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Labour Services and Peasant Obligations in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Southern Italy

G.A. Loud

A recent study has suggested that: ‘the role of *corvées* in the Norman-Staufen period appears from various points of view to be greater than is recognised by the historiography’.¹ That may, indeed, well be the case, but there remains much that is unclear about the nature and extent of peasant obligations in southern Italy during the central Middle Ages. This is linked with the wider problem of the structure of the agrarian economy as a whole, an issue complicated by the widespread regional variations within the Mezzogiorno. To some extent, of course, this is a problem with which all medievalists will be familiar. Local variation is the rule rather than the exception.

Yet one might suggest that, despite its relatively restricted extent, the regional variations within the newly-formed kingdom of Sicily were particularly strongly marked. Two factors accentuated these trends: the diverse political and cultural history of the region, and the pronounced geographical differences, above all between the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian sides of the southern peninsula. The former had low rainfall, few rivers, a dry climate and often problems of water supply: the latter was wetter and more fertile, but also often hillier. In lower-lying areas standing water might be a problem as much as a resource. The economy of the eastern coast was largely based on wheat, and in central Apulia later olives. In the western and central regions vines, chestnuts and fruit trees, as well as a wider variety of cereal crops played a proportionately much larger role in the countryside. Such a contrast was reflected, or so it has been suggested, in variations in the burdens laid upon the peasantry in different regions.² Furthermore, the region as a whole was far from static, and in some areas there were over time significant changes in the nature of the agrarian economy. On the Amalfitan peninsula, for example, the viticulture which predominated until the mid-twelfth century was challenged, and to some extent displaced, by the growing cultivation of

I am grateful to Jean-Marie Martin for his helpful comments on the first draft of this essay.

¹ Sandro Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno. Società rurale, potere aristocratici e monarchia (XII-XIII secolo)* (Rome 2014), p. 441.

² Jean-Marie Martin, ‘Le travail agricole : rythmes, *corvées*, outillage’, in *Terra e uomini nel Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo* (Atti delle settimane giornate normanno-sveve, Bari 15-17 ottobre 1985: Bari 1987), pp. 113-57; Jean-Marie Martin, *La Pouille du VIe au XIIIe siècle* (Rome 1993), pp. 64-104; Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 443-8.

chestnuts, a trend which was, however, largely reversed a century later, and also complicated by the planting of olive trees and the growing cultivation of vegetables and fruit. This last was by the fourteenth century the dominant feature of Amalfitan agriculture, as indeed it remains today.³ The spread of large-scale olive cultivation in the plateau around Bari was a twelfth-century development – before then olives were only a secondary crop. At the same period the Tavoliere of northern Apulia, hitherto only lightly-settled, became a major wheat-growing region, and thereafter probably a source of grain for the coastal regions.⁴ Most strikingly, the elimination or removal of the Muslims of western Sicily under Frederick II led not only to significant changes to the pattern of settlement, with villages increasingly replaced by isolated *masserie*, but also the replacement of a relatively diverse agriculture, assisted by irrigation, by what in the later Middle Ages was largely a wheat-growing monoculture, albeit leavened to some extent by pastoral transhumance.⁵ Changes such as these might well significantly alter the situation of the peasantry whose labour made them possible.

Admittedly, by the time of the Norman conquest in the eleventh century the serfdom of the early Middle Ages, often – though as Chris Wickham has argued probably wrongly – seen as comparable to and even the lineal descendant of classical slavery, had already largely disappeared.⁶ The destruction by the Arabs of the great abbeys of St. Vincent on Volturno and Montecassino in the late ninth century had led to the collapse of their system of demesne agriculture, if that was what the so-called *Curtis* system was,⁷ to such an extent that the later Cassinese chronicler Leo could lament that at the time of his monastery's re-foundation, c. 950, 'hardly anybody was to be found in that region who was obliged to provide any sort of

³ Mario del Treppo and Alfonso Leone, *Amalfi medioevale* (Naples 1977), pp. 22-38.

⁴ Martin, *Pouille*, pp. 354-66.

⁵ H. Bercher, A. Courteaux & J. Mouton, 'Une Abbaye latine dans la société musulmane: Monreale au XII^e siècle', *Annales. Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 34 (1979), 525-47, especially pp. 537-42. For transhumance, Henri Bresc, *Un Monde Méditerranéen. Économie et Société en Sicile 1300-1450* (2 vols., Rome 1986), i.139-54.

⁶ Chris Wickham, 'The other transition: from the ancient world to feudalism', in his *Land and Power. Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400-1200* (London 1994), pp. 33-6; and at greater length in his *Framing the Early Middle Ages. Europe and the Mediterranean 400-800* (Oxford 2005), chapter 5.

⁷ Wickham would, I suspect disagree; certainly he says at one point that labour services were 'almost unknown south of Rome', although elsewhere he notes St. Vincent on Volturno imposing *corvées* on some tenants during the ninth century, *Framing the Middle Ages*, pp. 278, 296. But whether the Cassinese cells of this period were the foci of a full-blown demesne economy, or collection centres for rents in kind, is by no means clear, and in any case the monastic *Curtis* economy was only a brief phase, probably c. 800-880.

service to the servants of God dwelling there'.⁸ The pressing issue was to attract settlers to these lands, by offering them relatively favourable conditions.

'The wise abbot then summoned peasants from all the surrounding areas which had not been devastated and placed them and their households wherever cultivators were lacking on the possessions of the monastery. He drew up a legal agreement both with those whom he found there and with the immigrants whom he had brought in, that every year they should give to the monastery a seventh part of the three main crops, that is wheat, barley and millet, from all this land, and a third part of the wine - they should retain the rest for their own use. This agreement has endured and been observed continuously up to the present day [c. 1100].'⁹

No mention was made here of labour services, although later on there is some evidence for these on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti*, as we shall see.

Elsewhere in the south, *servi* can be found, albeit infrequently, into the eleventh century. One of the parties in a property dispute in Salerno in 1020, the church of St. Maximus, had five of its serfs give sworn evidence on its behalf – this was clearly unusual, but it was noted that it was the custom for this church's serfs to be allowed to swear oaths.¹⁰ But the number of such serfs was tending to diminish. When a certain Count John gave property to another church in Salerno in November 1065, it was noted that he had already manumitted all his serfs, both male and female.¹¹ Admittedly we still find, to a surprisingly late date, the provision in privileges from local rulers that free men and women who married or co-habited with serfs would themselves lose their freedom, and that of any children of the union. Indeed, one privilege to this effect was issued by Duke Roger Borsa of Apulia as late as 1110.¹² We might, however, consider this something of an antiquarian survival. Certainly

⁸ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, ed. Hartmut Hoffmann (MGH SS xxxiv, Hanover 1980), I.1, p. 166.

⁹ *Chronica Monasterii Casinensis*, II.3, p. 171-2. The agreement of Abbot Aligern with the inhabitants of Sant'Angelo in Theodice in 966, which specified a monetary rent and 2/5 of the wine harvest, shows that there were local variations, Luigi Tosti, *Storia della badia di Montecassino* (3 vols., Naples 1842), i.223-6.

