Âge elicited lively reactions in France, including outright rejection.[69] The attribution of periodising significance to the "Gregorian reform" in that country also found an immediate echo in German scholarship. In 2019, historians on both sides of the Rhine debated the question of *La réforme grégorienne, une 'révolution totale'?*, a discussion that culminated in a volume which was published in 2021, one introduced by Florian Mazel and concluded by Gerhard Lubich – the same scholar who only a few years earlier had introduced the German anthology on the waning appeal of the *Hochmittelalter*.[70] The conclusion amounted in part to an acknowledgment of the difficulty of reconciling the two national historiographical traditions.[71] Yet, the process is now underway. A little over a year after the Pisa

[66] Lauwers, et Mazel, "Le 'premier âge féodal'."
[67] Mazel, "Pour une redéfinition," 25.
[68] Mazel, "Pour une rédefinition;" Mazel, "Introduction. Une 'revolution totale'?;" Lauwers, "L'Eglise dans l'Occident;" Le Goff, et Toubert "Une histoire totale;" Guerreau, *Le féodalisme*; Guerreau, *L'avenir*; Iogna-Prat, *La maison Dieu*. On this complex trajectory, see now Michel Lauwers' contribution and position in this volume.
[69] "Une question d'actualité;" Boucheron, *Ce que peut l'histoire*.
[70] Martin, et Winandy, *La Réforme grégorienne*.
[71] Lubich, "Schlussbetrachtung," 216-7.

seminar, in the spring of 2024, the Spoleto study week was devoted to *Profili del secolo XI*, and opened with a keynote lecture by Chris Wickham. Only a few months earlier, Wickham had completed his monumental volume on the economic history of the Mediterranean regions from the late 10th to the mid-12th century – a study that many of the contributors to this volume were already able to draw upon.[72] In 2025 – when our book had finally entered the publication pipeline – the appearance of the Spoleto proceedings was accompanied by at least three other significant volumes. The first offers a radical reappraisal of the debate on the "feudal revolution" across the long span from the 10th to the 12th century, with close attention to the Investiture Controversy and – with origins in a research project based at the University of Tübingen – with a perspective that ultimately extends, as far as possible, to the whole of post-Carolingian Europe.[73] The second volume seeks to intertwine ongoing research on the German and Italian fronts *jenseits des Investiturstreit*, while also paying close attention to feudal transformation. It does so, however, on the basis of a relatively narrow periodisation – the mid-11th to the early 12th century – and through a renewed invocation of the concept of *Aufbruch*.[74] Finally, a Charles West's very recent synthesis presents the 11th century as new starting point for a Europe conceived as extending beyond the post-Carolingian space, whose Latin regions experienced the "feudal revolution" and the "reform of the Church" as two sides of single process of transformation.[75]

7. *Beyond the 'grand national narratives'*

It is not possible to incorporate the results of this dense sequence of studies into the present introduction, though they can be productively addressed elsewhere. It may suffice to note that a process is now underway aimed at overcoming those paradigms of change that were originally constructed as hegemonic within national historiographies and that were subsequently perceived as mutually exclusive – particularly in France and Germany, which were long regarded as the core of what was once Carolingian Europe. The consolidation of French historiography's interest in the so-called *Investiturstreit* corresponds to a growing inclination within German-speaking historiography to engage more fully with debates on the seigneurial transformation and to undertake a reassessment of feudalism; in short, to move beyond overly rigid and insufficiently nuanced conceptualisations of *Grundherrschaft* and *Lehnswesen*.[76]

[72] *Profili del secolo XI*; Wickham, "Nuovi approcci."
[73] Haack, Grabowsky, and Patzold, *After the Feudal Revolution*.
[74] Doublier, und Faini, *Krise und Aufbruch*.
[75] West, *Europe in the Eleventh Century*.
[76] Pelz, "Signoria rurale-Grundherrschaft;" Goetz, "Frühmittelalterliche Grundherrschaften;" Reuter, "Forms of Lordship;" Kuchenbuch, "Abschied;" Patzold, *Das Lehnswesen*; Kasten, "Zum

In the recent 2022 miscellany edited by Thomas Kohl – in which *mutation féodale* and the *Investiturstreit* are respectively mobilised as interpretative paradigms for France and Germany – Italian historiography is instead subsumed under the hegemony of a national paradigm of "communalism".[77] This attribution is not without justification given the enduring weight accorded to medieval cities and to the "communal age" in mid- to late 20th-century Italian historiography, which is shaped by a long tradition rooted in the cultural legacy of the Risorgimento and reinforced by the success of a celebrated essay by one of its leading figures.[78] 'Communalism' can no longer be regarded as a genuinely dominant paradigm in narratives of change and transformation in the 11th and 12th centuries, however, even in the case of central and northern Italy. Over recent decades, medieval Italy has instead functioned as a privileged field for the reception, comparison, and testing of multiple – and often competing – models and paradigms of change. In particular, the contemporaneity, shared matrix, and mutual interdependence of 'feudal' (seigneurial and feudal-vassalic) and 'communal' developments now constitute a well-established historiographical acquisition for the peninsula, one closely linked to the consolidation of interpretations that view the 11th and 12th centuries as an era marked by the localisation of power.[79] A recent essay by Chris Wickham which examined in parallel the feudal transformation in France and the emergence of the communes in Italy should have contributed decisively to overcoming the residual influence of older conceptual frameworks at an international level.[80] The issue is not merely to underscore similarities between two paradigmatic national narratives of change – once considered polar opposites – or between two unquestionably distinct macro-regional experiences. Rather, 'seigneurialisation' and 'communalisation' – neither predominant nor mutually exclusive – unfolded simultaneously within the Italian kingdom, taking shape through the same underlying processes of transformation. Beyond the specific communal forms that took shape in the central and northern regions, of course, as well as those regional and local variations through which trajectories of change manifested themselves, Italy as a whole was simultaneously the setting for both – indeed, by definition – the movements of ecclesiastical reform on the one hand; and seigneurial transformations, economic growth, and political development centred on urban areas on the other.

It is therefore unsurprising that, as Kohl has suggested, national paradigms tend to break down in the context of renewed European comparison. Aristocratic and/or feudal transformations, ecclesiastical and papal reform or

Deutungsstreit;" Dendorfer, *Das Lehnswesen*; Patzold, "Die Kontroverse."

77 Kohl, "Einleitung," 2.

78 Cattaneo, *La città considerata come principio*; on the reception, influence and Sismondian roots of which see Gamberini, *Oltre le città*, 9-12; and most recently, on Sismondi and Cattaneo: Bizzocchi, "Introduzione," 58-9.

79 Provero, *L'Italia dei poteri locali*; Milani, *I comuni italiani*, 5-7.

80 Wickham, The 'Feudal Revolution' and the Origins."

revolution, and the development of new political forms in cities (not necessarily communal in the Italian sense): the processes that gave substance to each of the so-called grand national narratives – and underpinned their claims to historiographical dominance – affected, albeit in different ways and according to differing chronologies, all the regions of Carolingian Europe during the 11th and 12th centuries, as well as those areas into which it was expanding in those same centuries. These regions naturally included central and northern Italy, but also southern Italy, which together constitute the principal geographical points of reference for this volume. The trajectories and timing of change varied from case to case. However, within the local and regional worlds shaped by the Carolingian legacy, turning points and broader trends were to a large extent shared. Even in areas adjacent to the Carolingian space – where, as in southern Italy, processes of transformation unfolded simultaneously with movements of expansion, conquest, and colonisation – comparison is not only legitimate and necessary, but should be conceived as open to the possibility of unified syntheses, those capable at last of dismantling the rigid compartments inherited from the long era of nationally-bounded historiographical construction.

This volume thus constitutes an expression of a new historiographical conjuncture and of a renewed wave of attention to the 11th and 12th centuries, whose emergence it now appears to have almost anticipated. The transformations that unfolded during these centuries may well become a lasting focus of supranational research and scholarly debate. Accordingly, alongside the customary analysis of political, ecclesiastical, social, and institutional developments, we considered it essential to address not only economic growth and material transformations, but also changes in the sphere of law – without confining them to a separate "cultural" sector (as in Spoleto in 2024). We were nonetheless obliged to forgo an exhaustive investigation of change on the more broadly cultural and ideological plane – once understood, in the manner of Charles Homer Haskins or Giles Constable, in terms of *geistlich* or spiritual rebirths – but which today ought to be approached in the newer and more comprehensive terms of a transformation of mental frameworks, within a renewed cultural history that is deeper and broader than the traditional history of ideas.[81]

A collective discussion of these issues would nonetheless be highly desirable, taking into account the overall results of each scholar's research and their specific proposals in order to assess and explain convergences and divergences of interpretation – not only with regard to the underlying dynamics of change, but above all to the interrelationships between the processes identified and the chronological frameworks reconstructed within their respective fields of inquiry.

