Angevin synoecisms in the Kingdom of Sicily in the 13th and 14th Centuries

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In Europe, the period between the 11th and the first half of the 14th century was a time of great economic and demographic growth. During this age, most of the continent's countries experienced – within various degrees and under different names –the phenomenon of the development of "new towns".[1] Regarding Italy, the topic has prompted a prosperous branch of studies[2] which mostly focuses on the communal movement – thus on the northern and central regions of the country. Indeed, the southern part has traditionally been considered apart because of acknowledged differences in its political structures, languages, and developments.

Southern Italy in the late Middle Ages presented unique characteristics such as a pervasive diffusion of urban entities dating back to the Greek and Roman times, which left almost no space to new foundations during the Middle Ages, and the presence of the territorially largest state of the Peninsula, the Kingdom of Sicily. The northern frontier of the Kingdom, however, was quite different from the rest of the country: it was a mountainous region characterized by small settlements, royal fortresses and nobles' *consorterie*,[3] making it prone to rebellions and hard to defend when attacked (both occurred on multiple occasions in the 13th century).

After the conquest of the Kingdom of Sicily by Charles I of Anjou in 1266, the Angevin kings ordered or authorized the construction/reconstruction of many towns in the region: the first ones, right after the battle of Benevento, were L'Aquila and Montereale (ca. 1266-1271), then followed by Leonessa (founded in 1278) and by the failed attempt of Valle Castellana (1281), while Cittaducale (1309-1311) and Cittareale (1329) were created by order of Charles II and Robert of Anjou.

With the notable exception of L'Aquila, these places cannot be considered cities, neither according to the local medieval standards nor to the modern ones: admittedly, they all had stone ramparts, but among them only L'Aquila became an episcopal see in the Middle Ages

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[1] In France, the *bastides* have been studied thoroughly by Charles Higounet, Francois de Lannoy, Bernard Gilles, Jacques Dubourg and others. In England the subject is included in the 'new town' phenomenon. In Italy the birth of urban structures in the late Middle Ages is known as *secondo incastellamento* and can have different names depending on the founding authority, the geographical region or the means used to promote the foundation: i.e. *terre nuove, castra, borghi nuovi, borghi franchi*. See also Wim Boerefijn, *The Foundation, Planning and Building of New Towns in the 13th and 14th centuries in Europe: an Architectural-historical Research into Urban form and its Creation*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Amsterdam, 2010, which compares the new towns in Wales, the *bastides* of Aquitaine and the *terre nuove* of Florence. New towns were however founded in almost every part of Europe.

[2] Culminating in the volume: Rainaldo Comba, Francesco Panero, Giuliano Pinto, ed., *Borghi nuovi e borghi franchi nel processo di costruzione dei distretti comunali nell'Italia centro-settentrionale (secoli XII-XIV)*, Cherasco, Società per gli Studi Storici, Archeologici ed Artistici della Provincia di Cuneo, 2002 (Insediamenti e cultura materiale, n° 1). For more bibliography, see also Maria Elena Cortese, 'Castra e terre nuove. Strategie signorili e cittadine per la fondazione di nuovi insediamenti in Toscana (metà XII-fine XIII secolo)', David Friedman and Paolo Pirillo, ed., *Le terre nuove, Atti del seminario internazionale di Studi (Firenze-San Giovanni Valdarno, 28-30 gennaio 1999)*, Florence, L. S. Olschki, 2004, pp. 283-318, at p. 283, footnote 1.

[3] Groups of families of high and low nobility connected by ties of kinship and common political interests.

(Cittaducale only became a bishopric at the beginning of the16[th] century) and they were not densely populated. All these towns were however characterized by the great expectations of their founding fathers, exemplified by the chosen names: L'Aquila (which means "eagle", an imperial symbol), Montereale (*Montis Regalis*), Leonessa (from Gonesse, a French city connected to the Angevin dynasty), Cittaducale (*Civitatis Ducalis*), Cittareale (*Civitatis Regalis*) – all these names allude directly to the mighty founders, and clearly show the ambition that those people had for them.[4]

These foundations shared other common elements such as their functions and their urban plans, but above all they were established through the same method: synoecism, namely the merging into a single place of the inhabitants from scattered settlements located within a larger area. As will be detailed further down, both the king and the population had distinct interests in this kind of process – some were explicitly expressed, others left unsaid.

Cases of synoecism are numerous in studies about the founding of towns in late medieval Italy,[5] but they have always dealt with new towns built under different methods. On the other hand, an extensive study on the synoecistic method has, as far as I know, never been done. Such a study, even on the Abruzzi's regional level where a few comparable cases have been found, is not easy to carry out because primary sources on the topic are extremely scarce. That is partly because these towns grew in a frontier region which exposed them to all kinds of troubles coming from both sides of the border, and partly because the central Angevin archives of Naples were destroyed during the Second World War.

Nevertheless, the lack of some overall, comprehensive documentation did not prevent several scholars from studying a few specific cases;[6] they based their research on stand-alone documentation housed at various archives of the region (particularly the State Archives of L'Aquila and Rieti and the Diocesan Archive of Rieti), as well as on chronicles,[7] on the works of local scholars from the 16th down to the 19th century[8], and lastly on archaeological finds and

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[4] On the use of the term *civitas* to describe particularly ambitious projects, see Paola Guglielmotti, 'Villenove e borghi franchi: esperienze di ricerca e problemi di metodo', *Archivio storico italiano*, n° 166, 2008, I, pp. 79-86: p. 82.

[5] See Roberto Farinelli, Andrea Giorgi, 'Fenomeni di sinecismo e accentramento demico-insediativo piantificato: il 'secondo incastellamento' nella Toscana dei secoli XII e XIII', Giuliano Volpe, Pasquale Favia, *V Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale*, Florence, All'Insegna del Giglio, 2009, pp. 406-411, and its bibliography.

