

FLORENTINE STUDIES

Politics and Society in
Renaissance Florence

edited by
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FABER AND FABER
24 Russell Square
London

*First published in mcmxxviii
by Faber and Faber Limited
24 Russell Square London WC1
Printed in Great Britain by
Robt MacLehose and Company Limited
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SBN 571 08477 8

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CONTENTS

	EDITOR'S PREFACE	Page 9
1	THE MYTH OF FLORENCE Donald Weinstein <i>Associate Professor of History, Rutgers University, New Brunswick</i>	15
2	IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO Charles T. Davis <i>Professor of History, Tulane University, New Orleans</i>	45
3	THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY D. P. Waley <i>Reader in History, London School of Economics</i>	70
4	THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE AND CIVIC HUMANISM IN THE EARLY RENAISSANCE Marvin B. Becker <i>Professor of History, University of Rochester, N.Y.</i>	109
5	INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY Charles M. de la Roncière <i>Chargé d'Enseignement d'Histoire, University of Dakar. Translated by Janet Sondheimer</i>	140
6	FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA: A TUSCAN CASE-STUDY IN THE MEDIEVAL ORIGINS OF MODERN AGRARIAN SOCIETY P. J. Jones <i>Fellow and Tutor, Brasenose College, Oxford</i>	193

CONTENTS

7	SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA: A RURAL COMMUNE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES David Herlihy <i>Professor of History, University of Wisconsin</i>	242
8	LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE AROUND 1400: THEORY, POLICY AND REALITY Raymond de Roover <i>Professor of History, Brooklyn College</i>	277
9	THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION Gene A. Brucker <i>Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley</i>	314
10	HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS George Holmes <i>Fellow of St Catherine's College, Oxford</i>	357
11	FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY IN THE EARLIER FIFTEENTH CENTURY Peter Partner <i>Assistant History Master, Winchester College</i>	381
12	PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: ASPECTS OF THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST FLORENTINE DOMINATION Michael Mallett <i>Lecturer in History, University of Warwick</i>	403
13	FLORENTINE CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY Nicolai Rubinstein <i>Professor of History, Westfield College, London</i>	442
14	THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION IN FLORENTINE POLITICAL THOUGHT Felix Gilbert <i>Professor of History, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton</i>	463
15	THE END OF FLORENTINE LIBERTY: THE FORTEZZA DA BASSO J. R. Hale <i>Professor of History, University of Warwick</i>	501
	INDEX	533

ILLUSTRATIONS

after page 512

- 1 Vasari, Alessandro de' Medici
- 2 Baldassare Peruzzi, The Walls of Florence (c. 1520). Uffizi, 360 A.
- 3 Vasari, The Siege of Florence. Detail from the fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence
- 4 Cittadella Vecchia. Detail from no. 8
- 5 Francesco de Marchi, The Walls of Florence. From *Trattato d'Architettura Militare*, B.N.F., II, I, 280, fol. 2r
- 6 Detail from no. 5
- 7 Antonio da Sangallo the younger, project for improving the Cittadella Vecchia at Porta alla Giustizia. Uffizi, 761 A.
- 8 Stefano Buonsignori, Plan of Florence (1584)
- 9 Antonio da Sangallo, distance rose, Florence. Uffizi, 773 A.
- 10 Fortezza da Basso, dome of central hall
- 11 Detail from the 'Berlin' woodcut view of Florence (c. 1470)
- 12 Fortezza da Basso. Detail from no. 8
- 13 Astrological diagram for the foundation time of the 'Arx Florentina'. A.S.F., Carte Stroziane, Ser. 1, 129, fol. 196r
- 14 Antonio da Sangallo. Sketches for a fortress at Porta S. Gallo. Uffizi, 758 A.
- 15 Antonio da Sangallo, preliminary drawing for Fortezza. Uffizi, 783 A.
- 16 Antonio da Sangallo, preliminary drawing for Fortezza. Uffizi, 782 A.
- 17 Fortezza da Basso. Section showing *mastio* and Porta a Faenza
- 18 Fortezza da Basso. *Mastio* from rampart

ILLUSTRATIONS

- 19 Antonio da Sangallo, preliminary drawing for Fortezza, Uffizi, 760 A.
- 20 Bastiano da Sangallo, Fortezza, plan. Uffizi, 315 A. The back is endorsed to Antonio, and this plan was probably sent to him in Rome from Florence
- 21 Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, plan of city front. Uffizi, 756 A.
- 22 Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, section through stables, rampart and wall. Uffizi, 1282 A.
- 23 Plan of sally port access
- 24 Fortezza, plan
- 25 Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, ink and wash plan of *mastio*. 'Torre de la porta a faenza' at bottom. Uffizi, 757 A.
- 26 Pediment (at ground level) of original entrance to *mastio*
- 27 Top of early entrance, city front, right of *mastio*
- 28 De Marchi, Fortezza da Basso. MS. cit., fol. 3r.
- 29 Fortezza da Basso. B.N.F., MS. XIX, 62, fols. 14v-15r
- 30 Bastiano da Sangallo, detail from no. 20
- 31 Bastiano da Sangallo, detail from no. 20
- 32 Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, section. Uffizi, 931 A.
- 33 Bastiano da Sangallo, copy of no. 32. Uffizi, 1659 A.
- 34 Antonio da Sangallo, design for stonework of *mastio*. Uffizi, 726 A.
- 35 Fortezza, *mastio*
- 36 *Mastio* excavated to show stonework below modern earth level
- 37 Fortezza da Basso, A.S.F., R. R. Possessioni, Piante, 536
- 38 Project for new bastion between the Fortezza and Porta al Prato. A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, cart. XIX, scaffale L, palchetto 10, no. 58
- 39 Baldo de Paludi's inscription in the Fortezza

Acknowledgements are made to the Soprintendenza ai Monumenti per le Provincie di Firenze, Arezzo e Pistoia for plates 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 35, 36 and 39.

MAP

The *contado* of Pisa in the fifteenth century, page 410

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present volume grew out of discussions among friends who some years ago were working at the Archivio di Stato in Florence. Although it does not make any pretence at comprehensiveness of a chronological or systematic order, it does not entirely lack unity of purpose or direction. By assembling studies that are representative of contemporary research in Florentine history, it may not only provide the reader with new information on a variety of topics and problems, but also acquaint him with some of the principal currents and aims of that research. Its very incompleteness is not entirely accidental, but reflects a similar incompleteness in historical scholarship. While some aspects and fields of Florentine history have been thoroughly investigated, others still await elucidation; and as so often, the increase in our knowledge has not been without an increased awareness of the gaps that remain to be filled. Even so, our knowledge of Florentine politics and economy from the 14th to the 16th century has been notably widened and deepened during the last 20-odd years; and if the present volume succeeds in conveying to the reader some of this fuller vision, its plan would seem to have been amply justified.

That it could be planned at all on this level and with so great a variety of topics, in itself bears witness to the remarkable flourishing of Florentine historical studies since the Second World War; that all but one of the contributors come from Great Britain and the United States, shows the popularity of these studies in those countries. The present activity offers a striking contrast to the situation between the two world wars; the part played in it by students from outside Italy provides yet another example of the attraction exercised by medieval and Renaissance Florence on non-Italian scholarship.

EDITOR'S PREFACE

To investigate the causes of this attraction would go far beyond the scope of this brief introduction. The position of Florence as one of the chief centres of Western civilization has no doubt had a large part in it, as has the fame of Lorenzo the Magnificent and Niccolò Machiavelli, and hence the desire to know more about their city and 'age'. Less evident, but perhaps in the long run more important as far as the critical study of Florentine politics and society is concerned, is the incomparable wealth of the Florentine archives which allows a unique insight into the political and economic structure and the everyday life of one of the greatest medieval city states. Jacob Burckhardt has said that Florence deserved perhaps 'the name of the first modern state'; it was tempting to see in it at least a prototype of medieval urban development. At the same time, her history could, by the very richness of its documentation, serve to demonstrate modern political issues or theories. Sismondi had, at the beginning of the 19th century, written a history of the medieval Italian republics in terms of the struggle between liberty and despotism; Robert Davidsohn claimed in 1896, in the preface to his monumental *Geschichte von Florenz*, that the history of that town was 'prevalently that of her people and of its fight against any kind of superior power'. Davidsohn was a German, nurtured in the traditions of German liberalism; Nicola Ottokar, whose book on 'Il comune di Firenze alla fine del Dugento' (1926) revolutionized the study of Florentine communal government, was of Russian origin, and came to the study of 13th-century Florence from that of the medieval French communes, and hence from a wider vision of the problems of medieval urban development.

Davidsohn's *Geschichte* (1896-1927), in seven massive volumes based on extensive research, was a turning point in the study of medieval Florence and will no doubt remain its solid foundation for a long time to come. The narrative breaks off in 1330, but the three volumes on Florentine civilization and economic life, as well as the four additional volumes of *Forschungen*, also cover some of the rest of the fourteenth century. Descriptive rather than analytical, the *Geschichte von Florenz* leaves open important problems of social and political development and oversimplifies others. Gaetano Salvemini's *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295*, on the other hand, has exercised, since its publication in 1899, a lasting influence, on account not of the discovery of new facts but of its interpretation of Florentine history in terms of conflicting economic interests between social classes in the city, and between the city and the countryside. In both respects, Salvemini's views, which were also largely accepted by Davidsohn, have been

EDITOR'S PREFACE

subjected to searching criticism by Ottokar and his disciple Johan Plesner. By detailed analyses of the composition and alignments of the ruling group Ottokar has demonstrated its basic continuity throughout the political and constitutional changes of the late Dugento; by applying similar methods of enquiry to the immigration into Florence from two places in the *contado*, Plesner¹ has shown that the thesis of the exploitation of the countryside by the city cannot be held without considerable qualification.

Since the last war, much research has been focused on the economic relations between city and *contado*, on rural conditions in general, and the social background of Florentine politics. While much of this research has been concerned with the 14th century,² there has also been a greatly increased interest in the 15th century, which hitherto had been mainly the province of biographers. Elio Conti is preparing an extensive study on the rural foundations of Florentine society in the Quattrocento,³ to form the first part of a work on the social history of Florence during that century. Raymond de Roover has devoted a fundamental book to the Medici bank,⁴ thus continuing into the 15th century the researches on Florentine commerce and banking to which A. Saponi and recently F. Melis have made so many important contributions for the fourteenth century. This fresh interest in the fifteenth century has not remained confined to economic history. Lauro Martines, in examining the social conditions of Florentine humanists,⁵ has also thrown new light on the part played by officeholding in Florentine society, while I have devoted a book to the mechanics and development of Medicean government.⁶ Florentine political thought, seen until recently almost exclusively in relation to Dante and Machiavelli, has been studied within the context of Florentine politics between the 13th and the 16th century; part of this fresh approach has been a reassessment, for the early Quattrocento, of the political role of Florentine humanism.⁷

A few final words of explanation may be added. It would have been tempting to include in this volume studies on Florentine art, literature and scholarship. However, any attempt to make an even moderately

¹ *L'émigration de la campagne à la ville libre de Florence au XIII^e siècle* (Copenhagen, 1934).

² See esp. Enrico Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina', *A.S.I.*, vols. CXV–CXVII (1957–59).

³ See his preliminary studies, *La formazione della struttura agraria moderna nel contado fiorentino*, vols. I and III, pt. 2 (Rome, 1965).

⁴ *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397–1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).

⁵ *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (Princeton, N.J., 1963).

⁶ *The Government of Florence under the Medici, 1434–1494* (Oxford, 1966).

⁷ See esp. H. Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1955; revised ed., 1966).

EDITOR'S PREFACE

representative selection of these would have rendered it unmanageable. As for the subtitle, some readers might object to its use for a period which stretches roughly from the 13th to the 16th century. Some historians describe this period as 'late medieval' and 'early modern'; like Denys Hay,¹ I prefer to use the old-established term Renaissance for a period of Italian history which, whether or not one defines it in terms of revival, has some weighty claims to be treated, however loosely, as a historical unit.

¹ *The Italian Renaissance in its Historical Background* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 14-15.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS*

A.A.	Florence, Archivio Arcivescovile
A.I.	Florence, Archivio dell'Ospedale degli Innocenti
A.S.	Archivio di Stato
A.S.F.	Archivio di Stato, Florence
A.S.I.	<i>Archivio Storico Italiano</i>
A.S.P.	Archivio di Stato, Pisa
B.N.F.	Biblioteca Nazionale, Florence
Bicch.	Biccherna
Cat.	Catasto
C.C.E.	Camera del Comune, Entrata
Cons. Prat.	Consulte e Pratiche
C.R.S.	Compagnie religiose soppresse
C.S.	Conventi soppressi
Dip.	Diplomatico
Est.	Estimi
M.A.P.	Mediceo avanti il Principato
Magl.	Magliabechiana
Not.	Notarile
P.C.	Provveditore di Camera
Provv.	Provvisioni, Registri
Prot. Provv.	Protocolli delle Provvisioni
R.I.S.	<i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i>
<i>Riv. Stor. Ital.</i>	<i>Rivista Storica Italiana</i>
V.A.	Vatican Archives

* Unless otherwise indicated, archival references are to the Archivio di Stato, Florence.

I

DONALD WEINSTEIN

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

'I Sandro painted this picture at the end of the year 1500 in the troubles of Italy in the half time after the time according to the eleventh chapter of St John in the second woe of the Apocalypse in the loosing of the devil for three and a half years. Then he will be chained in the twelfth chapter and we shall see him trodden down as in this picture.' So reads the Greek inscription across the top of Botticelli's *Mystical Nativity*. Above the Mother and Child angels holding olive branches and crowns dance in a ring. Below, men and angels embrace beside a gentle stream while tiny devils flee this scene of reconciliation.¹ Clearly, Botticelli intended his *Nativity* as an allegory of another, imminent birth which would end the time of troubles and bring about the glories prophesied in *Revelation*, when the devil would be overcome and a new age of earthly harmony and peace would begin. Looking back from 'the end of the year 1500',² he would have been thinking of the troubles of Italy since the French invasions of 1494.³ In Florence Botticelli had witnessed the expulsion of the Medici and Savonarola's rise and fall, and he had experienced both the optimism and the pessimism of those years.⁴ Did he intend the *Nativity* also as an allegory of Florence's travail and her future

¹ The painting is in the National Gallery, London. For the full inscription and a discussion see Martin Davies, *The Earlier Italian Schools* (National Gallery Catalogues; London, 1951) no. 1034 (pp. 79-83). For discussion of the painting see Herbert Horne, *Alessandro Filipepi Commonly Called Sandro Botticelli Painter of Florence* (London, 1908), pp. 294-301 and Mario Ferrara, *Savonarola* (2 vols.; Florence, 1952), vol. II, 51-4.

² The Florentines began their new year on 25 March, the Day of the Annunciation; thus 'the end of the year 1500', taken literally, would be 24 March 1501 in our system.

³ Ferrara, *Savonarola*, vol. II, p. 52.

⁴ André Chastel, *Art et humanisme à Florence au temps de Laurent le Magnifique* (Paris, 1961), pp. 384-6.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

splendour? The chapters of *Revelation* that he cited speak of the holy city which would be trod under foot for forty-two months (*Revelation* XI, 2) and of the woman clothed in the sun who would give birth to the future ruler of all the nations (*Revelation* XII, 1-5). Both the idea of Florence as a holy city and the image of Florence as a woman in childbirth were, as we shall see, deeply rooted in civic tradition.

In this late period of his life, no one knows just when, Botticelli also painted a *Crucifixion* in which he made a more explicit connection between millennial hopes and Florentine patriotism.¹ The cross divides the painting into two lateral scenes: the right is a scene of wrath and punishment, the left a scene of redemption and glory. On the right burning brands descend from a murky sky, while an angel stands below, whipping a small, bushy-maned animal. On the left the sky is illuminated by a shining circle of light in the centre of which sits a venerable figure holding a book open to the viewer. White shields emblazoned with red crosses descend over a city bathed in sunlight. Below, a beautiful woman, golden hair flowing down her back, lies prostrate, embracing the base of the cross. A small animal with bared teeth is escaping from the folds of her cloak.

Botticelli used no inscriptions to explain this painting. To the Florentines no explanation was necessary. The fiery brands showering from the heavens were the *flagellum Dei*, so often heralded by Savonarola.² In the sun-bathed city they could easily recognize the Florentine Cathedral, Baptistery, Campanile, and many other buildings. White shields with red crosses were the established symbol of Florentine Guelfism. The woman embracing the cross was the Magdalen,³ but probably also Florence, the *bella donna* of Florentine poetry and painting,⁴ whose repentance had gained for her the promise that she would be the centre of the great renewal.⁵ The animal being whipped by the angel suggests the Florentine lion, the *marzocco*, while the small fierce beast escaping from the Magdalen's cloak was probably the wolf, symbol of the persecutors of the Church.⁶ Thus Florence is represented

¹ The painting is in the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is believed by Horne to be a school piece; Horne, *Alessandro Filipepi*, pp. 301-2.

² Girolamo Savonarola, *Compendium Revelationum*, in J. Quéatif, ed., *R. Patris F. Hieronymi Savonarolae Ferrariensis Epistolae Spirituales, Et Asceticae* (Paris, 1674), p. 226.

³ Identified as Mary Magdalen by Horne, *Alessandro Filipepi*, p. 302.

⁴ Identified as Florence by Wilhelm von Bode, *Sandro Botticelli* (Berlin, 1921), p. 188. On the city as beloved lady see Warman Welliver, *L'impero fiorentino* (Florence, 1957), p. 40 *et passim*; on the *bella donna* in poetry see below, p. 32.

⁵ On Florence as the centre of the great renewal see below, p. 19 *et passim*.

⁶ On Savonarola's animal symbolism in connection with his prophecy of the Church's tribulations, *Prediche nuovamente venute in luce . . . sopra il salmo Quam Bonus*

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

three times in the painting, the three times of Savonarola's prophetic cycle: once, under the divine scourge; a second time, repentant at the foot of the cross, having driven out the persecutors of the Church; finally, in triumph, bathed in the light of the open book of God's revelation.

Botticelli was but one of many visionaries in early sixteenth-century Florence who dreamed of civic glory. Preachers like Francesco da Meleto and Francesco da Montepulciano made the churches ring with their denunciations and their promises, while popular elements of Savonarola's *piagnone* following survived in the group called the *Unti*, led by the artisan-prophet, Pietro Bernardo.¹ Another radical preacher was the Franciscan Amadeite, Frate Antonio da Cremona.² In a sermon of 26 December 1508, for which he was called to account by the Archbishop of Florence, Frate Antonio castigated the city for crucifying the prophet who had brought her the message of repentance which had justified her election as the seat of divine illumination in the midst of Italy's tribulations. As a result of this perfidy, he said, Florence would be abandoned, to share for a time the fate of 'the garden of Italy' which would be overrun by wild beasts, the foreign barbarians. But Florence was the New Jerusalem and would not be destroyed, for 'the holy pastor has many things to do in the city of Florence in honour of Christ', and he would send other prophets to call her to repentance.³

Similar themes were combined with a revolutionary social vision in the prophecy disseminated in 1512 by a Florentine priest, Giovanni d'Angelo da Miglio, who asserted that he had copied it from a 1490 text which recorded a vision experienced in 1436 by a Carthusian, Albert of Trent.⁴ The prophecy 'foretold' the disaster that was to come to Italy from the invasion of a foreign king 'between 1490 and 1503', and 'predicted' the appearance of a prophet in Florence who would teach the truth, convert most of the people to God and protect them from the

Israel Deus (Venice, 1528), Predica Quinta. The animal escaping from the Magdalen's cloak has been identified as the *lupa*, Dantesque symbol of ecclesiastical corruption, by Ferrara, *Savonarola*, vol. II, p. 56. It might also, or alternatively, refer to Pisa, the fox, which had escaped from Florentine rule in 1494 and was only recaptured in 1509.

¹ For the most recent discussion of these figures see Cesare Vasoli, 'L'attesa della nuova era in ambienti e gruppi fiorentini del Quattrocento', *L'Attesa dell'età nuova nella spiritualità della fine del medioevo* (Convegni del Centro di Studi sulla Spiritualità Medievale, III, 16-19 October 1960, Todi, 1962), pp. 390-429.

² Giampaolo Tognetti, 'Un episodio inedito di repressione della predicazione post-savonaroliana (Firenze 1509)', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, vol. XXIV (1962), pp. 190-9.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

⁴ There are several MS. texts in Florentine libraries and an Italian version, much abbreviated, in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. français 828, fols. 217r-221v. The fullest text, which I cite here, is B.N.F., MSS. Capponi, 121, fols. 1-10v.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

divine scourge until he himself died by burning. Before he died, however, he would reveal certain secrets, among them the coming destruction of the Church. The year 1502 would see great confusion, especially in Florence; but the powerful men of the world would be punished by the people and the Florentines would attain power (*dominium*), while a popular champion would arise to convert the Church entirely to religion. Further turmoil would take place in the adulterous Church, which would be torn by black and white dogs sent by an avenging angel, until the keys fell from her hand. A universal Church council would meet in Florence and receive 'the new book in which the whole law will be renewed'. Finally, the age of Adam would return and all would be converted to one faith, united under a single shepherd.

The correspondence of these prophecies with certain elements of the two Botticelli paintings is striking. Clearly, there existed a shared prophetic language and a shared set of hopes. The references to the prophet who had been put to death explicitly connect this millennial expectation with Savonarola, and indeed he had preached and prophesied many of the same things. Savonarola had scored the sinfulness of the clergy, the tyranny of rulers and the corruption of morals, and he had seen those woes as signs that the Biblical prophecies were about to be fulfilled. Declaring that the world stood at the threshold of the new age, he had identified King Charles VIII as God's instrument for the chastisement which would precede renewal and he had given Florence a special place in the divine scheme as the centre from which the light of reformation would go out to the world.¹ Many of Florence's literary and intellectual leaders had hailed Savonarola as a prophet of God and had helped to publicize his vision of a rebirth of Florence and of Christendom.² Girolamo Benivieni, one of Lorenzo the Magnificent's *brigata* of poets and friend of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, had addressed his city in this way:³

*Arise, O New Jerusalem and see
your Queen and her beloved son.
In you, City of God, who now sit and weep*

¹ 'Insuper et erunt congregati omnes fere ecclesiae rectores in inclita urbe Florentinorum. Et liber habetur novus in quo renovabitur tota lex inreprehensibilis Jesu Benedicti.' *Ibid.*, fol. 9.

² Ferrara, *Savonarola*, vol. II, pp. 7-72; Joseph Schnitzer, 'Die Flugschriftenliteratur für und wider Girolamo Savonarola', *Festgabe Karl Theodor von Heigel* (Munich, 1903).

³ Girolamo Benivieni, *Commento sopra a più sue canzoni et sonetti dello amore et della bellezza divina* (Florence, 1500), fol. 113v.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

*Such joy and splendour will yet be born
as to decorate both you and all the world.
In those days of bliss*

*You will see all the world come to you,
devoted and faithful
folk, drawn by the scent of your holy lily.*

All peoples and nations, wrote Benivieni, would conform to the one true religion of Florence and the world would be united in one flock under a single shepherd. In the new age Florence would extend her hegemony in a benevolent *imperio* because she was the city of the elect and of the true religion. All those who returned voluntarily to rest under the paws of the Florentine lion would be blessed with temporal and spiritual rewards, while any who disdained her future glory would be cursed.¹ Another Savonarolan from the same circle, Giovanni Nesi, in 1497 published his *Oraculum de Novo Saeculo*, a dream-vision compounded of Christian millenarianism and Hermetic and Neopythagorean occultism.² To Nesi Savonarola was both the prophet of the Christian millennium and the oracular fount of esoteric knowledge, 'the Socrates of Ferrara,' possessed of the wisdom of Plato, Plotinus and the Cabala, as well as of the Bible, who dispensed the divine illumination by which men would be able to reconstruct Florence in liberty, spirituality and truth, according to the models of both the celestial Jerusalem and the Platonic republic. With Savonarola's teaching Florence would multiply her *imperium* and create the new era (*novum illud saeculum*). In Florence Christ reigned and the golden age had begun.³

Such were the dreams dreamed in Florence, city of hard-headed businessmen, practical politicians and sophisticated artists and thinkers, at the turn of the sixteenth century. All the characteristics of the familiar pattern of millenarian episodes were present: social crisis, a charismatic leader, a view of the world as a battleground between good and evil forces, a chosen people, a vision of ultimate redemption in an earthly paradise.⁴ But reduction of this episode to the millenarian formula will mislead us unless we also look at it in the perspective of Florentine history, for the Florentine messianic vision was not merely a response to the late Quattrocento crisis nor to the preaching of Savonarola alone.

¹ *Ibid.*, fols. 112r-113r.

² On Giovanni Nesi see Eugenio Garin, *Medioevo e Rinascimento* (Bari, 1954), pp. 277-8.

³ *Iohannis Nesii Florentini Oraculum De Novo Saeculo* (Florence, 1497), signature C 6v.

⁴ These are the salient features, as I understand them, in the best-known recent work on millennialist movements, Norman Cohn's *Pursuit of the Millennium* (2d ed., New York, 1961).

DONALD WEINSTEIN

It was in fact an important aspect of long-standing civic tradition, one of the ways in which Florentines habitually regarded their city and themselves in relation to her. To the Florentines their city was a living creature with a destiny shaped by God. Divine providence had attended her birth and continued to guide her throughout her history. She was a favourite of the Lord, and as such her statesmen had the responsibility of considering the moral and religious consequences of their deliberations.¹ Unusual occurrences in the city were interpreted with the aid of astrologers and prophets as signs of this hidden design. The successes and failures of the city's undertakings were seen as rewards and punishments for the virtues and vices of her citizens. To be sure, from the end of the fourteenth century Florentine humanists had begun to expound a new public ethos which emphasized the active virtues of the citizen in guiding the destinies of a state whose purpose was the enhancement of freedom and the development of the individual.² In order to fulfil this task they had re-examined and re-evaluated many of the traditions and assumptions by which Florentines lived. But the humanists did not make a clean break with the values and traditions of the past. If they developed a new view of the founding of the city they retained the notion that Florence, as the daughter of Rome, had a special heritage, and if they no longer saw Florence as the dutiful servant of Papalist Guelfism they incorporated into their new view of the city as the champion of republican liberty certain features of the old Guelf ideology — its moralism and its sense of a special civic destiny. As much as civic humanism reshaped and intensified the historical consciousness of the Florentines, it did not terminate their disposition to look at themselves in the light of prophecy. Florentine civic humanism developed on an established base of popular and patriotic traditions, and humanist classicism and the older *volgare* grew not merely side by side but in a mutually influential relationship.³ Similarly, in the Laurentian era of the 1470s and 1480s, the poets, artists and Neoplatonist thinkers who cultivated the notion of Florentine greatness leaned upon popular civic traditions.⁴

Seen from this point of view the millenarian ideas of the 1490s and the early 1500s appear neither as unique nor as a reaction of 'medieval' ways of thinking, but as another stage of a persistent but dynamic myth

¹ Felix Gilbert, 'Florentine Political Assumptions in the Period of Savonarola and Soderini', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XX (1957), pp. 187-214.

² Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, N.J., 1955), vol. I, pp. 364-8 *et passim*.

³ *Ibid.*, see especially Part IV.

⁴ Chastel, *Art et humanisme*, p. 4; Welliver, *L'impero fiorentino*, especially chapter 1.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

of Florence's special destiny.¹ Our task, then, is to consider what function this myth performed and whether a study of its protean life gives us any insight into the changing attitudes and experiences of the Florentines in their civic life.

The first history of Florence, the *Chronica de origine civitatis* of the thirteenth century, traced her origins to Roman colonization in the time of Julius Caesar. According to the *Chronica*, Florence was founded *ex flore hominum Romanorum*, from the flower of Roman manhood, and she was a *parva Roma*, a little Rome.² Thus she was marked out for a special destiny from her very beginnings, and in the earliest Florentine history prophecy and history were intertwined. The *Chronica* also introduced the theme of Florence's rebirth after a divine scourge: five hundred years after her founding she was destroyed by *Totila flagellum Dei*; when the Romans rebuilt the city they founded churches, each of which corresponded to a church in Rome.³

It has been suggested that the origin of the theme of Florence's special destiny as a child of Rome was related to the first Florentine military incursions into the Tuscan *contado* in the twelfth century.⁴ After 1250, when the Ghibelline government was overthrown by a popular revolution, the Florentines embarked on a new phase of expansionism under the aegis of Guelfism. They also elaborated upon the myth of the city's destined greatness. One version was inscribed on the walls of the *Palazzo del Popolo* about this time: Florence is full of riches; her rule brings happiness to Tuscany; she will be eternally triumphant over her enemies; she reigns over the world.⁵ But the great defeat of the Florentine Guelfs by the Ghibelline exiles and the forces of Manfred of Hohenstaufen in the Battle of Montaperti in 1260 checked the city's territorial drive and put an end to the government of the

¹ It seems to me there has been a tendency to exaggerate the crisis of confidence in Florence's own republican traditions and the dependence upon the model of Venice. See, for instance, Renzo Pecchioli, 'Il "mito" di Venezia e la crisi fiorentina intorno al 1500', *Studi Storici*, vol. III (1962), pp. 470-1.

² Nicolai Rubinstein, 'The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence. A Study in Mediaeval Historiography', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. V (1942), pp. 198-227. Professor Rubinstein describes it as a work compiled of popular legends, mythological traditions and historical facts derived from ancient and medieval authors (p. 199). Thus popular belief and more sophisticated history blended from an early date.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 201-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 212, n. 1, citing B. Schmeidler, *Italienische Geschichtsschreiber des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1909), pp. 44-5. Such ideas were not limited to Florence alone, of course.

⁵ See the text of the inscription in Rubinstein, 'Beginnings', p. 213. For the idea of *renovatio Romae* in the Baptistery of Florence see Mario Salmi, 'La Renovatio Romae e Firenze', *Rinascimento*, vol. I (1950), pp. 3-24.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

Primo Popolo. When the Guelfs were restored in 1266 with the support of the Papacy and its Angevin ally, popular government and kinship with France as well as alliance with the Papacy became integral parts of the Florentine Guelf ethos.¹ Thereafter Guelfism itself came to be regarded as part of the Florentine destiny, as we can see from the fourteenth-century legend of the prophecy of 'the White Cardinal': 'The conquered shall conquer victoriously, and they shall not be defeated unto eternity,' which, according to Giovanni Villani, meant that the Guelfs who had been defeated and driven from Florence would return victoriously to power (*in istato*), and they would never again lose their ascendancy in Florence (*loro stato e signoria di Firenze*).²

About the same time a new legend took root, replacing the earlier belief that Florence had been reconstructed by the Romans after Totila's devastation. In this newer, fourteenth-century account the time of Totila's destruction remains the same, but the Romans are replaced as restorers of the city by the Emperor Charlemagne. Apparently this linking of Florentine destinies with the great Emperor Charles had to do with the rise of Angevin power in Italy in the thirteenth century and with the consequent diffusion of the prophecy of the Second Charlemagne. The Second Charlemagne prophecy, itself a compound of older legends with the prophecies of Joachim of Flora and his imitators,³ foretold that the Empire would come under the leadership of a French king, a new Charles, who would cleanse the Church, cross the sea to the East and, conquering the Infidel, unite the world in one flock under a single shepherd, whereupon he would lay down his crown upon the Mount of Olives.⁴ Both the legend of the

¹ Nicola Ottokar points out, however, that the restoration of the Guelf régime was not a return to the government of the *Primo Popolo* as the fourteenth-century chroniclers represented it to be, but rather it resulted in the establishment of the *Parte Guelfa* as the predominant power in the city. *Studi comunali e fiorentini* (Florence, 1948), p. 81.

² *Cronica*, VI, 80. The story is also found in Lapo da Castiglionchio, *Epistola o sia ragionamento*, ed. L. Mehus (Bologna, 1753), p. 115. Master John of Toledo, named to the Cardinalate in 1343, was known as the White Cardinal because of his Cistercian habit. According to contemporaries he was a prophet and necromancer who employed his gifts in the anti-imperial cause, predicting the coming of a new King who would make peace in the world after wiping out the Sicilians and the race of Frederick. He was confused with the author of 'the Toledo letter', a prophecy which originated in the twelfth century and versions of which continued to circulate long afterward. For all this see Herman Grauert, 'Meister Johann von Toledo', *Sitzungsberichte der philosoph. und der histor. Classe der kgl. bayer. Akademie der Wissenschaften*, 1901, Heft II, pp. 111-325.

³ For the Joachimite sources and literature see Morton Bloomfield, 'Joachim of Flora: A Critical Survey of His Canon, Teachings, Sources, Biography, and Influence', *Traditio*, vol. XIII (1957), pp. 249-311.

⁴ Text in Oswald Holder-Egger ed., 'Italienische Prophetien des 13. Jahrhunderts', *Neues Archiv der Gesellschaft für ältere deutsche Geschichtskunde*, vol. II (1904), pp. 383-4; see also Franz Kampers, *Kaiserprophetien und Kaisersagen im Mittelalter* (Munich, 1895), pp. 145-53.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

Carolingian restoration and the prophecy of the Second Charlemagne are found repeatedly in the fourteenth-century Florentine sources, although only toward the end of the century, as we shall see, were they linked in such a way that Florence shared in the ultimate triumph of the Carolingian line. The legend of the city's restoration by Charlemagne appeared for the first time in the chronicle which Giovanni Villani began to write in 1300. Villani emphasized the religious aspects of the restoration which, he said, took place on 'the Easter day of the Resurrection' and included the founding of the Church of the Holy Apostle 'to the honour of God and the holy apostles'. He also stressed Florence's continuity with the Roman past and her special place in Christian eschatology, for, he said, while Totila had destroyed the city, her cathedral (*il duomo di santo Giovanni*), which had originally been a temple of Mars, had remained standing and would remain standing until the Day of Judgment.¹

But what was the mission and the destiny of this city which Providence had caused to be founded under the auspices of eternal Rome and reborn under the auspices of Charlemagne, the emperor of Rome reborn? Villani noted that when Charlemagne refounded the city he also granted her communal privileges: 'and he made the commune and citizens of Florence and for three miles around independent and free.' After this a government on the Roman model was established, with a council of one hundred senators and two consuls.² Thus, free republican government was a fundamental part of the Carolingian-Roman heritage. Villani also thought of Florence's Roman heritage in terms of 'greatness' and the doing of great deeds. We need only recall the famous passage in the eighth book of his chronicle where he explained how he came to write the history of his city. In 1300, he tells us, he went to Rome to participate in the jubilee indulgence of Pope Boniface VIII. There he saw the wonderful sights of the ancient city and read the story of Rome's great deeds in her ancient authors, and there and then he decided to write the history of his own

¹ G. Villani, *Cronica*, II, 1: 'e infra la città presso alla porta *casa, sive domo*, interpretiamo il duomo di santo Giovanni, chiamato prima Casa di Marti. E di vero mai non fue disfatto, nè disfarà in eterno, se non al *die judicio*; e così si truova scritto nello smalto del detto duomo.' This is the present-day Baptistery of San Giovanni, which served as the cathedral until the early twelfth century. The same story in Castiglione, *Epistola*, p. 67. Compare the Roman proverb: 'Quamdiu stat Colysaeus stat et Roma; quando cadet Colysaeus cadet et Roma; quando cadet Roma cadet et mundus.' Quoted in Charles T. Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford, 1957), p. 3.

² G. Villani, *Cronica*, III, 3. Professor Rubinstein suggests there may have been a forged charter of franchise since Villani's account is so detailed. Rubinstein, 'Beginnings', p. 215, n. 3. Villani took the trouble to deny other stories of the rebuilding of Florence in which it took place under pagan auspices.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

city, for, just as Rome was in decline, 'Florence, the daughter and creature of Rome,' was in the ascendant and on the verge of accomplishing great things.¹ And yet, for Villani the Florentine inheritance of Roman greatness had little or nothing to do with Rome's imperial mission. With Florentine territorial expansion he had little sympathy. Villani castigated those of his fellow citizens who offended God by their dissatisfaction with the benefits He had bestowed upon the city and who aspired to go beyond their proper boundaries in aggression against their neighbours.² For him Florentine greatness was a composite of her wealth, her republican institutions, her culture and her charitable and pious citizenry. Moreover, Villani's view seems to have been characteristic of his time. Expansionist ambitions there were, but the Florentines of the first half of the fourteenth century do not seem to have reformulated their old territorial ambitions into an ideology of imperialism.³ Military activity beyond the city walls was generally justified as a defence of Guelfism — that is, of domestic republicanism, civic virtue and service to the cause of the Church.⁴

In the years following the mid-century it became increasingly difficult to hold to this position, as we can see in the writings of Giovanni Villani's brother, Matteo. In taking up his pen to continue the chronicle of Giovanni, who died of the Black Death in 1348, Matteo had to come to terms with that disaster. For him the Black Death was a second Flood, a divine judgment upon men's sins even more severe in its toll of human lives; but like the first Flood it was the beginning of a great renewal.⁵ Consequently, he felt that his task was to interpret Florentine events in the light of God's judgment so that his readers would understand them and learn that the remedy for adversity

¹ Ibid., VIII, 36.

² Villani recounts how, after the Florentines had been defeated by the Pisans (in 1341) he had told a Florentine *cavaliere* why God had permitted this defeat: 'la vera carità è fallita in noi; prima verso Iddio, di non essere a lui grati e conoscenti di tanti benefici fatti e in tanto podere avere posta la nostra città, e per la nostra presunzione non stare contenti a' nostri termini, ma volere occupare non solamente Lucca, ma l'altre città e terre vicine indebitamente', XI, 135. Similarly, in 1342 Villani suggested that the loss of Lucca was the judgment of God, 'per abbassare la superbia e avara ingratitudine de' Fiorentini e de' loro rettori,' and he recalled the prophecy of his friend Maestro Dionigio dal Borgo a San Sepolcro in 1328, that Florence would have the lordship of Lucca but only at great expense and for a short time: XI, 140. See also X, 86.

³ See also *La Cronica di Dino Compagni*, ed. Isidoro Del Lungo, *R.I.S.*, vol. IX, 2 (Città di Castello, 1916), p. 3.

⁴ Giovanni Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. Vittore Branca (Florence, 1956), p. 127.

⁵ '... propuosi nell'animo mio fare alla nostra varia e calamitosa materia cominciamento a questo tempo, come a uno rinnovellamento di tempo e secolo, comprendendo annualmente le novità che appariranno di memoria degne, giusta la possa del debole ingegno, come più certa fede per li tempi avvenire ne potremo avere.' M. Villani, *Cronica*, I, 1.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

was to conform to the Divine Will.¹ In politics as in other activities his countrymen were to conform to the canons of virtue. Matteo condemned the use of deception (*inganno*) by the civic leaders in their attempt to take over the city of Pistoia,² as he condemned generally the tyrannical rapacity with which city attacked city, 'departing from the straight road of true justice.'³ On the other hand, he justified Florence's occupation of the towns of Colle and Prato as well as Pistoia when it seemed that they might otherwise submit to the tyranny of Milan and thus increase the threat to Florence's own security.⁴ Matteo thought of Guelfism as the party of piety, of liberty and of Latinity against the German barbarism which was attempting to overrun the free cities of Italy.⁵ Ghibellinism, the party of imperialism, was tyrannical; thus, he declared, an Italian who became a tyrant would find it necessary also to become a Ghibelline.⁶ Matteo's Guelfism was an ideal that regarded the good of the whole in terms of the civic liberties of each of its parts. Individual cities were to subordinate their ambitions to the common good of Italian civilization; no one state must seek supremacy over any other, for the ultimate value to be defended was the freedom of the Christian commune, with equal emphasis upon both those terms.

But even as Matteo Villani wrote the fibre of his Guelfism was undergoing heavy strain. In Florence he saw the *Parte Guelfa* being used as an instrument of private ambitions and oppression,⁷ while in the neighbouring Papal States he saw the activities of Cardinal Albornoz as a challenge to Florentine liberty. Matteo had very sharp words for those governors of the Church who used their positions to gain power for themselves. Unmindful of how Florence had aided the Roman Church to enlarge its temporal state on many past occasions, these tyrants were both secretly and openly trying to impose their lordship over the Florentines and thus to undermine their liberties. This put the Florentines in the false position of having to act against the Church of Rome, which was tantamount to acting against their very selves,

¹ Ibid., prologue and chapter 1.

² Ibid., I, 97.

³ Ibid., II, 1.

⁴ Ibid. On Pistoia, I, 96; on Colle, I, 43; on Prato, I, 43-4.

⁵ Ibid., IV, 78: 'Appresso è da considerare, che la lingua latina, e' costumi e' movimenti della lingua tedesca sono come barbari, e divisati e strani agl' Italiani, la cui lingua e la cui leggi e' costumi, e' gravi e moderati movimenti diedono ammaestramento a tutto l'universo, e a loro la monarchia del mondo.'

⁶ 'E di vero la parte Guelfa è fondamento e rocca ferma e stabile della libertà d'Italia, e contraria a tutte le tirannie, per modo che se alcuno Guelfo divien tiranno, convien per forza ch' e' diventi ghibellino . . . ' Ibid., VIII, 24.

⁷ For Matteo Guelfism as an ideology and the interests of the Guelf party were not identical. As an ideological Guelf he did not feel bound to an unquestioning support of the Party.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

although it was not against the Church but against its evil and worldly pastors that the Florentines were resisting.¹

Thus developments both inside and outside Florence in the middle years of the fourteenth century were working to undermine the traditional Guelf ideology of republican pluralism and papal leadership. It was not until 1375, when Florence went to war with Pope Gregory XI, that this ideology received its death blow; but even before that, a new view was forming, one in which Florence no longer defined her Roman inheritance in terms of papal leadership but claimed the leadership for herself.²

In the growth of this new view radical Christian apocalyptic ideas played their part. One source of these ideas was the movement of the Fraticelli, radical offshoot of the Spiritual Franciscans.³ In the fourteenth century, the Fraticelli were very active in Florence. Through such men as Frate Salvestro da Monte Bonello and Frate Simone Fidati da Cascia we can trace some strands of Fraticelli influence among laymen. Frate Salvestro, an uneducated wool carder, had joined the Frati dal Castagno, a Fraticelli group in the Florentine *contado* with which was connected a confraternity of artisans and merchants called the Ciccialardoni. He was active both in the Convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence and among a circle of devotees which used to meet at the villa of Tommaso Corsini, a prominent Florentine lawyer and member of a patrician Guelf family. Frate Salvestro preached poverty and isolation from the world and was believed to have the gift of prophecy.⁴ His close friend and disciple, Frate Simone Fidati da Cascia, also preached the doctrine of apostolic poverty and was protected against papal repression by the Florentine city fathers, who seemed to find it useful to encourage anti-papal feeling while Florentine relations with Rome were worsening.⁵ That the Fraticelli were well-

¹ *Ibid.*, VIII, 103.

² 'In Florence it [the War of the Eight Saints] destroyed a major political tradition.' Gene A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton, N.J., 1962), p. 265 and pp. 266-96. For a good account of Florentine relations with the papal legate see pp. 177-83.

³ On the Fraticelli see Felice Tocco, 'I Fraticelli', *A.S.I.*, ser. 5, vol. XXXV (1905), pp. 331-68; Decima Douie, *The Nature and Effect of the Heresy of the Fraticelli* (Manchester, 1932).

⁴ *Vita del Beato Salvestro in Distici per Don Zenobi Tantini in Leggende di alcuni santi e beati venerati in S. Maria degli Angeli di Firenze*, ed. Casimiro Stolfi (Bologna, 1864), vol. II, pp. 137-69, also 19-81. On the Ciccialardoni, *ibid.*, p. 139, n. 1. On Tommaso Corsini, Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, pp. 30 *et passim*, and on the Corsini family, Luigi Passerini, *Genealogia e storia della famiglia Corsini* (Florence, 1858).

⁵ On Simone Fidati da Cascia see Mary Germaine McNeil, *Simone Fidati and his De Gestis Domini Salvatoris* (Washington, 1950); Douie, *Fraticelli*, pp. 65, 362. For his letter on the death of Angelo Clarenio see Nicola Mattioli, *Il beato Simone Fidati da Cascia dell'Ordine Romitano di S. Agostino e i suoi scritti editi ed inediti* (Rome, 1898), pp. 337-9.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

organized in Florence and influential enough to be considered a serious problem we know from several sources, but especially from the writings of Giovanni dalle Celle.¹ This Vallombrosan hermit, revered as a saint and looked to as a religious advisor by a number of laymen, began to attack the local Fraticelli when one of his own devotees, a carpenter named Tommaso, decided to join their sect.² Giovanni attacked them as schismatics, who were said to have their own secret church with bishops and pope, and he noted that despite continual anti-Fraticelli preaching, 'many lambs continue to run after the wolf.'³ He also attacked them for preaching heretical doctrine, the coming of an Angelic Pastor and the millennium. 'They say that the world is about to be renewed, and I say it is about to be ruined. They cite their predictions and false prophets, and I cite Christ in the Gospel, who says that false prophets will arise and work miracles and there will be more tribulations than there have ever been.'⁴

Giovanni acknowledged the truth of the Fraticelli teaching in one respect, that is, on the corruption of the Church: the pastors of Florence were negligent and allowed their flock to be devoured by wolves, and this turned them to heresy and schism. Such clerics, he wrote, should be put to death.⁵ A few years later, although still violently opposed to 'those members of Antichrist, that is, these heretical Fraticelli, who have already deceived many people and continue to deceive them every day', Giovanni dalle Celle had moved even closer to them in his thinking about the Church. Citing *il papale*, a book of prophecies about the popes which was then believed to be the work of Joachim of Flora,⁶ Giovanni wrote that the then reigning pope, Gregory XI, was the last

On the *Signoria's* protection of Simone against the Inquisitor see Felice Tocco, 'La eresia dei Fraticelli e una lettera del Beato Giovanni dalle Celle', *Rendiconti dell' Accademia dei Lincei, Cl. di Sc. Mor.*, etc., ser. 5, vol. XV (1906), pp. 161-2. See also Marvin B. Becker, 'Florentine Politics and the Diffusion of Heresy in the Trecento: A Socioeconomic Inquiry', *Speculum*, vol. XXXIV (1959), pp. 60-75.

¹ P. Cividali, 'Il beato Giovanni dalle Celle', *Atti dell' Accademia dei Lincei, Cl. di Scienze Mor.*, etc., ser. 5, vol. XII (1907), pp. 353-477.

² Stolfi believes this Tommaso to be the same Maso or Tommaso romito who drew many people to the Fraticelli of Castagni. *Leggende*, vol. II, 25, n. 1.

³ Letter to the Fraticelli in Cividali, *Il beato Giovanni dalle Celle*, pp. 453-4.

⁴ Letter to Tommaso in Giovanni da Prato, *Il Paradiso degli Alberti*, ed. A. Wesselofsky (Bologna, 1867), vol. I, 351.

⁵ Letter to Guido dal Palagio in *Lettere del Beato don Giovanni dalle Celle* (n.p., 1844), p. 15.

⁶ Giovanni indicated that he had a shorter version, lacking one pope, from which he concluded that either his copy was corrupt or that someone had added to the text. Letter to Guido, *ibid.* On the revision of the *Book of the Popes* in Florence at this time see Herbert Grundmann, 'Die Papstprophetien des Mittelalters', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, vol. XIX (1928), pp. 77-139. On Giovanni's belief in the imminent end of the world see his letters to Giorgio Gucci and to Francesco Datini in *Lettere del Beato*, pp. 42, 45.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

pope before the coming of Antichrist. The Church was darkened; the first tribulations were coming and after them the second, the tribulations of Antichrist, would bring the last torments. This evil would come from the north, in the direction of Fiesole, and it would come in the lifetime of men then living. Giovanni's discussion of the end of the Roman Church and of the Last Judgment took place at the time of the final breakdown of Florence's relations with the papacy, which culminated in the War of the Eight Saints in 1375. He was writing to Guido dal Palagio, a lay patrician admirer who had asked him to discuss his ideas about the end of the world.¹ Torn between his loyalties to the commune and to the Church, Guido also asked the monk whether he could in good conscience serve in a civic office when his city was under interdict and at war with the Pope. Giovanni's reply shows how the issue was being drawn between papal leadership and communal self-assertion: he assured Guido that the excommunication of the Florentines by the Pope was invalid and that he need not hesitate to support the Republic in the war. Guido should first have regard for the honour of God, which Giovanni obviously no longer equated with the Papacy, then for the good of his city. It was lawful for him to defend his city and to help preserve it.

Thus the Fraticelli were not the only ones who were undermining the traditional Florentine Guelf ideology. Giovanni dalle Celle rejected Fraticelli millenarianism and schism, but he accepted the pseudo-Joachite *Book of the Popes*, which was probably of Fraticelli origin, in formulating his own eschatology of the approaching Day of Judgment and the destruction of the Church of Rome. Perhaps because his view of the future was so pessimistic, he did not pursue the implications of his advice to Guido on the moral independence of the Florentine Republic. Some shared his pessimism, for example the poet Franco Sacchetti,² but others began to dream of a great role for their city in a splendid future. The exiled poet, Fazio degli Uberti, was one of these. Throughout most of his life Fazio had been a Ghibelline, true to the aristocratic tradition of his family;³ but with the repeated failures of the German

¹ Letter to Guido in *Volgarizzamento inedito di alcuni scritti di Cicerone e di Seneca*, ed. Giuseppe Olivieri (Genoa, 1825), pp. 111-12. On the similar advice given by Luigi Marsili see Becker, 'Florentine Politics', p. 72.

² In a letter of 1392 to Pietro Gambacorti, *Signore of Pisa*, Sacchetti wrote 'e' mi pare comprendere il mondo essere venuto presso all'ultimo fine', and to Giacomo di Conte he wrote to the effect that unless God in his compassion provided otherwise it seemed that the Last Judgment was at hand. *I Sermoni Evangelici, le lettere ed altri scritti inediti o rari*, ed. O. Gigli (Florence, 1857), pp. 206, 220.

³ On Fazio degli Uberti see Natalino Sapegno, *Il Trecento* (Milan, 1934), pp. 479-84; Guglielmo Volpi, *Il Trecento* (Milan, 1907), pp. 268-72.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

emperors he turned his thoughts to Rome herself and to the possibility of an independent Italian revival. In 1355 he wrote:¹

*My song, search the garden of Italy,
Closed by mountains and by its own sea,
And do not travel forth again.*

In his two poems, 'Florence' and 'Fiesole' he returned to the old theme of Florence the daughter of Rome. In the first poem he stressed the Roman origins of the *donna*, Florence, who had the characteristics (*tutte impronte*) of 'that valorous and weighty people' from whom she had sprung.² In 'Fiesole' that town tells of the birth of Florence from her own descendant, Rome, and of Florence's inheritance of the Roman mission.³ So far, Fazio seems to share the idea of Florence as the pillar of Holy Church, as also expressed by the Villani brothers; but unlike them he combines this with an idea of Florence's destined leadership.⁴ Moreover, Fazio had a definite idea of what Florence had been chosen

¹ Quoted in Volpi, *Trecento*, p. 271.

² 'Firenze' in *Poesie minori del secolo XIV*, ed. E. Sarteschi (Bologna, 1867), pp. 6-11.

³

*Roma pur operò finchè fu sana ;
E in quel tempo felice e non lontana,
Da se credè una donzella tale ;
A dir a chi fu eguale
Fior si chiamò, chè ben fu ver suo nome :
E l' opere dirò, e 'l che, e 'l come.*

*Di che discese de la mia nipote
Firenze, fiore d' ogni ben, radice,
Per farsi imperadrice,
Come sua madre fu del secol tutto.*

*Qual più perfetto e verace costruito
Dir si potrebbe di quest' alta donna,
Se non ch'ell' è colonna
Di santa chiesa e de' ben temporali,
Prudente, giusta e nimica de' mali?*

'Fiesole', *ibid.*, pp. 11-14. The poems are not dated, but since Fazio was an ardent Ghibelline throughout most of his life these would seem to be from a late period.

⁴

*A te dico, Firenze, chiara luce,
Segui chi ti conduce ;
Il forte Marte, col voler di Giove,
Onora le tue rede, in cui conduce
Vivezza, e in te produce
Bellezza, in te d' ogni corone nove.
E quel signor del ciel che tutto move
Veggendo in te regnar tanta virtute,
Vorrà che tua salute
Sormonti, trionfando per tal modo
Che pur nel 'maginar tutto ne godo.*

DONALD WEINSTEIN

to do:¹ 'On my behalf, bring down tyrannies and those of evil life.' Finally, he turns to the citizens themselves, whose duty it is to support their city in her mission:

*O citizen of her whose honour
You ought to defend more than life itself,
I pray that you will take delight
From your duty to the lily's well being
If only you cause her to reign in safety.*

Similar ideas were expressed in a poem by Braccio Bracci, a Tuscan in the employ of Bernabò Visconti of Milan.² The year was 1375. Florence and Milan had just made an alliance against the papacy and Braccio was obviously using rhetoric that the Florentines liked to hear.³

In the poetry of Uberti and Bracci the model for the civic ethos was republican Rome; but in certain other quarters there was another model, the New Jerusalem. In 1378, shortly after the War of the Eight Saints had ended, there erupted in Florence the great uprising known as the Ciompi Rebellion.⁴ With the upheaval came a renewed interest in religious prophecy, in which the influence of the Fraticelli is often explicit. Typically, the prophecies were expositions of a biblical book,

¹ *Disfammi tirannie, e chi mal vive
Và dirizzando co' ingiustizia spada;
E dal mondo digrada
Qual pertinace vive in sù l'errore.
Non mi guardare a grande, nè a minore,*

² On Bracci see Volpi, *Trecento*, pp. 278-9.

³ *Firenze or ti rallegra, or ti conforta
Che Dio t' ha dato sì nobile stato,
Ch' e nati tuoi ciascun somiglia Cato
In suscitar libertà ch' era morta;*

*Questa gran fama ha rotto muri e porta
E per Italia un tal strido elevato,
Che 'l servo, che dormia, è risvegliato,
E segue l'orme di tua salva scorta.*

*Roma non fece mai quel che tu fai.
Ma tenne le provincie soggiogate,
E tu da servitù tutte le trai:*

*Quest' è perchè tue voglie son legate
Con quella del Visconte, sì che mai
Non voglia Iddio che stien più separate.*

⁴ 'A Firenze' (1375), in Sarteschi, *Poesie minori*, p. 41.

⁴ On the Ciompi see N. Rodolico, *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1945) [and below, IX].

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

The Book of Daniel was a favourite, and they seem to have been re-workings of older, Joachite-inspired texts in the light of recent events in Florence. One, for example, purported to be an exposition of *Daniel* by a Minorite friar in the year 1368. It 'predicted' the uprising of 1378, when the *popolani* and *gente minuta* would kill all tyrants and traitors and despoil them of their states, along with those of many princes and powerful lords.¹ The common people would join with a reformed clergy stripped of all its temporal possessions, and after the appearance of Antichrist, a false restorer and a heretic emperor, a holy pope (*papa santo*), would appear, who, together with the poor Fraticelli led by a mystical Elias of the Franciscan order, would drive all the luxury-loving and avaricious priests from the Church. The King of France would be elected Emperor of the Romans and would become lord of the whole world, healing the breach between Guelfs and Ghibellines and conquering Jerusalem. In another *Daniel* prophecy, this one described as an exposition of certain 'masters of Toledo and of England' and copied in Paris in 1365, a similar string of uprisings and devastations would culminate in a great revolution (*grande novità*) in the year 1380.² The holy government of the great city divided in many parties, the daughter of Rome, would suffer many tribulations from bloody internal conflicts, wars and a revolution, and her condition would seem hopeless until one of her humble citizens (*un suo picciolo cittadino*) would be made governor. He would rule a long time, purge the city of her evils, bring repose to all her citizens, enlarge her territory and magnify her name. Three neighbouring cities would be brought under her rule with the good will of their own citizens. Afterwards this popular leader would render his soul to God amidst great mourning, having left the city in liberty with a government *comune e pacifico*.

Thus, in both these prophecies, the popular cause was identified with a Christian millenarianism emphasizing world renewal, a spiritual Church and the leadership of a French king. In the second, Florence was singled out as the daughter of Rome, destined to be a beacon of liberty and a leader in Tuscany. The Guelf tradition is still evident in the moral, religious and French context in which renewal is conceived; but it is Guelfism with a difference, or rather, with two differences:

¹ *Diario d'anonimo fiorentino dell' anno 1358 al 1389*, ed. A. Gherardi in *Cronache dei secoli XIII e XIV* (Documenti di Storia Italiana, vol. VI, Florence, 1876), pp. 389-90. The chronicler inserted his description of the prophecy after an entry for December 1378.

² 'Qui son venute lettere de Maestri di Tolletta e da quelli d'inghilterra . . .' MS. B.N.F., Magl. XXXV, 173, fol. 1r-1v. The letter was supposed to have been sent originally to Cardinal Anibaldo degli Orsini in Paris. I can find no trace of a cardinal of this name.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

first, the satisfaction of lower-class aspirations for justice and equality; second, the displacement of the Roman Church as the Guelf leader and the corresponding rise of Florence. Significantly, the assertion of Florence's independence from ecclesiastical Guelfism was accompanied by a growing tendency to look to the Florentine state itself as the arbiter and protector of social justice.

The Ciompi rebellion did not consolidate itself. The interlude of popular government ended in 1382 with the reinstatement of oligarchic, *Parte Guelfa* control. Since the earlier policy of protecting the Fraticelli had proved to be a two-edged sword, the new government took steps to repress heretical preaching, and sent one radical, Fra Michele the Minorite, to the stake in 1389.¹ Meanwhile, the looming threat of Milanese expansion gave the Florentines a strong motive for seeking internal harmony. In poetry and in the prophecies we hear appeals for reconciliation. In one poem, addressed to the beautiful lady with golden hair, the poet, probably Bruscaccio da Rovezzano,² recalls the example of 'lofty Rome' which suffered decline because of false counsel, envy, greed and pride.³ The poet ends with the statement of faith that God will help the city of flowers ever to flourish anew.

¹ On suppression of the Fraticelli see Becker, 'Florentine Politics', p. 73. On the execution of Fra Michele see *Storia di Fra Michele Minorita come fu arso in Firenze nel 1389* (Bologna, 1864).

² Attributed to Guido dal Palagio by G. Carducci, *Rime di M. Cino da Pistoia e d'altri del secolo XIV* (Florence, 1862), pp. 597-600, and by G. Volpi, *Trecento*, p. 284, and by Sapegno, *Trecento*, p. 490. Antonio Medin included it in his 'Le rime di Bruscaccio da Rovezzano', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, vol. XXV (1895), pp. 222-4, under the title, 'Cançon del detto Bruscaccio quando messer Donato Acciaiuoli fu confinato a Barletta.' This would date the poem 1396, the year of Acciaiuoli's exile, or soon after. Without claiming a definitive attribution, which would have to be based on a study of the manuscripts, I would argue for Bruscaccio's authorship: Guido was not otherwise known as a composer of verse; Andrea Stefani included it in a collection of the poetry of Bruscaccio in the early fifteenth century (Medin, p. 185); moreover, the poem is similar to several other political poems by Bruscaccio. Finally, there are some stylistic similarities with other of Bruscaccio's poems:

Bruscaccio: 'ché più non posso far brieve latino

Sia qual si vuole, o guelfo o ghibellino'

(Medin, 'Le rime', p. 217)

Bruscaccio or Guido: 'gentile o ppopolano

Sia qual si vuole, ascolti il mio latino'

(Medin, 'Le rime', p. 222)

On the other hand, there seems little in the poem to warrant connecting it with Donato Acciaiuoli's exile as Medin does. The poem seems to be talking about a general reconciliation between citizens.

³

*O bella donna mia, o bel paese,
O voi c' avete ile sue trecce in mano,
Gentile o ppopolano,
Sia qual si vuole, ascolti il mio latino.
Non ricercate le passate offese.*

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

In another poem, written after the victory over Milan at Governole in 1397, Bruscaccio urged the Florentines to grasp the opportunity given by God and Fortune, and he drew a parallel with the position of Rome during the wars with Carthage.¹

Similarly, the anonymous author of a dialogue between Florence and the neighbouring town of Colle has Florence draw a parallel between herself and Rome.²

These appeals for unity in the interest of Florentine power did not succeed in stifling the voices of social protest; but even the prophecies show a new concern for reconciliation and a broader, civic point of view. In one which styled itself 'Some little flowers drawn from the Apocalypse' the conflicts in the city were blamed upon the attempts of certain persons to make the burden of the laws fall upon the weak rather than the strong.³ But the humble people were also to blame, for

*No lle scenpiate la dorata chioma,
Non vulnerate i delicati membri,
Sicchè non si dismembri
Da voi la giusta spada e lla colonna.*

Ibid., pp. 222-3.

1

*Voi siete Roma, e Anibale è il Duca.
Se volete riluca
Liberamente il popol loro stato,
Questo can rinneghato
Convien che ssie disfatto, ch'a dDio piace,
E seguiranne a tutta l'Italia pace.*

*Ma sopra tutto la tal mia Fiorença,
Che nella sua potença
O mia speranza come 'n salda torre*

Medin, 'Le rime', pp. 225-6. Cf. the remark of Leonardo Bruni in his History, in 1415, that 'in our time' Florence had reached the point where Rome stood after her victory over Carthage. Baron, *Crisis*, vol. I, 324.

2

*Roma non imperò senza gran doglio
de' suoi, che poser l'avere et la vita
per por del mondo in lei tutte le spoglie.*

*Il suo exemplo et lo mio ben m'invita
ad farne ogni difesa, et si me toglie
ogni timore. Deh sia pur meco unita!*

*et vedra' mi vestita
sopra i nostri nimici vinti et stanchi
con ghirlanda d'ulivo in panni bianchi*

Orazio Bacci, 'Due sonetti politici in figura di Colle e di Firenze', *Miscellanea storica della Valdelsa*, vol. II (1894), p. 6. The dating is uncertain. Bacci thinks they were written between 1399-1402, but other possibilities are 1429, 1447 and 1452.

³ 'Qui si cominciano alquanti fioretti tratti dell' Apocalisa', MS. B.N.F., Magl. XXXV, 173, fols. 1v-6r. The prophecy purports to be based on a non-existent 35th chapter of *Revelation*.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

they had abandoned 'the straight way' and therefore had been led into deception. As a consequence, the 'city of the flowers', ordinarily such a good example to others, had fallen ill, and her internal weakness made it difficult for her to maintain her position abroad. She was at the mercy of the great, rich foreigner who, raised from lowly origins to the royal dignity, was taking castles and cities by deception, including 'the city of P' (Pisa) and 'the city of L' (Lucca). Nevertheless, Florence would ultimately come into her own. She was called lion because of her nobility; she was also the queen and princess of other cities.¹ After the death of one who represented the apostolic way, Judas and his followers would be discovered, the traitors to God and the commune would be finished, and the city of flowers would become a new centre of lordship, liberty and grace. Florence, the daughter of Rome, would recover from her sickness with the aid of the French, who would help her put down the German Eagle, the Ghibellines and their followers, including the Pisans, and the lion would be lord and master of the other cities around her. Prayers would be sung and good works performed, for the just would be separated from the sinners. A new pastor would arise, one who would be solicitous for his flock and for the freedom of the friends of Peter's See, and Holy Church would nourish the children of the daughter of Rome and of the Gauls and create them anew.