[81] The issue, however, naturally arises especially in the essays by Conte and Loschiavo on the legal "revolution", in Lauwers' pages on the "Gregorian reform", and in Internullo's contribution on the documentary revolution.

8. *The present and the past of a historiographical agenda*

Within the department's broader project, the theme of the acceleration of historical time was also defined in relation to its opposite: permanence and resistance to change. Hence the recourse to the notion of 'resilience,' a term that has since become ubiquitous. In its original sense, resilience is a property of materials, one expressing their capacity to return to an initial state after being subjected to external stress. Metaphorically extended to historical analysis, it can be applied to structures which – when exposed to destabilising pressures – either revert to prior configurations or fracture, thereby giving rise to new ones. Tensions might arise from the very functioning of structures, however. Structural change does not necessarily entail the sudden rupture of pre-existing arrangements; rather, the movement of structures may generate tensions that, over time, produce lasting transformations, with new general configurations emerging through the accumulation of such changes. One of the most radical methodological critiques of the feudal transformation model was articulated by Stephen White and Fredric Cheyette, who directly challenged Duby's use of the concept of structure in his research on the Mâconnais. These pages are clearly far removed from the scepticism expressed by Stephen White and Fredric Cheyette regarding the possibility of introducing structural breaks and further periodisations into the European past beyond the undeniably fundamental divide between the pre-modern and the modern.[82] In line with the quotation from Antoine Prost cited in the epigraph, periodisation and the identification of structures are, on the contrary, understood here as inseparable operations; indeed, as being consubstantial with historiographical practice itself. From this perspective, we can readily concur with White's critique of Duby's difficulty in substantiating the thesis of an absolute staticity and continuity of Carolingian judicial structures and institutions up to the feudal – or seigneurial – break at the end of the 10th century. Yet, refuting Duby's interpretation of the functioning of the Carolingian *mallus publicus* does not require abandoning structures as a conceptual tool for reconstructing historical change. On the contrary, it is essential to conceive of structures as being in motion, and to proceed from the assumption that they evolve, transform, and change through their own internal dynamics, without always having to invoke external factors. In this sense, one may legitimately extrapolate from its original context a striking formulation by Charles West: *Nous voyons non seulement des structures mais également des dynamiques à l'oeuvre*.[83]

Other pivotal periods – on a different, though still broad and extensive scale – can also be reconstructed in addition to the one that ushered

[82] White, "Tenth-Century at Mâcon," and Cheyette, "Some reflection on Violence" (see comments in Fouracre, "Review," 696 and West, *Reframing*, 4).
[83] West, "Le saint," 245. Ultimately, it is not unreasonable to read West's monograph as an illustration of a complex structural dynamic that, between the 9th and the 12th centuries, culminated in a revolution – understood as the fulfilment of a profound structural transformation (West, *Reframing*, 255-63, 257).

in modernity in the 18th century. The dynamics that marked the transition to a 'central' Middle Ages did not operate upon a single structure, but rather upon a plurality of structures, each characterised by distinct trajectories and chronologies of change which in turn manifested themselves differently across local contexts. It follows that the task is not to identify a single 'turning point' from the outset, but rather, first and foremost, to trace – in diverse social and spatial settings – the asynchronous movements of different structures. Then, we must examine whether, to what extent, and in what ways these various structures and movements interacted with one another; whether such interactions generated an acceleration of change; and finally, we must assess to what degree these transformations can be reconstructed as an overarching process whose outcome produced a new order and a new world. In short, what were the changes that occurred across the various domains in which the social reality of the 11th and 12th centuries unfolded, and how did they intertwine – political and ecclesiastical institutions, both at the apex and at the grassroots; religiosity and cultural models; law; the economy; settlement patterns; and material life? In the 11th and 12th centuries, can we discern an abrupt rupture, a sharp turning point, or rather a phase of more or less rapid acceleration in processes which were already under way – and if so, which processes, and from when? So were all three modes of change plausibly at work, depending on the processes involved? Furthermore, whether we are dealing with sharp breaks or accelerations of existing transformations, can we identify particular domains in which turning points originated and spread to other dimensions of social life? Finally, given the plurality of structures involved, to what extent is it possible – or indeed necessary – to speak of driving structures, and/or of 'systems' of structures?

These are questions to which this book does not claim to provide definitive answers. Yet, they are questions that confront us nonetheless. At the same time, they are by no means new. It is no coincidence that the need to address these issues – without privileging *ex ante* any of the currently prevailing paradigms of change – emerged in Italy beginning in Pisa, where Cinzio Violante taught and left a profound intellectual legacy. Violante was, like few others in his country, a medievalist who conceived of the past in terms of structures in motion; throughout his scholarly life, he sought to forge organic connections between transformations in ecclesiastical and lay life as well as institutions, and he was consistently drawn to the ambition of a *histoire totale*. In 1980, he engaged in a heated debate with Toubert (and Le Goff) over their proposal for a *histoire totale* based on the reconstruction of the *liasons essentielles existants à un momente donné et dans un milieu donné entre toutes les structures qui coexistent et interfèrent*, organised around a *phénomène globalisant*, which was then identified with the process of *incastellamento*.[84] Violante then debated the possibility of a "system of structures" (or "structure

[84] Le Goff, et Toubert, "Une histoire totale."

of structures"), conceived as a system endowed with its own temporality, one distinct from the temporalities of the individual structures that composed it.[85] In the same months, Giovanni Tabacco also reflected on the proposal advanced by Le Goff and Toubert – and perhaps also on Violante's remarks – and offered his own response, one marked by an absolute distrust of any perspective of *histoire totale* that struck him as Volpian in flavour, and above all Brunnerian: that is, one that delineated an organic, compact, and self-contained social structure, and which was totalising in scope. The defining characteristic of the Middle Ages, conceived as an age distinct from both antiquity and modernity, was instead to be recognised in its existence and functioning as a *cosmo di strutture instabili* within which no organic coherence could be presupposed among social and economic, political, and cultural forms. On the contrary, the defining feature – and indeed the driving force – of the period lay precisely in the asynchrony of movements, the constant evolutionary misalignment, and the resulting tensions among the structures themselves: Christianity, the aristocracy, the socio-economic system, and communalism (understood as a foundational phenomenon common to all European cities).[86] The call to temper the impulse towards all-encompassing views could hardly have been more decisive, and was made in the name of multiple temporalities and of evolutionary logics internal to different planes of reality. Distinct periodisations may coexist without being mutually exclusive, but they must then be made explicit and examined in order to reconcile them without producing overtly contradictory dissonances. From Tabacco we may also legitimately retain a reluctance to subordinate all other structures to the primacy of a single structure or a single dominant dimension of social reality. Yet this caution does not absolve us – given the evident concurrence of multiple, parallel structural transformations – from the task of addressing questions concerning the alignment of these temporalities and the interactions among different structural levels; that is, the interplay of the 'layers of time.'[87]

While setting aside the questions surrounding 'systems of structures' and 'globalising phenomena,' Cinzio Violante continued to reflect on this problem in the years that followed. The results of his thinking found expression in the aforementioned Trento study week on the 11th century, and can today be read as insights that remain strikingly relevant. Seeking the cornerstones of a synthesis between feudal transformation and ecclesiastical reform, Violante invited the participants to undertake what he called an *operazione di* annodamento [i.e. knotting], *[del]le novità più o meno incisive e [del]le mutazioni rapide e nette o lente e graduali*, to underscore *le analogie e i parallelismi, le coincidenze, le*

[85] Violante, "Presentazione;" Petralia, "Storie di strutture."
[86] Tabacco, "Il cosmo." The very notion of asynchronies reveals plausible echoes of Pomian's 1978 essays: Pomian, "Periodisation" and Pomian, "Histoires des structures" (this, an essay that discussed the concept of structures starting precisely from Toubert's research on *incastellamento* in medieval Lazio: 529-34).
[87] Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*.

intersezioni e gli intrecci tra [le] linee di svolgimento of the *vasti e complessi ambiti della storia religiosa ed ecclesiastica e della storia civile*.[88]