[6] Most of these few studies were from local amateurs, like: Antonio Angelini, *Il territorio di Montereale dalla preistoria all'unità d'Italia*, L'Aquila, Tipolito 95, 2001; Mauro Zelli, *Gonexa: appunti storici su Leonessa dall'Origine all'anno 1400*, Rome, s. n., 1974; Mauro Zelli, *Narnate: storia di un territorio di frontiera tra Spoleto e Rieti dall'VIII al XIII secolo*, Rome, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1997; Mauro Zelli, *Gonessa: nascita di una comunità nel XIV secolo*, Leonessa, Museo città di Leonessa, 2003. Cittaducale and Cittareale were studied by expert historians: Andrea Di Nicola, *Città Ducale dagli Angioini ai Farnese*, Rieti, Pro Loco, 2004; Andrea Di Nicola, 'La fondazione di Cittaducale e il controllo della Montagna', *Bullettino della Deputazione Abruzzese di Storia Patria*, n° 97-98, 2007-2008, pp. 453-485; Andrea Di Nicola, *Un'opera di Antonio da Settignano: la rocca di Cittareale*, Cittareale, Comune, 2013; Antonella Sciommeri, *La rocca di Cittareale*, Pescara, Edizioni Zip, 2008. The only exception is the city of L'Aquila, which was the object of of many studies: for example, Alessandro Clementi, *Storia dell'Aquila. Dalle origini alla prima guerra mondiale*, Rome, Laterza, 1998; Raffaele Colapietra, *Aquila: dalla fondazione alla* renovatio urbis, L'Aquila, Textus, 2010; Maria Rita Berardi, 'Il territorio aquilano da entità geografica a spazio politico', Giovanni Vitolo, dir., *Città e contado del Mezzogiorno tra medioevo e età moderna*, Salerno, Laveglia, 2005, pp. 47-79.

[7] Principally the works of the 14th century chronicler Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronica*, Carlo De Matteis, ed., Florence, Edizione del Galluzzo per la Fondazione Ezio Franceschini, 2008, and of the 17th century scholar Sebastiano Marchesi, *Compendio istorico di Civita Ducale*, Andrea Di Nicola, ed., Rieti, Pro Loco, 2004.

[8] Antonio Ludovico Antinori, an 18th century scholar from L'Aquila, wrote the *Annali degli Abruzzi dall'epoca romana fino all'anno 171 dell'era volgare* and the *Corografia storica degli Abruzzi e dei luoghi circonvicini*: both manuscripts are preserved in the library 'Salvatore Tommasi' in L'Aquila (Italy). Scholars from Naples, like Carlo De Lellis and Camillo Minieri Riccio, provided transcripts of the documents of the Angevin archive.

urban surveys. This is the reason why the first study on these towns as an ensemble focused on their urban plans characterized by orthogonal axes: this was a complete novelty in the region as revealed by Enrico Guidoni.[9] The subject was later studied by Tersilio Leggio[10] who examined the entire region in his book dealing with the whole northern border of the Kingdom of Sicily and its relation with the nearby ancient city of Rieti; Alessandro Clementi[11] took an interest in the institutional aspects of the topic and understood the foundations as an effort made by the Angevin kings to strengthen the frontier region. The comparative analysis we intend to make here will show a wider array of reasons explaining the emergence and development of these new towns.

The Founding of New Towns

L'Aquila and Montereale were the first towns that were reconstructed after the Angevin conquest. L'Aquila had been established in 1254 by Conrad IV Hohenstaufen[12] through the union of the population of two ancient and ruined dioceses – Amiterno and Forcona. The former had been under the supervision of the bishop of Rieti (Rieti was outside the Kingdom of Sicily) since the 10th century, while the latter had survived, at least in name, albeit without any urban location. After the death of Conrad in 1254, L'Aquila had taken the side of Pope Alexander IV against Manfred, the illegitimate brother of Conrad and the usurper of the throne, in order to obtain the translation of the episcopal seat from Forcona. Montereale, which was built around the same years as L'Aquila, is firstly attested in 1256 when Alexander IV used it as a landmark to specify the borders of the new diocese of L'Aquila. The agreement between L'Aquila and the Pope deprived Manfred of the control on the northern region of the Kingdom. This is why he set off with his army, marched onto L'Aquila which was unable to defend itself and was burned to the ground while its inhabitants fled. Montereale, accused of siding with the Pope, suffered the same fate.

The battle of Benevento in 1266 ended with the death of Manfred and the victory of Charles I of Anjou. It gave new hopes to the population of the region which was quick to send

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9   Enrico Guidoni, 'L'espansione urbanistica di Rieti nel XIII secolo e le città nuove di fondazione angioina', Marina Righetti Tosti-Croce, dir., *La Sabina medievale*, Milan, A. Pizzi, 1985, pp. 156-187. His studies were followed, in more recent years, by those of Maria Cristina Rossini and Roberta Cerone: Maria Cristina Rossini, 'La Sabina e le città di nuova fondazione: il caso di Leonessa', Luciana Cassanelli, *Leonessa: storia e cultura di un centro di confine*, Rome, La nuova Italia Scientifica, 1991, pp. 39-55; Maria Cristina Rossini, 'Urbanistica e politica territoriale fra Umbria e Abruzzo in età federiciana e angioina', Boris Ulianich and Giovanni Vitolo, ed., *Castelli e cinte murarie nell'età di Federico II: atti del convegno di studio organizzato dal Comune di Montefalco (Pg), Montefalco, Museo Civico S. Francesco 27-28 maggio 1994*, Rome, De Luca, 2001, pp. 105-134; Maria Cristina Rossini, 'Città nuove di confine: l'universitas di Cittareale e la politica territoriale di età angioina', *La Rocca dei cittarealesi: l'eredità di Federico II. Dai misteri al riuso, Atti del Convegno organizzato dal Comune di Cittareale (Cittareale, 7 settembre 2002)*, Rieti, s.n., 2003, pp. 27-55; Roberta Cerone, '"Inexpugnabile est". Pierre d'Angicourt, il presidio di Ripa di Corno e la città di Leonessa', *Arte Medievale*, IV, n° 5, 2015, pp. 183-196.
10 Tersilio Leggio, *Ad fines regni. Amatrice, la Montagna e le alte valli del Tronto, del Velino e dell'Aterno dal X al XIII secolo*, L'Aquila 2011.
11 Alessandro Clementi, 'La fondazione di Leonessa e la creazione del confine settentrionale del Regno', in *La fondazione di Cittaducale nella problematica di confine fra Regno di Napoli e Stato della Chiesa – Atti del convegno, Cittaducale, 7-8 dicembre 1990*, Rieti, Il Velino, 1992, pp. 25-36; Alessandro Clementi, 'La formazione del confine settentrionale del Regno di Sicilia al tempo dei primi angioini', Walter Capezzali, *Celestino V e i suoi tempi: realtà spirituale e realtà politica – Atti del 4° Convegno storico internazionale – L'Aquila, 26-27 agosto 1989*, L'Aquila, Arti Grafiche Aquilane, 1990, pp. 55-70.
12 See Gennaro Maria Monti, *Lo stato normanno svevo*, Trani, ed. Vecchi e C., 1945, pp. 311-317; Maurizio D'Antonio, 'Due documenti inediti di Corrado IV sulla fondazione dell'Aquila', *Bullettino della Deputazione Abruzzese di Storia Patria*, n° 107, 2016, pp. 17-34.