This prophecy carried on the Ciompi tradition; all those who favoured a government of force and exploited the people would be driven out and their palaces would be ruined. But the point of view of its author has changed from that of the earlier prophecies of the Ciompi era. Here the prophet involves the *popolo* in responsibility for civic strife and shows concern for the effect of internal dissension upon Florence's position abroad. He vents his hatred not only upon the oppressors of the poor but also upon the 'great foreigner' who was enveloping Italy through his deception — an obvious reference to Gian Galeazzo Visconti of Milan. As a Florentine of Guelf sympathies he not only attacked the Ghibellines but all those who favoured a government of force against liberty and all those who forgot that the chief responsibility of citizenship was the civic good, and on this ground he criticized the lowly as well as the great. Referring to the example of Rome he pointed out how the tiny house of Romulus had become the bastion and ruler of the world and had prevailed as long as it loved the common good and served the commune in unity and liberty.

So it was that under the double pressure of civic strife and foreign aggression the mythic Florence of the Guelfs tended to coalesce with the

¹ The lion was another common symbol for Florence.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

prophetic Florence of the Ciampi. Good government and piety, social justice and power, temporal and religious leadership — Rome and Jerusalem — were blended in a single vision which seems to have functioned both as a model of a civic ethos and as a promise of ultimate rewards.¹ From its inception in the early fifteenth century this dual vision continued to serve as an inspiration to the city's prophets, orators and poets. In the rhyming prophecy 'Awake o proud lion to my loud cry', one of the many prophecies ascribed to St Bridget of Sweden but clearly of fifteenth-century Florentine origin, we see Florence arising from her struggle with Milan.² Milan, the serpent, would be in great trouble; the See of Peter would lose the keys; but Florence, lying pregnant in a feverish sleep, would give birth, whereupon every hatred and bitter pain would disappear. In the new age she would shed her old skin and have a joyous peace. The 'Bridget prophecy' expressed the more independent Florentine spirit that followed the War of the Eight Saints and the successful resistance against Milan, but its imperialism was not unrestrained. While the author took a more positive view of Florence's right to hegemony over her neighbours than the Guelfs of the previous century, he nevertheless shared the older view that justice and moderation were more important than unlimited power, and he advised Florence to limit her territorial ambitions.³ In most instances, however, moderation gave way to enthusiasm for the unlimited possibilities of Florence's destiny. The deathbed dictum ascribed to Cosimo de' Medici in 1464, that kings and other peoples would turn to Florence for counsel on how to govern until all Italy was under her dominion, was merely a restatement of what the prophecies had by then been saying for decades.⁴ In the vision of Fra Antonio da Rieti, a prophecy which

¹ On the other hand, Professor Baron says that the Ciampi rising 'had not left any traces that might have shaped the outlook and culture of the citizenry about 1400'. *Crisis*, vol. I, p. 8.

² On St Bridget see Johannes Jørgensen, *Saint Bridget of Sweden*, trans. Ingeborg Lund (London, 1954). The MS. cited here is B.N.F., Magl. VII, 1081, fols. 12-15, 56-7, entitled 'Propheta di Sancta Brigida [del giudicio che debbe venire sopra Toscana]'. Another, B.N.F., II. II. IX, 125 ends, 'Finita la profetia di sancta Brigida la quale tratta di quella a' da venire dal 1460 infino al 1470, ridotta in volgare in versi da Iacopo da Montepulciano mentre era nelle carcere del Comune di Firenze.' No pagin. This is attributed to Iacopo by Angelo Messini, 'Profetismo e profezie ritmiche italiane d'ispirazione gioachimito-francescane nei sec. XIV e XV', *Miscellanea francescana*, vol. XXXVIII (1937), p. 50. On Iacopo see Guido Laccagnini, *Giorn. Stor. d. Lett. Ital.*, vol. LXXXVI (1925), pp. 225-82.

³

*Ma ben convien che torni a sua confina
Et viva in più letitia
In soda e gran giustitia
Insieme tengha.*

⁴ Welliver, *L'impero fiorentino*, pp. 42-3. While I am not convinced by Welliver's characterization of a 'Florentine theology' and his ascription to Lorenzo de' Medici of

DONALD WEINSTEIN

survives in many fifteenth-century manuscripts, the Florentine lily is seen putting out ever more beautiful branches, flowers and leaves until it covered all of Italy.¹ In another text which begins, 'The bear of tribulation arises,' Florence, the daughter of Rome, is envisioned as the 'mistress and capital' of all those around her,² while one of the prophecies attributed to Merlin predicts that she would become head (*capo*) of all Italy.³ In all three Florentine leadership is associated with a coming age of spiritual perfection and peace, although each has a different idea of what the new age will be like. Fra Antonio prophesied that the Pope would fly to the protection of the lily, that is, of Florence. Italy would have peace for five hundred years, while the cross would extend its arms from West to East. Antichrist would appear and be vanquished, and all human labour would cease. In 'The bear of tribulation' the emphasis was upon the Church's renunciation of its claims to temporal power and upon Florence's rise from its bed of pain to become the nest of Christ, the eagle. The Merlin prophecy was unusual in predicting the ultimate supremacy of the German emperor over the Church and 'the Gauls', but the first two persisted in the traditional Florentine Francophilism, both envisioning some form of joint Franco-Florentine hegemony.

The rhetoric of some of the Republic's paid orators and poets of the period contain similar themes. Thus, Buonaccorso da Montemagno, a humanist civil servant,⁴ in a public oration, urged the Florentines to fulfil their destiny: 'And acting in this way [for the common good] you will see this your most fortunate rule (*imperio*) continually flourish: you will see this broad leadership (*amplissimo principato*) ever enlarge itself: you will see the triumphant name of Florence grow in the world in ever more honoured fame, and earn the veneration of all peoples.'⁵ And in another speech:⁶ 'Uniting so many hearts in one heart, so many wills in

a conscious design for a Florentine empire and a Florentine church, I think he has done more than anyone to show the importance of the mythical Florence in the culture of the Laurentian period.

¹ *Copia d'una rivelazione che ebbe frate Antonio da Rieti dell'ordine di Sancto Francesco de Frati Observanti* (Florence, n.d.). See *British Museum Catalogue of Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century*, vol. VI, p. 631. The MS. texts that follow date the vision 1422: B.N.F. Magl. XXV, 344, fols. 33-6; VII, 1081, fols. 20-1 and 29-30.

² 'Levassi l'orsa della tribolatione dove ella fia stata', B.N.F., Magl. XXV, 344, fols. 31-2r, and VII, 1081, fol. 28r-v.

³ MS. B.N.F., Magl. XXV, 344, fol. 24r.

⁴ On Buonaccorso see Baron, *Crisis*, vol. II, pp. 623-4. The orations have been attributed to Stefano Porcari, but see G. B. C. Giuliani ed., *Prose del giovane Buonaccorso da Montemagno* (Bologna, 1874), pp. xvi-xviii.

⁵ 'E così facendo vedrete sempre questo vostro fortunatissimo imperio fiorire: vedrete questo amplissimo principato sempre magnificarsi: vedrete il trionfante nome di Firenze crescere nel mondo sempre in fama degnissima, e meritar veneratione di tutti i popoli.' Giuliani, *Prose*, p. 26.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

a single will, so many powers in one power, from which are formed a richness, a power, a fame universal . . . this most beautiful Republic is formed, which we possess by the grace of God.' Similarly, Antonio di Meglio, the city herald, in 1434 addressed the 'glorious Florentine people' who could observe their own ascendancy, 'your great power dominating others',¹ while, in 1442, at the time of another crisis with Milan, Anselmo di Gioacchino Calderoni rallied Florence as 'the queen and lady of liberty to whom Italy bears reverence', and pictured the branches of the Florentine lily flowering over every other palm and green olive:²

*This lady whom you now must lead
wishes to show you her government
which has taken its happy and holy birth
from that eternal choir.*

Thus the myth of Florence had, by the mid-fifteenth century, at the latest, become a conscious tool of official rhetoric; but it was an official rhetoric that seems to have corresponded to a felt need and a real faith, judging from its agreement with the more spontaneous and popularly-oriented prophecies. These, neither abandoning their aspirations for social justice and a reformed clergy nor yet identifying with a single class or interest, as the prophets of the late fourteenth century had done, promised the joy of the divine favour in the form of power and glory for the Republic, if its citizens would serve the common good.

The dominance of these themes of civic concord, combined with self-assertion abroad, corresponded remarkably closely in time with the leadership of Cosimo de' Medici. By contrast, the prophecies of the years immediately following Cosimo's death in 1464 give voice once more to social discontents and to aspirations of civic freedom, sometimes even to direct attack upon Medici domination. One text, ascribed to the thirteenth-century poet, Jacopone da Todi, foretold the 'cruel sentence' which would be passed in the year '70, when the lovely lady, full of envious and rapacious citizens would suffer from a general pestilence and her wicked inhabitants would be driven out by a dragon, against whom, in turn, all Christians would rise up. Florence, like the phoenix, would go up in flames before recreating herself with her own people, but 'no Medici will be found who will undergo so many misfortunes'. Ultimately 'honest government' would be restored to the

¹ Francesco Flamini, *La Lirica toscana del Rinascimento anteriore ai tempi del Magnifico* (Pisa, 1891), p. 100.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 214-15. Calderoni was substituting for the regular herald, Antonio di Meglio, who was ill (*ibid.*, p. 213).

DONALD WEINSTEIN

city, but she would never recover her former power, for all the cities of Tuscany would recover their freedom and she would live in peace with all of them.¹ The 'cruel sentence' of the dragon doubtless referred to the Turkish attacks of the 1470s; the dragon was a regular symbol for both Turks and Antichrist. In the prediction that 'honest government' would return to Florence after the disappearance of the Medici we have, perhaps, an echo of the republican conspiracy of 1466.² In this prophecy anti-despotism was linked with anti-imperialism in the manner of the Guelfs of old. More often, however, the democratic or republican aspirations of the period were coupled with ambitious dreams of Florentine power and spiritual leadership, as in the 'Vision of the Holy Hermit of the Year 1400'. This prophet saw the Florentine lion prostrate, beset by difficulties. Pisa was continually trying to break her bonds; Arezzo would have liked to do the same; Lucca was menacing. Within Florence itself the 'bad seed' was sown and the swords of the people would cut cruelly. In all of Italy there would be popular upheavals and great havoc. The emperor would come to Italy to be crowned and all would tremble, while the Castilians would come by sea. Tuscans and Lombards would become embroiled with them and the most terrible wars in history would take place. But Florence would be victorious: the 'flowery lily' would grow and those who disobeyed her would suffer: she would play a leading role in the New Church and she would have great wealth and power.³

1

*Medici non si truova
Per far si gran pruova
Di tanti mali*

B.N.F., Magl. VII, 40, fols. 46-49v.

² Guido Pampaloni, 'Fermenti di riforme democratiche nella Firenze medicea del Quattrocento', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX (1961), pp. 11-62, 241-81; A. Municchi, *La fazione antimedicca detta del Poggio* (Florence, 1911). On the other hand, see the poem of Niccolò di Cristofano Risorboli in praise of Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, Flamini, *La lirica*, p. 145, n. 2:

*Tu se' el mio Petro, et sopra questa pietra
O rinovato il tempio a libertate.*

3

*Distenderassi tua potentia a roma
Et parte harai di quella
Che la chiesa novella Tel consente.*

*Sarai cum lei daccordo pienamente
In perfecta amistade
Cosi tucte tue strade fieno scorte.*

*Partirassi el pastor della sua corte
Donde uso distare
Verrassi ariposare Nella citta fiorita.*

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

The troubled decade of the 1490s produced an outpouring of prophecies. The death of Lorenzo the Magnificent on 8 April 1492 was accompanied by signs and portents which, at least in retrospect, seemed to foretell the evils that came afterwards.¹ Lorenzo was succeeded as ruler of Florence by his son, Piero, who alienated the patricians whose support he needed and mismanaged the diplomatic balance which was the key to Florentine security. Italy was agitated by the growing rivalry between its major states and by the impending invasion of Charles VIII of France. By the time Charles succeeded to the French throne in 1483, he was already being linked to the 'Great Enterprise' of reconquering Naples and crusading against the Turks.² Prophecies in the tradition of the Second Charlemagne legend appeared, envisaging a great religious reform and a universal French monarchy.³ By 1486 the King and his counsellors were making their plans and laying the diplomatic groundwork for the invasion of Italy.⁴ Among the Italians too the impending French invasion preoccupied prophets as well as diplomats. In Rome a preacher foretold the coming of enormous tribulations to the City in 1491 and 1492 and the appearance of the Angelic Pastor.⁵ In the Kingdom of Naples a prophecy attributed to St Cataldus, legendary bishop of Taranto, was 'discovered' at least as early as 1493, which predicted the French invasion, a world war between believers and unbelievers, and the appearance of an avenging angel who would bring about a universal renewal in the year 1510.⁶

Nowhere did the coming invasion cause more apprehension than in Florence, long an ally of the French, but now bound to Naples by Piero de' Medici's policy. Nowhere was there more apocalyptic expectation. Since 1490 Savonarola had been preaching regularly in Florence, first in his convent church of San Marco, then, as his audience

*Crescera la citta per piu misure
Di ricchezze e d'havere
Staranno in piacere Et buono stato.*

MSS. B.N.F., Magl. VII, 40, fols. 32v-40 and VII, 1081, fols. 49v-53. I cite the latter, fol. 51v.

¹ Felix Gilbert, 'Guicciardini, Machiavelli, Valori on Lorenzo Magnifico', *Renaissance News*, vol. XI (1958), pp. 107-14.

² Henri F. Delaborde, *L'expédition de Charles VIII en Italie* (Paris, 1888), pp. 234-5.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁵ On the prophecy of the Angelic Pastor see Friedrich Baethgen, *Der Engelpapst* (Halle, 1933); Stefano Infessura, *Diario della città di Roma*, ed. O. Tommasini (Fonti per la storia d'Italia, vol. V, Rome, 1890), pp. 264 ff. See also Paul O. Kristeller, 'Marsilio Ficino e Lodovico Lazzarelli', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, Lettere, Storia e Filosofia*, ser. 2, vol. VII (1938), pp. 237-62.

⁶ The printed version says the prophecy was found in 1492: St Cataldus, *Prophetia* (Florence, n.d.). The MSS. say it was found in 1494: B.N.F., Magl. XXV, 344, fol. 56r-v; VII. 1081, fol. 45r-v.

DONALD WEINSTEIN

swelled, in the Cathedral.¹ Already from 1 August 1490 he had begun to expound *Revelation*.² At that time he gave no hint of his later vision of a glorious future for Florence; instead he predicted that wrath and tribulation would be visited on all alike.³ Savonarola's pessimism about Florence was shared by other prophets in the city, although most of them differed from him in predicting religious reform and world renewal, while he, for the time being, foresaw only the coming Day of Judgment and world's end.⁴ One contemporary prophecy, the *Prophetia Caroli Imperatoris*, castigated Florence for having deserted the French, for in doing so she had also abandoned the divine cause which the New Charlemagne would carry forward. Because of her desertion the French invaders would destroy Florence as well as Rome.⁵ Another group of prophecies, attributed to St Bridget, predicted that the French king would bring about a renewal of the Roman Church, but that Florence would suffer famine, foreign rule and a popular uprising in which many people would die. Florence would seek help from a league, but to no avail; she would grieve for ever.⁶ Another prophet who saw a dim future for Florence was a certain 'devout monk' who had a vision based on 'the Prophet Daniel, St John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse, St Bridget and other old prophets'. The world, he said, stood at the beginning of the fourth age, the age of scourge which had been predicted to begin 'after the year '76'. The cities of Italy would be visited with great punishment. Florence, the lovely lady with her beautiful lily and her wise people, would weep for her beautiful daughter, Pisa, who would be seized by the proud lion. Many of her people would cover the ground with their blood, while the French king would camp just outside her San Frediano gate before entering to devastate her. Furious with their leaders, the people would rise up and overthrow their government, but, 'according to the prophet who speaks here' they would be set upon an evil path. After wreaking havoc in Florence the French king would go on to Rome where he would persecute the Bride of Christ and sack the city. For this, and for refusing to go on crusade against the Turks and pagans, he would be excommunicated; but after

¹ Roberto Ridolfi, *Vita di Girolamo Savonarola* (Rome, 1952), vol. I, p. 54.

² *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 48.

³ See my article 'Savonarola, Florence, and the Millenarian Tradition', *Church History*, vol. XXVII (1958), pp. 5-6.

⁴ 'Versiculus hic qui in 76 psalmo Voce Mea ad dominum clamavi . . .', MS. B.N.F., Magl. VII, 1081, fol. 45; *Quest' è il Judicio Generale* (n.p. or d.); 'De adventu antichristi' MS. B.N.F., Magl. XXXIX, 86, fols. 76-8.

⁵ *Prophetia Caroli Imperatoris con altre prophetie de diversi santi huomini* (n.p. or d.). Copy in B.N.F., Guicciardini, 2-3-57.

⁶ This is a group entitled 'Rasmo di Viterbo 1420'. One version is MS. B.N.F., Magl. VIII, 1443, fols. 27-8, the other in same library MS. II, 130, fols. 153r-154v.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

three and a half years he would see the error of his ways and fulfil his mission to establish Christianity among the pagans. At last, on the Mount of Olives, he would give up his power, leaving to the Church a larger patrimony than even Constantine had done, while the Archangel Michael would come to announce an era of peace and religious reform under a new Emperor and a new pastor who would reign together in mutual love.¹

The vision of the 'devout monk' shows how traditional prophetic themes were modified to express the interests of a particular moment. Based on the old Second Charlemagne prophecy which, in Florence, had been used to link the Republic's aspirations with French power, it could only have been written at the moment in November 1494 when the French army stood at the city's San Frediano gate and the inhabitants expected the worst. Despairing of a reconciliation — a reconciliation which in fact was to take place soon — the prophet turned upon the French king and predicted his apostasy, even suggesting that he would play the part of Antichrist, while he held out no hope for the salvation of the Florentines.

But the outlook for Florence suddenly changed for the better. On 17 November, Charles VIII made his long-feared entry. Instead of sacking the city, however, he chose to negotiate with her new government, and on 25 November, the two old Guelf allies signed a treaty of mutual aid and friendship. Charles received a grant of money and free transit through Florentine territory. Florence received his promise to restore Pisa and her other possessions as soon as he had successfully completed his mission. On 28 November, at the urging of Savonarola and others that he continue his sacred mission of reform and crusade, Charles resumed his march south.

Once more the Florentines dreamed of election and glory. In the treaty with Charles they celebrated him as the new restorer and defender of their liberty, not merely *Carolus Magnus* like his ancient forebear, but *Major et Maximus*.² A poem addressed to the King referred to his divinely appointed role as Charlemagne's successor and to Florence as the New Jerusalem.³ The prophecy of the Holy Hermit appeared in a new version which took note of the happy outcome of the King's visit to Florence and reaffirmed the city's future power and religious role: the proud lion would molest the lilies but then make peace and turn its attack upon Rome and the rest of Italy. War would

¹ MS. B.N.F., Magl. VII, 1081, fols. 57v-60v, and VII, 40, fols. 18-32v.

² Giuseppe Schnitzer, *Savonarola*, Italian trans. by Ernesto Rutili (Milan, 1931), vol. I, p. 210. Ed. G. Capponi, *A.S.I.*, vol. I (1842), p. 364.

³ *Ternario in lode di Carlo VIII*, ed. A. Medin (Padua, 1896).

DONALD WEINSTEIN

follow, but a falcon would emerge from the lilies and restore the Church which would be purged of its temporal goods. The lilies would have power from God to put the Church in order and they would flourish amazingly. All Italy would come to stand under their branches, from which would issue a gentle fragrance. A New Emperor would cross the seas to the Holy Land and institute an era of universal Christendom and peace which would last until the end of the world.¹

In this atmosphere of newly kindled optimism Savonarola began to revise his earlier prophecy of the Last Days and to elaborate on the wonderful prospects in store for the Republic. The Ark he had laboured to construct had held firm and the Flood had receded. Now God revealed to him that Florence was specially chosen, spared from the general punishment in order to carry out His will, and on 10 December, he proclaimed his vision of Florentine glory:² 'I announce this good news to the city, that Florence will be more glorious, richer, more powerful than ever. First, glorious with respect to God and with respect to men, and you, O Florence, will be the reformation of all Italy and the renewal will begin here and from here spread everywhere, because this is the navel of Italy, and your guidance will reform everything by the light and the grace that will be given you by God. Second, O Florence, you will have innumerable riches, and God will multiply all things for you. Third, you will extend your empire and thus you will have power temporal and spiritual, and have such blessings of abundance that you will say, "We want no more."' Thus Savonarola, the prophet of the *flagellum Dei* and the Last Judgment, was won to the Florentine myth of renewal, riches and power and became its most famous spokesman and agent. What made him unique in Florentine history was not his prophetic vision of a new Florence of Roman power and Christian spirituality, for that, as we have seen, he shared with many others, but his efforts to translate vision into reality. That he was given this opportunity, even for a brief three and a half years, was a measure not only of his powers of leadership but also of the continuing power of the Florentine dream.

Having pursued the myth of Florence over more than three centuries

¹ Pietro Fanfani, ed., 'Profezia di Santo Ilario romito che stava ne' monti di Santo Bernardo, e celebrando la messa l'Angiolo gli rivelò molte cose, pubblicate l'anno 1400 come seguita, cioè:', *Il Borghini. Studi di Filologia e di Lettere Italiane*, vol. I (1863), pp. 743-4. Fanfani does not identify the MS. beyond saying that it is in his own possession, but I have not been able to find it in his papers which are in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Florence.

² Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche sopra Aggeo con il Trattato circa il reggimento e governo della città di Firenze*, ed. Luigi Firpo (Rome, 1965), pp. 166-7.

THE MYTH OF FLORENCE

and returned to our approximate starting point, let us reflect upon what we have seen. It must be clear by now that the myth was no occasional fantasy arising only in times of civic crisis, but a conviction which persisted throughout the Republic's history and intimately connected with her life. The substance of what we have been calling the myth was the belief that Florence had a special destiny of leadership in the furtherance of certain high political, moral and religious principles, a destiny appointed by God who would reward her gloriously if she fulfilled His expectations. In form the myth consisted of two main themes, both of which can be found in its earliest appearance, in the thirteenth century, the theme of Florence as the daughter of Rome and the theme of Florentine rebirth. It would be too simple to equate the first with aspirations of inheriting the Roman legacy of power and the second with longing for a spiritual republic and to posit a dialectic of the two; from early on aspirations for power were disciplined by a sense of responsibility for promoting justice and liberty, while the idea of rebirth was associated with a restoration of republican government as well as of a new spirituality. Nevertheless, changing combinations and differing interpretations of the two themes at different times suggest the shifting civic outlook and mood. After an initial emphasis upon Roman imperialism, which seems to have reflected the first stage of vigorous communal self-assertion, the myth embraced the outlook of a Guelfism in which Florence took its lead from the Angevins and the papacy. The introduction of the Second Charlemagne prophecy into Florentine mythology linked the Republic with a messianic world design, although at first more by implication than by explicit claim. For most of the fourteenth century Florence conceived of her mission to greatness as that of preserving the Italian Guelf system with its ideals of communal independence, mutual responsibility and a pious moderation on the part of her citizens. In the last quarter of the century, however, a series of crises in domestic and foreign affairs put this ethos under heavy pressure. The struggle with the papacy, the Ciompi upheaval and Milanese aggression combined to force a rethinking not only of Florence's position *vis-à-vis* the other Italian states but also of the relationship between the individual and the city state. One product of this rethinking, as Hans Baron has shown, was civic humanism, with its ethos of individual freedom and civic responsibility to an idealized free republic. Another, and probably related, development was the new assertion of Florence's mystical destiny to religious and political supremacy, reflecting not only the break from papal tutelage and the successful defence of liberty, but also a new sense of the Florentine state

DONALD WEINSTEIN

as the source and guarantor of social justice and well being. The appearance of the New Jerusalem theme, which was a stronger version of the old theme of rebirth, expressed this new emphasis upon domestic harmony founded upon mutual responsibility as the prerequisite for world leadership. Weakened by private greed and selfish exploitation and beset by godless and tyrannical enemies, the Florentines would cleanse themselves, unite in a spirit of communal love and assert their dominance in a new age of spiritual perfection and peace. This apocalyptic theme served a variety of functions in the fifteenth century. During Cosimo de' Medici's time it was a support for the consensus upon which his leadership was based. It also served the anti-Mediceans of the 1460s in their protest against tyranny. Later it provided suggestive themes for the poets and artists who spun a *mystique* around Florence and her ruler, Lorenzo the Magnificent. The discontent of the post-Laurentian 1490s expressed itself in deploring the plight of the 'lovely lady' and foretelling her ultimate liberation, just as the woman clothed in the sun would be liberated from the attacks of the seven-headed beast. Savonarola also embraced the Florentine myth, finally, which helps explain why his movement attracted such a broad spectrum of support, not only from the populace, long since imbued with the radical millenarian myth of the Fraticelli and Ciompi, but also from the *literati* and artists who had their own eclectic versions. The main new element in the Savonarola movement was the prophet's own personality; its literature was a combination of three centuries of Florentine mythology — Guelf republican, Ciompi millenarian, Roman imperialist and Laurentian mystical and Neoplatonic. All these themes survived Savonarola's downfall in 1498, and the Savonarolan episode was itself incorporated into later prophecies as another event long since predicted. Thus the myth absorbed Savonarola as it had absorbed other occurrences in Florence's history, treating each of them as a determined event, a milestone on the predestined path toward the realization of Florentine glory. The only occurrence that the myth was unable to absorb and survive was the death of the Republic itself, which came by stages in the course of the sixteenth century; for the myth was the personification of the Republic, the expression in fantasy of its collective purposes, hopes and fears.

II

CHARLES T. DAVIS

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO¹

The spectacular rise of Italian communes is reflected in their early chronicles. As Professor Nicolai Rubinstein has noted, they are marked by patriotic optimism and by an emphasis on progress.² This attitude is particularly noticeable in the medieval annals of Florence. The influential *Chronica de origine civitatis*, composed certainly before 1231 and probably before 1200, celebrated not only the glorious origin of Florence (its alleged founding by Julius Caesar after the defeat of Catiline and after the Roman sack of the rebel stronghold Fiesole), but also its rebirth, following its legendary destruction at the hands of Totila (often confused with Attila) and the Goths. For the author of the *Chronica*, the consummation of this rebirth was the Florentine conquest of Fiesole, which supposedly had been refounded by Totila. The *Chronica* was thus a glorification of civic expansion and a legendary amplification of the historical sack of Fiesole by the Florentines in 1125. The theme of this first major account of Florentine history was echoed

¹ The writing of this paper was made possible by research grants from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Research Council of Tulane University. I am also grateful to Dr Teresa Hankey, Professor G. Arnaldi, Dr Rino Avesani, Professor Nicolai Rubinstein, and Professor Charles Witke for help and suggestions.

² 'Some Ideas on Municipal Progress and Decline', *Fritz Saxl, 1890-1948. A Volume of Memorial Essays from his Friends in England*, ed. D. J. Gordon (Edinburgh and London, 1957), pp. 165-83. For the patriotic implications of early Florentine historiography, see especially N. Rubinstein, 'The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. V (1942), pp. 198-227. See also the references to patriotic historians from other cities in A. Buck, 'Zur Geschichte des italienischen Selbstverständnisses im Mittelalter', *Medium Aevum Romanicum* (Munich, 1963), pp. 63-77. G. Arnaldi, *Studi sui cronisti della Marca Trevigiana nell'età di Ezzelino da Romano* (Rome, 1963) and 'Il notaio-cronista e le cronache cittadine in Italia', *La storia del diritto nel quadro delle scienze storiche* (Florence, 1966), pp. 293-309, shows that many Italian chronicles were semi-official or official in nature, and that some of them were even notarized like public documents.

CHARLES T. DAVIS

in its early Dugento continuation, Sanzanome's *Gesta Florentinorum*. After a summary of part of the *Chronica*,¹ it gave a highly rhetorical survey of events between 1125 and 1231, emphasizing the victories of Florence over her neighbours.

The story of the rise of Florence in the *Chronica* and in Sanzanome was repeated and developed in various thirteenth century Latin and vernacular chronicles which drew on these early sources. It found an ample canvas in the great fourteenth century history of Giovanni Villani, who said that he was moved to write of the origins and growth of his city by a consideration of her 'nobility and greatness' and her similarity to Rome.² Although he moralized about Florentine sins, and attributed the various disasters which befell the city to God's judgments on human wickedness, his chronicle was essentially a success story.³ His emphasis on her military and political successes and economic growth and his proud survey of her wealth and power around 1339 (XI, 91-4) are proof that he took, on the whole, a positive view of her history. He disclaimed literary ambitions: it was the patriotic matter of his chronicle that was important. All these Florentine histories were in a sense public property. Far from being considered independent and inviolate texts, they were constantly being appropriated, added to, adapted, and revised by other historians and compilers. They reflected the pride and self-confidence of participants in the expanding life of one of the great communes of medieval Europe.

The dark side of this success story was, however, the prevalence of civic dissension and factional war. Villani again and again deplored it, and for some other Florentine writers this negative side of communal history seemed, at least at particular times and in particular situations, to be of supreme importance. After the great Guelf defeat in 1260 at Montaperti, for example, the exiled Brunetto Latini gave way to nostalgic melancholy. He repeated, in the historical portion of his *Tresor*, the legend of the destruction of Fiesole after Catiline's supposed flight there, and the Roman foundation of Florence in the valley below, and went on to say that the place on which Florence was built was

¹ Fragmentary in the one surviving manuscript. Sanzanome, the Latin text of the *Chronica*, two vernacular adaptations of the latter (one of them under the title *Libro fiesolano*), and other early accounts of Florentine history were edited by O. Hartwig, *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz* (Marburg, 1875).

² *Cronica* (Florence, Magheri, 1823), I, 1; VIII, 36.

³ E. Mehl, *Die Weltanschauung des Giovanni Villani* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1927), emphasizes the pessimistic and 'medieval' aspects of Villani's thought. But see the review of F. Chabod, *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol. XIII (1929), pp. 336-9, pointing out that Mehl neglects Villani's interest in economic matters. Some idea of the abstractness of Mehl's book may be gained from the fact that he devotes only four pages (139-42) to a discussion of the most interesting part of Villani's *Weltanschauung*, his attitude to Florence.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

originally called *chiés Mars*, after the god of battles, and therefore it was no wonder that the Florentines were always plagued by war and civil discord, for the planet of Mars reigned over them. Brunetto remarked that he had had personal experience of this fact, since he was writing his book in exile as a result of the wars of the Florentines.¹ In his *Tesoretto* he looked back with longing to the time when Florence 'flowered and brought forth fruit', when the Ghibellines were far away, and when his city could be called 'mistress of Tuscany'. 'A land broken by party', he said mournfully, could not survive.² The poet Chiaro Davanzati also deplored at this time the fate of the 'sweet and joyful Florentine land, / fountain of valour and pleasure', which could no longer be called 'Fiorenza' because it was 'sfiorta'.³ Some forty years later the Dominican lector of Santa Maria Novella, Remigio de' Girolami, after some of the members of his family had suffered exile and the confiscation of their property as a result of the victory of the Black Guelfs in 1302, wrote in a similar vein. He said, like Chiaro, that even the name 'Fiorenza' was no longer appropriate; the corruption 'Firenze' which had come into use might be likened to the exclamation 'fi! fi!' made by the French as they tried to close their noses against an evil smell. 'And so well, or rather ill, is Florentia changed into Firenze, since there where once foreigners, drawn from distant parts by the perfume of her fame, invested their money for the sake of temporal utility and profit, now on account of the stench of her infamy even her own citizens try to withdraw their deposits, and, what is more disgraceful, are unable to retrieve what is theirs.'⁴

In much fiercer language Dino Compagni described the 'perilous and harmful events' which had afflicted 'the noble city and daughter of Rome', built 'under the sign of Mars'. Sulla had had his Mario, said Compagni, and the wickedness of the Black Guelfs would also be punished. His chronicle was interspersed with fiery diatribes and ended with the solemn warning: 'O evil citizens, you who have corrupted and spoiled the world with harmful customs and false gains! It is you who have introduced every sinful habit to the world. Now the world commences anew to turn against you: the Emperor with his forces will seize and plunder you by sea and by land.'⁵

¹ Ed. F. Carmody (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948), I, 37.

² *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. G. Contini (Milan and Naples), 1960, vol. II, pp. 179-82, esp. ll. 114-21, 178-9.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 414-16.

⁴ *De bono communi*, B.N.F., MS. Conv. sopp. C.4.940, fols. 101v-102r, quoted by R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz* (Berlin, 1908-27), vol. III, pp. 211-12.

⁵ *Cronica*, ed. I. del Lungo, *R.I.S.*, vol. XIX, 2 (Città di Castello, 1913-16), prologue; I, 1; II, 1; III, 42.

CHARLES T. DAVIS

It is only with the poet Dante Alighieri, however, that one finds, in addition to these denunciations of faction and civic corruption, what might be called an extended negative theory of thirteenth and early fourteenth-century Florentine history. It was precisely in the period of the most remarkable growth of his city, celebrated by all the other Florentine writers, and even in the glorious decade 1250-1260 of rule by the *Primo Popolo*, that he found the seeds of her moral downfall. Where other Florentines praised her wealth (Remigio, for example, regarded the florin as one of the seven great gifts bestowed by providence on Florence, for it was made of the finest gold, and circulated even among the Saracens),¹ Dante said that his city, founded by the Devil, produced and spread abroad this 'cursed flower' which had led the sheep and lambs astray and made a wolf of their shepherd (*Par. IX*, 130-2). The Pope, according to Dante, had forgotten Peter and Paul, for his desire was fixed on the image of St John the Baptist imprinted on the Florentine coin (*Par. XVIII*, 133-6). Where others praised Florence for political expansion (Brunetto after Montaperti was nostalgic for the time when she was mistress of Tuscany), Dante regretted even her penetration into the *contado*. He thought that this had caused 'a confusion of persons' which had been 'the origin of evil in the city' (*Par. XVI*, 67-8): he used the old legend of the formation of the population of Florence from both Roman and Fiesolan settlers as a prototype of such mixing. The immigration from the *contado*, he believed, had brought in 'the new people and the quick profits' which had disrupted the unity and discipline of the old ruling class (*Inf. XVI*, 73-5). The Fiesolans had been, according to legend, the original immigrants, and also could be seen as the original rebels against the order and justice which Dante believed the Romans had tried to impose. They could therefore be used to symbolize the spirit of faction represented by both the Black and White Guelf parties. This conception is summarized in the words put by Dante in Brunetto's mouth when the poet meets his old teacher in Hell:

'If you follow your star you cannot fail to reach a glorious port, if in sweet life I saw clearly. And had I not been dead so early, I should have helped you in your task, seeing that towards you Heaven was so well disposed. But that ungrateful and malignant people which descended from Fiesole long ago and still smacks of the mountain and the rock will become your enemy on account of your good works. . . . Your fortune has reserved you such great honour that the ravening of both sides will be against you, but the grass shall be far from the goat. Let the Fiesolan

¹ B.N.F., MS. Conv. sopp. C.4.936, fols. 89v-90r.

beasts make fodder of each other and not molest the plant (if any still springs up in their dung-heap) in which the holy seed may live again of those Romans who remained there [in Florence] when a nest was made for such great malice' (*Inf.* XV, 55-78).

This process of corruption, according to Dante, had reached a climax in his own time. In the mid-thirteenth century it had still been possible to find 'courtesy and valour' in the city (*Inf.* XVI, 67), as reflected, for example, in such citizens as Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, and Iacopo Rusticucci. But the degeneration of Florence, in Dante's view, had begun much earlier, with the murder of Buondelmonte at the foot of the statue of Mars near the Ponte Vecchio. He was the sacrifice to Mars made by Florence 'in her last peace' (*Par.* XVI, 145-7). Brunetto and Dino Compagni referred to the legend that the planet Mars was an astral influence promoting Florentine factionalism. Dante added the legend of the malign influence of the statue,¹ supposedly first placed in Mars' temple (believed to have been the Baptistery) by the inhabitants of pagan Florence, and then moved out of doors when the city became Christian. Dante made it the sinister symbol for a whole period of Florentine history (*Inf.*, XIII, 143-50).

Dante placed his *buon tempo antico*, earlier than that of other Florentine writers, in the twelfth century, before the murder of Buondelmonte and the rise of the Gueff and Ghibelline parties. For him the good old time was not, as for them, a period of wealth and power, but of

¹ It is curious that the Ottimo (Andrea Lancia?), generally well-informed about Florentine matters, should have had to ask Dante about the meaning of this legend: 'Elli [Dante] fu di Firenze, e però qui recita una falsa opinione, che ebbero gli antichi di quella cittade, la quale io scrittore domandandoneli, udii così raccontare. Che li antichi ebbero opinione, che la città di Firenze fosse fondata essendo ascendente Ariete, e Marte signore dell'ora; onde fu fatto padrone d'essa Marte, e al suo onore sotto certa constellazione fu fatta una statua di pietra in forma d'uno cavaliere a cavallo, alla quale rendeano certa reverenza e onore idolatrio . . .' (*L'Ottimo Commento della Divina Commedia*, ed. A. Torri (Pisa, 1827), vol. I, p. 255, referring to *Inf.* XIII, 143-50). In his note to *Par.* XVI, 145 (vol. III, p. 383) the Ottimo said, 'Alcuna idolatria si pareva per li cittadini contenere in quella statua, che credeano che ogni mutamento ch'ella avesse, fosse segno di futuro mutamento della cittade.' But there is no testimony to superstitious fear of a vengeful presence in the statue in any surviving Florentine writer earlier than Dante, the Ottimo (c. 1335), and Villani. It is perhaps worth noting that Pseudo-Brunetto, describing at length the murder of Buondelmonte, said only that he was attacked 'appiè di Marzo, in capo del Ponte Vecchio' (ed. A. Schiaffini, *Testi fiorentini del dugento e dei primi del trecento* (Florence, 1926), p. 119). Most of the evidence cited by Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. I, pp. 748-52, for the legend about the statue comes from Dante's commentators. The popular custom testified to by Pucci, *Centiloquio* (c. 35, terz. 76-9) and cited by A. Zenatti, 'Calendimanzo', *Archivio Storico per Trieste, l'Istria e il Trentino*, vol. IV, 155, of decorating the statue in March with flowers if the weather was good and with mud if it was bad, indicates that there was not much fear of it amongst the Florentine people. Dante's reference to Buondelmonte as the *vittima* or sacrifice made to the statue sounds like a poet's invention (see below, p. 53).

CHARLES T. DAVIS

austerity and of a modest communal life, before Florentine expansion had begun, and before luxury and pride had altered the virtuous simplicity of early customs. In the time of his ancestor Cacciaguida, Dante said, Florence was only one-fifth as populous as in 1300 and her authority stopped at Galluzzo and Trespiano. Then

*. . . the citizenry, which now is mixed
with Campi, with Certaldo, and with Figline,
saw itself to be pure, down to the last artisan.*

(*Par.* XVI, 46-9)

Her inhabitants were then sure of their burial place, without fear of dying in exile. Her wives did not lie in lonely beds while their husbands traded in France. Dress was simple, dowries were low, and exotic vice was unknown. Then Florence had not yet outstripped Rome in size and power, but 'within her ancient circle' lived modestly and soberly and was at peace. Cacciaguida said of the women of Dante's golden age:

*They wore no chains about their arms or crowns,
Or ornamented skirts and belts
Which were more looked at than was she who wore them.*

Then fathers were not terrified to have daughters, for they were not married too young, nor were their dowries large. Cacciaguida saw Bellincion Berti, one of the most prominent citizens of the old Florence, go about 'girt with leather and bone' and his wife did not paint her face. He saw members of the Nerli and del Vecchio families who were content to wear 'skins without covering' and their wives were not ashamed to sew (*Par.*, XV, 97-129).

It is a curious fact that Villani, the moral of whose chronicle was in general optimistic, followed Dante in many of these judgements. He, too, attributed the divisions of Florence to the populating of the city after the overthrow of Fiesole by two such diverse peoples as the virtuous Romans and the rough and fierce Fiesolans (I, 38; III, 1; IV, 7). He also condemned an instance of Florentine penetration of the *contado*, the capture of the Buondelmonti castle of Montebuono: 'And so the commune of Florence commenced her expansion, more by force than by reason, increasing her *contado* and subjecting to her jurisdiction every noble in it, and destroying their fortresses' (IV, 36). He also emphasized the rôle of the statue of Mars in Florentine history (though doubting the influence of the planet). Like Dante (*Inf.* XIII, 143-50), he referred to the belief of the Florentines that the city could not have been rebuilt after its sack by the Goths if the statue of Mars had not

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

been retrieved from the Arno, into which Totila had thrown it (III, 1).¹ After recounting the murder of Buondelmonte, he said: 'And it is clearly demonstrated that the enemy of the human race because of the sins of the Florentines had power in the idol of Mars, which the Florentine pagans adored of old, for it was at the foot of his image that this homicide was committed, on account of which so much ill has afflicted the city of Florence' (V, 38). He described, moreover, the time of the *buon tempo antico* in terms very similar to those of Dante, though he placed it a century later, under the sway of the *Primo Popolo*:

'And note that at the time of the said people, and earlier, and then long after, the citizens of Florence lived soberly and ate coarse food, and spent little, and had many coarse customs and gallantries, and dressed themselves and their ladies with coarse cloth, and many wore skins without a cloth covering, and caps on their heads, and all had leather boots on their feet, and the Florentine women wore boots without ornaments, and the greatest were content with one very close-fitting skirt of coarse scarlet cloth of Ypres or Caen, fastened with an old-fashioned leather belt, and with a hooded cloak lined with miniver, having a hood above, which was worn on the head. And ordinary women dressed themselves with coarse green cambric in similar fashion, and 100 lire was the normal dowry for a wife, and 200 or 300 lire was in those times considered splendid, and most girls were twenty or more years old before they were married. Of such dress and rough manners were then the Florentines, but they were loyal and faithful amongst themselves and to the commune, and with their rude life and poverty they did greater and more virtuous deeds than are performed in our own time with greater riches and more refinement.' (VI, 69.)

Where did Dante and Villani derive their concept of the *buon tempo antico*? Morghen has maintained that their source is the chronicle of Ricordano Malispini, allegedly compiled in the late thirteenth century. The description of the good old time in the Malispinian chronicle (ch. 164 in Follini's edition) is almost identical with that of Villani. Yet there are some significant differences. One of the two most authoritative manuscripts of Malispini (B.N.F., II, IV, 27) has 'good customs' instead of 'rough customs and gallantries' and, after the observation that dowries of 200 or 300 lire were considered very large, inserts the information 'since the gold florin was worth 20 soldi'. It also leaves out the whole last sentence of Villani's chapter, with its uncomplimentary

¹ Davidsohn, loc. cit., accepts the Ottimo's date (ed. cit., vol. III, p. 383) of 1178 as the year when the statue actually fell into the Arno and the information that it was retrieved 'rotta e corrosa per lo lungo stare che fece nel acqua'. It was finally lost in the flood of 1333.

CHARLES T. DAVIS

references to contemporary Florence, as well as some of the details about dress. This manuscript was almost certainly written towards the end of the fourteenth century. Roughly contemporary with it is the other early Malispini manuscript, Biblioteca Laurenziana Plut. 61. 29, which contains, on fol. 34v, the same account of the *buon tempo antico*, with the same divergencies from Villani's description. Just before the information about dowries, however, the Laurentian manuscript has an additional sentence eulogizing the old Florentines: 'all their zeal was directed towards good customs and noble virtues.'¹ But the moral of the passage, the comparison of the good old time with the decadence of contemporary Florence, is also omitted here (and omitted, as well, in the other Malispini manuscripts that I have examined). If, as Professor Morghen says, Ricordano's chronicle was composed in the late thirteenth century,² its author was presumably writing about the Florence of his youth, and was therefore more likely to be emotionally involved in a comparison of the good old time with the next generation than either Dante or Villani. Why, then, is the obvious moral omitted? The main purpose of an idealization of the past, especially of the immediate past, is usually to prepare the way for an attack on the present. Without it, Malispini's chapter lacks point.

The first part of Malispini's chronicle (chs. 1-41 in Follini's edition) is mainly a copy of a vernacular adaptation of the *Chronica de origine civitatis*, edited by Hartwig under the title *Libro fiesolano*. The second part covering the years c. 800-1285 (and containing also a section at the end dealing with the events of the years 1282-85, allegedly written by Ricordano's nephew Giacotto), closely parallels the corresponding part of Villani's chronicle, but gives a more compressed version of the events

¹ That this phrase is the interpolation of a copyist is indicated by the fact that the manuscript of Malispini in the Biblioteca Nazionale of Rome (Vittorio Emanuele 499), which R. Morghen, 'Note malispiniane', *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo*, vol. XL (1921), 105-26, esp. 114, regards as an authoritative manuscript of Malispini belonging to the same family as Laur. Plut. 61. 29, omits the phrase. Its description of the *buon tempo antico* is, in fact, identical with that of B.N.F., II, IV, 27, which is believed by Morghen to represent another family of Malispini manuscripts.

² See on this, in addition to the article mentioned above, three other studies of Morghen, 'Dante, il Villani e Ricordano Malispini', *Bull. dell' Ist. stor. ital.*, vol. XLI (1921), 171-94; 'Ancora sulla questione malispiniana', *ibid.*, vol. XLVI (1931), 41-92; 'La storiografia fiorentina del Trecento: Ricordano Malispini, Dino Compagni e Giovanni Villani', *Libera cattedra di storia della civiltà fiorentina. Secoli vari: '300, '400, '500* (Florence, 1958), pp. 69-93. His thesis is accepted by, among others, G. Mazzoni, 'La questione malispiniana', *Nuova Antologia*, ser. VI, vol. CCXVIII (May-June, 1922), 193-204 and A. Del Monte, 'La storiografia fiorentina dei secoli XII e XIII', *Bull. dell' Ist. stor. ital.*, vol. LXII (1950), 175-282. It is questioned by M. Barbi, 'La questione malispiniana e Dante', *Studi danteschi*, vol. XV (1931), 195-8; C. T. Davis, *Dante and the Idea of Rome* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 244-62; and G. Aquilecchia, 'Dante and the Florentine Chroniclers', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. XLVIII (1965), 30-55.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

described there. As Busson¹ and Morghen² have pointed out, many of the historical passages appearing both in Malispini and Villani have a remarkable resemblance to lines in Dante's poem. They believe that both Dante and Villani depend for these passages on Malispini. It should be noted, however, that the curious lack in Malispini's description of the *buon tempo antico* of the moral which appears both in Dante and Villani is not an isolated case. It is rather one example of a consistent pattern in the relationship which undoubtedly exists among the three writers.

Malispini, for example, although he repeated the legend of the founding of Florence with a mixed population of Romans and Fiesolans,³ never denigrated the Fiesolans as a 'rough and fierce people' or compared them unfavourably with their conquerors. Although he gave the same account as Villani of the Florentine capture of the Buondelmonti castle of Montebuono,⁴ he did not moralize, like Villani and Dante, about the injustice of Florentine expansion. And although he referred to the statue of Mars as standing on a pillar near the Ponte Vecchio and mentioned the fact that the murder of Buondelmonte took place close by it,⁵ he did not say, like Villani, who up to this point gave an identical account of the episode, that 'the enemy of the human race because of the sins of the Florentines had power in the idol of Mars', or make it, like Dante, a symbol of the spirit of faction in Florence.

Even in connection with the more recent struggles and divisions which afflicted the Guelfs in the late thirteenth century, Dante and Villani were more didactic than Malispini, though here, if anywhere, one might expect to find some evidence of Malispini's personal involvement. Dante had Ciaccio in the *Inferno* give the following verdict on the Florentines:

*pride, envy, and avarice are
the three sparks which have inflamed their hearts*
(*Inf.*, VI, 73-5).

In Villani, book VII, ch. 56, we read: 'In these times (*c.* 1280) the great Guelfs of Florence, reposing from outside wars in victory and honour and fattened by the possessions of the Ghibelline exiles and through other stratagems (*e per altri loro procacci*), on account of their pride and

¹ A. Busson, *Die florentinische Geschichte der Malispini und deren Benutzung durch Dante* (Innsbruck, 1869).

² See the first study mentioned above, p. 52, n. 2.

³ *Storia fiorentina, col seguito di Giacotto Malispini, dalla edificazione di Firenze sino all'anno 1286* (Florence, 1816), chs. 49, 50. Follini's edition is based mainly on MS. B.N.F., II, IV, 27.

⁴ Ed. cit., ch. 73.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chs. 73, 99.

envy commenced to fight among themselves (*riottare tra loro*).⁷ Malispini does not include the words 'and through other stratagems, on account of their pride and envy' (*L*, ch. 88, fol. 47r, Foll., ch. 219). This is only one example of his characteristic detachment, much greater than that of Dante or Villani.

The rule does not always hold. Sometimes there is a close correspondence among all three writers. Malispini and Villani use the same words to sum up the great Florentine defeat at Montaperti: 'And so the madness (*rabbia*) of the ungrateful and proud people of Florence was quelled' (*Mal.*, ch. 171; *Vill.* VI, 78). Dante gives a similar description of the same event:

... when the Florentine madness (*rabbia*)
was destroyed, which was as proud
at that time as it now is whorish.

(*Purg.*, XI, 112-14)

Sometimes there is no precise Dantesque parallel for an observation made both by Malispini and Villani, as when they remark that the great fire which burned up a large part of Florence in 1177 was an affliction sent by God, 'for the Florentines had become very proud, because of the victories they had won over their enemies, and very envious of each other, and given to dishonest sins.' They also say that the war which broke out in the same year between the Uberti family and the consuls who ruled Florence resulted from 'too much fatness and repose mixed with pride and ingratitude'. This 'pestilence' created factions which, despite a temporary reconciliation, were destined to form 'the accursed parties that later existed in Florence' (*Mal.*, ch. 75; *Vill.*, V, 8-9).

At least once, an opposite moral is drawn by Malispini and Villani on the one hand and Dante on the other. Both chroniclers condemn the torture and execution in 1258 of the Pavian abbot of Vallombrosa Tesauro dei Beccaria for alleged treason to the régime of the *Primo Popolo*; both say that probably his only crime was belonging to a prominent Ghibelline family. Villani goes on to observe that many believed the defeat at Montaperti was a divine punishment for this judicial murder (a remark omitted by Malispini). But both Malispini and Villani end their description of this episode with a eulogy of the *Primo Popolo*. It was guilty of overweening pride and ambition, they say, but its rulers were very upright and patriotic; when a municipal official (one of the *Anziani*) dared to appropriate an abandoned old public gate for his private use, they fined him 1000 lire for having stolen

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

the property of the commune (Mal., ch. 160; Vill., VI, 65). Dante emphasizes the pride and folly of the régime before Montaperti, and never eulogizes it, though he praises some of its members. Tesauro dei Beccaria he dismisses contemptuously as a traitor 'whose throat Florence cut' (*Inf.*, XXXII, 119-20). Perhaps Brunetto Latini gave Dante another view of this last event.¹ On this point, Dante accepts a conclusion which Villani and Malispini reject. But in general Dante and Villani stand much closer to each other in their historical moralizing than either stands to Malispini. Malispini, moreover, advances no moral which is not found in Villani, but Villani and Dante make numerous didactic observations not in Malispini.

One may conclude from this comparison either that Villani and Dante embroider Malispini, or that Malispini, while pretending to be writing in the thirteenth century, is really using Villani in the fourteenth, and is providing a more compressed version of part of the latter's history.

In 1870 Paul Scheffer-Boichorst attempted to expose Malispini as a plagiarist of Villani, mainly on the ground that Martin of Troppau is the source of much of the historical information repeated both by Malispini and Villani, and that except in two instances, Villani follows this source more closely than Malispini. Villani must therefore be the intermediary between Martin and Malispini, not Malispini between Martin and Villani. In the second case, Scheffer-Boichorst said, Villani would have had to sit down with 'Martin of Troppau's Chronicle on his right hand and Malispini's on his left, now looking here, now there'.²

According to Morghen, who in this century has tried to rehabilitate Malispini, this is exactly what Villani did.³ But V. Lami offered in 1890 a much simpler explanation for the derivation of approximately ten-elevenths of the second part of Malispini's chronicle, covering the period *c.* 800-1282, and of Giacotto's additions from 1282-85. This includes chapters 42-248 in Follini's edition; the first 41 chapters, as Lami noted, are mainly derived from the *Libro fesolano*. Most of these last 207 chapters are to be found verbatim in the middle section (chs. 42-263) of an anonymous fourteenth-century compendium of Villani (B.N.F., II, I, 252), apparently written by a person of some learning,

¹ Brunetto probably wrote an official letter from the government of Florence to that of Pavia defending the execution of Tesauro. See Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV (Berlin, 1908), pp. 130-1; F. Maggini, *La 'Rettorica' italiana di Brunetto Latini* (Florence, 1912), pp. 61, 76-80.

² 'Die florentinische Geschichte der Malespini, eine Fälschung', *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. XXIV (1870), 274-313, reprinted in *Florentiner Studien* (Leipzig, 1874).

³ See above, p. 52, ns. 1 and 2.

but preserved only in a careless and often incorrect copy. A comparison of this manuscript with the text of Malispini makes it obvious either that the Anonymous copied Malispini or Malispini copied the Anonymous: even the blanks left for missing names and dates by the two writers are almost always the same. There are many reasons for believing that the second alternative is the more likely, that Malispini copied the Anonymous. Only two of them will be given here.¹

First, if the Anonymous copied Malispini, it is obvious that each author changed his method of composition in the course of writing his work. We know that Malispini in chs. 1-41 (according to Follini's numbering) was copying the whole of the *Libro fesolano*,² and also inserting information that it did not contain about the walls and families of Roman Florence.³ We also know that the Anonymous in chs. 1-41 was condensing the first two books of Villani and in chs. 264-508 (the end of the work) was abridging Villani, VII, 109-XI, 51. If we believe, with Professor Morghen, that Malispini's chronicle from ch. 42 to the end is substantially original, then its author must have abandoned at ch. 42 the method of following one source while making occasional insertions, and have undertaken the much more difficult task of putting together information from various sources to make a narrative of the history of his city far more elaborate and complete than that of any surviving pre-1300 Florentine chronicle. An acceptance of this theory also requires us to believe that though the Anonymous abridged Villani in the first and last sections, by far the lengthier part of his compendium, he copied ten-elevenths of Malispini's chronicle in composing the middle section (chs. 42-263). Yet the Anonymous must have had Villani before him while he was writing this section as well. As Lami has pointed out, he inserted some chapters from Villani not in Malispini.⁴

¹ V. Lami, 'Di un compendio inedito della Cronica di Giovanni Villani nelle sue relazioni con la storia fiorentina malispiniana', *A.S.I.*, ser. V, vol. V (1890), 369-416. I hope soon to be able to write on this subject in more detail.

² See above, p. 46, n. 1.

³ One of the most interesting of these insertions is Malispini's description of the walls of Roman Florence, which he said enclosed a small city and had a narrow circuit (ch. 26). Such information was unavailable to Villani, who said that he had found no chronicle that made mention of the extent and *giro* of the Roman city, but that by the time of its destruction by Totila it was supposed to have been very large. G. Maetzke, 'Ricerche sulla topografia fiorentina nel periodo delle guerre goto-bizantine', *Atti dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, cl. di scienze morali, storiche e filologiche*, ser. VIII, vol. III (1948), pp. 97-112, says that Malispini's wall, while very different from the limits of the original Roman city, corresponds rather closely to what excavations have revealed of the much smaller Byzantine city. Since Malispini could not have got this information from any surviving written source, he may have derived it from seeing actual remains of the old walls. I owe this suggestion to Professor Nicolai Rubinstein.

⁴ See Lami, art. cit., esp. pp. 393, 415-16, who gives a list of the passages in chs. 42-263 of the Anonymous which are in Villani but not in Malispini.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

Moreover, although generally using language identical with Malispini's, he included some turns of phrase found only in Villani. He seems to have had little faith in Malispini as an independent source, for he omitted every legendary and genealogical detail that was in Malispini but not in Villani.¹ At the same time, however, he also omitted every didactic observation that was in Villani but not in Malispini. What a whimsical compiler the Anonymous must have been!

But such odd and complicated theories are unnecessary if the opposite hypothesis is accepted: that the Anonymous was condensing Villani throughout his work, and that Malispini copied the *Libro fiisolano* for the earlier part of his chronicle and the Anonymous for the later, inserting in both cases the legendary and genealogical passages which give a special character to his *Storia fiorentina* and which seem to have motivated its composition.

Secondly, Malispini includes two accounts of the refounding of Florence, one corresponding to the *Libro fiisolano*, according to which the city was rebuilt by the Romans shortly after Totila had sacked it;² the other corresponding to the Anonymous and to Villani, according to which the site of the city lay deserted for centuries until Charles the Great's aid enabled the Romans to rebuild it.³ But Malispini's second description of this event, although verbally almost identical with that of Villani and the Anonymous, contains one major correction of their

¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 411-15 for a list of passages in Malispini containing such data. There is, so far as I have been able to determine, no piece of information in the Anonymous which is in Malispini but not in Villani, except for two passages clearly posterior to Villani (regarded by Morghen as later interpolations in Malispini's text) and two taken from Martin of Troppau which contradict Scheffer-Boichorst's rule that Villani's borrowings from Martin are often fuller and more exact and never briefer and less exact than Malispini's. Scheffer-Boichorst was puzzled by the two passages; he could have accounted for them easily if he had known of the existence of the Anonymous and their presence in his compendium. See on this Lami, *art. cit.*, pp. 408-10 and 416, n. 2.

² Malispini, *ed. cit.*, cc. 38-9; *Libro fiisolano*, c. 10.

³ Malispini, chs. 42-5; Villani, III, 1-3; Anonymous, chs. 43-6. All refer to information found in 'croniche di Francia' about Charles the Great's visit to Florence. N. Rubinstein, 'The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence', pp. 215-16 and n. 3, suggests that Villani took the story of Charles the Great's involvement in the refounding of Florence from Book VII of the *Reali di Francia*, a work of which we possess only a summary, since the only known manuscript of it was lost at sea during the last century. The fact that Charles the Great's connection with Florence is not mentioned in the *Chronica de origine civitatis*, or in the *Libro fiisolano*, or by Brunetto Latini, or by Dante, makes it unlikely that this was a native Florentine tradition. Malispini's reference in this one place to 'croniche di Francia' is curious, since elsewhere he speaks of his sources only under the two headings of writings found in the Badia of Florence and in the house of his relative Fiorello Capocci at Rome. Once he mentions the Badia material in connection with his knowledge of Charles the Great's expedition. Probably the mention of 'croniche di Francia' was a slip, and both Malispini's citation of them and his description of Charles the Great's part in the refounding of Florence were taken from the Anonymous's compendium of Villani.

CHARLES T. DAVIS

views. They assert that the new city was smaller than the one which had been destroyed. Malispini, on the other hand, quotes the statement of the *Libro fiesolano* that it was 'larger and stronger than before', and expands it into a polemic against the opposite theory. If Malispini is writing in the thirteenth century, against what chronicler is he polemicizing? Against the author of the *Chronica de origine civitatis*, the Latin text of which seems to have been followed by Villani in preference to the free adaptation of it in the *Libro fiesolano*? But there Malispini could have found only the remark that with the aid of skilled surveyors the city was enclosed by walls 'of modest circuit'.¹ No surviving chronicler before Villani develops this remark into the assertion that the 'Carolingian' city was smaller than the Roman. It is curious that Malispini should attack a non-existent opponent. If Villani has Malispini before him, as Morghen maintains, and if he is beginning a long series of assiduous borrowings, it is curious that he should give no reason for his contrary view. It is doubly curious that the Anonymous, if he is writing with both Malispini and Villani before him, should copy Malispini's phraseology but silently correct his opinion on a major historical point. But if Malispini is writing in the fourteenth century and attempting to fit together overlapping material (differing accounts of the refounding of Florence) in the *Libro fiesolano* and the Anonymous, this problem disappears. Malispini seems to have no clear theory as to the correct date of the refounding of Florence; he is primarily interested in asserting that the new city was larger than the old.

Such a solution is in harmony with what appears to be the main purpose of the Malispinian chronicle: the glorification of certain Florentine families (especially the Bonaguisi) not mentioned as part of the older aristocracy of the city by Villani or the Anonymous. Malispini's larger Carolingian city provided room for many more noble inhabitants. In fact, he did not limit them to Villani's *primo cerchio* but drew them as well from Fiesole and from the *contado*. His genealogical and romantically chivalrous interests (his detailed account, for example, in ch. 45 of the knights created by Charles the Great, of which Villani and the Anonymous know nothing), together with his comparative detachment in regard to the conflict between Florence and Fiesole and to the factional struggles of the thirteenth century, combine to make it likely that he wrote in the second half of the fourteenth century, when these older preoccupations had lost much of their interest. Then an expansive rather than a restrictive view of the families that composed the old Florentine aristocracy was in order. Whether the source

¹ Ed. Hartwig, vol. I, p. 59.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

of his information about them was ancient or not, his polemic against the opinion of Villani and the Anonymous that the rebuilt Florence was small seems to indicate that he was attempting to make the 'Carolingian' city capacious enough to house the families he wished to honour.

Probably Malispini had no direct knowledge of Villani, and there is no evidence that he knew Dante. The references to persons and events noted by Busson and Morghen which are common to the three authors can all be found in the compendium of the Anonymous. They can be found there, moreover, in the same form in which they appear in Malispini. The impression that Malispini had only a manuscript of the Anonymous before him, in addition to the *Libro fiesolano* and collections of genealogical and legendary data, is strengthened by another consideration, which has already been discussed. Malispini omits every didactic statement made by Villani but not repeated by the Anonymous. In addition to this, Malispini never, so far as I know, includes factual material in Villani not reproduced by the Anonymous.¹

It is possible that a few passages of the Malispinian chronicle (particularly those regarding Florentine families) may depend on an unknown historical source anterior to Villani. Almost certainly, however, the description of the *buon tempo antico* is not one of them. Both Malispini and the Anonymous supply the same abridged version of Villani, lacking (as in so many other cases) the moral and some of the details, but containing, in this instance, an insertion about the old value of the florin designed to make the reference to the size of dowries more intelligible to later readers. In our search for the source of this passage we may at this point dismiss Malispini and the Anonymous, for both are dependent, the one indirectly, the other directly, on Villani.