Once the ecclesiastical and civil spheres have been disentangled into their many components, the invitation at the origin of this volume is essentially the same. By establishing differences and discrepancies, the interplay between what changes and what endures – the dialectic between change and 'resilience' – shapes historical time and thus characterises the interpretative process that each author carries out in dialogue with the past and with colleagues and readers. Both our seminar and this book were born of a desire to begin highlighting plausible connections between discourses that already intersect. The metaphor of *nodi* (knots) remains especially apt: *annodare* (knotting) has recently re-emerged precisely within the same constellation of problems. I quote from a discussion on periodisation: *Les passages d'une période à une autre sont davantage pensés comme des moments où se nouent des dynamiques complexes aux temporalités multiples, constituant ainsi des temps d'accélération où se créent les conditions du basculement*.[89] Even more interesting is the fact that Violante then went on to seek *elementi unificatori* between these two planes – the civil and the ecclesiastical – and identified them in the functioning of two general ideal principles capable of impressing the same direction upon otherwise *tendenze pur contrapposte*. One of these was the *principio della territorialità*, by which Violante sought to capture the idea of a complex transition in the 11th century towards territorial conceptions of law and power (rather than personal ones, as would have been the case since the crisis of the Roman world). This transition, he argued, occurred across institutions both ecclesiastical and civil, in rural lordships as well as in the emerging communes. The other principle was *il principio della distinzione* which is to say the tendency towards increasingly formal distinctions. This was transmitted especially – but not only – *attraverso un processo di definizione giuridica*, and became increasingly established in all fields.[90] In this case, one cannot help but think of the category of distinction underlying the entire model constructed by Mazel, or of West's category of formalisation. We are thus not far from the "conceptual turn" recently discussed by Kohl, which aims to bring together feudal change and transformations in the religious and ecclesiastical sphere "in the decades on either side of 1100": namely, a heightened capacity for abstraction, distinction, and separation between concepts and categories that had hitherto remained "ambiguous".[91] Chris Wickham likewise opened his 2024 lecture in Spoleto on the 11th century by invoking Violante's principles of *territorialità* and *distinzione*.[92]

[88] Violante, "Introduzione," 35.
[89] Gibert, "Avant-propos," 30.
[90] Violante, "Introduzione," 37-9.
[91] Kohl, "The Seigneurial Turn," 97-8.
[92] Wickham, "Nuovi approcci," 1.

There are therefore historiographical premises within the best Italian medieval studies of the 20th century that it would not be productive to erase or disregard entirely. Of course, between those years and our own lie periods that have left other indelible marks: the linguistic turn, postmodernism, and the emergence of a new cultural history. Periodisation and structures can no longer be treated as if nothing had happened – as if they were still objective reflections of essential realities, or aseptic tools for neutral operations of progressive approximation to an ultimate truth. They are rather tools through which we project our interpretative choices onto the past, enabling us to grasp how the various spheres of reality are ordinarily structured and function, and the logic of their change. As early as the Trento week of 1997, Mario Nobili warned that, although the 11th century had indeed been treated by many leading scholars of European medieval history as a threshold marking a *trapasso da un'epoca all'altra*, the historiographical steps involved were far from homogeneous. Authors such as Bloch and Duby, in different ways, sought to identify an internal rupture within the Middle Ages themselves. By contrast, figures such as Bosl, Volpe, and – each in his own way – Pirenne, and even more decisively Brunner, interpreted the 11th century as the moment in which what he called the *dinamica decisiva della storia europea* first emerged. On their reading, the period inaugurates the long trajectory leading towards modernity: first, through the new relationship between the Church and the secular order; second, through the rise of the city – generated by agricultural expansion and differentiated from the countryside – the development of trade, and the emergence of merchants.[93] Shortly after the Trento meeting, a broadly similar interpretative framework was adopted by R. I. Moore in *The First European Revolution*. Today, however, we should be even more attentive to the preliminary question that such examples raise: namely, the need to ask, before proposing any periodisation scheme, within which hermeneutical framework and at what scale we intend to situate it.[94]

Compared with those who came before us, the profound transformation that has taken place in historical scholarship should, in short, have freed us not only from national narratives, but also – once and for all – from the risk of allowing the new High Middle Ages we are attempting to construct to fall back into older, polarising interpretative frameworks. One such interpretation is that centred on an absolutely irreducible otherness, one defined by the reduction of the Middle Ages to an absolute anti-modernity – an approach that perhaps has, on the whole, played only a marginal role in recent representations of the High Middle Ages. The more pervasive and subtler trap, however, appears to be the opposite one: the tendency to construe the period in terms of proto- or pre-modernity, driven by an obsessive search for the original ma-

[93] Nobili, "Le trasformazioni," 157-9, especially n. 2 (with reference to Brunner, *Vita nobiliare e cultura europea*, 60-2).
[94] Gibert, "Avant-propos."

trices through which Western modernity might be explained. What is at stake today is no longer the history of Europe or the West – still less a history of their primacy, their more or less effective domination of the world, or the early or foretold advent of modernity. What is at stake is simply the history of those centuries themselves. We can now work free from the ideological baggage that weighed so heavily on many – but not all – of the eminent voices (our "giants") reviewed here in connection with the "making of the High Middle Ages" and the nature of the "turning point" of the 11th and/or 12th centuries.

9. *This book*

The table of contents faithfully reflects the organisation of the works selected for the Pisa seminar in December 2022. The essays are grouped into six sections: *Church and Law*, *Forms of Political Power*, *Forms of Lordships*, *Urban Change*, *Archaeology*, and *Economy*. Their ordering was not – and is not – intended as a reflection on their importance, but rather was a response to practical considerations. Within each session, the authors largely agreed on the division of themes and topics.

Opening the section on *Church and Law*, and in stark contrast to proponents of an organic compactness and substantial immobility of the medieval legal order – most notably Paolo Grossi – Emanuele Conte and Luca Loschiavo, in their joint contribution, clearly endorse the thesis of a genuine revolution in the field of law and its uses. This transformation, they argue, took shape over the course of a few generations, between the mid-11th and 12th centuries – if not within the narrower span from 1075 to 1125; that is, during the so-called Investiture Controversy – and its protagonists may still be counted among figures such as Hildebrand of Soana and Irnerius. Their position represents a conscious revival of the perspective advanced by Harold Berman, who was the first to introduce the idea of a "revolution" into the history of medieval law by associating it with the 11th-century "papal revolution," drawing in particular on Paul Fournier's work on the repercussions of the "Gregorian" rupture for the collection and transmission of ecclesiastical law. Opposing recent attempts to downplay the novelty of these developments, Conte and Loschiavo analyse a series of exemplary cases. These include the debate at Gerstungen in 1085, contrasting the account offered by the partisans of Henry IV with that of Cardinal Otto of Ostia, the future Pope Urban II; a floor mosaic from the early decades of the 12th century which was recently discovered in the church of San Savino of Piacenza; and the fundamental – and by now famous – *placitum* of 1076 concerning the Tuscan abbey of Marturi, in which the first attested use of the *Digest* in a judicial context is found. Through these analyses, the authors show that the new canonists operated according to profoundly innovative intellectual principles: the search for an authentic textual tradition, the critique of custom and its normative value, and the adoption of dialectical and rational methods of source interpretation. By introducing

a deep rupture in the medieval millennium's legal unity, the science of these new jurists – and their relationship with legislators and rulers – would go on to exert a decisive influence on the subsequent history of law in Europe.

Mauro Ronzani, by contrast, focuses directly on the issue of the investiture of bishops – who have long been regarded as lying at the very heart of the 'Gregorian reform' and of the rift between pope and emperor, and which, under the label *Investiturstreit*, has been treated as a fundamental factor in the periodisation of the Holy Roman Empire's history. Ronzani begins by acknowledging that, following a complex process of revision initiated by Roland Schieffer in 1981, the most up-to-date German historiography has come, with Thomas Kohl, to define the *Investiturstreit* as an "invention" (*Erfindung*) of the 12th century. It was only with Henry V and Pope Paschal II that the question of investiture was isolated as the focal point of the broader political conflict between papacy and empire that had erupted earlier between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII. In a close analysis of the sources, Ronzani shows that neither the Gregorian decree of late 1075 nor subsequent papal interventions were in fact intended to proclaim an absolute – abstract and ultimately unrealistic – prohibition of imperial investiture, however. Rather, Hildebrand demanded strict compliance, prior to any possible royal or imperial investiture, with the procedures laid down by late antique canons governing the election and consecration of bishops. For Henry IV, this entailed the loss of the security of full and effective control over episcopal appointments, a control that had been guaranteed by a long-established imperial practice and had hitherto encountered no papal objection. The standoff moved towards a formal resolution only through additions to, and reinterpretations of, the late antique canons – introduced as early as 1111 by Callixtus II – that ultimately paved the way for the Concordat of 1122. Thus, the *Investiturstreit* proves to be not only an "invention" of the 12th century, but also, at this point, a misleading "invention" of modern historiography. Indeed, according to Ronzani the term should be definitively abandoned as a periodising label. In its place, he proposes a more accurate characterisation of what those fifty years of conflict actually entailed: a period of "dispute over the procedures governing the promotion of bishops".

