

records from the count's court provides a rare and fleeting glimpse of everyday life in the region at this time. In 827 Count Ratbert and the imperial *missus* Boso adjudicated a case between the abbot of Novalesa and seventeen peasants, who denied that they were his serfs, bound to the soil and to his service, as he claimed. The court gave judgment in favor of the abbot. A similar verdict was handed down in a case brought before the count's court by two peasants in 880. These cases reveal both the spread of serfdom in the region, and the resistance of peasants who refused to accept servile status, and were ready to go to law to challenge even a powerful landlord like the abbot.

The historical record provides some information about the way the clergy functioned as a pivotal element in the Carolingian administration. In 816 the Emperor Louis the Pious, Charlemagne's son and successor, appointed his former chaplain and adviser Claudius as bishop of Turin. The choice was clearly motivated by the need to ensure that this strategically-located diocese was in trusted hands. Probably thanks to Claudius's influence Turin was named by an imperial edict of 825 as one of the cities in which a *schola* or cathedral school was to be established. By imperial order these institutions of higher learning were set up in regional centers, to train the local clergy: the *schola* at Turin was designated as the institution for students from Piedmont and Liguria. We do not know how long it functioned, however, and we are forced to conclude that it did not survive for very long. Bishop Claudius seems to have been a vigorous, even contentious person. He campaigned against the popular cult of holy images, which were very popular because of their supposed miraculous powers, arousing much opposition among the people of his diocese. He was also a warrior-prelate who directed the defense of the region against the bands of Saracen raiders who had started to launch attacks across the Alps from southern France. In 832 he was succeeded by Bishop Witgar, who had also served as an imperial official. Witgar's successor, a certain Regimirus, reformed the cathedral chapter of Turin, in line with the ideology of Christian renewal that was central to the Carolingian imperial ideal. He instituted the rule of St Chrodegang of Metz, promulgated a century earlier, under which the canons of the cathedral lived a form of monastic life. But rather than living as monks, in seclusion from the world, the rule required them to take an active part in administering the diocese and its lands, in collaboration with their bishop.

The Carolingian empire, though powerful and extensive, was beset by grave internal weaknesses, which would ultimately destroy it. First and foremost among these was the uncertainty surrounding the right of