
Sale Charters and Land Markets

More Notes on the Forms and Formulas of the Private Charters in Southern Tuscany (8th and 9th Centuries)

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In the following study,¹ I wish to address an important question that arises concerning the nature of the ‘land market’ in the context of the economic and social history of medieval Europe. How was a price of land set in the Middle Ages? Was it determined by economic elements such as the rules of supply and demand, or by personal relationships, such as clientèle, friendship or kinship?² For the purpose of investigating the nature of the ‘land market’ or the ‘transactions of land’,³ this paper examines the private charters of early medieval Italy.

Once we attempt to approach the issue using the Italian documentation before the eleventh century, we are soon faced with a problem: the lack of sale charters. In many parts of the Italian peninsula numerous charters of sale were apparently redacted during the Lombard and Carolingian periods. However, the Italian ecclesiastical institutes, where almost all of the early medieval documents were preserved, tended to eliminate the charters of sale, while preserving for those of gift and leases.⁴ In this context the surviving sale charters included in the collection of the monastery of San Salvatore al Monte Amiata in southern Tuscany offer the possibility to discuss the issues related to land market. Certainly the limitation in the number of these charters

1 This study is a continuation of the present writer’s articles, which were published in Italian and English: “Note sulle forme e formule dei documenti privati nella Tuscia meridionale (VIII–IX secolo)”, *SITES: Journal of Studies for the Integrated Text Science*, 4/1 (2006), pp. 19–31; and “When a Lease Acquired Its Own Name. Further Notes on the Forms and Formulas of the Private Charters in Southern Tuscany (8th and 9th Centuries)”, *HERSETEC: Journal of Hermeneutic Study and Education of Textual Configuration (SITES II)*, 1/1 (2007), pp. 43–62.

2 See e.g. the studies collected in *Le marché de la terre au Moyen Âge*, eds. L. Feller, C. Wickham, Rome 2005.

3 On the problem regarding the concept of ‘land market’ for medieval land transactions, see C. Wickham, “Conclusions”, in *Le marché de la terre* (see n. 2 above), pp. 625–41 at pp. 629–32.

4 F. Bougard, “Actes privés et transferts patrimoniaux en Italie centro-septentrionale (VIII^e–X^e siècle)”, *Mélanges de l’École française de Rome. Moyen Âge*, 111/2 (1999), pp. 539–62, at p. 543. The documentation of the monastery of Monte Amiata, for example, contains many *leases*, in which ex-landowners leased back their own properties from the buyers; apart from a few exceptions, most of the *sale* charters are lost. On the surviving charters of this kind, see the second section of this paper.

prevents our carrying out statistical research such as that done by Laurent Feller, Agnès Gramain and Florence Weber in their examination of the dossier of the Karol family in Abruzzo, i.e. the sale charters from the ninth to the eleventh centuries included in the monastic cartulary of San Clemente a Casauria.⁵ The Amiata documents nonetheless have one advantage: almost all of the surviving charters of sale redacted in the eighth and ninth centuries (54 among 56 pieces) are in their original parchment form. These documents, therefore, enable us to examine the problem from the viewpoint of the written textual structure and its formulaic language.

In the first part of this paper I will examine the documentary form of sale charters conserved at the archive of the abbey of Monte Amiata, so that we can discuss the typology of this category of documents. The problem can be stated in the following way: how did the forms and formulas of sale charters determine the nature of land sale? Then I will examine how buyers, especially the abbots of the monastery of San Salvatore, made use of these charters.⁶ Finally I will assess the activities at the land market by the monastery in the regional or local framework: the *munimina*, i.e. private charters between laymen conserved at the Amiata documents, allow us to compare the transaction of land by the abbots with that done by laymen in local societies.

1. Typology of sale charters

Private charters in early medieval Italy are known to possess highly structured forms and formulas. This is especially relevant to sale charters.⁷ Certainly the details of the property recorded in sale charters, such as the nature of the land, its location and its extent, are the section to which the scribes must have felt considerable difficulty in applying formulaic language.⁸ This is exemplified in the description of boundaries of a forest in a Sovanese charter of 760, which Nick Everett in his study on Lombard charters cites as an example of a text where some evident traces of dictation can be seen: “*hoc est silbula: ab uno latere de subtu curre fossatum, et ab alio latere curre signa, da pede est tessaratu unu testuclu, et super illu est alius testuclu tesseractu, et super illu duo testucli sunt duo quercias, et super ipse una cerru tesseractu, et super ipsa cerru vade signa inter campu et silva, et de alia parte est terra emptori Possoni.*”⁹ The words like “*signa*”, “*tessaratu unu testuclu*”,¹⁰ “*duo quercias*”, or “*una cerru tesseractu*”, and the preference for the use of

5 L. Feller, A. Gramain and F. Weber, *La fortune de Karol. Marché de la terre et liens personnels dans les Abruzzes au haut Moyen Âge*, Rome 2005.

6 *Codex Diplomaticus Amiatinus. Urkundenbuch der Abtei S. Salvatore am Montamiata von den Anfängen bis zum Regierungsantritt Papst Innocenz III. (736–1198)* [=CDA], ed. W. Kurze, Vol. 1, Tübingen 1973.