We are left with Dante and Villani.² Did the poet in this case influence the chronicler, or the chronicler the poet? It is unfortunately not possible to fix the dates of composition either of the *Divina Commedia* or of the *Chronica*. We know only that the whole of the former must have been completed by Dante's death in 1321, and the whole of the latter by Villani's death in 1348; that the nineteenth canto of the first *cantica* of the *Commedia* contains a prophecy of the death of Pope Clement V,

¹ See above, p. 56, n. 4; p. 57, n. 1. Lami, art. cit., p. 408, n. 1, lists, it is true, the omission of two words, 'manghanelli' and 'bene', in the surviving MS. of the Anonymous which are included in the corresponding passages of Villani and Malispini. But his explanation of this tiny anomaly is almost certainly the correct one. He says that this MS. of the Anonymous is the work of an extremely careless copyist, and that there is no reason to suppose that Malispini used it, or that these omissions occur in the autograph.

² But unfortunately without a critical edition of the latter, despite the efforts of a long series of editors. The sad tale is summarized by Aquilecchia, art. cit., p. 36, n. 2.

which occurred in 1314; that this first *cantica* according to contemporary testimony had already been begun at least by 1314-15; that the fourth book of the *Cronica* contains a passage that could not have been written earlier than 1322¹ but the fifth book contains a passage that probably could not have been written later than 1307.² It is certain that Villani quoted Dante in later books of his *Cronica* and F. Neri thought this practice could be found at least as early as VI, 78 (the reference to the *rabbia fiorentina* quelled at Montaperti).³ On the other hand, Lami believed that he had discovered evidence of two versions of Villani's chronicle,⁴ and one cannot be sure how soon the first draft of the early books was known. Noting that it was not unusual for a medieval chronicler to circulate portions of his work as they were completed, F. M. Powicke went so far as to say that 'many of Dante's references to persons and incidents described by Villani in books I-VIII, ch. 36, could hardly have been made without a knowledge of Villani'.⁵ Rubinstein advances the more cautious hypothesis that Dante may have known at least Villani's first book.⁶ This abundance of theories and scarcity of objective data makes it difficult to hold any very dogmatic opinions about the relationship (which undoubtedly exists) between the *Divine Comedy* and the *Cronica*. Unquestionably Villani quoted directly from the *Commedia* in the later part of his work (for example, he mentioned 'lo ingrato popolo maligno, che discese de' Romani e de' Fiesolani *ab antiquo*', in XII, 44, repeating exactly the phrase used by Brunetto in *Inf.* XV, then altering the end of Dante's line in a curious fashion to make 'discese' refer to Romans as well as Fiesolans, and to a genealogical rather than a physical descent). But if

¹ See *ibid.*, p. 37. Aquilecchia follows G. Petrocchi, 'Intorno alla pubblicazione dell' "Inferno" e del "Purgatorio"', *Convivium*, vol. XXV (1957), 52-69, in regard to the date at which the first two *cantiche* of the *Commedia* were known. He thinks that the possibility of Dante's use of the first book of Villani cannot be excluded, but that the chronicler could hardly have begun his laborious task before his return to take up permanent residence in Florence in 1310.

² Villani, V, 4, refers to Edward I, whose death occurred in 1307, as if he were still alive: 'che a' nostri presenti tempi regna.' F. Neri, 'Dante e il primo Villani', *Giornale dantesco*, vol. XX (1912), p. 3, notes that all the authoritative Florentine manuscripts have 'regna'. He prefers, however, to follow the 'rengnò' of Cod. Marciana 3. 33 and to regard 'regna' as an interpolation by later copyists. The methodology of such a proceeding seems open to question. The passage under discussion deals with France, and Villani was in Bruges from about 1302 to 1307. He may have begun writing some of the sections of his chronicle dealing with northern Europe at this time. Yet the passage in Book IV, 4, which could not have been written before 1322, indicates some reworking by Villani of the earlier books of his chronicle.

³ Neri, *art. cit.*, p. 15.

⁴ See C. Merkel's obituary of Lami, *Bull. dell'Ist. stor. ital.*, vol. XIII (1893), p. xxvii.

⁵ F. M. Powicke, *Ways of Medieval Life and Thought* (London, 1949), pp. 247-8.

⁶ Rubinstein, 'The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence', pp. 217-8 (in note).

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

Villani had certainly read Dante by the time he finished his chronicle, could not Dante also have conceivably read and borrowed from one or more of Villani's early books, at least in an early version? This possibility cannot be ruled out. Perhaps, however, through a comparison of the historical theories of Dante and Villani, one may be able to conclude that this is unlikely.

A natural starting point for such a comparison is the use made by Dante and Villani of the date 1300 in connection with the great Roman Jubilee proclaimed by Boniface VIII. 1300 is in fact both the fictional date of the *Commedia* and the year in which the monuments and historians of Rome allegedly inspired Villani to begin the writing of his *Cronica*. Yet it was only in book VIII, ch. 36, that Villani told of his pilgrimage to the 'holy city' and his discovery of an historical vocation: '... considering that our city of Florence, daughter and creature of Rome, was on the rise (*era nel suo montare*), and pursuing noble things, while Rome was in decline (*nel suo calare*), it seemed proper to me to collect in this volume and new chronicle all the acts and beginnings of the city of Florence. . . .' There is an obvious parallel between this passage and *Par. XV*, 109-111:

*Nor was your Montemalo conquered yet
By our Uccellatoio, which, being vanquished
In soaring high (nel montar su), so shall it be in falling (nel calo).*

Professor Giovanni Aquilecchia has remarked that a comparison of these passages shows that Villani was borrowing here from Dante, and not Dante from Villani, for though *montar su* and *calo* are appropriate terms when used with the names 'Montemalo' (Rome) and *Uccellatoio* (Florence), Villani's *montare* and *calare* seem forced and derivative. When Villani wrote this chapter, he must already have read the fifteenth canto of the *Paradiso*. Aquilecchia also observes that the preamble of Villani's chronicle, which expresses only his pride in the ancient descent and modern greatness of his city, contains no reference to the Jubilee, or to the inspiration derived from reflecting on the rise of Florence and the decline of Rome. Aquilecchia speculates that when Villani wrote his preamble he had not yet been able to read the *Commedia*. Therefore he thinks it likely that Villani was influenced by a belated reading of Dante to insert this more pretentious 'second preface'. It is, Aquilecchia believes, less straightforwardly optimistic than his first preface, because of the ominous juxtaposition of Florence with a Rome already fallen into decline.¹

¹ Aquilecchia, art. cit., pp. 46-51.

CHARLES T. DAVIS

But even in this later passage, as Aquilecchia admits, Villani left out Dante's sombre prophecy. Although Villani almost certainly had in mind the corresponding lines from the *Commedia*, there is no evidence that his reading of the poem changed his basically positive attitude towards Florentine history. It may also be suggested that the earlier books of the *Cronica*¹ indicate that in them as well Villani sought to adorn his work by borrowing, and at times misinterpreting, some of Dante's moral judgments on Florence. Before producing a final version even of the first part of his *Cronica*, Villani probably had read the *Commedia*.

In book I, chapter 38, for example, Villani speaks of Florence as having been founded by 'two peoples so contrary and inimical and diverse in customs as were the noble and virtuous Romans and the rough Fiesolans eager for war'. As has already been noted, he regards this mixed composition of the early Florentine populace as an explanation for the factional struggles which later afflicted the city. He could not have found such an explanation in any surviving thirteenth-century chronicle.² Here Villani appears to be interpreting literally a figurative Dantesque antithesis, and to be advancing it naively as a convincing historical explanation. Yet Dante believes that nobility is not based on blood but on individual virtue. His assessment of the relative strength of the Roman and Fiesolan components of the Florentine populace depends not on descent but on deeds, and varies accordingly. In the Florence of Cacciaguیدا almost all her citizens are 'Romans' in Dante's view, even if they came down, like the Caponsacchi, from Fiesole, for they are united in a virtuous communal life.³ After the murder of Buondelmonte and the growth of the parties there are many 'Fiesolans' in the city.⁴ Such men as Guido Guerra, Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, Iacopo Rusticucci, and Brunetto Latini may, however, be regarded as 'Romans' because they are patriots; they still represent an important element in civic affairs.⁵ In 1300, the fictional date of Dante's poem, Brunetto is made to wonder whether the 'Roman plant' is still capable of producing fruit.⁶ A decade later, after Florence had come under the control of the Black Guelph faction and had set herself against the Emperor,

¹ In what we may suspect to be their second version.

² There is hostility to the city in the speech Sanzanome assigns to a Florentine orator calling for the destruction of Fiesole as 'the plant producing evil and useless seed' (Hartwig, vol. I, p. 3), but no mention of the influence of the Fiesolan immigrants as a cause of discord in Florence.

³ *Par.* XVI.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 140-7.

⁵ *Inf.* VI, 79-81; XVI, 4-87.

⁶ *Inf.* XV, 61-78.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

Dante denounced her as the 'most wretched offspring of the Fiesolans', guilty of having seduced the Pope with her florins and of having rejected her Roman heritage.¹ Her citizens are Fiesolans not because of their birth, but because they are rebels against legitimate authority and slaves to their own selfish and anarchic desires.

Dante's view of civic and individual nobility is based on virtue rather than on blood. It is curious that Dante the aristocrat condemns the concept of a nobility of descent, while Villani the bourgeois seems to have been led to accept it in this context by a literal appropriation of Dante's metaphorical language. He appears to think that the theory of a fundamental antagonism between the Roman and Fiesolan inhabitants of Florence accounts more convincingly for later factional strife than the old belief in the astral influence of Mars. 'Happy to possess such a fine explanation of subsequent events, he repeats it again and again in the course of his chronicle.'² His terminology is borrowed, ironically enough, from an aristocratic poet strongly opposed to such a racial theory, who, in fact, advances the antithetical doctrine that nobility rests on the right disposition of the will, on virtuous deeds in support of legitimate authority, and on rational obedience to the moral and legal imperatives of a society at once Roman and Christian.³

Cacciaguیدا was at the same time Roman and Christian in his outlook: according to Dante he followed the Emperor to Palestine and laid down his life in battle against the enemies of Christ.⁴ The members of Villani's *Primo Popolo* were prepared to lay down their lives in war with Siena or Pisa, subordinating private interests to public ambition.⁵ The contrast between these conceptions is profound. Yet Villani, under Dante's influence, also echoes Cacciaguیدا's denunciation of early Florentine aggression when he condemns the capture of the Buondelmonti castle of Montebuono as having occurred 'more by force than by

¹ *Epist.* VI.

² A. Gaspari, *Storia della letteratura italiana*, vol. I, trans. N. Zingarelli (Turin, 1887), p. 332. Cf. E. G. Parodi, *Lectura Dantis genovese* (Florence, 1906), p. 154; Neri, art. cit., p. 13.

³ For Dante's theory of nobility see *Convivio*, IV (and Appendix I, vol. II, pp. 373-4, in the edition of G. Busnelli and G. Vandelli, Florence, 1954); *Monarchia*, II, 3 (and n. 4, p. 117, in the edition of G. Vinay, Florence, 1950); *Par.* XVI, 1-15 (and the comments of the Ottimo, ed. cit., III, 321); N. Zingarelli, *La vita, i tempi e le opere di Dante*, 3rd ed. (Milan, 1939), vol. I, pp. 551-5; T. G. Bergin, *An Approach to Dante* (London, 1965), pp. 124-49; D. Guerri, 'La disputa di Dante Alighieri con Cecco d'Ascoli sulla nobiltà', *Giornale storico della letteratura italiana*, vol. LXVI (1915), pp. 128-39; M. Casella, '“Al cor gentil repara sempre amore”', *Studi romanzi*, vol. XXX (1943), pp. 5-53; C. T. Davis, 'Brunetto Latini and Dante,' *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., vol. VIII, fasc. 2 (1967). Cf. on Dante's allegorical use of the epithet 'Fiesolani', Benvenuto da Imola, *Commentum*, ed. J. P. Lacaíta (Florence, 1887), vol. I, p. 511.

⁴ *Par.* XV, 139-48.

⁵ Villani, VI, 47-75, *passim*.

reason'.¹ He does not seem to be aware that such a remark contradicts his basically optimistic view of communal history and his pride in the growth and greatness of Florence.

Dante's concept of the *buon tempo antico*, on the other hand, is an essential part of his historical thought. Cacciaguida's Florence is the necessary counterpart of the degenerate city he describes in *Inf.* XV–XVI, and elsewhere in the *Commedia*, where the Fiesolan beasts rule and 'cortesia e valor' have been replaced by 'the new people and their quick profits' and the 'arrogance and extravagance' they have generated.² The greed and pride of Florence, like the greed and pride of France, is a spectacular social manifestation of the basic human sin of *cupiditas*, of that evil which reveals itself in the individual, in the family, in the city, in the kingdom, in the Empire, and in the Church. Dante laments not only the condition of Florence but also that of Tuscany in general,³ of the Romagna,⁴ of Lombardy and the Marca Trevigiana,⁵ of Italy,⁶ and of the once 'good world that Rome made'.⁷ Everywhere, he believes, ancient virtue has been corrupted and put to flight by the Wolf from Hell.⁸ Undoubtedly his moral passion is fed by a sense of personal grievance, the bitterness felt by an unsuccessful politician who has had the bad luck to belong to a declining class (the lesser aristocracy) and to a defeated faction (the White Guelfs) and who finds himself despising, and despised by, even the companions of his exile.⁹ Perhaps also the devotion with which he clings to the memory of his ancestor Cacciaguida, a crusader knighted by the Emperor, shows the insecurity of the minor aristocrat. He strikes out against the arrogance of those whom he regards as upstarts like Filippo Argenti¹⁰ and also of those who are unquestionably magnates like Corso Donati.¹¹ But before his exile he was vulnerable to the taunts of Corso's brother Forese, who referred to Dante's poverty and to unavenged injuries done to his father.¹² Dante's idealization of past simplicity and virtue and his condemnation of present corruption may be in part a means of self-protection against the assured status of families more powerful than the Alighieri and against the promiscuous mingling of the late arrivals with the old Florentine

¹ Villani, IV, 36.

² *Inf.* XVI, 64–75; cf. *Inf.* VI, 49–51; *Purg.* XIV, 49–66; *Par.* XV, 100–8.

³ *Purg.* XIV, 16–66.

⁴ *Inf.* XXXVII, 37–54; *Purg.* XIV, 91–123.

⁵ *Purg.* XVI, 115–29; *Par.* IX, 43–60.

⁶ *Conv.* II, x, 8; IV, vi, 20; *De Vulg. Eloq.* I, xii, 4–5; *Purg.* VI, 76–126.

⁷ *Purg.* XVI, 106–29.

⁸ *Inf.* I, 49–60, 88–111.

⁹ *Par.* XVII, 61–9.

¹⁰ *Inf.* VIII, 32–63.

¹¹ *Purg.* XXIV, 82–7.

¹² *Rime* LXXIII–LXXVIII.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

stock. Yet his genius enables him to universalize these feelings, to subordinate them to a general moral and historical vision. Its poetic and rhetorical effectiveness is, in fact, not limited, but rather strengthened, by his own personal involvement.

In the context of Florentine historical thought, Dante's conception of the *buon tempo antico*, his placing it in the remote past, his emphasis on the poverty and small size of the virtuous city, content with an austere life within its narrow walls, had a considerable originality. But if Dante set himself against the current of the historiography of his own commune, he echoed a common topos of the historians, orators, and poets of Rome. He may have had in mind Virgil's passage from the second book of the *Georgics*, condemning modern decadence and praising the time ruled over by *aureus Saturnus* when Rome, enclosed by a single wall, had become 'the fairest of all things', but had not yet devoted herself to acquiring power and wealth.¹ He may have thought of the picture drawn by Juvenal in his *Satires* (of which Dante certainly knew VII, VIII, and X) of the corrupt and licentious metropolis. Juvenal's third satire would have been particularly appropriate to Dante's outlook, for there the Roman poet denounces the country bumpkins and Greek fops who infest the city, and asks, 'Is it so completely meaningless that as a child I breathed the air of the Aventine and was nourished by the Sabine berry?' There he ridicules Greek lust and the insolence and ostentatious dress of the newly-rich. There he also eulogizes the old Rome, where one prison was sufficient for the city's needs.² In the sixth satire he contrasts early feminine simplicity with later affectations.³ In the eleventh, he contrasts the spare diet of the ancient Romans with the gluttony of later times.⁴

The closest parallel to Dante's description of the *buon tempo antico* is, however, to be found in a contemporary author, Riccobaldo of Ferrara. Riccobaldo made a famous comparison between the frugal customs of Italy at the time of Frederick II and the opulence of the early fourteenth century. Dante almost certainly knew and quoted from Riccobaldo's most extended chronicle, the *Historie* (c. 1308-13), in which this description (found as well in at least four of his other works) appears in its most complete form.⁵ Although the second half of the

¹ *Georgics*, II, 458-540. According to E. Moore, *Studies in Dante. First Series: Scripture and Classical Authors in Dante* (Oxford, 1896), the only evidence that Dante knew this work is a reminiscence of *Georg.* IV, 525-7, in *Purg.* XXX, 49-51.

² *Sat.* III, 29-40, 60-181, 312-14.

³ *Sat.* VI, esp. 1-20.

⁴ *Sat.* XI, 64-146.

⁵ See A. Masséra, 'Dante e Riccobaldo', *Bollettino della società dantesca italiana*, n.s., vol. XXII (1915), 168-200. Masséra thinks that Dante derived the substance of the Guido da Montefeltro passage (*Inf.* XXVII, 63-129), the information about the mur-

Historie has been lost,¹ extracts from it, including this passage, were made by Francesco Pipino, Giovanni de' Mussi, and Fiamma.² Pipino's rendering is the most faithful, as may be seen by a comparison of it with the corresponding passage of Riccobaldo's *Compendium* of the *Historie*, finished c. 1318.³ The *Compendium*, however, lacks a final quotation from Seneca the Rhetor which is repeated by Pipino and Fiamma.⁴ In such shorter works of Riccobaldo as the *Pomerium Raven-natis ecclesiae*, the *Compilatio Chronologica*,⁵ and the *Cronica extracta de archivio ecclesiae Ravennae*,⁶ only a truncated version of the passage is given, containing the description of ancient customs without the denunciation of modern ones. The translation below follows the text of the *Compendium*, with the addition of the Senecan passage from Pipino and Fiamma:

'In those times customs and habits in Italy were rude. For men wore fillets of metal plates on their heads, sewed into caps which they called *maiatas*.⁷ At meals a man and his wife ate from one dish; wooden trenchers were not yet used for dining. There were one or two drinking-vessels for a family. By night the supper-table was lighted by torches, held by a boy or servant; it was not customary to have tallow or wax candles. Men wore mantles of skin without linings or of wool without skins, and hoods of linen. Women were married in tunics of linen. The style of living of men and women was primitive; they wore little or no gold and silver on their garments, and their diet was without refinement. Ordinary people ate fresh meat three times a week. At

der of Obizzo of Este (*Inf.* XII, 110-12), as had already been pointed out by Benvenuto da Imola, and perhaps the reference to Pope Martin IV's love of eels and wine (*Purg.* XXIV, 20-4), from Riccobaldo's *Historie*. I am informed by Dr Teresa Hankey, who is preparing an edition of the *Compendium* of the *Historie* to be published by the Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, that she has found other evidence as well of Dante's use of Riccobaldo.

¹ The first half has recently been discovered by Dr Hankey. See her article, 'Riccobaldo of Ferrara, Boccaccio and Domenico di Bandino', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XXI (1958), p. 220.

² See Masséra, art. cit. For repetition of the *buon tempo* passage by Pipino see *R.I.S.*, ed. Muratori, vol. IX, coll. 669-70; by John de' Mussi, *ibid.*, vol. XVI, col. 579; by Fiamma, *ibid.*, vol. XII, coll. 1033-4.

³ Published by Masséra, art. cit., p. 184. Cf. the old Italian translation of the passage published by C. Frati, 'Volgarizzamento di un'opera inedita di Riccobaldo Ferrarese', *Miscellanea di studi in onore di Attilio Hortis*, vol. II, p. 859, from a fifteenth-century codex (Marc. Ital. Zanetti, 38).

⁴ Pipino inserts also a quotation from Macrobius after the passage from Seneca. The Macrobian quotation is missing, however, in Fiamma, and Dr Hankey has told me that she has encountered no citations of Macrobius in Riccobaldo.

⁵ *Rev. Ital. Script.*, ed. Muratori, vol. IX, coll. 128, 247.

⁶ Cod. Vat. Ross. 8, fol. 49r. I owe my knowledge of this version of the passage to the kindness of Dr Hankey.

⁷ A helmet of mail protecting the neck as well as the head. Vat. Ross. 8, fol. 49r, has '*maiatas seu cervelleria*'.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

midday they had herbs or vegetables cooked with meat; for supper they had what was left from the same meat. Not everyone drank wine in summer. Men thought themselves rich if they had a moderate amount of money. Wine cellars were small. They did not have large barns, but were content with store-rooms. Women married with a modest dowry, since their style of living was then very frugal. Virgins before marriage were content with a linen tunic which was called a *sotanum* and a linen cloak which they called a *xocham*. Virgins wore no precious ornaments on their heads. Married women bound their temples, cheeks, and chin with wide bands. The glory of men was to be rich in arms and horses; that of nobles was to have lofty towers. Many dissolute habits have now stifled these early customs, many indeed which lead to the destruction of the soul. Parsimony has been changed into extravagance. One sees garments of rich material which are decorated with exquisite and excessive artifice, with marvellously fashioned silver, gold, and pearls, with wide embroidery and linings of silk, and trimmed with exotic and precious skins. Incitements to greed are not lacking. Foreign wine is drunk, almost everybody is a public tippler, feasts are sumptuous, and their masters, the cooks, are highly paid. Whatever incites to gluttony and ambition is sought for, and avarice labours that it may be supplied with these things. Thence come usury, frauds, rapine, pillaging, plunder, contentions in the state, unjust exactions, oppression of the innocent, destruction of citizens, banishment of the rich. Our belly is our God. We persist in those vanities which we have renounced in baptism, creatures of God, betraying him for the Devil. And were it not for the fact that the teachings of the clergy continually furnish us with examples of austerity, there would be no limit to our ambition and indulgence. Seneca the cultivator of good morals in his *Book of Declamations* condemns our times justly in these words: "Each day the situation deteriorates. Everything is a competition for evil. The talents of our idle youth stagnate; nor are they alert in the pursuit of any honest thing. Sleep and languor and an enthusiasm for misbehaviour worse than sleep and languor have invaded men's souls. A wicked zeal for both singing and dancing enthralles these effeminate people. To curl their hair, to thin their voices in female blandishments, to compete with women in softness of body, and to refine themselves in dissipation has become the model of civilized behaviour for our youth."

F. Neri, relying mainly on the truncated version of Riccobaldo's description of the good old time in the *Pomerium* and not on the fuller version of the *Compendium*, thought that the passage with its emphasis on 'rude and gross customs' and its details of dress and of the still modest

adornments of women, might have had some influence on the accounts of Dante and Villani. But he said that Riccobaldo was only trying to sketch the customs and not the spirit of a past age. He found no hint in Riccobaldo of 'the marriage between rough old austerity and loyal honesty', and of the 'fida cittadinanza' portrayed by Dante.¹ The cautious Masséra, who studied the passage closely in its more extended versions, spoke only of 'some light effect on Dante's thought, at least as a stimulus to deal with the subject in the Poem'.² But it should be noted that the structure and moral of the passage as it appears in the *Historie* is remarkably similar to that of the second half of *Paradiso* XV. The lack of richness in dress, of ornaments on the head, of bordered gowns, and the wearing of unlined skins is contrasted with the extravagance and the effeminacy of contemporary usage. Certainly the details of Dante's description are for the most part original, and he drew also on Juvenal and/or Orosius for the reference to Sardanapalus, as the symbol of unnatural vice.³ But it is not unlikely that Riccobaldo's passage served as a basis for Dante's whole description of life in twelfth-century Florence, transformed though it was by his knowledge of Florentine traditions and by his poetic genius.

Even if the dubious credentials of Riccordano Malispini could be accepted, it would be difficult to deny that thirteenth-century Florentine chroniclers seem relatively primitive both in technique and in their crudely optimistic spirit when compared with some of their North Italian contemporaries.⁴ It was Dante, probably borrowing in part from one of the most remarkable of these northern annalists, who gave Villani a view of the history of his city that tempered, although it did not essentially alter, his fundamental optimism. One may conclude that the concept of the *buon tempo antico*, despite its appearance in the works of Dante, Villani, the Anonymous, and Malispini, was alien to the spirit of most early Florentine historical writing. Partially inspired by

¹ Neri, art. cit., p. 30. But see Riccobaldo's *Chronica parva Ferrariensis, Rer. Ital. Script.*, ed. Muratori, vol. VIII, col. 483, cited by Rubinstein, 'Some Ideas on Municipal Progress and Decline', p. 166, which paints a picture of good citizenship as well as prosperity in the republic of Ferrara around 1230.

² Masséra, art. cit., p. 190.

³ Juvenal, *Sat.* X, 32; Orosius, *Hist.* I, 19; *Par.* XV, 107. Perhaps Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, II, 5, also influenced Dante's description.

⁴ An earlier example of the relative maturity of north Italian historiography is furnished by Rolandino of Padua, ed. P. Jaffé, *M.G.H., Scriptores*, XIX, whose concept of the good old time is discussed by Arnaldi, *Studi sui cronisti*, p. 192. (See the passages in I, 9, 13; II, 19.) He spoke nostalgically of the 'good wars' before the savagery of Ezzelino had broken down humane restraints. 'Today', he remarked, 'Ovid's prophecy is fulfilled, since the world, which he says had a golden beginning, is now on the contrary infected by filth' (I, 9). But his golden age lacked the note of austerity in Riccobaldo and Dante.

IL BUON TEMPO ANTICO

Riccobaldo and perhaps to some extent by classical Roman authors, it was created by a poet, adapted by a chronicler, and reiterated weakly and briefly by two compilers. It owed its influence to the force with which it was projected by Dante, to whom it was not merely a *topos*, but an essential part of a theory of history and of society. Dante, indeed, transformed the old classical conception. He was not, like nostalgic writers under the Roman Empire, longing for republican simplicity and virtue. He was rather looking back to a time of imagined unity under imperial authority, before ambition and greed had caused Florence to seek false liberty, to indulge herself in factional rivalries, and to reject the Emperor Henry VII's sovereignty. Villani in his republicanism and in his celebration of the victories of Florence over her neighbours was actually closer to the old Roman spirit. But when he made his great survey of her power (c. 1339),¹ the state and government of Florence was not so obviously different from her state and government between 1250 and 1260. Therefore his conception of the *buon tempo antico* lacked the cutting edge which it had had in the Roman authors, in Riccobaldo, and in Dante, where it was used as a device for condemning contemporary developments. Villani's moral passages and his reflections on human sins and divine punishments seem curiously external to the main sweep of his chronicle.

Villani's pious moralizing, often borrowed from Dante, carries conviction mainly when he condemns factionalism and civil war. His denunciations of wealth and ambition are not relevant to his major purpose, for it was precisely these characteristics of Florentine development which excited his imagination and moved him to write his history. His description of the rough clothes and frugal life of the *Primo Popolo* seems forced when we compare it with the inscription which that same *Popolo* placed on their new town hall, celebrating the power and victories of their city. Its first line asserted: 'Florence is full of all imaginable wealth.'² This note, also struck by Villani in many passages, gives a truer impression of the spirit of early Florentine historiography than the borrowings from Dante with which he tried to ornament his *Chronicle*.

¹ XI, 91-4.

² From the partial translation of the inscription by Rubinstein, 'Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence', p. 213.

III

DANIEL WALEY

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC FROM THE TWELFTH TO THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The ideal of a civic militia, of the city-republic in arms, is a noble and impressive one, and there is no better exemplar of patriotism in action than the citizen called away from his employment to serve in defence of his city. Such service was a normal obligation on the male inhabitants of the city-states of medieval Italy, as it had been in ancient Greece. Amid the anonymous masses of craftsmen and traders Socrates was in the ranks of the Athenian hoplites at the siege of Potidaea and Dante in the front file of the Florentine cavalry at Campaldino. The militia has been seen by writers on the city-republics as not merely a symbol of the community's public spirit, but an essential element in the survival of republicanism. 'The decline of the commune and of its militia'¹ is a conventional conjunction, and the fourteenth century is a time of 'military crisis' in which 'the citizen militia cannot withstand the superior organization and technique of the mercenary companies'. The mercenaries are often seen as 'the principal instrument in the introduction of the *Signoria*'. Through them Italy came to lose its 'liberty' and its ardour for glory, and their rise was itself the tragic consequence of 'love of money', greater wealth and the increased circulation of currency. These developments and the higher revenues of the state 'caused the citizens to lose the practice of arms and brought about the decline of the proud spirit which had animated the resistance

¹ E. Ricotti, *Storia delle Compagnie di Ventura in Italia* (Turin, 1893), vol. I, p. 92.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

of the town militias to Barbarossa and Frederick II'. The bourgeoisie, once the city's infantry, had become 'absorbed in industry and trade'.¹

This essay on the composition of Florentine armies from the city's first aggressive campaigns to the battle of Altopascio (1325) is an investigation of the development of Florentine military obligation and of the rôle of mercenaries during these two centuries. It is an enquiry into the accuracy of the picture, described above, of the supersession of civic zeal by apathy, economic specialization and the 'cash nexus'. It does not claim to be a military history of Florence, which undertaking would require much greater space.

The earlier military enterprises of the Florentines from the first years of the twelfth up to the middle of the thirteenth century are known to us mainly through the brief and untrustworthy accounts of the chroniclers. From these it is evident that the city's cavalry and infantry forces fought many short campaigns against neighbouring towns and feudatories. Often a castle or fortified town was captured. The terms whereby allied or dependent powers owed military service to Florence suggest two or three weeks — a month at the outside — as the maximum length of such campaigns, at least up to the early thirteenth century.² Probably they normally took place in the summer or autumn. The wars fought against Siena in 1207–8 and 1229–34 were perhaps more elaborate affairs, but in essence the latter was still merely a series of annual forays into Siennese territory, destructive raids in intention even if there was an occasional clash of arms. The duration of the campaigns of 1233 and 1234 was, however, more ambitious, if we are to accept the assurance of the chronicler that the Florentine army camped under the walls of Siena for 54 days in the former year and served for 53 days in the latter.³

The composition of the twelfth-century 'host' of the Florentines must remain almost entirely unknown, in the absence of adequate sources. It fought on horseback and foot ('a cavallo e a piè' it attacked Fiesole in 1110 and 1125),⁴ it was invariably accompanied by the symbolic waggon or *carroccio*, the emblem of civic patriotism, and probably the

¹ These typical passages are quoted from M. Fuiano in *Nuove Questioni di Storia Medioevale* (Milan, 1964), p. 347; G. Canestrini, *Documenti per servire alla storia della Milizia Italiana* (Florence, 1851), pp. ix and xii; E. Ricotti in *Memorie della R. Acc. d. Scienze d. Torino*, s. V, vol. II (1840), p. 40; C. Paoli in *A.S.I.*, s. III, i (1865), p. 74; P. Pieri, *Il Rinascimento e la Crisi Militare Italiana* (Turin, 1952), p. 217.

² P. Santini, *Documenti dell'antica costituzione del comune di Firenze* (Florence, 1895), pp. 21 (Lucca owes 20 days service, 1184), 56–7 (the bishop of Volterra owes 15 days, 1200), 63–4 (Florence owes Siena one month's service, 1201).

³ 'Cronica Fiorentina' in P. Villari, *I primi due secoli della storia di Firenze* (ed. 3, Florence, n.d.), p. 557.

⁴ G. Villani, *Cronica*, IV, 6; 'Cronica Fiorentina' in Villari, op. cit., pp. 526–7.

DANIEL WALEY

obligation to serve in the infantry or cavalry, according to a man's means, was universal for adult males. A Florentine promise in 1201 to assist Siena, for a month if necessary, with a hundred cavalry and a thousand foot, some of whom would be archers,¹ affords some indication of the nature of this army — no doubt numbers well below the city's total potential were named — but there is no other clue.

Universal military liability is unlikely to have meant universal service in every campaign. Both Florence's promise to Siena and the precise numerical obligations to Florence of Lucca (150 cavalry and 500 foot) and the bishop of Volterra (200 cavalry, one thousand foot)² suggest the existence of arrangements (which one would expect anyway), for the calling of a quota of the total service due. An isolated remark in a chronicle that the Florentine force engaged against the Pisans in 1222 comprised the whole cavalry and one-third of the infantry implies that two of the city's six regions (the *Sesti*) were involved, and the reorganization of 1250 (based on earlier arrangements) provided for the calling of two, three, four or all six *Sesti*.³

It is highly probable that this citizen army was, from the start, a paid force. Pay for the period of service is assumed in the agreements of other communes concerning military assistance quite early in the twelfth century, and by 1184 Lucchese cavalry serving with the Florentines were receiving 3 *soldi* a day and infantry one *soldo*.⁴ The first undoubted evidence of pay for Florentine soldiers relates to the horsemen 'chosen to serve with the Emperor' in 1240,⁵ but the sources are meagre and arguments from silence valueless.

Since it is quite clear that the Italian communes paid their own troops, both cavalry and infantry, when on service — and this point requires emphasis, because writers have often implied that the military obligation involved unpaid service, and was thus an index of altruistic civic spirit — it is evident too that in this context we must reserve the term 'mercenary' for the man who served a 'foreign' power. We shall sometimes be able to distinguish the Florentine (paid) conscript from the Florentine serving his city voluntarily for pay, but the latter must be differentiated from the outsider. Certain evidence of the employ-

¹ Santini, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-4.

² *Ibid.*, pp. cited p. 71 n. 2 above.

³ 'Sanzanome' in O. Hartwig, *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz*, vol. I (Marburg, 1875), pp. 22-4; Villani, II, 40.

⁴ Santini, *op. cit.*, p. 21. In 1131 Nonantola agreed to provide pay for the militia of Bologna when this city sent military aid: 'si milites bononie vel arcatores in nostro servitio venerint nostro stipendio eos retinebimus' (L. Salvioli, *Annali Bolognesi* (Bassano, 1784-95), I, 2, p. 180).

⁵ Santini, *op. cit.*, p. 473.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

ment of mercenaries by Florence seems to begin as late as 1208, when the city paid off a small group of Umbrian knights who had served against Siena, probably the previous year.¹ But long before this mercenaries were commonly found in the armies of Italian towns, and no doubt Florence took on such men in the twelfth century, as Fiesole did in 1124 in the attempt to preserve its independence against the Florentines.² Volterra's legislation forbidding its citizens to serve in the army of any other city shows that mercenary service was common in Tuscany by the end of the twelfth century.³ The Sienese, so often Florence's enemy, were making use of horsemen from Latium as early as 1180,⁴ and mercenaries played a very important rôle on their side in the war of 1229-34. In each year between 1229 and 1231 Siena employed hundreds of mercenaries, mainly Umbrians, Emilians, Lombards and Ligurians, though some were from France and Germany. The despatch of Sienese recruiting officials to Umbria, Lombardy and Genoa suggests that it was not yet possible to find already organized bands through contact with their commanders. Yet the number of men raised was very considerable; in the summer of 1231 the Sienese had nearly four hundred Genoese crossbowmen on their books, to whom they probably added a further three hundred from the region of Spoleto.⁵

The Florentines certainly did not employ mercenaries on the same scale as their foes; had they done so, some trace would surely have survived in the chronicles or elsewhere. But the ability of Florence to overcome a power served by many hundreds of mercenaries casts doubt on the generalizations normally made about the city militia in the age of development. If Florence's amateurs could withstand the crossbowmen of Genoa, does not this suggest that the primitive militia was at no hopeless disadvantage when engaged against men whose profession was war? And if they could remain in the field sufficiently long to drive the Sienese to accept unfavourable peace-terms, can it be maintained that they were handicapped by their incapacity to fight a prolonged campaign? This army was not a spontaneous, disorganized *levée en masse*. The fact that one year — and there is no reason to suppose this exceptional — one-third only of the infantry was called to the 'host', also casts doubt on the usual assertion that 'each campaign

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 148-9. For the Umbrian noble, Napoleone, who figures in this document see also Frederick II's privilege of 1200 in J. F. Ficker, *Urkunden zur Reichs- und Rechtsgeschichte Italiens* (Innsbruck, 1868-74), IV, pp. 258-9.

² 'Sanzanome' in Hartwig, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³ E. Fiumi (ed.), *Statuti di Volterra* (Florence, 1952), vol. I, pp. 47, 213.

⁴ *Regestum Senense*, ed. F. Schneider (Rome, 1911), vol. I, p. 114.

⁵ *I Libri dell'Entrata e dell'Uscita della Repubblica di Siena* (Siena, 1907 ff.), vols. II and IV, *passim*; for the crossbowmen, vol. IV, pp. 148, 157-8, 176.

DANIEL WALEY

interrupted the entire activity of the city'.¹ A temporary diminution in the city's industrial and commercial business probably accompanied such occasions, but those not called to arms may have worked harder to compensate for the shortage of hands. Peripatetic merchants, if away from home, were beyond the reach of the summons.

Trammelled by imperial power during the 1240s, the Florentines asserted their strength to the full in the first years of the following decade and emerged as the dominant authority in Tuscany. This was perhaps the greatest era of Florentine military achievement, and Giovanni Villani saw it, looking back from the fourteenth century, as a golden age when the city's 'sober' people, whatever their 'simple life and poverty', 'did greater and more virtuous things than have been done in our times with all our superior comfort and wealth'. Men then 'kept good faith and loyalty with the city and with each other', the 'lordly pride of the first *Popolo* and our ancestors was inspired by the pomp of the *carroccio* and the bell'. 'The Florentines were united by the good *Popolo*, they served in person in the host on horse or foot, openly and with a good heart, and their prowess brought triumph and glory to Florence from all sides.'²

We know a good deal about the composition of the Florentine armies of this great decade, thanks (paradoxically) to the partial survival of the archive of the force which met with Florence's heaviest defeat, the so-called *Libro di Montaperti* (1260). The advent of the *Primo Popolo* (1250) was accompanied by an institutional reorganization, but this had little effect on the Florentine army. The *Popolo*'s twenty companies of *pedites* were a cadre for domestic strife, to be employed if necessary against the nobility: there is no trace of them as units at Montaperti, where the infantry was grouped by the usual regional divisions (*popoli*), and within these by platoons of 25. On the other hand the arrangement whereby each *Sesto* was allotted for the purposes of military organization a certain area of the *contado* may well have originated with the *Primo Popolo*: it was certainly in existence by 1260.³

Command was normally exercised by the *podestà*, together with a

¹ E.g. in Y. Renouard, *Les Villes d'Italie de la fin du Xe siècle au début du XIVe s.* (Cours de Sorbonne, 1962), p. 205. That it was normal to call two or three *Sesti* at one time is also suggested by Giovanni Villani's description as an 'ordine molto antico' (VI, 40) of the arrangement for pairing *Sesti* on such occasions: when 3 were called, Oltrarno went with Borgo and S. Pancrazio, S. Pier Scheraggio with Porta del Duomo and Porta S. Pietro: when 2 were called, the pairings were Oltrarno-S. Pancrazio, Scheraggio-Borgo, Porta del Duomo-Porta S. Pietro.

² G. Villani, VI, 52, 70, 76.

³ G. Villani, VI, 39-40; *Il Libro di Montaperti* (ed. C. Paoli, Florence, 1889), pp. 103-77, 312-38. Villani's statement that the military forces of the *contado* were first organized in 96 leagues in 1250 is probably incorrect; the word *lega* is certainly an anachronism in this context. My interpretation of the role of the 20 'companies' of 1250 is that of F. Smith, 'Ueber die florentinischen Wehrmacht im Jahre der Schlacht

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

council of twelve Captains (two representatives of each *Sesto*). The army of 1260 was led by the *podestà*, Giacopo di Rangone of Modena, and the author of the didactic *Liber de Regimine Civitatum*, written probably in the 1260s, assumes that a *podestà*'s duties will include command on campaign. He should be everywhere, 'warning, encouraging and comforting, and, when necessary, frightening, threatening and even striking the disobedient,' and his tent should be in the very middle of the camp. However, 'he should not take part in the fighting personally (*in propria pugna pugnare*), but should make others do this.'¹

The number of *Sesti* called on each occasion depended on the nature of the campaign; for instance there seem at various stages of the war in the Casentino in the late autumn of 1251 to have been three, four or five *Sesti* in the field.² Each *Sesto* had its own cavalry force, the obligation to provide this falling on certain individuals and groups of relatives ('consorts'). Those who were thus selected — by special officials (*ad equos inponendos*) — had to maintain a horse or horses on behalf of the city. They did not have to serve in person, but were permitted to furnish as a substitute a younger relative or some other 'suitable rider'.³ These horses were assessed financially and their holders received compensation in the case of death or injury. If the partial figures which survive in the *Libro di Montaperti* are a typical sample, more than half of the horses 'owed' to the city were held jointly. Frequently the 'consorts' were joint heirs of a man on whom the obligation had previously fallen and hence it might rest on involved combinations of relatives such as a father, his sons and a nephew, or even two sets of brothers together with a nephew of one set. The most common types of joint obligation, however, involved as *consortes* either brothers, or brothers together with other co-heirs, or a father and his son or sons.⁴

von Montaperti' in *Delbrück-Festschrift* (Berlin, 1908), pp. 115–53, and *Beiträge zur florentinischen Verfassungs- und Heeresgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1914), p. 33. It disagrees with that of most writers (for instance of Renouard, *op. cit.*, pp. 259–60).

¹ *Liber de Regimine Civitatis*, ed. G. Salvemini in *Bibliotheca Iuridica Medii Aevi*, vol. III (Bologna, 1901), pp. 268–75. The Florentine Brunetto Latini seems to assume in *Li Livres dou Trésor*, written in the 1260s, that the *podestà*'s military functions may be limited to the composition and delivery of bellicose speeches (*Li Livres dou Trésor*, ed. F. J. Carmody, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1948, pp. 419–20), but a versified rendering of the same work names Giacopo de' Rangoni as the Florentine commander: on this see Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV (Berlin, 1908), p. 150.

² G. Villani, VI, 47–8 and Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV, 1 (Berlin, 1922), Anmerkungen, p. 53. For an occasion when 2 *Sesti* were called (1267) see Villani, VII, 19.

³ Santini, *Documenti*, vol. II, p. 394.

⁴ This description of the 'consort' system is based on information about the cavalry of the *Sesto* of S. Pancrazio in the *Libro di Montaperti*, pp. 291–308. Of the 185 horses listed there, 116 were held jointly. 24 of these were owed by brothers; 16 by a father together with a son or sons; 13 by brothers with other heirs; and all the others by other combinations of relations or co-heirs. A similar system involving the joint obligation of co-heirs existed at Siena by the 1250s (*Libri dell'Entrata* . . . , vol. XIII, pp. 49–58).

DANIEL WALEY

This system whereby one man might owe a service of several horses and several men might jointly owe one horse was of course designed to secure the maximum mobilization of Florence's cavalry potential.

By the 1250s — and we must emphasize that these arrangements, like those concerning the cavalry, may well go back a lot earlier — the infantry was not a single homogeneous force in its composition but included a number of specialist elements. Within the corps of each *Sesto*, both crossbowmen and archers were brigaded separately and had their own standard-bearers, as did those infantrymen who were equipped only with hoes and stakes. The *pavesarii* (shield-men) were under three standard-bearers, each heading the men of a pair of *Sesti*, and the same grouping was employed for the sappers (*guastatores*) and for the 'market' or provision-train. The pack-train was organized in two corps, while a special bodyguard under a single commander was assigned to the defence of the *carroccio*, and another captain or banner-bearer commanded the ragged assemblage of camp-followers.¹

From these preliminaries on the composition of the armies of the 1250s and '60s we may move on to a more detailed analysis of the only force of which such an analysis can be made, that of 1260. The surviving fragment of this army's archive fills nearly four hundred pages of print, but permits quite radical differences of opinion about its numerical strength. Tantalizingly, the *Libro* invites attempts to reconstruct the composition, size and cost of this army, while providing full information on none of them.

The army of 1260 was in essence an army of Florentines — of paid Florentines. Our estimate of the number of Florentine cavalry present in fulfilment of the obligation to serve must be based on the cavalry of the *Sesto* of S. Pancrazio, of whom 185 were present (pp. 291–308).² This *Sesto* provided approximately two-fifteenths of the city's strength in *pavesarii* (pp. 17–27) and one is forced to guess (admittedly rashly) that the proportion for cavalrymen may have been similar; if it was, some 1,400 men of the city's *cavallata* were in the field. To these should probably be added some Florentine cavalrymen receiving a higher rate of pay because they had volunteered for paid service at a time when they had not been summoned (pp. 42–3); but there is no means of assessing the number of these, nor of knowing whether the number of cavalry summoned from the city's *Sesti* included the (possibly quite

¹ Where the *Libro di Montaperti*, pp. 1–32, differs from G. Villani, VI, 40, I have followed the former. The pairing of *Sesti* is that described above (p. 74 n.). Page-references in the following paragraphs are to the *Libro di Montaperti*.

² This is to assume that all *Sesti* were present in the host, as seems to be implied on p. 83 of the *Libro di Montaperti*.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

numerous) 'knights of the *contado*' (p. 97). The guard of the *carroccio* included forty-eight more Florentine cavalymen, together with 153 infantry (pp. 1-17). There were probably at least two hundred mercenary cavalry (from Emilia and Romagna, pp. 38-40, 83, 96) and quite possibly more (pp. 45-7). Numbers were of course higher among the infantry. An estimate of the number of unspecialized Florentine foot must depend again on the use of the figures available for the *Sesto* of S. Pancrazio and multiplication of this by the co-efficient (explained above) of 15:2. The number of names recorded in a not entirely complete list¹ (pp. 312-38) is 1,058, but of these no less than 531 were noted as absentees on the eve of the battle. Assuming this proportion of absenteeism to have prevailed throughout the army, we should perhaps guess this element at some 4,000. There was also — at least in June and probably later — a force of 1,000 crossbowmen (pp. 97-8). The archers — of whom only one-quarter seem to have been called at a time (p. 98) — may perhaps have been equally numerous. The *Libro* preserves a list of the 302 *pavesarii* who were on service in February; this element was probably greater in the summer, but it might be rash to assume this. Three thousand sappers from the *contado* were equipped with scythes and hoes (pp. 98-9). As for other infantry from the *contado*, the only clue is a list of 881 men present from the *pivieri* and *popoli* attached to the *Sesto* of Porta S. Pietro (pp. 341-68): this *Sesto* provided one-sixth of the *pavesarii* and — again supposing this proportion to be a clue — this suggests a total force of 'general infantry' from the *contado* of some 5,000. I omit *contadini* called up for local defence only, as not being part of the force present at Montaperti.

The figures so far hazarded are presented in the following table:

City cavalry	c. 1,400
<i>Carroccio</i> guard	201 (153 infantry, 48 cavalry)
Mercenary cavalry	200 (or more)
City infantry (present: of general body)	c. 4,000
City crossbowmen	1,000
City archers	1,000
City <i>pavesarii</i>	c. 300
<i>Contado</i> sappers	3,000
<i>Contado</i> infantry (general body)	5,000

This would give a total of 16,100 men, of whom some 1,650 were mounted. All but some 200 were Florentines, and all were paid.

¹ It includes seven *popoli*, of the eight in this *Sesto* (Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. I (Berlin, 1896), p. 329).

DANIEL WALEY

Giovanni Villani has it that the Florentine force consisted of 1,300 cavalry out of 3,000 Gueff cavalry in all. For the infantry he gives only a total figure of 30,000, but if the Florentine share of this was similar to its proportion of cavalry there would perhaps have been some 13,000 Florentine foot, and therefore a total Florentine force of 14,300. Though Villani's figures possess no great authority they are perhaps worth citing in defence of my own guess, since they come reasonably close to it, and are more distant from the figures of Smith (9,000) and Davidsohn, who puts the total Gueff force at 70,000, though he would not guess the size of the Florentine element.¹

The *Libro* contains data concerning rates of pay which beckon yet further into the attractive landscape of historical guesswork. The pay of the city cavalry was 6 *l.* 15 *s.* a month, that of the mercenary cavalry 8 florins a month. City crossbowmen received 3 *s.* a day, archers 2 *s.* 8 *d.*, *pavesarii* 2 *s.* 6 *d.* The main body of city infantry (including probably the footmen in the *carroccio* guard) received 2 *s.* a day, and the sappers or pioneers from the *contado* 1 *s.* It is probable that the *contado* pioneers were paid by their own regions, like the general body of *contado* infantry. If these surmises are near the mark, the cost of pay alone for this force amounted to some 35,000 *l.* a month.² This constitutes an enormous sum, but not an incredible one. Siena, a smaller and less wealthy city, paid out more than 7,000 *l.* (Sienese currency) to Sienese soldiers alone during the second half of the following year (1261), not a time of acute military crisis, and well over 20,000 *l.* to German troops during the second half of 1268.³ The financial burden was alleviated, perhaps to a substantial degree, by fines levied on absentees and defaulters, of whom we know there were many. The normal fine for absence was 10 *l.* for a cavalryman and 5 *l.* for an infantryman, while failure to show a costly item of required equipment (such as lance, saddle or shield) involved a penalty of 1 *l.* and for cheaper items (hoes, saws, etc.) the sum was 5 *s.* Enormous fines were threatened, such as 100 *l.* for the serious offence of selling a horse 'imposed' as an obligation by the city, and failure to denounce absentees was also a

¹ G. Villani, VI, 79. F. Smith in *Delbrück-Festschrift*, p. 146; Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. IV, 1, p. 245 (and Anm., p. 55), *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 151.

² *Libro di Montaperti*, pp. 35-6, 42-3, 45-7, 68-9, 75-8, 84, 94-5. The estimate for one month's pay works out as follows. City cavalry 6 *l.* 15 *s.* × 1,400 = c. 9,500 *l.*; *carroccio* guard, 50 at same, 150 at 2 *s.* p.d. = c. 900 *l.*; mercenary cavalry, 200 × 8 florins = 1,600 florins: city infantry, 4,000 × 2 *s.* p.d. = 12,000 *l.*: crossbowmen, 1,000 × 3 *s.* = 4,500 *l.*: archers, ditto × 2 *s.* 8 *d.* = 4,000 *l.*: *pavesarii*, 300 × 2 *s.* 6 *d.* = 1,125 *l.*: (*contado* pioneers (paid locally?), 3,000 × 1 *s.* p.d. = 4,500 *l.*).

³ These figures are based on calculations from Siena, Archivio di Stato, Biccherna, nn. 33 and 43. (I was aided in visits to archives while preparing this essay by a grant from the Central Research Fund of the University of London.)

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

crime. Crossbowmen could purchase exemption from service for 30 s. (15 s. for *contadini*) and archers for 10 s., but we have no evidence for this period concerning the amount of revenue derived from this source and from fines.¹

Florence's mercenaries at Montaperti, though not very significant numerically, require separate treatment. In March 1260 the city sent emissaries to recruit two hundred cavalry, half of them in Emilia — Modena was to be tried first, then if necessary Reggio, Parma and Frignano (prov. Modena) — the other half in Romagna. By the end of that month another fifty cavalry mercenaries had been promised by Pietro 'de Bazacape' of Milan (pp. 38-40, 45-7). Of these we hear no more, whereas the *Libro* does reveal the presence in May of mercenaries from Modena and Romagna, and of some cavalry recruited, rather enterprisingly, from the *contado* of Siena (pp. 83, 86-7, 89-90, 92-3, 96). The instructions of March embody the terms on which Florence hoped to employ the 200 cavalry sought. The initial period of enlistment was to be three months, and each group of 100 was itself to be divided into two companies of 50, officered by a Gonfaloniere and two captains; these were required to have three horses, their men one only. If possible, Florence should be committed to pay no compensation of any kind, though if this arrangement was unacceptable the city might agree to pay *mendum* for horses killed or injured. Any prisoners taken by the mercenaries were to be handed over to the Florentine authorities, who would pay 10 l. for each captive; failure to make this payment would result in the prisoner becoming the possession of his captor. Property captured from the enemy might be retained. If one of the mercenaries were himself captured he would if possible be exchanged against a prisoner taken by his own force. Financial details were left to the emissaries who were 'to try to get the best terms possible'. The city's letter to Pietro of Milan promised his men 8 florins a month; each would bring one horse and was to be taken on for at least two months. Loss of horses or of arms was to receive financial compensation (which was the normal arrangement, though the Florentines hoped to omit it in the case of their Emilians and Romagnols), and the terms concerning prisoners were the same as those mentioned above.

These projected conditions tell us a good deal about the stage to which mercenary service had developed in Italy by 1260. It is noticeable that fifty is the accepted size of a single unit. Such companies are expected to have officers, but that they will not necessarily be recruited and brought along en bloc by the commander himself is suggested by

¹ *Libro di Montaperti*, pp. 97-8, 370-6.

DANIEL WALEY

the instructions to the Florentine emissaries to visit not only the towns of Emilia but their country regions (*contadi*) if necessary. Nor was fifty an invariable number, as may be seen from the group of ten Mantuan mercenaries found in Florentine employment in 1257 and the miscellaneous horsemen from the Sienese *contado* mentioned above.¹ The latter presumably were men who had fallen out, for respectable political reasons or less respectable judicial ones, with their suzerain authority, and such a situation must often have started a man on the wandering life of a mercenary. The cavalry to be recruited by Florence in Milan in 1260 were granted safe-conduct 'except in the case of Florentine citizens found guilty of murder, fraud, theft or arson', but in the following years, after the installation of a Ghibelline régime at Florence, there must have been many more political exiles than criminals in search of military employment. By 1264 Bologna had become a centre of Guelfs driven from Tuscany, many of them penniless. There they came into the pay of the Guelfs of Modena, with whose assistance they defeated the Modenese Ghibellines and set themselves up with the horses and weapons captured from this defeated foe. Moving on further west they vanquished the Ghibellines of Reggio Emilia, waxed fatter still on fresh loot and came to compose a well-mounted body of more than four hundred which contributed notably to Charles of Anjou's campaign of conquest in southern Italy (1266).² This story illustrates clearly enough the mixed motives which brought together mercenary cadres in the crucial years of the Guelf-Ghibelline struggle between Frederick II's death and Manfred's.

The Ghibelline decade which followed Montaperti is an ill-documented age, partly through the reticence of later Florentine writers. Indeed the city's military arrangements become clearer only from the time of the first surviving minutes of council-meetings (1280). But the period between the capitulation of the Tuscan Ghibellines (1270) and the installation at Florence of a semi-permanent garrison of Spanish mercenaries (1305) deserves emphasis as the central phase in the cycle of change which this essay seeks to describe. In this time the army of Florence, no longer merely the expression of one city's power, became part of the wide fabric of Guelf military policy. With this change was inextricably involved the increased importance of mercenary bands, and the evolution of the Florentine army towards a new and complicated combination of civic militia with professional troops.

¹ Santini, *Documenti*, vol. II, pp. 211-14.

² G. Villani, VI, 87: corrections in Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. IV, 1, pp. 549-50, 559-60.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

The arrangements made after the battle of Benevento (1266) between the Guelf league in Tuscany and the King of Sicily, who was represented in Tuscany by a series of vicars, involved the retention of a permanent Guelf army. Each member of the League was responsible for the payment of a certain share (*tallia*) of this force, whence its designation as the *tallia militum societatis tallie Tuscie*. As early as 1268 Florence was expected to pay the wages of Guelf mercenaries in Tuscany, and the composition of this army is illuminated by Pisa's agreement (1270) to free those prisoners of war who were 'Lombard, German, Spanish, Catalan and Provençal mercenaries of the commune of Florence'.¹ The Guelf League recruited largely among French and Provençal cavalymen, and in its earliest phase many of these were doubtless men who had taken part in Charles of Anjou's expedition of 1265. A decision was reached in 1281 that the Tallia's mercenaries should be 'French or foreign by language or race' (*de lingua seu gente francigena seu ultramontana*) and that they should be *de parte guelfa*,² but one cannot help being sceptical concerning the effectiveness of this ideological requirement. An agreed share of the troops — of which Florence's was always the largest — was maintained by each member of the League, and these men became the affair of that city and remained within its territory unless a general campaign was proclaimed. Thus the Florentine element of the Tallia was in most ways a component of the Florentine army.

The interests of the Tuscan Guelf League were not confined to Tuscany — its troops were engaged, for instance, in Romagna on behalf of the papacy from 1281 and in the Regno on behalf of Charles of Anjou from the following year — but probably its most strenuous preoccupation was the struggle waged against Arezzo and Pisa in the years 1287–93. The total force of the Tallia seems normally to have been quite small in the 1270s,³ but by the following decade, on which we are better informed, it was much larger. Through most of 1285 Florence appears to have kept in its pay five hundred mercenary horse, which was probably its share of the Tallia, since soon afterwards an agreement was reached whereby the city was to retain 500 of a total cavalry force of 1,500.⁴ For a two-month period in 1285 the wages of this body

¹ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. II (Berlin, 1900), nn. 1080–1; *A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII (1920), pp. 80–1.

² *A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII (1920), p. 101.

³ This is suggested by the fact that in 1272 Siena's share was 29 horsemen and in 1277–8 only 20 (*A.S.S.*, Bicch., n. 51, f. 23v; n. 67, f. 29; n. 71, f. 20v).

⁴ *Le Consulte della Repubblica di Firenze*, ed. A. Gherardi (Florence, 1896–8), vol. I, pp. 188, 196, 225, 229–30, 250–2.

DANIEL WALEY

amounted to 5,500 *l.*¹ and inevitably the republic found difficulty in raising the money. In 1288 the total cavalry strength of the Tallia was 500, but Florence provided an additional force of 300 mercenaries.² Opinion in the Florentine councils differed a good deal as to the best size for the Tallia, and as arrangements were only made for a few months it was possible to make frequent changes. That the Florentine share should normally be 500 seems to have been the general view, but naturally there were advocates of a smaller force. In October 1291 some spokesmen in council wanted to see it confined to 300.³ It is not clear whether they got their way, but the following year, in a successful effort to bring the Pisans to terms, the Florentines determined to raise the total force of the League to 2,500 cavalry and 20,000 infantry; Florence would offer 300 cavalry and 2,000 infantry beyond its rightful share (*ultra partem contingentem*). After this there is for some time no indication of the size of the Tallia, but a whole decade later (1302) the total cavalry strength was 800 and there was again a very big infantry force of 20,000.⁴

In the first years of the Guelf Tallia its force came under the authority of the Angevin vicar in Tuscany, to whose treasurer payments concerning it were made.⁵ The manner in which Tuscan Guelfism emancipated itself from Angevin control in the following decade shows very clearly in the institution of a special captaincy for the Tallia and in the names of those appointed to that office, each for a period of six months. Most of its holders were feudatories from Tuscany or the Tuscan-Romagnol frontier. They included Nello della Pietra (1285) and Ranuccio Farnese (1287) from southern Tuscany and two members of the comital family of Romena, Aghinolfo (1286) and Alessandro (1288). After an experiment with Frenchmen with Angevin connections (perhaps Jean d'Eppe in 1288 and certainly Amauri of Narbonne in 1289), there was a return to Italian captains by 1292, when Gentile Orsini was appointed. For the next twelve years the captains were almost all Tuscans or else feudatories from the neighbouring zone such as Malatestino Malatesta (1302).⁶

¹ A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 39 and v; Protocolli delle Provv., I, fols. 63 and v, 82v-83.

² G. Villani, VII, 120.

³ *Consulte*, vol. II, pp. 63-4.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 265-8, 272; *A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 101.

⁵ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. II, nn. 1241, 1255, 1324, etc.

⁶ 1285, Nello della Pietra (*Consulte*, vol. I, p. 165); 1286, Count Aghinolfo (*A.S.S.*, Bicch., n. 94, fol. 171); 1287, Ranuccio Farnese (Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. II, pp. 226-7) and Count Guy of Battifolle (*ibid.*, n. 1705); 1288, Count Alexander of Romena (Villani, VII, 120) and Jean 'Novellus' d'Eppe (sought, not definitely appointed: *Forschungen*, II, n. 1711); 1289-91, Amauri of Narbonne (*A.S.F.*, Provv., II, fols. 10v-11v; C. Vic and J. Vassete, *Histoire Générale du Languedoc*, vol. IX (1885),

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

The Guelf Tallia leads on naturally to discussion of its servants, the bands of mercenaries, whose role raises a number of questions. Were they already organized as fixed 'companies' each remaining under one accustomed leader? What were their origins, geographical and social, and what was the military use made of them by their employers?

The view seems normally to be accepted that Montaperti had 'taught the Florentines a lesson', that they had learned the inability of burghers to withstand a professional force in the field, and hence made the decision to turn to mercenaries for their own protection.¹ While there can be no doubt that the outcome of Montaperti must have affected profoundly the outlook of thoughtful Florentines, it seems inescapable that a condition of prolonged military crisis made a virtually 'standing army' a necessity, that the economic strength of Florence made the employment of considerable mercenary forces a feasible policy, and, finally, that large numbers of cavalrymen from southern France and the surrounding areas were now 'on the market'. The employment of these men was urged by a powerful ally, the Angevin monarchy, on whose friendship the Tuscan Guelfs were in any case dependent, and the men themselves, few of whom can have had much capital apart from their horses and equipment, were at hand and needed pay. It was thus a buyers' market in which numbers of hard-pressed knights might have to accept decreased wages, particularly out of the campaigning season; even in the critical period between Tagliacozzo and Colle (1269) Siena's Germans had to undergo a reduction of pay from twelve to nine pounds a month.²

A glance at vocabulary and semantics will help in investigating the crystallization of the mercenary companies in Italy. The word normally used in Italy for a small unit or band of soldiers up to the second half of the thirteenth century was 'masnada'. The word was employed in this sense at least as early as the twelfth century, and remained ubiquitous in all contexts, official and unofficial; it is to be found in the *Libro di*

pp. 138-9; A.S.S., Bicch., n. 106, fols. 118v, 147, 166v); 1292, Gentile Orsini (*Consulte*, II, pp. 63, 206); 1296 (and 1304), Bertoldo de' Malpigli of S. Miniato (*A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 105 and *Consigli della Rep. Fiorentina*, ed. B. Barbadoro, Bologna, 1920-1, vol. I, p. 173); 1297, Count Inghiramo of Biserno (*Forschungen*, vol. II, n. 1868); 1298, Count Taddeo of Montorgiali (*A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII; p. 105); 1300, Ugolino 'de Corrigia' (*Forschungen*, vol. II, nn. 1913, 1920); 1300-01, Barone de' Mangiadori of S. Miniato (*ibid.*, n. 1934 and A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fol. 29); 1302, Musciatto de' Franzesi (*Forschungen*, vol. II, n. 1965) and Malatestino Malatesta (*A.S.I.*, vol. LXXVIII, p. 105); 1304, Franceschino Malaspina (A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fol. 43).

