

The Counts of Valentinois beyond the Rhône : territorial dynamics, power networks and communities of inhabitants in Vivarais (13th-15th centuries)

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Abstract

Situated at the western end of the Kingdom of Burgundy, which had been attached to the Empire since the 11th century, the Vivarais is a border territory crossed by the presence of several actors with intertwined interests. If its borders are generally defined for the early Middle Ages from those of the diocese of Viviers, the creation of a bailliage in the 14th century and then of the particular States of Vivarais in the 15th century also concerned the ultra-Rhodanian areas of the dioceses of Valence and Vienne. In this context, the County of Valentinois formed a veritable principality at the beginning of the 13th century, whose power extended to both banks of the Rhône until the Poitiers family's extinction in 1419. Through the study of the archives of this seignior and of the lords and communities who paid tribute to it, this work aims to understand how their authority was structured and manifested on the right bank of the Rhône. The study of the dynamics that run through this space and the political interactions between the actors involved will make it possible to question the political unity that seems to have been built up during the period with the creation of the States. This work will also draw on broad contributions in digital humanities in order to study and represent the spatial dynamics and political networks that are apparent in the study of the sources.

In particular, these archives contain a large corpus of homages made in favour of the Counts of Valentinois by their various vassals, including the two registers B 2633 and B 2634 held by the Archives départementales de l'Isère, which constitute the only systematic undertaking at county level that has been preserved to date. These deeds are particularly useful as they often contain a large number of details on the property, obligations and royalties of vassals. Once those relating to the right bank of the Rhône have been selected, it is possible to observe the spatial distribution of this data and to try to draw conclusions about the relationship between this distribution and, for example, the many diocesan boundaries in this area.

Registers of homages to the Counts of Valentinois and Diois

Register	B 2633	B 2634
Number of sheets	422	263
Sheets in deficit	7	2
Inserted sheets	0	16
Number of deeds	368	165
Number of homages	365	101

Research Question

In the Rhône Valley, the end of the Middle Ages was marked by the gradual establishment of the authority of the King of France. Several events had a decisive impact, such as the War in Languedoc, which ended in 1229 with the extension of the king's power to the south of France, and the cession of the Dauphiné by its lord in 1349. In the Valentinois region, the Count placed in 1239 all his lands on the right bank under the control of the Count of Toulouse, which the King of France inherited in 1271. The recognition of royal authority by the Bishop of Viviers in 1305, followed by the cession of the counties of Valentinois and Diois to the royal Dauphiné in 1419, completed the establishment of his hegemony in the middle Rhône valley. This geopolitical transformation from a group of quasi-autonomous seigneuries to an area fully integrated into the French administration can also be analysed locally in terms of the spatial and social dynamics at work in this context. Studying the presence of the Counts of Valentinois on the right bank of the Rhône is therefore an opportunity to observe how seigniorial authority was defined and structured on the basis of contextual changes.

Implications

The creation of a database to extract the information contained in the homages and other documents in the corpus was an opportunity to use the work of the Charters Encoding Initiative: a data schema dedicated to the encoding of medieval charters and written in XML and based on the *Vocabulaire international de la diplomatie* (Cárcel Ortí, 1997). Now available as a schema interoperable with the Text Encoding Initiative, this data format enables precise encoding of people, places and assets in the diplomatic context in which they appear in the document. The creation of an index of places and people makes it possible both to bring together different spellings of the same entity and to disambiguate homonyms. This method of working makes it easier to write queries to find mentions of places and people in their diplomatic context, or to create tables associating the content of important formulas in certain documents.