Michel Lauwers' contribution is central to many of the discussions that both our seminar and this book seek to stimulate. Lauwers unhesitatingly adopts Jacques Le Goff's notion of the "long Middle Ages" in Western Europe, a perspective that Guerreau subsequently reinforced through a social and cultural reading grounded in two conceptual cornerstones. The first is *dominium*: the domination exercised by the powerful – in its various forms – over land and those men who cultivated it. The second is *ecclesia*, understood in the range of its medieval meanings: the spiritual community of the faithful, encompassing both dominants and dominated; the consecrated place that functions as the community's centre of gravity; and the body of clerics. In this sense, *ecclesia* is not to be confused with the modern concept of the Church. Lauwers also shares the view that, in the current historiographical debate in

France – in which he himself is a leading figure – the paradigm of the seigneurial or feudal revolution has been superseded by that of a different kind of revolution: one understood not as a sudden rupture, but as a series of slow and cumulative changes unfolding from the mid-11th to the early 13th century, and brought about by the so-called "Gregorian reform". From this perspective, phenomena traditionally regarded as characteristic of the 11th and 12th centuries – *encellulement*, parochialisation, *incastellamento*, and territorialisation (as analysed by Fossier, Duby, Toubert, and Violante) – do not appear to Lauwers as the result of a "sudden break". Rather, they emerge as the final outcome of a long process of social and spatial construction of local communities under aristocratic rule. This process unfolded through the growing "polarisation" of human groups around local sacred places – churches and cemeteries – rather than around castles, and Lauwers sketches its main stages before turning to a more detailed analysis of the high medieval period. In this sense, these transformations are best understood as the result of a long dynamic specific to what he terms *dominium ecclésial*: a notion that does not denote ecclesiastical or clerical domination, but instead captures the *ecclesial* – that is, communal and Christian – logic structuring relations between rulers and ruled, as well as the fundamental role played by the *ecclesia* in sustaining the social order. The link with the processes of change that traditional Catholic historiography in France subsumed under the formula of the "Gregorian reform" (and in Germany, under the label *Investiturstreit*) remains decisive – provided that those processes are understood, as they were in Italy by Capitani and above all by Cinzio Violante, not as the outcome of a conscious programme culminating in Gregory VII, but rather as the product of a multiplicity of reformist ideas and practices, some of them mutually contradictory. On this view, what took place was not a "Gregorian" revolution, but an "ecclesial" one – yet a "revolution" nonetheless. What remains genuinely revolutionary, in fact, is that at the height of these processes – and with the support of the rediscovery of law and the development of new legal practices – the new Church was able to effectively establish the monopoly of all ecclesiastical forms of social organization. This was achieved through a clear separation between the ecclesiastical and secular elites, as well as between their respective, increasingly "territorialised" spheres of domination, a separation that also helped to shape phenomena such as seigneurialisation and feudalisation. It was the "ecclesial" dimension of the social organization that conferred upon the transformation its universal and revolutionary scope. In this sense, the so-called "Gregorian reform" retains, as it does for Mazel, the status of a "total social fact". Michel Lauwers, however, explicitly rejects a periodisation according to which the advent of an institutionalised Church would divide a first from a second Middle Ages. In his view, these developments should instead be understood as manifestations of a long-term dynamic of ecclesial domination that did not disrupt the period's overall coherence. Moreover, this dynamic continued to unfold in later forms and stages – most notably in the Protestant Reformation – without even then possessing the force required to break the

underlying ecclesial logic that would continue to structure European society until the revolutionary upheavals of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The essays by Giuseppe Albertoni and Luigi Provero – which are included, together with Vito Loré's contribution on southern Italy, in the section *Forms of Political Power* – are devoted to the tensions and transformations that affected aristocratic society and political relations with the sovereign in the Italian kingdom. Albertoni takes his point of departure from the oft-overlooked final pages of *La Société féodale*, in which Bloch identified the affirmation of a right of resistance – first of vassals against lords acting unlawfully, and by extension of subjects against the king – as one of the principal corollaries of the formalisation of vassalage and the consequent assimilation of the relationship between aristocracy and king to a bilateral contract. Susan Reynolds' reassessment, which shifts the formalisation of the feudal–vassalic relationship to the mid-12th century, poses an obvious challenge to any straightforward revision or endorsement of Bloch's suggestions. Albertoni addresses this issue by focusing on the social group of the *milites* and on their relationships with royal and imperial power, as well as with the high office-holding aristocracy, in the period spanning from the second half of the 10th century to the 1030s. In doing so, he also recovers the category of 'informal feudalism' which was developed by Cinzo Violante in collaboration with Amleto Spicciani. Above all, however, Albertoni explicitly embraces Susan Reynolds' invitation to distinguish carefully between "phenomenon", "concept", and "word". He thus presents the intricate and largely spontaneous network of relationships – which were horizontal rather than vertical – in which the *milites* of the Italian kingdom were embedded at the time as the expression of a dense web of loyalties and personal ties that predated both their conceptualisation and their verbal articulation as feudal-vassalic relationships. The *Edictum* promulgated by Conrad II in 1037 responded to the needs of the *milites* not so much by establishing the principle of the hereditary nature of their *beneficia* – as Lombard jurists would later assume and argue in the 12th century – but rather by securing their right not to have those assets taken away without a concrete and formally declared fault, and to avail themselves, in such cases, of the judgement of their peers. The right of resistance was thus not merely the product of political action well before the formalisation and emergence of legal feudalism; rather, the very written definition of feudal customs can be understood as the final outcome of the efforts of first- and second-rank *milites* to obtain guarantees that would transcend the oral character of practices and the unwritten rules governing the granting and revocation of the essentially fiscal and ecclesiastical assets assigned to them.

Provero's essay is devoted to the radical transformation of the very nature of royal and imperial power in the Kingdom of Italy following the *Edictum* of 1037, over the little more than one hundred years separating the accession of Henry III in 1039 from that of Frederick Barbarossa in 1152. Provero identifies an initial phase of change unfolding during the 11th century, followed by a final phase of marked acceleration in the last decades of the period under

consideration. The first phase manifested itself through a series of developments beginning with the failure to rebuild the royal palace which had been destroyed by the inhabitants of Pavia following Henry II's death in 1024. The kings renounced the appointment of marquises and counts outside established family lines of office-holders, and were forced to contend with growing disruptions in the traditional system for managing fiscal lands. Royal control over sites devoted to specialised production came to an end, while the high office-holding aristocracy removed large estates from the fiscal patrimony, either through sales to their followers or by transferring them to privately-founded monasteries. By weakening the great lords' power over the intermediate military aristocracy, the *Edictum* of 1037 itself had already begun to undermine the system that enabled sovereigns to rule the kingdom through the mediation exercised by the great office-holding aristocracy over the Italian elites' lower ranks. This aristocracy increasingly found itself excluded from the procedures and conflicts surrounding the election of sovereigns, in part because it no longer sought to influence or participate in the political game of the kingdom, but rather to emancipate itself from it. The empire thus became one element – albeit one of particular importance – within a broader constellation of local power relations. By deposing Marchioness Matilda of Tuscany in 1081 and failing to resolve the crisis of the Arduinic March following the death of Marchioness Adelaide in 1091, the emperor himself effectively acknowledged the exhaustion of the great political structures on which royal power had traditionally rested. By the mid-12th century, Frederick Barbarossa was compelled to base his political action on the restoration of his role in public ceremonies and on efforts to reclaim jurisdictions and assets whose accurate inventory had been lost in the meantime. Provero concludes by stating explicitly that the reform of the Church – which severed the ties between the empire and the bishops, who had been the traditional mediators with the cities – together with the civil wars of those years constituted decisive factors in the final acceleration of broader political change. Yet – and this is the crucial point – these conflicts must still be situated "within a broader context, encompassing a multiplicity of processes".

Reconstructing the common thread linking the central political powers and local forces is also an essential tool for interpreting southern Italy, if we wish to grasp the nature of change and to propose effective periodisations. There can be little doubt that, in continental southern Italy – the subject of Vito Loré's contribution – the 11th and 12th centuries marked a sharp turning point, nor that the interplay between change and continuity unfolded there along highly distinctive lines. By other routes, but even more so than in Carolingian Italy, political power there retained a pronounced public character. In the three Lombard principalities – in Capua and Benevento, and somewhat later in Salerno – between the end of the 10th and the mid-11th century (on the eve of its conquest by Norman knights and mercenaries), there was a clear increase in the counts' role. These figures controlled territorial districts as well as public lands and prerogatives, were frequently able to transmit their

offices to their heirs, and at times – especially where Normans were already present in the region – also acted as castle-builders. These developments nevertheless did not amount to a 'privatisation of power', nor did they give rise to vassal-like relationships. In the Byzantine areas, on the other hand, the transfer of tax revenues to local powerful figures cannot be interpreted in terms of lordship, nor can the pursuit of autonomy by cities be taken as evidence of communal development. Between 1050 and 1070, the Norman rupture constituted a genuine "systemic change": military conquest brought into being a new aristocracy and a mosaic of lordships across the continental South, which remained largely autonomous during the period of weak political primacy exercised by the Dukes of Apulia. No less profound was the new rupture that, between 1127 and 1142, led Roger II of Sicily to found the kingdom and establish a strong form of public sovereignty – one that did not assume the characteristics of feudal domination over the territorial aristocracy until the end of the century. Vito Loré's assessment of the dialectic between "change and resilience" is therefore ambivalent. With the *Regnum Siciliae*, the political system of southern Italy recovered – by projecting it onto a newly unified space – its ancient tendency, which was already present in Lombard and Byzantine times, to gravitate towards a stable and clearly-defined centre. At the same time, however, Norman success brought about a sudden acceleration in the seigneurialisation of local power. By immediately structuring this power in territorial form, it foreclosed the possibility of alternative internal developments based on patrimonial accumulation and landownership – developments that remained largely confined to monastic lordships.