7 See Y. Nishimura, “Note sulle forme e formule” (n. 1 above).

8 N. Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy, c. 568–774*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 141–44, p. 143 for the charter. See also M. Costambeys, *Power and Patronage in Early Medieval Italy. Local Society, Italian Politics and the Abbey of Farfa, c.700–900*, Cambridge 2007, pp. 42–43.

9 CDA 10, p. 21.

10 On the words “*testuclu*” (=acer) and “*tesseractu*” (=marked up), see CDA 10, p. 22, n. 1; *Chartae Latinae Antiquiores. Facsimile-edition of the Latin charters prior to the ninth century*, XXIII: Italy IV (Siena I), eds. A. Petrucci and J.-O. Tjäder, Dietikon/Zürich 1985, n. 738, p. 38.

prepositions (*ab, de, da, super*) often accompanied with the incorrect case of the following nouns indicate that the scribe recorded the issuer's (i.e. seller's) dictation, even if he did not transfer directly the oral expression to the graphic medium.¹¹ Nevertheless, a kind of 'formalism' is to be found in such descriptions. To make this point clear, let us begin by comparing two sale charters redacted between laymen and written by the scribes of Tuscania in the Lombard age.

The first is a sale of a single tenant holding (*casa cum vinea...*) in "*vico Diano*" between Rodpertu and Oportuno in 739. This time Rodpertu sold it to Oportuno for 30 *solidi*.

*"Constat me Rodpertu magistrum Cummacinu vindedisse et vindedi tibi Oportuno viro devoto casa cum vinea, clausura, citina, terra, cultum, incultum, movilem et immovilem, omnis labore vel adquisito, quas avire visu sum in finis istius Tuscanensis."*¹²

The second is a document of 765 between Uuilimundu and Ualcarius of the "*vico Mariano*". The former sold to the latter a piece of land in "*fundo Mariano*" at the price of "*auro trimissi septe*" (=2 *solidi* and 1 *tremissis*). The following is the *venditio* clause of the charter:

[1] "*Ideoque consta meae Uuilimundu, filius quondam Fildirado, havitator in vico Mariano, vir honestus vinditor liveram potestatem vindedisse et vindedit tibi Ualicarius, similiter havitator in Mariano, hoc est terrula iuris mei in fundo Mariano, [2] qui posita est in loco ubi est adfinem: de unam parte vinea sancti Petri, et de aliam parte est vineas quem tu emtor meus posuisti in terrula sancti Iuhanni, et de tertjam pars est vinea Teudiro, et de quartam pars est terrula quod dedit Florino ad pastinare; [3] et mensurata est de una parte perticas quattuordeci, et de ali parte est perticas undeci et pedi sex et tremisse unu, et de tertjam pars perticas septe et pedes sex et tremisse uno, et de quartam pars perticas tres; et ipsa perticas de pedes duodeci ad pedes iustus."*¹³

The contrast between these two texts is significant. While the charter of 739 includes merely the pertinent formula ("*casa cum vinea, clausura...*"), the document of 765 has the detail and precise descriptions of the land boundaries ([2]) and its measurement ([3]). This kind of contrast can be seen in other sale charters. Thus one can discern two modes of descriptions according to the types of land being sold. One refers to a piece of land (*terra/terrula, terra purecta*) or the like, such as a vineyard (*vinea, terra cum vinea*) or an olive grove (*olibos una cum terra*), and this type of text possesses detailed

11 Everett, *Literacy in Lombard Italy* (see above n. 8), p. 143. The language of the private charters in early medieval Italy is far removed from classical Latin. But this is a matter of documentary culture. On this see A. Bartoli Langeli, *Notai. Scrivere documenti nell'Italia medievale*, Rome 2006, pp. 17–35; Id., "Private charters", in *Italy in the Early Middle Ages*, ed. C. La Rocca, Oxford 2002, pp. 208–12.

12 CDA 4, p. 8.

13 CDA 12, p. 25.

descriptions of the boundaries and measurement.¹⁴ The other concerns both a portion of inheritance (*sors/portio*) and a unit of composite property such as tenant holding(s) (*casa et res / casae et res*) or estate (*curtis*), and the text in question is usually accompanied with some pertinent formula and often with the description of the provenance of the transferred property (succession, purchase, gift, exchange, etc.).¹⁵

As for the former type of descriptions, we are even able to identify the terminology and the patterns of description. Indeed, in a series of sale charters written by the scribes of Chiusi in the eighth century—many of which were redacted between laymen—each land parcel (*terra, terra purecta*) was measured first “*in longo*” (in length) and then “*in lato*” (in width), and the latter itself measured “*da caput*” (at the head), “*in pede*” (at the foot), and sometimes also “*in medio*” (at the middle); as a rule, the “*pes*” was used as the unit of measurement.¹⁶ When a vineyard or an olive grove was the object of transaction, the term “*ordines*” or “*sellos*” was used respectively as the unit of measurement. Thus in 774, Usingo, the abbot of the monastery of Monte Amiata, bought from Anastasius “*sex sellos di olibis, una cum terrula et curtina sua ubi positi sunt*” in *Punpuna* (near Chiusi), and in the following year Maurulu sold to Radiuro and his brother Radipertu a vineyard “*mensuras [...] urdenis ucto*”, situated in “*casale Camprena*” (territory of Siena).¹⁷ With respect to the descriptions of boundaries, they are usually delimited by four sides, and the locutions such as “*de uno latere / de una pars*”, “*de secundo latere / de alia pars*”, “*(in) caput*”, or “*(in) pede*” are always used.¹⁸

The way or procedure to measure the land and the units of measurement used

14 Sale charters concerning land plots: *CDA* 3 (a. 738), 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 21, 25, 26, 41, 46, 52 (a. 803), 59, 183 (a. 907). See also *CDA* 55 (scripulum), 97 (citina).