Example of encoding a homage to the Comte de Valentinois

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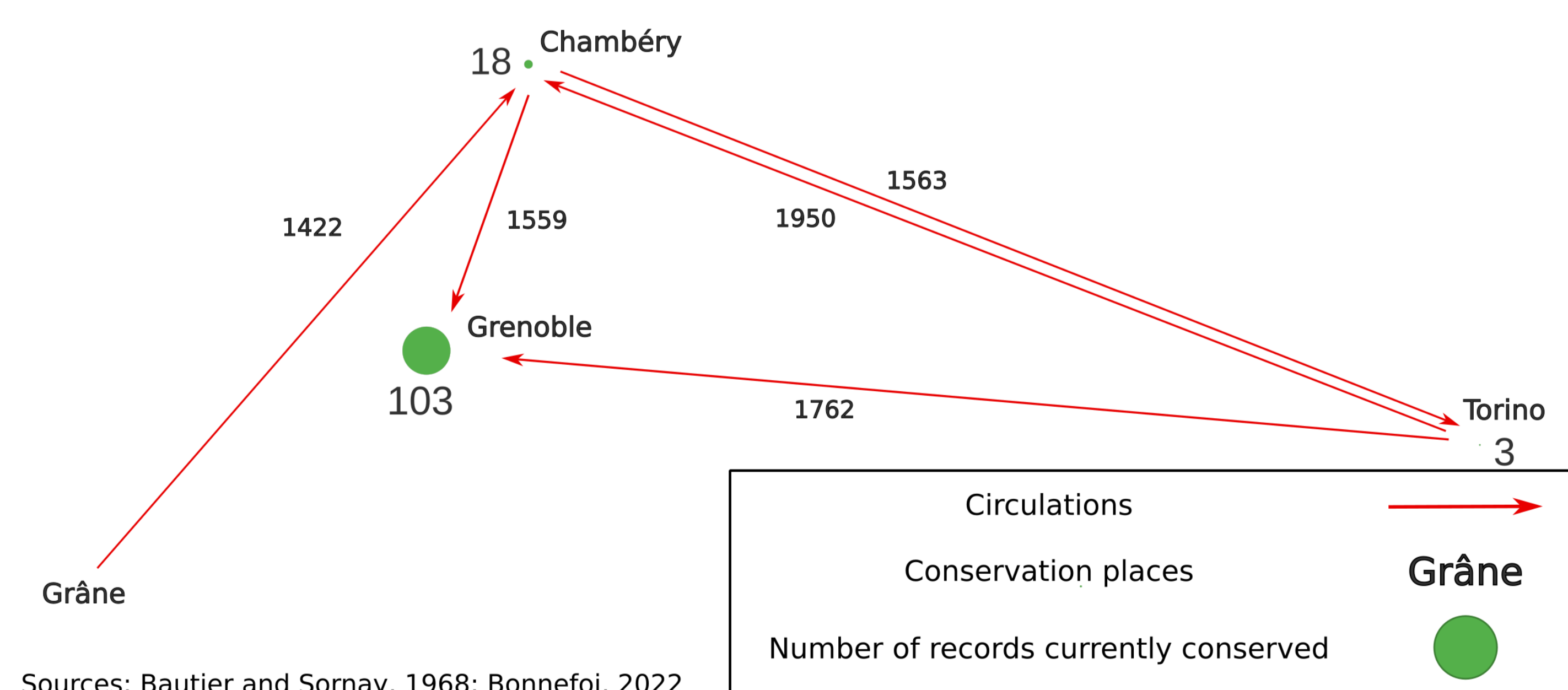
fuit et vere ac publice recognovit se tenere, tenere debere ac velle tenere
a dicto domino nostro comite <gap/> in feudum francum, antiquum et nobile
<asset type="fiefdom"> medietatem pro indiviso quorundam pratorum,
terrarium et possessiorum que et quas dictus Petrus Cornuci habet, tenet
et possidet vel quasi infra <placeName nymRef="#fontis_regnalis"
>mandamentum, territorium et districtum Fontis Regalis in <placeName
nymRef="#sanctus_johannes">parrochia Sanctis
Johannis</placeName></placeName> prout confrontatur
<delimitation type="boundary"> ab una parte cum <placeName
nymRef="#rivus_del_peyrier"/>
</delimitation><delimitation type="boundary">et cum <asset
type="realEstate">terra Hogonis de Ranco</asset> ab alia parte
</delimitation><delimitation type="boundary">et cum <asset

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Methodology

The main archive that can be used for this study is the Chartrier des comtes de Valentinois et Diois, which was kept in Grâne until the town was taken by the Savoyards, who claimed the inheritance of the last Count Louis II. This succession dispute is the main reason why the collection is divided into several files justifying the rights of each party. Even the majority of the documents held in the Archives Départementales de l'Isère as part of the archives of the Chambre des Comptes du Dauphiné do not form a coherent whole, but rather a collection of documents inserted into the Dauphiné archives according to the context in which they were integrated.

Circulations and conservation places of the Chartrier des comtes de Valentinois et Diois



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