¹⁰ *Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, ed. Michele Morcaldi, Mauro Schiani & Silvano De Stefano (8 vols., Milan & Naples 1873-93), v.29-31 no. 725.

¹¹ *Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis*, ix, ed. Simeone Leone and Giovanni Vitolo (Badia di Cava 1984), 29-30 no. 10: *ipse Iohannes liberos dimisit omnes servos et ancillas, aldios et aldias sibi pertinentes ... absque omni conditione.*

¹² *Normannische Herzogs- und Königsurkunden aus Unteritalien und Sicilien*, ed. Lothar von Heinemann (Tübingen 1899), pp. 18-19 no. 9 (from Archivio della badia della S. Trinità di Cava [henceforth Cava], *Arm. Mag.* E. 14.

where we find the traditional terms for such servitude (*servus / ancilla*) in twelfth-century charters, these tend to refer rather to actual slaves employed in domestic service, as with the sale at Salerno in March 1154 of an *ancilla* ‘born of the Saracen race’ and her infant son.¹³

This did not of course mean that unfreedom, or perhaps one might better say ‘bonds of dependence’ disappeared. Even supposedly free men might still be subject to dues and services, or constrained to remain on the lands which they were cultivating.¹⁴ Free men, expressly described as *liberi homines*, might even be donated to a monastery as its *defensani* (clients / protected men).¹⁵ King Roger’s assizes of the 1140s briefly discussed the constraints upon serfs, and here the term *servus* was used: a *servus, colonus* or *servus glebi* who had fled from his lord should be returned to him for punishment, and restrictions were placed on the ordination of serfs (*adscripticii*). While the ordination of such was permitted, with their lords’ permission, their children would revert to servile status.¹⁶ A subsequent law of King William (II?) defined the latter provision more closely. The restrictions on ordination applied only to *adscriptii* (as they are now spelt) and serfs of the glebe; those who owed service only because of their tenure of a holding could freely become clerics, whether or not their lords consented.¹⁷ But while these provisions are unlikely to have been wholly divorced from reality, like most legislative provision the picture they present may be unduly tidy,¹⁸ as well as reflecting the terminology of their ultimate source (the legislation of Justinian), and while the implication is that the unfree owed service, what that service might be is not spelt

¹³ Cava, *Arca* xxviii.100: *tradidit ipso landulfo ... unam ancillam nomine nubiliam ... ex saracene genere ortam, cum uno infantulo sarraceno*. Cf. here, amid other examples, a charter listing household property accompanying a daughter in marriage in June 1088, including *due sclave mater et filia*, and a legal case in March 1127, both from Bari, *Codice diplomatico barese v Le Pergamene di S. Nicola di Bari. Periodo Normanno (1075-1194)*, ed. F. Nitti di Vito (Bari 1902), 18 no. 9, 128-30 no. 74. For discussion, Pietro Corrao, ‘Il Servo’, in *Condizione umana e ruoli sociali nel Mezzogiorno normanno-svevo*, ed. Giosue Musca (Atti delle nove giornate normanno-sveve, Bari 17-20 ottobre 1989: Bari 1991), pp. 63-4, and Jean-Marie Martin, ‘L’esclavage en Pouille (fin du X^e siècle-milieu du XIII^e siècle)’, in *Congressi sulle relazioni tra le sponde adriatiche. 2. I rapporti demografici e popolativi* (Rome, 1981), pp. 53-74 [reprinted in J.-M. Martin, *Byzance et l’Italie méridionale* (Paris, 2014), pp. 353-365].

¹⁴ See the Salerno charter of 1019 cited by Augusto Lizier, *L’Economia rurale dell’età prenormanna nell’Italia meridionale (Studi su documenti editi dei secoli ix-xi)* (Palermo 1907), p. 70; and *Codex Diplomaticus Cavensis* vi.28 no. 1049 (August 1045). It should be noted, however, that the latter document embodied a contractual obligation.

¹⁵ *Le Più antiche carte dell’abbazia di San Modesto in Benevento (Secoli VIII-XIII)*, ed. F. Bartoloni (Rome 1950), pp. 11-17 no. 5 (991/2), at p. 15. This privilege was subsequently copied in a later charter of 1174, *ibid.*, no. 14.

¹⁶ Vatican Assizes vi, x, in G.M. Monti, ‘Il testo e la storia esterne delle assize normanne’, in his *Lo Stato normanno svevo. Lineamenti e ricerche* (Trani 1945), pp. 120, 122.

¹⁷ *Liber Augustalis*, III.3, in *Die Konstitutionen Friedrichs II. für das Königreich Sizilien*, ed. Wolfgang Stürner (MGH Constitutiones et Acta Publica, Supplementum 2, Hanover 1996), p. 366.

¹⁸ Cf. Wickham, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, pp. 383-4, and 523-4.

out. Nor did this legal categorisation take any account of those of intermediate status such as the *affidati* found in charters from the Bari region.¹⁹

The reference to *adscriptii* (those written down) does of course point to the *anthropoi*, *bellanoi*, and *al-rijāl* recorded in the lists (*platea* or *jarīda*) of peasants from particular estates or lordships in Sicily and Calabria. It has recently been argued that these peasants were not necessarily of ‘servile’ status, even though they were undoubtedly tied to the land they inhabited.²⁰ Others would, however, disagree, and probably rightly so.²¹ However, while such a legal status (if we can use such a term) was important in binding peasants to the land, and preventing their flight, as is shown in King Roger’s assize, it does not necessarily imply that such ‘unfree’ peasants were forced to provide labour services. In Sicily, Muslim peasants were obligated to pay a head tax (*jizīya*) and rent in kind, but insofar as we find evidence for labour services on the island these would seem to have been exacted from the Christian (and primarily Greek) peasants of the north-east.²² Indeed, according to ‘Falcandus’, those Greeks and Muslims classified as *villani* (in the mid-twelfth century) ‘had to pay tithes and an annual money rent’. He did not mention labour services, and even in the north-east these may have been relatively unusual.²³

We need therefore to look less at the legal status of peasants than at the reality of what their subjection meant in terms of the burdens laid upon them. (Here one *would* agree with Carocci). Certainly at some places and in some regions these obligations could be heavy, and might indeed involve significant and time-consuming labour services. Laurent Feller has, for example, suggested that the *corvées* exacted in the Abruzzi in the early thirteenth century were just as burdensome as those of the Carolingian era.²⁴ The tenants (*angarii*) of the archbishop of Cosenza in Calabria owed up to a hundred days’ labour a year at the same

¹⁹ E.g. *Cod. Dipl. Barese* v.35-6 no. 18 (January 1094), 90-1 no. 49 (December 1107/8), 93-4 no. 51 (May 1108), 97-8 no. 54 (1109). Cf. Vincenzo D’Alessandro, ‘Servi e liberi’, in *Uomo e ambiente* [above note 2], pp. 307-8; Martin, *Pouille*, pp. 312-16.

