PART THREE

BISHOPRICS, THE NOBILITY, AND THE LÄNDER
IN THE HIGH AND LATE MIDDLE AGES
CHAPTER THIRTEEN

THE ORIGIN AND THE BEGINNINGS OF EPISCOPAL PROPERTY IN THE TERRITORY OF PRESENT-DAY SLOVENIA

Introductory Remarks

Around 1200, the territory within the borders of the present Republic of Slovenia was ecclesiastically divided into six dioceses, which belonged to four different church provinces. By far the largest and simultaneously central part of present-day Slovenia between the Drava, Sotla, and Kolpa rivers belonged to the bishopric of Aquileia. The bishop of Aquileia, who carried the prestigious title of patriarch from the middle of the 6th century, also exercised metropolitan authority over large parts of Venetia, Friuli, and Istria. In the latter province the bishoprics of Trieste and Koper, whose small dioceses partly extended into the Karst in present-day Slovenia, were subordinated to him as suffragans. Northeastern Slovenia between the Drava and Mura rivers was under the ecclesiastical authority of the archbishop of Salzburg and thus a Bavarian church province, while Prekmurje, as part of the Kingdom of Hungary was divided between the bishoprics of Győr and Zagreb, and consequently between the archbishoprics of Esztergom and Kalocsa.¹

The properties the bishoprics had in Slovene territory create a picture that is quite different from that of the ecclesiastical administrative division. Of the bishoprics mentioned above, only Aquileia and Salzburg were large (territorial) landowners in the High Middle Ages, while the properties of the two coastal bishoprics were small and largely limited to the territories of the cities of Trieste and Koper, and the bishoprics of Győr and Zagreb had no estates at all in Prekmurje.² Three bishoprics of the Salzburg ecclesiastical province, which however had no ecclesiastical jurisdiction here, established themselves as big landowners in the Slovene territory: Freising, Brixen, and Gurk.

¹ See Mlinarič 1991, 61 ff.
² Zelko 1996, 94 ff.