envoys to the new king hoping to obtain his consent for the rebuilding of the city. Despite strong opposition from the nobles, Charles I approved the reconstruction of L'Aquila. The city became part of the public domain, while each inhabitant obtained a plot of land seven and a half *canne* long and four *canne*[13] wide – a size sufficient to accommodate a family. Each plot was valued a gold florin, to be paid to the king.[14]

The reconstructed city grew fast and strong, helping Charles I when the son of Conrad IV, Corradino, went through Italy at the head of an army of Germans: on August 23 1268, L'Aquila took part in the battle of Tagliacozzo siding with the Angevin army[15] who was victorious. In the following years the control of the city was assigned to trustworthy officials of Charles I: particularly Pontio de Villanova, Captain of the town from 1269 to 1270, and Lucchesino da Firenze who had been assessor to Pontio and was Captain from 1271 to 1274. It is during the latter's command that the oldest surviving list of the settlements that had united to form L'Aquila was produced: the *cedula taxationis* of 1269 addressed to Pontio de Villanova contains the names of fifty-seven communities '*que sunt in Aquila et in districtu eius*' among which the biggest were Terra Siniziensis, Terra Ocrensis, Balneum, Bazanum, Paganica, Popletum, Clusura, San Victorinus, and Castrum Rodii.[16]

We don't precisely know when Montereale reappeared but it is mentioned in another *cedula taxationis* of the same year 1269,[17] in which it is said to be composed of Terra Marenonsis (the settlement of Marano, which was controlled by the noble family of the same name), Paganica (a different settlement from the one close to L'Aquila), Civitas Novara and Capitinianum. These four settlements were the biggest villages in the area – later sources and studies list more than these four communities as part of the *districtus* of Montereale: from fifteen[18] up to thirty-six.[19] During the 14th century they split into four districts each named after it main church: S. Maria, S. Giovanni, S. Pietro and S. Lorenzo.[20]

The foundation of Leonessa, in 1278, presents numerous differences when compared with L'Aquila and Montereale: whereas both of these were reconstructions, Leonessa was the first town built from nothing by Charles I of Anjou. In its original project, the aim was to provide a new place for the inhabitants of Valle Arenaria – a settlement near the border whose people had rebelled in 1274 but had since come to an agreement with the King of Sicily and his representatives. The new town was erected near the fortress of Ripe de Cornu: the idea was to strengthen the fortress and at the same time to assure the king's control on the former rebels.[21] Another factor which most likely led to the edification of the town was that the relationship between Charles I and the Holy See had worsened following the election of Pope Nicholas III in 1277. This circumstance could explain why in the document ordering the foundation, Charles

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[13] Approximately 19.5 meters long and 10.4 meters wide.
[14] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.
[15] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-42; Joseph Daniel Guigniaut, Natalis de Wailly, ed., *Chronique anonyme des rois de France finissant en MCCLXXXVI*, Paris, Imprimerie Imperiale, 1855, (*Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France*, vol. XXI), pp. 80-102: p. 89.
[16] Angiola De Matteis, *L'Aquila e il contado: demografia e fiscalità (secoli XV-XVIII)*, Naples, Giannini, 1973, pp. 11-15. See also Raffaele Colapietra, *op. cit.*, pp. 140-141. These communities paid, together, 254 ounces of gold, more than half of the 563 ounces paid by the entire city.
[17] Stefano Palmieri, ed., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1995, vol. XLII, pp. 14-19, n° 17: p. 17.
[18] As supposed by the bishop of Amelia and Rieti Marian Vittori, in his manuscript *De antiquitatibus Italiae et Urbis Reatis*, Rieti, 1566, stored in the Diocesan Archive of Rieti, collection Capitular Archive of Rieti.
[19] In the opinion of the local amateur historian Antonio Angelini, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 149, 190-197.
[21] Accurately described in the orders given to Giovanni Scoto, *justiciarius* of the region, by Charles I, that can be found in Jole Mazzoleni, éd., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1964, vol. XVIII, pp. 52-54, n° 112.

I emphasized the strategic role that the chosen location might play in controlling the roads to Rieti and Spoleto – the nearby cities in the Papal States. Despite the fact that the initial plan was merely to accommodate the population of one village, the new town drew new inhabitants from the entire region even outside the border of the Kingdom, and this for a prolonged period of time. Leonessa was progressively built in different phases of urban drift: the first in 1278, the second from 1280 to the end of the century,[22] the third around 1317-1322 after the earthquake of 1315. The town was still growing in 1358 when it acquired the village of Fuscello sited in the frontier region towards Rieti, thus attracting a new flow of people. Eventually more than fifteen settlements joined the town eventually divided into six districts called *sestieri*: Corno, Forcamelone, Poggio, Croce, Torre and Terzone after the names of the largest among the founding communities.

The Sicilian Vespers, which broke out in 1282, followed by the death of Charles I and the imprisonment in Aragon of Charles II led to a period of unrest for the Kingdom of Sicily which did not even end with the return of Charles II in 1289. In the following decade most of the Kingdom's resources were spent to help the war for Sicily and to rebuild the power of the Angevin dynasty. It was only after the peace of Caltabellotta, in 1302, that Charles II was able to dedicate himself to the domestic policies of his realm. One of the priorities was the stabilization of the northern border of the Kingdom, especially near the city of Rieti, as had become evident to the king when he had travelled the region in 1305.[23] In the following year Charles II received multiple donations of land from the nobles of the area,[24] and in 1307 he gave orders to clarify the precise location of the frontier between the Kingdom and the district of Rieti.[25] He also ordered the seizure of the properties the citizens of Rieti had within the Kingdom[26] and asked the bishop of Rieti for a new clarification on the border.[27]

According to the 16th century scholar Sebastiano Marchesi, the population of the area had sent envoys to Charles II to ask him permission to create a new town so as to be able to defend themselves more easily from the vexations of the nobles as well as to participate in the shielding of the Kingdom from its external enemies.[28] In 1308, a second delegation reached Robert, the son of Charles II who was Duke of Calabria and heir to the throne at the time, while he was travelling across the region, to ask him to intercede with the king. The strategy was successful since on September 15 1308 Charles II granted the inhabitants of Lugnano, Forca Pretula, Rocca di Fondi, Pendenza, Petescia, Santa Rufina, Valviano, Arpagnano, Poggio Girardo and Cantalice, along with others, the authorization to build a new town on a hill guarding the road to Rieti called Radicara. However, after the death of Charles II in the summer

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[22] The last community to join Leonessa in this phase was probably Santogna in 1298, presumably after an earthquake had destroyed the original settlement: see Maria Cristina Rossini, 'La Sabina', *op. cit.*, p. 43.