²⁰ Sandro Carocci, ‘Angarii e franci. Il villanaggio meridionale’, in *Studi in margine all’edizione della platea di Luca arcivescovo di Cosenza (1203-1227)*, ed. Errico Cuzzo and Jean-Marie Martin (Avellino 2009), 205-41; cf. Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 88-9.

²¹ E.g. D’Alessandro, ‘Servi e liberi’, pp. 309-11; Corrao, ‘Il Servo’, pp. 72-8.

²² Annliese Nef, *Conquérir et Gouverner la Sicile Islamique aux XIe et XIIe Siècles* (Rome 2011), pp. 485-515. For labour services, see, for example, Dieter Girgensohn and Norbert Kamp, ‘Urkunden und Inquisitionen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts aus Patti’, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 45 (1965), 133-48 nos. 7-8, at pp. 138, 143-4 (both July 1249).

²³ *La Historia o Liber del Regno Sicilie e la Epistola ad Petrum Panormitane Ecclesie Thesaurium* di Ugo Falcando, ed. G.B. Siragusa (Fonti per la storia d’Italia, Rome 1897), p. 145.

²⁴ Laurent Feller, *Les Abruzzes Médiévales. Territoire, Économie et Société en Italie Centrale du IXe au XIIIe Siècle* (Rome 1998), pp. 551-2.

period.²⁵ Two contemporary legal cases paint a similar picture in rather more detail. In 1221 the peasants (*homini seu villani*) of four villages belonging to the Cistercian monastery of St. Stephen *de Nemore* (S. Stefano del Bosco) in Calabria petitioned the imperial court about various demands and ‘molestations’, not sanctioned by custom, which they alleged the monastery was imposing upon them. These innovations would seem to have been fiscal dues. But as part of the settlement which was imposed by the judges the services which they customarily owed were specified. These would appear to have been of long standing – indeed the monastery’s representative claimed (albeit mendaciously) that they dated back to the time of Count Roger I.²⁶ Every *villanus* owed two days’ work a week to the monastery, and in addition twelve days a year extra, either transport services (*perangaria*) for those possessing animals, or further agricultural work, and additionally a small monetary payment, for those without them. There was also a further day’s work a year collecting wood. Nor indeed were these the total of their dues, for they also owed 1/10 of wine must and field crops, and 1/5 of olives and vegetables.²⁷ Three years later, in September 1224, an imperial court presided over by the chief justiciar, Henry de Morra, resolved a dispute between the churches and knights of Sorrento and the peasants of the villages around that town, who had petitioned the emperor concerning the demands the former had made upon them. Here there seems to have been some attempt to deny the rights of lordship – whereas in the Calabrian case the peasants had been at pains to explain that they had never denied being the men of the monastery, merely the extent of the services and dues that were being demanded. As with the earlier case, the eventual judgement specified exactly what services were due. The judges decreed that in future the *villani* would owe one day’s work a week during ten months of the year – the churchmen and knights having alleged that two days a week had been the case in the time of Kings William I and II. In the other two months, which would be at the lord’s choosing, they would still owe two days a week, and the lords had the right to force them to this labour if they refused.²⁸

²⁵ Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 406-8.

²⁶ This monastery was only founded c. 1116, some years after Roger I’s death, and his charter endowing it with various peasants transported to Calabria after the siege of Capua in 1098 is a blatant forgery, which was probably written at the time of this legal dispute, so closely does it mirror what the abbey’s proctor claimed, *Documenti latini e greci del conte Ruggero I di Calabria e Sicilia*, ed. Julia Becker (Rome 2013), pp. 285-8 no. †77. Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 317-18.

²⁷ *Historia Diplomatica Friderici Secundi*, ed. J.L.A. Huillard-Breholles (6 vols. in 12 parts, Paris 1852-61), ii(1).208-17. Donald Matthew, *The Norman Kingdom of Sicily* (Cambridge 1992), pp. 324-5, discusses this case.

²⁸ *Historia Diplomatica Friderici Secundi*, ii(1).378-83.

It would appear, certainly if the representatives of the landlords were being truthful, that the judgement of 1224 was a compromise, which embodied a significant reduction in the services demanded, although those that remained were still heavy. What is also interesting is what these services were for. According to the lords, those exacted in the twelfth century had included the ferrying of the wine harvest from Sorrento to Amalfi by sea, with the duty of remaining at Amalfi for a week while the harvest was sold. Was it therefore the implication that the two months when an extra day a week *corvée* would still be exacted would be during the wine harvest – during September and October therefore – and indeed that much of the labour exacted would be devoted to viticulture? ²⁹

While these examples might suggest that labour services in the Mezzogiorno were heavy, and were the most significant part of the burdens laid on unfree peasants – those at Sorrento otherwise only had to render some very minor dues in kind at Shrovetide and Easter – we cannot be certain that they are typical, even for the regions from which they come. Thus a *platea* from the Cassinese dependency of St. Nicholas of Sellectano in northern Calabria, dating from 1171-4, lists some 55 male dependants of that church, most of whom owed labour services, but generally only two to four days a year, with a maximum of nine days service. ³⁰ In other regions their impact was similar to this, and much less than at S. Stefano or Sorrento. On the lands of the bishop of Troia in the Capitanata, for example, the men of his *casale* of San Lorenzo in Carminiano, according to a charter of May 1100, provided various monetary payments roughly related to their wealth (or at least the number of draught animals they owned). Those who had animals also had to provide some sixteen works a year, for sowing, weeding and at harvest; those without some small extra dues in cash and kind. Yet if we are to believe another document issued on the same day (the text of which is admittedly very defective) the bishop's men on another *casale*, Monte Aratro, owed little or nothing, apart from a general obligation to plant and develop their lands. ³¹ The implication is, I think, that S. Lorenzo was an existing settlement whose fields were already productive, whereas Monte Aratro was a new foundation – the charter refers to the building of houses, so quite possibly these did not yet exist.

²⁹ Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 274-7, for discussion. Giovanni Cherubini, 'Il Contadino', in *Condizione umana e ruoli sociali* [above note 13], p. 143.

³⁰ Heinrich Dormeier, *Montecassino und die Laien im 11. und 12. Jahrhundert* (MGH Schriften 27, Stuttgart 1979), pp. 232-4.

³¹ *Codice diplomatico pugliese xxi Les Chartes de Troia (1024-1266)*, ed. J-M. Martin (Bari 1976), pp. 144-6 nos. 33-4.