¹ See, for instance, Prévité-Orton in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VI, pp. 182, 202. With his customary perspicacity, Prof. Prévité-Orton emphasized the advent of the Guelf Tallia as a turning-point in Italian military developments.

² A.S.S., Bicch., n. 42, fol. 105.

DANIEL WALEY

Montaperti (pp. 90-1) as well as in the Sienese account-books, and Dante uses it vividly when Brunetto Latini calls his fellow-sufferers on the burning sands 'la mia masnada'.¹ Although it remained in frequent use, *masnada* came to be supplemented, and to some extent superseded, by the word *conestabilia* or *conestabileria*. The significant point is that the unit now derived its nomenclature from its commander, the *conestabilis* (= constable); the 'constabulary' is his body of men, not merely 'a group'. The word presumably came to Italy through the French (via Latin *comes stabuli* > Old French *conestable*), but the earliest use of it that I have noted in Tuscany, in the collective form, is its application by the Sienese to German troops in 1267.² The rather later appearance of this word in the Florentine sources may be the fortuitous consequence of the greater wealth of the Sienese archive, but very possibly it reflects Siena's greater willingness to employ mercenaries. Whatever the explanation, the word is used in the minutes of a Florentine council which met on 18 August 1285 and discussed *super facto militum stipendiariorum qui erant sub conestabilia Petri Rugerii*;³ here it still perhaps denoted an office rather than a unit, but it was a useful noun, needed to express an increasingly important reality, and it was to be worked hard for several decades.

Already some years earlier these men were so normal a part of the scene that the city had a 'chapter in the constitution of the commune concerning the employment of mercenaries', and this employment in turn naturally involved the appointment of *ad hoc* officials, for instance those elected in 1285 'to inspect mercenaries and their arms and horses'. Despite the infinite capacity of councillors to suggest ingenious new formulae, relations with mercenaries became increasingly in the 1280s a matter of routine and convention, so that it was possible to suggest a contract 'on the usual terms' (*ad pacta solita*),⁴ a phrase which probably covered the normal arrangement that payment should be made for a period of two months at a time.

From the city's point of view there were great advantages in the crystallization of mercenary troops into 'constabularies', and suggestions made in council-meetings were increasingly phrased in terms of commanders: 'that Dino di Castiglione be employed if he can be got' or 'that Mainardo should come'.⁵ Recruitment was much easier when

¹ *Libri dell'Entrata e dell'Uscita*, vol. XIV, pp. 7-9, etc.: *Inferno*, XV, 41.

² A.S.S., Bicch., n. 40, fol. 55, etc. In northern Europe the *constabularia* was normally a body of paid infantry: see, for example, C. Warren Hollister, *The Military Organization of Norman England* (Oxford, 1965), p. 33.

³ *Consulte*, vol. I, p. 278.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 80, 212, 345-6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 445-6, 458-9.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

conducted through a single leader, with whom alone terms needed to be concluded, and it was less often necessary to send off specially appointed Florentines to seek recruits in other regions. When men served under a commander to whom they were known they probably served better, and such units must have been easier to move about without large-scale desertion. They were also easier to loan to allies, a common practice, which occasionally ran into difficulties, as in 1288 when Peter de Pera refused a Bolognese order to take his band of one hundred to Florence unless his pay was raised by 90 *l.* a month 'on account of the high cost of living in Tuscany'.¹ The recruitment as Captains of the Tallia of feudal magnates capable of bringing a retinue of a hundred or even of hundreds, is of course a parallel, and the development shows very clearly in the attempt made in 1289 to recruit Baldwin of Supino, a noble of the Campagna, with four hundred horsemen, though this particular move was frustrated by Nicholas IV.² More and more Florence was reluctant to employ miscellaneous and officer-less mercenaries. In 1285 a Council decided that all the mercenaries then in Florentine employment should be given a constable (*detur eis unus conestabilis*), and eight years later discussions again centred on 'giving constables to those cavalrymen who have been, or are to be, taken on and have no constables'.³ The logical conclusion was the decision, made in 1301, to appoint Schiatta dei Cancellieri (a Pistoian) as 'Captain of the Florentine Militia' and commander of 300 mercenary cavalry, with powers to recruit constables and mercenaries.⁴

The thirteenth-century constable is the fourteenth-century *condottiere* in embryo, but the small number of his men makes him a distinctly early-stage foetus. At the time of Montaperti the normal Florentine infantry platoon was a Venticinquina, and 25 was also an extremely common size for a band or constabulary of mercenaries.⁵ Companies of 50 men were no less frequent, and very many bands of this size are found in Florentine employment in the 1280s and 1290s.⁶ When large numbers of men were sought it was natural to have recourse to the next highest factor, and bands of 100 were certainly not unusual; this was the size of

¹ A.S. Bologna, Riformagioni e Provv. (Serie Cartacea), n. 5, fols. 38v, 49-50, 69, 72-3, 78.

² Dino Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. I. del Lungo, *R.I.S.*, IX, 2, p. 21.

³ *Consulte*, vol. I, p. 278; vol. II, p. 302.

⁴ *I Consigli della Repubblica Fiorentina*, ed. B. Barbadoro (Bologna, 1920-1), vol. I, p. 32.

⁵ For some instances of companies of 25 at this period *v. Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 14, 82, 457, 485, and vol. II, pp. 189, 504-5. Bands of 25 are often found in Siennese and Bolognese employment at the same period.

⁶ Examples: *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 8-9, 485 and vol. II, pp. 168, 489-90, 514. There are also many instances in contemporary Siennese, Perugian and Bolognese sources.

DANIEL WALEY

the company of the Provençal Inghilese of St Rémy, with whom terms were agreed in 1277, that of William the Catalan (of whom more hereafter) in 1291–92, and of Count Manente of Sarteano in 1293.¹ In practice, naturally, bands of uneven number remained common, nor is there even a detectable trend in the direction of companies of 25, 50 and 100. Both practical difficulties of recruitment and inevitable fluctuations in the size of bands militated against neat numbers. The eight constables who were in Florentine pay in January 1300 commanded troops numbering respectively 5, 20 (three bands), 25, 30 and 40 (two bands): thus there were 200 men, and although the average size of a constabulary was 25 only one constabulary was actually of that number.²

It may be a relief to turn from numbers to individuals, and the early phase of the employment of mercenary bands can be exemplified through the fortunate survival (from a book-cover) of an early *condotta* (contract). This is the agreement reached on 5 May 1277 in the church of S. Maria *supra portam* between the commune of Florence and the Provençal Inghilese of St Rémy (dép. Bouches du Rhône).³ Eighteen months earlier Inghilese had been in Sienese service with fifty horsemen.⁴ Now his band had grown. He was to serve Florence and the city's Parte Guelfa with a hundred cavalymen, each of whom was to have a good war-horse (worth at least 30 *l.*), full armour (covering neck, thigh and leg) as well as a helmet and shield, sword, lance and knife. Half of this force had to be found by mid-May, the rest before 1 June. The normal rate of pay was to be 11 florins per month. The captain, who had to have two horses as well as his war-horse, would receive double pay, as would two 'banner-bearers', one for each company of fifty. Each of these companies would also have a trumpeter, who received normal pay. The force must have thirty rounceys (pack-horses), for each of which 5 *l.* would be paid monthly. Its war-horses would be valued by a committee comprising the Florentine marshal, two other citizens and a representative of the band: they would be compensated in full for the injury or death of these horses at the hands of the enemy, so long as the casualty was reported within three days. Such compensa-

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 374: again there are many examples in Sienese and Bolognese sources.

² A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fols. 7v–8, 16–17.

³ A.S.F., Dip., Coperte di Libri, n. 1. This *condotta* is mentioned twice by Davidsohn in the *Geschichte*, but somehow it seemed fated to escape the full comprehension of that great historian. On the first occasion (vol. II, 2, p. 134) he gives Inghilese's place of origin as 'S. Ramigno', on the second (vol. IV, 1, pp. 229–30 and Ann., p. 51) he treats him as an Englishman and gives the rate of pay incorrectly. I hope to publish the text elsewhere.

⁴ A.S.S., Bicch., n. 63, fol. 45v.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

tion would be made within ten days and the man who had received it must show a new horse within three days of its receipt. Failure to ride *quicumque et qualitercunque* when ordered would involve a fine of 40 s. for the first day and 10 s. for each subsequent one. The mercenaries had to parade (*facere mostram de personis et armis*) on request; the provision of a substitute on parade or service was punishable by a fine. Any prisoners they captured had to be handed over within four days to the city, which would pay 25 l. for a horseman and 10 l. for an infantryman; if, however, the city did not want to have the prisoner his captor might do with him as he liked, short of putting him to death. Should any of them suffer capture, he would be exchanged for an enemy prisoner if possible. Each side was to give securities, that of Florence extending for four months and guaranteeing the pay of the first two: pay would normally be given monthly, three days before the end of the month. In case of law-breaking, the Florentine authorities had jurisdiction over the mercenaries. Another clause promised Inghilese a loan, the amount of which is unfortunately not clearly legible, though it may have been 100 l. If either side failed to observe these promises, made on oath, it was to pay 1,000 l., the terms remaining valid.

Inghilese of St Rémy is not a particularly important figure in the military history of Florence; the survival of his *condotta* is quite fortuitous. A more significant personality, perhaps, is Berard of Rieti, a constable who helped rout a Ghibelline force in the Maremma in August 1288, and the following month was knighted and given 500 gold florins by a grateful city.¹ When Berard passed into the service of the Sienese, Florence had the fortune to acquire as a mercenary commander a no less successful soldier, Amauri of Narbonne. Amauri, the son of Aimeri V, vicomte of Narbonne, came to Florence in May 1289 in the company of King Charles II of Naples; both had been prisoners at Barcelona and they may have met there.² Before moving on to his kingdom, Charles knighted the young man and arranged for him to remain as the Florentine commander, with a hundred Angevin cavalry. Amauri did not have to wait long for action. At Campaldino on 11 June he led the Florentine troops. In the battle his former guardian,

¹ Villani, VII, 123; and see Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, 2, p. 329 and G. Salvemini *La dignità cavalleresca nel Comune di Firenze in Magnati e Popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295* (Turin, 1960), p. 435 (where, however, the date should be September, not October: see A.S.F., Provv., I, fol. 101). For Berard's later career see Villani, VII, 136; *Consulte*, vol. II, p. 127; A.S.S., Bicch., n. 99, fol. 94v; n. 101, fols. 46, 73.

² For Amauri, see J. Régné, *Amauri II, vicomte de Narbonne* (Narbonne, 1910), especially pp. 51–85; also Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, 2, pp. 337, 343, 348–9, 367, 369, 373. Amauri's father-in-law, Jourdain IV lord of l'Isle Jourdain, had accompanied Charles I of Anjou and fought at Benevento.

DANIEL WALEY

Guillaume de Durfort, was killed and he himself suffered a facial wound.¹ Generously enthusiastic, the Florentines received Amauri in triumph on his return to the city and appointed him Captain of the Tallia, for whom he commanded two hundred cavalry.² In 1290 he was confirmed in office as Captain of the Tallia; that year his force was to consist of 30 knights *de conredo*, experienced in war, 420 other knights (of whom at least 170 were to be from beyond the Alps), and 170 squires. The knights had each to have a war-horse, palfrey and rouncey, and their pay was to be one florin a day; the squires (*damoiseaux*) received only half this pay, and did not have to possess palfreys.³ In the winter of 1290-91 he remained in Florentine service with two hundred cavalry, most of whom were reinforcements recruited in Provence.⁴ Amauri himself was on the pay-roll until 31 October 1291; soon after this he re-crossed the Alps.⁵

Another leader of the same period, less illustrious than Amauri, but better documented even than Inghilese, was William 'the Catalan', product of a famous breeding ground of medieval mercenaries. The Italian career of William, son of Bertran de la Torre, can be traced over a period of fifteen years. His initial appearance is in Sieneese service in October 1277; he was then a member of the band of Bertrand of Forcalquier, which numbered a mere nineteen.⁶ William was evidently born to give orders, not to receive them. In November 1279, still serving in the Sieneese element of the Tuscan Tallia, he acknowledged receipt of his pay as a constable and that of his men.⁷ Throughout the three following years (1280-82) William remained on the Sieneese pay-roll.⁸ With few setbacks, he succeeded in building up the strength of his constabulary, which in January 1280 numbered only 22 men. By September of that year he had 40 men, and by September 1281 (when he was serving in Romagna) 48. Thereafter their numbers rarely fell below 40: by August 1282, if not before, William had his fifty, and the

¹ On Campaldino, see the sources cited by Davidsohn, vol. IV, 2, p. 349 n. For horses lost by Amauri's men, A.S.F., Provv., II, fols. 67v-68v.

² A.S.F., Provv., II, fols. 10v-11v, 63v.

³ C. Vic and J. Vaisete, *Histoire Générale du Languedoc*, vol. IX (1885), pp. 138-9.

⁴ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. II, n. 1788: the words 'qui soluti fuerunt in Provenza' in this document provide the first certain instance of recruitment by Florence outside Italy.

⁵ *Consulte*, vol I, pp. 407-8, 445-6, 468-9, 487, 522-6; vol. II, pp. 5-7, 15-16, 20, 42, 54, 70-1. Amauri was Captain of the Tallia, at least in name, till 31 December 1291 (A.S.S., Bicch., n. 106, fol. 166v).

⁶ A.S.S., Bicch., n. 482 (Misture), fol. 15.

⁷ *Ibid.*, n. 485 (Misture), fols. 14, 30.

⁸ The traces of this period of William's service are to be found in A.S.S., Bicch., n. 76, fols. 36, 41, 52; n. 78, fols. 38, 45; n. 79, fols. 30v, 46v; n. 80, fols. 78v, 102, 108; n. 82, fols. 99, 123v; n. 83, fols. 82, 95v, 103, 107v.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

last trace of this period of service is his receipt of pay for 59 men and 59 rounceys for the period 8 October–8 December 1282. For a time William disappears from the records, to return triumphantly, again in Sienese service, in November 1285 with a company of 114 cavalymen.¹ The following spring he suffered a mysterious schism, and the size of his band fell to fifty; with this diminished force he served Siena until May, when he again fades from the Sienese records. He comes once more into view, this time in the service of Bologna, in November 1288, when again his company had expanded to a hundred men. Of these only fifty seem to have been retained after September 1289, but this force remained in the pay of Bologna for another year. Then, on 14 September 1290, William and his band left, 'in the service of our friends of the Parte of Tuscany'; he was 'to begin in the service of Florence'.²

Five days later a Florentine council was discussing the use to be made of William's fifty horsemen. Their movements up to the autumn of the following year cannot be traced, but by this time the size of the band had again doubled. William and a fellow constable, the Picard John 'de Chesta', were then paid 40 florins a month, the other men 10 florins. In the summer of 1292 they constituted the garrison of S. Miniato al Tedesco, an important strategic point in the Pisan war. In July, however, at the request of the municipality of S. Miniato, the Florentines decided to substitute the constabulary of Count Manente of Sarteano for William's.³ William and his men, most of whom were Provençaux, now had to look for a new master. The insecurity of their livelihood may explain the fact that very few of the band of this time had been with William at Bologna four years earlier.⁴ Soon after 4 August William's company left S. Miniato. Passing through Parma and

¹ For the second period of William's Sienese service, see A.S.S. Bicch., n. 90, fol. 391; n. 92, fols. 71v, 76, 96 and v.

² The sources for William's Bolognese period are A.S. Bologna, Tesoreria e Contraltatore, n. 3, fols. 101v–102 (nominal roll), 104, 108v; Assegnazioni di Cavalli ai Soldati, loose parchment dated 1289; Riformagioni del Consiglio del Popolo, I, fols. 301 and v, 317–18, 360v–362v, 403v, 410. His service at Bologna is mentioned (but attributed to '1280') by C. Ghirardacci, *Historia di Bologna* (Bologna, 1605), p. 250.

³ *Consulte*, vol. I, p. 464; vol. II, pp. 61, 109, 164, 177, 192, 200, 237, 243, 275–6. For Count Manente, below, p. 93.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., C. 102 (G. Cantapocchi), fols. 34, 39–48v. Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, I, pp. 234 and 236, supplies a reference to this very valuable source (Cantapocchi moved around with William's company for two months, recording many of their transactions) but fails to exploit it and takes William for a hotel-keeper! Of the 69 members of William's band mentioned in Cantapocchi's register, only seven are clearly identical with men appearing in the full Bolognese nominal roll (of 100) of 1288; another three are probably identical. These figures are not fully reliable, since the abbreviated and Italianized forms of the names make them difficult to recognize, and one-third of the personnel of 1292 remains unidentified. But it is evident that those who had remained four years in one constabulary were a very small minority.

DANIEL WALEY

Piacenza, they reached Milan by 6 September. Here perhaps William secured temporary employment, for a recruit picked up at S. Miniato who deserted with formal solemnity on the 12th described himself as *soldatus comunis Mediolani*.¹ If Milan employed William it did so either very briefly or on unsatisfactory terms, for on 15 September he deputed to two Florentines, Neri and Bindo Del Bene, powers to negotiate an agreement on his behalf with the commune of Bologna. But it seems almost certain that he failed to get back into Bolognese service, for that city was committed to another company, and indeed heavily in debt to it.² I have failed to find any further trace of William the Catalan, though continued searches might prolong at either end the known fifteen years of his career.

If the attention given here to one mercenary commander seems disproportionate, it must be emphasized that we are, to use the favourite phrase of *Annales*, 'aux origines,' and this particular episode in the formation of the institution of mercenary companies happens to be a well-documented one. Although their rôle was crucial to the increasing cohesion of the bands, concentration on the early *condottieri* must not exclude discussion of the provenance of their men. From the time of Charles of Anjou's expedition (1265) until the 1290s Provence and the surrounding areas were probably the most important source of Florence's mercenaries. There were Provençaux among the prisoners released by Pisa in 1270, and many of them in the Sienese Guelf bands of the 1270s, including men who later came into Florentine service such as Inghilese's company and William's. After the contract with Inghilese (1277), certain evidence of Provençal mercenaries at Florence is lacking until 1285. Then in 1288 'French' mercenaries from the kingdom of Naples were taken on.³ It would be interesting to know whether the majority of southern French cavalymen were recruited by agents in Provence (as was clearly the case with Amauri of Narbonne's men) or whether they normally made their own way to Italy to seek employment. The dependence of Florence and the other Guelf cities on these men around the years 1288-92 is well symbolized by the password at

¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 47v for this curious document, which begins: 'Pateat omnibus manifeste hanc paginam inspecturis quod me presente notario et testibus infrascriptis ad hoc rogatis Gerius quondam Bardini de castro Sancti Miniatis del Tedescho soldatus comunis Mediolani de constaboleria Guilliemi Catalani dixit et protestatus fuit quod ipse presenti die separabat se a civitate Mediolani a dicto soldo et quod ipse repudiavit dicto soldo et paghe dicti soldi . . .'

² A.S. Bologna, Rif. del Consiglio del Popolo, II, fols. 217v, 218v, shows the city had chartered several bands for the period February 1292-February 1293: and fol. 223 shows it faced on 24 October 1292 with a bill for soldiers of 32,000 *l*.

³ *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 314-15: A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 67v-69 (an attempt to recruit Jean d'Eppe with 100 cavalry), 88v-89v (privileges for mercenaries from the Regno).

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

Campaldino, which was 'Nerbona cavaliere'. Bands under southern French leadership were not bands consisting solely of southern Frenchmen, however. Amauri had Spaniards and Frenchmen from the north in his company,¹ and when we come to William the Catalan's men in 1292 we find that of 53 men whose place of origin can be established, 28 only were from Provence, even when we use 'Provence' in the wide sense in which it was then employed in Italy, to include a place as far west as Toulouse. Of the remainder, 8 were from northern France (including 6 Picards) and 2 from Flanders, 7 from Italy, 7 from the Iberian peninsula (including 3 Catalans), and one from England.² By the early 1290s the Provençal element seems to have become unpopular in Tuscany, and there was also probably greater competition from Italian companies. In 1292 Florence had in its pay John of Burgundy with 50 men and Roger of Lille with 25, as well as William the Catalan's men, but after the departure of William's band that summer the Provençaux and French disappear for some time from the Florentine scene.³

There had never been anything like a French monopoly of the profession. Not only did French and other 'constables' recruit Italians in their peregrinations — we have seen that William the Catalan had seven of them, and Roger of Lille enrolled the notorious Pistoian robber Vanne Fucci — but many bands were commanded by Italians and consisted solely of men from the peninsula. Horsemen raised close at hand, when they could be found, were welcome, and a number of Tuscan bands were in Florentine service during the period 1280–1305. The Casentino had a military tradition, perhaps because the agriculture of mountainous regions is less demanding in manpower, and it is no surprise that Florence's constables should have included Bonavia of Poppi with a band of 50 (1280), and Stephen of Bibbiena, whose long-serving troop (1290–94) oscillated in strength from 25 to 50.⁴ Not that their recruitment either was entirely local, for we find Lombards under a leader from Bibbiena. Among the many other primarily Tuscan

¹ *Consulte*, vol. I, p. 355 (Navarrese): A.S.F., Provv., II, fol. 107v (men from Champagne and Paris).

² For sources of information concerning William's band see previous notes. His force may have had one German member (A.S.F., Not. C. 102, fols. 8v–9), but at this period there were few Germans in Florentine service: for some rather later (1304) see A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fols. 43 and v.

³ Note a speech in a council-meeting against French mercenaries, Oct. 1291 (*Consulte*, vol. II, p. 63) and S. Miniato's objection to William's band (*ibid.*, pp. 275–6). The explanation may, however, be that the French now found employment in the campaigns being fought in Sicily and in France itself. See also *ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 172, 181, 200, 239, 246.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 8–9, 345–6, 367–9, 380, 434, 437, 449, 452, 468–9, 485, 497, 526; vol. II, pp. 12, 29, 61, 159, 166, 343; A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fols. 106 and v.

DANIEL WALEY

bands of these years — it would be tedious to list them all — may be mentioned two which normally numbered about 50 men serving under Aretines, Michael (1291–92) and Puccio (1293 and 1300). Occasionally bodies of paid horsemen were recruited from the city of Florence itself, though this method was unusual and not always successful. After 1292 there was for some time a quite high proportion of Tuscans among all Florence's bands; this is certainly true of the 265 men (organized in six companies) in the city's pay in 1293, and of the eight companies comprising 200 men serving in 1299–1300.¹ Besides this, innumerable isolated references in council-minutes show that many Tuscans served as individuals.

The most common area of recruitment outside Tuscany was probably Umbria. 'Send men to Perugia to raise 200 horse' was a piece of advice given in council in 1285. It was in this region that the Tuscan Ghibellines recruited 300 men in 1290, and Florence's commanders the following year included Naldo of Perugia and Asto of Spoleto.² Equally close was the March of Ancona, which provided a small constabulary in 1290 and two large ones in 1296, the latter composed almost entirely of men from Fermo and Recanati.³ Emilia and Lombardy was another convenient region for recruitment, as the Florentines had found in 1260. Bologna in particular had a reputation for mercenaries, a reputation which the city found so inconvenient that in January 1290 it legislated against recruitment in its territory, except for crusading: so many bands were being raised to participate in the wars then raging 'that the city of Bologna may be emptied of people and particularly of men of the Geremei party, and this might be a great danger to the city and district and especially to the Church party'.⁴ Soon after this (in 1293) men from Parma and Brescia were among the commanders of bands in Florentine pay.⁵

Umbria, the March, Emilia and Lombardy complete the tour of Tuscany's neighbours, but a more distant region, the Campagna, was a favourite recruiting-ground for both Guelfs and Ghibellines. Florence had a cavalry force from Campagna on its books in 1280, and again during the campaigns of 1288–92.⁶ The feudal houses of that area had

¹ *Consulte*, vol. II, p. 374; A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fols. 7v–8, 16–17, 21, 22v–23v.

² *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 236–7, 374; vol. II, pp. 44, 69, 206, etc.

³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 524; A.S.F., Not. C. 102, fols. 103v–104v.

⁴ A.S. Bologna, Rif. del Consiglio del Popolo, I, fol. 316. Ghirardacci, *Historia di Bologna* (Bologna, 1605), p. 307 has it that in 1293 Bologna passed a law that all captured mercenaries were to suffer the loss of a foot, a hand and the right eye; this writer is not an entirely reliable source, but the story is inherently probable. For Bolognese infantry in Florentine pay (1301), see *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 22.

⁵ *Consulte*, vol. II, pp. 317, 319; also *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 214 (1305).

⁶ *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 6, 8–9, 14. In 1288–9 Siena had in its pay the Campagnol noble John of Ceccano with 290 cavalry (A.S.S., Bicch., n. 97, fol. 111v; n. 99, fol. 40 etc.).

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

large cavalry retinues which potentially constituted ideal mercenary bands, and a perfect agreement from the Florentine point of view was that of 1289 whereby the lord of Supino was to serve Florence with 400 horsemen. The city had arranged to transfer 2,040 florins to Rome or the Campagna as an advance of three months pay for this force when Pope Nicholas IV intervened and put an end to this scheme, but three years later a successful *coup* secured Florence the services of Gentile Orsini with 200 cavalry.¹

It was not always necessary to go so far afield to seek the feudal nucleus of a mercenary force, as may be seen from the names of the commanders of the Guelf Tallia. In southern Tuscany there were feudatories who were already virtually professional soldiers by calling. Such a one was Nello della Pietra de' Pannocchieschi, husband of Dante's Pia, while succeeding generations of the Counts of Sarteano (prov. Siena) served the Sienese and Florentines. Between 1290 and 1293 Count Manente of Sarteano was in Florentine pay with a band which originally numbered 40 but rose to 100, while at the same time his son Bolgaruccio had his own company of 25. Count Manente was so valuable a man that the city was willing to overlook his conviction, by a Florentine court, for murder. His own vassals constituted a useful nexus for his constabulary, though he made it up to strength with other elements.² The strongly feudalized mountainous territory of the Tuscan-Romagnol-Marche border into which Florence so long strove to extend its authority, later a great home of mercenaries, was already the breeding-ground of Tuscany's first *condottiere* turned 'tyrant', Uguccione della Faggiuola, and of the many despots of Romagna. From here came the Counts of Romena, generals of the Tallia in 1286 and 1288. The Guelf force which took the field against Arezzo in the latter year included two hundred and fifty horsemen raised by 'the Guelf Counts Guidi, Mainardo da Susinana, messer Iacopo da Fano, Filipuccio of Iesi, Marquis Malespini, the Judge of Gallura, the Counts Alberti, and the other minor barons (*baroncelli*) of Tuscany', says Villani.³ To read a

¹ Dino Compagni, *Cronica*, p. 21; A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 110v-111 and II, fols. 10v-11; G. Villani, VII, 154; *Consulte*, vol. II, pp. 206-7.

² For Counts Manente and Bolgaruccio, *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 345-6, 380, 407-9, 457, 485, 497-8, 526; II, pp. 6, 10-11, 17, 20, 29, 42, 54, 61, 71, 77, 82-3, 88, 166, 207, 212, 222, 275-6, 292. Many of their men were from Sarteano, but others were from Tuscany, Rome and Bologna. For members of this family in Siense service v. *Libri dell'Entrata e dell'Uscita*, vol. III, p. 184 (Counts Bolgarello and Rimbotto, 1230); IV, pp. 111, 116, 126, 134, 137; A.S.S., Bicch., n. 40, fols. 14, 41-2 (Count Andrea, 1267), n. 43, fol. 99 (same, 1268), n. 110, fol. 140; n. 111, fols. 94v, 109v, 118; n. 112, fol. 96 (Count Bolgaruccio, 1294-5). For Count Manente's condemnation v. Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. II, 2, p. 310.

³ VII, 120.

DANIEL WALEY

sentence like this is to wonder whether medieval Italian history has been seen in focus yet; if it were, it might present the appearance of great stretches of feudalized territory with the towns fitted merely into the interstices. A territorial magnate like Mainardo da Susinana counted for so much as an ally in war that it is no surprise to find Florence deciding at the end of this campaign to release one of his vassals who was under the ban of the city; it was tacitly understood, they agreed, that such men should have safe-conduct 'especially the familiars of Mainardo and the other nobles who came to this army and served the commune'.¹

A very high proportion of all these Florentine mercenaries consisted, it will have been observed, of cavalrymen. There were exceptions, such as the 200 crossbowmen retained in May 1291, and occasional bodies of mercenary foot, but the generalization holds.² To assess their utility in battle seems impossible, partly because battles were so few. Mercenaries were severely engaged in the clash with the Aretines at Pieve del Toppo in 1288 and again at Campaldino the following year,³ but for the most part their life was one of garrison-duties at S. Miniato al Tedesco, Volterra, or some other fortress, interspersed with raiding into Pisan or Aretine territory.

This long discussion of the main military development of the years 1270-1305, the employment of mercenary companies, needs to be considered in relation to the persistence of the citizen element. Military service continued to be due from the Florentines, and to be performed by them, and all the campaigns of these years were fought by mixed forces. It was usual to call out not more than two, or occasionally three, of the city's *Sesti* for the infantry host, the normal period of service being ten days or two weeks. At times ingenious alternatives were proposed, such as sending two-thirds of the force of each *Sesto*, or sending one-quarter only, these being paid by the three-quarters who stayed at home. The city and *contado* could without great difficulty put into the field an infantry force of 6,000 or perhaps even 15,000.⁴ The *cavallata*, the obligation to keep a horse for service, also remained an effective and important institution. Attempts to find Florentine volunteers to serve for pay in Romagna in 1281 and 1282 and with the Siense in 1285 met with great reluctance, and failed even when as few as

¹ A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 79-80v.

² *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 6-7; vol. II, pp. 129 ff.; A.S.F., Prot. Provv., II, fol. 111v; *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 117.

³ A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 90v-91v; II, fol. 46.

⁴ G. Villani, VII, 148 and VIII, 52-3; *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 177-9, 218-30; vol. II, p. 263, etc.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

twenty-four men were sought.¹ But throughout the war of 1288–92 it was normal for 500 or 600 citizens to be in receipt of the *cavallata* payment (40 florins a year was the usual sum) and to be in readiness.² In the early summer of 1288 the number of horses was even raised to 800, and that year there was talk of 1,000, though this was probably not put into effect.³ Holders of *cavallata* received 10 s. or 15 s. a day during service in addition to the 40 florins per annum for the upkeep of each horse.⁴ It was frequently suggested by left-wing elements that *cavallata* without salary should be imposed on the richer men, or that no cavalry service should be paid, but such schemes seem never to have been put into practice.⁵

Payment made to holders of *cavallata* was a considerable burden on the city — if five hundred men owed the service for a whole year the cost would be 20,000 florins — and had to be borne by the imposition of a special tax. At Siena such a tax was imposed, in the *contado* as well as the city, as early as 1252, and it may have an equally long history at Florence, though the first surviving record seems to date from 1266.⁶ Towards the end of the century various schemes were proposed for imposing the *cavallata* tax as an obligation of a large number of named individuals, without transferring the sum raised to holders of *cavallata*.⁷ That the cavalry obligation should be made the excuse for a tax does not of course demonstrate that it was now becoming anachronistic or ineffective. There may be a hint of this in the extreme difficulty met in raising a troop of volunteers for the Romagna and in an offer to grant exemption from a proposed extension of the *cavallata* to another 200 men on payment of 20 florins each,⁸ but the large numbers of Florentines who fought on horseback at Campaldino and at Altopascio show that there had been no general departure from equestrian habits. The schemes of 1288 and of 1290 were merely fiscal plans for imposing a tax

¹ *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 46–9, 89–90, 332–3.

² *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 329–30, 407–8, 492; vol. II, pp. 66, 234; A.S.F., Prot. Provv., I, fols. 82v–83; II, fols. 2v–3.

³ Villani, VII, 120: A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 91v–92v, 95v–96. The last of these implies a *cavallata* of 2,000 but was a notional, fiscal measure (see below, p. 96): it may, however, explain the figure of 2,000 given as a maximum for the *cavallata* in the not very reliable 'Discorso intorno al Governo di Firenze dal 1280 al 1292' in G. Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze* (Florence, 1875), vol. I, pp. 552–62.

⁴ A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 109v–110 (1 horse, 10 s.; 2, 15 s.; 3 or *de corredo*, 20 s.): *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 423–4 (20 s. *de corredo*, 15 s. others).

⁵ A.S.F., Provv., I, fols. 91v–92v: *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 223–4, 491–2; vol. II, p. 280.

⁶ *Libri dell'Entrata e dell'Uscita*, vol. XIII, pp. 49–58 (1252); vol. XVII, *passim*; A.S.S., Bicch., n. 26, fol. 8v (1257), etc.: Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 300.

⁷ On this topic see B. Barbadoro, *Le Finanze della Repubblica Fiorentina* (Florence, 1929), pp. 329–45 and N. Ottokar, *Il Comune di Firenze alla fine del dugento* (Florence, 1926), pp. 210–14, with references.

⁸ *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 407–8 (1290).

DANIEL WALEY

of 40 florins (1288) or 100 *l.* (August 1290) or 20 or 40 florins (November 1290) on 2,000 well-to-do citizens of the class which was generally liable to *cavallata*. In 1304 a similar tax, mentioned by Dino Compagni, levied 50 florins each on 1,200 citizens; the sum paid was deductible from the next instalment of the ordinary direct tax, the *libra*. To call this a 'cavallata fittizia'¹ is correct, so long as it is understood that this is a case of using the military obligation as an excuse for taxation, not of replacing cavalry service by commuting it into cash payment. It is thus irrelevant to the issue of whether the Florentines had fallen away from earlier standards by preferring to pay rather than to fight.

The citizens, then, continued to fight alongside the men of Inghilese, Amauri, and the rest; they had paid to be reinforced, not superseded. The intricate combinations of citizens, *contadini* and mercenaries both proposed and put into the field show at its most characteristic the Florentine taste for ingenious variation. That the composition of the army was an open question appears clearly in the prolonged discussions of 1285 about a campaign planned, but often postponed, against Pisa.² It was common ground that several hundred mercenary cavalry should be employed and that the *contado* should provide a large body of infantry, but the city cavalry was the centre of controversy. Some wished these to be paid, others not. Of those who wished them to be paid, some proposed that those not called should provide the money, but not all agreed to this. Some suggested heavier taxation for those called for garrison duties only. And there was disagreement about how many *Sesti* should provide the horsemen. Later in the same year the decision to send aid to Siena provoked the same sort of discussion.³ Four hundred foot from the *contado* were sent promptly, and then fifty mercenary cavalry, but arguments arose in council-meetings about how this body was to be reinforced. Some wished to send more cavalry only, others an infantry force of 1,000, to be provided in equal shares by city and *contado*; the size of the city's contribution, and the question of whether an attempt should be made to recruit volunteers, were points of disagreement.

The Pisan campaign of 1285 never materialized and we do not know the eventual composition of the force sent to the Sienese that winter, but the armies of 1289, the year of the great victory at Campaldino, are better documented. For that campaign mercenaries from Campagna and Amauri of Narbonne's 100 horsemen supplemented the city's own

¹ Ottokar, loc. cit.: Compagni, *Cronica*, p. 170.

² *Consulte*, vol. I, pp. 208-58.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 319-31.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

cavalry. In the battle of 11 June, 1,000 of the 1,600 cavalry involved on the Guelf side were in Florentine pay; of these 400 were mercenaries, the other 600 Florentines. If a similar proportion prevailed in the infantry, Florence provided some 6,000 of these. The host set out from the city on 2 June and returned, in triumph, only on 23 July. In this very active year, Florence lent 400 of the *cavallata* and 2,000 foot to Lucca for 25 days in August, and in November another mixed cavalry force of citizens and mercenaries made a last, vain attempt against the city of Arezzo.¹

To move on a few years, we may find other permutations within the same framework of a mixed citizen and mercenary force in a discussion of 16 April 1296 in an *ad hoc* council appointed to consider military aid for Bologna.² Eight different speakers were heard, and no two wanted the same combination. The suggestion that one hundred mercenary cavalry were required was generally acceptable, as was 400 for the Florentine infantry, to comprise 200 pikemen and 200 crossbowmen. But the size of the Florentine cavalry element raised great disagreement; five different numbers were proposed, varying from 30 to 150, not to mention the different schemes for its composition. Finally it was decided that 50 Florentine horsemen were to be called, each with a *socius* or squire. These prolonged discussions of military matters must have been a feature of council-meetings in all the cities in this age when the mercenaries were coming in general to play a larger rôle and both the composition of armies and the use to be made of the 'constabularies' were open questions. With these Florentine arguments one may compare, for instance, the endless discussions of the Perugians a few years earlier as to whether their 380 cavalry mercenaries should be brigaded together under one commander or shared out among several corps.³

The sort of force that emerged from these debates did not usually vary greatly from the formula of 1289. The army engaged against Pistoia in 1302⁴ comprised 500 cavalry and nearly 7,000 infantry, of whom about 1,000 were pioneers and sappers. The horsemen were all Florentines, whereas 1,000 of the foot were mercenaries, the remaining infantry consisting of 4,000 *contadini* and 750 specialists (crossbowmen and 'shieldmen' from the city). It may be noted that since the pay of all

¹ Sources are cited in Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. II, 2, pp. 339-53: add A.S.F. Provv., II, fols. 9, 15-16.

² *Consulte*, vol. II, pp. 542-3.

³ A.S. Perugia, Rif., V (1282), fols. 31v-37v, and Camerlenghi, I, fol. 317v. Six constables commanded numbers varying from 50 to 95: eventually all were placed under a single commander, Marquis Guiduccio of Montemezzano.

⁴ C. Paoli, 'Rendiconto e approvazioni di spese occorse nell'esercito fiorentino contro Pistoia nel maggio 1302', *A.S.I.*, s. III, vol. 6, pt. 2 (1867), pp. 3-16.

DANIEL WALEY

the infantrymen was one florin per month, and of the horsemen 9 florins, the wages of the quite small cavalry element amounted to about 40 per cent of the total for this campaign.

The crossbowmen and *pavesarii* of 1302 raise the question of changes in the technique of warfare in the thirteenth century. It is often suggested¹ that the main development of the time was the abandonment of the use of infantry *en masse* in favour of specialization and a new emphasis on *corps d'élite* of crossbowmen, shieldmen and archers. Certainly these men were much in demand. Charles of Anjou wanted Tuscan archers, crossbowmen and pikemen to fight for him in the Regno after the Vespers,² and the *pavesarii* — whose shields the bishop of Arezzo is said to have taken for a stockade — played an important part at Campaldino. Companies of mercenary crossbowmen are to be found by this time,³ but their Genoese predecessors had served the Sienese in hundreds in 1231. As very large numbers of infantry continued to be employed on campaign — in 1292, for example, it was decided that the Tallia should raise 20,000 foot⁴ — and as more than 2,000 specialist infantry had been engaged on the Florentine side at Montaperti in 1260, it may be doubted whether the Florentine sources for this period bear out this generalization. It seems likely, in fact, that some 14 per cent of the Florentine force of 1260 consisted of specialized infantry, compared with 10 per cent of the army of 1302.⁵ These men were a valued element and loans of them were often sought,⁶ but their unchronicled rise must be set earlier, whereas, in Tuscany at least, that of mercenary bands comprising infantry with cavalry occurred later.

The period 1270–1305 is an important one for the development of military organization not on account of changes in the methods of fighting, but through the formation of increasingly cohesive companies of cavalry mercenaries. Yet this development is more marked, as far as Florence is concerned, in the 1280s and early 1290s, than it is later. And throughout this time a really large and important citizen element continues to fight alongside the mercenaries. This fact, apparent enough from the chroniclers' and other not entirely reliable figures for the campaigns of 1288–92, is clear too from the absolutely indisputable

¹ Especially in the very valuable writings of P. Pieri, e.g. 'Alcune questioni sopra la fanteria in Italia nel periodo comunale', *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, vol. 50 (1933), pp. 561–614 (particularly pp. 597–609).

² A.S.S., Bicch., n. 87, f. 101v.

³ *Consulte*, vol. II, pp. 129 ff. (1291, a company of 200 mercenary crossbowmen). For a rare instance of a band comprising both cavalry and foot, A.S.S., Bicch., n. 76 (1280), fol. 47v (17 horse, 40 archers).

⁴ *Consulte*, vol. II, p. 265.

⁵ Above, pp. 77 and 97.

⁶ E.g. Florence loaned 400 to Bologna in 1296 (*R.I.S.*, XVIII, pt. 1, p. 244).

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

financial accounts of 1302. There is no evidence that the Florence of 1300 was a city of soft, decadent businessmen who preferred to pay others to fight on their behalf.

The main theme of this essay is the nature of the Florentine army 'in transition' in the period 1270-1305, with the traditional obligation persisting alongside the new element of mercenary bands. The appropriateness of the overworked label 'transitional' can, however, only be tested by a consideration of the following period. Hence we shall now look briefly at the composition of Florentine armies between the Duke of Calabria's assumption of the captaincy of the Guelph League (July 1304) and the overwhelming defeat of Florence by the Ghibellines at Altopascio (September 1325).

When the Duke of Calabria (later King Robert) came to Florence, as the city's *Capitano di guerra*, in the spring of 1305 he brought with him a large force of Catalan mercenaries under his marshal Diego de Rat (or Ratta). Later that year the Duke departed for Bordeaux leaving Rat in command and until the autumn of 1313 Rat and his Catalans were a permanent and important feature of Florence's military arrangements. This very long-standing link constitutes a clear innovation. Rat himself became a well-known personality in the city, sufficiently known indeed to achieve immortality in that portrait-gallery of fourteenth-century Tuscany, the *Decameron*.¹ A characteristic tale celebrates the 'gentile uom catalano chiamato messer Dego della Ratta, maliscalco per lo re Ruberto . . . del corpo bellissimo e vie più che gran vagheggiatore', and his alleged success in enjoying the favours of the bishop of Florence's niece thanks to the payment to her husband of five hundred florins — in forged money. The salary of Rat and his men was indeed provided by all the towns of the Guelph League, but the centre of Rat's operations was Florence, where he had his own 'palace' and was used as adviser on the city's defences, and where his company became so acclimatized that it was eventually excused the customary formal parades (*mostre*).² He and they became involved, inevitably, in Florentine politics; it was the Catalans who in 1308 put an end to a long story by killing Corso Donati.³ The same year the city of Pistoia arranged a programme of jousts to celebrate Christmas, and Rat and his men, now almost honorary Tuscans, decided to participate; they were clearly surprised and indignant when the Pistoians, instead of welcoming this, met them

¹ Day VI, Nov. 3.

² *Consigli*, vol. I, pp. 383, 404, 415, 442, 449, 456-7, 461, 472, 476, 483, 498, 509 n., 550, 564, 570, etc.

³ Villani, VIII, 96: Compagni, *Cronica*, pp. 212-13.

DANIEL WALEY

with force and thus gave them some serious fighting to do.¹ Rat's long period of service to the Guelfs included spells on loan to the Bolognese (in 1307-8 and 1311) and the Perugians (1310) and in 1311 he himself became Captain of the Guelf Tallia.²

The normal cavalry complement of Rat's force seems at first (1305-1307) to have been 300, which was later (1310-11) reduced to 200. There was also an infantry element (of Catalan *almugavari*) from the start, numbering 300 in 1305 and 500 two years later. The disparity in pay was considerable, the cavalry receiving 15 florins a month in 1309, the infantry 3 florins.³ The employment of large numbers of mercenary infantry at this time and the appearance of mixed companies of cavalry and infantry constitutes a very significant development. Not only did Rat himself continue to brigade infantry with cavalry, but the example was followed in 1311 when King Robert reinforced Rat and sent to Romagna a body of 200 Catalan cavalry and 500 *almugavari* under Gilbert of Centellas.⁴ Nor was the appetite for foot-soldiers fully satisfied by the Catalan contingent. In 1306, engaged in war with both Pistoia and the Ubaldini, Florence took on 500 infantrymen in Romagna.⁵

The notable aspect of Rat's relations with Florence, in the early years at least, was their friendliness. In 1308 the city wrote to the Duke of Calabria a letter in which his marshal's services were praised enthusiastically. They wished to retain him and his men for another year at least — till mid-November 1309 — for he had given satisfaction both in Tuscany and Romagna, opposing the enemies of the Guelfs so strenuously that he had won victories everywhere. It is all the more striking that the Florentines praised these men at the very time when they were asking permission to lower their rates of pay. This request was granted, the pay for cavalry being reduced from 16 to 15 florins a month, that for infantry probably from 3 to 2½.⁶ The following summer

¹ A.S.F., Signoria, Missive, I, fols. 63v-64, 73v. The Pistoians perhaps felt that the Catalans were professionals attempting to enter for an amateur event.

² Ibid., fols. 98v-99v, 104v-105, 107; Villani, IX, 5, 17; F. Bonaini, *Acta Henrici VII* (Florence, 1877), vol. II, pp. 47-9; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. III, pp. 331, 377; *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 549.

³ Villani, VIII, 82, 118; *Acta Aragonensia*, ed. H. Finke (Berlin-Leipzig, 1908-23), vol. I, pp. 516-17; Bonaini, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 21-3; Davidsohn, *Forsch.*, vol. II, n. 2018 (and, for *almugavari*, *Gesch.*, vol. III, p. 295); A.S.F., Signoria, Missive, I, fols. 86 and v, 102 and v.

⁴ A.S.F., Signoria, Miss., I, fol. 57; Villani, IX, 18; R. Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò e i suoi Tempi* (Florence, 1922-30), vol. I, p. 133.

⁵ Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, 1, Anm., p. 49: these included a band of 60 under Tosus Ugolini of Cesena (A.S.F., Not. B. 2127 (Bondoni Ugucione), II, fol. 25).

⁶ A.S.F., Signoria, Miss., I, fols. 20v-21, 53v-54v, 86 and v, 102 and v: (. . . contra hostes sanctae matris Ecclesie vestros et nostros sic viriliter et potenter se habuit quod ubique victoriam meruit et regia et vestra insignia honorum fastibus decoravit, conculcatis hostibus et depressis. Et quod in omnibus tam ipse quam sui milites et pedites se

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

Robert seems to have proposed celebrating his accession to the Neapolitan throne by recalling Rat, but eventually some news — perhaps the employment of the Catalans against Arezzo — persuaded him to revoke this decision.¹ Rat stayed on, to play a very prominent rôle in the campaigns against Henry VII (1312–13), and eventually to forfeit his popularity.

The presence of the Catalan company was not accompanied by any supersession of the Florentine cavalry obligation, but these years saw certain changes. The *cavallata* remained, the number of citizens whom it affected being increased in 1308, and then raised to 1,000 in 1310 and to 1,300 in 1312.² Holders of the *cavallata* continued to receive payment, though various experiments in the form of payment may be noted: this might now be made from revenue yielded by confiscated property or might be made (in part) in grain, and it might be accompanied by preferential taxation.³ There is some sign, too, of a significant willingness on the part of the commune to regard money as an acceptable alternative to service. Thus in 1305, during the siege of Pistoia, Florentine citizens 'had to go or to send a substitute, when it was their turn (*come toccava per vicenda*) or else pay a poll-tax called the *sega*'. In 1310, again, service seems only to have been due from those who 'had the *cavallata* and (whose names) were drawn from the bags'. That fines for non-performance of the *cavallata* were frequent and often ineffective seems suggested by a decision in 1313 to levy only five per cent of the amounts due from such fines.⁴ This looks like the *cavallata* in decline but, if so, the agony was a long one, as we shall see.

The campaigns of the years 1305–10, against Pistoia, the Ubaldini, and Arezzo, were insignificant in comparison with the great struggle against Henry VII in 1311–13. This period, when even more than before Florence was drawn into a vast alliance, under Angevin leadership, with the Guelfs of Tuscany, Bologna and Romagna, and in which it is again difficult to identify a specifically Florentine army, surely deserves to be considered as the time of the city's finest military achievement. The defeats of Florence at Montaperti, Montecatini and Altopascio have achieved a wider fame than its victories, yet the city once secured a great military triumph, and did this without fighting a great

gesserunt et fecerunt prout nobis placuit et vestre celsitudini decuit, et ipsius et sue comitive honori, ita quod eorum grata opera et servitia retributionem merentur maximam et gratiam specialem, et de ipsorum gestibus [*sic*] et actibus ad gratiarum vobis assurgimus multiplices actiones . . .').

¹ Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò*, vol. I, pp. 100–1.

² *Consigli*, vol. II, p. 379; Villani, IX, 7, 44.

³ *Consigli*, vol. II, pp. 463, 553; A.S.F., Signoria, Miss., I, fols. 42v–43v.

⁴ Villani, VIII, 82; *Consigli*, vol. II, pp. 568, 629–30.

DANIEL WALEY

battle. The repulse of the menacing imperial army — a recent conservative estimate¹ puts its strength at 2,000 cavalry and 15,000 foot — was above all a triumph of mobilization and numbers.

These numbers were provided in part by the Catalans, but above all by Florentines. In 1311–12 the total mercenary cavalry seems to have risen to 800, though it is not certain that all were in Florentine pay. The Catalan element within this may have numbered 500: they were reinforced by horsemen recruited at Perugia, Bologna and elsewhere.² There was also a considerable body of Catalan infantry, numbering at least 500. In May and June 1312 the very large Gueft army at Rome included as many as 1,500 infantry in all, together with some 400–600 'Florentine' cavalry, of whom some were Rat's Catalans but the majority were probably Florentine citizens.³ Later in the summer this force was withdrawn northwards, through Umbria into Tuscany; the Gueft Tallia seems then to have had some 2,000 cavalry in the field (of whom 700 or 800 were mercenaries) and 8,000 infantry.⁴

Diego de Rat served as commander-in-chief at Rome. Then in September he and his men were involved in a clash with imperialist forces at Incisa; the result was a defeat, though not a costly one.⁵ Whether or not he lost prestige seriously on this occasion, a change occurred around this time in his relations with Florence, but he continued to serve in Tuscany throughout the winter of 1312–13. There seem to have been faults on both sides. Rat's complaints that his salary was in arrears go back to August 1312 and the Florentines' anxious promises to pay were repeated at frequent intervals throughout the next twelve months; when he left the city's service in August 1313 he was owed 18,500 florins and, though a special tax was levied to raise this sum, he had still not been paid in full by mid-September. Meanwhile deserters were leaving Rat's force, some of them taking service with Bologna.⁶ But most serious was Rat's own defiance; in the spring of

¹ W. M. Bowsky, *Henry VII in Italy* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1960), p. 174.

² *Consigli*, vol. II, p. 550; Bonaini, *Acta Henrici VII*, pp. 63–4.

³ The different figures given, even in strictly contemporary sources, for the size of these armies, are mutually irreconcilable. The principal sources are, for 1311, Villani, IX, 17 (400 Catalans) and MS. source cited in Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. III, p. 457 (800 'ultramontane' cavalry); for 1312, Bonaini, op. cit., vol. II, p. 97 (40 Catalan and 600 Florentine horse, 1,500 foot at Rome); Villani, IX, 39 (300 Catalan and 200 Florentine horse, 1,000 foot at Rome: cf. *Acta Arag.*, vol. II, pp. 302–3, which reports 500 Catalan cavalry and 500 Catalan infantry); Bonaini, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 114–15, 117–18 (40 Catalan and 200 Florentine cavalry, 1,500 infantry at Rome, with 200 Florentine cavalry and 1,200 infantry to follow).

⁴ Bonaini, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 167–9; Villani, IX, 44.

⁵ Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. III, p. 584.

⁶ Bonaini, vol. II, pp. 150–1, 157–8, 217–18, 250–1, 254–5, 257, 262–5; *Consigli* ol. II, pp. 629–30, 632.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

1313 he refused orders to go to Poggibonsi, announcing that he would go instead to the Val d'Arno because he had a quarrel with the people of S. Giovanni, who had killed some of his band and captured others. Thus the Florentines found themselves threatened by a private war at a time of crisis when Henry VII was at Pisa. They ordered Rat to Lucca in May 1313, on pain of receiving no pay: their indebtedness had its advantages. But by this time there were sore feelings on both sides, and much of Rat's authority passed to King Robert's vicar, Jacques Ganteaulme, and to the experienced Romagnol commander, Fulcieri da Calboli, who became *Capitano di guerra*, a position he had previously held at Bologna and S. Gimignano.¹ Shortly after Henry VII's death the city received a letter from King Robert offering to renew his marshal's secondment, but the Signoria replied very promptly that they needed him no longer and the King might have him back.² A few years later, after Rat had fought on the losing side at Montecatini, his former popularity had entirely vanished, according to an Aragonese emissary: 'the Florentines cannot stand the sight (*non libenter vident*) of anyone from Catalonia or Aragon, owing to the cowardice which they have constantly shown from the time of the Emperor's expedition . . . and Diego, with the Navarrese, is the beginning, middle and end of all this cowardice.'³ Florence was later to see Rat (by then Count of Caserta) as King Robert's vicar in the city, but he never resumed his military command there.

The great armies of 1311-13, however important the Iberian contribution, were predominantly recruited from Florence and its *dominio*. In 1312 the *cavallata* obligation was levied on 1,300 men and at one time 200 of these were serving in Rome and 500 in Tuscany. The city also had considerable assistance from the Guelf feudatories of the region and their retainers, among them Count Guy Battifolle and his son Charles, Count Guy Salvatico, and, above all, Count Roger of Dovadola, who succeeded Fulcieri da Calboli as *Capitano di guerra*. In August 1313 Count Roger commanded a force composed of the cavalry of three Florentine *Sesti*, as well as his own followers.⁴

¹ Bonaini, vol. II, pp. 185, 188-9, 193, 197, 199, 278, etc. For Fulcieri's career see also Davidsohn, *Forsch.*, vol. II, nn. 2091-2, 2100, and *R.I.S.*, vol. XVIII, 1 (*Corp. Chron. Bon.*), vol. 2, pp. 257, 283-4, 347, 353, 367, 431.

² A.S.F., Signoria, Carteggio, Minutari, IV, n. 67 (17 Sept. 1313).

³ *Acta Arag.*, vol. II, pp. 558-61 (letter of 18 Jan. 1316).

⁴ Bonaini, vol. II, pp. 214-15, 242-3, 272, 278; *Consigli*, vol. II, pp. 631-2, 634, 656. There seems to have been a strong determination around this time to secure more commanders, perhaps with the supersession of Rat in mind: in Nov. 1312 the Florentines wrote urgently to Padua for the services of Giacomo de' Rossi (Bonaini, vol. II, pp. 186-7) and in Apr. 1313 chose a noble from northern Latium, Cataluccio di Bisenzio, as *capitano di guerra* (A.S.F., Riform., Atti Pubblici, XXXIX, fol. 1).

DANIEL WALEY

Most striking in sheer numbers was the quantity of men under arms from the *contado*. Some of these were called as infantry early in the summer of 1312, but in the autumn their numbers were augmented enormously, and they were used to man the whole *contado* at the time of Henry VII's threat to the city. Early in September the Signoria decided to mobilize 12,000 foot of the *contado*. Thereafter a stream of letters flowed, not always with much effect, to the captains of the 'leagues'. The force was levied according to the tax assessment of each village, a certain number of infantrymen being called for every 1,000 *l.* due by the *estimo*. In the crisis of late October, though, the entire *contado* was ordered to send to the city its total foot strength of all male 'Guelfs' aged from 15 to 70. This was the time when, according to Villani, 6,450 cavalry and 9,300 infantry were within the walls, and when the Emperor turned aside without essaying a serious siege.¹

A *corps d'élite* of Florentine cavalry played a spectacular rôle in the defence of the city during this winter, and inflicted a defeat on the Germans in Val di Pesa; they were 'a company of volunteers', says Villani, 'called the *cavalieri della banda*, formed from the most honourable young men of Florence, and they accomplished much in the field (*assai feciono d'arme*).'² It is a sign of the prestige of this force that one of its members who was severely wounded in the engagement in Val di Pesa was a year later voted the very large sum of 300 florins as compensation.² The existence of the *cavalieri della banda* is proof, of course, of the survival of Florentine military spirit, yet there is perhaps something about its renown and very special treatment which protests too much. If patriotic *gestes* had been the norm, rather than the exception, there would have been no need for a privileged body of this sort, and on the whole its existence should surely be accounted a symptom of declining military zeal among the Florentines.

Henry VII's death (August 1313) brought no end to the Guelf-Ghibelline struggle in Tuscany; apart from the brief break of 1317-20 war continued throughout the period with which this essay is concerned. The Guelf armies of 1314-15 are notable mainly for the replacement of Rat's Catalans by a mixed body of mercenary horse from the Regno (under King Robert's brother, the Count of Eboli) and for recruitment in France. This by no means meant the disappearance of the Spanish element; the two Florentine constables killed at Montecatini (29

¹ Bonaini, vol. II, pp. 94-5, 165-6, 170-2, 174-5, 178-9, 182, 184-5, 189, 193; Villani, IX, 47. But on 1 Jan. 1313 an Aragonese commander put the Guelf cavalry strength at 1,000 (*Acta Arag.*, vol. II, pp. 326-7).

² Villani, IX, 48; Bonaini, vol. II, p. 236; *Consigli*, vol. II, p. 649: see also Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. III, pp. 508-9.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

August 1315) were Blasco of Aragon and Rat's own brother-in-law Berlinghiero Caroccio. But the move towards a preference for recruiting in France was very clear, and is reflected in the stratagem whereby the Pisans were frightened into accepting peace in 1317, the Florentines planting on them a bogus letter to Philip VI purporting to offer 60,000 florins for the services of 1,000 French knights.¹ It is impressive that in these circumstances of prolonged warfare time could still be found for a thorough reorganization of the *contado* infantry, in the light, no doubt, of the lessons of 1312-13.² A list was drawn up of the numbers due — again based on the *estimo* — from each *piviere* and commune, and regulations laid down requirements concerning weapons and fixed the proportion of crossbowmen at 10 of each 100 infantrymen. The *piviere* was to provide pay for its own men at the rate of one florin for every two months served.

Service by *contadini* cannot, however, be equated with military service by the citizens of Florence itself. In a sense these subjects were pressed men. Our task is rather to assess the rôle played by the merchants, craftsmen and professional men of the city. For these the *cavallata* system continued, and the Florentine cavalry element at Montecatini was very considerable: it cannot well have been less than 300.³ Villani puts the casualties of this force at 114 killed or taken prisoner, but this is almost certainly an underestimate. A contemporary letter to James II of Aragon gives the figure for killed alone among the Florentine cavalry as 141 and suggests that many others were in the total of 1,342 Guelf prisoners.⁴ Among the dead in this heavy defeat was King Robert's brother, the Count of Eboli. Castruccio Castracani's triumph was commented on in a series of satirical sonnets by the Lucchese Pietro de' Faitinelli, one of which suggests that Florentines were now only good for jousting, buying wool and making money; this view, so commonplace in the following period, was perhaps already becoming the general opinion.⁵

¹ Villani, IX, 61, 72, 82; Caggese, *Roberto d'Angiò*, vol. I, pp. 208, 215; *Consigli*, vol. II, p. 666; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, 1, pp. 227, 230 (recruitment in Flanders and Artois).

² *Consigli*, vol. II, p. 677. There is a good deal of information on the military organization of the *contado* in F. Smith, *Beiträge zur florentinischen Verfassungs- und Heeresgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1914), pp. 9-42.

³ The *feditori* (advance-guard) numbered 154 (Ildefonso di S. Luigi, *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*, Florence, 1770-89, vol. XI, p. 208): the figures for *feditori* in 1325 (*ibid.*, vol. XII, pp. 262-8: 229 *feditori* in a body of 500 or more cavalry) suggest that these comprised rather less than half the total cavalry force.

⁴ Villani, IX, 72; *Acta Arag.*, vol. II, pp. 553-5.

⁵

*Voi gite molto arditi a far la mostra
con elmi e con cimiere inargentate,
e par che lo leon prender vogliate,*

DANIEL WALEY

By the 1320s, when the war with Castruccio was resumed, the employment of mercenary companies had become a matter of administrative routine. Legislation controlled the important matter of loans to the mercenaries. Six *offitiales super conductis* held paid office for a term of six months; they had their own building, were chosen by a characteristically complicated system of indirect election, and were ineligible for re-election for certain periods.¹ A development of this time was the use — hitherto unorthodox for a Guelf power — of Germans and men from the Friuli, many of them mounted crossbowmen, but with them were representatives of older traditions. In 1324 the city recruited 500 *franceschi*, predominantly, it would seem, from Artois and Champagne; that these were under twelve constables suggests that the average unit was still one of about fifty men.²

Together with the increasing formalization of mercenary service the city was experiencing its corollary, the effects of increasingly cohesive action by the mercenaries themselves. Not yet the semi-independent political entities that they were to become around the mid-century, the bands were beginning to realize and try out their own strength. In the winter of 1322–23 two hundred foreign mercenaries (under eight constables) deserted the Florentine service and joined up with a great many other unattached soldiers. *La compagna*, as they called themselves, came to number five hundred cavalry and a considerable strength in infantry. They wandered, plundering, through the Sienese *contado* till driven out by a very large Sienese and Florentine army, after which they transferred their activities to the Marche.³ This episode was a foretaste of much of the history of Italy and France during the next hundred years and beyond.

Yet Florence's fighting in 1323 was certainly not left to the mer-

per Firenze entro, quando fate giostra.

*E, per magnificar la terra vostra,
che non n'è oggi de le più onorate,
a guisa di conigli v'intanate:*

*e 'l viso, ove si dee, non si dimostra.
Lassate far la guerra a' perugini,
e voi v'intramettele de la lana
e di goder e raunar fiorini.*

*Voi solevate soggiogar Toscana;
or non vate in arme tre fiorini,
se non a ben ferir per la quintana*

(in A. F. Massera (ed.), *Sonetti burleschi e realistici dei primi due secoli*, Bari, 1940, p. 189).

¹ *Statuti della Repubblica Fiorentina*, ed. R. Caggese (Florence, 1910–21), vol. I, pp. 330–2, 336–9; vol. II, pp. 417–18.

² Villani, IX, 135, 147, 151, 208, 238, 276, 302 (see also the will of a mercenary cited in Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. IV, 1, pp. 230, 233).

³ Villani, IX, 183.