15 Sale of single or several tenant-holding(s): *CDA* 4 (a. 739), 22, 33, 34, 50, 53, 56, 58, 60, 62, 66, 70, 74, 76, 85, 87, 88, 94, 95, 101, 105, 119—*solus de casa, curte...*—, 131, 154, 155, 176 (a. 903); *sors/portione*: *CDA* 7 (a. 750), 28, 38, 43, 44, 93, 122, 143, 152 (a. 872); estate: *CDA* 96 (a. 825), 116 (a. 838). There are many examples in which tenant holding(s) as the object of transaction is/are equivalent to “*omnis rebus substantias mea*” or “*integra sortes meas*”: *CDA* 22, 33, 34, 53, 56, 58 etc.. For comparison, see Feller *et al.*, *La fortune de Karol* (see n. 5 above), pp. 85–91.

16 Sale charters of Chiusi (8th century) regarding: *terra/terrula* (*CDA* 5, 9); *terra purecta* (*CDA* 13, 14); *terra cum vinea* (*CDA* 3); *vinea* (*CDA* 25, 41—in the latter not only *vinea* but also *sors* are objects of transaction); *olibij olibos cum terra* (*CDA* 21, 46). As an example of *venditio* clause used by scribes of Chiusi, I quote a text from the document of 765 concerning a piece of land located near a city gate: “*Constat eos hab ac die vindedis et vindedi vobis Saxxo et Piperello, germanis emturibus, terra purecta prope civitate Clusina, subtus heclesia sancti Silvestri, foras portas sancte Mustjole; qui ipsa terra extendet in longo pedes centum dece, et da caput in lato extendet pedes viginti duo, et in medio loco per traverso extendet pedes triginta, et in pede in lato extendet pedes triginta duo, omnia ad pede publico mensurata; et de uno latere abet vinea vestra emturis, et de secundo latere abet vinea sancti Silvestri, et caput tenet in terra Blancani, et pede tenet in vinea sancti Fidelis de supra porta predictae civitatis Clusine; infra ista designata loca, vobis quorum supra, una cum poma super se abentes, in integrum vobis vindedimus.*” (*CDA* 14, p. 29) One exception on the mode of measurement (*CDA* 3) will be examined in the following paragraph.

17 *CDA* 21, 25. Both charters were written by Maurinu *notarius*, who redacted the documents respectively in Monticchiello and *Acilianu* (both in the terr. of Chiusi). Judging both from the places of charter redaction and from the viewpoint of diplomatics (forms and formulas of charters), this Maurinu must have been among the notaries of Chiusi. On the identifications of the places, see the register: *CDA* III/2 (Tübingen 1998). On the forms and formulas of sale charters peculiar to those of Chiusi, see Nishimura, “Note sulle forme e formule” (see n. 1 above), pp. 20–24.

18 On the usual quadrangular figure used in the measurement of land parcels, see in general L. Lagazzi, *Segni sulla terra. Determinazione dei confini e percezione dello spazio nell'alto Medioevo*, Bologna 1991, pp. 32–33.

for land parcels may well have been quite different from territory (*civitas*) to territory, or even from place to place, as a mysterious unit of measurement “*pede Munichisi*”, used only around Monte Amiata in the eastern side of the Chiusino territory, shows.¹⁹ But the point to be stressed here is that a standardized unit for measurement of land parcels, *pes*, was shared ‘publicly’ among landowners in each local society. We should understand in this way the locutions such as “*omnia ad pede publico mensurata*” (all was measured in the ‘public’ *pes*) or “*pede iustus*” (in the proper *pes*) mentioned often in the description of land parcels.²⁰

The consistent presence of descriptions of land boundaries and measurement in the transaction of land parcels, together with the use of a ‘publicly’ acknowledged land measure in local society, leads us to postulate the existence of two levels of transactions of land or, I suggest, two types of ‘land markets’: one for land plots where land was circumscribed and measured exactly, so that one could determine its price; the other for *casa et res* or *sors*, in which the pertinent formula or the provenance of property would be sufficient information for transactions, and the price seems to have been fixed by elements other than economic ones: especially by social relationships.

The sums of money involved in the documents support this supposition. When a *sors* or a unit of tenancy and of small ownership was to be sold, the sums of money indicate the static characteristic of this kind of land market; in the eighth century, the price of a tenant-holding was fixed in 30 *solidi*,²¹ and in the following century, it was determined in round numbers from 20 up to 100.²² That is to say, the price was not determined by economic value. On the contrary, at least in the eighth century, the price of land parcels was valued in *tremissi* (three *tremissi* being equivalent to one *solidus*) and both the extent of the land and the amount of money were rather small:

19 CDA 3: “*terras iuris meis ... quod est totas in circus perticas XXX, et ipsa perticas abente in se per una pedi XX ad pede Munichisi*” See also the description of a falsified privilege issued by the Lombard king Aistulf for the monastery of San Salvatore around the middle of the eighth century (CDA +6: “*et ipsas sugas per unamquemque abentes pedes sexaginta ad pedes Munichisi*”). On the use of the Roman units of measurement, *uncia* and *scripulum*—one twenty-fourth *uncia*—, see CDA 55 (*duo scripuli*), 59 (*terra uncia una*). On the localised practices of land measurement in the early Middle Ages, see in general B. Andreolli, “Misurare la terra: metrologie altomedievali”, in *Uomo e spazio nell’alto medioevo* (Spoleto, 4–8 aprile 2002), 2003 Spoleto, pp. 151–88, in particular at pp. 162–69.