The obligations laid upon the inhabitants of S. Lorenzo were similar to those imposed a few years later, in 1116, by the abbot of Torremaggiore on the inhabitants of his *castello* of San Severo, also in the Capitanata. Once again there were monetary dues, graded according to the number of animals owned – owners of a pair of oxen owed 40d. a year, those with a single donkey 14d. Those with a pair of oxen also owed twelve days' work a year, six for sowing and six reaping, others rendered fewer days. There were in addition various dues in kind, notably one pig or sheep in fifteen to the lord.³² Compared to the *corvées* exacted around Sorrento or in southern Calabria, these dues were relatively light – and if a peasant was prosperous enough to own a yoke of oxen would he necessarily have been driving them in person? Northern Apulia was, as was noted above, still underdeveloped at the start of the twelfth century, and the major concern of landlords was to expand the cultivation of their lands, rather than to extort as much as they could from their dependants. The presence of *corvées* in the Capitanata shows that lords retained land in demesne, almost certainly for the cultivation of cereals. The younger brother of the count of Loritello reserved three 'works' a year, two for sowing and one for threshing, on his own lands when he otherwise surrendered his rights over a dependency of St. Sophia, Benevento, in this region in June 1118.³³ But there are few references to such services after the early years of the twelfth century, so if demesne agriculture continued in this region it is probable that it was largely staffed by wage labour. Rents in money and kind became the norm – the latter often at a relatively low level. In August 1151, for example, the abbot of Torremaggiore leased a piece of land at San Severo for a simple render in kind of 1/10 of the crop.³⁴ The abbot of St. Benedict, Conversano, in southern Apulia similarly sought a rent of 1/10 when trying to attract settlers to cultivate deserted but fertile lands around a ruined church in December 1171.³⁵ There may well have been a shortage of cultivators in the more peripheral areas of Apulia, but whatever the reason the burdens imposed on the peasantry in most of this region were relatively low at the beginning of the twelfth century, and if anything tended to diminish, while references to wage labour become more common in the late twelfth century. And if rents were greater in

³² Michele Fuiano, *Città e borghi in Puglia nel medio evo i Capitanata* (Naples 1972), pp. 155-7, appendix no. 1.

³³ *Chronicon Sanctae Sophiae* (Cod. Vat. Lat. 4939), ed. Jean-Marie Martin (2 vols., Fonti per la storia d'Italia, Rome 2000), ii.769-71.

³⁴ *Codice diplomatico del regno di Carlo I e II d'Angiò dal 1265 al 1309*, ed. Giuseppe del Giudice (3 vols., Naples 1863-1902), i, appendix pp. xx-xxi no. 7.

³⁵ *Codice diplomatico pugliese xx Le Pergamene di Conversano (901-1265)*, ed. G. Coniglio (Bari 1975), 263-6 no. 26.

the heavily-populated and prosperous central region around Bari than in the more marginal areas, these were exclusively monetary.³⁶

Labour services were similarly both relatively rare, and where they existed tending to be limited, in the Campania. This was to a large extent because of the nature of agriculture in the region. Labour services were most useful, and necessary, for cereal cultivation, much less so for the characteristic *coltura promiscua* of the region, with trees, vines and crops grown together on the same pieces of land, and vines often supported by chestnut or fruit trees. ‘Trees favoured peasant autonomy’, so Jean-Marie Martin has suggested.³⁷ Admittedly, on the Montecassino lands there is some evidence for labour services, which continued over a long period, or were resurrected in the later thirteenth century. The franchise granted by Abbot Rainald II to the men of Cervaro in 1142 limited the service owed by those who possessed oxen at threshing and harvest, which suggests that elsewhere on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* such services were customary. However, although this privilege is the only one of its type surviving from this period, it was probably not unique, and it has been suggested that it was a part of a general lightening of the obligations owed by the men of the abbey at this time.³⁸ Other similar documents issued for *castelli* on the Cassinese lands some fifty years later refer in rather vague terms to both holdings for which service was due and to men rendering peasant service: *vos qui rusticanorum servitium facere debetis*, but without specifying what such service entailed.³⁹ Although there are occasional references thereafter to *angaria et servitia* rendered by *villani*,⁴⁰ as well as to *startia* (demesne land),⁴¹ what these services comprised is only revealed by the inquests conducted on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* in 1267 and 1270/1. There was still a fairly general obligation for all those not specifically exempted to render labour services, but those that were required were light, ranging between one and three days’ work a year, along with a *terraticum* of in a few cases still 1/7, but more

³⁶ Martin, *Pouille*, pp. 322-7.

³⁷ Martin, ‘Le travail agricole’ [above, note 2], p. 147; cf. Cherubini, ‘Il Contadino’, p. 144.

³⁸ Luigi Fabiani, *La Terra di S. Benedetto* (2 vols., Miscellanea cassinese 33-4, Montecassino 1968), i.424, appendix no. 3. Pierre Toubert, ‘La terre et les hommes dans l’Italie normande au temps de Roger II; l’exemple campanien’, in *Società, potere e popolo nell’età di Ruggero II* ((Atti delle terze giornate normanno-sveve, Bari 23-25 maggio 1977: Bari 1979), pp. 55-71, especially 67-8.

³⁹ Quotation from the privilege of Abbot Roffred to the inhabitants of Sant’Angelo in Theodice; cf. the references to *tenimenta que sunt de servitio* in the *Lex Municipalis* of Pontecorvo (both issued February 1190), Fabiani, *Terra di S. Benedetto*, i.428, 432.

⁴⁰ *Regesto di Tommaso Decano o Cartolario del Convento Cassinese, 1178-1280*, ed. Mauro Inguanez (Montecassino 1915), pp. 57-60 no. 35 (March 1208).

⁴¹ *Registrum Bernardi I Abbatiss*, ed. A. M. Caplet (Montecassino 1890), p. 81 no. 173 (1225).

usually 1/10 of crops.⁴² These inquests were intended to record the customary obligations of the abbey's men, and may therefore be taken as evidence of what had been the case for some considerable time – although in the inquest for Sant'Angelo in Theodice it was noted that the *terraticum* had been reduced from 1/7 to 1/10 by an agreement between its men and Abbot Riccardo (c. 1255-8).⁴³

It has been suggested that the reason for retaining such exiguous *corvées* was primarily symbolic, as a reminder of the rights of lordship and of the dependent status of the peasant, rather than for any practical economic purpose.⁴⁴ However, the Cassinese inquests show these very few days' work were very specifically targeted when labour was most needed: for example those men of Sant'Angelo in Theodice who possessed oxen had to render their two days' work on a specific piece of demesne land (*startia*), one for ploughing and one sowing. Those lacking oxen had to work by hand, one day reaping and two at the wine harvest. At Sant'Ambrogio those with oxen provided one day's ploughing and two sowing, those without two days' reaping, one day threshing; at Cervaro those with oxen had to spend one day ploughing and one day sowing, as well as two days of manual work, one reaping and one threshing.⁴⁵ *Corvées* therefore provided extra labour at key points in the agricultural year, but at this minimal level can only have been a reinforcement, not a substitute, for wage labour – although we know very little about the latter. While there was clearly some demesne still on the Cassinese lands – and the Liri Valley is relatively flat, and thus suitable for large-scale grain cultivation – it may not have been very extensive.