THE ARMY OF THE FLORENTINE REPUBLIC

cenaries. When Castruccio threatened Prato that summer, the Florentines 'as soon as they heard the news, shut up their shops, left their work, and rode to Prato, both *popolo* and knights. Every gild sent infantry and cavalry, and many families, both of *grandi* and *popolani*, sent bands (*masnade*) of foot at their own expense.'¹ Villani's picture of zealous patriotism in action is a vivid one, but the very fact that in a crisis an *ad hoc* organization was necessary casts doubt on the efficient functioning of the *cavallata* system and the normal infantry obligation.

In principle this system survived intact. That it could still be effective will be evident from a final analysis of a Florentine force, that which took the field in the campaign of 1325 terminating in the disaster of Altopascio (23 September). This force (excluding Florence's Guelf allies) comprised some 1,500 mercenary cavalry, of whom 700 were French, 200 Germans, 100 Catalans, and 450 a mixed body of French, Flemings, Italians and others. There were over 500 Florentine horsemen, 400 of the *cavallata* with more than 100 *compagni* or squires. Finally there was an infantry element numbering perhaps 15,000. Not only was the Florentine cavalry present in force; it suffered heavy casualties. Villani puts the city's own cavalry losses in killed and prisoners at forty *de' migliori di Firenze grandi e popolani*, but a surviving, incomplete, list (including infantry) names 199 prisoners from Florence and 578 from the *contado*, and Davidsohn convincingly suggests that Villani's figures need to be doubled or even tripled.²

Florence's own contribution of 500 horsed citizens at Altopascio, of whom one-fifth were killed or captured, compares well with the 300 or more at Montecatini (1315) and the 600 at Campaldino (1289). If the estimate made above, that 1,400 Florentine cavalry were at Montaperti, is near the mark, the large-scale employment of mercenaries after the 1260s did indeed lead to an initial decline in the Florentine cavalry element. But there was no serious further decline in the next half-century, and the universality of mercenary warfare did not yet, in 1325, mean that the Florentines deserved reproach as a race of decadent and sedentary businessmen.

After Altopascio the defence of Florence fell to Charles of Calabria, with a force of 1,000 cavalry. By then the routine employment of mercenaries was, as we have seen, fully organized, and in 1337 a lengthy code was promulgated, which regulated every aspect of mercenary

¹ Ibid., IX, 214.

² Ibid., IX, 306; *Delizie degli Eruditi Toscani*, vol. XII, pp. 268-87; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. III, pp. 741-3.

DANIEL WALEY

service.¹ Nevertheless, up to the middle of the century, the rôle of the militia was not fully ended,² nor were the mercenary companies yet political powers in their own right.

It would be dangerous to accept the fourteenth-century version — Giovanni Villani's and Fainelli's — of what had happened. Villani's chronicle is a didactic work in praise of the civic virtues. To read how, before Campaldino, Vieri de' Cerchi chose for the vanguard of his own *Sesto* himself (despite an injured leg), his son and his nephews, is to be reminded of Pericles' funeral oration: 'there no hearts grew faint because they loved riches more than honour . . . remember this greatness was won by men with courage, with knowledge of their duty, and with a sense of honour in action.'³ Mingled with this didacticism was a strong element of nostalgia, always a great refractor of historical light. Villani's mid-thirteenth century Florentine patriot is a 'golden age' myth, the product of the belief, so characteristic of wealthy societies, that the primitive virtues were fading. Again there is a Greek parallel, in Demosthenes' accusation against the Athenians of his day that they preferred 'to sit idle, and enjoy themselves helplessly while they heard that so and so's mercenaries were winning a battle'.⁴

The influence of this outlook did not end in the fourteenth century. Machiavelli, for example, adopted unquestioningly Villani's view of Florence in the 1250s ('tanta virtù era allora in quelli uomini, e con tanta generosità d'anima si governavano'),⁵ and this in turn contributed to his exaltation of the militia over mercenaries. Our investigation of the composition of Florentine armies in the age of the Guelf mercenary bands, the first sixty years after the Angevin conquest, shows that this picture is misleading. Florence's wealth was used to reinforce its own citizens, not to supersede them so that they could concentrate on gathering still more wealth, in a vicious spiral of civic and moral degeneracy.

POSTSCRIPT

On Rat see now also M. T. Ferrer y Mallol, 'Mercenaris catalans a Ferrara (1307-17)', *Anuario de estudios medievales*, II (1965), pp. 155-227.

¹ G. Canestrini, *Documenti per servire alla storia della Milizia Italiana (A.S.I., vol. XV, 1851)*, pp. 497-549.

² See C. C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence: the 'De Militia' of L. Bruni* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 17 ff.

³ Villani, VII, 131; Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, II, 42-3 (trans. A. E. Zimmern).

⁴ Demosthenes, *Orations*, III, 35 (quoted by H. W. Parke, *Greek Mercenary Soldiers*, Oxford, 1933, p. 143).

⁵ *Istorie Fiorentine*, II, 5-6 (ed. F. Gaeta, Milan, 1962, pp. 145-7).

IV

MARVIN B. BECKER

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE AND CIVIC HUMANISM IN THE EARLY RENAISSANCE

The two most penetrating and sensitive commentators upon the early Florentine Renaissance are Hans Baron and Eugenio Garin.¹ Each of these scholars has argued persuasively for a connection between cultural developments and Florentine public life. The present inquiry follows this same tack but with a slightly different perspective. It is not the wars against the Visconti of Milan in the late Trecento and early Quattrocento which will be stressed as being solely responsible for that outburst of intellectual and artistic activity commonly described by the term 'civic humanism', but internal political and economic developments. Therefore, foreign policy and foreign affairs will be dealt with only in so far as they serve to create chronic political problems and persistent budgetary difficulties. Further, it will be suggested that the impetus in encouraging the rise of civic humanism was furnished by a new type of political organism — the territorial state. No effort will be made here to suggest its origins or attempt to delineate its genesis. Instead, I shall try to indicate something of the scope and authority of this new variety of regimen, and to point up certain problems peculiar to this type of political entity. This was a

¹ Baron's writings are numerous, but see especially, 'Das Erwachen des historischen Denkens im Humanismus des Quattrocento', *Historische Zeitschrift*, vol. CXLVII (1932), pp. 5-20; *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1955; revised ed., 1966). Garin's works represent the most compelling composite of Italian Renaissance thought in general and Florentine thought in particular. See especially, 'I cancellieri umanisti della repubblica fiorentina da Coluccio Salutati a Bartolomeo Scala', *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, vol. LXXI (1959), pp. 185-208; 'Umanesimo e vita civile', *Atti della Accademia Fiorentina di Scienze Morali*, vol. XVI (1947-50), pp. 57-104; *L'umanesimo italiano* (Bari, 1952; Engl. transl., Oxford, 1965).

MARVIN B. BECKER

polis markedly different from that of the early fourteenth century, and it made very different demands upon the Arno citizenry. Civic art and the civic humanism of a Salutati or a Bruni or a Poggio gave voice to these new demands. Few men of this generation remained immune to the promptings of a new polis, and this distinguished assembly was to include the foremost classicists in all Europe along with Franco Sacchetti and the artists, Donatello, Ghiberti, Masaccio, Brunelleschi, and a score of other luminaries.

I

In the late 1370s, there was to be an outburst of patriotic poetry. An anonymous enthusiast was to call his fellow citizens 'true Christians elected by God' to undo the heinous work of the 'carnal church'.¹ These were the difficult times of the War of the Eight Saints. Soon afterwards, Franco Sacchetti, the leading Florentine poet and writer of *The Three Hundred Tales*, was to compare the twelve labours of Hercules with the glorious victories of his beloved native city.² Florence was 'Fiorenza santa' and she had been divinely elected to initiate a spiritual *renovatio*. Such flowery language was not altogether unfitting if one were paying tribute to a new political entity that had gone far in the usurpation of powers once held exclusively by the medieval church.

By the early 1380s the Tuscan clergy had been stripped of most of their medieval immunities and liberties. The Florentine government had succeeded in even wresting away control of the inquisition and it had almost become a state tribunal.³ Such ancient rights as benefit of

¹ *Diario d'anonimo*, ed. A. Gherardi in *Documenti di storia italiana*, vol. V (Florence, 1876), p. 308. Substantial numbers of prophecies uttered in the 1370s entertain the hope of imminent religious reform under the aegis of the Arno republic. This 'bella città' will bring happiness to those opposing the hosts of evil. Amid the tribulations of the Antichrist, Florence emerges 'pregnant with the hope of a new era'. Cf. D. Weinstein, 'The Savonarola movement in Florence', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Supplement II (1962), p. 198 [and above, I]; N. Rodolico, *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1945), pp. 53-62, 142-3. (I wish to thank Professor Donald Weinstein for making available to me certain unpublished materials on the subject of prophecy and the commune.)

² One of his sonnets contains the line, 'Florentina civitas Dei et domina libertatis.' This new 'civitas Dei' must install a regimen designed so that the clergy can again follow the precepts and life of Christ, and in this way truly minister to the needs of mankind. Cf. Franco Sacchetti, *Il libro delle Rime*, ed. A. Chiari (Bari, 1936), nos. CLXXIX-CXCIV. On the general question of the writer's civic morality, see L. Caretti, *Saggio sul Sacchetti* (Bari, 1951), pp. 86-139.

Notable is the fact that by the 1370s the Florentine Signory had become sufficiently powerful to be cast in the rôle of saviour. For an illustration of the use of the word 'salutificator' (saviour), see M. Becker, 'An essay on the "novi cives" and Florentine politics, 1343-1382', *Medieval Studies*, vol. XXIV (1962), p. 75.

³ The spiritual milieu of these troubled times is treated by M. Meiss, *Painting in Florence and Siena After the Black Death* (Princeton, 1947), pp. 80-93; N. Sapegno, *Il*

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

clergy and sanctuary had been systematically denied. The Tuscan church was now making regular contributions to the public fisc. Enormous tracts of ecclesiastical lands were confiscated by the state; and while the government did assume liability for some of this clerical patrimony, restitution was made infrequently and in paltry amounts. Most telling of all, however, was the growing power of public courts at the expense of ecclesiastical tribunals. By the early Quattrocento it was virtually impossible to prosecute anyone on a charge of usury in an ecclesiastical court, since the plaintiff would be required to deposit an amount of money exactly equal to that which he was suing for. Such a sum was to be deposited in the coffers of a state court, and if the plaintiff won in the church court, the money would be forfeited to the defendant.¹

Two organisations closely associated with the Italian church were likewise much reduced in stature. Starting in the middle years of the fourteenth century, the Signory began to hedge the authority of those quasi-political bodies, the religious confraternities, until they were almost under state domination. Not only did the Signory appoint captains to govern the most prominent of these groups, but the communal councils enacted laws putting the public treasurer in charge of the assets of the confraternities. By the 1370s, direct fiscal supervision was the order of the day.² With the advent of the fifteenth century,

Trecento (Milan, 1934), pp. 528-40; H. Grundmann, 'Die Papst-Prophetien des Mittelalters', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte*, vol. XIX (1928), pp. 120-3; Garin, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 ff.; M. Becker, 'Florentine politics and the diffusion of heresy in the Trecento: a socio-economic inquiry', *Speculum*, vol. XXXIV (1959), pp. 60-75.

Too frequently, the middle years of the Trecento have been depicted as being full of sound and fury, signifying at best the indeterminacy of transition. What has been neglected are the creative social and economic impulses that served to transform the relaxed regimen of the medieval commune into the commanding rule of a Renaissance polis. The most telling decade for the enactment of legislation hostile to the church, the magnates, and the *Parte Guelfa*, and therefore favourable to the growth of the territorial state, was 1372-82. Cf. M. Becker, 'Florentine "libertas": political independents and "novi cives," 1372-1378', *Traditio*, vol. XVIII (1962), pp. 393-407.

¹ *Statuta Populi et Communis Florentie* ('Friburgi', 1778), vol. I, pp. 124-5 (lib. II, rub. xix: 'Quomodo procedatur quando instrumentum vel aliud dicitur usurarium.').

² Severe regulation of the confraternities began at the height of the Pisan War, when the *Camera* was sorely pressed for funds. Cf. A.S.F., *Prov. v*, fols. 7-7v (21 August 1363). (All unpublished documents cited in this study are to be found in the *Archivio di Stato*, Florence.) The connection between the growth of government regulation and the rise of the public debt becomes increasingly clear when we learn from this provision that all bequests from last wills and testaments made to these bodies were to be paid into the Florentine treasury and certain of their assets were to be sold by the state. Monies realized were to be used to satisfy the claims of communal creditors. Two years later, the government reserved the right to examine the accounts of these bodies, even though they were under the direct jurisdiction of the Bishop of Florence. *Prov. v*, 52, fol. 151 (30 May 1365). For examples of statutes of these confraternities, see *Testi fiorentini del dugento e dei primi del trecento*, ed. A. Schiaffini (Florence, 1926), pp. 34-54. On the general theme of these organizations in north Italian history, see G. Monti, *Le confraternite medievali dell' Alta e Media Italia* (Venice, 1927), vol. I, pp. 147-93; vol. II, pp. 23-5.

these lay religious companies were expressly prohibited from engaging in any political activities, no matter how trivial. If this proviso was violated, then the chancellor of the republic was to confiscate all the confraternities' assets and distribute them among the poor.¹ Much more significant than the extension of state hegemony over the many confraternities was the reduction of the power of that most intractable of medieval organisms — the *Parte Guelfa*. The religious confraternities could, upon occasion, be used by those who sought to undo a communal statute against the Tuscan church, but the *Parte Guelfa* could and did serve as the arm for the city's nobility and the papacy of Avignon. By the late seventies, many of the great nobles of Florence had come to champion a pro-papal policy. Further, they employed the *Parte Guelfa* to check those political activities conducted by the Signory against the interests of the Holy See. When war erupted between Florence and the Papacy, the *Parte* stood in direct opposition to the bellicose programme. So intransigent was the *Parte* and so obdurate its enemies that revolution ensued. The events of the late seventies and early eighties encouraged public-minded Florentines to denigrate the rôle of this most venerable of medieval quasi-public organizations until its functions had become almost purely ceremonial and administrative. No longer were the aristocratic Captains to be privy to the great public decisions.²

The second half of the Trecento is also the scene for the final triumph of public rights over the medieval prerogatives of the great feudatories of remote Tuscany. With the advent of the 1380s, such patrimonies as those held by the Counts Guidi and Ubaldini were finally declared subject to direct public levies. Just as telling were the many usurpations of seigneurial rights by the republic; this despite older treaties between commune and feudal lord in which the former agreed to respect the prerogatives of the latter.³ Starting in the 1340s and gaining momentum

¹ R. Caggese, *Firenze della decadenza di Roma al Risorgimento di Italia* (Florence, 1913), vol. II, p. 360. For an instance, earlier than that cited by Caggese, see Lib. Fab., 41, fol. 90 (18 February 1383). After 1415, it was necessary to have the permission of the Signory before a religious company could be organized. Cf. *Statuta Populi* cit., vol. III, p. 42.

² Judging from representation accorded the *Parte*, it reached the apogee of its *auctoritas* in the late 1360s and early 1370s. Cf. Cons. Prat., 9–12. Shortly before, legislation had been enacted requiring that the Guelf Captains be present at all important sessions of the communal councils. Cf. U. Dorini, *Notizie storiche sull' università di Parte Guelfa in Firenze* (Florence, 1902), pp. 28–39.

³ In a single month, the Counts Battifolle were fined the grand total of 52,473 lire 10 soldi for usurping public property. Formerly these extensive holdings spread over three rural parishes, and had been acknowledged by the commune as the private patrimony of these feudatories. C.C.E., 161, unnumbered fol. (7 July 1374). In the territories of the Counts Guidi (the Commune of Romena) and those of the Ubaldini (the Podere

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

over the next two decades was the inauguration of a programme to regain 'iura communis'; such an effort entailed the scrupulous implementation of public law against feudatories alleged to have usurped 'bona et iura communis'.¹

While the Signory never abolished legislation permitting injured Florentines to have recourse to vendetta, there is no question but that this honourable response to outrage tapered off after the 1330s. The lawlessness of the Florentine nobility was such that a walk along the Arno in the late Dugento was almost as dangerous as an evening stroll in Central Park. The crimes of the Bardi, Cavalcanti, Nerli, Rossi *et al.* — magnates every one — fill hundreds of folios of court records. The republic acted to limit the right of vendetta, and since this form of revenge was most status-worthy among magnates and haute bourgeoisie, this restriction tended to alter the behaviour of the highest stratum of patrician society. No longer was it considered disgraceful to seek vengeance in the courts of law rather than in a street brawl. There was a marked trend among the patriciate to turn more enthusiastically towards state courts. In addition, some of the most lawless of the magnates literally became pensioners of the commune, and their arms and good will were at the disposal of the republic.²

Numerous rural nobles went even further than becoming public pensioners. The rural socio-economic landscape had been transformed over the later Middle Ages. In Tuscany the status of 'vassal' had virtually disappeared from *contado* life by the last part of the Trecento.

Fiorentino) the *signori* enjoyed jurisdiction and exemption from the communal *estimo*. In the early 1380s these lands were subject to all obligations. Cf. E. Fiumi, 'L'imposta diretta nei comuni medioevali della Toscana', *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì* (Milan, 1957), vol. I, p. 338; P.C., I (1384).

¹ M. Becker, 'Florentine popular government (1343-1348)', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, vol. CVI (1962), pp. 373-7.

² Many of the feudatories of the great Tuscan house of the Ubaldini were to become pensioners of the commune shortly after the republic waged her last great war against these nobles in the early 1370s. C.C.E., 169, unnumbered folio (21 November 1375). For arrangements between Florence and other *signori* during these years so critical for the formation of the territorial state, see C.C.E., 171, unnumbered folio (12 April 1376); Lib. Fab., 41, fol. 101r (28 April 1383). On this general but neglected theme, see G. Soranzo, 'Collegati, raccomandati, aderenti negli stati italiani dei secoli XIV et XV', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX (1941), pp. 3-35. What the commune could not gain through coercion, she was to achieve with subsidies. In a discussion held by the advisory councils before the Signory on 5 September 1380, speakers suggested that the Tarlati clan and other great feudal lords in the vicinity be visited by discreet diplomats 'ad exhortandum eos. Et cum pecunia subveniatur.' Cons. Prat., 19, fol. 63. Cf. also *Delizie degli eruditi*, ed. Ildefonso di San Luigi (Florence, 1770-89), vol. VII, p. 191.

On the problem of magnate lawlessness, see Giudice degli Appelli, pp. 121-5. During the decade of the 1330s there were seventy-two Florentine families inscribed among the city's *magnati*. Of this number, forty-six stood convicted of grievous breaches of communal law. Each of these houses averaged four convictions for high crimes ranging from assault to homicide and treason.

MARVIN B. BECKER

There had been a time, two generations or so before, when such a juridical designation was economically advantageous to the individual in question. Now, however, as taxes tended to become territorial rather than personal, there was little to be gained from such a status. With the mid-1360s, local communities were held liable for almost all imposts; the nexus between rural inhabitant and urban government was growing tighter. The great fiefs of Tuscan antiquity were now responsible for the exaction of gabelles on wine and even on the rural nobility.¹ Little wonder that scores of Tuscan noble clans deserted their *consorterie* beginning in 1342-43. They stood up in communal court and renounced their ancient ties and lineage, then the Florentine councils declared them to be *populares et non magnates*. In this way did the Pazzi of Valdarno, the Counts of Certaldo, the Becchi of Castro Fiorentino, and hundreds of others ask to be included among *il popolo* of Florence. The ancient *consorterie* were collapsing and new bonds between men and their state were being forged.²

Exactly the same pattern can be discerned among the city's magnates. There the noble house of Ricasoli renounced its magnate status, changed its name to Bindacci, and were declared *populares*. The Della Tosa became the Bilisardi, the Donati the Bellincioni, the Bondelmonti the Montebuoni. This is but a fraction of the shift from partially disfranchized magnate to fully participating citizen.³ Many magnate individuals petitioned the Signory stating that they had always been 'peaceful and law-abiding men'; some beseeched the governors of the city to take cognizance of the fact that they and even their forebears had been 'law-abiding merchants' properly matriculated in one of the city's guilds. Because some consort of theirs had committed a crime, they were being made to suffer. Now they looked to the state to offer them redress of grievances and afford them protection.⁴ Progressively over

¹ The advantage accruing to those declared 'homines alterius', and thus being declared exempt from certain Florentine imposts, was to disappear almost entirely over the first years of the Trecento. Cf. E. Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza dell' economia fiorentina', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXVI (1958), pp. 482-3. Significant was the fact that tributary obligations were now becoming territorial rather than personal and that increased communal income was being employed to pay interest to communal creditors, C.C.E., 130 (March-April 1369).

² *Statuta Populi*, cit., vol. I, pp. 446-7; Balie, 5 (1349). For a discussion of taxation as a force in encouraging magnates to seek *popolani* status, see E. Fiumi, *Storia economica e sociale di San Gimignano* (Florence, 1961), pp. 189 ff.

³ Very important were the payments made into the treasury by many who were granted the coveted *popolani* status. Again the monies accruing from these former magnates were diverted to communal creditors. Cf. C.C.E., 89-95 (May-June 1362-May-June 1363).

⁴ Cf. G. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 155-6.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

the course of the fourteenth century, fewer and fewer individuals petitioned the government for the right to bear arms. The noble activity of jousting and swordplay had fallen into disrepute. Later, when this sport was revived, it was the ceremonial and decorative that enticed Quattrocento Florentines.

The city's guilds, like the magnates, were transformed over the second half of the Trecento. Egalitarianism triumphed among the *arti* just as it had among the *grandi*. Granted that such a victory was largely juridical; yet it is no less important for that reason. All guilds and guildsmen became liable for prosecution on charges of violating communal statutes against monopolies after 1343. No longer were the city's seven major guilds virtually exempt from these stern ordinances. Moreover, the imbalance between major and minor guild representation in the Court Merchant was substantially corrected in the early seventies. At that same time, lesser guildsmen were permitted to have complete recourse to both the Court Merchant and the state tribunals. This was a great advantage, since litigation was frequently tortuous in gild courts.¹

It is ironic that at the very time when legal parity was coming into being, the political system of the guilds was entering a decline. First, the by now familiar pattern of state intrusion into another facet of the medieval order was evolving. Officers of the republic were charged with responsibility for the communal food supply. Not only did they undertake to import certain commodities, but even to fix prices and arrange for their sale.² In the eighties — only a decade after the installation of such officials — a special commission (*balìa*) was founded to regulate gild matters. With the advent of the Quattrocento, those bastions of the pluralistic medieval political universe began to lose prestige, and what was even more significant, they suffered an attrition of revenue. Only a century before, these artisan, mercantile, and industrial corporations had been the principal bulwark of Florentine public life. They, like so many other quasi-political medieval institutions such as the *Parte Guelfa* and the religious confraternities, could provide fiscal support for communal ventures. During the first third of the Quattrocento, the treasury of the guilds was so meagre that now no reliance could be placed upon the *arti* by the state.³ The coming of the Medici in 1434 heralded a decline of the jurisdiction of both the Court

¹ M. Becker, 'La esecuzione della legislazione contro le pratiche monopolistiche delle arti fiorentine alla metà del secolo quattordicesimo,' *A.S.I.*, vol. CXVII (1959), pp. 8-28; A. Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, ed. G. Klein (Florence, 1940), vol. II, p. 70.

² For a description of the authority of these officials, see *Cons. Prat.*, 21, fols. 53, 56-56r; C.C.E., 230, fol. 4r (21 April 1386); A. Doren, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 105.

³ G. Canestrini, *La scienza e l'arte di stato* (Florence, 1862), p. 156.

MARVIN B. BECKER

Merchant and the gild tribunals. In their stead, state courts assumed control. Finally, by the end of the Quattrocento, the entire elaborate system of gild matriculation was undermined. Again state authority intruded rudely.¹

Such an intrusion might well be described as an expression of proto-mercantilism, for there were deep economic needs that were becoming more dependent upon state power for their satisfaction. If one reads the correspondence of the Florentine chancellery for the second half of the fourteenth century (*Missive*), then one is struck by the great abundance of letters dispatched by the Signory in support of the myriad of enterprises of Florentine merchants who traded and banked from the Balearic Islands to the exotic capitals of Eastern Europe. More and more the precarious but profitable activities of these businessmen required state support. This is particularly in evidence in the correspondence beginning in the late seventies, when Florence's favoured position was put in jeopardy; foreign competition and the hostility of the Papacy were handicaps too severe for the republic's traders to overcome.²

Increasingly, the city's manufacturers called upon the Signory to afford them protection from ruinous foreign competition. In October, 1393, the first general legislation was enacted establishing a sizable duty upon the importation of fine foreign cloth. Over the next years, the consuls of the once so proud wool gild acknowledged that further state action would be necessary if the gild and its membership were to prosper. Similar requests were made by other cloth gilds during the first part of the Quattrocento.³ Certain of the leadership of the major gilds had concluded that the gilds could not sustain their competitive position on the European market unless they were propped by rigorous

¹ R. Pöhlmann, *Die Wirtschaftspolitik der florentiner Renaissance und das Prinzip der Verkehrsfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1878), pp. 48-9; A. Doren, *Die florentiner Wollentuchindustrie vom vierzehnten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1901), pp. 418 ff.

² The concern of the Signory for winning advantages for Florentine bankers, merchants, and industrialists is indicated by the ever greater number of discussions on this topic as well as the growth of communal diplomatic correspondence devoted to promoting the republic's mercantile interests abroad. Cf. especially *Missive della Prima Cancelleria*, 17-35. On the decline of Florentine foreign trade during the 1370s, see *Cronica fiorentina di Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*, ed. N. Rodolico, *R.I.S.*, vol. XXX, part I (Città di Castello, 1903-1955), rub. 765. The best available index for assessing the vigour of this foreign trade are the receipts from the customs toll. In 1368 they stood at 196,395 lire, while in 1377 they totalled only 93,806 lire. For the figures on the earlier year, see *C.C.E.*, 122-7, and for the latter year, see *C.C.E.*, 176-81.

³ C. C. Bayley, *War and Society in Renaissance Florence* (Toronto, 1961), pp. 71-2. R. Davidsohn's, 'Blüte und Niedergang der florentinischen Tuchindustrie', *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, LXXXV (1928), pp. 225-55, so frequently cited as an authoritative study on the Florentine cloth industry, is much in need of revision. For evidence pertaining to demands by the consuls of the wool gild for protection, see *Lib. Fab.*, 51, fol. 203 (30 May 1418); *ibid.*, fol. 206r (9 June 1418).

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

tariff systems. That the first such system was introduced in October 1393, during the tenure of Maso degli Albizzi as Gonfalonier of Justice, when he first came to dominate the political scene, indicates that the most powerful elements in communal politics responded enthusiastically to the imperatives of proto-mercantilism. Moreover, two of Florence's major wars, one against Pisa in the 1360s and the other against the same adversary in the early fifteenth century, were in response to the exigencies of manufacture and trade. These conflicts were enormously costly, but finally Florence wrested control of the littoral from her sturdy neighbour and soon was building ports and constructing galleys to further the Mediterranean interests of her great merchants.¹

Not only did Florentine proto-mercantilism entail a sustained response to the needs of her business community — a response the once powerful guilds were unable to effect, but it also came to embody an even more telling awareness to the needs of the state itself. Exactly in the same year, 1393, laws were enacted prohibiting Florentines from insuring any merchandise borne on foreign ships. The public interest could best be served if money was prevented from leaving the country. Simultaneously, a law was passed designed to keep hard money in the Florentine domain. Anyone who exported more than fifty gold florins at one time was liable for prosecution.² This was an expression of the same impulse which had animated Florentine legislation framed to prevent any citizen from alienating shares of public stock (*Monte*) to foreigners. The state was reluctant to pay interest to non-citizens who would take money outside the Florentine territories.³

Increased state participation in economic life occasioned an enlargement of communal bureaucracy. Over the fifty years between the popular revolution of 1343 and the oligarchical reaction of 1393, the number of officials hired by the Florentine treasury quintupled. In addition, an abundance of new fiscal posts were created. In the forties the numerous officers in charge of funding the communal debt were authorized to regulate the intake of certain gabelles. As the century advanced, their number and responsibilities multiplied.⁴ Another set of officials most conspicuous after the 1350s were the *regulatores*. These key

¹ For appropriations devoted to these ends, see P.C., 27-40.

² L. Piattoli, 'Le leggi fiorentine sull' assicurazione nel medioevo', *A.S.I.*, vol. XC (1932), pp. 208-11. For a discussion of this problem, held by the advisers to the Signory in August of 1395, Cons. Prat., 31, fol. 107r.

³ Canestrini, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

⁴ By the 1360s, their number had quadrupled, and by the '70s, they were handling such diverse matters as the licensing of pawnbrokers and the operation of a credit bank for the republic's mercenaries. By 1377 these officers in charge of the communal debt were also serving as guardians of orphaned minors. At a meeting of the advisory councils to the Signory, it was suggested 'pro utilitate pupillorum' that the patrimony of

MARVIN B. BECKER

appointees met with the Signory to decide critical matters pertaining to tax assessments and the intake of gabelles. Soon they and their many notaries and scribes were conducting inquiries into problems of rural quotas, making surveys and collecting unpaid obligations from great feudatories. By the early seventies they were meeting with the Signory and appearing before the communal councils where they explained the merits of a particular tax bill or discussed the need for recovering public properties.¹ On this score, dozens of new positions were being created so that public properties could not only be recovered but even profitably managed. Special judges were appointed along with notaries and bailiffs to oversee the collection of the principal communal gabelles. No longer was one set of officers sufficient, but appointments were made for wine, salt, customs tolls, and many others. Especially effective were the officers in charge of that veritable army of *castellani*. These *officiales castrorum* were busily engaged in supervising the public monies that went to maintain state forts and battle stations.²

One would hardly have to dwell upon the vast expansion of the vicariate and the captaincy throughout the burgeoning Florentine empire in order to be convinced of the movement towards the bureaucratization of the polis. Further, the increased use of complex techniques of syndication starting in the 1340s would bedazzle even the most technically-minded of modern lawyers. By the 1370s a review of the financial activities of a vicar or a captain had become a notarial tour de force.³ In point of fact, so many aspects of communal life were coming

these children should remain 'in the hands of the commune'. It would then be invested in the funded communal debt 'cum interesse'. It should be observed that earlier the rôle now performed by the state was filled by one of the city's many confraternities. Cf. Cons. Prat., 15, fol. 54r (13 November 1377).

¹ On the early history of the *regulatores*, see Archivio dei Sindaci, B., IV, 5, fol. 1r. The date given for the beginnings of effective administration by the *regulatores* in this source is 1352. On their participation in sessions of the government, see especially Cons. Prat., 6, 12 and 14.

The office of *defensor* was originally created by the Signory to check the spoliation of the *contado* by *magnates* and *potentes*. By 1367, however, the function of this vastly expanded office had been altered: now its members were being regularly dispatched to the environs of the city in order to punish tax delinquents and protect communal property. Cons. Prat., 12, fol. 57. The office of *bargellino* underwent a similar evolution. Cons. Prat., 8, fol. 28r (11 January 1367). On the fiscal role of the *Capitano della Custodia* and his staff, see C.C.E., 33, fol. 71 (14 May 1349).

² Cf. P.C., 1 ff.

³ The treasury records indicate that the number of officials compelled to make restitution of communal monies increased tenfold over the generation since the early 1340s. If one looks into the many volumes of the *Atti dell' Esecutore*, one is immediately struck by the long and involved procedure that comes into vogue in the mid-Trecento. On the theme of syndication, see G. Masi, *Il sindacato delle magistrature comunali nel secoli XIV* (Rome, 1930). There are special runs of documents housed in the Florentine archives yet to be examined on this neglected theme. Cf. *Sindacato del Capitano e Podestà*, 1 ff.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

under closer supervision and regulation, while at the same time the state was performing a myriad of new functions, that it was becoming extremely arduous to locate qualified personnel. The bulk of the new officialdom were responsible for the manifold activities of the public fisc.

As early as the 1380s, the main feature of communal debate was governmental fiscal policy. The problems of rule were becoming more and more managerial. The tendency had been to move away from selecting communal officeholders by lot, or even by popular election. Instead, crucial positions in the treasury or in charge of the public debt (*Monte*) were now filled by appointment. What was required was technical knowledge. Problems were not those which stemmed from efforts to implement new policies, but rather from the attempts to underwrite the far-flung and enduring commitments of the republic. The medieval ideological content of politics was slowly dissipated until popes, emperors, Guelfs and Ghibellines were seldom the topic of heated debate in communal councils after 1382. Well before that date, however, extraordinary commissions (*Balie*) did most of the administrative work of government. These *Balie* provided the régime with continuity of action. Their function was to minister to the persistent problems confronting each and every Signory from the 1360s on: the apportionment of revenue and the hire of troops. The same personnel moved from *Balia* to *Balia*, and as far as communal fiscal policy was concerned, there was precious little alteration. Even during intervals of revolution the direction of the public fisc was not substantially modified. Too frequently, historians have relied upon new and spectacular legislation enacted by communal councils at dramatic moments without seeking to discover whether these radical innovations were indeed implemented.¹

The work of these *Balie*, then, involved, first, drawing up propitious contracts with mercenary troops, and second, managing the public fisc so that disbursements could be made and communal creditors repaid. Needless to say, such functions could only be filled if the membership were given expanded powers. As early as the 1350s, the ancient system of farming taxes was abandoned and the commissioners supervised the

¹ The test period might be 1378 when a radical revolution was waged and won. The victors announced a fiscal program. The treasury records indicate that little or none of the proposed reforms were in fact implemented. The same was true of the subsequent régime. Cf. C.C.E., 185-7. For a study of intent, the works of Niccolò Rodolico are invaluable, especially *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1945), but an analysis of the practices of revolutionary régimes still remains to be done. [But see below, IX.]

MARVIN B. BECKER

collection of many gabelles.¹ In the following decade they were authorized to provide certain revenues for the holders of public stock (*Monte*). To this end they were charged with the obligation of finding new sources of revenue. Fines against violators of the city's food laws were increased. Under the aegis of this *Balia*, new communal grain mills were to be constructed so that the state might enjoy a higher income. Stricter ordinances were passed regulating the use of public fisheries and fulling mills. Mounting public indebtedness, occasioned almost exclusively by the phenomenal escalation of war costs since the 1350s, was making the régime of these *Balie* both more necessary and more brutal.²

II

With the advent of the 1380s, it can be suggested that the exigencies of the public economy were becoming the dominant consideration in Florentine civic life. Perhaps the following somewhat oversimplified description of the transformation of the commune into an entity approximating a Renaissance territorial state would not be altogether amiss. Until the 1320s the intake of the treasury and its outlay were in balance. The public debt for the first decade and a half of the fourteenth century stood somewhere between 47,500 florins and 50,000 florins. This was a petty sum and it was relatively easy to meet interest payments.³ Further, expenditures for warfare could be covered by the income from such taxes as customs tolls and the gabelles on wine and salt. Neither state credit nor government spending were critical to the communal economy. In this type of society the foci of wealth and of credit were principally in the hands of private investors, and while the impact of communal spending was not altogether negligible, it could hardly inspire new directions in civic life. But beginning with the 1320s, the delicate equilibrium between the *entrata* and the *uscita* of the *Camera* was disturbed, and over the next twenty years the treasury ran sizable deficits. Finally, by the early 1340s, public indebtedness reached a

¹ The treasury records reveal that the shift from private collection of communal imposts to public exaction occurred in the interim 1348-49. The last year, then, the *gabellia portarum* and other principal levies were farmed was 1348. Cf. C.C.E., 25-31. Again the middle years of the Trecento prove to be crucial for the transformation of the commune into a territorial state.

² For a record of the enormous disbursements of certain of these *Balie*, see P.C., 1, fol. 425; *ibid.*, fol. 336; *ibid.*, fol. 377. On the general subject of rule by these extraordinary commissions, see Giovanni Antonelli, 'La magistratura degli Otto di Guardia a Firenze', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXII (1954), pp. 3-29.

³ A. Saponi, *L'età della rinascita* (Milan, 1958), pp. 149-54; E. Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', *loc. cit.*, 427-502; M. Becker, *Florence in Transition*, vol. I (Baltimore, 1967), p. 4.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

considerable sum. Yet, compared with the totals attained in the late fourteenth century, the amounts were trifling. The formation of the floating communal debt (*Monte*) in 1345 marked the beginnings of a gradual transformation in communal society. The *Monte* came to be so embedded in civic life that it was to assume the rôle of determinant in the formulation of public policy. Moreover, the total indebtedness of the *Monte* was never to be reduced; over each decade there were to be substantial increments occasioned by the costliness of war.

Contemporaries regarded these expenditures, which threw the budget out of balance, as being the result of temporary conditions. They would attribute these substantial outlays to the machinations of a faction or the connivance of self-seeking and unscrupulous men, rather than to the product of a situation now endemic. The advent of the Emperor into Tuscany and the granting of subsidies to the marauding companies added sizable amounts to the public debt in the 1350s, while the war with Pisa and the campaigns against San Miniato al Tedesco had a comparable effect in the subsequent decade. Finally, the intervention of the Visconti lords of Milan, the conflict with the Tuscan feudatories of the Ubaldini clan, and the costly War of the Eight Saints with the Papacy (1375-78), prompted this public debt to soar still higher. During the forty years since the decade of the 1340s, state fiscal policy came to be the most absorbing of all public concerns. No longer were chroniclers satisfied merely to describe families and enumerate their patrimony, now they came to place strong emphasis on public economic life. Before war was declared or peace treaties confirmed, it became mandatory for the treasurer of the *Monte* to render an opinion. The chronicler Filippo Villani narrates an instance of just such an occurrence, and opines that the Florentines got the better of Pisa (1362-64) simply because the Florentine treasury could better afford the brunt of the campaigns.¹ In the sixties and seventies, the treasurer of the *Monte* did make enormous loans from the principal of the public debt so that Florence might hire mercenaries. In fact, without these loans the special branch of the *Camera* which was authorized to hire troops would have been unable to function.²

Gradually, then, the Arno republic was moving away from a private economy in which government intake and outlay was a negligible causal force, towards the formation of an economic system in which government spending and borrowing was to play a decisive rôle.

¹ F. Villani, *Cronica*, ed. F. Dragomanni (Florence, 1845), XI, 82.

² This practice is first recorded in the treasury records of May 1368, and was to continue over the entire period treated in this study. Cf. C.C.E., 125, fols. 111-122, and subsequent volumes.

MARVIN B. BECKER

During the middle years of the fourteenth century, when successive régimes searched energetically for revenue, medieval immunities, privileges, and liberties had tended to erode. As we have seen, the Tuscan church came to be heavily taxed, and the guilds, along with the Court Merchant, lost many of their ancient prerogatives. The church, the *Parte Guelfa*, the guilds, the Court Merchant, and the religious confraternities were no longer potent political entities by the 1380s. The pressing needs of the republic's treasury could no longer be satisfied by a small subsidy from the clergy or a loan from the *Parte Guelfa*, or even a direct levy on the city's guilds. The private wealth of Florence was being increasingly syphoned into the burgeoning communal debt. So large had this indebtedness become, that no small group of families or merchant corporations could underwrite any but the smallest part of it. Unlike the situation in the early Trecento, when a family like the Bardi could alleviate substantial fiscal pressure by making a loan of about 30,000 florins, such a sum would be minute in the face of early Quattrocento demands. Now virtually every affluent Florentine had a sizable portion of his patrimony invested in one or more of the several funded communal debts. In 1345, less than a hundred families had large-scale *Monte* holdings; by 1427, however, this number had increased more than twentyfold, and in most instances the amounts involved were thirty and forty times as great as investments in the original *Monte* of 1345. The *Catasto* of 1427 demonstrates compellingly that virtually every Florentine whose patrimony exceeded 3,000 florins was a shareholder in the republic's funded debt.¹ No longer, then, could any one of these thousands of investors in public securities (the political élite of the city) disregard the operation of the public sector of the economy.

By the 1380s the public debt had become the pivot around which the treasury revolved. Simply to meet the minimal interest payments on the *Monte* would require approximately half of the commune's total tax revenue. So unwieldy and inflated had the *Monte* become, that amortization could scarcely be more than a pious hope. In 1387, carrying charges on the *Monte* stood at more than 150,000 florins, but this was only a harbinger of things to come. By 1394 the total had reached almost 190,000 florins. Ten years later, just after the outbreak of the Pisan War, it had increased to approximately 250,000 florins. As an aftermath of the war the total rose by another 25,000 florins. During the course of the conflict, a special *Monte* was established for the sole pur-

¹ P. J. Jones, 'Florentine families and Florentine diaries in the fourteenth century', *Papers of the British School at Rome*, vol. XXIV (1956), pp. 197-8. The figure 3,000 florins is derived from a survey of *Monte* holdings of the citizenry in the year 1427. This sum represents an average.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

pose of financing hostilities against Florence's neighbour. Over the course of the following two decades, the *Monti* totals remained fairly constant; new funded debts were created out of special forced loans (*prestanconi*), and these were to be interest-bearing at rates of either seven or eight per cent.¹

With the creation of new funded debts, the operations of the *Monte* and its officers began to expand into new fields. Now they concerned themselves with the funding of special loans from merchants, or with the consolidation of *prestanze* on the countryside. For many years they had been in charge of the restitution of interest to those clergy whose properties had been confiscated during the War of the Eight Saints (1375-78). Sixteen years after the conclusion of this conflict, the officials of the *Monte* were still delaying the payment of 15,000 florins a year interest to Tuscan ecclesiastics.² Among their other functions were the drawing up of contracts with pawnbrokers, the prosecution of manifest usurers, and the protection of the patrimonies of Florentine orphans. They were also charged by the communal councils to finance the building of a Florentine fleet, as well as to underwrite the activities of the republic's university (the *studio*). When the chronicler Gregorio Dati spoke of the officials of the *Monte* as having great power and authority ('grande ballia e autorità'), he was not exaggerating in the least, for he was well aware that 'almost all the income of the commune comes into their hands . . .'.³

Beginning in 1390, forced loans (*prestanze*) came to be exacted at a frantic pace. In that year alone they were to total half a million florins. In the following year they rose to 673,937 florins, and the next year saw a return of a little over 600,000 florins. By 1393, however, the total soared above 1,200,000 florins, and this figure was soon to be reached again during the early years of the Quattrocento. Moreover, special *prestanze* were levelled against the inhabitants of territories under the republic's rule. Many of these *prestanze* were interest-bearing at rates of seven or eight per cent; in the year 1407 the treasury set aside approximately 85,000 florins for payment of interest. In that same year the treasury was dispensing 11,584 florins for interest to those who paid *prestanze* in the recent war against Pisa. Rate-payers had an option: they could pay a smaller assessment and lose both interest and capital,

¹ P.C., 4, fols. 272-276r; *ibid.*, 10, fols. 245-65; *ibid.*, 19, fols. 256r-269.

² P.C., 10, fol. 260.

³ *Istoria di Firenze di Gregorio Dati dal 1380 al 1405*, ed. L. Pratesi (Norcia, 1904), pp. 153-4. Cf. also p. 117, n. 4.

MARVIN B. BECKER

or they might pay a heavier assessment and receive interest and eventually regain their capital.¹

It is not possible always to have a precise estimate of these *prestanze*, since the communal system of treasury book-keeping was exceedingly complex. Sometimes balances were not struck, and, upon occasion, the statistics are less than complete. Bearing this in mind and making the most conservative estimate, the total for all *prestanze* during the decade of the 1390s would be approximately 5,000,000 florins. The first five years of the Quattrocento would see this total augmented by 3,500,000 florins. Judging from the tax returns of 1427 (the *Catasto*), this astronomical figure would be at least seven times the total of all the commercial wealth in the city. Although these returns did not provide an altogether candid presentation of the tax payers' patrimony, the amount of private capital now being absorbed by the state was staggering by any standard. Nor was there to be any respite: in 1424, *prestanze* amounted to 560,912 florins; in 1426, they stood at 888,309 florins; in 1427, the figure was 439,590 florins; and finally, in 1431, they reached almost 600,000 florins. If we were to add all the *prestanze* exacted by the government from 1390 to 1427, we would discover that the grand total would be an amount equal to the wealth of the entire citizenry as recorded in the *Catasto*. Of course the major portion of these *prestanze* soon came to be incorporated in the *Monte*. Not only did this inflate the public debt, it also served to increase substantially the number of citizens who were state creditors. In addition, the size of individual holdings in the public debt was augmented.²

Starting in 1388, with the first war against the Visconti, military expenses began to spiral; in that year the outlay for hiring troops was just under 300,000 florins. By 1391 it reached more than 750,000 florins. In 1400 it was almost 500,000 florins, and it sustained this level over the next half decade. Clearly, a substantial part of the increment in the public indebtedness was occasioned by expenditure for warfare; over the next quarter of a century these outlays were not diminished, since Florence continued to wage war against her neighbours. In a single year, 1424, the total exceeded 2,500,000 florins. Expenditure for troops (only a single item in a military budget) between the early nineties and the late 1420s would reach the grand sum of about 10,000,000 florins. If one adds the *Entrata delle Castelle* and the outlay for provisions and arms, not to speak of subsidies to emperors and princes, then perhaps another

¹ For the year 1390, see P.C., 8; for 1391, P.C., 7; for 1393, P.C., 9; for 1407, P.C., 21.

² Cf. P.C., 6-37.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

million florins can be tacked on to this already imposing figure. Such a sum is again higher than the total capital of all Florentines, which, according to the *Catasto* records, stood at from eight to nine million florins.¹ Certainly this would stand as the most convincing instance of massive state intervention in communal life. Over an interval of only slightly more than a generation, government spending and public fiscal policy had conspired to precipitate an unprecedented acceleration in the flow of capital from private investment into the public sector of the economy.

This redeployment of capital into the hands of the state was further intensified in 1425 when the *Monte delle Doti* was founded. This credit institution served as a type of insurance bank in which deposits were made by families so that their daughters might be guaranteed a dowry and they might be assured a progeny. In an age when a girl without a dowry had virtually no opportunity to marry, this ingenious plan would appear to have been a boon to the unfortunate. It was possible to make arrangements with the officials of this *Monte* whereby one could deposit a fixed sum over a specified number of years and thus obtain a suitable dowry. The term of the normal contract ran from seven to fifteen years; if one selected the shorter term then one paid a larger annual payment. If the daughter died or entered a convent before the term expired, part of the deposit went to the commune; if, however, she had marriageable sisters, then the capital could be transferred and a new contract drawn up under less favourable conditions. This particular *Monte* was to add substantially to the obligations of the republic, for Florence was committed to pay three and three-eighths per cent on all deposits. By 1470 the liability of the republic for the *Monte delle Doti* was 198,000 florins yearly, and this figure was well over one half the annual revenue of the city.² The republic was now responsible not only for the defence of the Florentines, but even for the proper marriage of their children. As much as any single fiscal stratagem, the foundation of this *Monte* induced the citizenry to look towards the state for its well-being. When Cosimo de' Medici postponed making payments on the *Monte delle Doti*, the chronicler Giovanni Cavalcanti averred that he had broken the bond which tied 'la grandezza della Repubblica colla libertà del Monte'.³ So tight was the nexus between the grandeur of the

¹ P.C., 5-29. Jones presents materials on the extent of Florentine wealth in his 'Florentine Families', loc. cit., p. 197.

² L. Marks, 'The financial oligarchy in Florence under Lorenzo', in *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London, 1960), pp. 128-9.

³ *Istorie fiorentine*, ed. F. Polidori (Florence, 1839), vol. II, p. 203. Much later, Francesco Guicciardini was to quote a saying recorded in 1457, '... el Monte disfarà

MARVIN B. BECKER

state and the integrity of the *Monte*, that in the mind of this chronicler they had become inseparable.

III

The problem of finding fiscal support for this inflated credit structure was indeed the most pressing to confront Florentines who sat in the *Balie* (extraordinary commissions) over the years. That their efforts met with some degree of success is attested by the fact that the value of shares in the public debt did not decline appreciably over the years between the 1380s and the 1430s. They were traded on the market at a price that varied between twenty-five and thirty-five per cent of their face value, and this quotation differed little from that of the decade of the 1370s. For tax purposes they were assessed at from fifty to sixty per cent of their value. As to the *Monte delle Doti*, despite the abuse heaped on Cosimo when he prorogued payment, this institution continued to prove extremely popular. There is little to indicate that Florentine confidence in the fiscal reliability of the state diminished over this sixty-year period. Rather, the alacrity with which the citizenry made short-term loans to the *Camera* suggests that faith in the integrity of the public fisc was durable. Despite a myriad of complaints, lampoons, and even invective, Florentines continued to underwrite the burgeoning expenses of war through numerous forced loans. Gregorio Dati enumerates the republic's outlays for warfare during the years 1375-1405, arriving at the sum 11,500,000 florins. Then he expresses the naive doubt that no one would have believed that there was so much money in the world. Indeed, how could the Florentines have raised such a staggering amount? The answer for Dati was divided into two parts: first, much of the money lent to the republic was inscribed in the *Monte*, and second, the wars themselves were a boon to the Florentine economy. The mercenaries spent much of their pay in the city, Florentine merchants imported provisions, and businessmen made all manner of profit on government contracts. Even more telling, however, for the state of the economy and public morale, were the fruits of the victories. The conquest of Pisa in the early Quattrocento both expanded opportunities for Florentine capitalists and augmented the general revenue of the republic.¹ Guido Cavalcanti emphasizes identical points in his chronicle. This he does in the form of an oration delivered by the city's

Firenze o Firenze disfarà el Monte.' Cf. *Le Cose fiorentine*, ed. R. Ridolfi (Florence, 1945), p. 109, and *Ricordi*, ed. R. Spongano (Florence, 1951), p. 126. (I wish to thank Anthony Molho and Nicolai Rubinstein for these references.)

¹ *Istoria di Firenze*, pp. 136-9.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

political leader, Rinaldo degli Albizzi. After extolling Florence's ancient forebears, 'our fathers the Romans,' and eulogizing the citizenry's love for their republic, he says he intends to speak with candour: To tell you the truth, during periods of warfare our city is crowded and everyone profits from our successful martial undertakings.¹ Finally, there was yet another reason for public support; even in the darkest days of the conflict with the Visconti, when all seemed hopeless, Florentines could believe sincerely that the Duke of Milan 'was only an *uomo mortale*'. When he died, then, 'finito [era] lo stato suo,' but as for Florence, she would endure and thrive again because 'il Comune non può morire...'.²

General confidence in the reliability of officials over the *Monte* appears to have been well placed; the treasury records indicate that these public servants were scrupulous in the performance of their arduous tasks. That the state frequently was compelled to suspend interest payments to *Monte* shareholders does not gainsay the fact that as soon as conditions improved, the treasury would resume its accustomed disbursements. Every month a certain portion of the customs toll, the gabelles on wine, salt, contracts, the *estimo* on the *contado*, and a host of other levies would be assigned to a special section of the *Camera* for the purpose of restitution. Each *Monte* and many of the larger *prestanze* were supervised by a staff of accountants and financial rectors. These men kept meticulous accounts, and the monies were set aside regularly for the republic's creditors.

In the last analysis, both the psychology and mechanics of this complex system of deficit financing depended upon general business conditions, for it was the state of the economy that would determine the amount of revenue available to the treasury. Unless Florentine prosperity could be sustained at a reasonable level, the intake of the *Camera* would fall and the inflated credit structure must collapse. There were times when the Signory was forced to cut rates, but as soon as the crisis had passed, the old rate would be restored. Florentines firmly believed that the state would soon recover its vigour, and creditors would be paid in full.

This faith was amply justified by the intake of the *Camera* from the traditional gabelles.³ Judging from the returns from the customs toll,

¹ *Istorie fiorentine*, vol. I, pp. 75, 79. When Florentine foreign policy met with success, the value of *Monte* shares rose. Cf. D. Buoninsegni, *Storie della città di Firenze dall' anno 1410 al 1460* (Florence, 1637), p. 93.

² Dati, *Istoria di Firenze*, p. 74.

³ This statement has validity only if we recall that until 1427 the enormous forced loans collected by the treasury were used to underwrite the costs of war and diplomacy.

MARVIN B. BECKER

Florence remained a vigorous commercial city, and the treasury collected even more revenue than she had garnered in the prosperous years of the early Trecento. The yield of this gabelle had never been higher than 90,100 florins. Beginning in 1384, however, the return was 119,133 florins, and it rose still higher in the following year when it registered 132,475 florins. While it is true that it declined to 82,496 florins at the height of the Visconti war, it soon recovered and stood almost at the same level it had attained in 1384. By 1394 it recorded a total of 115,667 florins. In the decade of the 1410s, it went above 120,000 florins, reaching 127,421 florins. Over the next few years there was a sizable decline, and in 1424 the figure was only 94,732 florins. It sustained that low until 1427, then once again recovery set in and the customs toll shot above the 100,000 florin mark.

Despite the vicissitudes of war and the vagaries of diplomatic manoeuvring, despite the invasion and occupation of Florentine territories, despite plague and famine, this most critical barometer of the republic's well-being never experienced dramatic fluctuations, indicating that both foreign trade and communal customs receipts remained vigorous and thriving.¹ Certainly, the rates of the customs tolls must have been adjusted periodically, but the tenacity of this gabelle is attested to by the constant yield over a period of almost half a century. Nor was this an isolated phenomenon; comparable patterns of behaviour were registered by other economic indicators. The return from the levy on salt evidenced more erratic behaviour. It would plunge precipitously in a single year and then recover its value and finally surge upward. In the overall, however, it did not diminish during the years from 1384 to 1427 (the year the *Catasto* was founded). In the earlier year it stood at 63,870 florins, while in the latter it totalled 82,150

Therefore it would be possible to use the yield from the gabelles to pay interest on *Monte* stock. After 1427, returns from direct taxes on property and capital would bring in sizeable returns. In 1429 the yield from the *Catasto* was 168,502 florins, and in the following year it rose to 414,758 florins. This type of levy did not increase the public debt as did a *prestanza* which was interest-bearing and inscribed in the *Monte*. The *Catasto*, then, relieved much of the fiscal pressure on the treasury and would serve to inspire confidence in communal creditors. A preliminary investigation suggests that it was not until the 1470s that the value of *Monte* stock declined. Cf. L. Marks, *op. cit.*, 129-30. It may be that this decline was much accelerated in the eighties by the sharp decrease in gabelle returns. Cf. L. Marks, 'La crisi finanziaria a Firenze dal 1494 al 1502', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXII (1954), pp. 60-72.

¹ The statistics on the *gabella portarum* are virtually continuous for the period under consideration. My position is that the economy remained vigorous and that there was no sharp and sudden drop. Cf. P.C., 34, fols. 56-9; P.C., 35, fols. 69-74; P.C., 36, fol. 61r; P.C., 38, fol. 97 for returns of this gabelle in the early 1430s. Again the statistics demonstrate that it sustained its vigour.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

florins. Other returns did not differ markedly from the customs and the salt gabelle.¹

The republic could then be assured of an income almost identical to that enjoyed in the middle years of the Trecento or even during the apogee of Florentine prosperity, the biennium 1336–38. There was no more reason for men to doubt the fiscal potency of the state in 1430 than there had been in 1360 or even 1330, if we measure fiscal potency in terms of communal income. Moreover, the returns from indirect taxes proved almost constant, accounting as they did for approximately 270,000 florins a year. It was not until the late 1480s that they began to tumble, and it is worth noting that the late fifteenth century marks the beginning of a failure of public confidence in the fiscal integrity of Florence. At this point, the psychological imperatives that gave durability to the Florentine economy and inspired faith in the economic capabilities of the state remain elusive, but surely the steady decline of returns from indirect levies did little to shore up civic confidence. In 1487, income from these levies was only 160,000 florins, and by 1490 it had dropped to 105,000 florins.²

That the state was assured of a substantial income from gabelles and customs tolls meant that in periods of peace the returns could be pledged for payment of interest to communal creditors. Customs tolls and the gabelles on wine and contracts, in addition to the *estimo* on the *contado*, were assigned to the creditors of the *Monte Comune* (the largest of all *Monti*, bearing five per cent interest). The gabelle on salt was pledged to those who made eight-per-cent *prestanzoni*, while the tax on mills and fisheries went to those who made special loans for the Pisan War. Such a system may have done much to reassure the creditors of the republic, and to sustain their morale, but it left almost no monetary residue with which to support the expenses of government and the waging of war.

As we have seen, with almost all the republic's regular income already committed to the satisfaction of the claims of the shareholders in the public debt, the Signory had to resort to numerous forced loans. But such a tactic merely increased the communal debt and, therefore, it would be necessary to extract additional revenues. At this juncture we can observe the acceleration of a trend already in progress since the middle years of the Trecento. This trend, perhaps as much as any other, was to be responsible for the development of a highly specialized and

¹ The same contention as was made concerning the *gabella portarum* has validity for most of the other communal levies. Also there was little change in their yield immediately after 1427. Cf. P.C., 30, fols. 76–112; P.C., 32, fols. 74–112r; P.C., 33, fols. 70–113.

² Cf. above, n. 1, and pp. 127–8.

MARVIN B. BECKER

more imposing form of state organization. Subject territories, rural parishes and country villages had already lost much of their autonomy during the middle years of the fourteenth century. This movement towards greater dependence on Florence was largely a resultant of the pressing demands made upon the city's domains by the public fisc. Further, Florentine bureaucracy had expanded and the city was now assuming the rôle of guardian and sometimes spoiler of rustic wealth. The *contado* of the later Middle Ages was little taxed, and because communal budgets were small, there was little reason for exploitation. The very citizens who staffed the Signory were owners of extensive rural patrimonies. There was always opposition to the levying of direct taxes on the countryside, and in the early Trecento, Florentine régimes were reluctant to incur the enmity of the communal councils even in times of budgetary crisis.¹

As we have seen, the shift to a sterner régime over the *contado* began in the middle years of the Trecento; what had begun gradually was to become intensified, and by the late 1380s had reached considerable magnitude. The contribution of the *contado*, the rural districts (the outlying reaches), and the subject cities, bore perhaps one-fifth of the brunt of all imposts. This was a substantial increase over the figure of a half-century before, when the fraction was perhaps no more than ten per cent. Moreover, the levy on such commodities as meat and wine in the *contado* continued to rise.²

The *estimo* on rural wealth was a regular feature of the Florentine tributary system, and where earlier there had been only a single direct levy in the course of a year, now there were sometimes two, and often three. Even during the 1360s and 1370s it was not unusual to find this harsh expedient resorted to. Beginning in the eighties, the commune levied not only an *estimo* but what was described as an 'extraordinary impost' on the countryside. By 1388 this latter assessment became a regular feature of the Florentine system and continued to be collected throughout the early Quattrocento. In addition to this, starting in 1393, the republic placed an 'extraordinary *estimo*' on the rural regions; this, too, came to be a permanent feature of the Florentine tributary system. By 1395 the *estimo* was bringing in just over 17,500 florins to the *Camera*, while the 'extraordinary *estimo*' was yielding approximately

¹ For evidence of hostility to the enactment of the *estimo* on the *contado*, see Capitoli, *Protocolli*, 12, f. 173 (1 February 1337); *Lib. Fab.*, 14, fols. 41-5 (18 December 1329); *ibid.*, 16, II, fol. 77r (8 November 1335); *ibid.*, 17, fol. 90 (19 January 1339).

² By 1388 the levy on meat slaughtered in the *contado* had reached 6,979 florins; this figure was over one third higher than that cited by Giovanni Villani for the prosperous biennium 1336-38. Cf. *Cronica*, IX, 92, and P.C., 5, fol. 238r (1388). For the 1380s the tax on wine in the *contado* averaged 15,000 florins, and this figure was at least one third higher than that collected during peak years of the middle Trecento. C.C.E., 80-6.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

31,500 florins. Moreover, the extraordinary imposts were returning almost 15,500 florins.

The tax on wine produced in the *contado* stood at 17,000 florins. The sum of all these rural imposts reached the very impressive figure of 85,000 florins, and this at a time when intake from general taxation was just above 300,000 florins.¹ By 1402 the figure had ascended until the *contado* was contributing almost 140,000 florins a year to the Florentine treasury, and during the early Quattrocento this amount was not infrequently exceeded. Soon fixed payments were substituted for some of the old levies, and the rate of the 'extraordinary imposts' was much augmented. Now the wealth of the countryside contributed almost one half to the general revenues. Special taxes were being placed on rural communes and country parishes, and Tuscany was being called upon to pay forced loans. By 1431, approximately eighty per cent of all monies collected from rural localities were being distributed to the treasurers of the various *Monti* so that interest payments to the communal creditors could be met. From 1427 on, the wealth of the environs and districts of Florence were inscribed in the *Catasto*: each time the *Catasto* was imposed (and it could be exacted several times during a year) the contribution of the *contado* was to be 18,594 florins, while the city's was to be 25,341 florins. Considering the disparity in wealth, the *contado's* share seems disproportionate.²

During the late Trecento and the first quarter of the Quattrocento, fixed payments were substituted for some of the old levies, and the rate of the extraordinary imposts was raised. All of this occurred at a time when the countryside was suffering the ravages of war, and the probabilities are that rural population was on the decline. Almost every year the Signory enacted special legislation encouraging immigration into rural Tuscany. The government promised immunity from seizure for debt, as well as important tax concessions to those who would take up residence in the countryside and work the land.³

While no precise picture can be drawn of economic conditions, certainly the harsh régime of the *contado* could not have come at a

¹ For the *entrata dell'estimo ordinario del contado* in the year 1395, see P.C., 11, fol. 267. For the *entrata dell'estimo straordinario del contado* for the same year, see P.C., 11, fol. 205. The returns for the gabelles on wine and meat are reported in the same volume on fols. 227 and 278 respectively.

² G. Canestrini, *La scienza e l'arte di stato* (Florence, 1862), pp. 122-5.

³ For a model for such a type of provision, see Provv., 72, fol. 1614; Lib. Fab., 41, fol. 116 (21 October 1383) and Provv., 80, fol. 197; Lib. Fab., 43, fol. 232 (15 December 1391). The reason given by the Signory for the enactment of such measures is that the lands of the *contado* are not sufficiently cultivated. The greater incidence of such provisions occur over the late Trecento and early Quattrocento.