20 “*Pede publico*”: CDA 14 (see n. 16 above), 21; “*publica mensura*”: CDA 25; “*pede iustus*”: CDA 12 (see the text correspondent to n. 13 above). Many medievalists are against the hypothesis that “*pede publico*” used in eighth-century sale charters would be connected with the term “*pes Liuprandi regis*” used only from the tenth century onward and would reflect the so-called metrological reform pursued by the Lombard king Liutprand (712–44). See e.g. U. Tucci, “Pesi e misure nella storia della società”, *Storia d’Italia*, 5*, *I documenti*, Torino 1973, pp. 581–612; Andreolli, “Misurare la terra”, pp. 163, 166; but S. Del Lungo, *La pratica agrimensoria nella tarda antichità e nell’alto medioevo*, Spoleto 2004, pp. 153–54.

21 CDA 4 (a.739), 22, 34 (a.787).

22 20 sol.: CDA 74, 87, 94; 30 sol.: CDA 60, 62, 76, 88; 40 sol.: CDA 66; 50 sol.: CDA 56, 101; 60 sol.: CDA 58; 100 sol.: CDA 50, 154. For similar discussion, see C. Wickham, “Land sales and land market in Tuscany in the eleventh century”, in Id., *Land and Power. Studies in Italian and European Social History, 400–1200*, London 1994, pp. 257–74, at p. 265.

the length of the longer side of land was always less than 300 *pedes*,²³ and in almost all cases the price was fixed between 1 *solidus* 1 *tremissis* and 4 *solidi*.²⁴ It is impossible to determine a correlation between land scale and price from our sale charters, because the number of documents is limited. However, there is no reason to suppose that a land parcel was measured precisely without any practical purpose.

The fact that money was used almost always in these transactions as a means of payment, not as a measure of the value of the objects,²⁵ along with the fact that in the ninth century increasing number of lease-holders paid rents in money,²⁶ suggest that a local market of land parcels was supported by the circulation of a sufficient volume of coinage in the region, both before and after the reform of the monetary system by Charlemagne in the 780s and 790s; though, the money that circulated in many parts of southern Tuscany was coined outside of the region, in centres such as Rome or Lucca (this city is the only place where money was coined abundantly in eighth-century Tuscany).²⁷

It would be misleading to suppose that in the transaction of land plots the price

23 The historiography tends to accept the hypothesis of Angelo Mazzi, according to which 1 *pes* (*Liuprandi*) would correspond to 0,44m in early medieval Italy (A. Mazzi, *Il Piede Liuprando e le misure di Garlenda*, Bergamo 1885, pp. 6–7). If so, 300 *pedes* would be equivalent to 132m. See Andreoli, “Misurare la terra” (n. 19 above), pp. 163–64.

24 The olive groves constitute exceptions: *CDA* 21 (7 *sol.*), 46 (15 *sol.*). As for the ninth century we have little information: between 807 (*CDA* 59) and 907 (*CDA* 183) we have no sale charter concerning land plots (see n. 14 above).

25 Here also the examples of olive groves constitute exceptions: *CDA* 21, 46. It is interesting to note that in both cases the purchasers were abbots of San Salvatore. See the next section of this paper.

26 See Y. Nishimura, “The Transformation of Documentation Practices at the Monastery of San Salvatore at Monte Amiata in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries: From *Libelli* to List of Rents”, in *Genesis of Historical Text and Map: Text/Context 2* (Studies for the Integrated Text Science. The 10th International Colloquium, 17 November 2006), ed. S. Sato, Nagoya 2007, pp. 35–36.