The *Terra Sancti Benedicti* was anyway exceptional within southern Italy, as a very large and unified franchise, whose rulers exercised a high level of seigniorial, and even judicial, authority. While other landowners might possess extensive properties, these were much more fragmented. Elsewhere in the Campania, labour services were few, and most lords leased much or all of their lands. There were *some* pockets of demesne land, even in the early thirteenth century, but mentions are few and far between. At Aversa, for example, a *startia* of a man called Simon of Casaluce appears in a charter of 1196, another *startia* belonging to one of the barons of the town was mentioned in 1201, a man named Giovanni

⁴² *Registrum Bernardi I*, pp. 26-50 nos. 79-93, which records the inquests on fifteen *castelli* on the *Terra Sancti Benedicti*. For discussion, Fabiani, *Terra di S. Benedetto*, ii.221-45.

⁴³ *Registrum Bernardi I*, pp. 41-4 no. 87, at p. 42.

⁴⁴ Carocci, *Signorie di Mezzogiorno*, pp. 429-31.

⁴⁵ *Registrum Bernardi I*, pp. 35-7 no. 83, 41-4 no. 87, 46-7 no. 90. For Cervaro, also Fabiani, *Terra di S. Benedetto*, i.440-7, at 441.

Francisio had a *startia* at Caivano, to the east of Aversa, in 1205, a knight from that town gave land from his *startia* to a cleric in 1210, and another knight had a *startia* at the village of S. Marcellino, west of Aversa in 1212.⁴⁶ There was an imperial *startia* near Capua Vetere in 1246.⁴⁷ These were all in the very flat and fertile region between Naples and the River Volturno. Further up the Volturno valley, the bishop of Caiazzo still had a *startia* in 1257, and labour services were owed from a holding which had escheated to one of his predecessors in 1195.⁴⁸ There are, however, only a few other references to *corvéés* in this region. An undated and badly-damaged, but clearly twelfth-century, list of renders owed to the Cassinese dependency of S. Angelo in Formis, outside Capua, mentioned service with oxen.⁴⁹ A holding on the archbishop of Benevento's land at Montesarchio, in the Caudine Valley, owed one day's labour service a week in the mid-twelfth century.⁵⁰ Finally, the count of Molise promised in 1254 that no townsman of Isernia would be subject to labour service, either in person or through his animals, which surely implies that such service was still sometimes exacted from others.⁵¹ Even if an extended search might increase the number of such examples, this would remain a meagre haul. Nor can we be sure that references to labour being demanded always refer to *corvéés*. Thus a lease from Avella, on the southern frontier of the principality of Capua, in 1129 required the lessee to provide workmen for the olive harvest which would be shared between him and his lord, but it is not clear that these were unfree – the implication is rather that they were paid.⁵²

Further south, in the principality of Salerno, there are some interesting comparisons, not least from the extensive lands of the abbey of Cava, which was, apart from Montecassino, probably the wealthiest abbey in southern Italy, and is by far the best documented. Cava did indeed amass extensive concentrations of property in several different parts of the principality: in the immediate vicinity of the abbey just to the north of Salerno, at Nocera

⁴⁶ *Codice diplomatico normanno di Aversa*, ed. Alfonso Gallo (Naples 1927), p. 292 no. 153; *Codice diplomatico svevo di Aversa*, ed. Catello Salvati (2 vols., Naples 1980), i.37 no. 18, 90 no. 44, 122 no. 60, 130 no. 64.

⁴⁷ *Le Pergamene Sveve della Mater Ecclesia Capuana*, ed. Giancarlo Bova, iii 1240-1250 (Naples 2001), 331 no. 50.

⁴⁸ *Le Pergamene dell'archivio vescovile di Caiazzo (1007-1265)*, ed. Catello Salvati, et alii (2 vols., Caserta 1983), pp. 366 no. 171; and 90-1 no. 33: *tenimento quod fuit quomdam Iohannis Alferii de quo angaria et redditus exire debebat*.

⁴⁹ *Regesto di S. Angelo in Formis*, ed. Mauro Inguanez (Montecassino 1925), p. 215 no. 76.

⁵⁰ *Le Più antiche carte del capitolo della cattedrale di Benevento (668-1200)*, ed. A. Ciarelli, C. de Donato & V. Matera (Rome 2002), pp. 241-3 no. 83 (probably April 1163, although the dating clause is damaged).

⁵¹ Evelyn M. Jamison, 'The administration of the County of Molise in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries II', *English Historical Review* 45 (1930), 30-4 no. 6, at p. 32 [reprinted in Evelyn M. Jamison, *Studies on the History of Medieval Sicily and Southern Italy* (Aalen 1992), at p. 63].

⁵² *Codice diplomatico verginiano*, ed. P.M. Tropeano (13 vols., Montevergine 1977-2001), ii.321-4 no. 175.

some 10 km to the north-west of the abbey, around Montoro c. 15 km. to the north on the road to Avellino, in the plain between the Rivers Tusciano and Sele to the south of Salerno, and in the Cilento region in the south of the principality. But this endowment was built up piecemeal, rather than as a consequence of a few large-scale princely donations, and over much of the twelfth-century purchase played as important a role as donation in extending its property. In none of these areas, even immediately around the abbey, was Cava ever the sole proprietor, and the development of its seigneurial rights was a slow, and incomplete, process. The contrast to the *Terra Sancti Benedicti* is clear.⁵³

Admittedly, Cava, as with other important churches in southern Italy, was granted lordship over a great many peasants. Sometimes these were men and their families who were living on lands donated to the abbey, clearly tied to the land, and not even listed or numbered. Thus, in November 1081 Gilbert the Norman, son of Osmund, gave Cava three pieces of land at Roccapiemonte, near Nocera, with a church built on one of them and with all the *villani* therein.⁵⁴ Similarly, in April 1107 Count William of the Principato gave the abbey his church of S. Angelo at Candela, with all its property and the *villani* who dwelt there or should live there in future, while in June 1108 the bishop of Lacedonia gave Cava a ruined church in his diocese, its property and (once again) the *villani* currently dwelling there or who would in the future.⁵⁵ In December 1113 Duke William of Apulia confirmed to the monastery all the *villani* living on its extensive lands at Vietri (on the coast between Salerno and the abbey).⁵⁶ Other charters embodied grants of specific men, numbered and often named. So in May 1081 Robert Guiscard's nephew Richard the Seneschal, who was to become one of the abbey's most important patrons, made a grant of churches and other property in his lordship near Taranto, along with three *villani* at Mottola and two at Massafra.⁵⁷ Within the principality, in December 1092 Gregory, lord of Capaccio, a cousin of the former Lombard princes, gave

⁵³ See especially G.A. Loud, 'The abbey of Cava, its property and benefactors in the Norman era', *Anglo-Norman Studies 9 Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1986*, ed. R.A. Brown (Woodbridge 1987), 143-77 [reprinted in G.A. Loud, *Conquerors and Churchmen in Norman Italy* (Aldershot 1999)]; Huguette Taviani-Carozzi, *La Principauté lombarde de Salerne, IXe-XIe siècle* (2 vols., Rome 1991), ii.1044-86; G. A. Loud, 'The monastic economy in the principality of Salerno during the eleventh and twelfth centuries', *Papers of the British School at Rome* 71 (2003), 141-79; Valerie Ramseyer, *The Transformation of a Religious Landscape. Medieval Southern Italy, 850-1150* (Ithaca (NY) 2006), pp. 159-92; and Vito Loré, *Monasteri, principi, aristocrazie. La Trinità di Cava nei secoli XI e XII* (Spoleto 2008).