MARVIN B. BECKER

more unpropitious moment. Likewise, it is not possible to ascertain with exactitude the effects of the republic's stern programme on long-range rural developments; but when we note that Florence's intake from the *contado* reached the staggering sum of 150,000 florins in 1405, and when we observe that in succeeding years new assessments were levied on the countryside with monotonous frequency, we can suggest that the fiscal demands of the city hardly stimulated the vigour of the rural economy. Furthermore, in the 1420s numerous *prestanze* were being collected from the environs and districts of the city. It goes without saying that the bulk of the revenue from the *contado*, some eighty to ninety per cent of the total, was assigned to the treasurers of the various *Monti* for payment of interest to communal creditors.¹

This Spartan régime, in its search for money, was acting to integrate rural territories into a political complex that can perhaps be best described as a Renaissance state. So different was this type of régime from its medieval predecessor of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, that while terms like 'republic' or 'commune' might continue to be employed to describe the Florentine political configuration by men from the thirteenth through the fifteenth century, the fact was that the entity described in the later period differed markedly from that of the earlier time. The lax and easy government of the Middle Ages had receded, and in its stead emerged a strict, almost exploitative type of régime. By the fifteenth century the term 'commune' no longer signified a government characterized by a relaxed rule over its rural domains. Instead the government was anxious to garner substantial tribute from the countryside. In time of peace this revenue could be disbursed to the republic's creditors, while in time of war it could be employed for the hire of mercenaries. The *laissez-faire* rule of a medieval commune was replaced by the strict rule of a Renaissance territorial state, and this change was dictated, at least in part, by the pressing economic exigencies of the world of the late Trecento and early Quattrocento.

We have seen that the stringent control of subject cities began in the second half of the Trecento, and that this development paralleled the emergence of the republic's sterner policy for the *contado*. Florentine officials were being appointed by the Signory to oversee the collection of gabelles in certain districts. By the 1360s and 1370s, direct payment of taxes collected by subject cities were being made into the Florentine treasury. These returns were then utilized either to hire troops or to pay interest to communal creditors.²

¹ Cf. P.C., 34, fol. 154; P.C., 35, fol. 141.

² Cf. C.C.E., 135-53.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

Florence won much territory during the second half of the Trecento and the early Quattrocento; prizes such as Volterra, Arezzo, Pisa, Cortona, and finally, Livorno were attained. Pisa, conquered in 1406, is the city for which the most abundant treasury records survive and therefore it can be used as a test case. Almost immediately after occupying the territory of her neighbour, the Florentine Signory established a special section of the *Camera* to be expressly devoted to handling Pisan fiscal affairs. In 1407 an itemized account of the income of Pisa was drawn up by the officials of the Florentine *Camera*. All gabelles of the subject city were turned over to her conqueror. By 1408 the Florentines were making a substantial profit on the Pisan tax intake. The *Entrata* of the treasury exceeded the *Uscita* by approximately 200,000 lire.¹ It is not possible to make long-range assessments of the fiscal advantage won by the Florentines as a result of their domination of Pisa, but certainly during the early years the conquest was not unprofitable. Beginning in 1414, special military levies were placed on Pisa, and they amounted to between 33,000 and 56,000 florins a year. In addition, an *estimo* of thirty soldi per lira, rather high by Florentine standards, was levied on the Pisan *contado*. Further, a tax was placed on Pisan grain. The major part of all this revenue was diverted to the *Monte* and used for restitution to communal creditors. In 1428 Pisa, in the company of so many other Florentine subject cities, was made liable for the *Catasto*.²

A comparable but less amply documented history can be narrated for such prize Florentine possessions as Arezzo, Cortona, and Volterra. These places also rendered their income from customs and the gabelles on wine, salt, meat, and contracts to Florentine treasury officials. The greater part of these monies were employed for the usual purposes, either the hire of mercenaries or for supporting interest payments on the *Monte*. While figures are scattered and records discontinuous, it would seem that the *Entrata* of these towns did exceed the expense of administration and defence, and therefore Florence, at least during the early Trecento, did realize a profit. In addition, there were the numerous special levies placed on the subject cities; in the case of Cortona, such a levy was often in excess of that commune's total *Entrata* for a given year. Prato was a special case, and as early as 1420 was being assessed extraordinary taxes by the officials of the *Monte*. Very soon all income from

¹ P.C., 22, fols. 181-96.

² G. Canestrini, *op. cit.*, pp. 127 ff. On diversion of revenues from Pisa into the hands of the treasurers of the *Monte*, see P.C., 38, fols. 168 ff.

MARVIN B. BECKER

gabelles collected by Livorno were placed at the disposition of these Florentine officials.¹

There were of course the numerous levies upon lesser places and more remote rural regions. During the course of the 1380s, these imposts were increased by some seventy per cent, and the added intake was to be utilized for defence. Beginning with 1393 there was a further increment in these imposts when they were boosted from approximately 18,000 florins to 28,000 florins. Further, these same communities were subject to heavy fines if they did not comply with Florentine regulations.²

IV

With the establishment of the *Catasto* in 1427 certain problems in communal finance were altered. The treasury records indicate that from the date of its establishment until 1431, this direct tax was exacted some thirty-three times, and while several of these exactions were not for the full value of individual assessments, still in a single year, 1429, the republic realized about 170,000 florins in revenue from this source. The following year the intake was well above 400,000 florins and in 1431 it totalled more than 700,000 florins. That the government could rely upon such a substantial income did not, however, relieve the tax payers from the obligation of paying *prestanze*. In 1431 these forced loans amounted to close to 600,000 florins.³ This meant that the indebtedness of the *Monte* continued to increase despite the imposition of direct taxes. Nor was the total indebtedness of the commune to diminish over the balance of the Quattrocento, for the Signory was to impose regularly special *prestanze*, sometimes at twelve per cent interest, which were in fact short-term war loans. The difference perhaps between the credit structure of the early Quattrocento and that of the later years stems from the sharp decline in communal income from gabelles. In the years covered by the present study, income from indirect taxes remained vigorous, and served to shore up public confidence in the fiscal reliability of the state. The discussions of the advisory councils to the Signory in the late Quattrocento suggest a precipitous decline in public

¹ P.C., 27, fol. 311r (1419); P.C., 28, fol. 375 (1420); P.C., 29, fols. 332-413 (1424); P.C., 30, fol. 259 (1426).

² P.C., 8, fols. 374-8; P.C., 9, fols. 375-89r.

³ Cf. 'Ritratto dei Catasti', P.C., 34, fols. 303-66. Many of the *catasti* imposed were for a fraction of the total evaluation of citizen patrimonies. Cf. P.C., 32, fols. 332-38 for revenues from the *catasti* of 1429. For the year 1330, see P.C., 33, fols. 332-78. For a summary of *prestanze* levied in the year 1431, see P.C., 31, fols. 202-24.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

trust.¹ The fact was that the *Monte* had become inflated at a time when communal income was reaching its nadir.

It is worthy of note that the interval treated in this study coincides with the era alleged to be the apogee of civic humanism. Certainly any discussion of this intellectual movement must take into account those economic factors that encouraged the growth of empire, transformed relations between city and *contado*, and finally, bound the destinies of the affluent to the public fisc through the institution of the *Monte*. It was at exactly this time that Florence's chancellor, Leonardo Bruni, asserted the positive value of wealth, averring that it is to the city as blood is to the individual. A little later, another chancellor and an equally eminent humanist, Poggio Bracciolini, was to extol trade and commerce because it was only through these vital activities that cities gained the wealth that made possible their splendour, beauty, and art.² These men, deeply civic-minded, were not speaking in a vacuum, but rather were responding to the exigencies of their times. The nexus between private wealth and civic well-being was apparent, and perhaps it would be fair to say that a new economy had emerged which was now dependent upon government spending and government credit. Under the sway of this new economic system affluent citizens had become the major shareholders of a giant corporation that might be termed the 'Renaissance state'. This entity had come into being in the early Quattrocento, and while it was not until 1470 that a piece of Florentine legislation spoke of the *Monte* as 'the heart of this body which we call city', and argued that 'every limb, large and small, must contribute to preserving the whole body: as the guardian fortress, immovable rock and secure strength of the salvation of the whole body and government of our state', this was but a much delayed recognition of the most imposing of Florentine institutions.³ In fact, exactly the same statement could have been made two generations earlier.

V

Some inferences should be ventured as to the implications of this

¹ Cons. Prat., 61, especially fols. 51-98.

² Garin, *L'umanesimo italiano*, pp. 59-60; Baron, 'Franciscan poverty and civic wealth as factors in the rise of humanistic thought', *Speculum*, vol. XIII (1938), pp. 16 ff.; R. Roedel, 'Poggio Bracciolini nel quinto centenario della morte', *Rinascimento*, XI (1960), pp. 51-67.

³ '... il cuore di questo nostro corpo, che si chiama città . . . ogni membro piccholo et grande contribuischa quanto commodamento ciaschuno può alla conservazione di tutto il corpo: come presidi et roccha firmissima et stabilimento certo della salvazione di tutto il corpo et governo di stato nostro.' Quoted, in English translation, by Marks in his 'The financial oligarchy under Lorenzo', op. cit., p. 127.

MARVIN B. BECKER

transformation of the medieval polis into the Renaissance territorial state.¹ If one argues that the shifting of what Marc Bloch called 'the ties of obligation' precede and encourage the 'transvaluation' of the consciousness of one's identity, then the citizen of the new Renaissance state was responding to very different imperatives than his forebears of the medieval commune. In the medieval commune, this sense of identity had essentially its place in the asymmetrical combination of private loyalties and multiple allegiances to quasi-public bodies such as gild, religious confraternity, and *Parte Guelfa*. It was laced with civic pride and patriotism. Neither communal art nor public rhetoric sought to coerce the citizen into constricting his loyalties or focusing these vague sentiments. Instead there was the easy, happy belief that these loyalties and emotions were somehow compatible, and in the end would further the well-being of the commune. Admonition and exhortation framed to effect the spiritual regeneration of the citizen were the hallmarks of the communal *paideia*. The demands of the city and the requirements of citizenship were minimal, and thus the calls for public sacrifice were modest. The rule of law was gentle, marked as it was by extreme solicitude for the well-being of the noble and the burgher patrician. Judicial dispensation, remission, and pardon were the order of the day. The incidence of taxation both on city and *contado* was light, and the loan of a few thousand florins from gild or *Parte Guelfa* might sustain the public fisc.

Giovanni Villani and his contemporaries of the first part of the Trecento were spokesmen for the rule of law only in a theoretical sense. They would extol the advantages of strong government and yet condemn a particular régime for infringing upon the ancient liberties of the church or the time-honoured rights of the nobility. Further, they would denounce communal magistrates as 'tyrants'; upon closer inspection, however, these 'tyrants' can be shown merely to have engaged in the enforcement of statutes prohibiting the carrying of deadly weapons or the smuggling of salt and grain.²

¹ Perhaps this quotation from the writings of Eric Voegelin can serve as an introduction to these inferences: 'Human society is not merely a fact, or an event, in the external world to be studied by an observer like a natural phenomenon. Though it has externality as one of its important components, it is as a whole a little world, a cosmos, illuminated with meaning from within by the human beings who continuously create and bear it as the mode and condition of their self-realization.' (*Philosophy of the Social Sciences: A Reader*, ed. M. Natanson (New York, 1963), p. 3.)

² See G. Villani, *Cronica*, vol. XI, 16, 39, where he contends that the law should be enforced and then assails the régime for *uficiali arbitrari*. In point of fact these magistrates searched for arms, ousted the banished from the Florentine *contado* and attempted to control street brawling. Cf. C.C.E., 1 *bis*, fols. 37 ff., for a record of the pedestrian activities of these law-enforcement officers. Cf. also Stefani, *Cronica fiorentina*, rub. 505.

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

Beginning in the mid-Trecento, however, a new and sterner régime emerged, and with it the gentler *paideia* receded. Now chroniclers extolled, both in fact and in theory, the sway of communal law. No exceptions were to be made for nobility or clergy.¹ Moreover, coupled with the mounting demands of law we witness the intensification of the incidence of fiscal burdens upon the citizenry. To those concerned with the problem of the culture of this polis there looms the challenge of a paradox. The nascent civic humanism defined by Hans Baron and Eugenio Garin is as much a description of the realities of civic life as it is of the myth of the polis. Bearing this paradox in mind it may be that certain ambiguities of civic experience can be more clearly comprehended. Thus, with the burgeoning of the territorial state and closer supervision of public life the republic came to require hundreds of additional civil servants. While the literature and the art of the period proclaim the glories of serving the state, the records of the Florentine treasury disclose that thousands of ordinary citizens preferred to pay the substantial fine of twenty-five lire rather than assume the responsibility of public office. Similarly, many office-holders made sizable payments into the *Camera* for absenting themselves from key posts over extended intervals. An identical situation occurred in the councils of the republic, where dozens of elected members were regularly fined for failure to attend sessions.² If the expanding polis required citizen talent and participation, it had still greater need for citizen revenue. Again we observe the same ambiguity: on the one hand protestations of civic generosity were intoned, while on the other, literally thousands of petitions were received by the Signory requesting a substantial reduction in an individual's tax contribution.³

It would seem that the new *paideia* is as much a product of the reality as of the myth. Students of domestic chronicles, manner books and

¹ Cf. Becker, 'An essay on the "novi cives"' cit., pp. 59-82. It should also be observed that with the closing years of the Trecento, the state became increasingly capable of offering protection to the citizenry. Therefore the Signory received fewer and fewer petitions from individuals requesting the right to bear arms because of long-standing family feuds and vendettas.

² The number grew especially formidable during the 1380s. Cf. C.C.E., 210 ff. Yet concern for political reputation and pride of office are absent from none of the major chroniclers: Iacopo Salviati, Giovanni di Paolo Morelli, Buonaccorso Pitti, Stefani, etc.

³ Again we observe that during the 1380s, while requests for preferential treatment in matters of taxation increased markedly, so too do the number of bequests to the republic as well as the number of state funerals. Payments are now made to the state 'pro honorando corpus' by patriotic relatives. For an early notation in the treasury records of such a payment, see C.C.E., 223 (27 March 1384). There is also a notable augmentation in the number of individuals receiving state pensions commencing in the 1370s. Finally, there is a substantial jump in the number of patents of knighthood conferred upon 'honourable citizens' by a grateful republic.

MARVIN B. BECKER

diaries are struck by the persistent ambiguity of civic sentiment. The self-same writer who composes a panegyric on his beloved native city, also concocts ingenious recipes for defrauding the treasury of the republic. Indeed, one discovers an inordinate number of stratagems designed to minimize civic responsibility. And yet because the power of the state looms ever more formidable, the sterner *paideia* achieves momentum. This more impersonal *paideia* voices the exigencies of the state. It will become a persistent element of civic life, not by virtue of bland acceptance, but rather by dint of the intense conflict it provokes in the Florentine mentality. The same diarist who advises his progeny to shun public life will laud the value of high office only a few pages later. That chronicler most critical of the Signory's fiscal policy will be the warmest advocate of continuing the costly war against Milan.¹

Myth and reality had blended, and while one could not be substituted for the other, each would lose meaning without its counterpart. Art and literature ministered to that twilight zone where ideal and real converged. It was in the area of this ambiguity that civic rhetoric gained cogency and the civic humanists acquired an audience. Patriot and egoist, the Florentine citizen desired to believe in the durability of the polis. His patrimony, the dowry of his daughters, and thus his progeny were hostages to the well-being of the state. Exactly at this time emerges the first great profusion of civic monumental art since the times of ancient Greece and Rome.²

Some impressionistic fragments of evidence and a sceptical disclaimer might serve as a conclusion. First, the merchant diarist Giovanni di Paolo Morelli, looking back from the vantage point of the late Trecento upon the feuds of almost a century ago, observes that today, instead of having recourse to the sword, the citizen has recourse to the ballot.³ This awareness of the rule of law deepened into Leonardo Bruni's self-conscious articulation of constitutionalism. His preference for popular régimes, which the Greeks called 'democratic', was stated upon the conviction that only this type of government could safeguard 'liberty and equality' before the law: 'All our [Florentine] laws aim only for this,

¹ Giovanni di Pagolo Morelli, *Ricordi*, ed. V. Branca (Florence, 1956), pp. 317, 333-4. (I wish to thank Professor Anthony Molho for calling my attention to this citation.) Cf. Leonardo Bruni, *Difesa contra i reprensori del popolo fiorentino nella impresa di Lucca*, ed. P. Guerra (Lucca, 1864), p. 27.

² The literature on this subject is of course vast. In addition to H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton, 1957), see G. Fasola, 'La nuova spazialità', *Leonardo: Saggi e Ricerche* (Rome, 1954), pp. 293-311.

³ *Ricordi cit.*, p. 131. In ancient times men used to build 'torri alte and grosse' and wage war with crossbows: 'e' s'usava allora di nimirarsi più colla spada in mano che colle fave, come si fa al di d'oggi . . .' (pp. 130-1).

THE FLORENTINE TERRITORIAL STATE

that the citizen may be equal because true liberty has its roots in equality.¹

The citizen must live the *vita civile*, responding always to the imperatives of the collectivity. What more impressive tribute to the *paideia* of this new polis can be offered than the fresco of the Trinity painted in c. 1425 by Masaccio in the church of Santa Maria Novella. At the foot of this mural is the tomb of the Lenzi family. A Lenzi had recently been elected to the highest civil office in the republic (*Gonfaloniere di Giustizia*); Masaccio probably commemorated him, clad in the red robes of this office, as the donor. Thus does the earthly city meet the heavenly city.²

While Masaccio portrayed Lenzi as an exemplar of the *vita civile*, and the sculptor Bernardo Rossellino placed a carving of Bruni's *History* of his beloved adopted city on the statesman's tomb, there would be some who, while acknowledging the triumph of law and equality, secretly grieved for a lost world of lawlessness and vitality. Not the least of these was Machiavelli, whose *History of Florence* set forth the following remarkable, and neglected, thesis that the triumph of equality and the rule of the magistrates began in the mid-Trecento. The price for the exaltation of civil authority was high: 'And thus Florence lost the generosity of her character and her distinction in arms.'³

¹ E. Garin, 'I cancellieri umanisti della repubblica fiorentina da Coluccio Salutati a Bartolomeo Scala', *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, vol. LXXI (1959), p. 200.

² E. Borsook, *The Mural Painters of Tuscany from Cimabue to Andrea del Sarto* (London, 1960), pp. 143-4.

³ N. Machiavelli, *Istorie fiorentine*, vol. II, 42. Quoted from Machiavelli, *History of Florence* (New York, 1960), p. 107. Cf. also vol. III, 1; *ibid.*, p. 111.

V

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY: THE EVOLUTION OF TARIFFS AND PROBLEMS OF COLLECTION¹

The fourteenth century witnessed the appearance of new fiscal institutions throughout Western Europe. A nascent bureaucracy, soon to make increasing demands on food supplies, building works, and above all protracted, and at times permanent, wars, fought by paid soldiers, entailed as many heads of budgetary expenditure, in part unprecedented, and as many supplementary charges, sometimes enormous. New demands created the need for new resources. At first, the great states of the West tried to find them through a more efficient administration of their domain; but this was a palliative, further compromised by the incoherence of princely policies. The alternative was to fall back on resources characterized as extraordinary, as indeed they were, when invoked only in time of exceptional difficulties. Where such difficulties recurred or became chronic, these extraordinary resources became institutionalized. They were loans, indirect taxes, and, above all, direct taxes, levied usually by hearths. In Italy, the problem confronting the communes was different, and presented itself at an earlier date, since they had only a very restricted domain. From the end of the twelfth century, the towns were obliged to institute a fiscal régime similar to that which the great monarchies would know only in the fourteenth century. At first the system was based on direct taxation; until the middle of the thirteenth century a hearth tax, thereafter the

¹ Where no indication is given to the contrary all the unprinted sources cited in this article are preserved in the Archivio di Stato, Florence.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

estimo (based on an assessment of revenue). But in the second half of the thirteenth century, when the communes faced unusually heavy expenditure, soon very much in excess of the norm, this tax proved inadequate. Recourse was had to borrowing; but loans had to be reimbursed or the interest on them paid. There remained indirect taxation. The end of the thirteenth century and the whole of the fourteenth is characterized in Italy by the appearance in all the cities of a fully-fledged and workable system of indirect taxation. Monopolies (salt), taxes on transactions, gate tolls, they soon frequently occupy first place among the receipts, as for example at Venice, Siena, Reggio Emilia, Milan, and at Genoa and Pisa.¹ Florence is no exception to the general rule.

Thanks to the work of B. Barbadoro, it is now established that at Florence, as elsewhere, the budget was considerably swollen during the first half of the fourteenth century, because of the exceptional expenditure demanded by food supplies, urbanization and above all by wars. Thus we learn from Barbadoro that in 1317 the budget amounted to 395,373 lire (the maximum for the years 1316–18) and in 1325 to about 875,000 lire (but this figure is exceptional); according to Giovanni Villani, between 1336 and 1338 the budget was stationary at about 930,000 lire; after 1345 there was added to it each year the 77,000 or so lire paid as interest on the public debt, from now on consolidated.²

This budgetary inflation continued after 1348–50; as before, supplies³ and military activities⁴ often still form the principal heads of

¹ For fiscal problems in Italy during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see G. Luzzatto, *Storia economica d'Italia, Il Medioevo* (Florence, 1963), pp. 254–303, and the author's bibliography. On the rôle of gabelles see: for Venice, G. Luzzatto, *Storia economica di Venezia* (Venice, 1961), p. 113; for Genoa, R. di Tucci, 'Le imposte sul commercio genovese durante la gestione del Banco S. Giorgio', *Giornale storico e letterario della Liguria*, n.s., vol. VI (1930), pp. 25–58; for Milan, *Storia di Milano*, Fondazione Treccani, vol. VI (Milan, 1955), pp. 500–2; for Pisa, D. Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance* (New Haven, 1958), pp. 80–9; for Siena and S. Gimignano, Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXVII (1959), pp. 451 ff. and p. 448, n. 99; for Reggio Emilia, G. L. Basini, 'Note sulle pubbliche finanze di Reggio Emilia nell'epoca comunale (1306–26)', *Nuova Rivista Storica*, vol. XLVII (1963), pp. 460 ff.

² Barbadoro, *Finanze della Repubblica fiorentina* (Florence, 1929), pp. 515–622, 649. The figures for 1325 and 1336–38 are given in florins, G. Villani, *Cronica*, IX, 324, and XI, 92, i.e. 250,000 florins (1325) and 300,000 florins (1338). For greater ease in comparison I have converted the florins into lire, on the basis of 65 soldi to the florin in 1325 (equivalences for the florin given in the course of this article, where unsupported by references, will be justified in a forthcoming work), 62 soldi in 1338 (G. Villani, XI, 93). Interest on the consolidated debt amounts in February 1345 to 2074 florins a month, that is 24,888 florins a year, Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 649; value of the florin = 62 soldi (G. Villani, XII, 53, October 1345).

³ For expenditure on supplies see the examples collected by Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', pp. 476–7. For the heavy expenditure in 1375, the author of the *Cronichetta d'incerto* (ed. D. M. Manni, *Cronichette antiche di vari scrittori . . .*, Florence, 1733, p. 277) offers the figure of 150,000 florins.

⁴ After 1348, quite apart from the threat represented by the Companies, the com-

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

expenditure, looming larger than ever, but these items are now joined by others: for example, the systematic erection of fortifications in the *contado* and the payment of salaries to the employees of a proliferating bureaucracy.¹

The list of receipts to balance this budget is not over-long. Returns from the direct tax (*estimo*) are mediocre; no longer levied on citizens after 1315, after 1350 its yield in the *contado* starts to stagnate or even decline.² True, there are a number of other receipts, chief among them revenues from the confiscated goods of criminals, from fines and pecuniary penalties and from letting charges on communal properties (shops, etc.); but their yield of about 30,000 florins is meagre, and even when the receipts from the *estimo* are added (30,000 florins), in 1338 the total only just exceeds the figure for the commune's ordinary expenditure, estimated by Villani at 40,000 florins.³

There remained borrowing: the forced loan (*prestanza*), and the voluntary loan, which was consolidated in 1345 (registered at the *Monte*) and was bearing interest. From the beginning of the century recourse to borrowing was the commune's favourite expedient, prized for its flexibility and quick results, indispensable features in times of emergency, dearth, or war. Growing year by year, by the 1370s the consolidated and floating debt had reached sizeable proportions.⁴

munne was obliged to conduct four sizable wars: against Milan (1351-53 and 1369-1370), against Pisa (1362-64), and lastly against the Pope (1375-78). Each of them demanded a large-scale financial effort. For the war 1369-70 see below, n. 4. For the war of 1375-78, known as the *Otto Santi*, Stefani estimates the total cost at 2,243,000 florins. M. di Coppo Stefani, *Cronaca, R.I.S.*, vol. XXX, part 1, rub. 795.

¹ Construction of fortifications in the *contado*: between 1363 and 1371 at least 40 villages were provided with new or reinforced fortifications, Provv., L to LIX, *passim*; the reason is given Provv., LIX, 79 v, August 1371: 'utile fore propter continuationem guerrarum habere castra et fortilitias in quampluribus partibus comitatus et districtus florentie'. Ramifying bureaucracy: see, for example, I. Origo, *The Merchant of Prato* (London, 1957), p. 201. High salaries: Stefani, rub. 728, 'di notai negli ufici si pagavano troppo ingordamente', May 1371. At some time before 1370 the *famiglia* of the Priors obtained an increase in their pay, which is extended in June and October of that year and in June 1371: Provv., LVIII, 31, LIX, 46, 146.

² In 1338 the *estimo* brings in 30,000 florins, that is 93,300 lire (florin = 62 soldi); at this date the tax was at the rate of ten soldi for every lira (that is tax-payers were liable each year for half the amount for which they were registered on the tax rolls, thus ten soldi for each lira of 20 soldi). During five half-yearly periods spread over the years 1354 to 1358 the *estimo* brings in 268,489 lire, an annual average of 107,396 lire. Its rate, however, during at least one of these semesters was at 25 soldi for each lira, and on two occasions other taxes were collected at the same time. During five later semesters, strung out between 1369 and 1375, the *estimo*, although regularly augmented by sundry other taxes (*macello* from the *contado*, casked wine) brings in only 197,887 lire, that is 79,154 lire a year. G. Villani, XI, 92 (1338); Appelli, 1867, I, 51, IV, n.p.; 1868, VII, 4-4v, 22, 31 (*estimo* 1354-58); 1873, V, 97; 1872, VI, 27; 1873, III, 21, V, 36, 54, 97 (*estimo* for 1369-75).

³ R. Davidsohn, *Storia di Firenze* (Florence, 1956 ff.), vol. V, pp. 211-13. G. Villani, XI, 92, 93.

⁴ For borrowings (*prestanze*) before 1345, see Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 515-628. Re-

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

But it was still only an expedient. *Prestanze* had to be reimbursed; interest on *Monti*, steadily increasing, had to be paid. Barbadoro has shown that in fact the foundation of the commune's finances, whether as permitting payment of its creditors, or, in more general fashion, through direct allocation to the various budgetary heads of expenditure, was provided by indirect taxes or gabelles.

The rôle of the gabelles, which Barbadoro traced down to 1345,

course to *prestanze* did not cease after this date and occurs on a large scale at moments of crisis: seventeen are recorded in 1369-71, sixteen in 1375-78; in 1375-78 *prestanze* bring in 570,000 florins, cf. G. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society* (Princeton, 1962), p. 196, n. 8 and 9, p. 315. The purposes to which the loans are applied — chiefly military expenditure and grain supplies — account for their proliferation. In 1369-71, 41 per cent of the *known* receipts from *prestanze* from the S. Spirito quarter (42,900 florins, 7 *prestanze*) are paid into the *Abbondanza*. Conversely, from 1 August 1374 to 1 August 1375, *prestanze* supply this office with 49 per cent (first six months) and 41 per cent (last six months) of its budget. Appelli, 1872, I, 4 and 8; 1873, I, *passim.*, VIII, 7 and 49. The consolidated debt (*Monte*): for its creation in 1345 see Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 629-84. The *Monte* shows no signs of diminishing: in 1375-77 the principal heads of expenditure in its budget are as follows. 'Dono e interesse de danari depositati nel monte dell'uno tre e nel monte dell'uno due e nel monte libero del comune di Firenze, e a più persone per i stanciamenti facti per l'ufficiali dela diminutione del monte . . . e pagato a più persone in più di per la diminutione del monte libero' (Appelli, 1874, n.p.). Add to this: (i) reimbursement of certain *prestanze* and payment of interest on them — in May-November 1375, the treasurer of the *Monte* had to 'rendere il denaio per libra (payment of interest at 5 per cent), rendere l'interesse della sexta decima *prestanza*, e rendere la decinovesima e ventunesima' (Appelli, 1873, VIII, 32-32v); (ii) advances made to other funds — in December 1368, this same treasurer is ordered to pay out the money he has in hand 'in capsa conducte stipendiarium', for the purchase of corn, Provv., LVI, 107v.

The evolution of the *Monte* budget is thus as follows:

REFERENCE	DATE	PERIOD OF OFFICE	GROSS BUDGET	VALUE OF FLORIN	BUDGET IN FLORINS (to nearest florin)
Appelli, 1867, IV, 40v	Nov. 1354- Nov. 1355	1 year	19,728 fl. 31 s. f.p.		19,728 fl.
Ibid. 1868, VII, 90	Nov. 1356- Nov. 1357	1 year	18,890 fl.		18,890 fl.
1871, V, n.p.	6 Jan.- 17 Nov. 1365	10 months 11 days	98,706 fl. 2,733 l. 13 s. f.p.	66 s.	99,531 fl.
1874 n.p.,	18 Nov. 1376- 17 Nov. 1377	1 year	12,842 fl. 866,881 l.	72 s.	252,922 fl.

In twenty years, the budget of the *Monte* has multiplied by 13, despite a partial bankruptcy of 16 per cent in 1364, cf. Davidsohn, *Storia*, vol. V, p. 235.

On 21 October 1378, the consolidated debt stood at 2,361,802 florins, G. Brucker, 'Un documento fiorentino sulla guerra, sulla finanza e sull' amministrazione pubblica', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXV (1957), p. 169, n. 20. Hence the remark of Stefani at this date, 'il comune non poteva sodisfare alle spese dei soldati ed al Monte', *Cronaca*, rub. 883.

starts to emerge at the end of the thirteenth century, but becomes especially clear-cut after the suppression of the urban *estimo* in 1315.¹ From that date the greater part of the city's expenditure is always covered by gabelles. Indirectly, they act as security for loans. They are also applied directly: the treasurers of the various gabelles are frequently invited to pay the product directly into the various accounts—for mercenaries, for war, for the grain supply (*abbondanza*), for urban works, etc.² In 1338 the gabelles account for eighty per cent of the entries.³

After 1350 the gabelles continue to play a prime rôle in the commune's finances; as before, they are often, so far as we can see, applied directly to certain essential heads of expenditure: food supply,⁴ setting

¹ There is no fundamental work in existence on the gabelles at Florence; an old book by G. Canestrini, *La Scienza e l'arte di Stato*, I (Florence, 1862), has nothing on the gabelles; the most numerous references to them are to be found in Barbadoro's *Finanze*. For the beginning of the century in particular see Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV (Berlin, 1908), pp. 303-7, and his *Storia*, vol. V, pp. 214-24. There a few observations in Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', pp. 447-59. M. Becker, in his 'Florentine popular government', *Proceedings of the American Philos. Soc.*, vol. CVI (1962), pp. 361-5, gives an account of the gabelles from 1343-48, supported by figures; lastly A. Saponi has studied 'La Gabella delle porte di Firenze 1361 e 1364', *Miscellanea in onore di Roberto Cessi* (Rome, 1958), vol. I, pp. 321-48, a study followed up in his *Lezioni di Storia economica* (Milan, 1960), pp. 167-201. On the various aspects of the gabelles paid by the guilds, see Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, pp. 355-7, and the same author's *Entwicklung und Organisation der florentiner Zünfte im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1897), pp. 26 ff., 106 ff. Indirect taxes became established in the Tuscan communes about the year 1270, Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', p. 447. G. Villani remarks that down to 1293 'era tanto il tranquillo stato . . . che di notte non si serravano le porte alla città, nè avea gabelle in Firenze'; VIII, 2.

² For gabelles before 1345, see Barbadoro, *Finanze, passim*. Examples of gabelles assigned to the repayment of loans before the year 1315 are given in Barbadoro, *Consigli della Repubblica fiorentina*, vol. I, p. 204 (April 1305), p. 293 (Oct. 1306), etc.; for the period after 1315 and down to 1345, in Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 523-67 *passim* (1315, 1321, 1326, 1328, 1329 etc.). Examples of gabelles directly assigned: (i) to the payment of mercenaries: for the earliest example (1305), *ibid.*, p. 507 and for others *passim* (1321, 1327, 1331, etc.). A rubric from the Statutes of the Captain of 1322-25 gives a list of gabelles provisionally assigned 'usque ad kalendas januarii proxime secuturas' 'in solutionibus stipendarum'. All the great gabelles are mentioned: gate, wine sold retail, contracts, together with fourteen others, *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo* (1322-25), V, 137, ed. R. Caggese (Florence, 1910), pp. 340-1; (ii) to the conduct of a war: the *Dieci*, who were financially responsible for the Lombard war, were assigned, in July 1336, the gate gabelle, in October the salt gabelle, and in December the gabelle on wine sold retail, Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 574; (iii) to purchasing grain (*Abbondanza*): numerous examples for 1334 in Provv. XXVII, *passim*; for 1343-44, Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 636, 29 December, Provv., XXXII, 140, 3 March, Capitoli, XVIII, 7v, 4 August; (iv) to urban works, G. Villani, XI, 67.

³ Figure calculated following G. Villani, XI, 92.

⁴ Examples of payments made by the treasurers of the various gabelles to officials in charge of the grain supply (*sopra l'abbondanza del grano*) between 1343 and 1353: from the gabelle on wine 'quod reponitur in comitatu': 14,000 lire out of the 26,100 collected between 1 December 1347 and 30 September 1348 (53.6 per cent), Appelli, 1822, VI, 65; from the gabelle on livestock sold at Florence and in the *pieve* S. Giovanni: 1867 florins out of the 2908 collected from 12 June 1346 to 11 June 1348 (64.2 per cent), Appelli, *loc. cit.*, 70v; from the gabelle on slaughter of livestock (*macello*): the entire proceeds for the year starting 10 August 1353 are handed over 'ut pecunia pro grano et blado habeatur', Provv., XL, 142, Appelli 1367, I, 11v, 13.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

the *contado* on a defensive footing,¹ payment of mercenaries.² They are used, as before, for the repayment of *prestanze*³ and also and above all for paying interest on the public debt, once it is consolidated. Tables I and II show that after 1350 a growing percentage of receipts from the gate gabelle and the gabelle on wine sold retail was being regularly paid into the *Monte*. After 1370 this percentage consistently reaches and exceeds 50 per cent in the case of the gate gabelle, 80 per cent in that of the gabelle on retail wine. Conversely, the gabelles played a preponderant rôle in the budget of the *Monte*, judging from a few examples: they account for 98 per cent of its budget in 1355 (gate gabelle)⁴ and for 82 per cent of it in 1365 (retail wine, 20 per cent, gate gabelle, 45 per cent, salt, 12 per cent);⁵ the proportion for 1377, although unknown, was certainly considerable, since the receipts of the *Monte* include payments from the gabelle on wine sold retail, from the gate gabelles, from salt and from the *macello* (on butcher's meat).⁶ In the global receipts of the commune, the rôle of direct taxation steadily diminishes in proportion to that of the gabelles: in 1338 the yield from the *estimo* amounts to one third (33 per cent) of that from the gate gabelle; in 1354-8 it accounts for no more than 30 per cent; between 1369 and 1375 it sinks to less than 20 per cent.⁷ When new resources,

¹ In 1353-56, for example, the office of the *Castella* receives several payments from the gabelle on wine *a minuto*: (i) August 1353-February 1354 (no figures); (ii) March-August 1354, 5221 lire, 49 per cent of the budget for this office (12,763 lire 16 sol.); (iii) November 1355-February 1356 (no figures), Appelli, 1867, III, n.p., IV, 73v.

² On this, from 1342, cf. Becker, 'Florentine popular government', p. 363.

³ 1363, December 20: assignment of the gate gabelle to the creditors of the commune on account of two *prestanze* levied in June and August 1362, Provv., LI, 87; 1372, 1 April: assignment of gate gabelles, salt gabelle and the proceeds of the *estimo* to the repayment of a loan of 80,000 florins, Provv., LX, 1.

The gabelles also go to fill the coffers of the officials charged with repayment of the *Sega*, a loan levied at Florence on several occasions between 1352 and 1355. From November 1352 to April 1353, the coffers of the 'carmarlingho . . . sopra rendere le paghe de la Segha' subsist entirely on the gabelle on retail wine (14,400 fl.) and the gate gabelle (7200 fl.), and again from November 1353 to April 1354; between April 1355 and May 1357 they are partially sustained by the gate gabelle: Appelli, 1867, IV, 21v-23; 1869, VII, 22.

⁴ Thirteen payments of 1500 florins, that is 19,500 florins out of 19,728, Appelli, 1867, IV, 40v.

⁵ 98,706 florins, 2733 lire, 13 soldi made up of 12,397 florins 2 lire 19 soldi from the salt gabelle, 46,500 florins from the gate gabelle, and 29,500 florins from the gabelle on wine sold retail, Appelli, 1871, V, n.p.

⁶ Appelli, 1874, n.p.

⁷ 1338: gate gabelle, 90,000 florins, Provv., XXVIII, 110, G. Villani, XI, 92; *estimo* (10 s./lira), 30,000 fl., G. Villani, loc. cit. 1354-58: gate gabelle (+ *macello* + *vino* + *farina*), 783,294 lire from five semesters. 1369-75: gate gabelle (no mention of additional taxes), 1,138,399 lire from five semesters. Appelli, 1867, I, 35, 36, IV, n.p.; 1868, IV, 52v-53, VII, 53-53v (gates 1354-1358); 1873, I, 211-15, 143, 154, V, 22, VIII, 20v (gates 1369-75). For the *estimo*, see p. 142, n. 2: the comparison with the gate gabelle is in respect of the same semesters. The comparison between the year 1338 and the period from 1354-58 is not really conclusive, but it is for the periods between

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

temporary or permanent, had to be found for the commune, the advisers of the Signoria always ended by proposing recourse to gabelles.¹ To sum up, in the Florence of the fourteenth century indirect taxes were called on to play an ever-increasing rôle in a budget itself freely expanding.

In the following pages an attempt will be made to analyse the methods employed by the commune to keep the gabelles at a level commensurate with the demands made on them, measures which, as we shall see, consisted essentially in making increases in the tariffs; to discover how these increases compare with the yield brought in by the gabelles; and finally to elucidate, in summary form, the burden these now institutionalized taxes represented to taxpayers on the eve of the Ciampi movement.

The Florentines classed a number of different impositions under the heading of *gabelle*: Villani enumerates some thirty in his celebrated description of Florence, and the list is not complete.² It is nonetheless surprisingly varied and includes some impositions which are really taxes on movable property (gabelles on *pigioni* or rents) or on real property (possessions in the *contado*); it also includes taxes on profits (levied on *feneratores* or pawn-brokers), taxes on the pay and lump sums earned by mercenaries, and fines for simple breaches of the peace (unarmed brawls). The true gabelles group themselves into four categories: what would now be described as stamp duties (on contracts and indictments); taxes falling on food commodities, levied at various stages — thus, when the crop was gathered (wine, sometimes corn and oil), when it was sold wholesale (livestock), when it was processed (milling, flour, slaughtering or *macello*) and when it was sold retail

1354-58 and 1369-75: under the heading 'gate gabelle', the taxes are no more numerous in 1369-75 than in 1354-58; but the *estimo* is regularly tacked on to other impositions, and nevertheless shows both an absolute and a relative diminution in its yield.

¹ Proposals to increase the *estimo* are rare, but examples occur in 4 March 1367 and on 9 May and 4 November 1376, Cons. Prat., VII, 47v, XIV, 42 and 99v. Advice to resort to gabelles: July 1351 (start of the war with Milan), *ibid.*, I, 22-22v; October 1354, *ibid.*, I, 107v; January 1355, *ibid.*, I, 141-3v; 1363, *ibid.*, IV, 44-44v; 1372, *ibid.*, XII, 11v, etc.

² Villani omits: (i) the gabelle on bread '*venalis civitatis et comitatus*' of which there is mention in 1296, Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, IV, p. 306; we hear of it again between 1318 and 1327, Provv., XV, 163, XVI, 117v, XVII, 117, XXIII, 100. In 1327 it had just been increased. Mentioned in 1351, Appelli, 1866, 77; (ii) 'Gabella grani et bladi quod reponitur in comitatu'; (iii) 'gabella olei comitatus', Provv., XXIII, 100 (1327); (iv) the gabelle on *frantoi*, sometimes allied to that on mills and fisheries, collected separately in 1321, Provv., XVII, 117, in 1337-38, Provv., XXIX, 71-3. Villani's account, XI, 92.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

(wine, vegetables and fruit — *trecche* —, weights and measures, market dues); gate tolls; and lastly monopolies (sale of salt). These gabelles in the strict sense, being much the most remunerative, received greater discussion and attention than the rest and underwent greater modification. It is these which form the subject of this study.

There were two simple procedures for increasing the yield from gabelles, and both were employed simultaneously, from the beginning of the century.

From the thirteenth century it was customary to contemplate creation of new gabelles whenever some need presented itself; thus in 1266,¹ and again in 1299, we find the *Pratiche* voting the establishment of *novi proventus*, in other words gabelles;² in 1302 and November 1325 we again hear of *nuove gabelle*.³ Villani's famous list (1338) is merely a statement of the position at the time it was compiled. The years immediately preceding had seen the introduction of some hitherto non-existent taxes: thus in 1336 a tax was instituted on hogs brought into the city; other unspecified taxes were created at the same time and probably added to the gate gabelle;⁴ there is evidence of similar creations in April 1337 and before March 1338.⁵ The following decades witnessed the creation of yet more gabelles; these gabelles, proposed at various times by advisers to the Signoria, as for example in 1354 and 1372,⁶ appear to have been put into effect on several occasions, more particularly in the years before 1355. It is at this period that we first hear of the imposition of a tax on bread made and sold outside Florence, in the *pieve* S. Giovanni, of another on inhabitants of the *borgo* S. Niccolò, outside the walls, to compensate for the gate gabelle,⁷ of yet another on

¹ To pay the German mercenaries, Stefani, *Cronaca*, rub. 135.

² Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 306-7; Provv., IX, 165v-7.

³ Barbadoro, *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 49, 26 March 1302; G. Villani, IX, 324 (1325).

⁴ 25 September 1326: 'de mense [blank] proximo preterito . . . creata fuit *de novo* quedam gabella inter cetera continens quod quilibet qui immitteret in civitatem Florentie aliquem porcum vel troiam non tamen pro vendendo ad macellum vel aliter deberet dare et solvere nomine gabelle ipsi comuni soldos decem spic.', Provv., XXVII, 90. Other taxes added to the gate gabelle: Provv., XXVIII, 158, Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 570 sq.

⁵ 4 March 1338: the six officials 'ad dirigendum redditus et proventus comunis Florentie' will repay loans made to their office by means of gabelles 'tam creaturarum quam etiam que crearentur'. Provv., XXVIII, 37. The *sei* were a special office created 7 February 1338 and forbidden to initiate new gabelles, Provv., XXVIII, 34. The prohibition had thus been lifted in the interval.

⁶ 21 October 1354, Cons. Prat., I, 108, 'quod reponantur gabelle suspense et de novo alie crehentur'; 19 March 1372, *ibid.*, XII, 11v, 'quod graventur comitatini aliqua gabella nova'.

⁷ For the distinction *pieve-città*, cf. E. Fiumi, 'La demografia fiorentina nelle pagine di Giovanni Villani', *A.S.I.*, vol. CVIII (1950), pp. 85-6. Gabelles on bread, . . . from the *borgo* S. Niccolò, Appelli, 1867, IV, n.p., examination of the accounts of Niccolò di Bartolo, 'camerlingho della gabella delle porte'.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

sales of dried meat in the *contado*,¹ and lastly of one on wine *invegetato in città*, 'casked in the city,' on the model of the similar gabelle already being levied in the *contado*.²

However, when we come to examine the yield of these new taxes it is undeniably meagre³, all the more so since on each occasion their imposition appears to have been short-lived. The gabelle on wine *invegetato in città* had a fleeting existence from 1344; but this brief episode ended well before 1347. When the gabelle was revived in 1355 it was for only one year (Nov. 1355–Nov. 1356); a further revival in 1363 probably lasted only ten months (Dec.–Oct. 1364).⁴ In fact these gabelles were merely minor appendages to the great basic gabelles, tacked on to them at critical moments.⁵ For all the great gabelles were already in existence in the fourteenth century.

The Signoria's intention, when it contemplated or instituted gabelles described as 'new', was not so much to tax fresh transactions but rather to boost the revenue brought in by taxes already in existence. If the talk is of 'new gabelles', this is partly because the heavier tax is itself a novelty and also because the decreed increase, whose collection is often entrusted to a specific official or purchaser, in practice figures as an independent gabelle.⁶ In case of need, therefore, the commune's chief resource was in fact to increase the tariff of gabelles already in being.

Throughout the fourteenth century, gabelle tariffs were always rising at Florence; increases were a frequent subject of debate in the

¹ Appelli, 1867, IV, n.p. Accounts of Matteo di Caccino 'camerlingho dell'estimo di contado'.

² After its fleeting appearance in 1344, this gabelle was apparently re-established in November 1355; from Nov. 1355 to May 1356 Niccolò di Bartolo is treasurer of the gate gabelle and of various others, among them the 'gabella nova del vino', Appelli, 1867, IV, n.p. This is probably already the gabelle 'del vino che se mette nella città' under another name, the gabelle with which his successor (May–November 1356) is charged, Appelli, loc. cit.

³ E.g. for wine casked 'in città': Dec. 1363–March 1364 (3 months 13 days), about 10,000 lire (not an exact figure).

⁴ (i) 21 July 1344, fine on a Florentine for not having paid the gabelle on wine 'invegetatum . . . in civitate et comitatu', C.C.E., 7, 113; (ii) Nov. 1355–13 Nov. 1356, 'gabella del vino che se mete nella città', cf. n. 30; (iii) December 1363, gabelle collected for 6 months, after 6 December, by the officials of the *prestanze*, Appelli, 1871, III, 140; (iv) October 1364, date at which the *prestanze* official ceases payments, after making them regularly during the preceding months, C.C.E., 104; there is no further mention of the gabelle in the official sources.

⁵ This is so in the case of the *novi proventus* contemplated in 1299; they consist primarily of increases to existing gabelles: salt (already in force in 1282), wine sold retail (1285), mills (1293); A. Gherardi, *Le Consulte della Repubblica fiorentina* (Florence, 1896–98), vol. I, pp. 65, 267; Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 306.

⁶ For example, in April 1345 there is an examination of the accounts of purchasers of the 'gabelle vini quod venditur ad minutum, in civitate comitatu et districtu Florent. videlicet illius pluris seu excessus quod in exigendo nomine dicte gabelle unius denarii de tribus denariis est plus et ultra quam in exigendo unum denarium de quator denariis . . .', Appelli, 1817, III, 250. This *augmentum* was sold separately.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

Pratiche of the Signoria. The upshot of such discussions was often some positive decision, especially at moments of crisis.

A number of tariffs had been increased at the very end of the thirteenth century: the tariffs for salt, wine sold retail, milling and fulling, markets in the *contado*, not to mention some of the minor gabelles.¹ Between 1314-15 and November 1316 the war with Pisa necessitated a surcharge, first of 2 denari and later of 4, on certain trading transactions.² The campaigns of Castruccio made it necessary between June 1324 and February 1327 to add a tax of 4 denari to the gate gabelle,³ and in November 1325 there was a simultaneous rise by more than one third in the tariffs of the gabelles as a whole, which remained in force for several years.⁴ The league with Venice (1335) was the occasion for a number of similar increases: a general increase in the gabelles, decided on at the end of 1335,⁵ came into effect, for the gate gabelle, on 5 June 1336,⁶ and for the other gabelles after 15 July.⁷ In both cases the tax was doubled; ten months later, in April 1337, the gate gabelle suffered a further rise, designed to remain in force for twenty months.⁸ This increase was only slight, but in March 1338 a supplementary *augmentum* was under discussion and was brought into partial effect.⁹ Notwithstanding Villani's assertion to the contrary, it is possible that the despotic rule of the Duke of Athens (1342-43) was marked by only one increase, in the tax on wine sold retail.¹⁰ But this is not certain. By

¹ Provv., IX, 165v-167, 24 March 1299; cf. Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 306.

² Provv., XV, 18-20v, 23 Nov. 1316. For the details of this imposition, see Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, p. 362, and *Entwicklung*, pp. 105-8; Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. III, p. 248.

³ Provv., XVII, 117, 22 June 1321; for its abolition 4 Feb. 1327, see Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 538, n. 2. This gabelle is exacted 'ex mercantiis et rebus que immituntur et extrahuntur in civitatem et de civitate', Provv., XVIII, 3. It is a supplementary tax: on 10 August 1327 the Duke of Calabria assigns the gate gabelle to himself; the tax of 1.66 per cent (4 d./lira), suppressed 4 February, was therefore an addition to it. Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. III, p. 256; Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, pp. 370-1.

⁴ G. Villani, IX, 324; Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 541 and 578.

⁵ Provv., XXVII, 52, 5 June 1336; the five officials deputed 'super venditionem augmenti omnium gabellarum' have in January 1336 sold the contract gabelle from the period starting in February.

⁶ Provv., XXVII, 50v, 'considerantes quod . . . propter venditionem augmenti gabelle duplicationis ejus quod solvitur . . . ad portas civitatis Florentie de rebus que immituntur et extrahuntur de ipsa civitate . . .'

⁷ G. Villani, XI, 50; after 15 July, the Florentines elect 10 wise men 'a trovare moneta e fornire la detta guerra [against the lords of Verona] e assegnarono loro trecentomila fiorini d'oro l'anno sopra certe gabelle, raddoppiandole gran parte'.

⁸ Provv., XXVIII, 153v-4; there is talk of a 'novum augmentum gabelle portarum indictum . . . super certis rebus' sold for twenty months (1 April 1337-30 Nov. 1338), 3000 lire fl. parv.

⁹ Provv., XVIII, 37, 4 March 1338: the gabelles or their supplement 'tam creatarum quam etiam que crearentur' are assigned to the repayment of certain loans.

¹⁰ G. Villani, XII, 8; Paoli, 'Della Signoria di Gualtiero duca d'Atena', *Giornale degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. VI (1862), p. 78; Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 626.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

contrast, the economic and demographic crisis of 1347-49 has left numerous fiscal traces. Recourse to the gabelles is envisaged in provisions of July 1347 and February 1348; in November 1348 it was an accomplished fact, and 1349 is conspicuous as a year in which certain taxes doubled (on wine at the gates and sold retail, on flour, meat, salt and bread).¹ The Milanese invasion of two years later had the same results: an increase proposed in July 1351² became effective in December, many taxes being doubled.³ It is the same story with the Pisan war of 1362-64: discussions initiated in April-May led before December to the introduction of gabelles, whose augmentation was already being contemplated in March 1364⁴ and took effect in April. This increase doubled the taxes in question⁵ and also certain of the gate tolls, which was perhaps its main object.⁶ A year later the commune was again hoping to complement its revenues from the gabelles,⁷ even though the previous increases were still partially in force.⁸ Thereafter the pressure of indirect taxation eased off all round. The *Pratiche*, concerned at the burden such taxation represented, favoured reductions.⁹ The gabelles continued at a high rate, and were certainly still high in 1378, but there was no appreciable rise.

The volume of these measures is striking; but so is their imprecision. It is difficult to appreciate their real bearing, for a number of reasons.

In the first place, there were times when a contractual tax, imposed on the guilds, was partially responsible, in alliance with the gabelles, for a rise in the selling price of goods. This was so for a few months in 1321¹⁰

¹ Provv., Duplicati, VII, 65; Provv., XXXV, 104; M. Villani, I, 57.

² Cons. Prat., I, 22-5, 30 July-10 August 1351.

³ M. Villani, II, 46: 'Raddoppiarono e crebbono più gabelle . . .'

⁴ Cons. Prat., IV, 44-44v, 54v (April-May), 133v-4v (December): there is talk at this date of 'gabellarum *de novo impositarum seu imponendarum*'. Mention in particular of the gabelle on wine and on merchandise at the gates, *ibid.*, V, c. 6.

⁵ M. Villani, XI, 84, April 1364.

⁶ C.C.E., 102: June 1364, payment by the 'camerlingus gabelle portarum', '*pro crescimento dicte gabelle solvit ut supra lib. VIII III s. II pic.*'

⁷ Provv, LIII, 10v, 12 July 1365. Nomination of 16 Gueff citizens 'ad inveniendum modum per quem introitus seu redditus com. Florentie augeantur. . . . *Per viam dumtaxat impositionis . . . gabelle seu gabellarum*'.

⁸ For example, the 'recrescimentum gabelle macelli', collected from May 1365 and probably earlier, is levied again in 1366, C.C.E., 107-11, *passim*.

⁹ A number of discussions take place 'super facto diminutionis gabellarum', some of them being deemed 'nimis excessive': thus, *ibid.*, VIII, 20, 24 December 1366, 93v-4, 6 July 1367.

¹⁰ 22 January 1321: *balia* granted to the Priors to establish gabelles on the guilds; the greater guilds are to pay a tax 'ad rationes den. quattuor pro qualibet libra rerum vendendarum', Provv., XVII, 56. This provision is probably a renewal of an earlier one, Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. III, p. 251. 6 February 1321: the other guilds are saddled with a contractual payment they are themselves to collect from their members; a list of these taxes is at the same date. Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, *op. cit.*, gives a list of

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

and again between 1325 and 1330.¹ The increase is undeniable; but how to apportion it?

Then there is further difficulty: the advantage of the gabelles was that they offered a fiscal instrument which was flexible, and adapted itself to the needs of the moment. When the need became less urgent, the gabelles became correspondingly lighter. An increase was rarely regarded as permanent; for example, in 1349 certain gate taxes were doubled; in August 1351 because of the war with Milan, an adviser to the Signoria proposed doubling *all* the gate tolls: had the preceding measure been revoked?² As we have seen, the proposal was in any case brought into effect (December 1351), but not on a permanent basis; in fact in October 1354 the *Pratica* was suggesting the *revival* of the gabelles 'imposed in time of the war . . . with Milan' and discussion of this proposal continued until January.³ It is made clear that this revival would be temporary in its turn, kept in being only so long as the actual necessities (*opportunitates*) of the commune demanded.⁴ The history of the gabelles is evidently one of successive ups and downs.

Thus, although the many known measures relating to gabelles mostly have to do with increases, one cannot help wondering whether the rate of the gabelles did in fact change very perceptibly in the course of eighty years. This can only be ascertained by tracing the actual evolution of specific gabelles, as we shall now attempt to do.

Among the gabelles Villani lists in 1338, he singles out three, apart from the *estimo*, as chief: the gate gabelles, the gabelle on wine sold retail, and the gabelle on salt. Since they are also those for which the documents provide the most continuous information, it is these gabelles we shall examine.

payments made by forty trades in 1320, following a similar measure voted at an earlier date, whose text is missing. See also Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 529, n.1., Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, pp. 366-8. Measures annulled in 1321, Barbadoro, loc. cit., and not 1323, Doren, loc. cit.

¹ 14 September 1325: forced loan of 30,000 florins exacted from the gilds, Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. III, p. 254; suppressed in 1330, Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, p. 369.

² 'Guillelmus Lupicini consuluit quod . . . gabella portarum duplicetur', Cons. Prat., I, 25, 1 August 1351.

³ *Ibid.*, I, 107-111, 116, 141-143v; Provv., XLI, 109. 'Quod gabelle sublata a tempore mote guerre comuni Florentie per Biscionem citra que exacte fuerunt in comuni florentie in dictum tempus indicantur et reponantur de novo': advice given by Castellus Bernardi de Quarata 'pro gonfalonieriis', *ibid.*, fol. 141, 16 January 1355.

⁴ Guillelmus Lupicini 'quod cogantur XII monete ad reponendum gabellas ut comune possit fulcire suas opportunitates', Provv., XLI, 142v, 18 January.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

THE GATE GABELLE

It is impossible to determine the rate of the gate gabelle *en bloc*, since each item of merchandise had its own tariff which could be, and was, altered independently of the rest.¹ It is therefore necessary to make a specific study of certain of the items which composed it. Leaving aside the *mercanzia*, we shall examine the taxes on wheat, wine, oil and live-stock.

Gate Gabelle on Wheat (denari|staio)

Before 3 March 1285 ²	3 March 1285	22 June 1324- 4 Feb. 1327 ³	1341- April 1364 ⁴	April- July 1364 ⁵	15/21 July 1364-1380 ⁶
12	6	6(?) + 4	12	24	12

Note. The dates in italics indicate that a change of tariff came into operation on that day. The other dates refer merely to isolated mentions of a tariff whose duration we do not know. Where there are sufficient references during a given period, and they point each time to the same rate, it has seemed reasonable to conclude that the rate within this period remained the same. Hence the figures covering two or more years.

It will be seen that the wheat gabelle shows a remarkable continuity between the two terminal dates, a century apart. The only change to continue in effect for any length of time was perhaps the decrease of 1285. Otherwise, where the figures are known, it seems that reductions and increases were very quickly annulled, once the reason for them had gone. The same holds for the gabelles on other cereals.⁷

Gate Gabelle on Oil (soldi/orcio)

1326 ⁸	after Feb. 1327 ⁹	1332 ¹⁰	1334 ¹¹	1341- 1349 ¹²	1355- 1356 ¹³	1364 ¹⁴	1365 ¹⁵	1366- 1380 ¹⁶
3	c. 2 ?	5.6	6	10	10	20	10	15

In contrast with the gabelle on cereals, that on oil becomes heavier

¹ The gate gabelle fell into two main categories: the gabelle taken at the gates and paid into the *cassette delle porte* and the gabelle on merchandise (*mercanzia*), perhaps also collected at the gates but placed in a special account. The former was seemingly imposed on articles of everyday consumption, described by Villani as '*vittuaglie*' the latter was probably levied on commodities of large-scale commercial undertakings, *mercanzia*. There were other categories, of inferior yield: frontier tolls (*passageri del contado, coloro che stanno a ricogliere a confini*) and *forestieri* (a payment by foreigners, but in what circumstances?), Appelli, 1816, I, 89-100 (scrutiny of the accounts of the gabelle officers who were in office from January 1342-August 1343), Sapori, 'La gabella della porte,' p. 197.

Although one finds frequent proposals for increasing the gate gabelle proper, there is less enthusiasm when it comes to the tax on merchandise. In January 1364 several counsellors are unanimous in advocating its reduction. Philippus Capponi 'consuluit quod gabella mercantiarum non est utilis, ymo dampnosa, et ideo non exigatur', and others speak in the same sense, namely Francesco degli Albizzi, Talento Neri and

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

as the century advances, especially between 1327 and 1364, when it increases tenfold. These are limit figures. In 1365 the oil gabelle returns to its more moderate pre-1364 rate. Even so, as far as we can judge, after 1366 the tax regularly kept to a rate five times higher than in the first quarter of the century.

Niccolò degli Alberti, 'quod non placet indicta gabella mercantiarum et ideo non procedat', Cons. Prat., V, 6, 15 January 1364. Thus there is a very precise distinction between 'gates' and 'merchandise'. The former is made up of a number of different items placed side by side, their tariffs being quite independent of one another.

² Gherardi, *Le Consulte*, vol. I, p. 174. Debate on the corn gabelle: 'Cenni Bentacorde consuluit quod XII denarii [dentur] pro stario grani ut actenus servatum est. . . . Placuit duabus de sex denariis pro Stario.'

³ Corn, like other merchandise, has to pay the supplementary gate gabelle of 4 d. (see p. 149). In 1321 two peasants conclude with the hospital of S. Paolo de' Convalescenti a contract to supply 36 *staia* of corn. The hospital administrators will pay 'la gabella di 4 den. lo stao mentre che si pagasse ale porte e ongni altra gabella'. The gabelle of 4 den. is very probably the supplementary gabelle, which will not long remain in force, while 'ongni altra gabella' is the ordinary gabelle. In this instance the tax of 4 d. is levied per *stao* and not on the value, San Paolo de' Convalescenti, 976, 86.

⁴ Santa Maria Nuova (henceforth S.M.N.), 4392, 18 November 1341. It may be that this figure goes back to June 1336, the last occasion on which the gabelles as a whole were doubled (see p. 149 n. 6), but it is not known how long this measure remained in force. The gabelle of 12 d. is perhaps older, being raised temporarily to 24 d. by the doubling in 1336. Other references to 1342, 1343 and 1346 in S.M.N., 4393; 5 August 1347, San Paolo de' C., 661, at the date mentioned. Examples for 1350, 1351, 1352, 1353, 1360, 1363. Between 1358 and 1363 the flour gabelle is regularly 1 soldo per *stao*; that on wheat is certainly no higher: in 1350, 1358-59, 1361-62 and 1363 flour and wheat probably have identical tariffs. Information for 1356-57 is lacking. S.M.N., 4398, 4408, 4409, 4416.

⁵ F. Villani refers to this doubling (XI, 84). We know that it applied to wheat because in the following month the *Pratiche* of the Signoria are contemplating a reduction in certain of the gate gabelles, including that on wheat; Cons. Prat., V, 73, 9 May 1364, Pierozus Pieri pro gonf. 'reponantur . . . gabella grani S.I.' etc. This proposal takes effect after 16 July (gabelle from 10 *staia* of wheat, 20 soldi, S.M.N., 4417, 26v) but before 21 July, cf. below.

⁶ S.M.N., 4417, 28, 21 July 1364. Examples for every year with the exception of 1366, 1369, 1376, 1378. S.M.N., 4417, 4421, 4426, 4428, 4430.

⁷ For rye, beans and lentils, for example, they are half that on wheat, S.M.N., 4393, 18 April 1347; 4409, 27 August 1355; 4421, 21 November 1368; 4426, 19 September 1374 — rye gabelle, 6 denari.

⁸ Manoscritti, 75, 235, 6 February 1326, 'gabelle olio due orcia 6 solid. flor. parv.'

⁹ The supplementary gabelle of 4 d. per lira is suppressed in February. In 1326 the average value of an *orcio* of oil is 3 lire, thus the supplementary tax which disappears in 1327 was about 1 soldo.

¹⁰ Manoscritti, 75, 234v.

¹¹ S.M.N., 4390, 11 March.

¹² San Domenico del Maglio (=S.D.M.), 125, 21 December 1341. The rise may go back to 1336. Examples of the same tariff for every year (apart from 1346) down to 4 January 1349.

¹³ S.M.N., 4409, 2 March. Manoscritti 75, 268v.

¹⁴ S.M.N., 4417, five examples spread out between 17 February and 27 August. Tariff probably in force since the end of 1363, unaffected by the doubling of April 1364.

¹⁵ S.M.N., 4417, 2 March.