[23] Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, p. 241. In 1304 Rieti had also tried to annex the big settlement of Cantalice to his *districtus*, but the treaty had remained without consequences: see Michele Michaeli, *Memorie storiche della città di Rieti e dei paesi circostanti dall'origine all'anno 1560*, Rieti, Tipografia Trinchi, 1898, vol. III, pp. 61-62; Andrea Di Nicola, *Città Ducale*, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-12. The original document is stored in the Diocesan Archive of Rieti, collection Capitular Archive of Rieti, armoire VIII, file D, nn° 2/a and 2/b.

[24] As registered in a late 17th century manuscript preserved in the State Archive of Naples: Sigismondo Sicola, *Repertorio 3*, pp. 601, 605-606.

[25] Camillo Minieri Riccio, *Saggio di codice diplomatico formato sulle antiche scritture dell'Archivio di Stato di Napoli*, *Supplemento II*, Naples, F. Furchheim, 1883, pp. 43-45. See also Andrea Di Nicola, *Città Ducale*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

[26] As established by a letter dated November 6 1308, stored in the Diocesan Archive of Rieti, collection Capitular Archive of Rieti, armoire IV, file B, n° 4.

[27] To establish which settlements in the region under the religious guidance of the bishop were politically within the Kingdom. See the late 17th century manuscript preserved in the State Archive of Naples: Michelangelo Chiarito, *Repertorium et index regesti Caroli illustris (1309)*, p. 6.

[28] Sebastiano Marchesi, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

of 1309, a military expedition from Rieti destroyed the building site. Robert of Anjou, now king, ordered that a new location should be selected and the hill of Cerreto Piano (a little further away rom Rieti) was chosen. The town of Cittaducale sprang up in the summer of 1310, after the clearance of woodland and the erection of temporary fortifications to prevent a second attack from Rieti. Its name was meant to honour Robert, Duke of Calabria when the process had begun. Despite some initial problems, among which the recalcitrant attitude of the population of the settlements of Forca Pretula, Rocca di Fondi, Ianula, Viaro, Canetra and Paterno, who did not want to relocate, Cittaducale was considered completed around 1325; its *districtus* consisted of more than twenty settlements combining both those that had moved in the new town (at least fifteen) and those that hadn't.

The border between the Kingdom and the Papal States was now fixed near Rieti, but its northern side, towards Spoleto, Cascia and Norcia, was still unstable. It is in that region that the last foundation in the Abruzzi by the Angevin dynasty, Cittareale, took place in 1329. Its construction was ordered by Robert of Anjou probably because of the Italian military campaign of Louis IV known as 'the Bavarian' that had occurred the year before and which had generated general reflection on the Kingdom's defensive structure and its weakest points. The result was the fortification of the mountain pass of Radeto through the edification of an *oppidum* to accommodate the population of Radeto's valley, Falacrinae and Terra Camponesca: Cittareale was designated as *constructum* in 1332.[29] From the beginning, the new town faced harsh difficulties: the same 1332 document contains the complaints of its inhabitants who declared having faced frequent aggressions from their neighbours inside and outside of the Kingdom and having, consequently, asked the king for help.

The edification of Cittareale put an end to the external attacks that were affecting the area but did little to improve the condition of the inhabitants of the founding settlements. The control over the new town – made important by its role of guardian of the border – was indeed immediately disputed between the two major cities of the region: L'Aquila and Amatrice. The contest resulted in open war on several occasions while the monarchs proved incapable of taking a firm stance on the question. At the beginning of the 15th century, the problem seemed solved: in 1400 king Ladislao deprived Amatrice of its jurisdiction over Cittareale.[30] In the following years the small settlement was drawn closer to L'Aquila and in 1421 queen Joanna II assigned Cittareale to the bigger city. In 1424, nevertheless, troops from Amatrice seized the land around Cittareale, burning down and looting the town and causing the destruction of its archives. After this event, Cittareale was permanently integrated in the district of L'Aquila, but its chances of growth were already lost for ever. The reasons of this half-failure were in reality much older: they can be traced back to the location chosen for the foundation (too close to Amatrice, Cascia and L'Aquila) and to the small number of communities involved (one of which, Terra Camponesca, was under the control of a powerful noble consortium, the *Camponeschi*, who probably controlled and limited the flux of population from its possessions to the new town).

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[29]   Agostino Cappello, *Osservazioni geologiche e memorie storiche di Accumuli in Abruzzo*, Rome, Giornale Araldico – Boulzaler, 1825, p. 66.

[30]   The document is transcribed in an act by the notary Domenico di Nicola di Pizzoli, dated April 14th 1474, stored in the State Archive of L'Aquila, collection Civic Archive of L'Aquila, file VI/1, n° 19. See also Andrea Di Nicola, *Un'opera di Antonio da Settignano*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

The Need for Infrastructures

As we have seen, each new town had to face many difficulties. Some managed to cope with these challenges better than others: Cittareale was a project ruined from the start, while the others, which gathered many more settlements, were able to rally enough forces to defend themselves.

Demographic increase obviously required important investments and works to provide the needed infrastructures. We have very little information regarding Montereale in its first years. No architectonic evidence is available since the town was destroyed by an earthquake in 1703 and almost nothing has survived of the medieval aspect of the town. The same can be said of Cittareale which was destroyed at the beginning of the 15th century. Concerning L'Aquila, Leonessa and Cittaducale, however, we know that they built their basic infrastructures in the years immediately following their foundation or reconstruction. Moreover, the period during which the towns were built is well documented: we know for certain that two royal captains, Lucchesino da Firenze for L'Aquila and Enrico de Recuperantia for Cittaducale, were responsible for the construction of the two towns. They both kept their jobs for many years despite the rule stating that a royal officer's mandate was to last no more than one year. The presence of captains who stayed in office for longer than due (as was also the case in Montereale, Leonessa and Cittareale) allows us to suppose that a specific method for building a town was probably adopted by the Angevin kings. The process clearly involved the designation of a royal captain charged with supervising the whole construction of the town.