⁵⁴ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* B.20.

⁵⁵ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.5, E.7.

⁵⁶ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.29.

⁵⁷ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* B. 15, ed. G. Guerrieri, *Il Conte normanno Riccardo Siniscalco (1081-1115) e i monasteri benedettini cavesi in Terra d'Otranto sec xi-xiv* (Trani 1899), pp. 53-4 no. 3. This is one of Richard's charters to the abbey which seems to be genuine. Not all are, and a new edition would be very desirable.

property at Vetrano in Cilento, along with four named men (*homines*), in fact two pairs of brothers, and their families to his proprietary church of St. Nicholas, which he subsequently gave to Cava.⁵⁸ In June 1113 one Ursus Cicari sold six men to the abbey whom he had earlier been granted by Duke William as a reward for his loyal service.⁵⁹ And in March 1115 Richard the Seneschal gave the abbey various lands in Salerno, along with two named *villani*, once again brothers.⁶⁰ Sadly, one of the most interesting of such documents, in which Cava was given no less than 97 named *homines* in Cilento by one of the lords of S. Severino is suspect, as are a number of other charters relating to this family.⁶¹ One may note in passing the terminology: *villanus*, *homo*, or occasionally *homo censilis*,⁶² never *servus*. The distinction between free and unfree was, however, still significant. When Guaimar, lord of Giffone, another member of the family of the Lombard princes, died childless in 1114, he specified in his will that he left one of his *castelli* to the archbishop of Conza, provided that the men there remained free and without any condition or servitude.⁶³

Such donations, particularly those made by the dukes or other major territorial lords, often specified that the abbey would in future receive all the *angaria*, as well as the rents and customary payments, that these men had previously rendered to their lay lords. However, as Vito Loré has recently reminded us, this clause referred to the obligations owed ultimately to the state, by free men as well as unfree, even if after the Norman conquest they might have become seigneurial renders.⁶⁴ But while Loré still sees a link between these rights and the exaction of *corvées* by twelfth-century lords, the phraseology of the Salernitan charters is couched rather in terms of immunity from the burdens due to the public power. Hence, when Duke William granted Cava the right to build a *castello* at S. Maria di Giulia in Cilento in September 1123, he declared that the *censiles* and men of the monastery could live there free from all ducal exactions, and with no interference by his officials. Similarly in May 1126 he

⁵⁸ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* C. 33.

⁵⁹ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.25.

⁶⁰ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.39; ed. Guerrieri, *Il Conte normanno*, pp. 100-2 no. 24. A copy of this charter was made in January 1165, *Arm. Mag.* H.43, the early date of which argues for the genuineness of this document.

⁶¹ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E. 27 (October 1113). Maria Galante, 'Un esempio di diplomatica signorile: i documenti dei Sanseverino', in *Civiltà del Mezzogiorno d'Italia. Libro, scrittura, documento in età normanno-sveva*, ed. F. D'Oria (Salerno 1994), p. 291 and note 52 therein.

⁶² *Censiles*, e.g. Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.10 (May 1110), G. 24 (March 1137), *Arca* xxiv.41 (January 1139), xxxi.6 (January 1164, a purchase).

⁶³ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* F.28 (a later copy of January 1125): *sic tamen ut omnes homines eiusdem castris liberi sint et absque omni conditione servitutis permaneant*.

⁶⁴ Vito Loré, 'Signorie locali e mondo rurale', in *Nascita di un regno. Poteri signorili, istituzioni feudali e strutture sociali nel Mezzogiorno normanno (1130-1194)*, ed. Raffaele Licinio e Francesco Violante (Atti delle diciassettesime giornate normanno-sveve, Bari 10-13 ottobre 2006: Bari 2008), pp. 214-18.

issued a general confirmation of the property of the abbey, including its *villani*, and ordered his officials not to molest the latter.⁶⁵ It is anyway arguable that the term *angaria*, which is Byzantine in origin, refers in these particular charters rather to labour on public works, to which all men, whatever their juridical status would be liable, as was the case in pre-Norman Apulia, rather than to agricultural labour.⁶⁶ Indeed, as the customs of Corleto (in Cilento), recorded in 1172, remind us, obligations to the state remained distinct, and could sometimes be burdensome, even for those on seigneurial land.⁶⁷ We ought not therefore to assume that the many *villani* and *censiles* acquired by Cava would therefore have automatically rendered labour services – the term *censilis* (which became ever more common in the later twelfth century) would anyway imply a hereditary rent-payer. Furthermore, the overwhelming majority of the hundreds of leases granted during the twelfth century and preserved in the abbatial archives were granted in return for renders in kind, usually an hereditary lease in return for half the wine and chestnut harvest, and a *terraticum* (not always specified, but when it was 1/10), of the sown crop, accompanied by *exenia*, small symbolic renders in kind or token monetary payments, once or twice a year. The exceptions were leases of property immediately around the city of Salerno, which were usually short-term and in return for a monetary rent.⁶⁸

The best evidence for the exaction of labour services during the first half of the twelfth century comes with a privilege granted by Abbot Symeon of Cava to the inhabitants of the *castello* of Sant'Angelo in Cilento in June 1138. Among other provisions, the abbot remitted one of the two days' work a week which the men of the *castello* had previously rendered, on condition that the remaining day should be a full one from early morning by the best worker in each house. In addition, the inhabitants agreed that each household should render three extra 'works' each year, one each for sowing, weeding and harvesting.⁶⁹ What is

⁶⁵ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* F.24, ed. Paul Guillaume, *Essai Historique sur l'Abbaye de Cava* (Cava 1877), pp. xxvii-xxviii, appendix H; *Arm. Mag.* F.38, ed. *Normannische Herzogs-und Königsurkunden* [above, note 12], pp. 32-3 no. 19. Cf. the donation of a *colonia* called Manso by Count Richard of Sarno in December 1105: *ut ille et liberi eius semper sint in potestate tua et hominum quos volueris et omne servitium et dationem, quicquid nobis seu reipublice facere dare et adimplere ipse manso et liberi eius tibi et hominibus quos volueris semper faciant, dent adque persolvant.* Cava, *Arm. Mag.* E.3.

⁶⁶ Martin, *Pouille*, p. 303.

⁶⁷ del Giudice, *Codice diplomatico* [above, note 34], i, appendix pp. liii-lviii no. 27. For the identification of Corleto, Loré, 'Signorie locali', p. 220.