¹⁶ S.M.N., 4420, 4421, 4426, 4428, 4430. Examples for every year apart from 1375-76.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

Gabelle on Livestock brought into the City — Example: Hogs (soldi/head)

Livestock was subject to a variety of taxes, one of the chief being a tax collected at the gates. The main trends in its evolution as it affected hogs are as follows:

Feb. 1333 ¹	Dec. 1351 ²	Feb. 1359 ³	Oct. 1364 ⁴	Dec. 1364- Jan. 1365 ⁵	June 1365- 1369 ⁶	1370- 1380 ⁷
6	60	70 (?)	46·6	31-2	40-40·6	40

In the eighteen years 1333-51 the tax on hogs thus shows a tenfold increase. Its history during the next thirteen years is by no means clear. There appears to be a further rise which reaches its peak with the rate of 70 soldi in the late 1350s. After 1364 it appreciably declines, like so many others. But then, despite some rapid temporary oscillations and uncertainty over the rate, the tax remains until 1380 at values approximately equal to seven times the 1333 figure.

Gate Gabelle on Wine (soldi/cogno)

As we shall see, this was but one of the many charges affecting wine, from the time of the vintage to its sale by the retailer; even so, it was by no means inconsiderable. The main trends are set out in the following table:

Nov. 1320 ⁸	1331 ⁹	before Jan. 1336 ¹⁰	1 Jan. 1336	1340- 1345 ¹¹	1348- early 1349 ¹²	1349 ¹³	1351- 1356 ¹⁴	1360- 1380 ¹⁵
10	20	10	20	30	30	60	60	50

Thus it appears that this tax, too, grew appreciably heavier; it increases perhaps sixfold in the thirteen years 1335-49, keeps the ceiling

Some of the gabelles, particularly that on oil, were the subject of a debate in the *Pratiche* in July 1367; some speakers propose their reduction as being 'nimis excessive', Cons. Prat., VIII, c. 94, 6 July. If the proposed reduction relates to the tariff of 15 s. per *orcio*, it is clearly not adopted. But it may refer to a higher tariff, later than 5 March 1367 (S.M.N., 4420, 5 March 1367, 15 s. per *orcio*), of which we know nothing because it was revoked, as the result of this debate, before 31 January 1358 (S.M.N., 31 January 1368, 15 s. per *orcio*: no references to the period between March and January).

¹ The gate gabelle is already being collected on livestock in 1324. But all we know at this date is that this gabelle, like the others, is affected by the surcharge of 4 denari per lira levied from 1321-27; Provv., XXI, 57v, 12 November 1324. In June 1327 there is again mention of a 'gabella bestiarum que exigitur ad portas, de IIII den. pro libra'; the surcharge of 4 denari was suspended in February, which raises the question whether the figure mentioned may not represent the tariff, a modest one, of the genuine gabelle. The precise reference to 'IIII den. pro libra' seems to indicate that this is in fact the surcharge, extended for some months longer; Provv., XXIII, 100. The first definite information is given in February 1333. The steward of the hospital records an expenditure of 18 soldi for the gabelle on three hogs. He makes no reference to their

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

at this maximal value for the next seven years (apart from variations which have escaped us) and then after 1360 stabilizes at a rate five times higher than the pre-1336 figure.

Such, apart from the *mercanzia*, were the gate gabelles as they affected the principal commodities.

size and since they are not described as *temporali* they must be full-grown, S.M.N., 4390, 27 February 1333.

² 7 December 1351, measure giving the table of tariffs for the gate gabelle on live-stock: the tax on a single hog was 60 s., irrespective of size, Provv., XXXIX, 60v.

³ 27 February 1359, payment of the 'gabella alla porta' on three hogs 'da insalare': 10 l. 10 s., that is 70 s. per head. But cf. 31 s. 5 d. for a 'porco rosso' on 5 January. Has the tax more than doubled in the interval? Is there perhaps a special tariff for russet hogs? Is the weight of the animal being taken into account? The hog in question is full-grown and costs 5 l. 5 s. (average price of hogs = 5 l. per 100 lbs.), S.M.N., 4412, under the dates mentioned.

⁴ S.M.N., 4417, 17 October.

⁵ S.M.N., 4417, 22-5 December-3 January.

⁶ This gabelle was apparently not rigidly fixed at this period. The tax is variously given as 40 s. (February 1368), 42 s. (19 July 1367, 2 September, 14 October, 26 December 1368), 43.6 s. (August and December 1365, January-December 1366, December 1367, 26 February 1368, January 1369), per head, irrespective of size or weight (in the same year we find 42 s. being paid on a hog of 163 pounds, 40 s. on a hog of 170 pounds); S.M.N., 4417 (1364-March 1367), 4421 (May 1367-September 1369).

⁷ References for each year in S.M.N., 4426, 4428, 4430, note however 4426, 22, 17 March 1371: gabelle on two hogs, 3 l. 12 s.

⁸ This gabelle has certainly already been in existence for a long time, but tariffs are lacking before this date. Santa Maria Novella, 292, Uscita, at the date in question.

⁹ Manoscritti, 75, 242v.

¹⁰ The gabelle on wine at the gates is included in the increase decided on at the end of 1335 (see p. 149). For this gabelle the increase amounts to a doubling; on 5 June 1336 the purchaser of the 'augmentum gabelle soldorum decem flor. parv. pro congio vini inmissi . . . in civitatem florentie', who has been responsible for it from 1 January 1336, is relieved of his duties, Provv., XXVII, 50v. This 'augmentum' of 10 s., which when added to the original gabelle has the effect of doubling it, proves that the gabelle itself then stood at 10 s., a reduction on the 1331 figure.

¹¹ See p. 145.

¹² S.M.N., 4392, 30 August 1340, 23 October 1341, 30 November 1342, 2 April 1343, 28 September 1345. S.D.M., 125, September 1347. S.M.N., 4397, 23 September 1348.

¹³ M. Villani, I, 57: 'Il comune avendo bisogno raddoppiò la gabella del vino alle porte, e dove pagava soldi trenta il cognò, lo recò in soldi sessanta.'

¹⁴ It is possible that there was a reduction in the tariff between 1349 and 1351. Nevertheless, on 22 September 1351 it is still, or again, at 60 s.; S.M.N., 4403, 22 September and 24 October 1351; Manoscritti, 75, 117v, November 1353; S.M.N., 4409, 20 September 1355; 4412, December 1356.

¹⁵ S.M.N., 4416, 4421, 4426, 4428, 4430. Several references for each year, apart from 1376. However, it is probable that this tax too underwent some fluctuations, within the framework of the all-round increases described above, as for example in 1364; cf. the discussions which took place in the *Pratiche* April-May 1364. 'D. Niccolaus de Albertis consuluit quod assignatur terminus disgombrandi comitatum et quod tollatur Gabella s. L pro congio et non plus', Cons. Prat., V, 59v, 29 April 1364. Again: 'Preponatur gabella vini s. L pro congio,' etc., cf. 73-4v, 9-11 May 1364. This *gabella vini* must certainly be the gate gabelle, since the reason for reducing it is to encourage peasants to bring their harvest, threatened by war, to the shelter of fortified positions. This gabelle would have been increased in April along with the others, M. Villani, XI, 84; in September it again stands at 50 s., S.M.N., 4477, 29 September and 1 October 1364.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

Data relating to the gabelles of smaller yield show that they also increased in the course of the fourteenth century, some of them very appreciably. The gabelle on eggs, for example, from being 2 denari a hundred in 1290 had risen to 16 denari in 1344 and in 1367 to 24.¹

We turn now to gabelles of a different kind. These are not tolls; they represent taxes on transactions (the retail sale of wine), the sales of monopoly commodities (salt), and impositions levied on certain harvested crops (casked wine). With the exception of salt, these gabelles, although the subject of a number of laws, are less well known, because they have not to my knowledge left any trace in private accounts. I shall consider three of the most important: the tax on wine sold retail (*vino a minuto*), the salt gabelle, and the duty on wine casked in the *contado*. For the rest it is difficult to give any figures and their history eludes us.

GABELLE ON WINE SOLD RETAIL

In the *contado*, as in the city, this tax fell on all wine sold retail. The imposition was a heavy one, and it is easy to see why it was one of the highest gabelles in yield. Individuals who disposed of the surplus of their own harvest were obliged to pay it, at least at times, as were all tavern-keepers.² A special mark traced on the vendor's casks and known as the '*segnatura grossa*' certified that the tax had been paid.³ The first known tariffs date from 1299.⁴ Some of the stages they went through were as follows:

21 March 1299 ⁵	1 Jan. 1315–Nov. 1316 ⁶	1340 ⁷
6·25% of the sale price	7·14% of the sale price	25% of the sale price
10 Dec. 1342 ⁸	before Oct. 1349	1 Oct. 1349 ⁹
33% of the sale price	33% of the sale price	50% of the sale price
1351 ¹⁰	1 Dec. 1358 ¹¹	12 Sept. 1359 ¹²
50% of the sale price	40% of the sale price	66% (?) of the sale price

¹ Provv., II, 63v (1290), omitted by Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 304; San Domenico del Maglio, 125, December 1344; S.M.N., 4420, 18 April 1357.

² The sale of wine retail is regulated by a measure of 1297 which fixes prices and forbids anyone to purchase wine 'non gabellatum', Provv., VIII, 147, 27 October 1297. In 1344 there is record of a judgment passed by the *Esecutore* on Manerio de Maneriis, who had been accused of selling 'vinum ad minutum non signatum et non gabellatum contra formam statutorum in domo habitationis d. Manerii'. Sentenced in his absence to a fine of 1250 l., *Esecutore* I, 55, V, 29. The duty of individuals to observe this regulation is reiterated in 1359, Provv., XLVII, 37v, 12 September 1359.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

The tariff of this gabelle shows a precocious rise, since in 1340 it is already four times what it was in 1299. Like many others, it increases in 1349. The reduction of 1358 is only slight; tariffs remain high throughout the second half of the century. Although we have no precise information after 1358, we can legitimately surmise that during the two succeeding decades the tax was roughly equivalent to half the sale price.¹ This gabelle, which at moments may have been levied at a rate ten times higher than in 1299, probably remained for long periods after 1360 at a level eight times higher than in 1299.

³ For example, Provv., CCXI, 6, 29 October 1303.

⁴ Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 304 (1281).

⁵ Provv., IX, 166: 'Solvendo tot sodos florinorum parvorum pro quolibet congio quot denarios vendiderit medium quartum.' One *cogno* = 200 demi quarts; one soldo = 12 denari. The measure is analysed, inadequately, by Davidsohn in *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 306.

⁶ The 'mescitores vini' are to pay a surcharge of 2 d. per lira on the retail price, Doren, *Le arti fiorentine*, vol. I, p. 362, Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. III, p. 249, which also deals with the abolition of this tax.

⁷ The gabelle continues to be levied between 1316 and 1340, cf. Provv., XXVI, 58, 26 November 1333, but the tariffs are missing. Tariff of 1340: 'unum denarium de singulis quatuor denariis qui percipientur ex venditione vini . . . ad minutum' (from 10 December 1340 this gabelle passed by sale into the hands of the gild of the *vinaterii*). There is no mention of the tariff being new. The figure given by Fiumi for 1338 (1 fl. per *cogno*) is without foundation, 'Fioritura e decadenza', p. 449.

⁸ Decision by the Duke of Athens, Paoli, 'Della Signoria', p. 78, n. 67. From now on there is a tax on the retail price of 'unius denarii de tribus denariis' and the rate continues unaltered at least until 10 December 1344, Provv., XXXII, 151, 20 April 1344. It is mentioned again in September 1349, cf. note 9 below.

⁹ 'Chi vendesse vino a minuto dovesse pagare de duo danari luno al comune', M. Villani, I, 57. ' . . . ab ultimo die presentis mensis in antea, de omni et toto vino quod vendetur ad minutum in civitate vel comitatu vel districtu Florentie de quo hactenus exigebatur gabella, . . . exigatur medietas totius pretii quod vinum ipsum vendetur; [hitherto] ipsa gabella erat ordinata ad rationem unius denarii de tribus denariis', Provv., XXXVII, 45v, 27 September 1349.

¹⁰ Preferential tariff granted to the inhabitants of Scarperia: for them the gabelle on retail wine is to be 'ad dimidium ejus quod pro tali gabella exigitur ad presens in civitate vel comitatu . . . de singulis quatuor denariis quibus vinum eorum venditum est . . . in castro vel ejus curia . . . unus denarius', Provv., XXXIX, 45v, 9 November 1351.

¹¹ November 1358: discussions in the *Pratiche* concerning conditions for the sale of wine retail. One member is deputed to judge between the various proposals, his decision to be regarded as binding 'sic observetur et fiat per officiales gabelle vini'. He decides in favour of the proposal 'exigatur gabella vid. de quinque denariis duo'. The proposals include 'quod gabella exigatur ut hactenus', 'quod pro gabella exigatur de duobus denariis unus', 'quod de quinque denariis duo exigantur in gabella'. The tariff of 1349 must have been revoked, since its re-introduction is proposed, but it is not known whether this was by way of increasing the tax. Cons. Prat., I, 180, Nov. 1358.

¹² Tariff imposed as *segnatura grossa* on individuals who decide as an after-thought to sell their surplus wine: 'de tribus denariis . . . denarios duos.' It is possible that this was a special tariff; the measure does not specify. Provv., XLVII, 37v.

¹ On 12 June 1363 a tavern-keeper from Rovezzano owes over 152 lire for the gabelle on ten *cogna* registered in 1362. In November 1362 the wholesale price of wine was between 11 and 13 lire per *cogno*. In 1364 there is record of two payments of 23.6 l. per *cogno* for the same cause, Provv., L, 166v, LII, 55v.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

THE SALT GABELLE

The salt gabelle was more complex; it consisted in the obligation on the part of an individual or a community to buy a given quantity of salt at a given price. Its yield could be improved either by increasing the prescribed quantity or by raising the price. In the course of the fourteenth century the commune did both simultaneously, as is shown by data given below:

(1) *Price in the city per staio of salt*

DATE	PRICE (per <i>staio</i>)
February 1292 ¹	6 s.
24 March 1299 ²	12 s.
September 1312–September 1315 ³	30 s., then 20 s.
28 January 1326 ⁴	25 s.
June 1327 ⁵	65 s. (= 1 florin)
1331, March and June	c. 40 s.
January 1332–November 1334 ⁶	c. 30 s.
20 April 1336	c. 20 s.
1338 ⁷	40 s.
18 March 1346	c. 20 s.
1348: 24 August	40 s.
24 September	60 s.
1349 ⁸	108 s.
January 1351 ⁹	48 s.

¹ Gherardi, *Consulte*, vol. I, p. 65.

² Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 306.

³ *Protocolli delle Provv.*, IV, fol. 8, 28 May 1314. The gabelle is sold for three years; the farmer will exact 30 s. per *staio*, a price reduced to 20 s. at the time of the attack on Florence by the Emperor Henry VII. It is not known whether the price of 30 s. is new.

⁴ S.M.N., 4390, 28 January. For brevity's sake, I give no references for data furnished by the accounts of Santa Maria Nuova, which can easily be tracked down under the relevant dates. Prices shown in the table for the period before 1350 may be only approximate, for two reasons: (i) the prices given in the accounts may include the costs of measurement and transport; (ii) the prices are sometimes entered in florins and we do not know the exact value of the florin on the day in question. Since the official prices are always a full number of soldi, the figures have been given to the nearest soldo. From various examples it can be seen that the hospital buys its salt at the tax price.

⁵ *Provv.*, XXIII, 91v, 9 June. It is not known whether this is a new price.

⁶ 5 examples ranging between 30 s. 1 d. and 31 s.

⁷ G. Villani, XI, 92.

⁸ M. Villani, I, 57.

⁹ *Provv.*, XXXVIII, c. 176v, 27 January.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

DATE	PRICE (per <i>stajo</i>)
February 1352–March 1352	108 s.
July–December 1353	120 s.
June 1354–March 1355	60 s.
November 1355–October 1356	120 s.
9 December 1356 ¹	Reduction decreed
22 May 1357	60 s.
April 1358 ²	Increase decreed
July 1358–March 1360	120 s.
15 December 1360	109 s.
October 1361–December 1362	80 s.
22 May–15 December 1363	120 s.
15 May–1 June 1364 ³	80 s.
December 1364–December 1366	120 s.
18 March 1367	80 s.
1368–1378 ⁴	120 s.
25 July 1378 ⁵	60 s.

Prices for the *contado*, so far as they can be ascertained, were in general 20 soldi lower than for the city. Although less marked, the increase is none the less real.

(2) *Prescribed quantities*

The inhabitants of the *contado* were obliged to buy at regular intervals from the tax officials a quantity of salt prescribed by the commune.⁶ As

¹ Provv., XLIV, 36v.

² Provision calling attention to the existence 'augmentationis pretii salis et saline . . . de mense aprilis proxime preterito facte', Provv., XLI, 234, 4 July 1358. If the tariff in force before April 1358 is still that of May 1357, this increase amounts to a doubling, as is shown by the July tariffs.

³ On 16 May this tariff is still very recent. On 11 May, in fact, a speaker in the *pratiche* is still found proposing a price for salt of 4 l. per *stajo* for the citizens and 3 l. for the inhabitants of the *contado*. The proposal must certainly be one for a reduction — at this date all the Signoria's advisers are in favour of reduction. Cons. Prat., V, c. 74. The suppressed tariff is most likely to have been that of 120 soldi, still in force in December 1363.

⁴ Examples from October 1368, January 1371, September and November 1374, August 1376, November 1377, February 1378.

⁵ 'A di XXV di luglio detto . . . recarono il sale a lire tre, ch'era a lire sei lo stajo', *Cronica terza d' Anonimo*, ed. G. Scaramella, *Il Tumulto dei Ciompi*, R.I.S., vol. XVIII, part 3 (Bologna, 1917–34), p. 130.

⁶ A measure of 1318 envisages that the distribution of salt among the citizens will be in accordance with the criteria in operation in 1285 for the distribution of the *estimo*, i.e. a compulsory distribution; Provv., XV, 16, quoted by Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 126. But after this nothing more is said of this obligation as it affected the citizens. It is explicitly formulated only in respect of inhabitants of the *contado*: nobles are liable as

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

time went on, this quantity increased, as is shown by some figures relating to rural communities:

DATE	1 Sept. 1318– 31 Aug. 1319	1 July 1325	1352 'prima paga'	15 Nov. 1355– 15 May 1356	25 Nov. 1356– 15 May 1357
QUANTITY	10 <i>staia</i>	18 <i>staia</i> 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ <i>metadelle</i>	16 <i>staia</i>	24 <i>staia</i>	36 <i>staia</i>

Note. (i) The quantity of salt prescribed for the rural communities is per 100 lire of their *estimo*.

(ii) In 1318–19 the quantity is prescribed for one year, in 1325–27 seemingly for two years, in 1352 for a 'paga' or fraction of a year (6 months?), in 1355–56 for six months — the controllers of the salt gabelle hold office for six months and the measure defining their powers also stipulates exactly what quantity of salt they are to receive. The same holds good for 1356–57. *Prov.*, XV, 161, XXII, 62, XL, 3v, XLII, 156, XLIV, 6.

Like the gate gabelles and the gabelle on retail wine, the gabelle on salt thus shows a considerable increase between 1292 and 1378, partly accounted for by the rise in the sale price but also by the increase in the quantity prescribed. Admittedly, the price of salt was subject to frequent fluctuations. It was more sensitive than any other to contingencies. In time of difficulty the commune had no hesitation in raising it steeply (1327, 1348–49, 1352–53, 1355–56, 1358–60, 1363 . . .). As things became more settled, pressure relaxed. But even though times might be easier, the fall-back level continued to rise. Between 1310 and 1345 the minimum prices average out at 20 soldi, between 1350 and 1360 at 60 soldi and between 1360 and 1368 at 80 soldi. After this date they correspond to the maximum prices (120). They thus increased sixfold. The average value of the tax itself increases between 1292 and 1368 by a factor of twenty.

If the increase in the *contado* seems less marked (from 11 soldi 6 denari in 1302 to 60 soldi in 1364) — though here there are gaps in our knowledge — the situation there was worsened by increases in the quantity prescribed. Taking the fiscal year as a yardstick, a community obliged to buy 10 *staia* in 1318 and 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ in 1325–27 had to purchase at least 32 *staia* in 1352, 48 in 1355 and 72 in 1356. These isolated figures, which are perhaps exceptional, are insufficient to prove that the additional

individuals, rural communities collectively, pro rata with their *estimo*. On this subject, from the late thirteenth century down to 1380, the terminal date of this present study, see Barbadoro, *loc. cit.*, *Prov.*, XV, 103v (1317), XXIII, 38 (1326), XL, 3v (1352), XLII, 156 (1356), etc. At times the distribution was made every year: the measure of 1318 speaks of 'distributione salis pro anno presenti ordinata et facta in comitatu. . . .' It was naturally open to taxpayers to take their prescribed quantity in several instalments. Later, as we shall see, distribution might be made at more frequent intervals.

TABLE I: GATE GABELLE

REFERENCE	ANNUAL INDEX (i)	HALF-YEARLY INDEX (ii)	DATES	ANNUAL RECEIPTS (To the nearest lira)	GABELLES COLLECTED with the GATE GABELLE	USCITA (PAYMENTS)			PAYMENTS ON PRESTANZE OR REIMBURSEMENT OF VARIOUS LOANS	%
						CAMERA COMUNE	MONTE	%		
XXVIII, c. 110	122		1 Dec. 1336-30 Nov. 1337	280,000 lire (iii)						
	122		1 Dec. 1337-30 Nov. 1338	281,000 lire						
XXXI, c. 55	92		1 Jan.-31 Dec. 1342	214,500 lire (iv)						
	92		1 Jan.-31 Dec. 1343	215,000 lire (v)						
, 1822, I, c. 147	102		25 March 1346-24 March 1347	234,375 lire (vi)						
	101		25 March 1347-24 March 1348	232,500 lire (vii)						
, 1822, VIII, parch.	107		25 March 1348-24 March 1349	245,100 lire (viii)						
	107		25 March 1349-24 March 1350	245,100 lire						
				HALF-YEARLY RECEIPTS						
1865, V, 53v-54		119.5	12 Sept. 1351-11 March 1352	229,702 lire (ix)	FLOUR	714 fl. 126,574, 12	39,978, 2 l.	3,662 fl.	17	5.2
1866, III, 35	129	60.5	12 March 1352-11 Sept. 1352	116,385 lire (x)	FLOUR	311 fl. 75,043, 14	30,360, 12 l.		26	
1866, VII, 63v		85.7	12 Sept. 1352-26 Feb. 1353	164,689 lire (xi)						
1867, I, 35-36		57.5	26 March 1354-25 Sept. 1354	109,793 lire (xii)						
1867, IV, n.p.		78.5	1 Nov. 1355-13 May 1356	150,977 lire (xiii)	VARIOUS	82.8 fl. 126,352, 15		unspecified payment		
1868, IV, 8v-9v	113	79	15 May 1357-14 Nov. 1357	152,075 lire (xiv)	VARIOUS	51.8 fl. 92,310	30,850 lire	18,735 lire	19	12
		57	15 Nov. 1357-14 May 1358	108,147 lire (xv)		354 fl. 64,500	23,751 lire	13,141 lire	22	12
		118	15 May 1358-14 Nov. 1358	227,362 lire (xvi)	VARIOUS	1,925 fl. 131,726, 5	395 fl. 30,987, 4	1,521 fl. 39,684	13.5	19
1869, VII, 54		72	15 Nov. 1360-15 May 1361	137,625 lire (xvii)		316 fl. 27,428	53,160, 10 l.	1,970 fl. 46,960	38.6	39
1870, VI, n.p.		80.5	15 Nov. 1362-14 May 1363	155,555 lire (xviii)	VARIOUS	73 fl. 39,192, 9	31,390 lire	75,382 lire	20	48.4
Leztoni, p. 197		150	3 July 1364-2 Jan. 1365	288,515 lire (xix)		50,370 fl. 9 s.	32,139 fl. (allowing for the <i>diminuzione del Monte</i>) 655 fl. 25,069, 3	incomplete	37	
		139	7 July 1366-6 Jan. 1367	267,651 lire (xx)		300 fl. 112,467, 12	110,639 lire		10	
		130	15 Sept. 1369-14 March 1370	238,688 lire (xxi)		113,834 l. l.			46.3	
		114	15 March 1370-14 Sept. 1370	218,997 lire		85,293, 1 l.	119,416 lire		54.5	
		105	15 Sept. 1370-14 March 1371	202,305 lire		unspecified payment	unspecified payment	unspecified payment		
	198	132	15 March 1371-14 Sept. 1371	253,393 lire (xxii)		119,639 lire	130,464 lire		51	
		101	15 Sept. 1371-14 March 1372	193,733 lire		68,250 lire	115,769 lire		59	
	207	147.5	15 March 1372-14 Sept. 1372	283,528 lire		105,569, 14 lire	162,831 lire		57	
		102	15 Sept. 1372-14 March 1373	196,289 lire (xxiii)		167 fl. 102,974	75,880 lire		38	
			15 March 1373-14 Sept. 1373			unspecified payment	unspecified payment			
	168.5	88	15 March 1374-14 Sept. 1374	168,812 lire (xxiv)						
		115	15 Sept. 1374-14 March 1375	220,145 lire (xxv)						
		85.5	15 March 1375-14 Sept. 1375	164,014 lire (xxvi)	VARIOUS	7,137 lire	142,810 lire		81	

NOTES:

- (i) Annual average 1342-43: 1346-50. 100 = 230,880.
(ii) The indices have been calculated from the gross figures; discussion of them will appear shortly. The half-yearly index represents the average receipt of the semesters 1361-75. Base 100 = 192,500.
(iii) The figures *italicized* are those given in florins and converted by me into lire. The gabelle was sold for two years for 90,000 florins per year. Average value of the florin 1337-38 = 62 soldi (G. Villani, XI, 67). I add 1000 lire for the first year and 2000 for the second in respect of the 'augmentum gabelle portarum' of 3000 lire voted for 20 months, starting on 1 April 1337. See p. 149. This increment explains the figure of 90,200 florins given by Villani for 1338, XI, 92.
(iv) Sold for two years, 130,000 florins to pay in the six months. Florin = 66 s. (average value according to tables to be published shortly).
(v) Average value of florin = 66 s. 2 d.
(vi) Sold for two years, 75,000 florins per year. Florin = 62 s. 6 d.
(vii) Florin = 62 s.
(viii) Sold for two years, 158,000 florins. Florin = 62 s. 6 d. The variations in the florin in 1348 make the choice of this figure arbitrary.
(ix) Exact amount, 3131 florins, 219,331 lire; florin = 66 s. 3 d., figure given by the book-keepers themselves. This sum includes the flour gabelle.
(x) Exact amount, 898 fl., 113,377 lire — florin = 67 s. Again includes flour.
(xi) Exact amount, 1478 fl., 159,738 lire — florin = 67 s. The term lasted only five and a half months. I have established the index over six months, assuming that the receipts for the last two weeks were equal to the average receipts for preceding fortnightly periods. No mention of flour.

- (xii) 663 fl., 107,473 lire — florin = 70 s. No mention of flour.
(xiii) 2038 fl., 143,739 lire — florin = 69 s. To this gabelle were added the 'gabella del macello del pieve S. Giovanni, gabella nova del vino, gabella della farina, gabella dei panateri e fornai che fanno pane a vendere'.
(xiv) 1456 fl., 147,125 lire — florin = 68 s. Same annexed gabelles as above.
(xv) 799 fl., 105,407 lire — florin = 68 s. 6 d. No mention of annexed gabelles.
(xvi) 3571 fl., 214,878 lire = florin = 67 s. 3 d. (figure given by book-keepers). No mention of annexed gabelles.
(xvii) 2311 fl., 129,768 lire — florin = 68 s. No mention of annexed gabelles.
(xviii) 321 fl., 154,480 lire — florin = 67 s. Annexed gabelles: *macello*, flour, tolls in *contado*.
(xix) 86,124 fl. — fl. = 67 s., Sapori, *Lezioni*, 171.
(xx) 1924 fl., 261,215 lire — florin = 68 s. 6 d. No mention of annexed gabelles.
(xxi) Figure given in lire. From now on, no mention of annexed gabelles.
(xxii) 109 fl., 246,243 lire — florin = 65 s. 6 d. (book-keepers' equivalence).
(xxiii) 253 fl., 195,440 lire — florin = 66 s. 6 d. (book-keepers' equivalence).
(xxiv) 266 fl., 167,855 lire — florin = 71 s.
(xxv) 130 fl., 219,664 lire — florin = 72 s.
(xxvi) 110 fl., 163,652 lire — florin = 75 s. Annexed gabelles: *macello*, tolls in *contado*.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

weight of the burden was permanent. But they at least testify to a significant growth in the maximum amount prescribed.

There can be no doubt that in the *contado*, as in the city, the rise in the salt gabelle was progressive and irreversible.

GABELLE ON WINE CASKED (*invegetato*) IN THE CONTADO

This gabelle may already have been in existence in 1291; there is talk in the *Pratiche* at that date of a 'redditus vini comitatus', but the reference is more likely to be to wine sold retail. Tariffs for wine in cask are known only from 1328, and are as follows:

Soldi/Cogno

DATE	TARIFF
before 10 Nov. 1328 ¹	10 s.
1341-1344 ²	10 s.
August 1347-48 ³	20 s. (?)
1351 ⁴	20 s.
Feb.-August 1352 ⁵	30 s.
Feb.-June 1353 ⁶	20 s.
March 1354-Oct. 1358 ⁷	30 s.

¹ On 10 November 1328 the gabelle 'que dicitur soldorum decem pro cogno' is transformed into a contractual imposition falling on the inhabitants of the *contado* pro rata with their *estimo*. For details of this law see Provv., XXV, 21v, and Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 196. This system continues in operation until 27 November 1330; the substitute tax then disappears in its turn, and all the impositions on inhabitants of the *contado* are consolidated, to form a single contribution of 20 soldi per lira of their *estimo*, Provv., CCXVI, II, 7.

² We know that the former gabelle was re-established before December 1341, since at that date it is purchased for one year by two Florentines. For its rate, 'sold. decem pro quolibet congio,' see Provv. Duplic., III, 27v. The rate is the same in 1342-44 (*ibid.*).

³ Sale in August 1347, for one year, of the 'gabella nova s.10 sp. pro quolibet congio vini quod incanovabitur', etc. This new gabelle must thus be additional to the old gabelle, Provv., XXXV, 11v.

⁴ Review of the accounts of the treasurer elected 'a la gabella delo residio del vino del contado di s. venti per cogno', in office since 18 September. The increase in rate is thus anterior to this date, since there is mention of a 'residuo', Appelli, 1865, V, 40.

⁵ The accounts of the gabelle 'S. XXX per cogno del vino del contado' for the fiscal term 20 February-10 August 1352 are examined Appelli, 1866, 180. Same examination in respect of the accounts of the official charged to collect 'e residuo di XXX s. per congno' from 16 August 1352 to 16 February 1353; there seems to be some question of arrears from a suppressed gabelle, Appelli, 1866, VII, 143. On 27 February the collection of these arrears is still incomplete, Provv., XL, 69v.

⁶ During these four and a half months the gabelle has been collected at 's. XX per cogno', *ibid.*, 123.

⁷ 25 March-20 October 1354, Appelli, 1867, I, 52; November 1355-May 1355, *ibid.*, IV, n.p. For the following years, see Appelli, 1868, VII, 4-4v, 19, 28.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

DATE	TARIFF
Feb. 1360–August 1362 ¹	20 s.
19 July 1371–1 Nov. 1372 ²	40 s.
March 1372 ³	20 s.
March 1375	

Despite fluctuations which in 1371–72 pushed the tariff up to a rate four times higher than in 1328, this gabelle, which merely doubled, is among those whose rise is least marked. Even so, it is worth noting that between 1354 and 1358 it kept to a level three times higher than that of 1328.

To sum up, only one gabelle, that on corn at the gates, shows a genuine stability during the period under review. The commune had no wish to increase the price of this vital commodity, which was often scarce and whose price, at such times, was difficult to keep at a reasonable level.

On the other hand, taxes on the other food-stuffs we have studied, also in everyday use, show an irreversible, albeit discontinuous, rise. After 1360, the duty on oil at the gates was at least five times higher than at the beginning of the century. The same is true of eggs and wine. The tax on this same wine, sold retail, increased tenfold during the same period. The gabelle on salt was also ten times heavier after 1368 than at the beginning of the century. In short, although increases were envisaged as temporary and often revoked after a few months, they always left an aftermath. At the end of a period of augmentation, even one consciously conceived as temporary, the gabelles rarely returned to their former level. The burden became ineluctably heavier as one crisis succeeded another. Obviously, our sample is very incomplete; it omits all industrial products, many food commodities, timber, building materials etc. Nevertheless the trend it indicates must surely be the general one. It is hardly likely that the Signoria made no attempt to distribute the burden, and that the growing weight of the gabelles was tied exclusively to products of large-scale consumption and great social importance. As we shall see, the Signoria always found it difficult to collect the gabelles with any regularity; under the necessity of assuaging popular resentment, the Signoria in all likelihood felt obliged to increase

¹ 18 February 1360–17 August 1360, Appelli, 1869, VII, 29; August 1362, *ibid.*, 1870, VI, 5.

² 19 July 1371, Provv., LIX, 69. Measures brought in 1 November 1372, *ibid.*, 259.

³ *Ibid.*, 20 soldi for three years.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

many other indirect taxes as part and parcel of the same programme, so that during the fourteenth century there was a proportionate increase at Florence in the rate of all the gabelles, without exception.

We have seen that under financial stress the commune made substantial additions to gabelle tariffs in the course of eighty years. Did the yields come up to expectations? In the absence of continuous data, I cannot show the yields from all the gabelles whose tariffs have just been studied. Nevertheless, thanks to the archives of the judge of appeals, who was responsible for scrutinizing the accounts of the gabelle officers (except where gabelles were put up for auction), it is possible to trace in fairly continuous fashion the evolution of receipts from the gate gabelle and from the gabelle on wine sold retail.¹

GATE GABELLES

Table I shows the global receipts of the treasurer of the gate gabelle from 1336.²

At first glance, it seems that revenues from this tax rose appreciably between 1342 and 1378, since they progress from index 100 for 1340-50 to index 198 or even 207 for 1371-73. The half-yearly indices point to the same conclusion (base index 100 = average half-yearly revenues for the period 1350-78): the known half-yearly figures for 1352-59, taken as a whole, give index 82³; this index is 111.8 for the half-yearly figures 1369-75, taken as a whole. And in fact this increase, which according to the annual figures is of about 36 per cent for 1371-75 in relation to 1352-59 and 86 per cent in relation to 1342-50, corresponds roughly to rises in the tariffs of certain of the gabelles (oil, by 50 per cent from 1342, wine at the gates by 66 per cent during the same period). More precisely, rises in receipts, at the time they first show themselves, often reflect alterations in the tariffs: it is very probable that the measures of

¹ One source for the study of the gabelles, as M. Becker has shown, is the *Camera del Comune*. However it is only completely reliable when gabelles have been put up for auction; in such cases the registers of the Camera record for the most part the total of the sum agreed, even if payments are incomplete. But, when gabelles are collected directly by the commune, as was usually the case after 1350, the *Camera del Comune* records only sums actually paid into it; now, as we have seen, this was often only a fraction, sometimes a very reduced fraction, of the total receipt.

² Davidsohn refers to a purchase by auction of the gate gabelle, valid for two years, for the sum of 2500 lire, on 26 April 1281, *Forschungen*, vol. IV, p. 304. The amount is so ridiculously small that the gabelle in question must be a supplementary one; I omit it here.

³ We have the figures for eight semesters between 1352 and 1359, four relating to the first half of the year and four to the second; it is therefore legitimate to calculate an approximate average. The same applies to the period 1369-75. For seasonal variations in the gate gabelles, see Saponi, *Lezioni*, pp. 172-5.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

351 are behind the 29 point rise in the index of receipts for 1352-53; at the tariff increases around the year 1358 — testified by the tax on hogs — are reflected in the receipts for the fiscal term May–November 1358 (index 118); that the decrees of late 1363 and early 1364 have their repercussions in the exceptionally high receipts of the Del Bene (index 150); and lastly that the levels of the gate tariffs, which remain persistently high despite an appreciable fall after 1360 (hogs, wine), and an even more marked fall after 1364 (corn, oil), account for the substantial yields regularly produced by the gabelles between 1369 and 1375. A parallelism thus certainly exists, and tariff rises can undoubtedly be held to account for short-term changes in the revenues from the gabelles.

It cannot be taken for granted that the same is true of long-term fluctuations. We may even wonder whether the rise from one decade to another, suggested by the figures, is not in part illusory. As a first glance at the table shows, there are occasions after 1350 when the treasurer of the gabelle, who until this date and specifically in 1338 had charge only of the gate gabelle,¹ finds his responsibilities augmented: in 1351, 1352 and 1355 he has to receive the flour gabelle; in 1354-57, in 1364 and again in 1375 he has to receive the *macello*, and lastly, in 1355-56, the gabelle on wine *invegetato in città*.² With the exception of the Del Bene accounts, the receipts are not given separate values, which obliges us to present them as global figures. Now both the statistics given by Villani and the books of the Del Bene show that these gabelles played a complementary rôle which was by no means negligible: in 1338 the tax on flour represents 5 per cent of the gate gabelle, that on slaughtering (*macello*) 16 per cent.³ In 1364 flour and *macello* together account for 25 per cent of the receipts taken by the gate officials.⁴ Thus, where the accounts of the judge of appeals show that the treasurer of the gate gabelle was also receiving other taxes, the increase revealed by the indices should be severely pruned. Inconsiderable for 1352, for 1355-56 the sum to be deducted amounts to perhaps as much as 25 per cent and

¹ G. Villani, XI, 92. Between January 1342 and August 1343 the receipts of the purchaser of the gate gabelle are still distributed under the following headings: 'mercantia', 'forestieri', 'porte' (both the normal and the false receipts); 'frontiere', Appelli, 1816, I, 98v.

² Appelli, 1865, V, 22, 53v, 54; 1866, III, 35; 1867, I, 35-6; IV, n.p.; 1868, IV, 8v-9v; Sapori, *Lezioni*, p. 197.

³ G. Villani, XI, 92: 90,000 florins (gates); 4,250 florins (flour); 15,000 florins (*macello*).

⁴ Sapori, *Lezioni*, p. 197. 64,926 florins (gates), 13,778 florins (*macello*), 7281 florins (*mulina* or flour), 86,105 florins (global receipts). The *macello* in question must be the tax levied 'in città'; the *contado macello*, when it is collected along with others, is combined with the *estimo*. Appelli, 1868, VII, 4 (1357), 19 (1357-8), 28 (1358).

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

for 1356-57 probably exceeds this figure.¹ It would be equally large for 1363 and 1375. The annual indices accordingly collapse: the index for 1357 would be not much above 90-96 (instead of 113).² The same applies to the half-yearly indices (113 instead of 150 in 1364).

Can we not assume that this was the general case? When the accessory gabelles fail to appear in the accounts, is not this the fault of the book-keepers? Anxious to simplify and speed up their work, have they not omitted to list under the general heading 'gate gabelle' the various items of which it was composed?³ The gate receipts for the half-year March-September 1375, the only ones in the years 1369-75 which we know for a fact have been artificially inflated, are the lowest in this five-year period; this low ebb would not disclose itself to such an extent, despite the plague and famine (the famine of 1369-71 makes little noticeable difference to the yield from the gabelle) if the financial year 1375 had enjoyed, and uniquely enjoyed, a plus-value of this kind. We must surmise, and the homogeneity of the figures convinces me this is so, that from 1355 the receipts from the gates were regularly being augmented by those from the *macello*, often by those from the flour gabelle and at times by others as well.

To sum up, the net yield from the gate gabelle seems to increase very little during the second half of the century. This stagnation is particularly noticeable for the decade 1350-60, in which the receipts for every year are in fact barely higher than in 1342-50: yet before and during the plague the yield from the gate tax seems to have been only moderate, while between 1350 and 1360 tariffs doubled (wine at the gates) or at least substantially rose. If the years 1365-75 seem by comparison to coincide with a recovery — all the more marked in view of the general relaxation in the standard tariffs of various taxes after 1365 — in a good year the real receipts are still probably no more than 30 per cent,

¹ In 1352 the only annexed gabelle is that on flour. Semester November 1355-May 1356: global receipts = 150,977 lire. The list of annexed gabelles is given above, see note xiii of the table. Their relative importance can be estimated as follows: *macello*, between 6 and 20 per cent; flour, between 5 and 10 per cent; bakers, between 3 and 6 per cent (produces 6000 lire in six months of 1355, Appelli, 1867, IV, 65); wine, between 10 and 15 per cent (probably the gabelle 'del vino che se mete nella città', which we know was collected with the gate gabelle during the next official term), May-November 1356, Appelli, 1867, N.S. At the end of 1363 this last gabelle brings in 9000 lire in three months. To sum up, the contribution of the annexed gabelles was between 25 and 50 per cent. The same applies to the semester May-November 1357.

² Deducting 30 per cent from the receipt for the first semester, we are left with about 214,000 lire for the year, a figure very little higher than that of 1342.

³ We know that the *macello* gabelle was assigned to the gates in 1375 because the accountant responsible for the audit, under the general heading 'gate gabelle', has been careful to note after the reference to 'Entrata' that the treasurer received the gate gabelle 'e per lo macello', Appelli, 1873, VIII, 32.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

at most 50 per cent, higher than those in the years around 1338,¹ and this at a time when all known tariffs were twice as high as in the earlier year. The rise in receipts does not keep pace with the rise in tariff rates.

GABELLE ON WINE SOLD RETAIL

Table II shows that between 1295 and 1377 there was a considerable advance in the receipts from wine sold retail: between 1370 and 1375 they regularly run at least fifteen times higher than at the beginning of the century. The rise is most marked in the twenty years 1310–30, during which receipts multiply by 6.75. Subsequently, after a period of sixteen years (1332–48) during which the index of the tax's yield hovers around 12 (except during the official term 1342–43), there is a further rise, following the plague. In 1353–54 the index tops 17, remains at this level during 1355–56, and appears to stay within one or two points of it throughout the following decades, if the half-yearly indices are any guide. The boom harvest year of 1370 is also a year of maximum yield (index 18.62), followed by a slight decline (1372–73).

These rises can be matched with changes in the tariff: the twelvefold increase in the yield from the gabelle between 1299 and 1322 must in part be due to the rise in tariffs, which by 1332 would already be approaching their 1340 level; if the index gains three points between 1335 and 1336, it is probably because the tariff found in operation in 1340 came into force about that time. The tariff increase of 1349 must be primarily responsible for the new level attained by the yield in May–October 1351 and in 1353–55 (index 18.70). The measures of 1358 and 1359 are not reflected in the table, but our figures for that period are too fragmentary. On the other hand, the substantial receipts which flow in without a break from 1367–77 betray unequivocally the important part played, in the retail sales, by a predetermined fiscal share, which was probably kept stabilized at half the retail price.

Nevertheless, the rise in receipts cannot be wholly ascribed to the rise in tariffs, which was much less pronounced. Between 1299 and 1340 tariffs multiplied by 4, receipts by 14 or more; between the beginning of the century and the onset of the plague, tariffs multiplied by 6, revenues

¹ In 1374–75, admittedly an indifferent year, the receipts from the gate gabelles in lire are one and a half times higher than in an average year between 1342 and 1350 (index 168), if we deduct the *macello* (10 per cent); the receipts are not more than 350,000 lire. The index falls to 152. But from January 1374 the florin increased in value so that, converted into florins, the receipts are even smaller; assuming the florin to equal 72 soldi (its average value 1374–beginning of 1375, calculated from 24 known values), the *entrata* amounts to only 97,200 florins (index 133; the average for 1342–1350 = 73,000 florins, index 100). In 1338 it is 90,000 florins, a difference of 8 per cent.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

from the gabelles by 15 or 18. At least until 1350-55, the growth in receipts is twice as marked as the increase in tariff rates, the disproportion being particularly apparent in the first third of the century (1300-36).

The first explanation of this fact to come to mind is an increase in retail sales of wine during the first decades of the century, attributable to the enlargement of the *contado*¹ and the greater activity to be found there at certain times, due to the passage of pilgrims, new building work² and wartime markets. Such happenings undoubtedly had their repercussions on consumption during the earlier decades. They do not, however, appear to have had any decisive long term influence on the yield from the gabelle. One observation will suffice: the best receipts occur after the plague. The basic reason for the increase in receipts seems, in fact, to have been the rise in the retail price of wine. There are instances of retailers being left completely free to fix their prices.³ But in general, since sales of this commodity made such a substantial contribution to the state coffers and since the tax on it was proportionate to the price, there was good reason for the commune to keep watch over the price or better still to fix it. We find the price of wine being officially determined on a number of occasions, and may wonder whether this was not the general practice throughout the century.⁴ Controlled by the

¹ Without taking into account villages seized from the barons of the Apennines (*feudatari*), whose fiscal status down to 1350 is somewhat obscure (cf. A. Vecchi, *Residui feudali nel territorio fiorentino nel sec. XIV*, typewritten thesis, Florence, 1958), between 1290 and 1340 the following villages were permanently incorporated in the *contado*: Poggibonsi (late 13th-early 14th century), Castelfiorentino (1313-43), Gambassi (after 1293), Carmignano (1328-29), each with its neighbouring *popoli*, various communities in the Val di Nievole (1330-50); altogether several thousands of hearths. The articles of submission envisage certain tax remissions, but these were for only a limited period. Take the gabelle on retail wine: the communes in the Val di Nievole were paying it from 15 April 1342, Provv. Dupl., III, 9v, Carmignano and some of the Apennine villages from before 1340, Provv., XXXII, 88, December 1343. Prato and its *contado*, acquired in 1350, paid this tax from 1351 (Table II).

² The men of the *piviere* of Decimo petition in 1362 for a reduction in the amount they are obliged to pay annually in respect of this gabelle; this sum had been calculated on the basis of the years 1355-58. Now at this period building work had been in progress in the *piviere*, on the fortifications of San Casciano, and 'continue ibi stabant et fuerunt multi forenses, magistri, manuales, officiales et alie plures persone que bibebant de vino gabellato; propter quod dictis annis . . . dicta gabella ascendit ad magnam summam. . .'. They therefore ask that another base be selected for the calculation, 'dumtamen in illis annis non comprehendatur annum jubilei seu generalis indulgentie . . . propter amplos introitus dicte gabelle in dicto anno', Provv., XLIX, 96, 12 February 1362.

³ Before December 1299 the commune decrees that anyone shall be able to sell his wine retail, wherever it may be, 'pro illo pretio et quantitate quod et quam sibi placeret', Provv., X, 180. A measure of 1349 authorises anyone to sell 'vinum ad minutum . . . quamtotumque pretio sibi videtur', Provv., XXXVII, 45v. Among the opinions expressed by the *Pratiche* in 1358 is the following: 'quod cuilibet liceat vendere vinum pro libito', Cons. Prat., I, 180.

⁴ Periods when prices were uncontrolled, some of them of very brief duration, seem to be interspersed among longer periods when fixing of prices is the general rule. The

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

commune in this way, retail prices reached a very high level. Wholesale prices, on the other hand, despite steep cyclical rises, increased only moderately during the first half of the trecento and now and then fell back to the level they held at the beginning of the century. Between 1313 and 1320 the price at time of harvest of a *cogno* of red wine of medium quality fluctuated between 6 and 10 lire; this was still its price in 1331-1338; even in 1354, 1357 and 1358, years of good vintage, it did not rise above 13 lire.¹ There is nothing comparable in the retail prices, as is shown in the following table.

Retail Price of Wine (denari per demi-quart)

Reference	Year	Nov.- Dec.	Jan.- Feb.	March- April	May- June	July- Aug.	Sept.- Oct.
1. <i>Red Wine</i> <i>Consulte</i> , ed. Gherardi, vol. I, 255-7	1285 July	8 8	10 10	10 10	12 12	12 12	12 12
	Prov., VIII, 147	6 6	6 8	8 8	10 10	10 12	12 12
	Prov., CCXI, 6	12 12	12 12	12 12	16 16	16 16	16 16
	Cons. Prat., I, 180	1358 Nov.	80 80	80 80	88 88	88 88	96 96
2. <i>White Wine</i> <i>Consulte</i> , ed. Gherardi, vol. I, 255-7	1285 July	8 8	10 10	10 10	12 12	12 12	12 12
	Prov., VIII, 147	8 8	8 10	10 10	12 12	12 14	14 14
	Prov., CCXI, 6	1301	14 14	14 14	14 14	18 18	18 18
	Cons. Prat., I, 180	1358 Oct.	96 96	96 96	108 108	108 108	120 120

measure of December 1299 cancels the articles of agreement concluded by the commune and the purchaser at the auction, which laid down 'pretia et quantitatem'. From now on sellers were allowed to sell their wares 'etiam ultra'. The measure of 1349 is adopted 'non obstantibus ordinibus editis circa pretia vini'; in the discussion of 1358 allusion is made to an 'ordinamentum jam factum' on the price of wine. Out of four proposals, only one envisages freedom of sale. It was not adopted. By contrast, as we shall see, there are instances of price fixing in 1285, 1297, 1303 and 1358.

For price controls at Florence see M. Becker, 'La esecuzione della legislazione contro le pratiche monopolistiche delle arti fiorentine alla metà del secolo quattordicesimo', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXVII (1959), pp. 8-29 and the discussion by Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', pp. 438 ff.

¹ These figures will be justified in a work in course of preparation.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

It is true that the prices for 1358, mentioned in only one document, could have been exceptional. This does not seem to have been the case. It is obvious that the previous prices, already fixed by the commune, were of the same order, since one adviser suggests that to obtain the desired increase in receipts the same prices be adopted, with a simple readjustment of 8 denari per demi-quart. As regards the prices which might develop spontaneously in a free market, the advisers clearly imagine they would differ little from the taxed prices, since they decide to leave non-Florentine white wines untaxed,¹ having no reason, it seems, to fear their competition.

To sum up, in 1358 wine sold retail was nine (red wine) or ten (white wine) times more expensive than in 1297. Now we have seen that in the same period the gabelle rate rose from 6.25 per cent of the retail price to 40 per cent, a sixfold increase. In 1358 the sale of a given quantity of wine brought in for the commune a sum 55 to 60 times greater than in 1297. Assuming that the taxed prices remained the same for the following year, in 1359, when tariffs were increased, the commune's predetermined share would have been 90 to 100 times greater than in 1297.

Thus in 1358-59 there is an obvious imbalance between receipts per unit and global receipts; the increase in the former since 1299 has been from three to five times as great as in the latter. Whether because of a fall in sales or slackness in collection, in 1358 the retail tax appears to be levied on a quantity of wine at the lowest estimate three times smaller than in 1299.

But this is not a phenomenon peculiar to 1358; it must have appeared earlier and continued after this date.

While until about 1342 it is possible that the rise in receipts reflects and even exceeds the combined rise in the sale and gabelle tariffs,² which would argue an increase in consumption, after that date the situation alters. Notwithstanding sundry indications which suggest a genuine profitability in retail sales around 1344,³ the fall in receipts

¹ 'Quod gabella exigatur ut hactenus et quod vinum nostratum possit vendi ultra ordinamentum jam factum vid. rubeum IIII denarios metadella' (proposal supported by seven members); among the decisions taken, 'vinum forense vendatur pro libito', Cons. Prat., I, 180.

² From 1295-1300 to 1336-38 receipts multiply by about fifteen (see table), gabelle tariffs by about three; if, as is probable, prices multiplied by about five, the rise in receipts to some extent reflects a rise in consumption.

³ Certain indications from the years 1330-45 seem to suggest an increase in demand and a proliferation in places of sale. In 1344 the wine-merchants' gild presents a petition to the Priors demanding that sales of wine by individuals, which have increased beyond their control, be compulsorily subjected to the jurisdiction of their gild. In 1346 a rubric is added to the statutes of the wine-merchants designed to eliminate competition, which has apparently recently become fierce, opposing the inn-keepers over the question of keeping cellars and shops; in the same year the wine-merchants

which starts after 1342 and continues until 1348¹ — and coincides, what is more, with a rise in the tax — signalizes an appreciable dwindling away of the taxable base. After 1358 we have no further information concerning sale tariffs until 1378. But the gabelle tariff probably rose by about ten points, possibly more. The receipts, however, show no advance. If anything, they decline.

In short, these two examples, the gate gabelle and the gabelle on retail wine, illustrate the growing complexity of the problems which indirect taxes presented to the commune. As we have seen, such taxes played an ever-increasing rôle in the communal budget, a budget which never stopped growing. Their place in the fiscal system ended by being fundamental. The commune found itself making continual increases in all the tariff rates, without exception, but the receipts failed to keep pace with them.

I would like to consider briefly why this should have been so. What were the causes of the stagnation, one might even say regression? And what the consequences? Was the commune really injured by it, and if so, at what level?

One of the leading causes was certainly the fall in population in 1348 and its subsequent decline, which was still continuing in 1378.² The plague and its recurrences go a long way to explain the distortion noticeable after 1350 between receipts per unit and global receipts, as compared with those of 1300. Nevertheless, we must bear in mind that this disproportion in the global receipts is also noticeable in the gate gabelle and gabelle on retail wine during the period 1343-48; and we should note that although population within the limits of the *contado* of 1350 declined between 1348 and 1378, the *contado* itself was expanding during those thirty years and that these new acquisitions kept the number of Florentine fiscal units at a stable level.³ Now, without taking into

feel themselves strong enough to make their suppliers pay the freight charges on the wine they purchase from them. *Statuti delle arti dei fornai e dei vinattieri di Firenze*, ed. F. Morandini (Florence, 1956), pp. 123, 129 (LI-LII), 133 (LVIII).

¹ Index of receipts 1334-40: 13·26; 1342-48: 11·23.

² Urban population figures according to Fiumi, 'La demografia', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIII (1950), pp. 106-12: 18,000 hearths in 1347, 15,000 in 1352, 13,370 in 1379. All the figures are approximate, especially the first. It should be noted, as Fiumi points out, that the number of inhabitants per hearth may have varied over the twenty-five years. There are no global figures for the *contado* before 1348, Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', p. 481, in which he corrects his own 'Demografia', *passim*.

³ The chief acquisitions after 1350 were as follows (except where stated otherwise, all references are to *I Capitoli del comune di Firenze*, ed. A. Gherardi (Florence, 1866-93), vol. I, under the relevant name): Montagna Fiorentina, 1349; Raggiolo (Casentino), May 1357, Provv., XLIV, 125; Romena (Casentino), Oct. 1357; Bibbiena, Jan 1360; Soci and Farneto (Casentino), Jan. 1360, Provv., XLVII, 96v, 117v; Montecarelli

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

account the gate gabelle, for the economic link between Florence and these subject communities certainly preceded their political union, if we look, for example, at the gabelle on retail wine, we find that it fails to reflect this stabilization in the number of taxpayers, since the receipts for 1370-75 are about nine per cent down on those for 1353-56;¹ and the same applies to the salt gabelle. If the great crisis of 1348 is ignored, the effects of minor demographic fluctuations appear to have been deadened by other impulses to which the gabelles were more sensitive. It is natural to think at this point of the economic situation as a whole.

The Florentine economy, which shows signs of distress from 1339, by 1343-44 was in a state of collapse.² Various indications (rise in rents, increased inscriptions in the guilds, sustained activity by Florentine merchants abroad) suggests that the plague was followed by a partial recovery, but this return to prosperity proved ephemeral: the emigration of craftsmen and successive bankruptcies (in 1358-60, 1366, 1378) are testimony, after 1360, to a general malaise, made worse by dearths (1368-71, 1374-75), epidemics (1363 and 1374) and wars.³ Florence did not escape the economic slump which hit the West after 1350. The

(Mugello) and neighbouring *popoli*, 1360, Provv., XLVIII, 1; Staggia (Val d'Elsa), 1361; Cerbaia, 1361, M. Villani, X, 52; Montaione (Val d'Elsa), 1369; Dicomano and surroundings (definitive occupation), 1373, Stefani, *Cronaca*, rub. 740; S. Miniato al Tedesco, 1369-70. Say about 3000 hearths, going by the population figures given for these villages by Fiumi, 'La Demografia', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIII, pp. 127 ff. Where articles of submission include clauses of fiscal exemption, they are only for a specific time: 6 years (Montecarelli), 10 years (Serra, Gello, San Miniato), 12 years at most (Bibbiena, Montagna Fiorentina). Furthermore, the exemption never applies to the gabelle at the gates of Florence and not always to the gabelle on retail wine or the salt gabelle. All in all, the acquisitions made between 1350 and 1380 compensate for the fall in population, leaving the number of Florentine taxpayers stationary.

¹ For 1350-59 the average half-yearly index, taken over eight semesters, is 107. For 1370-79 the average half-yearly index, taken over twelve semesters, 98. In the two samples the numbers of first semesters and second semesters are equal (4 and 4, 5 and 5).

² I adhere to the current view, recently summarized again by G. Brucker in *Florentine Politics*, pp. 5-9. See also W. Ferguson, 'Recent trends in the economic historiography of the Renaissance', *Studies in the Renaissance*, vol. VII (1960), pp. 7-27; R. S. Lopez, *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. II (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 338 *et seq.* M. Becker, 'Florentine popular government,' p. 368, basing himself on the rise in the urban population and the receipts from the gate gabelle, thinks that the interval 1343-47 'was, in fact, a period of adjustment and growth, rather than of protracted depression'. But the growth of population 1340-47 is extremely hypothetical: the only source for it is G. Villani's approximate estimate of the mortalities for these two years, see G. Villani, XI, 114, XII, 84, and Fiumi, 'La Demografia,' *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIII, p. 106, n. 57. As for the slight rise in receipts from the gate gabelle, Becker has not taken possible tariff rises into account. In any case, as I shall show elsewhere, the same period not only saw steep increases in commodity prices but also an appreciable decline in wages: how, then, can one speak of 'growth'?

³ Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, pp. 11-14; Lopez, *op. cit.*, pp. 343-4. For the economic difficulties which preceded the Ciompi movement, see below.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

generally poor returns from the gabelles between 1343 and 1350, and during the second half of the century, must in large part flow from this state of affairs. Yet when we look into the details, for instance at the gate gabelle (bearing in mind its artificial increment), we find that the returns of this gabelle are consistently more meagre between 1351 and 1361, a period of higher tariffs, than between 1369 and 1375, when duties were appreciably lower. This gabelle goes against the general trend. It is true that, contrary to general opinion, the gate gabelles reflect primarily the volume of internal traffic, specifically the traffic in important food-stuffs.¹ But this gabelle, even if it was more stable, because levied on essential commodities, should also have been affected by the great crisis.

The fact is that while long-term demographic and economic fluctuations certainly played an important part in the fortunes of the gabelles, at the level of decades there is another important element, essential to obtaining a satisfactory yield from taxes, to be considered: namely the method of dealing with difficulties experienced in collecting them. In practice there were many such difficulties, and numerous debates in the *Pratiche*, as well as legislation which did not shrink from making radical changes in the system, showed that the Florentines were fully aware of the threat from this quarter to the profitability of their taxes.

It is the gravity of this problem, together with the long-term results obtained by the commune in its efforts to resolve it, that I now wish to consider.

Generally speaking, there were a number of constant factors which impeded collection of the gabelles throughout the fourteenth century.

In the first place, there were the exemptions enjoyed by certain potential taxpayers. Should we include in this group foreign towns which received Florentine goods as free imports? A statute of 1325 in effect declares that goods from such towns will be liable at Florence to a tax equal to that which these towns themselves impose on goods coming from Florence, the gabelle to be put up for auction; if another

¹ In 1363 the share of the *Mercanzia* in the gate gabelle was 18 per cent, Saporì, *Lezioni*, p. 197. In 1338 the contribution of wine alone to this same gabelle was about 30 per cent. At this date, in fact, 55,000 *cogna* of wine were being brought into Florence every year (G. Villani, XI, 94); each *cogno* paid a tax of 30 soldi at the gates. Value of the florin: 62 s. 6 d. Thus out of the 90,000 florins produced by the gabelle (G. Villani, XI, 92), about 26,000 came from wine. The figure is approximate, wine being free of tax at the gates for certain communities. After 1364 the contribution of the *Mercanzia* certainly did not increase. For example, in January 1364 all speakers in the *Pratiche*, save one, were of the opinion 'gabella mercantiarum non est utilis, ymo dampnosa', Cons. Prat., V, 6.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

town suppresses its own gabelle, Florence will follow suit.¹ But in this event, would such goods be allowed to pass through the gates of Florence entirely free of tax? It seems hardly likely. Some important foreigners enjoyed a more clear-cut and complete exemption from gate tolls: barons, senior prelates and ambassadors all had diplomatic immunity and their baggage was not searched.² Others who were privileged were Florentines, such as a number of religious communities. From 1322, the Cistercian abbeys of Settimo and Buonsollazo and the Umiliati of Ognissanti were immune from all 'libra, imposita, factio, prestantia, vel aliquod onus', and this included the gabelles, or at any rate the gate gabelle.³ About this time or later, the privilege of immunity at the gates was also extended to other clerics: when the privilege was finally abrogated in April 1373, after protracted negotiations⁴ and temporary suspensions, the right to make the contractual grant which took its place was conceded every year to over eighty beneficiaries.⁵ The ranks of the privileged were further swelled by the rural communities recently incorporated into the *contado*. Such communities were permitted to pay a reduced imposition over a period of between one and fifteen years, sometimes longer; and there were only certain gabelles they were obliged to pay.⁶

Such were the regular exemptions, accepted as a matter of course. Naturally, we cannot place a figure on them. They probably represent only an insignificant percentage of the receipts.

¹ *Statuto del Capitano*, IV, 40, p. 203.

² On 23 December 1367 the commune appoints officials to supervise the gates, so that this privilege may be enjoyed by the beneficiaries without interference. The privilege is thus older. Provv., LV, 108. Cf. Saporì, *Lezioni*, who quotes the Statutes of 1415.

³ Privilege of 1322-25, *Statuto del Capitano*, V, 72-3, pp. 270-1. Exemption from the gate gabelle: on 21 October 1328 a peasant is imprisoned for having tried to evade the gate gabelle by fraud; he had brought in his wine 'sub defensione et sigillo dicti monasterii [the Cistercian monastery of Settimo], ipsum sigillum . . . falsificando et falsum portendo sigillum super apodisis, in figuram sigilli dicti monasterii', C.R.S., 484, 15v. The exempt communities were required on each occasion to present a ticket bearing their seal. For the other advantages and exemptions granted to Settimo, see P. J. Jones, 'Le Finanze della Badia Cistercense di Settimo nel XIV Secolo', *Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia*, vol. X (1956), p. 91.