Seigneurial power is the central focus of the essays by Alessio Fiore, Sandro Carocci, and Maria Elena Cortese in the section *Forms of Lordship*. With his 2017 monograph on the "seigneurial transformation" in the Kingdom of Italy between 1080 and 1130 – a period marked by civil wars stemming from the dispute over the promotion of bishops, and roughly coinciding with the brief chronological span that saw the abrupt introduction of territorial lordship by the Normans further south – Fiore transposed to central and northern Italy the 'French' paradigm of the contemporaneity between the breakdown of the Carolingian-derived public order and the emergence of new forms of territorial lordship, and in the Italian case, also of powers exercised over the countryside by urban communities. Central to the transformation described by Fiore is the remodelling of the language of violence. This is so precisely because the lords accompanied these changes with an intensification of acts of violence against their subiects and their bodies, practices aimed at extending their dominion over men and women who were not serfs. This transformation is examined here with reference to two aspects that have received little attention in the historiography until now. The first concerns variations in the language and practice of violence as the identity of the political actors exercising it changed. It thus emerges that the violence exercised by urban communities – which positioned themselves as collective territorial lords over rural communities they sought to acquire or retain – cannot be assumed, in practice

and when circumstances demanded it, to have been substantially different from or less brutal than that practised by non-citizen lords. What differed was rather the way in which this violence was represented. Urban communities tended to offer a self-representation that was less complacent and less openly acknowledged than that of rural lords who, conversely, were interested in cultivating an image of arrogance closely tied to their aristocratic and military identity. The second issue concerns the link between aristocratic power and instances of sexual violence against dependant women. Alessio Fiore removes this practice from the prevailing historiographical view, which has tended to present it as an extraordinary or exceptional phenomenon. His hypothesis is that the lord's claim to dominion over women's bodies was one of the implications of the new language of violence that accompanied the transformation of lordship. If this aspect of domination appears only sporadically in the sources, it is because it was obscured and silenced – effectively censored – by the community's own men who, in cases of rape committed by the lord or his agents, had been unable either to defend or to compensate for a form of honour which had been violated on three levels: that of the women who were assaulted, that of the men, and that of the community meant to protect or avenge them. It should therefore not be regarded as coincidental that this phenomenon emerges in the sources only when the subjects themselves are not the ones speaking – as in the *querimoniae* – but rather when it is reported by observers external to the community.

The contributions of Cortese and Carocci tend, in many respects, to broaden the problematic framework within which the processes of seigneurialisation in Italy have been analysed, while also complicating their effects as well as their chronological and spatial scope. Both authors – albeit to different degrees, and with Carocci addressing the issue directly and at length in his concluding remarks – accord renewed prominence to the *milites*. In Albertoni's essay, these figures appeared as a central element of crisis within the political order which had been inherited from the Carolingian and Ottonian traditions; they may also be seen more broadly as one of the factors underlying the transformation of relations between the great office-holding aristocracy and royal power as discussed by Provero. In the first part of his essay, Cortese revisits the relationship between aristocratic structures and public and royal authority, highlighting what may well be the most significant development to emerge from recent research. In the 10th century, and well into the 11th, the Kingdom of Italy's aristocracy – far from benefiting from a privatisation of public property that had already deeply undermined royal power – remained strongly dependent on the royal court's capacity to deploy its vast fiscal resources so as to sustain an informal and unwritten circulation of land, wealth, and honours. The resilience of public fiscal assets, together with the continuity of this structure of political relations, also tended to preserve a traditionally open configuration of kinship. Within this framework, individuals pursued their fortunes within largely horizontal networks of relationships which were oriented as closely as possible towards the central court, without giving rise

to processes of dynasticisation, either among the higher aristocracy of margraves and counts or within the middle aristocracy. This pattern has been studied primarily in the Tuscan area, but it also finds significant parallels in the Milanese and, beyond the kingdom, in Ravenna. Consistent with this picture, the crisis of 'public' powers and the emergence of local 'private' powers in the Kingdom of Italy – when viewed both in relation to the mutationist paradigm initiated by Duby and to the national historiographical tradition – appear to have been clearly displaced by roughly a century, unfolding instead in the decades around the year 1100. With regard to this point, and to the model that is thereby emerging, Cortese nevertheless introduces important qualifications. In many areas of northern Italy, such as the bishopric of Trento and the patriarchate of Aquileia, continuity with Carolingian-derived socio-institutional structures remained uninterrupted, and no development of territorial lordships took place. Territorial lordships were likewise very weak in major areas of Umbria and Tuscany – around Perugia, Lucca, and Pisa – or, more clearly still, in Romagna. In many rural areas they did not take shape until the end of the 12th century or even later, including parts of Lazio, Tuscany, and the Po Valley. Even in the territory of Milan, an area of relative weakness in the development of lordship is now being identified. The second part of the essay examines the implications of this revised state of the research and chronology in relation to the classic thesis linking the rise of territorial lordship to economic growth driven by the intensified pressures exerted by lords on peasant production – one of the fundamental corollaries of the mutationist paradigm. Archaeology has suggested that evidence for this connection may be found in a transition: namely, in the material structures of feudal castles, which would have shifted from wood to stone between the end of the 11th and the beginning of the 12th century. Cortese considers this hypothesis to rest on fragile empirical foundations, however, not least because such a transition does not in fact appear to have occurred before the second half of the 12th century. A significant temporal discrepancy therefore remains with respect to the currently accepted dating of the *mutamento signorile*. According to Cortese, an earlier *pietrificazione* of castles would not even be compatible with the later chronology for the economic take-off of central-northern Italy which was recently proposed by Chris Wickham in *The Donkey and the Boat*. The territories of Pisa and Milan, by contrast, display a capacity for growth that appears to be independent of territorial lordship. Cortese – like Sandro Carocci more fully in the following essay – ultimately argues for shifting the correlation between increased seigneurial exactions and increased growth to lower levels of the social hierarchy, locating it in the relationship between peasants and the domination exercised by *milites* of more modest social standing.

In an essay that moves with particular originality between documentary evidence and contexts drawn from both southern and central–northern Italy, Carocci decisively shifts the focus from the seigneurial powers of the upper and middle aristocracy to those exercised by the several thousand *milites* who held dominion over the produce, land, or even the persons of fewer

than a dozen – or at most two or three dozen – men in Italy. These knightly 'micro-lordships' are examined through a specific analytical lens: that of the pervasiveness of seigneurial power, a conceptual tool which is already foregrounded in other important and innovative studies by Carocci. In southern Italy – Norman and later Swabian – such micro-lordships were particularly numerous. There, royal taxation and the relatively light exactions imposed by territorial lords left ample space for the undoubtedly heavier levies and greater intrusiveness exercised by the knights. Their numbers and intrusiveness had increased as a result of the disorder and militarisation associated with the period of conquest, and were further sustained by subsequent royal concessions and protections, which came to an end only with Frederick II's new legislation on the militia and the vassalage of the lower strata. Micro-lordship, however, unlike territorial lordship, was also present in the pre-Norman period, taking the form of the transfer of taxpayers along with their fiscal obligations, or the assignment of immigrants and foreigners subject to payments in exchange for protection. According to Carocci, the relative neglect of micro-lordships in central and northern Italy is largely the result of delays in research rather than of their historical marginality. There can nevertheless be no doubt about the widespread presence, from at least the mid-11th century onwards, of lower-ranking *milites* within the upper strata of local societies. Throughout the 12th century, these figures were key protagonists of processes of upward social mobility, processes that only partially – and at a later stage – derived from service rendered to medium and large territorial lords. Both micro-lordship and pervasiveness appear to Carocci to be long-lasting phenomena that extend beyond the relatively 'narrow' chronology assigned to the emergence of territorial lordship, which currently functions as a historiographical benchmark in Italy. Given that, in general – without implying a strict correlation – pervasiveness tends to be more characteristic of minor than of major lords, it is not easy to argue that it increased in parallel with the rise of new and violent territorial lordships between the 11th and 12th centuries. In many regional contexts, the sheer number and pervasiveness of micro-lords – who were often present precisely in those areas where new territorial lordship had failed to take root – also require us to reconsider their overall power of extraction, which may well have exceeded that of territorial lords. Echoing observations advanced in Cortese's essay, Carocci thus asks "whether the sharp acceleration of exactions revealed by many material indicators in the mid-12th century depended less on the violence of territorial lords than on the pervasive local presence of milites," and consequently, whether historiography has in this respect overestimated the significance of the emergence of territorial lordships. Moreover, from a chronological standpoint, and as in the South, the expansion of knightly micro-lordships in central–northern Italy may likewise be traced back to the mid-11th century as the outcome of processes of increasing violence, a growing number of knights, and what Carocci terms the "militarisation of pre-eminence".