⁶⁸ Loud, 'Monastic economy', pp. 155-6, 160-2, 168-9.

⁶⁹ *Arca* xxiv.61: *Ita tamen ut ipsa una quam daturi sunt; plena et integra sit. et ab optimo domus labore a primo mane perfecta. ... unaqueque videlicet domus illorum proprium focum habens. pro iamdicto castello regendo et sustentando. parti ipsius prenominati monasterii tres operas faciant; unam scilicet cum necesse fuerit ad seminandum. aliam ad mundandum. tertiam ad metendum.*

striking about this is not only the extent of the *corvée* previously levied, but the collective responsibility. But the men of Sant'Angelo were in a different position from other dependants of the abbey. The *castello* had clearly been created, or developed organically – we do not know which – next to the monastery of S. Angelo on Monte Corace, which had been in existence since at least 1040.⁷⁰ A legal case in 1083, heard in the presence of Duchess Sichelgaita, listed by name some 223 *homines* under the monastery's lordship in Cilento, grouped around eight dependant cells, of whom fourteen were then at S. Angelo.⁷¹ Cilento was thus the area where Cava exercised real lordship, and it was the site of two of its very few *castelli*. (One might also note from the 1083 case that nearly all these men already belonged to the abbey before the Normans conquered Salerno in 1076, and that Cava appeared already to have written lists of its peasants). What is not so clear is why the monastery had a significant area of demesne land devoted to grain cultivation – which is the clear implication of the 1138 privilege – in the mountainous locality of SW Cilento.⁷² That it did, however, is also supported by one other document, for in November 1136 the abbot had leased land belonging to the monastery of S. Angelo to three brothers, in return for a day's work a week.⁷³

Cava was not the only lord in the principality of Salerno still to require labour services, although once again the evidence is very limited, and indicative rather than conclusive. In March 1136 Robert, lord of Caggiano, agreed to allow Cava's men at its dependency of St. Maria di Pertosa in the Val di Diano rights of pasturage and gleaning on his lands, in return for them all, irrespective of whether or not they had beasts, performing two days' work a year on his fields, one sowing and one threshing.⁷⁴ A similar agreement in January 1187 with the lord of Novi Velia in Cilento allowed the abbey's men pasturage, wood and water on his lands in return for six day's work a year: two sowing, two reaping and

⁷⁰ *Cod. Dipl. Cavensis*, vi.125-6 no. 956.

⁷¹ *Recueil des actes des ducs normands de l'Italie (1046-1127)* i *Les premiers ducs (1046-1087)*, ed. Léon-Robert Ménager (Bari 1981), 136-41 no. 43.

⁷² Unfortunately the cell and *castello* of S. Angelo are poorly documented in the twelfth century, but almost the only contemporary charter which gives details about any of its land shows that the territory in question was on a steep hillside, Cava, *Arca* xxiv.114 (August 1140). A detailed description of the boundaries of its lands was given in an alleged charter of William of S. Severino of March 1187, which is, however, probably forged, *Arm. Mag.* L.21. See more generally, Barbara Visentin, *Fondazioni cavensi nell'Italia meridionale (secoli XI-XV)* (Battipaglia 2012), pp. 194-203.

⁷³ Cava, *Arca* xxiv.12: *marcus et matheus et pascali et eorum heredes natos nascentes faciant servitium ad predicto monasterio sancto angelo de cuncta iamdictae hereditate; una opera per ebdomada.*

⁷⁴ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* G. 18; ed. Pietro Ebner, *Economia e società in Cilento* (2 vols., Rome 1979), i.338-9.

two threshing.⁷⁵ At Montecorvino, which was acquired by the archbishopric of Salerno in 1168, all tenants owed four days' labour a year, two for threshing the wheat and two for barley, and those with oxen another four days for sowing each crop.⁷⁶ At Faiano, in the hills to the east of Salerno, the service of one day's work a year with a yoke of oxen may have been symbolic, although the other terms in this lease of October 1197 from the nuns of St. George, Salerno, were heavy, including 1/6 of the grain crop.⁷⁷

There is also some evidence for labour services being commuted in the later part of the twelfth century. In a court case of August 1189 four brothers from a village in Cilento claimed, and showed a charter to prove, that their father had some years earlier been absolved by their lord from most of the *angaria* he owed in return for an annual cash payment, although they admitted that they still owed nine *opera* every year, three each for sowing, weeding and threshing. Their new lord, who had brought them before the court, eventually agreed to continue this arrangement, in return for a substantial one-off cash payment.⁷⁸ This suggests that the original labour services had been substantially heavier than what remained. In February 1192 the abbey of Cava remitted the labour service owed by three brothers and a nephew, two of whom were priests, in return for a small annual payment and the service owed by a *serviens* (sergeant?) at S. Mauro in Cilento. This sergeantry service, if that is what it was, would presumably not have been agricultural labour.⁷⁹ The Abbot of Montevergine freed a man from labour services and other burdens, and enrolled him among the *franci et liberi homines* of Mercogliano in March 1196. Finally, the lord of Taurasi (between Avellino

⁷⁵ Cava, *Arm. Mag.* L. 17: *Homines vero suprascriptarum ecclesiarum dent similiter ipsi guilielmo et heredi suo semel in anno sex prekarias. videlicet duas ad seminandum. et duas ad zappandum. et duas ad metendum.*

⁷⁶ Salerno, Archivio diocesano, Mensa archiepiscopalis, Arca II no. 75: *videlicet ad metandum ordeum duobus diebus et ad metandum frumentum aliis diebus duobus et ad seminandum suprascriptum campus habentes bovem ut boves ad frumenti seminationem duobus diebus et ad seminationem ordei similiter alios duobus diebus.*

⁷⁷ *Pergamene del monastero benedettino di S. Giorgio di Salerno (1038-1698)*, ed. Leopoldo Cassese (Salerno 1950), pp. 85-8 no. 14.

⁷⁸ Archivio segreto vaticano, Archivio Buoncompagni Ludovisi, Prot. 270 no. 11 (from the charters of S. Maria, Elce). This charter mentions the consent to the earlier remission of Matthew Vulturus. Since the latter had been granted a *feudum* by Abbot Symeon of Cava as far back as November 1135, Cava, *Arca* xxiii.102, this suggests that the original charter remitting the labour services, which was produced in court but to which no date was ascribed, must have been quite a few years earlier

⁷⁹ Cava, *Arca* xlii.98: *remisit ipsis presbiteris et iohanni et landoni omnes angarias quas ipsi suprascripto monasterio facere consueverunt. ... Tantum omni anno in festo Sancti laurentii ipsi presbiteri et iohannes et lando et eorum heredes causa cognitionis dent parti ipsius monasterii quinque tarenos bonos presente monete ipsius civitatis. faciendum quod voluerit. et faciant et adimpleant similiter omni anno parti ipsius monasterii omnia alia; sicut servientes casalis sancti mauri dant faciunt et adimplent.*

and Benevento) remitted a weekly labour service in return for a substantial cash payment in May 1200.⁸⁰