L'Aquila's re-edification was the slowest among the Angevin foundations, mostly because of its enormous size. Indeed, even though the rebuilding of the city had started in 1267, L'Aquila still lacked its defence system and symbols of power in 1271 as well as a water source. They were all built after the election as royal captain of Lucchesino da Firenze, who retained the office from 1271 to 1274/1275.[31] He erected the city gates along the path outlined by the wooden palisades that, according to the will of the population, enclosed the entire plateau on which L'Aquila was built and were later replaced by stone walls. He also supervised the building of the civic tower, the royal palace and the first water supply, called *Fonte della Rivera*.[32] It is probably under Lucchesino's guidance that the city's road system was built: it presents the evidence of accurate planning being characterized by orthogonal axes but it is also mixed with roads that proceed differently and probably date back to the Swabian age of the city or the years between L'Aquila's rebirth and Lucchesino's arrival. These first years were probably devoted to the development of a structure capable of containing many different communities allowing them to remain separated – a structure that was replicated in the other Angevin foundations in the Abruzzi and which is one of their most peculiar traits: the division of the towns into *locali* (that will be better analysed further down).

Montereale was constructed, supposedly, with the same methods used to build L'Aquila, and was probably completed in a shorter time: the royal captain Giacomo de Champeigny remained in office from 1269 to 1272[33]. In a document dated October 6 1272, Montereale is described as a urban centre provided with a district: the source is a letter by Charles I to the royal captain of L'Aquila regarding some vassals who had fled from the noble family de

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[31] Pierluigi Terenzi, *L'Aquila nel Regno. I rapporti politici fra città e monarchia nel Mezzogiorno tardomedievale*, Naples-Bologna, Il Mulino, 2015, p. 691.

[32] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, p. 45; Antonio Ludovico Antinori, *Annali, op. cit.*, vol. X, pp. 14, 18.

[33] Jole Mazzoleni, ed., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1967, vol. IV, p. 9, n° 57, p. 147 n° 984.

Machilone and had found shelter in the nearby towns including Montereale.[34] In 1318 the town must have had an outer wall that left free room for new buildings since the inhabitants asked Robert of Anjou to invite the population of the surrounding countryside to move within the city walls and erect new homes there.[35]

The town of Leonessa also faced problems of slow development. Its construction started in 1278 to host the population of Valle Arenaria but the plan was quickly changed to accommodate inhabitants from a larger number of settlements. The first royal captain, appointed in 1278 was Teodino de Roio; he had been a member of the commission in charge of choosing the location. He died the following year and was replaced by his son Berardo who kept the office until the end of 1281.[36] Under his supervision the town was soon provided with walls and water supply connected to the fortress of Ripe de Cornu,[37] while the presence of a Royal Palace is firstly registered in 1287.[38] The first part was built on a North-South axis, its main street linking Leonessa to the roads to L'Aquila and Spoleto, a layout caused by both the morphological characteristics of the ground and the function of the town itself that is to say that of a gate of the Kingdom towards Spoleto. The North-South structure was further developed in the second wave of urban construction, between the end of 13th and the beginning of 14th century, when the town expanded its walls and built an aqueduct to accommodate and supply its increased population.[39] The civic tower was only built in the 15th century.[40]

Leonessa was the last town founded by Charles I of Anjou. His son Charles II and his nephew Robert were responsible for the project of Cittaducale in 1309-1310. The construction was organized by royal engineers and supervised by the royal captain Enrico de Recuperantia Visconti who was in office until 1313.[41] The first attempt to build the town – on the hill of Radicara – had failed because of the military expedition from Rieti. The second try – on the hill of Cerreto Piano – started then with great care. It was dedicated to the construction of the town walls: the initial wooden ones were quickly replaced by stone ramparts.[42] At the same time, the inhabitants built an aqueduct that was completed around 1315. It is obvious that the urban

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[34] Riccardo Filangeri, ed. *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1957, vol. IX, p. 99, n° 102. See also Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237.

[35] Romolo Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò e i suoi tempi*, vol. I, Florence, Bemporad, 1922, p. 451; Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

[36] Renata Orefice de Angelis, ed., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1967, vol. XXI, p. 277, n° 167. See also Hubert Houben, ed., *Dokumente zur Geschichte der Kastellbauten Kaiser Friedrichs II. und Karls I. von Anjou, auf der grundlage des von Eduard Sthamer gesammelten Materials. Bd. III, Abruzzen, Kampanien, Kalabrien und Sizilien*, Tübingen, Niemeyer, 2006, pp. 37-46, nn° 1292-1308; Bianca Mazzoleni, ed., *Gli atti perduti della Cancelleria Angioina trasuntati da Carlo de Lellis*, vol. I, Rome, Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1939, p. 409; Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, p. 249, footnotes 1363-1364. The transmission of an office from father to son was quite unusual and was probably the sign that the *de Roio* family was capable of granting stability in the region, or that Berardo knew well the town's construction project his father was working on – maybe both.

[37] Giuseppe Chiaretti, 'Gonessa-Leonessa 1278-1978 VII Centenario', *Leonessa e il suo Santo*, special number, 1978, pp. 3-26, p. 11; Carla Bresciani, Giuliano Sacchi, 'Note introduttive alla catalogazione di Leonessa e prime acquisizioni conoscitive in ordine alla sua storia edilizia e alle diverse fasi della sua crescita urbana', Luciana Cassanelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-38, p. 28.

[38] State Archive of Rieti, collection Fondo membranaceo, n° Q-286. It was probably just the residence of the royal officers.

[39] Carla Bresciani, Giuliano Sacchi, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

[40] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

[41] Sebastiano Marchesi, *op. cit.*, p. 30; Andrea Di Nicola, 'La fondazione di Cittaducale', *op. cit.*, pp. 477-478. He was the son of *Recuperantio* Visconti of Pisa. His brother Guglielmo was a close advisor of Charles II and was appointed royal captain of L'Aquila in 1309.