All three essays in the section *Urban Change* move well beyond classic local investigations of urban history aimed at reconstructing 'communalisation' processes. Instead, they deploy their case studies to advance broader methodological proposals. Alberto Cotza traces in parallel – drawing on the most recent historiography – the divergent trajectories of Genoa and Pisa from the late 11th century onwards. In the 1130s and 1140s he identifies an area of interaction among the respective urban elites, Pope Innocent II, and even the empire – an interaction capable of embedding urban political dynamics within a papal project of pacification following three decades of inter-city conflict. A specific political space took shape through this process, one detached from the geographical and even institutional – or geopolitical – frameworks usually privileged by historians. In both cities, though according to different modalities rooted in their distinct local histories, this moment marked a crucial turning point and a significant qualitative leap in the definition of urban consuls' power. Two parallel yet distinct political trajectories – and which were destined to remain so – thus experienced a shared acceleration in the formation of communal structures, an acceleration that cannot be attributed to endogenous factors of change alone. Cotza thus shows that, in the new world of the High Middle Ages, change – communal development in this case – cannot be understood by analysing it solely within a local dimension, nor by relying on simple models of circulation and imitation, here in their political-institutional form. The transformation of the High Middle Ages cannot be reduced to the localisation of power alone; it also generated supra-local spheres of action that became decisive arenas of change. From this perspective, comparative approaches aimed merely at typological differentiation along geographical, regional, or sub-regional lines prove inadequate for grasping processes of communal development. The emergence of new inter-local and supra-local spatial configurations – the "connected arenas" in which the individual urban political elites interacted – rather calls for the construction of a genuinely "connected history of communal developments".

Dario Internullo draws attention to the "documentary revolution" that swept across Europe in the High Middle Ages alongside many other contemporary transformations, and which may be understood as part of a broader "writing revolution". The 12th century marks an absolute watershed: the number of surviving documents increases tenfold beyond this point, and the documents themselves also become qualitatively new. In terms of script, density, and organisation of writing, they are more legally standardised, more abstract and increasingly shaped by Roman law, more socially inclusive, more easily manageable, and often organised into registers. In Rome, the chronological curve of documentary production rises until the mid-11th century, then declines until the 1120s before entering a phase of renewed and more rapid growth. Internullo explains the initial phase of growth by pointing to the transition from papyrus to the more resistant and durable medium of parchment, but also to a genuine increase in the number of documents through which members of the papal clientele received Church lands in emphyteusis

and other forms of long-term leasing. The subsequent decline, between 1050 and 1124, can therefore be more plausibly attributed above all to the direct effects of Church reform and to its reaction against the alienation of *res ecclesie*. The final phase, extending to the end of the 12th century, represents a genuine explosion, and in quantitative terms is the true beginning of the documentary revolution. More interesting and significant are the qualitative ruptures and innovations, however. From this perspective, the decisive break in fact occurred during the period of quantitative decline, roughly between 1050 and 1150, and was initiated and sustained by the city's need to respond to the crisis of the earlier political and judicial system. That system had been based on the public power exercised by the pope and his officials, on the *placita*, and on the circulation of ecclesiastical goods among those laypeople who were closely connected to the churches and the papacy. From the mid-12th century onwards, with the completion of the transition to a phase of economic take-off and social growth, the demand for documents expanded dramatically, allowing quantitative and qualitative transformation to converge. The Roman case thus reflects changes that can be extended to the broader Italian and European context, as shown by a comparison with Florence – though on a slightly later chronology – and with Barcelona, which presents a largely corresponding trajectory. Everywhere, the revolution in types of documents can be linked to the crisis of the earlier public systems of the early Middle Ages. At the same time, the similarities observed – such as the end of early medieval "graphic particularism" – may be traced back to the emergence of new supra-regional interactions and connections which, according to Wickham's recent research mentioned above, finally took shape across the Latin Mediterranean from the mid-12th century onwards. With regard to the broader problem of periodisation between the Early and High Middle Ages, Dario Internullo emphasises the "real break" represented by the documentary revolution. In his view, this break severs any direct and specific link with a general growth in the needs of the "state" (as proposed in the pioneering work of Michael Clanchy), and thus also with communal development as such. Instead, it marks a fundamental stage – though perhaps not the final one – in the transition from a culture in which social events themselves acquired the status of "texts" or "documents," binding individuals even through records entrusted solely to oral memory, to a culture in which documentality and textuality came to rest essentially on writing.

Paolo Tomei's essay on Lucca is devoted to the emergence of new family structures – the aristocratic *domus* – which shaped the city's political development well beyond the advent of the *Popolo* in the early 14th century. The fact that Tomei himself presents his study as a contribution to debates on "seigneurial transformation" clearly demonstrates the impossibility of understanding medieval change in the central-northern Italian cities in isolation from the broader transformations which affected the aristocratic world and the forms of power in which those cities were embedded. A first group of *domus* crystallised around the year 1100, in conjunction with the seigneur-

ial transformation. These lineages became institutionalised, each coalescing around a material and symbolic heritage composed of "dignity, origin, kinship, names, symbols, power, and wealth". With few exceptions, they were ruled by *milites* and *domini* who – following the definitive crisis of the March of Tuscany and the Marquisate of Lucca –withdrew to the mountains of Garfagnana and the Versilia coast between 1080 and 1120, residing in towers which were erected at the centre of their fortified *curtes* while surrounded by their peasant dependants. A second group of *domus* emerged between 1170 and 1220, in conjunction with the definitive consolidation of communal institutions. These new lineages coalesced around *milites* who were largely *homines novi*, enriched by the "commercial revolution", while the powerful and well-established *domus* of the first phase returned to the city and assumed key positions within the urban political system. At the same time, the militia became a closed corps whose dominance over the city – and with it, that of the *domus* – would be broken only by the laws against *casastici et potentes* enacted by the *Popolo* in 1308. The principal strength of Tomei's argument lies in his ability to highlight, with clear periodising intent, the structural rupture represented by the formation of the first *domus* at the time of the crisis of marquisal power and its end with the death of Matilda of Canossa (1115). In the earlier structure there was only a single 'house,' consisting of the marquis' palace – which was destroyed around 1081 during the civil wars triggered by the conflict between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire. This palace functioned as both a political and physical focus of centralisation and of the continuous distribution of honours, wealth, and justice. Orbiting around it was an aristocracy composed of individuals without stable kinship ties or constraints which historiography has at times mistakenly reconstructed in terms of family histories and genealogies. In doing so, it projected onto this earlier aristocracy the same distorting and manipulative, self-celebratory gaze later adopted by the *domus* with respect to their own past – a gaze that accompanied the replacement of the centripetal "court society" with a localised and initially centrifugal "house society".

The texts in the *Archaeology* section – following the introduction to the theme in the essays by Cortese and Carocci – engage more directly with issues of economic and material transformation. These transformations largely supported, and at times actively shaped, the broader processes of change that characterised the period under consideration. Alessandra Molinari analyses and discusses the Italian peninsula's economy, situating it within a wide-ranging and systematic comparison with data and current knowledge relating to Egypt, Sicily, and Tunisia, regions that were once united under Fatimid rule. Like most of the contributions on archaeology and economics collected in this volume, her study takes into account Chris Wickham's impressive work on Mediterranean economies between 950 and 1180, which was published shortly after the Pisa seminar. Molinari confirms several of the main conclusions of *The Donkey and the Boat*: the relative economic backwardness of the Italian area – while nonetheless emphasising the "gradual transition from systems

based on redistribution to the growth of cities and independent, specialized crafts"; and the greater economic complexity of the Islamic regions, for which it is nevertheless possible to hypothesize an earlier development that became more rapid and visible in the 11th and 12th centuries. Her analysis significantly broadens and deepens the perspective from an archaeological standpoint, revisiting and updating data on settlements and trade networks, and extending the discussion beyond ceramics to other forms of evidence, including organic remains, paper, and textiles. In particular, Molinari emphasizes what material evidence reveals about creativity, knowledge, and technological innovation in manufacturing and agriculture, all of which are essential for interpreting economic complexity. One of her central arguments is that trade between "culturally and politically distinct regions", beyond its quantitative volume (the primary focus of Wickham's analysis), significantly fostered internal growth and specialisation by circulating "ideas, knowledge, and tastes". This was clearly the case in Sicily and Egypt under Fatimid rule. Morever, for the late 12th and 13th centuries, evidence from Sicily and the Crusader states calls into question Wickham's thesis concerning the continued external – and therefore non-decisive – role of Italian merchants in regional Mediterranean societies, even after the economic take-off of the Italian peninsula.