27 It is possible that money was coined in Chiusi in the Lombard period (see E. Bernareggi, *Moneta Langobardorum*, Milan 1983, p. 92). In the late ninth century, the coins struck at Rome seems to have been circulated not only in the southern fringes of *Tuscia Langobardorum* which belonged to the Church of St. Peter after the concession of Charlemagne (*CDA* 161 (terr. Sovana), 162 (terr. Tuscania), 163 (terr. Sovana)), but also in that of Chiusi which constituted a part of *regnum Italiae*. In 890 Lanprando, a lease-holding tenant of *casale Plana* (Castel del Piano, in terr. of Chiusi), actually promised the monastery of Monte Amiata to pay rent in kind: “*bomeri quinque, quisque una bomeri valentes denari quatuor de Rumana moneta*” (*CDA* 167). On the monetary system and the circulation of gold/silver coins in Lombard and Carolingian Italy, see e. g.: P. Grierson, “Money and coinage under Charlemagne”, in *Karl der Große I: Persönlichkeit und Geschichte*, ed. H. Beumann, Düsseldorf 1965, pp. 501–36; E. Bernareggi, “Attività economiche e circolazione monetaria in età longobarda nella testimonianza delle <chartae>”, *Rivista italiana di numismatica*, 72 (1970), pp. 117–37; P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage, I, The Early Middle Ages (5th–10th centuries)*, Cambridge 1986, pp. 55–66, 205–17, 223–24, 249–66; A. Rovelli, “Circolazione monetaria e formulari notarili nell’Italia Altomedievale”, *Bullettino dell’Istituto storico Italiano per il Medio Evo*, 98 (1992), pp. 109–44; E. A. Arslan, “La circolazione monetaria (secoli V–VIII)”, in *La storia dell’Alto Medioevo italiano (VI–X secolo) alla luce dell’archeologia. Convegno internazionale (Siena, 2–6 dicembre 1992)*, eds. R. Francovich and G. Noyé, Florence 1994, pp. 497–519; Id., “Zecche e circolazione della moneta”, in *Il futuro dei Longobardi. L’Italia e la costruzione dell’Europa di Carlo Magno*, eds. C. Bertelli and G. P. Brogiolo, Milan 2000, pp. 107–12. For the case of Tuscany, see C. Wickham, “Economic and Social Institutions in Northern Tuscany in the 8th Century”, in *Istituzioni ecclesiastiche della Toscana medievale*, Galatina 1980, pp. 7–34, at 27–34, though his argument differs from mine.

was determined only by economic elements; but also, *vice versa*, we can not say that in the case of tenant holdings it was determined only by social relationships.²⁸ In any land sale, it is true, price was determined both by economic and social elements in medieval societies. Nevertheless, one can say that a land parcel was the object whose price was established *par excellence* by economic elements, whereas a portion of inheritance or a tenant holding was suitable for transactions in which inter-personal relationships weighed more heavily. In this sense, the nature of the land in transaction was essentially ‘embedded’ in the documentary forms.

2. Use of sale charters and leases by the monks and laymen

Through the examination of forms and formulas regarding the sale charters it is clear now that in early medieval southern Tuscany there were two categories of sale charters. Correspondent to them, two levels of land markets or transactions also existed: one for land parcels (*terrae, vineae* etc.), the other for composite units of properties such as tenant-holdings (*casae et res*) or estates (*curtes*), and for portions of inheritance (*sortes*). In this section we shall examine how a monastery, as a buyer, behaved in the transactions of land, or how it made use of these land markets rooted in local societies.

The monastery of San Salvatore was founded by a Friulan aristocrat Erfo in the mid-eighth century with the support of a Lombard king Aistulf (749–56), that is to say, by the gift of a huge bloc of landed property—which was a part of a “*curte civitatis nostre Clusine*”—on the eastern slope of Monte Amiata. Within the decades after its foundation it became one of the largest landowners in the region through, on the one hand, the gifts of estates by the Carolingians and, on the other hand, through purchase, or, rarely, through gifts of land from laymen, whether large or small landowners.²⁹ The examination of the Amiata documents will permit us to identify the changing politics of the monastery on the transactions of land: in the later eighth century the abbots were involved in both types of land markets rooted in local societies, but in the following they limited themselves to take part in only one of these, that for tenant-holdings.

In order to make clear the meaning of this change it will be helpful to look at the activities of the monastery more closely. The earliest surviving sale charters redacted

28 See e.g. Wickham, “Conclusions” (n. 3 above), p. 629.

29 CDA +6. On this falsified *praeceptum* of Aistulf issued to the monastery, see W. Kurze, “Die langobardische Königsurkunde für S. Salvatore am Monte Amiata”, *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 57 (1977), pp. 315–30 (now translated in Italian with the title: “Il privilegio dei re longobardi per San Salvatore sul Monte Amiata”, in Id., *Monasteri e nobiltà nel Senese e nella Toscana medievale. Studi diplomatici, archeologici, genealogici, giuridici e sociali*, Siena 1989, pp. 339–56). The best studies on the history of the monastery of Monte Amiata are those by W. Kurze, now collected in two miscellanies: *Monasteri e nobiltà nel Senese e nella Toscana medievale; Studi toscani. Storia e archeologia*, Castelfiorentino 2002. On the construction of estates by the monastery, see in particular W. Kurze, “Il monastero di San Salvatore al Monte Amiata e la sua proprietà terriera”, in Id., *Studi toscani*, pp. 361–95.

between the monastery of Monte Amiata and local laymen are those of 774 and 775. In January 774 the abbot Usingo bought an olive grove near Chiusi from Anastasius for 7 *solidi*; five months later, he paid thirty *solidi* to Audelapus and his brother Gaidilapus when he acquired all their property (*omnem paupertate substantiae nostrae*), i.e. a unit of small ownership, situated in *casale Agello* (terr. Chiusi); in 774 or 775, he purchased a vineyard with olive trees (*vinea cum olive*) in *casale Colonnate* (terr. Tuscania) from Raucio in 3 *solidi*.³⁰ In this way, the abbots accumulated land to construct estates in various parts of southern Tuscany in the later eighth century, making use of both kinds of land markets. Their activities, however, differed from laymen in one point: while lay landowners always used money as means of payment, the abbey often utilized movables instead of money in similar situations. In the above-mentioned transaction of the olive grove, for example, the abbot Usingo gave Anastasius a horse valued at seven *solidi* (“*caballo uno balente solidos septe*”); in 796, when Rumano sold an olive grove in *casale Saucine* (terr. Chiusi) to Ansperto, a successor of Usingo, he received a horse valued at 15 *solidi* (“*caballo uno balente solidos quindecim*”) instead of money.³¹ If we take into account the fact that a sufficient quantity of coinage was in circulation in the region at that time,³² we should conclude that in some cases the abbots chose deliberately a movable as means of payment, because they had the intention of creating or enforcing a certain type of social relationship with vendors. The fact that they chose a valuable animal, i.e. a horse, which represented a higher social status among the freemen, as instrument of payment indicates their first attempt to construct their own patronage network with local landowners.³³ In short, the monastery acquired land parcels as well as tenant holdings not only to accumulate monastic land but also to create social relationships with local landowners: perhaps the abbots hoped to gain social or political support from their neighbors.