[42] Sebastiano Marchesi, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

system was carefully planned since its structure is characterized by perfectly orthogonal axes.[43] Cittaducale was conceived as a town divided into *locali*, as certified by a document dated July 28 1314, that was written '*apud Civitatem ducalem, in ecclesia Sancti Nicolai de Podio Girardi*'[44]: Poggio Girardo was one of the settlements involved and the presence of the church in the new town is an evident sign that its inhabitants had moved. As already seen, however, some villages resisted the project, causing part of Cittaducale to have fewer inhabitants than expected: those areas were left out to become gardens.[45]

The last of the Angevin foundations in the Abruzzi was Cittareale but our sources on its development are extremely limited: the destruction of the town in the third decade of the 15th century is an insurmountable obstacle that has left historians with very few data on the town in the Angevin era. It seems that the town walls had already been erected in 1332 Cittareale being then defined as a completed *oppidum*. The new town was built on a North-South axis on the side of a hill, its three parallel streets starting near the top where the fortress still is, and descending towards the valley. The southern part of the town seems to be older, and more accurately designed, so it was probably erected in the years right after the creation of the town when the region was under the supervision of the royal captain, Mattia Camponeschi, who held that position from 1326 to 1332.[46] The decision to leave some distance between the fortress and the village can be explained as a way to better defend the bastion in case of rebellions or as the simple result of the slow flow of inhabitants from the countryside. The vacant space was then filled, probably after the arrival of a new wave of settlers near the end of the 14th century, and formed the northern section of the new town, less organized and characterized by irregular streets.

As already emphasized, the five Angevin new towns in the Abruzzi were built following a common method: first came the designation of a royal officer entrusted with supervising the edification of the town walls and the providing of water supply. He also dealt with the designing of the urban plan always characterized by orthogonal axes (traces have survived in modern Montereale in spite of the destruction caused by the 1703 earthquake). Water, defence system and roads appear thus to have been priorities which is not surprising for new towns cosntructed in a border region, built to be important waypoints for merchants and armies. They were not, however, the only concerns for the local population.

The Division in *Locali*

The inhabitants of the Angevin new towns came, as already stated, from a multitude of villages spread all around the countryside to become part of a larger community. Nevertheless, they had no intention of renouncing their rights on the common lands of the settlements they came from. For many of them, especially those from the villages closest to the mountains, pasture land and the woods were essential sources of subsistence and earning. It was thus of extreme importance for them to keep them and to avoid sharing them with the new fellow citizens.

The result was the partition of each new town in internal districts reflecting the original settlements, called *locali*. Each of them was built with a church and sometimes a small square.

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[43] Andrea Di Nicola, 'Il più antico documento di Città Ducale. Contributo per date la fondazione della città', in *Bullettino della Deputazione Abruzzese di Storia Patria*, LXXI, 1981, pp. 91-103, p. 99 footnote 24; Enrico Guidoni, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

[44] Andrea Di Nicola, 'Le pergamene di Santa Caterina di Città Ducale', *Il Territorio*, IV/2, 1988, pp. 19-50, n° 3 p. 26.

[45] Anton Ludovico Antinori, *Corografia*, *op. cit.*, vol. XXX/I, pp. 146-147.

[46] Andrea Di Nicola, *Città Ducale*, *op. cit.*, p. 8, footnote 25.

The identification of an inhabitant as member of a specific district was provided by his/her participation in the rites of its church. The system was not a closed one: the passage of an individual from a *locale* to another was not prohibited, and it was also allowed to possess lands, and thus the membership, in more than one *locale*.

This system, however, was not as simple as that. For instance, the *locali* were not simply the transposition of the villages involved in the foundation. Since part of the inhabitants of the older settlements often chose not to relocate, preferring to remain closer to their lands and meadows, most earlier villages were still inhabited,[47] at least partially, after the establishment of the new town. The various *locali* had then to include not only the townspeople but the villagers too. The result was that most of these districts presented an internal division: they were half inside and half outside of the town – the first half was called *intus*, the second *extra moenia*.

A second problem was that the partition of the new towns into *locali* helped maintain old rivalries and conflicts between the villages which often concerned the possession of lands or economic interests: these disputes were now transferred into the new urban structures, where they could result in armed clashes, the destruction of houses and the banning of families if not entire districts. Examples of this are the resistance put up by many settlements against the creation of Cittaducale and even more so the internal conflicts that shook L'Aquila between 1293 and 1294 when the *locali* of Barete and Paganica opposed those of Bazzano, Roio and Pizzoli.[48] The cause of the fight was a boundary dispute between the *locali* of Bazzano and Paganica; it culminated with the ban of the people that inhabited the latter and they were only allowed to re-enter the city in the second half of 1294.[49] More clashes followed in the 14th century, when the struggle for power and for the control over L'Aquila mostly involved noble families and royal officers – they all found, however, partisans, supporters or opposers in the population of the various districts.[50]

Why, then, did the kings permit the creation of such an unstable organization? Mainly for fiscal reasons: by allowing the inhabitants of the various villages to keep their original repartition, it was easier to keep track of their movements which prevented the uncontrolled merging of different communities (which could, as it did, bring forth conflicts) and the loss of taxpayers. Even more so since in the years following the edification of the new towns the taxes were collected separately between the *locali*. This is confirmed by the *cedula taxationis* of L'Aquila and Montereale in 1269 which shows that each district paid independently. As far as L'Aquila is concerned, the practice ended in 1294 when Charles II attempted to pacify its internal conflicts through fiscal unification.[51] It was, however, just a pause: in the registers

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[47] Sadly, we have very few data on the villages that were, instead, fully abandoned, and the timing is often unclear. Roberto Marinelli, *Malinconiche dimore. Indagine tra topografia ed etnografia degli insediamenti medievali e pastorali abbandonati dei monti reatini ai confini dell'Abruzzo*, L'Aquila, Edizioni libreria Colacchi, 2007, explores the matter for the region of Rieti, Cittaducale and Leonessa providing interesting details and sketches of the deserted villages.

[48] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56. See also Ludovico Antonio Muratori, *Antiquitates italicae Medii Aevi*, vol. VI, Mediolani, ex typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1742, p. 557.

[49] Michelangelo Schipa, *Carlo Martello angioino*, Naples, Regia tipografia F. Giannini, 1890, p. 71, reports of a pardon, dated August 13 1294, conceded by Charles II of Anjou to 64 citizens of L'Aquila '*quia ex quodam post obitum Nicolai de Insula militis civis Aquile suborto discrimine in Civitate prefata quidam inter ipsos et quosdam alios Aquilanos armorum strepitus bellique conflictus emersit [...] culpabiles et suspecti fuerunt bannis supositi et a incolatu dicte civitatis eiecti bonorumque ipsorum omnium privati*'.