Federico Cantini discusses the transformations that affected the "landscapes, economies, and societies" of central and northern Italy between the 10th and 12th centuries in an essay that focuses primarily on the influence of local and supra-local factors on processes of change. His point of departure is the 10th century, when urban centres still incorporated elements of the rural landscape and the use of stone – both newly quarried and reused – was relatively limited, except in the towers of bishops' palaces and in the restoration and reconstruction of urban religious buildings that began in the 970s and 980s. The resources required for these still modest investments were drawn mainly from regional and sub-regional economies. The use of stone was similarly limited in the countryside, to castles built on public initiative and in those constructed by bishops, monasteries, and the large and medium-sized secular aristocracy. Nevertheless, the number of such structures – together with the broader intensification of new settlements between the late 10th and early 11th centuries, including in lowland areas – points to ongoing demographic and productive growth. This growth nevertheless took place within a system based on the transfer of goods and services from peasant holdings to manorial centres, and from there to cities and major monasteries, in a context marked by the near absence of minted coinage. During the 11th century, while the countryside experienced a renewed wave of investment by the higher aristocracy in the construction of monasteries and the renovation of parish buildings, clear signs of a new urbanisation of space and a progressive petrification of urban landscapes began to emerge. The phase of growth continued, albeit at a low intensity. It was not until the 12th century that a period of more substantial economic development took shape, intensifying in particular after the 1150s and leading to the expansion of regional markets and the

consolidation of Mediterranean ones, accompanied by more pronounced demographic growth. In urban contexts, this development manifested itself in new stone constructions and in the erection of towers and tower houses which were characteristic of the new aristocracy that was organised into patrilineal lineages (the *domus* analysed by Tomei), as well as in the construction of walls and public and private buildings, and in a renewed use of brick. These processes unfolded against a backdrop of expansion in the property market and rising real-estate values. From the mid-12th century onwards, currency also became widespread within networks of rural settlements, where new villages and urban-type centres were founded, towers proliferated, and seigneurial residences modelled on urban architecture were built within castles – not only by the high and middle aristocracy, but also by upwardly mobile *milites* eager to distinguish themselves from the rest of rural society.

Andrea Augenti's essay helps to clarify the significance of the 10th-12th-century threshold in the long-term history of urban centres in central and northern Italy. First, it recalls that this period – which was preceded by important developments in the 9th century and followed by further ramifications in the 13th – coincided with the most profound transformation and the most significant reconfiguration in the urban network's density and geography. This occurred within a context marked by the enduring persistence of ancient urban centres, with relatively few abandonments and only a limited number of new foundations in the Early Middle Ages. During the same period, the urban topography of power underwent significant change: ancient public buildings were abandoned and the seats and palaces of authority shifted location and form, marking a break in architectural language that was already taking shape in the 10th century. Augenti also invites us, however, to consider evidence drawn from other aspects and tools of archaeological analysis that have either been neglected until recently or have only lately become available. The final decades of the 11th century especially correspond to major transformations in urban epigraphy, which since the fifth century had been characterised by a process of increasing "ecclesialisation". A "new flourishing of public inscriptions", together with the marked expansion of their forms, responded to emerging needs for public communication, including civil communication, and served to ensure political control over a newly-constructed civic memory. Alongside church façades, this memory made use of walls, bridges, and city gates, and – from the 12th century, if not earlier – also of the surfaces of houses and family towers, enabling the epigraphic self-celebration of private individuals and lay elites. Recent research highlights the importance of the artificial levelling and infilling of land during the 11th and 12th centuries, which can be interpreted – and not only in Rome – as evidence of deliberate and carefully-planned urban interventions. Finally, the histories of those cities which were abandoned in the early Middle Ages and subsequently replaced by ecclesiastical or monastic foundations – genuine "relay stations of memory" and sites of cultural investment in links with antiquity (all of which reached the height of their development, including economic growth, during this pe-

riod) – constitute a significant marker of the transformations that characterised the 11th and 12th centuries.

In the four contributions that make up the final section – *Economy* – economic change is examined in relation to other decisive junctures in ongoing transformations, such as political change in the cities and the emerging issue of the dissolution of public fiscal assets. It is also addressed through more readily measurable indicators, such as prices and monetary circulation – topics that are now often neglected in historiography. Alessia Rovelli surveys the production and circulation of silver coinage in central and northern Italy from the Ottonian period – when in the *Regnum italicum* minting was confined to the four imperial mints, which were already active in the Carolingian age, of Pavia, Milan, Lucca, and Verona – to the late 12th and early 13th centuries, when coinage passed to some twenty autonomous urban mints. Evidence from coin finds in Tuscany, together with archaeometric analyses of the provenance of their silver, suggests that until the early decades of the 11th century coinage was used primarily to finance military campaigns and imperial travel. The necessary metal flowed from the Harz to the mint in Pavia – by far the most productive one – not through trade, but through the "fiscal redistribution circuit", which both Simone Collavini and Giovanna Bianchi have described as characteristic of the broader management of public assets in the kingdom. The picture in the subsequent period, which was marked by the depletion of the Saxon mines and the crisis of the imperial presence in Italy – transformations discussed in Luigi Provero's essay – is far less clear and reveals pronounced local variation, including in the use of minted coinage, for which demand exceeded supply. Areas in which coins continued to circulate, and where *res valentes* and substitute currencies were rare, thus contrasted sharply with those regions in which such alternatives clearly prevailed. The four imperial mints operated irregularly, and the predominantly sub-regional scale of exchange – which is attested by the archaeological evidence – within a context of still limited economic growth did little to encourage monetary circulation. This situation changed radically around the middle of the 12th century. The proliferation of transfers of minting rights to cities was accompanied by a corresponding increase in coin production, as evidenced by archaeological finds. The reduction in the silver content of *denarii* coincided with the introduction of higher denominations, culminating in the minting of *grossi*. At the same time, the use of substitute currencies declined, coinage increasingly came to respond to economic interests, and local tax systems became monetised. Currency thus became an integral component of the new economic complexity.

Lorenzo Tabarrini undertakes the demanding task of revisiting classic issues – price inflation, currency debasement, and exchange rates – which a longstanding mistrust from economic anthropology has contributed to marginalising in recent research, despite the fact that, as late as the end of the 20th century, they remained a central component of studies on medieval economic change. Tabarrini reviews and succeeds in rendering methodologically

comparable the series of land prices which were developed in the research of Violante, Herlihy, Bonnassie, Racine, Jarnut, and Feller, and later synthesised in a recent study by Paolo Cammarosano. These series show an increase in nominal prices from the second half of the 10th century onward, which slowed during the first quarter of the following century before diverging into different trajectories in the second half of the 12th century. Various explanations have been proposed for this rise in prices; however, for the *Regnum italicum* – given the contemporaneity of monetary debasement and the peak of Saxon mining exploitation – Tabarrini suggests that one of the factors behind the duration, and perhaps even the initial trigger, of the inflationary phase can be traced to the "expansion of state demand". This refers to the growth of 'public' investment in large-scale royal enterprises aimed at sustaining the long-distance circulation of fiscal resources and financing the remuneration of both royal officials and the army. In a structurally different economic context, it nonetheless appears possible to identify a role for the 'state' in the renewed emergence of inflationary dynamics in the late 12th century, when cities – having acquired their own mints – began to experiment with forms of fiscal deficit to finance military expenditure, thereby adding public demand to existing private demand for consumption and investment. The essay's concluding section addresses another crucial issue, one that also carries significant theoretical implications for the preceding discussion: whether exchange rates between different currencies in the 12th century reflected, in whole or in part – and if so, to what extent – the intrinsic value of the coinage or the legal rates imposed by rulers. Tabarrini leaves the question open, rightly concluding that, as with all the complex problems his essay has the merit of bringing into focus, "closer collaboration between historians and archaeologists" is required – clearly including numismatists among the latter, and perhaps implicitly calling for a broader and more open engagement by historians working on economic history.

With his 2023 book, Chris Wickham has complemented his 2015 monographic study on political change in central and northern Italian cities between 1050 and 1150 with an in-depth discussion of contemporary economic developments. With frequent reference to Genoa, he examines – largely in order to refute – the hypothesis that a correlation existed between these two processes of transformation (or more precisely, between their respective outcomes): on the one hand, the formation of the Italian communes, and on the other, the economic take-off of the macro-region corresponding to the *Regnum italicum*. First and foremost, Wickham argues that these were not contemporaneous phenomena. The former took shape in the first half of the 12th century, whereas the latter occurred after 1150, if not after 1180, and in some cases even later. Even the subsequent political developments of the second half of the century were responses to political and military challenges rather than the result of economic change. Wickham encapsulates this position in an effective opening formulation: while "large-scale processes are rarely entirely independent of other broad contexts", the "basic causal elements of each were

different". He nevertheless points to a shared causal factor – in a very brief passage that is nonetheless consistent with most of the essays in this volume – for communal developments and for the other fundamental political transformation that can be considered their prerequisite: namely, the collapse of the Kingdom of Italy. Both processes are traced back to the civil wars that erupted in 1080 and are therefore – at least in part – consequences of the dynamics which were set in motion by the so-called "Gregorian reform". The disintegration of the kingdom and the formation of communes did not facilitate economic development, but instead initially slowed it down, since political and institutional fragmentation hindered the integration of local and sub-regional economies. Autonomy translated into a positive economic stimulus only in the 13th century, when communes began to invest systematically in public infrastructure. There were exceptions to this general separation between political and economic development, however. Owing to the growth of its textile manufacturing sector, Piacenza established close commercial ties with Genoa as early as the first half of the 12th century. In this case economic connections fostered similarities and simultaneity in the development of the two cities, partly through the imitation of political models. Taken as a whole, the essay thus marks a clear break with a long-standing tradition of scholarship – a cornerstone of the national 'communalist' narrative – which traced the roots of the Italian communes' distinctive autonomy to their exceptional economic dynamism and precocity, and held that communal institutions emerged primarily to regulate economic activity and sustain the so-called 'commercial revolution.'