At the beginning of the ninth century the abbey of San Salvatore changed this approach. The abbots lost their interest in the acquisition of land plots. Instead, they began to concentrate their investment on the other type of land: tenant holdings. Indeed, the monastery now acquired either single land holding (*casa et res*) from peasant proprietors, or else several tenant holdings (*casae et res*) from medium or large landowners. In these cases, both owner-cultivators and medium/large landowners usually sold all their properties to the abbots.³⁴ Furthermore, the monks in principle seem to have bought properties from these landowners, on the assumption that the former would lease them back to the latter soon after or some years later. Here the issuing of the sale charter, coupled with the following lease, became the norm.

30 CDA 21, 22, 26.

31 CDA 21, 46.

32 See n. 27 above and the corresponding text in this article.

33 On the interpretation that the use of movables as means of payment indicates the creation or reinforcing of the non-economic relationships between the parties, see L. Feller, *Les Abruzzes médiévales. Territoire, économie et société en Italie centrale du IX^e au XII^e siècle*, Rome 1998, pp. 361–86.

34 *Casa et res*: CDA 50 (a. 800), 56, 58, 60, 62, 66, 74, 76, 87, 88, 94, 101, 154 (a. 873); *solus de casa, curte, orta...*: CDA 119; *casae et res*: CDA 53, 70, 85, 95, 105, 131, 155, 176. Not all landowners sold all their properties: CDA 70, 88, 95, 155. See also n. 15 above.

Let us look at the case of land sale in “*vico Ulma*” (terr. Sovana). This *vico* is one of the places where the monastery accumulated land from the time of its foundation. The first villager who alienated his own land to the monastery is Iordanni. In 791 he sold a portion of inheritance (*sorte*) “*in fundi casalis Tribilonis et Sparagaria seo et in Vincinale*” (all of these *casalia* were probably located to the south of the monastery) to the abbot Ansperto, at the price of 8 *solidi*. In 806, he sold to the abbot Sabbatino another land, this time “*omnia ris mea (sic)*”, i.e. a unit of small ownership, and received 50 *solidi*. Twelve years later, his sons Lupo and Suaiperto leased them back from the monastery and at the same time they owed one week’s labour service every four weeks in the monastery (“*facere et perexsolvere deveatis angaria manuale ebdomatas quarta in suprascripto monasterio, in quid (sic) nobis utilitas fuerit*”).³⁵ One can suppose that Iordanni was obliged to sell his property out of constant necessity, and that when it became clear that his sons could not buy it back, they had to accept to become the tenants of the monastery and to work on its land. Prando “*centinario de vico Ulma*” followed apparently a similar process, yet, with a different motive and opposite consequences: he appeared for the first time in the Amiata documents in 798 as a witness in a donation of the monastery of San Quirico in *Climinciano* (terr. Chiusi) by its founders to the abbey. In 804 he sold to the abbot Ermari all his property (“*omnibus rebus substantzias mea*”), in which the “*serbos, ancillas*” were included, together with certain numbers of tenant holdings, and he received 50 *solidi*. Some years later, probably in the 810s, he rented it back for payment (*pensio*) of 6 *denarii* per year, without the obligation of labour service. Even after he became a tenant of the monastic land, Prando was among the witnesses of the transaction of land by the monastery;³⁶ at that time, as I have discussed elsewhere, these witnesses were composed of the clientèle of the monastery, such as local élites.³⁷

These cases characterise the politics of land transfer by the monastery of San Salvatore and, at the same time, represent the two opposite social relationships between the monastery and ex-proprietors in the first decades of the ninth century. On one hand, the abbots purchased all the property from owner-cultivators who needed money out of necessity, and after some years they leased them back to the latter in exchange for heavy labour service (*angaria*).³⁸ On the other hand, the abbey bought from local élites, like Prando, all their property on the condition that it rented the land back for a light obligation (*pensio*), a mark of higher social status; they would

35 CDA 38 (sale), 56 (sale), 81 (lease).

36 CDA 47 (gift), 53 (sale), 51 (falsified document of lease). The documents in which Prando appears as witness: CDA 47 (a. 798), 50 (a. 800), 81 (a. 819). On the debate concerning the reliability of the content of the lease, see the editorial note of CDA 51 (pp. 98–101). See also the case of other villagers, Rattilmi and his brother Marinu: CDA 82 (lease, a. 819).

