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Abstracts

FERDINAND OPLL, *Sub dominio domini. Zur Wahrnehmung von Herrschaft in der frühstaufischen Lombardei*

The article is based on the analysis of an inquiry of witnesses who had to appear before a law court in Pavia on November 14th and 15th, 1184. 80 individuals living in the border region between the *contadi* of Pavia and Piacenza (i. e. the five villages of Mondonico, Monticello, Olmo, Parpanese and S. Marzano, today close to the border of the provinces of Pavia and Piacenza as well as the regions of Lombardy and Emilia-Romagna) were interrogated about the authorities (one or the other of the two *comuni*, of an ecclesiastical institution or a lay/noble person) being responsible for their homeland. A close inquiry of this rich material of sources is enabling us to have new insights into phenomena of social communication and of the living conditions for these people in the hinterland of towns in the middle ages. It also provides us with new insights into the behavior and mentalities as well as the perception of social and political realities within the relationship between lordship and subjects. A first chapter (“Verhörende und Verhörte” = Interrogators and witnesses) is dedicated to the individuals themselves, especially to the problem of categorizing them as “ordinary” people. The following chapter about the analysis of the credibility of these statements is of fundamental importance: A comparison of the different modes of datings (1. giving the temporal distance from past occurrences by naming a certain figure of years - 2. dating of past occurrences by quoting *consules* being active at that time - 3. dating of past occurrences by quoting “big” events of the history of the empire) shows clearly the high precision of memory being doubted rather often.

A wide variety of historical insights is made possible by a profound analysis of these testimonials: So we do learn not only a lot about micro-history and local history but also about the daily life and labours of the individuals being interrogated, especially about the manifold duties and burdens to which they were obliged by the authorities. At the same time they were being offered quite a number of opportunities for a surprisingly intense and active participation in political matters of the local and regional context, acting as local *consules* or as commanders of military forces provided by these small villages. But nevertheless — life “sub dominio domini” surely meant to live under “coercion and arbitrariness”.

People living in these focal zones of Lombardy during the era of the early Swabian dynasty had to feel the consequences of the Swabian administration of the sixties of the 12th century within their own sphere of life. On some occasions they were even able to see the emperor “in persona” - but such events could absolutely bear dramatic features. Suppression and violence, helplessly facing the force and arbitrariness being executed by their domini or those fighting for dominance in their homeland - all those facts marked the conditions of living for these subjects. Authorities were felt as a narrow corset of a great number of oppressive measures. At the same time these subjects were able to participate in the realizations of power making use of their different “official functions”. It was especially within the context of acting as local *consules* in which

these individuals of the *contado* experienced a widening of their respective latitude of acting. Finally this could contribute to a great enlargement of their intellectual and political horizon - a phenomenon known for the inhabitants of the important *comuni* for a long time; by a close analysis of sources like these testimonials such an evolution can be stated also for the subjects living in their hinterland.