[50] For example: in 1308, the royal captain of L'Aquila, Guelfo da Lucca, punished the inhabitants of the district of Pizzoli *intus* guilty of having tried to protect the houses of the rebel Berardo de Roio who had just been defeated by Guelfo: see Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

[51] The document can be found in the manuscript collecting the privileges obtained by the city, redacted in L'Aquila in 1639 and stored in the city's State Archive: *Regia Munificentia erga aquilanam urbem variis privilegis exornatam*, pp. 1-3.

concerning the taxation of 1320 the city is never mentioned while its *locali* are.[52] Charles II's conciliatory effort had, thus, probably failed, or needed more time to be systematically applied.

We have scarce data regarding the process in the other new towns. In 1320 Montereale was taxed but the sources present no signs of Leonessa and Cittaducale as independent entities: neither of them is named while their *locali* are taxed individually.[53] Cittareale is justifiably absent: it did not exist yet. The fact that the settlements to be merged for its creation are recorded in the taxation registers in the same way as those that had already united into Cittaducale and Leonessa is probably a sign that in these new towns the integration process was still happening.

This proves that for most new towns, the conversion to a united revenue system progressed slowly but swiftly, and the absence of royal intervention explains why the change went unnoticed. The main exceptions are the two oldest foundations: L'Aquila and Montereale. The former stands out due to Charles II's 1294 charter and the latter due to its quick passage from a group of settlements to a single entity which can be explained by its more remote origins and by the fact that fewer communities were involved compared to the other Angevin new towns (with the exclusion of Cittareale).

Usually a century or so after the creation of the town the *locali* structure coalesced into a more   compact organization in quarters (this occurred in L'Aquila, Montereale, Cittaducale and Cittareale) or *sestieri* (six quarters, as was the case in Leonessa), easily regulated and less prone to produce internal fights.

Conclusion: the Reasons behind the Angevin New Towns in the Abruzzi

Each actor involved in the creation of our selected towns was motivated by his own interests. These interests all contributed to the organisation of the new urban structures, influencing their development.

The population obtained protection against the attacks of brigands and aggressions from beyond the border. This was a constant menace in the region according to the requests sent to the king by the population of Valle Castellana in 1281[54] and the inhabitants of the villages that gave birth to Cittaducale in 1308,[55] who complained about '*depretacionis, rapinis et iniuriis*' committed by '*potenciorum et maxime vicinorum non regniculorum*'. Enemies from outside the Kingdom attacked Cittaducale and Cittareale after their establishment: the first one was destroyed and it had to be relocated; the second one was severely damaged. The defence of the population was one of the main reasons for the population's support of the Angevin new towns. Others were the wish of the little artisans of the villages to congregate so as to obtain a bigger market[56] and the will of the inhabitants of the region to free themselves from the authority of the nobles.[57]

The kings had other motives: one of them was the control over important roads leading to the Kingdom, as stated by Charles I when commanding the edification of Leonessa. The same goal, even if not explicitly declared, probably explains the foundations of Cittaducale and Cittareale: both of them were constructed on main points of entrance from the Papal State. So are also the cases of Montereale and L'Aquila for they are sited near significant crossroads in

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[52] Camillo Minieri Riccio, *Notizie storiche tratte da 62 registri angioini dell'Archivio di Stato di Napoli*, Naples, R. Rinaldi e G. Sellitto, 1887, pp. 182-183.

[53] *Ibid.*, p. 182.

[54] Jole Mazzoleni, Renata Orefice, ed., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, vol. XXIV, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 1976, pp. 31-32, n° 152. See also Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-254.

[55] Sebastiano Marchesi, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

[56] Paola Gasparinetti, *La via degli Abruzzi e l'attività commerciale di Aquila e Sulmona nei secoli XIII-XV*, Rome, Palombi, 1967, pp. 26-28.

[57] As stated for L'Aquila by Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

the northern Abruzzi. Additionally their positioning meant that the new towns would benefit from the commercial fluxes passing through the so called *via degli Abruzzi*, the way used by merchants to reach Naples from Florence ever since the Angevins had been in control of the Kingdom of Sicily.[58]

Another aim was the stabilization of the frontier. The area had been prone to rebellions during the reign of Frederick II but in the age of Charles I of Anjou instability was mainly due to the political 'commuting'[59] of noble families: many barons in the region had the tendency to often change political allegiances, taking advantage from the fact that their possessions were on lands claimed by both the Kingdom and the cities of the Papal State, or were on the two sides of the border. Uncertainty was also caused by the frequent uprisings of villages under the authority of Spoleto, Cascia and Norcia, whose inhabitants rebelled against the control of the main cities and crossed the border to flee from their enemies – often conquering a Kingdom's frontier castle, badly manned for economic reasons, and thus obtaining a convenient base of operation for the rest of the war. To avoid having to reconquer his own fortresses, Charles I ordered various investigations aimed at ascertaining which were the least defensible so as to dismantle them. The process lasted up from the immediate years after the battle of Tagliacozzo (1268) to 1285.[60] In that year, the 200 frontier castles of Frederick II had been reduced to 68, and more demolitions were being considered.[61] The king's control on the region was, however, severely weakened. In the long period, the creation of the Angevin new towns solved all these problems at once.

The number of rebellions in the northern Abruzzi decreased, and the few that still took place were not directed against the king but against the nobles: the rebels often aimed at joining the new towns. For example, in 1272 the men of Casalis Bordonis escaped from their overlords, the nobles of Machilone, and found refuge in L'Aquila and Montereale.[62] Another case is represented by Leonessa itself, founded in 1278 to host the same population that had revolted in 1274 against Spoleto and had conquered two fortresses in the Kingdom, Turris Arnate and Ripe de Cornu, before reaching an agreement with Charles I of Anjou and moving inside the Kingdom. In the following years, the potential rebels found in the king someone willing to settle the matter: there are mentions of covenants between Charles I and the inhabitants of L'Aquila,[63] Montereale[64] and Leonessa,[65] but nothing precise has survived. Furthermore, by being transferred inside the new towns, the possible rebels were more easily controllable: the new urban structures were all provided with a castle or a tower aimed at guaranteeing the king against revolts.[66] Moreover, their inhabitants now lived under the rule of a royal captain or his

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[58] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-21.

[59] Antonella Sciommeri, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

[60] *Ibid.*, p. 18; Jean Dunbabin, *Charles I of Anjou. Power, Kingship and State-Making in Thirteenth-Century Europe*, London/New York, Longman, 1998, p. 174.