37 See Y. Nishimura, “Fra clienti e dipendenti: il monastero di San Salvatore al Monte Amiata e le strategie dei testimoni nei secoli VIII e IX”, in *La Toscana nell’alto e pieno medioevo. Fonti e temi storiografici “territoriali” e “generalisti”*. In memoria di Wilhelm Kurze (Atti del convegno internazionale di studi: Siena-Abbadia San Salvatore, 6–7 giugno 2003), eds. M. Marrochi and C. Prezzolini, Florence 2007, pp. 103–24, at pp. 111–18.

38 See also the case of three sons of Fausto in *vico Spiniocaprinu* (terr. Sovana): CDA 58 (sale, a. 806), 71 (lease, a. 811). Other cases: CDA 54 (lease), 65 (lease), 83 (lease).

become ‘privileged’ clientèle of the monastery.³⁹ In these cases labour service worked as a symbol of subjection, while money rent represented the higher social status of the rent-payer.⁴⁰ In other words, the abbots made use of the land market *par excellence* as a step to create or strengthen these dual personal links: patronage and lordship/dependency.⁴¹

In the 820s, the behaviour of the monastery of San Salvatore in the land market changed again: it continued to buy land holdings from landowners, though it rented them back to former peasant proprietors, to say nothing of local élites, for a light obligation (*pensio*). Here the case of transactions with the inhabitants of *casale Agello* (terr. Chiusi) is worth describing to clarify the social context of land sale from that time onwards. I have mentioned above that the monastery had acquired land in the *casale* for the first time in 774. Subsequently, the abbots accumulated land there through the purchase of units of land-holdings from owner-cultivators.⁴² Thus in the first decades of the ninth century at the latest they constructed an estate composed of demesne and tenant-holdings: in 837, on the occasion of renewing the contract of lease between his father and the monastery, Atriperto was bound to fulfill two days of corvée a week “*in ecclesia vel pertinentia sancti Pelegrini, qui est in Agello*”.⁴³ The existence of the bipartite estate does not mean that the villagers who ceded all their properties were necessarily bound to fulfill labour service there. In August 827, for example, Ferualdo, a small landowner of *casale Agello* sold all his property (*omnes rebus et substantia mea*) to the abbot Audualdus for 50 *solidi*; in the same month, probably on the same day, he rented it (*casa et res*) back for a payment of 6 *denarii* per year. One month later, two neighbors, Cristiano and Rospertu, in their turn leased from the abbot two tenant holdings, one of which was the tenant holding they had sold to him (“*casa et res de predicto monasterio in casale Agello, quem vos ipsis per cartula vinditionis dediste*”), and they were obliged to pay 8 *denarii* per year.⁴⁴

Here we can see the new strategy of the monks of Monte Amiata: making use of the money rents which denote higher social status, they apparently accumulated their land and at the same time extended the abbey’s patronage over the lower strata of the free men. The patronage networks must have been necessary to exert more effective control over local societies. Indeed, the determination of the price of *casa et res* sold by the peasant-cultivator Ferualdo supports this supposition: it was valued at 50 *solidi*, the equivalent of the patrimony of the local élite Prando *centenarius*. As noted above, the price of a *casa et res* was fixed at 30 *solidi* in the eighth century.⁴⁵ The monastery

39 Besides the case of Prando, see that of Maiano *presbiter*: CDA 75 (lease, a. 816), 104 (lease, a. 828).

40 On the social implications of *angaria* and *pensio*, see Y. Nishimura, “The Transformation of Documentation Practices” (above n. 26), pp. 35–36.

41 E.g. Nishimura, “Fra clienti e dipendenti” (n. 37 above), for the strategic use of charter-redaction assembly by the monastery as means to strengthen both patronage networks and lordship.

42 CDA 22 (sale, a. 774), 66 (sale, a. 809), 74 (sale, a. 814).

43 CDA 114 (lease, a. 837).

44 CDA 101 (sale, 8/827), 102 (lease, 8/827), 103 (lease, 9/827). E.g. CDA 82 (lease), 111 (lease), 123 (lease), 124 (lease), 154 (sale), 154a (lease).

45 See above, text to n. 21.

paid Ferualdo more than the standard price of a tenant-holding unit probably in order to induce him to join its network of clientèle. With regards to this, it is interesting to note that both in the case of Prando and that of Ferualdo the ratio of money rent to the price of land was 1 to 100: both of them received 50 *solidi* as a price for their properties and promised to pay 6 *denarii*.⁴⁶ One can imagine that the standard rate of money rent for local élites, the rate of 1 percent, was applied to the ex-owner cultivator. It shows that the latter was admitted by the monastery to belong to higher social status than his real position in the local society. The monastery of Monte Amiata would regain the amount of money they paid from their tenants after a century. The monks may well have intended to maintain the social relationships with, or political supports from, their tenants for three generations.