In these circumstances, it seems at first sight surprising that in some dozen otherwise unexceptional Cava leases between 1173 and 1216 labour services featured in addition to the usual share-cropping arrangements and customary renders. Not all the services required were very burdensome: one ‘work’ a month (February 1173),⁸¹ two ‘works’ a month (February 1187, and again in November 1209),⁸² three ‘works’ a year in May 1183,⁸³ and the work of a yoke of oxen at sowing at Capaccio in August 1193.⁸⁴ But the other seven leases all involved week work. In one, in December 1179 concerning land in the immediate vicinity of the monastery, this was no less than three days’ work a week;⁸⁵ in another, in March 1184 from a Cava dependency at Nola, two days a week;⁸⁶ while the other five all required one day’s work per week.⁸⁷ Apart from the two transactions at Capaccio and Nola, all ten of these other leases concerned land situated near the monastery, or in the villages close to it. The implication must be, although there is no reference to extended tracts of demesne land in this region, that some of the many pieces of land that appear in boundary clauses as belonging to the monastery must have been directly cultivated.⁸⁸

Furthermore, this was not the only land which the abbey retained in demesne at this time. Two legal cases at Sarno, on the northern border of the principality, in 1182-3 concerned disputes with the royal bailiffs about a *startia* on which some thirty-three named men ‘and various others’ were working.⁸⁹ In addition, at this same period we find some Greek peasants in the Basilicata rendering nine days’ a year labour service to a Cava dependency there,⁹⁰ while the abbey of Montevergine including labour services in a few

⁸⁰ *Codice diplomatico verginiano*, x.327-9 no. 1000; xi.319-22 no. 1091.

⁸¹ Cava, *Arca* xxxiv.17.

⁸² *Arca* xl.106; *Arca* xlvi.33.

⁸³ *Arca* xxxix.2: *et dent et faciant omni anno parti suprascripti monasterii operas tres ubi pars suprascripti monasterii voluerint.*

⁸⁴ *Arca* xliii.84: *Et omni anno propter hoc ipse Iohannis et eius iam dictum est descendentes tempore seminationis debent reddere ipsi priori vel partibus ipsius ecclesie parum bovum unum.*

⁸⁵ *Arca* xxxvi.107: *Et pro ipsa traditione dent parti suprascripti monasterii in unaquaque ebdomada operas tres sine preti, ubi pars suprascripti monasterii voluerit et preceperit.*

⁸⁶ *Arca* xxxix.78: *in una quaque ebdomada dua obero faciatis.*

⁸⁷ *Arca* xxxviii.104 (November 1182), *Arca* xxxix.10 (March 1183), 65 (January 1184), 105 (October 1184), *Arca* xlvi.93 (April 1216).

⁸⁸ Again, for early medieval parallels, Wickham, *Framing the Middle Ages*, p. 298.

⁸⁹ *Arca* xxxviii.34; *Arca* xxxix.13.

⁹⁰ Leone Mattei-Cerasoli, ‘La Badia di Cava e i monasteri greci della Calabria superiore’, *Archivio storico per la Calabria e la Lucania* 9 (1939), 291-2 no. 11 (September 1179).

leases for its land around Taurasi,⁹¹ and the men of Corleto were complaining in 1172 of their lord attempting to impose *angaria* on free men and priests, ‘and services which they ought not, and were not accustomed, to do’.⁹² Should we therefore conclude, either that labour services and demesne agriculture played a larger part in the abbatial economy than is apparent from the abundant *libelli* of the twelfth century, or perhaps that in the last third of that century there was a conscious attempt, and not just by Cava, to revive labour services? The latter is certainly possible, but the evidence is still very limited, and at Cava the trickle of such leases with labour services ceased once again after 1216. This issue is, however, complicated by a register from Cava written c. 1300, and concerning two villages, Passiano and S. Cesareo, in the valley below the monastery. This document lists more than eighty inhabitants of these two villages who between them owed almost two thousand days labour service a year to the abbey, even though such services are entirely lacking in contemporary charters.⁹³ Does this suggest that labour services remained an important, if poorly-documented, part of the abbey’s economy throughout this period, or should it be seen as part of an attempt to impose new burdens on the tenants in the vicinity of the monastery at a time when Cava was finding it more and more difficult to exploit, or even to hold on to, its more distant properties? It remains a unique piece of evidence, and anyway soon after 1300 Cava moved towards abandoning income in kind in favour of cash rents. If there was such an experiment (and this seems the more probable explanation), it would appear to have been short-lived, and indeed unpopular.⁹⁴

The evidence has not yet been fully collated, but we may still draw some tentative conclusions. Carocci is probably right when he suggests that labour services were more widespread than has previously been recognised. Nevertheless, it was only in certain regions that they were habitually heavy – and despite the examples cited earlier there is probably too little relevant evidence from Calabria to allow meaningful generalisation for this province. It may be that the real significance was the survival of lords’ demesnes – but the limited extent and scale of labour services revealed by the Apulian and Campanian sources suggests that

⁹¹ One day’s work a week at the abbey’s pleasure, in October 1173, *Codice diplomatico verginiano* vi.242-4 no. 564. In three other cases in 1184 the obligations were 24 days’ work a year, with 12 in another; see Loud, ‘Monastic economy’, p.159. An earlier Montevergine charter, dated November 1153, which mentions labour service, appears to be a thirteenth-century forgery, *Codice diplomatico verginiano* iv.40-3 no. 311.

⁹² Del Giudice, *Codice diplomatico*, i, p. lv [see above, note 67]: *quod cum liberi homines et sacerdotes sint imposuerunt eis angarias; et servicia que facere non debent, nec consueverunt.*

⁹³ Bruno Figliuolo, ‘Un inedito registro cavense di prestazioni d’opera della fine del secolo XIII’, *Archivio storico per le provincie napoletane*, Ser. III.21 (1982), 75-100, with an edition of the text in pp. 90-100.

⁹⁴ Figliuolo, ‘Un inedito registro’, pp. 85-6.

wage labour was probably much more significant in cultivating them than *corvées*, despite the relatively few occasions that it is expressly mentioned. However, while the development of a large-scale market economy, which certainly existed in parts of twelfth-century southern Italy – hence the transport of wine from Sorrento to Amalfi – may have encouraged the survival of a demesne economy,⁹⁵ the market arguably functioned equally well when lords received substantial rents in kind, which were far more than they needed for their immediate subsistence.⁹⁶ Furthermore, in assessing the burdens laid upon the hapless peasantry whose toil supported the churchmen and nobility of the Mezzogiorno we need to consider the overall load imposed upon them. Some of those rendering vestigial labour services, for example in northern Apulia and on the Montecassino lands, may well have been better off, overall, than the free tenants of the principality of Salerno paying half their principal crops to their landlords.

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⁹⁵ Cf. Wickham, *Framing the Middle Ages*, p. 536.

⁹⁶ Loud, 'Monastic economy', pp. 169-70.