[61] Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, p. 257; Paolo Grillo, *Cavalieri e popoli in armi. Le istituzioni militari nell'Italia medievale*, Bari, Laterza, 2008, p. 137.

[62] Riccardo Filangeri, ed. *Registri op. cit.*, vol. IX, p. 99, n° 102; Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237.

[63] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23.

[64] Riccardo Filangeri, éd. *Registri op. cit.*, vol. IX, p. 112, n° 23.

[65] Stefano Palmieri, éd., *Registri della Cancelleria Angioina*, Naples, Accademia Pontaniana, 2010, vol. L, pp. 294-295, n° 704.

[66] As openly stated by Charles I for Leonessa, where a tower is built '*pro coercitione hominum habitationis predictae*' and by Robert of Anjou for Cittaducale where the tower is built to prevent raids but also riots (Andrea Di Nicola, *La fondazione di Cittaducale, op. cit.*, p. 479). Montereale and Cittareale also had a stronghold at the top of the hill on which the town was built (the former has been destroyed by earthquakes, the latter still stands). The only exception is L'Aquila, but the city hosted a royal captain and a royal palace and was often visited by the *Justiciarius* of the province.

substitutes so that a close eye could be kept on them as well as they could be better integrated in the matters of the kingdom.

The presence of his officials also gave the king a way of better establishing his authority on regions until then mostly controlled by the local nobles. The new towns undermined the nobles' power: some of their lands were seized, some of their vassals were attracted by the new cities. In more general terms the towns became fierce competitors for the same sphere of influence. Between the end of the 13th and the first quarter of the 14th century many great families (i.e. de Machilone, de Monte Ursello, de Duce) seem to have been impoverished by the foundations which deprived them of part of their sources of income.[67] In the same period, other families obviously flourished: it was the case of families connected with the new foundations and whose members rose by becoming royal officials: they might have been responsible for the watch of mountain passes and border roads, or even captains of the new towns. The most revealing cases are those of the families de Roio and Camponeschi, both based in L'Aquila.[68] The prominent families, thus, reacted differently regarding the new urban structures and their fate was divergent: some of them underwent a social and economic decline while others found a new way to social ascension. Among the ones who chose to support the new foundations, the result still depended on their luck and ability to jump on the bandwagon of change: some important families, like the de Petescia and de Pendentia, who moved into Cittaducale, and the de Marano, who probably relocated inside Montereale, vanished from the sources probably because they proved incapable of maintaining their power in the altered environment.

The edification of the new towns, with their districts composed of properties from the king's domain and from the common lands of the villages involved, was also an occasion for the monarchs to set clear borders for the Kingdom. L'Aquila and Montereale had provided stability on the internal side of the frontier region. Leonessa represented the evident limit of the Kingdom's jurisdiction. Cittaducale and Cittareale put an end to the disputes in two contested areas, the first towards Rieti, the second in the direction of Cascia and Norcia. In at least one case, that of Cittaducale, the edification of the new town was preceded by an official inquest to verify the borders. We have no reports of a similar procedure being applied to the other new towns but it could have been an attempt to safeguard the new town against repercussions – and in that case, it was obviously a failure since Rieti attacked the construction site of Cittaducale in 1309.

Lastly, the building of new towns presented one major economic advantage for the Angevin kings. The fortresses that defended the frontier region during the Swabian age were extremely costly: both the castellan and the garrison were paid out of the king's treasury. The need to save up money was one of the reasons behind Charles I's decision to demolish many royal strongholds in the Abruzzi. With the new urban structure, the inhabitants were responsible for patrolling the streets and fighting against bandits and enemies. Moreover they paid the taxes and the salaries of the king's officials who governed them: this was a net gain for the finances of the Kingdom. The main disadvantage of the new towns was that they tended to attract the attention of the powers beyond the border: aggressions were numerous in their early years.[69]

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[67] Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-237, 273; Andrea Di Nicola, *Città Ducale*, *op. cit.*, p. 11; Alessandro Clementi, 'La formazione del confine settentrionale', *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67; Romolo Caggese, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

[68] Their family history is yet to be studied but they both grew big enough to justify an attempt at controlling L'Aquila during the 14th century: the *de Roio* family failed; the *Camponeschi* succeeded. Lalle Camponeschi was indeed the first *de facto* ruler of L'Aquila from 1343 to 1354 (even if he completely controlled the political life of the city he was never officially sanctioned as its lord).

[69] Even L'Aquila, the most internal of the group, was attacked in 1255 by Rieti whose men marched towards the new-born city with 150 German mercenaries and the aid of nobles opposing the building of the city. Only the interference of pope Alexander IV prevented Rieti from obtaining the assistance of Ascoli Piceno too. The

However, the cities become able to defend themselves,[70] L'Aquila even grew big enough to be a threat to the other new towns. Even before annexing Cittareale in 1425, L'Aquila had indeed shown its strength in 1347 during Louis I of Hungary's invasion of the Kingdom. At that time, L'Aquila took side against Giovanna I of Anjou and assaulted the nearby regions: Montereale and Cittaducale resisted the attacks while Leonessa was taken.[71]

Nevertheless, this occasion proved the effect that new towns had had on the frontier region: during the rebellions of the 13th century war was fought around the border's fortresses; when Louis I invaded the Kingdom, instead, all the clashes in the Abruzzi revolved around the new urban structures. The Angevin foundations were both assailants and preys, rebels and loyalists in the clash for power in the northern part of the Kingdom of Sicily as well as important actors in the conflict for the throne. The political and economic landscape was thus consistently altered.

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attacking army was defeated in the gorge of Antrodoco by the defenders of L'Aquila: Tersilio Leggio, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-218.

[70] The most documented case is that of Leonessa, a junior partner in a treaty with Rieti in 1287 (State Archive of Rieti, collection Fondo membranaceo, Q-286), before reaching a mutual defence agreement with Cascia in 1289 (Historical Archive of Cascia, collection Fondo diplomatico, parchment n° 6). In the following century the new town repelled the attacks of the Cappelletti's company in 1364, the English company in 1379 (Antonio di Buccio, 'Delle cose dell'Aquila', Ludovico Antonio Muratori, ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 794-795) and Spoleto in 1382 (Egildo Gentile, *Le pergamene di Leonessa depositate nel R. Archivio di Stato di Napoli*, Foligno, Soc. Poligrafica F. Salvati, 1915, pp. 37-38, n° 25).

[71] Buccio di Ranallo, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 250. Anton Ludovico Antinori, *Annali*, *op. cit.*, vol. XI, p. 633.