We need to add that the activities of the monastery in the land market were not isolated; rather they were shared with local laymen, at least in the ninth century. Or, one can also say that the monastery followed the local practices. The example of *casale San Martino ad Colonnate* (terr. Tuscania) is instructive. This is one of the oldest places where the monastery of Monte Amiata began to acquire lands: the abbot Usingo purchased a piece of vineyard from a villager Raucio in 774 or 775, as I have mentioned above.⁴⁷ Among the inhabitants of the *casale* was a landowner, Erminpertus: some time before 808 he bought a tenant holding (*casa et res*) from Graso; then, in July 808, this Graso and his son Trasulo leased it back. From that moment they were obliged to perform one week's labour service every month. In the following year Sabbatino, the abbot of Monte Amiata, in his turn acted likewise in the transaction of land. Indeed, he leased back to Deusdede, another inhabitant of the *casale*, a tenant holding that the latter had sold, and he imposed on the ex-owner a slightly lighter obligation than that of Erminpertus: one day's labour service per week.⁴⁸ The difference in the amount of *angaria* may reflect the strategy of the monk's to establish more effective estate management than that of his rival. Both ecclesiastical and lay landowners made use of land market as a step to exercise more or less strong control over their neighbors. We have another example of lay owner who bought a unit of small ownership to acquire his own clientèle. In May 856, Paul, landowner of "*vico Lautinano*" (terr. Sovana), rented back to Agiprandu, an inhabitant of the adjacent *casale Sopano*, a *casa et res* that Paul had purchased from him. The light obligation (*pensio*) was payment of 1 *solidus* per year.⁴⁹

46 Prando: *CDA* 53, +51; Ferualdo: *CDA* 101, 102. See also the case of Dabit, a resident of *casale Silbina* (terr. Sovana). Angerbertus, *praepositus* of the abbey, paid him 100 *solidi* for his *hominibus rebus et substantijs mei*, i.e. *casa et res*, and agreed to receive from him 6 *denarii* per year when he leased it back to Dabit: *CDA* 154 (sale, 27/6/873), 154a (lease, 27/6/873).

47 *CDA* 26 (sale, a. 774/775). See n. 30 above and the corresponding text.

48 *CDA* 64 (lease, a. 808), 65 (lease, a. 809). E.g. *CDA* 59, 139. There was another family that belonged to local élites of the *casale*, Rachipertus and his brother Auto. In 812 they leased a land holding to Alipertu who had come from Orvieto (*CDA* 73). This document was written in "*curtem Sancti Martini in Colonnate*", i.e. probably in an estate of these brothers. We are in disposal with these *munimina*, since later the lands, with the relating documents, were passed into the hands of the monastery.

49 *CDA* 138 (lease).

After a sale charter of 807 where a piece of land was object of sale, no such documents actually exist until 907.⁵⁰ This does not necessarily mean that land plots ceased to be objects of sale between laymen in the ninth century, since the number of *munimina* included in the Amiata documents does not directly reflect the documentary practices in local societies. However, there is evidence that even between laymen the land market of land parcels altered its characteristic. Actually, in the above mentioned document of 907, a Frankish Frogeri sold to Benedictu two pieces of land “*in merce pro solidos quadraginta*”: here the price was determined in a round number (40 *solidi*) and furthermore a movable was used as means of payment. Therefore we can suppose that, even if land parcels continued to be the object of transactions among laymen, rather than the economic relationships, interpersonal links determined the price of land plots by the beginning of the tenth century at the latest. In other words, during the eighth and ninth century the price formation became increasingly connected with the social environments of lordship and, in particular, of clientèle, irrespective of who the buyer was and what the object of transaction was.

3. Conclusions

Sale charters in early medieval Italy are known to have possessed highly formulaic language. Even in the descriptions of the object of transaction, where the text was considerably influenced by oral communication, one can recognize a kind of ‘formalism’. One example of formalism is the very frequent presence of the description of the boundaries and measurement regarding the transaction of land parcels. In eighth-century southern Tuscany, thus, two types of sale charters were written: charter of land parcel and that of portion of inheritance or composite property such as a tenant holding.

This formalism was not merely a matter of documentary structures. The patterns of the descriptions were closely connected with the practices of land transfer. Thus, the categories of sale charter reflect, or even determine, two distinct levels of land sale, or two land markets. One is the market of a land plot where the object of transaction was measured precisely in order to determine the price; the other is that of other types of land such as a tenant holding. In the latter case, pertinent formulas and descriptions on the provenance of the property offered enough information for transaction, because social relationships weighed decisively in the price formation. In eighth-century southern Tuscany, therefore, two types of land markets coexisted.

In the late eighth century the newly founded monastery of Monte Amiata began to accumulate lands, taking part in these two land markets rooted in local societies. But in certain cases the abbots made use of the market of plot of land strategically: using movables as a means of payment they probably tried to increase their clientèle. At the beginning of the ninth century, the abbots changed their policies in the land markets. They stopped buying land parcels; rather, they invested their money mainly

50 CDA 59 (a. 807), 183 (a. 907).

in tenant holdings, in order to gain political support from local élites and, at the same time, to extend their lordship over owner-cultivators. In these cases they combined land sale with land lease, using either as suited the occasion. From the 820s onwards the monastery gradually extended its patronage networks among the free peasantry: by offering attractive conditions, such as overvaluation of their property or 'privileged' rate of rent in money, the monks encouraged owner-cultivators to sell their property and enter into the monastic networks of clientèle. Thus by the middle of the century the reinforcement of patronage became by far more important than the intensification of lordship as a motive for investment in land. These politics of transaction of land were not pursued only by the monks; they were used also by lay landowners. In this way, the Amiata documents offer considerable evidence to trace the process in which, during the eighth and ninth centuries, social relationships acquired more significance than economic ones in the transaction of land. Interpersonal links became increasingly definitive elements in the formation of the price of land.