While this 'knotting' between the level of political–institutional change and economic transformation is denied in the case of communal history, it becomes plausible again in Simone Collavini's work. The abrupt collapse of royal and marquisal power, which gave rise to lordships and communes, "also brought an end to an economic structure – the 'fiscal system' – that had long been central to the Tuscan economy". Royal landholdings were particularly extensive in Tuscany, and in some areas were predominant. As elsewhere, these assets circulated widely and rapidly through concessions that were often temporary and granted orally within the aristocracy gravitating around public power – namely, within the "court society" here described by Tomei. Because continuity in the management of the *curtes* involved in this network was ensured by local elites of gastalds and *actores*, the system engaged not only the higher office-holding aristocracy but also the middle and lower aristocracy, extending down to local notables. Collavini's dense essay – one rich in clarifications that revise, among other things, several significant aspects of the regional model of seigneurial transformation – thus constitutes a fundamental contribution to understanding the Tuscan public fiscal system's functioning. The fiscal authorities organised and controlled the *manentes*' agricultural and craft production, channelling it into non-commercial forms and sustaining a large and efficient economic network which was separate from the 'private' one. This network ensured the city a form of 'centrality' linked to

the spending and consumption of regional elites. The system dissolved within a few decades around 1100, when the conflict between the papacy and the empire triggered a political and civil crisis whose irreversibility, according to Collavini – here pointing to another, inverted plane of interaction between economic and political dynamics – should also be connected to the earliest forms of economic growth and transformation that emerged in the 11th century. For the first time, these developments offered both the opportunity and the incentive to exit the 'public' political system governed by the fiscal authorities, thus making its crisis irreversible. It was a true "revolution" in political structures, from which emerged "a society that we can regard as fully post-Carolingian – i.e. as belonging to the High Middle Ages". As a result, the regional economy was profoundly reshaped. The wealth of the churches and aristocratic elites – which had already been expanding for demographic reasons, and owing to the rise of the *milites* as well – grew steadily and significantly, while their 'private' demand expressed by them also increased following the cessation of gifts from the court. With the collapse of the public network, aristocratic landholdings and the resources that remained 'fiscal' were absorbed into a single integrated system which was opened to the market, and wich now became the sole source of prestigious goods and of the money required to acquire them through the sale of peasant surpluses extracted as rent. Urban centrality was thus rapidly re-established on new productive and commercial foundations. The new freedom of economic action available to fiscal *manentes*, together with peasant initiatives which were capable of withstanding intensified lordly pressure, continued to fuel population growth and productive specialisation. From this perspective, the rupture represented by the collapse of the *Regnum italicum* appears as an "accelerator" of the Tuscan economy's long-term cumulative growth, which had begun in the Early Middle Ages, and as one of the causes of its take-off – a take-off clearly visible only in the second half of the 12th century.

10. *Some concluding remarks*

The panorama of studies and reflections offered in this volume, which is situated at the heart of the current investigations into Italian spaces and sources, thus constitutes a significant contribution to research on a new High Middle Ages – one more finely articulated chronologically, more clearly differentiated spatially, and therefore more deeply and accurately understood. Viewed from a broader perspective, it becomes evident that certain key themes recur, together with a series of proposals linking different levels of historical change. Among the most prominent is the acceleration - operating at multiple levels and across a plurality of ongoing processes – triggered in central and northern Italy by the final crisis of the Carolingian and Ottonian political and institutional structures of 'public' origin, as well as by the simultaneous collapse of Byzantine and Lombard power structures in southern

Italy. In the South, this rapid rupture gave rise to the radically new phenomenon of territorial lordships. At the same time, however, it can be argued that a degree of continuity in local practices – which were long anchored to a central power typologically marked by a form of 'resilience' of ancient state-like features – favoured, within a not much longer timeframe, the formation of a kingdom that was in many respects equally new (in the southern context, as in the broader European one). By contrast, in central and northern Italy the collapse of the *Regnum italicum* and the profound transformation of imperial power are confirmed as decisive factors: on the one hand, in the completion of the process of seigneurialisation; on the other, in the emergence of new forms of communal government. For both processes, more precise lines of enquiry are envisaged. It is nevertheless above all in the case of the latter – "communalisation" – that it seems necessary to further temper the claim, present in long-standing narratives, that certain developments essentially occurred independently and swiftly as the expression of peculiarly original social forces.

Although they do not necessarily mark the contours of a single, sudden rupture, and there is still room for interpretations inspired by broader time frames, these transformations are nonetheless widely understood to have crystallised within a relatively short span of time: namely, those few decades bridging the 11th and 12th centuries. In central and northern Italy this period corresponds to the so-called 'civil wars,' while in the South it coincided with a turbulent phase of conflict that culminated in the establishment of Norman seigneurial rule. The role played by the reforming papacy and its Church within the context of instability in southern Italy may need to be rethought and rewritten; there is nevertheless little doubt that in the centre-north of the peninsula, the 'civil wars' that accompanied the collapse of the Kingdom of Italy were closely linked to the conflict that erupted between the papacy and the empire over the appointment of bishops. Equally undeniably, the intersection between the dispute over episcopal appointments and the political structure of the kingdom thus emerges as a powerful driver of change in the Italian context. One may nonetheless ask to what extent these 'civil wars,' and indeed the very possibility of the papacy entering into conflict with the empire, were themselves 'preconditioned' by tensions already affecting the kingdom's structures at multiple levels – social and institutional, and perhaps even economic. What does appear genuinely new, however, is the importance attributed in several contributions to the movement and rise of the *milites* as a group, here understood as both an indicator and an agent of transformation across multiple spheres: political, aristocratic, and economic. The dynamism and transformations within the Church – which in this volume ultimately appear as a long-term process, especially where they are interpreted in terms of a *révolution ecclésiale* – are also connected, once again in what may be described as a two-way interaction, to changes in the field of law, which are here unequivocally characterised as a 'revolution.' The Roman 'crisis' of the Papacy, which was triggered by the reform of the Church – and thus, ultimately, by the breakdown of the legal and institutional functioning of a traditional po-

litical and 'public' order – was in turn linked to the 'documentary revolution,' one of the most prominent thematic innovations highlighted in the volume. Church, law, writing: the question of a cultural, and even anthropological, rupture is thereby reopened.

Finally, many essays across several sections emphasise the periodising significance of ongoing research into the relatively recent field of the management of fiscal and royal resources. After all, this sphere constituted the deepest layer – the very core – of continuity within the so-called public system, a continuity that Duby highlighted in his seminal monograph on the Mâconnais mainly in relation to the administration of justice. We can now provide a concrete, anachronism-free point of reference for the distinctions between 'public' and 'private', distinctions often criticized as projections of modern conceptualizations. The management of fiscal assets becomes the key to understanding the structural changes in kinship underpinning the choices made by the elites, but it also proves to have a fundamental influence on the economy, on currency circulation systems, and on surpluses. While an overly tight correlation between economic growth and a rapid seigneurial transformation around the turn of the 12th century now appears less convincing, the collapse of royal 'public' power and its fisc takes the form of a powerful accelerator of ongoing economic processes leading towards greater complexity. Without abandoning the perspective of a long-term and profound material and economic transformation, one which unfolded according to its own rhythms, there is nonetheless broad agreement in locating its peak – at least for central and northern Italy – in the second half of the 12th century.

The interweaving of topics, together with the overall picture that emerges from the individual contributions to this volume, ultimately points to the need for broader and more multidimensional representations of the new 'High Middle Ages' we are seeking to define. It is nevertheless clear that differing approaches to the complex historiographical problem of the 11th and 12th centuries persist. Differences persist, both with regard to the pace of the processes of change as well as their 'revolutionary' character – whether conceived as a sudden rupture or as an acceleration of ongoing processes – and with regard to the ways in which, and the extent to which, such changes can be articulated by linking different structural levels, which in turn has consequences for longer-term historical periodisation. Nevertheless, the coexistence of diverse perspectives constitutes the best guarantee for the continuation of a debate that has finally been set in motion, and one that need not reproduce sterile oppositions between mutually exclusive paradigms.

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