⁴ 'Componitur cum clericis de gabella in recompensationem ejus quod contingeret . . . a dictis clericis et religiosis pro dictis gabellis . . . exegi, recipi seu peti,' 23 December 1367, Provv., LV, 108. For taxes affecting the clergy, see the references given by G. Brucker, *Florentine Politics*, p. 196, n. 9.

⁵ Temporary suspension: from 1 January 1372 the gate gabelle was exacted from certain exempt communities; but this measure did not revoke the 'compositio facta hactenus cum ipsis religiosis seu clericis circa eorum immunitatem'. Furthermore, there was in operation a procedure 'de certa conventionem fienda cum clericis . . . circa gabellam'. By 12 April 1373 all this is 'nulla, irrita et inania'. The 80 beneficiaries are all clerics or urban monasteries (including Ognissanti); nothing is said about Settimo. Provv., LXI, 15v-17v.

⁶ See p. 170.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

It is quite otherwise with obstacles of an economic order, in which political or religious considerations played no part; I refer here to obstacles encountered in the collection of taxes actually due. At no time in the century were these difficulties absent, and in times of crisis they made themselves acutely felt.

A first indication of malaise is when payments fall into arrears. A war, exceptionally high prices, a poor harvest, and sometimes events of a more trivial nature, have an immediate effect on the regularity of payments. Take, for example, the wine gabelles; the campaigns fought in the *contado* in 1340–42, in the course of the wars against Pisa and the barons of the Apennines, made it impossible to collect the gabelle on retail wine in the Val d'Arno, the Val di Sieve, the Mugello and the Val d'Elsa; arrears mounted up over two years. Plague and famine prevented the gabelle from being collected in full from the rest of the *contado*.¹ The same difficulties were experienced in 1343 for identical reasons²; in 1347, because of famine;³ and again in 1356.⁴ In 1348 there was the same period of delay in collecting the tax on casked wine, because the plague had thrown the machinery out of gear; in 1351, over 3000 producers from 422 villages had still paid nothing for the harvest of 1348.⁵ With salt, arrears sometimes mount up over five-year periods: in January 1319, and again in 1326, many rural taxpayers were one year in arrears,⁶ but in January 1358 many were well and truly in debt, having accumulated nine years of arrears;⁷ and the majority of these delays were cumulative.⁸

Genuine poverty was often at the root of such delays. People did not pay their taxes because they lacked the means to do so. But incapacity was not infrequently a cloak for fraud. Some frauds of this nature are mentioned in the official documents and there must have been many more. Fraud was practised at the gates by usurping the immunity of a monastery⁹ or by playing on the lack of communication between the purchaser of the gabelle proper and the purchaser of the '*augmentum*

¹ Provv. Duplic., III, 9v, 7 August 1342.

² Provv., XXXII, 88, 9 Dec. 1343.

³ Provv., Duplic., VII, 40v, 8 July 1347.

⁴ Provv., XLIII, 4, 15 January 1356.

⁵ Appelli, 1865, I, parchment pages (my own deduction; the S. Spirito quarter is lacking).

⁶ Provv., XVI, 5v, 3 January 1319; *ibid.*, XXII, 62, 11 February 1325. The regions in question are essentially those invaded by the enemy.

⁷ Provv., XLV, 234, 4 July 1358 — in arrears since 1349.

⁸ In the *contado*, many examples of accumulated arrears: in 1327, arrears in at least four gabelles (bread, casked wine, retail wine, rents), Provv., XXIV, 29, 11 December 1327. Other examples for 1339 (Provv., XXIX, 1v), 1340, 1342, 1351, 1358, 1363, 1366.

⁹ See p. 173, n. 3.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

gabelle.¹ Both in the city and in the *contado*, people cheated over the gabelle on retail wine, by claiming a fictitious immunity, by concealing sales, by asserting that casks really destined for retail sale were being kept for domestic consumption.² There were frontier districts of the *contado* which at times carried on a brisk contraband traffic in salt, as for example the Montagna Fiorentina in 1365³ and the Mugello;⁴ even the suburbs of Florence were not immune, three men from Settimo being condemned for this offence in 1368.

How did the commune react to these damaging malpractices? Where possible, with severity.⁵ But severity was not always either possible or desirable, even in cases of fraud. Since many of the defaulters were genuinely unable to pay, on account of poverty, the commune was obliged to grant facilities for payment; after 1348, not a year goes by without the vote — or indeed several votes — of a partial or general moratorium in respect of gabelles. This became a fiscal habit, which was extended to the *estimo* and the *prestanze*.⁶ But when, as so often

¹ 'Propter venditionem augmenti gabelle duplicationis ejus quod solvitur . . . ad portas Civitatis Florentiae . . . multa incommoda et *fraudes* obveniunt', 5 June 1336, Provv., XXVII, 50v.

² Pretended immunity: Nov. 1333, the commune denounces those who falsely declare 'immunitatem habere' and refuse to pay the gabelle (in the *contado*), Provv., XXVI, 58. Disguised sales: in the city, see p. 156; in the *contado*, see e.g. Provv., LV, 51v (frauds at Hostina between 1360 and 1364). Stock-piling under pretext of domestic consumption: on 12 September 1359 the commune again denounces 'multas fraudes' on retail wine. It decrees that all who dispose of their wine 'prope ipsam civitatem per tria miliaria . . . in aliqua taberna' are to have their casks marked with the 'segnatura grossa', even if they declare the wine to be for their own use. The same obligation to be binding on all who lay in a quantity of more than 8 *cogna* of wine for domestic consumption. Provv., XLVII, 37v.

³ Provv., LIII, 110, 22 January 1366.

⁴ Provv., LXIII, 116v; Provv., LVI, 101, 22 November 1368. It is noticeable that frauds and defaultings multiply and spread at times when the government is in difficulties: 1343 (expulsion of the Duke of Athens), M. Becker, 'Florentine Popular Government', p. 361; 1348 (plague); 1355 (only a short time after Charles IV's Italian expedition). On these two latter occasions there were numerous defaultings in the *contado*; and Provv., XLIII, 4, 15 January 1356.

⁵ In 1356, for example, appointment of an officer charged to 'cogere . . . per multam et condemnationem et destructionem et pignora bonorum . . . omnes homines ad solvendum' (wine gabelle, contracts, *macello*), Provv., XLIII, 4.

⁶ Thus in the twelve years 1352-64:

1352: salt gabelle, moratorium of one and a half months for all the communities of the *contado*, Provv., XL, 3v.

1353: January, the whole of the *contado*, all impositions and gabelles, one month. June, the whole of the *contado*, *estimo*, three months. September, December, the whole of the *contado*, three successive extensions of the June moratorium, Provv., XL, 44, 118v, 150, 167v, 183.

1354: August, whole of the *contado*, *estimo*; amnesty for 4 years of arrears, Provv., XLI, 50v.

1355: April *contado*, sundry gabelles and the *estimo* of 1354, third moratorium; November, fourth moratorium, Provv., XLII, 17, 42v, 156.

1358: October and December, market gabelle, contracts, salt, extended for two and later four months, Provv., XLVI, 40, 63v.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

happened, defaulters were still unable to pay when the supplementary period had expired, there was nothing for it but to agree to reducing or even completely wiping out the debt. Such measures were often of limited application, made on behalf of specific communities more direly afflicted than others by calamity.¹ But they were frequently general,² and the remissions could be considerable — amounting in 1352 to three-quarters of the salt gabelle, in 1327 to 95 per cent of the gabelles as a whole, and in December 1317 to a total remission.³ In time of dearth or war, some of the gate gabelles were suspended in their turn: thus the corn gabelle was partially suspended in 1291, wholly suspended for a month in 1327, for five months in 1333, for seven months in 1344 and in 1376; the gabelle on livestock was suspended in June 1351.⁴

Even frauds, when they became widespread, were sometimes condoned by the commune; after much palaver, the 3000 defaulters on the gabelle on casked wine for 1348 were each sentenced to fines of 10 lire. When we look at the dates of the cancellations, we find that the first settlements occur only in 1377. Several of those sentenced seem to have paid nothing at all. Thus from motives of humanity, opportunism and political necessity, the commune was obliged right through the century to mitigate the rigour of the fiscal pressure it had itself created and to renounce part of the revenue it anticipated from the gabelles.

Nevertheless, there was one element which should have made for greater stability in receipts from the gabelles and a guaranteed annual

Numerous similar measures for each year from 1359 to 1363, Provv., XLVII to XLIX, *passim*. Pretext most frequently invoked: 'paupertatem et inopiam.'

¹ Thus in 1352, *pieve* of Acona, Provv., XL, 54; 1354, commune of Mangona and nine villages of the Mugello, Provv., XLI, 4 and 16v (partial reductions on account of the war), etc.

² Examples: 1351, twelve officers to be empowered to examine the accounts of debtor individuals and communities 'pro aliquibus libris, prestantiis . . . gabellis' and to reduce them 'ad eam quantitatem quam voluerunt', Provv., CCXVI, 11, 21v; 1336, 26 June: similar provision 'reducere seu liberare in totam vel in partem', Provv., XXVII, 57.

³ In 1352: salt to be sold to inhabitants of the *contado* at 15 soldi per *stajo* instead of 3 lire, Provv., XL, 3v; 1327: all taxpayers in default for gabelles given opportunity to discharge their debt fully and without penalty on paying 1 soldo in the lira, Provv., XXIV, 29; 1317, 23 December: revocation of a provision voted at the beginning of the month, in favour of all the communities of the *contado* 'super eis liberandis et absolvendis ab omnibus et singulis solutionibus . . . occasione aliquarum librarum, prestantiarum, impositarum, gabellarum' due since 25 March last, Provv., XV, 118.

⁴ 1291, 17 February: no gabelle on corn coming from Romagna 'in Or San Michele', Provv., II, 63v; 1327 (4 April-4 May), Provv., XXIII, n.p., 3 April; 1333-34, suppression of the gabelle for wheat and bread (4 Nov.-6 April), Provv., XXVI, 119; 1344 (1 May-1 December), the purchasers of the gate gabelle default on their payments, which they have not collected for this very reason, Cam. Comune, Entrata, VI, 79, VII, 115v, 153, VIII, 9, 22, IX, 42; 1376, June-September, Cons. Prat., XIV 41, 67v; 1351, Provv., XI, 115v.

TABLE II: GABELLE ON RETAIL WINE

REFERENCE	ANNUAL INDEX (i)	HALF-YEARLY INDEX (ii)	DATES 1 Nov.-31 Oct. unless otherwise stated	RECEIPT		USCITA (PAYMENTS)						
				1st semester (Nov.-April) to the nearest lira	2nd semester (May-Oct.)	CAMERA COMUNE	%	MONTE	%	PAYMENTS ON PRESTANZE OR TO CREDITORS	%	
<i>Consulte</i> , ed. Gherardi, II, 514	·87		1295-1296	10,850 lire								
Provv., VIII, 80	1·08		1296-1297	13,500 lire								
Provv., VII, 197v	·9		1298 (1 March)-1299 (28 Feb.)	11,220 lire								
Provv., X, 180	·93		1299 (1 April)-1300 (31 March)	11,520 lire								
Provv., XI, 82	1·2		1301-1302	15,000 lire								
Provv., XIII, 192	1·61		1308 (20 March)-1309 (19 March)	20,000 lire								
Provv., XXVI, 58	10·87		1332 (10 Dec.)-1333 (9 Dec.)	135,000 lire								
Provv., XXVI, 58	10·87	presumably	1333 (—)-1334 (—)	135,000 lire								
Provv., XXVI, 99	11·27	"	1334 (—)-1335 (—)	142,000 lire								
	11·27	"	1335 (—)-1336 (—)	142,000 lire								
Provv., XXVIII, 110	14·80		1337 (—)-1338 (—)	183,830 lire (iii)								
	14·80		1336 (—)-1337 (—)	183,830 lire								
Provv., XXVIII, 28	13·75		1338 (—)-1339 (—)	170,810 lire (iv)								
	13·75		1339 (—)-1340 (—)	170,810 lire								
Provv., XXXI, 55	9·49		1342 (—)-1343 (—)	117,900 lire (v)								
Provv., XXXII, 151	12·67		1343 (—)-1344 (—)	155,420 lire (vi)								
Capitoli, XVIII, 128	11·33		1344 (—)-1345 (—)	140,800 lire (vii)								
	11·15		1345 (—)-1346 (—)	137,500 lire (viii)								
	10·89		1346 (—)-1347 (—)	135,300 lire (ix)								
Provv., XXXV, 7	11·87		1348 (1 Jan.)-1348 (31 Dec.)	147,500 lire (x)								
Appelli, 1822, IX, 142	6·44		1348 (1 Nov.)-1349 (31 Oct.)	80,000 lire								
Appelli, 1865, VI, n.p.		103	1350-1351 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)		113,105 (xi)							
V, 75v-76		92	1351-1352 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	97,153 l.		84,633	87					
			1352-1353 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
Appelli, 1867, I, 25-26v III, n.p.	18·7	98 123	1353-1354 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	102,110 l.		130,621 l.		payments, unspecified (xii)			payments, unspecified	
			1354-1355 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
IV, 104v-105 IV, n.p.	18·7	79 139	1355-1356 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	84,016 l.		148,000 l.		111,889 l.	80 (xiv)		15,100 l. (xiii) 19,431 l.	15 15
1868, VII, 87-88		130	1356-1357 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)			138,241 l.		70,881 l.	54 (xv)		22,903 l.	17·6
			1357-1358 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
			1358-1359 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
1869, III, 33		88	1359-1360 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	93,603 l.				55,620 l.	61 (xvi)			
			1360-1361 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
			1361-1362 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
1870, VI, n.p.		92	1362-1363 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	97,027 l.				85,505 l.	89·5			
			1363-1364 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
1871, I, 62 V, n.p.		66 80	1364-1365 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	69,916 l.				23,605 l.	33			
			1365-1366 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	85,661 l. (xvii)				18,519 l.	21·5	40,316 l.	45·8	15,088 l.
			1366-1367 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									
1872, V, 154 VI, 103		117 118	1367-1368 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)		123,645 l.			missing		39,439 l.	31	
			1368-1369 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)		125,196 l.			payments, unspecified				
1873, I, 168		114	1369-1370 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)		120,589 l.							
1872, V, 97v 1873, I, 61	18·62	99 119	1370-1371 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	104,565 l.						65,000 l.	62·5	12,813 l.
1872, V, 115v		99	1371-1372 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	104,413 l.								
1873, I, 168 IV, 56	15·02	84 94	1372-1373 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	89,163 l.		97,485 l.				101,249 l.	97	
V, 9 VIII, 26	15·31	78·5 101	1373-1374 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	83,129 l. (xviii)		107,020 l. (xix)		19,383 l.	23	58,033 l.	69	
IV, 82 VIII, 22v	17·02	90 108	1374-1375 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	96,440 l. (xx)		114,987 l.				83,722 l. 104,229 l.	86·5 90	
1874, n.p.		118	1375-1376 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)			125,413 l.						
n.p.		76	1376-1377 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)	80,560 l.						111,185 l.	89	
			1377-1378 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)							74,282 l.	92	
			1378-1379 (1st sem.) (2nd sem.)									

NOTES:

- (i) Base: annual average 1295-1302 (12,420 lire) = 1.
(ii) Base: half-yearly average 1350-76 (106,257 lire) = 100.
(iii) The gabelle has been sold for two years for 118,600 florins, that is 59,300 fl. per year; G. Villani says 58,300 (XI, 67).
(iv) Sold for two years for 110,200 florins; florin = 62 s. (average established from tables to be published shortly).
(v) Sold for two years to syndics of the taverners' guild, 72,000 florins — florin = 65 s. 6 d.
(vi) From 10 December 1343, sale for one year of a supplementary gabelle of 11,800 fl. (one-twelfth of the retail price).
(vii) The florin falls in 1345 from 65 s. 6 d. in January to 61 s. 6 d. in October, to climb again to 65 s. 5 d. in December; I take 64 s. as the average value. Gabelle sold for three years and 22 days at 44,000 florins per year.
(viii) Average value of florin, 62 s. 6 d.
(ix) Florin = 61 s. 6 d.
(x) Sold for three years, at 147,000 lire per year. Sale cancelled 27 October 1348, by officials appointed by the commune to treat with gabelle purchasers. The purchasers have the gabelle restored to them for one year, starting 1 November, for 80,000 fl.
(xi) The gabelle on retail wine at Prato was collected by the same officials as at Florence. To begin with these officials kept the Prato account separately. After 1368 the two figures were consolidated. For the sake of consistency, I have shown the two gabelles after 1350 as a single figure. The actual figures of the Prato gabelle, and the percentage they contribute to the total receipts, are as follows:

		Percentage
1350-51	semester 2	3393 l. 3
1351-52	semester 1	4755 l. 4·88
1353-54	semester 1	4692 l. 4·59
1353-54	semester 2	8086 l. 6·19

		Percentage
1355-56	semester 1	3330 l. 3·98
1355-56	semester 2	7807 l. 5·26
1356-57	semester 2	7349 l. 5·61
1362-63	semester 1	3598 l. 3·7
1364-65	semester 1	2707 l. 4·01
1365-66	semester 1	3098 l. 3·61

- The average contribution is thus 4·5 per cent. To compare the annual indices of the first half of the century with those of the second, the latter have to be reduced by about one point. After 1350, the receipts from the gabelles are often partially expressed in florins. I have made the conversion into lire myself, as above.
(xii) The accountants whose job was to review the accounts note that some payments have been paid into the *Camera del Comune*, but give no indication of the sum involved. Hence my description 'unspecified payments'.
(xiii) In florins, 4753 — florin = c. 68 s.
(xiv) Percentages calculated from the gabelle from Florence and the *contado*. The *uscita* of the Prato gabelle is not recorded. Gabelle from Florence and the *contado*: 140,300 lire.
(xv) Same observation; the gabelle from Florence and the *contado* = 130,891 lire. Some amounts are given in florins — florin = 68 s. 4 d., figure given by the book-keeper.
(xvi) Same observation: gabelle from Florence and the *contado* = 89,713 lire.
(xvii) This year the treasurer receives sums of varying provenance (*diminuzione del Monte*); they have been deducted on both the credit and the debit sides.
(xviii) Exact amount: 9248 fl. 51,761 l. 48 s. — florin = 70 s. 6 d., figure given by the book-keeper
(xix) Exact amount: 14,715 fl. 55; 518 l. 12 s. — florin = 72 s.
(xx) Exact amount: 4677 fl.; 79,607 l. 3 s. — florin = 72 s.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

yield: the system whereby gabelles were collected. Throughout the first half of the century, the various gabelles, without exception, were put up for auction and assigned to the highest bidder.¹ The purchaser assumed complete responsibility for their collection; it was he who recruited agents and paid their wages; as a matter of course, his books were never examined at the time of accounting; the accountants appointed by the judge of appeals merely satisfied themselves that the sum stipulated at the time of the auction had been paid in full.²

For a number of reasons, this procedure should have produced a regular and stable yield: the more important gabelles were often purchased for two years at a time or even longer; for a period of this length, purchasers were unlikely to offer a price based solely on expectations of future harvests or anticipated imports, difficult to predict so long in advance. The figure arrived at, allowing for tariff changes and alterations in the area within the city's jurisdiction, would be based primarily on past receipts.³ There was thus some prospect of continuity and predictability in the yield. Moreover, many of the purchasers were of sufficient financial standing to bear an eventual deficit at their own expense, and in any case the commune protected itself against deficiencies by securing guarantees from a substantial body of citizens.⁴ Up to a point, therefore, since the commune had no direct responsibility for the collection of the gabelles, it was less sensitive to the difficulties involved and less inclined to sanction remissions.

In practice this system had its inconvenient aspects, which by mid-

¹ Any number of examples; cf. retail wine: 1291, 1295-1301, 1308, 1332-47. *Consulte*, ed. Gherardi, II, pp. 71, 506, 625; *Prov.*, VIII, 90; X, 180, 220, 255v; XI, 82; Barbadoro, *Consigli*, I, p. 36; *Prov.*, XIII, 192; XXVI, 58; XXVIII, 28; Appelli, 1817, III, 222, 250, 1822, VIII, n.p., IX, 142. Before 1350, on each occasion this gabelle is levied it is sold to farmers. The same applies to the gate gabelle, the *macello* gabelle, the gabelle on casked wine, on contracts, etc.

² In the Appelli register, 1817, III, *passim*, scrutiny of the accounts of numerous gabelle farmers.

³ Gate gabelle sold for two years in 1330 (1330-32), *Prov.*, CCXVI, 11, 18v; 1336 (1336-38); 1342, 1346, 1348 (Table I). The gabelle on retail wine is sold for one year at the beginning of the century (1296, 1298, 1301, 1308), for two years in 1332-42, for more than three years in 1344 (Table II). Numerous other examples of sales for two years after 1330 (*trecche*, contracts, *macello*, flour); a few examples of four year farms after 1340: *macello*, and salt in 1341, *Prov.* Duplic., II, 24-6. The periods of sale lengthen as the century advances.

⁴ Guarantees: November 1348, gate gabelle, 40 Florentines collectively responsible: 'fideiussores et socii compratorum gabelle portarum.' They include a Medici, a Bardi, a Gherardini and a Buondelmonti, Appelli, 1822, VIII, parchment. 1344: 17 Florentines act as guarantors for the gabelle on retail wine; they include a Rossi, a Medici, an Alberti, a Falconieri and an Alfani, *ibid.* Although often little known, the purchasers were quite solvent; they were new men, whose wealth was recent; M. Becker, 'An essay on the "novi cives" and Florentine government', *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. XXIV (1962), p. 41, n. 14.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

century were becoming increasingly evident and would lead to its partial abandonment; it was over-rigid and equally injurious to gabelle purchasers, taxpayers and the state. It was injurious to the gabelle purchasers on several counts, firstly because of the advances they were required to make: the commune demanded an advance at what was a very early date, given the inevitable time-lag in the collection of the gabelle, even before the purchaser had entered on his responsibilities, and which might be equal to the receipts for three, six or even the whole twelve months.¹ The purchaser thus had to borrow. At first the commune paid some compensation,² but the amount was negligible and later the payment seems to have ceased altogether. The gabelle purchasers had to meet the interest on their borrowing from their own pockets. But even without this additional expense, they often had difficulty in honouring their engagements. In 1350 Ser Bernardo F. Cecchi de Monteloro purchased the gabelle on *macello* in the town and *pieve* of S. Giovanni for two years. But in the meantime a shortage of salt developed, the only salt obtainable being *salina* (unpurified salt). The pork-butchers stopped curing their wares, individuals followed suit. Slaughtering ceased. As the crowning misfortune, with the approach of the Milanese army the men of the *contado* took refuge inside the walls, bringing their herds with them, with no thought of paying tax; in any case, the gabelle was suspended by order of the Priors. The gabelle purchaser's budget was thus perpetually at the mercy of all manner of unforeseeable hazards, which often had no connection with the tax in question. Such hazards were the daily bread of all engagements for a fixed term, but their threat seems to have increased as the century advanced. After 1338-40, in fact, we find that the budgets of the gabelle farmers are very precariously balanced. The auction prices decline somewhat, but still remain high; weighed down by taxes, *augmenta*, wars, poor harvests and epidemics, the taxpayers become increasingly reticent. The balance sheets of many of the gabelle purchasers show that they ended with a net loss; this is so in the case of the *macello* and livestock gabelles for 1336-38, of the gabelle on mills in 1340, of the gate gabelles in 1342-43 and again in 1348-50, and of the gabelle on

¹ Advances from farmers of the gabelle on retail wine before entering on their term: in 1295, one quarter of the prescribed sum, Gherardi, *Consulte*, vol. II, p. 506; in 1297, one-third, *ibid.*, p. 514; in 1298, two-thirds, *ibid.*, p. 628; in 1308, two-fifths, *Prov.*, XIII, 192. Gate gabelle, examples from 1325, 1330, 1342; Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 536. Gabelle on 'feneratori', examples from 1340 to 1350, M. Becker, 'Nota dei processi riguardanti i prestatori di danaro', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIV, 1956, p. 742.

² 223 lire for an advance of 3616 lire in 1296, *loc. cit.*

³ *Prov.*, XL, 115v, 12 June 1353.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

retail wine every year from 1336 to 1347.¹ True, many other gabelle farmers contrived to honour their engagements.² But these deficiencies, affecting as they did the most profitable of the gabelles, were symptomatic of a general malaise; there can be no doubt that everyone had difficulty in collecting the amount he had promised.

The commune was exacting in its demands; it might on occasion grant some relief to the gabelle farmers, but only in rare instances. The reliefs granted to taxpayers were not necessarily reflected in the contracts. The auction figure was rigidly adhered to and the Signoria never varied it spontaneously; except in 1348, measures in favour of the farmers are few and of little consequence. What is much more usual, especially after 1343, but in preceding years as well, is to find the communal authorities strictly insisting on payment of the stipulated sums.³ The Signoria was in need of money; and the popular Signoria was determined — more determined than most, perhaps — to set its finances in order.⁴

The gabelle farmers were trapped, as it were, by a pincer movement; on one side they were confronted by their growing difficulty in balancing their budgets, on the other by the increasing stringency of the commune. The only way out was to increase the pressure on the taxpayers, and this is what they did, sometimes to excess: the complaints of their victims are already echoed in the measures of 1321 and 1333.⁵ After 1343 complaints increase in volume: the farmers are acting im-

¹ *Macello* and sale of livestock, payments still incomplete in 1339, Provv., XXIX, 1v. Mills, Provv., XXXI, 5v. Gates, 1342-43, Appelli, 1816, I, 89; 1348-50, deficit of 18,937 florins, Appelli, 1822, VIII, parchment. Retail wine, 1336-38, deficit of 13,376 florins, Appelli, 1817, III, 222-34; not paid in 1339, Provv., XXIX, 1v. 1340-42, Provv. Duplic., III, 9v. 1342-44, Provv., XXXII, 88. Deficit of 2000 florins, Appelli, loc. cit. 1344-47, deficit of 8992 florins, Appelli, 1822, VIII, parchment.

² Appelli, 1817, 1822, *passim*.

³ 1348, probably in October, a commission of eight officers set up to come to terms with the purchasers of the wine gabelle and 'più altre gabelle'. On 27 October we find them treating with the farmers of the gabelle on retail wine, which had been purchased for three years (1 Jan. 1348-31 Dec. 1350), at the price of 147,500 l. per year: the farmers are to continue in office for one year (1 Nov. 1348-31 October 1349) and pay only 80,000 lire, Appelli, 1822, IX, 142. On the other hand, in 1342, despite the *mortalitas*, the *carestia*, the rise in the florin, wars, etc., the wine-merchants gild, who farm the gabelle, obtain an extension for only two months, Provv. Duplic., III, 9v, 7 August 1342. In 1347, despite 'carestia grani, bladi etc.', a moratorium of only one month is granted to their successors, *ibid.*, VII, 40v.

⁴ Provv., XXIX, 1v and 46; 1347, Provv. Duplic., VII, 9. On the attitude of the popular Signoria, instituted in October 1343, see Becker, 'Florentine popular government,' pp. 362 ff., and 'Some aspects of oligarchical, dictatorial and popular Signorie in Florence, 1282-1382', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. II (1960), pp. 425-34.

⁵ 1321: 'quam plures comitatini et districtuales florentie indebite et injuste inquietantur et molestantur ad instantiam emptorum talis gabelle' (salt), Provv., XVIII, 42v; 1333, 1 February, series of measures intended to ensure that citizens and inhabitants of the *contado* are not molested 'ab emptoribus gabelle d. comunis in solvendo id quod non debent, et in sustinendo expensas berovariorum et nuntiorum

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

properly by imposing payment of gabelles on those who are exempt; they are piling up summonses at the expense of the alleged debtors; they are abusing the right of distraint, refusing to surrender pledges once payment has been made; they cheat over quantities and quality; in short they are prolific in 'inique et diverse extorsiones per varios et diversos modos'.¹ Activities of this kind were not in accord with the hopes of their employers and the result was only as might have been expected: the further alienation of populations already made sensitive by economic difficulties and irritated by frequent tariff rises. The most revealing case is that of the gabelle on retail wine.

The collection of this gabelle seems already to have been attended by difficulties for some time past.² But from 1335-38 resentment was particularly strong, on account of the incessant tax increases which were raising the price of wine at the retailer's. There were protests against 'intolerable' gabelles, and the riots which broke out in 1343 were perhaps also wine riots: it appears that the gabelle on wine sold retail was the only one to have been increased in 1342-43, and increased very considerably.³ At all events, it is clear that the increase in the same tax in 1359 sparked off an agitation in the *contado*; in 1361-62 we hear that these 'taxationes', so much higher than the retail price, are provoking 'divisiones et scandala'.⁴ In such an atmosphere, the strenuous interventions of the farmers — as we have seen, continually dogged by the threat of deficit — had entirely negative effects: when the purchasers of the gabelle for the term 1340-42 ventured into certain parts of the *contado*, 'they were wounded and their instruments and money taken from them';⁵ when the farmers for 1362 appear, many of the inhabi-

quos ipsi emptores mittunt etiam non debentibus aliquid eis solvere' (all gabelles), Capitoli, XXII, 169v. Reiteration of the measure: Provv., XXVI, 26v (31 July), 96 (27 April 1334), 129 (25 August), XXVIII, 57 (26 June 1336).

¹ 23 December 1343: numerous complaints against the farmers of the gabelle on mills and *frantoi*, who are causing the people of the *contado* to be 'injuste predari et pignorari', Appelli, 1816, III, 89. December 1344, complaints about the farmers of the gabelle on contracts; they appropriate pledges of much higher value than the sum due; they exact payment without returning the pledge, Capitoli, XVIII, 88v. May 1345, petition 'pro parte totius Reipublicae, quod ad hoc ut inique et iniuste extorsiones que cotidie fiunt per emptores gabellarum com. florentie per varios et diversos modos possint reprimi, et ipsorum gabellariorum possint malitiis obviari', *ibid.*, II, 5v. April 1347, complaints about the purchasers of the salt gabelle, who defraud in both quantity and quality, Provv. Duplic., VII, 22v. Renewed complaints in January 1350, Provv., XXXVII, 68v.

² In January 1287, the Signoria is seeking to avoid 'iniquis et iniustus exactionibus actenus a comitatibus factis . . . pro reddito et proventu vini quod in d. comitatu venditur ad minutum', Provv., I, 38.

³ On these riots, and their connection with the famine and the high price of cereals, see G. Villani, XII, 8, 16, 17, 20; N. Rodolico, *Popolo Minuto*, pp. 45-51 and docs. 8-9.

⁴ Provv., XLIX, 156.

⁵ 'Quando vadunt ad dicta loca pro exactione ipsius gabelle sunt vulnerati, et eorum arnesibus ac denariis derobati', Provv. Duplic., III, 9v.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

tants 'refuse to pay what they owe them'. Taxpayers offered the same violent opposition to the *macello* gabelle in 1351¹ and to the gabelle on casked wine in 1348-9.²

The commune was very quick, however, to forearm itself against abuses on the part of the farmers, by surrounding them with an ever-growing network of supervisory offices and commissions. At the end of the thirteenth century, authority over the gabelle purchasers had been exercised by the gabelle officials, who in 1303 were given competence over all the gabelles, old and new, and by the judge of all the gabelles (a temporary office which disappeared in 1307) or by the former judge of the *Camera* of the gabelle 'et ad reinveniendum iura et rationes communis,' who in 1304 became the 'judex camere et gabelle'; this form of control was no longer in operation.³ Over the years, however, new bodies, with well-defined powers, appear on the scene. In November 1328, we find a commission being charged to settle all suits over the gabelles in which farmers and taxpayers were at variance, their decision to be final.⁴ The powers given to a similar commission set up in February 1333 are much wider in scope: the six officials appointed to arbitrate in disputes between taxpayers and farmers have authority to punish and to condemn without appeal all purchasers found guilty of unwarranted exactions. The powers of this commission were regularly renewed down to 1336.⁵ In 1338 the 'foreign' officer of the *Mercanzia* department acquired jurisdiction over the gabelle farmers.⁶ It is from 1343 that measures of surveillance start to multiply: in 1343 judicial officials are given added powers over the farmers; in 1345 the farmers fall under the jurisdiction of the *difensori* of the *contado*, who are specifically charged to protect taxpayers from their excesses; in the following

¹ 'Armati armis solvere recusabant, cum armis resistentes', Provv., XL, 115v, 13 June 1353.

² 'Plures et plures cessaverunt aprire hostia domorum et cellarum...' Appelli, 1865, I, parchment pages.

³ For these various personages see Barbadoro, *Finanze*, pp. 272, 275, 284, 507 (officers of the gabelles), 257 (judge of all the gabelles), 253-8 (judge of the Camera), etc. For the imprecise functions of the judge of gabelles, cf. Provv., CCXI, 19-20, January 1307: 'cum jurisdictio iudicis ghabellarum non sit bene et late ordinata. . . . He is given jurisdiction over all offences 'circa dictum offitium ghabellarum' in agreement with the officers of the gabelles; cited by Barbadoro, *Consigli*, vol. I, p. 304, n.a.

⁴ Provv., XXV, 22, 10 November 1328.

⁵ Capitoli, XXII, 169v, 19 Feb. 1333. Prolongation of its powers: 31 July 1333, 27 April 1334, 26 June 1336, Provv., XXVI, 26v, 93, 129; XXVII, 57.

⁶ N. Rodolico, *La Democrazia fiorentina nel suo tramonto* (Florence, 1901), pp. 234-5. The author gives some interpretations of the powers of this official. See also G. Bonolis, *La giurisdizione della Mercanzia in Firenze nel secolo XIV* (Florence, 1901), and A. Grunzweig, 'Le fonds de la Mercanzia aux Archives d'État de Florence', *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome*, vol. XII (1932), p. 71 ff.; XIII (1933), pp. 5-184.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

year this protection is given added cogency by the erection close to the Priors' palace of special buildings to house both the purchasers of the gabelles and the four *difensori* who watch over them.¹

Nevertheless, all these various measures produced no appreciable improvement either in collection or in the yield. The farmers were disillusioned; to the purchasers of the salt gabelle for 1347, who had before their eyes the deficit, albeit slight, incurred by their predecessors (1343-46), the decree of April 1347, which curbed their freedom of action at a most difficult moment (famine), must have appeared like persecution.² At a time when taxes were coming in badly and deficits were the order of the day, the additional supervision to which they were subjected was a further deterrent to purchasers; in 1341, in 1342-43 and in 1349, many gabelles failed to find a purchaser.³ The farmers of the others continued, often in despite of surveillance, to resort to the same abusive practices.⁴ And, as we have seen, the taxpayers continued to complain. Although there was a slight advance in yields between 1343 and 1348 — noticeable chiefly, however, in the minor gabelles⁵ — the commune was by this time aware of its difficulties and drew its conclusions. It was realized that auctioning the gabelles entailed a loss of profit, both on account of the disputes it engendered and the expense involved and because of the profits deducted by farmers, when they were in a position to do so. The system was thus gradually abandoned in favour of direct administration by the commune or, in the *contado*, by merging the gabelles, to which arbitrary tariffs were assigned, with direct taxation.

Admittedly, the custom of putting the gabelles up to auction did not vanish all at once or altogether. The gabelle on the sale of livestock, for example, continues to be auctioned with fair regularity, at least until

¹ 1343: Becker, 'Florentine Popular Government,' p. 363, n. 20; 1345: Capitoli, XVIII, 5v; 1346: to stop people of the *contado* from wandering about the city on the look-out for the purchasers and so that 'ea que comiterentur per ipsos emptores velocius veniant ad aures ipsorum IV defensorum', Provv. Duplic., VI, 60, 1 June 1346.

² Slight deficit, no figure given, Appelli, 1817, III, 236 et seq. In April 1347, the *defensori* are invited to intervene and supervise the farmers of the salt gabelle. They elect four officers to enquire, both in the city and in the *contado*, into their misdeeds. Provv. Duplic., VII, 22v.

³ 20 Nov. 1341: 'presenti tempore non inveniuntur emptores qui dictas gabellas redditus et proventus justo et convenienti pretio emere velint', Provv., XXXI, 31v, 20 Nov., quoted in part by Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 616, n. 1; 1342-43: lack of purchasers, numerous broken contracts, Balie, II, 38-104, quoted by Becker, 'Florentine Popular Government,' 361, n. 9; 1350, 20 March: an examination of the general problem of unsold gabelles, Provv., XXXVIII, 4v.

⁴ Exactions by the farmers of the salt gabelle late 1349-early 1350, Provv., XXXVII, 68v; by farmers of the gate gabelle, *ibid.*, 91v, 8 February.

⁵ See p. 170, n. 2.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

1363; the gabelle on wine sold retail is still being auctioned in 1360, the gate gabelle in 1372.¹ A return to this procedure is contemplated in the *Pratiche* in 1355² and is in fact used for the gabelles as a whole in 1366. But by now this represents a return to the past, a break with custom as it has gradually established itself over the last fifteen or so years.³ There were occasions at the end of the thirteenth century when gabelles were collected by communal officials direct; but this was a rare and abnormal occurrence, adopted provisionally for a new gabelle or for a gabelle which, exceptionally, had not been sold.⁴ After 1340, recourse to this method becomes more frequent: it is used for gabelles which have not found a taker, to eliminate unscrupulous farmers, or to replace purchasers who fail during their term of office.⁵ By about 1349–1350 this way of doing things is accepted as normal, the exception has become the rule. An administration is evolved for the purpose; a law of March 1350 decrees that every unsold gabelle is to be collected by the gabelle official of the commune. In the years after 1350 we find 'governors' being appointed to administer the chief gabelles; it is the governors who farm them out, should need arise, the governors who, through their officials, are primarily responsible for their collection. The officials are 'sub regimine gubernatorum'; they hold office for six months and are appointed by the governors, with the approval of the Priors; a treasurer, appointed by the commune for six months, is

¹ Sale of gabelle on livestock 'in città': 1351–53, Provv., XL, 122; 1353–56, 123v; 1357–58, 128v; 1359–60, XLVII, 38v; 1361–63, XLIX, 57. Retail wine: 1360–61, Provv., XLVIII, 85v. Gates: 1372, Provv., LX, 5v.

² December 1354 (all gabelles), Cons. Prat., I, 123v; again in January 1355, *ibid.*, 141–6.

³ Provv., LIII, 118, 4 Feb. 1366. That this was a return to past practice is shown by the reasons given: 'considerantes utile fore com. Flor. gabellas dicti communis et ipsorum redditus et proventus potius vendi quam *exigi ut est moris*.' This decision 'omnes et singulas gabellas . . . vendere' was taken by only a very narrow margin of votes in the Council of the *Capitano* (161 to 162); it did not last. In July 1366, the gate gabelle is being collected by officers of the commune; the same applies to retail wine in May 1368, to mills in October of the same year, Appelli, 1871, V, n.p.; 1872, V, 154; VI, n.p. — The measure of 1372 concerning the gate gabelle seems not to have taken effect. Note that in 1362 direct collection of the gabelle on retail wine is regarded as a custom, 'mos': and that on 16 May 1362 this gabelle can again (after an interruption of two years) be 'per comune Florentie et ejus officiales *exigi ut est moris*'. Provv., XLIX, 156.

⁴ Gabelle on mills, collected by officers of the commune from 1293 (the reason is unknown), Davidsohn, *Forschungen*, IV, 306. In 1321, the new gate gabelle is collected by officers (June), Provv., XVIII, 3.

⁵ Collection of unsold gabelles: 1341, 20 Nov., appointment of officers to receive, for one year, 'omnes pecunie quantitates' due 'ex quibus cumque gabellis', Provv., XXXI, 31v. Getting rid of unscrupulous farmers: Jan. 1350, the sale of the salt gabelle 'revocata est', 8 communal officials are to collect it, Provv., XXVII, 68v; February 1350, same decision for the gate gabelle, *ibid.*, 91v. Purchasers in default: *macello*, 1351, Provv., XXXIX, 23, 60v–61; wine casked in the *contado*, 1348, *ibid.*, XXXVI, 38.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

assigned to each gabelle, to receive payments and pay them into the various accounts as instructed by the Signoria.¹

This organization was to undergo certain modifications, particularly in the *contado*. The commune soon realized, in fact, that the operations of collection and administration, for which it was now responsible, were costing it money,² and sought to evade them. One method which was used after 1350, for example in respect of the gabelle on wine sold retail, was to make each rural community responsible for its collection. But to guard against possible fraud, each community was told in advance what sum it had to produce. The amount was arrived at by taking the annual average of payments made by the community in respect of the gabelle in question in the four years immediately preceding the assessment.³ The system aroused general indignation and did not last long.⁴ Another administrative expedient, which also looks like an attempt at simplification and economy, was to make the treasurers of some of the most important taxes responsible for administering the receipts from other gabelles. The treasurer of the *estimo*, for example, found his responsibilities gradually accumulating; in 1353 he was collecting the gabelle on casked wine; in 1355 the *macello* gabelle in the *contado*.⁵ These three taxes seem to have devolved on him regularly down to 1378. They were often associated with others, for example the gabelle on

¹ Law of March 1350, Provv., XXXVIII, 4v. Governors: December 1351, mention of governors for the wine gabelle and gabelle on contracts, Provv., XXXIX, 6ov, in October 1352 for the gate gabelles and the salt gabelle, *ibid.*, XL, 3v. The scope of their duties varies: the *macello* gabelle is confided in December 1351 to the governors of the wine and contract gabelles, who are given responsibility for new gabelles in January 1356, Provv., XLIII, 85v; for their competence, see Statuto del Capitano, 1355, I, 214. — For the officers under the governors, cf. provisions concerning those for the gate tolls: 'quinque officia sunt sub regimine gubernatorum gabelle portarum, officium rationerii seu scribani d. gabelle, O. officialis habentis curam de passageriis, O. ricercatoris portarum civitatis Florentie, O. officialis facientis appodixas merchantiarum, O. officialis habentis circum venditorum.' They were appointed for six months by the governors and their appointment had to be confirmed by the Priors; an oath was required from them, Provv., LVII, 27, 22 June 1369. For the treasurers (*camerlingo*) see Appelli *passim*; cf. Paolo Covoni, 'camerlingo dela gabella del vino che si vende a minuto chiamato per lo consiglio del comune di firenze per sei mesi' (1351) Appelli, 1865, VI, n.p.

² Above all the gabelle on retail wine; because there had been so many frauds, it was necessary 'propter ipsam sollicitandam in dicto comitatu fiant expense multe, varie et diverse, pro multis officialibus retinendis et exactionem ipsius in dicto comitatu faciando', Provv., XLVII, 37v, 12 September 1359.

³ Collected by rural communities (more than three thousand paces from the city), Provv., XLVII, 37v, 12 September, 1359. Measure reiterated in January 1360 and in May 1361, *ibid.*, 119v, XLVIII, 196. This is a sale: the communities therefore pay a lump sum, probably before collection. For calculation of the lump sum, see Provv., XLIX, 96, 12 February, 1362.

⁴ Disadvantages: lump sum too high; refusal to pay on the part of the rich, in short 'divisiones et scandala'. Hence the decision: 'per comune Florentie et ejus officiales possit exigi ut est moris,' from 1 November, Provv., XLIX, 156, May 1362.

⁵ Appelli, 1866, VII, 123; 1867, IV, n.p.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

bridges and foot-bridges, which, like certain other taxes, was from now on a fixed percentage of the *estimo* and normally collected with it. As for the three gabelles mentioned earlier, it may be assumed that the village communities had been made responsible for them as well, collecting them separately and paying them in with the *estimo*. The same applies to the gate treasurer; as we have seen, from 1357 he was regularly receiving the receipts from the various supplementary gabelles.

But in practice these were all merely refinements, whose aim was to rationalize and simplify a well-established organization, with no thought of upsetting it; from now on, the administration of most of the important gabelles remained for long periods, perhaps even permanently, in the hands of the commune.¹ What we must now briefly examine is the effect this effort at organization and reduction to order produced in the period shortly before 1378.

One fact is immediately obvious: this reorganization of the system had not touched the root of the problem. There was no abatement in financial needs, which the decade 1368–78 made even more pressing; as we have seen, the commune had to rely more and more heavily on the assistance of the gabelles.

Now these gabelles were being exacted from a population increasingly afflicted by poverty, for which there is plentiful evidence in the period after 1370. In the countryside, the operations against S. Miniato al Tedesco in 1369–70, combined with John Hawkwood's forays right up to the gates of Florence, were a serious blow not only to the low-lying region, but also to the small fortified towns, once flourishing rural and craft centres, in the Val d'Elsa and the Val d'Arno. Some of these seem to have been permanently affected. In 1369, when Castelfiorentino, Fucecchio, Monterappoli, Empoli and Gambassi petition for a reduction or moratorium in respect of their taxes, they plead the devastations wrought by the war and the indebtedness of their inhabitants, some of whom have fled (Empoli). These pleas were certainly not without foundation, and most of the petitions were granted. Borgo Santa Fiore, Pontormo and Poggibonsi seem to have been even harder hit; their petitions are renewed on two, three, and four occasions after 1370.² In 1375 many rural communities in the

¹ From the incomplete accounts of the judge of appeals, it seems that between 1351 and 1378 collection was handed over to the officers of the commune in at least 40 per cent of cases for the gate gabelle, 45 per cent for retail wine and 42 per cent for salt.

² Fucecchio: in 1365 petition for a reduction 'propter paupertatem' granted by advice of the commune, by 163 votes to 11, Provv., LIII, 91. Castelfiorentino: petitions of 23 February and 29 March 1369 (168 votes to 6). Monterappoli, *ibid.* Gambassi,

Apennines were experiencing the same difficulties.¹ These difficulties did not always prove insurmountable; but they were ever-present, sometimes for long periods, in one part or other of the *contado*, and the cause of perpetual financial embarrassment. In the city the threat of impoverishment probably hung over all social groups and most certainly over the wage-earners. Unemployment and low wages forced some textile workers to emigrate;² building labourers saw their day wages fall from about 10 soldi (the average 1360–70) to 8 after 1373; the earnings of masons at the same time went from 17 soldi to about 16½ after 1370.³

Both in Florence and in the countryside, resentment over this impoverishment was all the greater because it was accompanied by a simultaneous rise in prices. The rapid succession of famines after 1369 had brought increases all round. One example will suffice: the index of wheat prices — so far as an index can be established — rises from 84 for the period 1354–67 to 164 for the decade 1368–78 (index 100: 1320–1338).

In these circumstances, the high level of indirect taxes, to which was added the burden of prices which had doubled, was scarcely tolerable. To take a few examples. Between 1312 and 1328, the average price of oil at Florence was 65 soldi per *orcio*, without the gabelle. The tax (about 3 soldi) raised the price by 4·5 per cent. Between 1369 and 1381, under the same conditions, oil cost 114 soldi; the gate tax (15 soldi) put up the price by 13 per cent. Wine was in the same case. Between 1330 and 1340, red wine of medium quality commonly sold at Florence for from 7 to 9 lire per *cogno* at the time of harvest, tax not included. Before 1336, taxes raised the price by 20 soldi, that is on average by 12 per cent (10 soldi at the time of casking, 10 soldi at the gates); from 1365 to 1375, the current price of the same wine, under virtually the same conditions, was 15 lire 10 soldi; if we ignore ephemeral tariff increases, we can say

May 1369, 'sunt debilitati et inopes' (154 to 36). Empoli, Feb. 1369: has lost 200 inhabitants, Provv., LVI, 156. Borgo Santa Fiore, May 1369 'propter guerras . . . pass sunt depopulationem et destructionem honorum suorum' (169 to 25), LVII, 7v; November 1369, same petition, *ibid.*, 124; August 1370, further demand for reduction (198 to 14), Provv., LVIII, 60; September, same petition, *ibid.*, 92. Poggibonsi, petition of 19 December 1365, Provv., LIII, 98v; of September 1371, deploring the rapid depopulation of the commune, which is impoverished and weighed down by taxes (132 to 36), Provv., LIX, 112v; of 11 December 1375, same complaints (150 to 40), Provv., LXIII, 181v.

¹ Provv., LXIII, 49 (Alpi), 89 (Firenzuola), 133 (Podere fiorentino), 149 (Alpi).

² Doren, *Die florentiner Wollentuchindustrie* (Stuttgart, 1901), pp. 406 ff., 467 ff.

³ Figures arrived at from private accounts; justification for them will appear shortly. Basically, Santa Maria Nuova, registers already cited, *passim*.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

that the tax — 3 lire 10 soldi — put up the price by 22 per cent.¹ Lastly, without going into details, there is the case of sales of wine retail: we have no exact figures for the decade 1370–80, but the tax level was probably little lower than it had been around 1360 (66 per cent), and in conjunction with the rise in wine prices would have made a jug of wine at the tavern more expensive than at any previous time.

In these conditions, the commune's reorganization of the system for collecting gabelles offered only illusory comfort. And in fact during the years preceding 1378 most of the old reactions to the gabelles crop up again, reactions which have never been wholly absent since the thirties: arrears in payments, negligence, fraud, subterfuges, protests, all of them particularly in evidence at times of special economic difficulty or when gabelle tariffs were increased.

Arrears in payment, due to poverty, negligence or ill-will, are legion: in August 1374, despite the moratoria and suspension of sentences granted in May 1373 and March 1374, the wine-growers still owe all their arrears since 1371;² notaries' clients neglect to pay the gabelle on contracts;³ rural communities are in default both for the *estimo* and for the gabelles which are linked with it;⁴ inn-keepers, particularly vulnerable to trading conditions because of the overwhelming tax burden they carry, are many of them unable to pay their dues and become bankrupt, ruined by the plundering of friendly or hostile armies in the *contado* or merely by a spoilt cask of wine;⁵ lastly, in February 1375, the whole body of taxpayers in the *contado* have so many outstanding debts on gabelles of every sort that a commission is appointed to examine and judge their case.⁶

Many of these arrears were certainly fraudulent in intention, but

¹ In 1371 the tax on casks reaches its highest value since the beginning of the century: 40 soldo per *cogno*. It is in force from 19 July to 1 November of the following year.

² Provv., LIX, 69 and 259. Moratoria: Provv., LXI, 46v, 255v. Debt in August 1374: Provv., LXII, 105v, 3 August.

³ Provv., LIX, LX, *passim*.

⁴ In March 1370, numerous arrears among rural communities for salt, *macello*, markets, casked wine, bridges and foot-bridges, Provv., LVII, 184. Further general arrears: *estimo*, markets, bridges, contracts; October, *estimo*, salt; December, all gabelles, Provv., LVIII, 3v, 25, 26, 36v, 110v, 139; numerous similar examples in 1371, Provv., LIX, 39, 109. In 1373, Provv., LXI, 73, 121, 197; in 1374 and 1375, Provv., LXII, 105, 178v, LXIII, 40v, 98.

⁵ In October 1364, 23 inn-keepers declare themselves unable to pay sums ranging from 20 to 180 lire in respect of the *segnatura grossa*; Provv., LII, 55v, 56v, 80v, 81. Identical petitions in April 1366 (from two retailers). In 1373, 1374 and 1375, petitions of this kind multiply; Provv., LXI, 109v, 186, 247, LXII, 113, 137 and LXIII, 11v, 90v. Alleged reasons for incapacity: the war (1363), but also the bad weather, and poverty. On 12 September 1374 a wine-merchant asserts that in his career as a retailer he has paid over to the commune a total of 150,000 lire in gabelles.

⁶ Provv., LXII, 270–1v.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

these were habitual frauds, against which the commune was forearmed; of greater concern was a legal fraud, in the form of a subterfuge which allowed a large number of taxpayers to dodge the gate gabelle and avoid paying some of the sale taxes (meat and wine) in full; the subterfuge consisted in taking up residence outside the walls, in the suburbs.

There are instances in which such a removal was sanctioned by the commune. At one period the butchers' guild was in conflict with the government over regulations concerning sales and prices, difficulties which came to a head in 1354-57, no doubt because of the exceptional volume of the gate and *macello* gabelles;¹ in consequence, certain butchers were granted the faculty of selling meat retail 'extra vel prope portas civitatis', against payment of a special tax. But this authorization was withdrawn on 28 June 1367, without any special deliberation by the Priors.² In any case, the reason for the concession seems to have been not so much the gabelles but rather concern to ensure that the citizens, and perhaps more particularly the inhabitants of the suburbs, were supplied with essential food at reasonable prices.³ More frequently, removal outside the walls was due to the initiative of individual merchants who were anxious to evade payment of gabelles; and the move was surreptitious. So far as I know, it is in May 1367 that the commune first shows disquiet at 'these numerous working-men and citizens . . . who live outside the city, close to the gates and walls . . . so as to avoid paying the gate gabelles on their food. . . . They stock up their houses with ample food supplies, grain, barley, oil and many other commodities, which they then sell without paying any gabelle.' These canny people included many 'vinacterii et hospitatores', who sold wine retail.⁴ From this time on, similar expressions of alarm are frequently voiced by the Signoria, in particular with regard to the sale of drink.⁵

¹ On this conflict, see Becker, 'Legislazione,' pp. 12-25. Becker does not mention the high level of the gabelles as one of the causes of the conflict; in my view it was of prime importance. In the years preceding 1358, the tax on hogs at the gates was at its maximum. The *macello* gabelle was also at its maximum between October 1351 and April 1353, between August 1353 and August 1354, and again at intervals, at least down to 1358, Provv., XL, 115v, 92v, 142, XLVI, 25.

² Before June 1367, and probably from March, the butchers 'emerunt posse vendere extra'. Indeed, on 31 March a speaker in the *Pratiche* points out that it is in the interest of the citizens that 'carnes macellantur ad portas ut hactenus'. But in June opinion is against continuation of the experiment; it is suppressed by making it an offence within a radius of 1000 paces 'extra civitatum F. in aliquo loco propinquo muris civitatis F. seu januis civitatis . . . macellare seu vendere ad macellum carnes recentes', Cons. Prat., VIII, 62 (March), 82v, Provv., LV, 26 (June).

³ The Priors are to decide about the reopening of stalls at the gates, taking into account 'bonum singulorum civium', Cons. Prat., VIII, 78v.

⁴ Provv., LIV, 169v, 10 May 1367.

⁵ 21 January 1373, 26 September, same denunciations; on 21 May 1375 the case of the tavern-keepers is singled out for special mention, Provv., LX, 150v, LXIII, 117, 46-46v.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

Naturally, when faced with defaulting and frauds on this scale, the commune could hardly fail to take counter action. It often proceeded with moderation, especially in time of dearth, trading difficulties or war, when it was prodigal with moratoria and remissions. As we have seen, by and large this was the policy it had long followed in the *contado*; but in the years preceding 1378, when the situation was particularly grave, the indulgence became general, as for example towards the *contado* in 1368–71.¹ All the same, and especially once a crisis was past, the commune had to find some remedy 'considering how much the revenues from the gabelles of the commune have shrunk', as the Priors remark in 1372.² We find steps being taken to this end in 1367: to counteract the flight of urban taxpayers beyond the walls, a personal tax was instituted, designed to replace the gate gabelle and to fall on all inhabitants of the suburbs residing less than 1000 thousand paces from the walls, peasants not included;³ again in this year, to inhibit the proliferation of sales of drink in the suburb, the urban tariff on retail wine was extended to suburbs within the 1000 pace limit,⁴ and in July 1371 to suburbs within a 3000 pace limit.⁵

This counter action took substance and became organized in April 1372 (after the crisis of 1368–71), when the Priors assumed much more extensive powers in matters affecting the gabelles.⁶ Measures followed thick and fast. In December 1372, the Priors decided to act with greater severity in exacting rural taxes, and fifteen months later, in March 1374, to restrict the fiscal immunities granted to inhabitants of the *contado*.⁷ In January 1373, they confirmed the '1000 pace' tax; in November of the same year, in order to put an end to the manifold defaulting by tavern-keepers, the penalties for non-payment were set

¹ Examples from the *contado*: 1368, October, moratorium for salt, *macello*, bridges, markets (one month), 'compatientes domini priores . . . indigentis subditorum', Provv., LVI, 83v–4; 1369, February, salt gabelles (15 days), the *Signori* 'laboribus et indigentis comitatorum . . . indulgentes,' *ibid.*, 137v; April, salt, bridges, markets, casked wine (two months), 'propter guerram et propter paupertatem,' *ibid.*, 195v; October, salt, bridges, markets, casked wine, salt (15 days), Provv., LVII, 90. Identical examples in 1370: January, March, June, October, December; moratorium of 15 days for two months, Provv., LVIII, 3v, 25, 35v, 110v, 139. Further examples for 1371, 1372, 1373, 1374.

² April 1372, Provv., LX, 14v.

³ Provv., LIV, 169v, 10 May 1367, 'occasione earum victualium'.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Provv., LIX, 69.

⁶ From now on they will have power 'providere tam circa venditionem quam circa gubernationem et regimen quarumcumque gabellarum comunis Florentie . . . et circa electionem et deputationem quorumcumque officialium . . .'. Provv., LX, 14v, 29 April 1372.

⁷ 'Quia plerumque nonnulli potius pene formidine quam ex voluntaria liberalitate subeant onera quae subire tenentur,' Provv., LX, 123v (22 December 1372); Provv., LXII, 2 (March 1374).

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

out in detail; in August 1375, the Priors complemented this measure by enlarging the powers of the governors of the gabelles over wine-merchants,¹ and in the same month gave fresh confirmation to the '1000 pace' tax.² It seems that these measures were applied with some flexibility, particularly during the harsh times of the war of Eight Saints.³ But they were nonetheless in existence.

To sum up, from the beginning of the century to its end, the commune failed to find a solution to the continuing and serious difficulties presented by the collection of the gabelles. Whether from incapacity, or because of fraudulent or anarchical leanings, many taxpayers were constantly seeking ways of evading the gabelles, and were succeeding. These hazards in collection probably contributed to the mediocrity of the yields; we may think that they accentuated the negative effect of the demographic crises and economic difficulties; and also that they deadened the effect of recoveries, as in 1350-60 when periods of recovery coincided with high tariffs: all the indications are that evasions of taxation greatly increased in this decade, because of the severity of the gabelles. This, then, would provide a partial explanation for the meagre receipts during this period of greater economic ease. What is quite clear is that the burden represented by the gabelles provoked hostility which showed itself in protests and riots.

If we now look at the immediate future and consider the history of the gabelles in the context of the events of 1378, it must be emphasized how great a burden the indirect taxes continued to be. Their collection had been reorganized; it was doubtless more equitable, but also more efficient. Measures against fraud appear to have been more effective. And this putting of the house in order is doubtless not unconnected with the improvement, despite the crisis, in the yield from the gabelles. Assigned a rôle of capital importance in the fiscal system, the gabelles were kept at a high level, higher than before the plague. Their yield, even if it did not progress in step with the rise in tariff rates, was greater than in the days of Florentine splendour. Falling on a reduced population, the weight of the taxes was crushing for taxpayers made poorer by the rise in prices and the fall in the nominal wage.

Given these conditions, it is very surprising that riots like those touched off by the gabelles in the middle of the century should not

¹ Provv., LXI, 186 (28 November 1373), LXIII, 90v-91 (14 August 1375).

² Provv., LXIII, 117.

³ Compromise reached with the tavern-keepers, 12 October 1375, Provv., LXIII, 138-9. With defaulting rural taxpayers, 31 January, 10 June 1376, *ibid.*, 149, LXIV, 49.

INDIRECT TAXES OR 'GABELLES' AT FLORENCE

have broken out in the years — crisis years, at that — which preceded the Ciompi revolt.¹ It is surprising, too, that demands relating to the gabelles should play so relatively small a rôle in the programme of the mob and its fleeting implementation. The petitions of the *popolo minuto* of 21 July call merely for the suppression of the market tax;² even when the popular Signoria is installed, the only relevant measure of any note is the reduction by half of the salt gabelle.³ The liberty of entering the gates accorded for six months to bread and flour,⁴ and the three weeks' moratorium decreed for *prestanze* and the gabelles on 27 July, were merely benign expedients, consecrated by long usage, and in no way revolutionary.⁵ By contrast, nothing was done about the gate gabelles, the meat gabelle or the various gabelles on wine.⁶ No explicit allusion is made to the general problem of the gabelles. The absence of any specific reaction to the gabelles is all the more marked when we compare the popular demeanour in 1370–78 with the riots and demonstrations which punctuated the years 1343–60.

The reasons for this attitude cannot be elucidated in just a few lines. By way of conclusion, I shall content myself with indicating the reasons which seem most plausible. In the first place, during the years 1340–60 the gabelles, until then fairly light, became firmly established, and in only a brief space of time reached an unprecedented level, a level they were not soon to reach again. The novelty of this fiscal pressure, the high level of the tariffs, and, capping it all, the famines and the epidemics, combined to exasperate people beyond endurance. So we hear of protests and actual riots, in both town and countryside, among working men as in the lesser gilds. But in the succeeding period, although the gabelles remained high, they did not increase; they even slightly diminished. Protests are muted, people have become resigned; as is so often the case, an innovation looks most oppressive when it is first introduced. The gabelle has become institutionalized.

A further observation. In the general crisis of the years around 1375, other preoccupations came to take first place: wages, indebtedness, the devaluation of the small currency and, more generally, the size of the

¹ Cf. Brucker, *Florentine politics*, p. 378.

² '... che la piazza del Mercato Vecchio non pagase al comune l'anno se non fiorini trecento d'oro cioè la descheria de' beccai,' *Cronaca di Alamanno Acciaiuoli*, ed. Scaramella, *Tumulto dei Ciompi*, p. 29.

³ *Cronaca terza d'Anonimo*, *ibid.*, p. 130.

⁴ *Cronaca seconda d'Anonimo*, *ibid.*, p. 114, cf. p. 130; *Diario di Anonimo*, ed. Gherardi, *Documenti di Storia Italiana*, vol. VI (Florence), 1876, p. 370.

⁵ *Diario di Anonimo*, p. 371.

⁶ The *contado* also benefited from certain remissions: in July (reduction in the price of salt, lightening of other gabelles) and September (reduction of the *estimo* by one third, and of the price of salt by a half), Rodolico, *La democrazia*, pp. 216–17.

CHARLES M. DE LA RONCIÈRE

public debt and the burden of direct levies. The gabelles subside into the background.¹

One last remark. One may wonder whether, given the pressures to which wages were subject, and the high profits milked from the public finances by the rich on the score of loans, the reactions of the lesser people were not primarily determined by the scandalous inequality between their lot and that of the rich, in other words, whether the poor had not come to resent their poverty, not so much as a misfortune but as an injustice and a form of subjection. In the sphere of public finance, they were aware above all of the injustice of a system which, through the *Monte* and *prestanze*, so openly favoured the rich; the *Monte* they wanted abolished, the *prestanze* replaced by a direct tax. The gabelles, however, were paid by all alike; they affected every transaction, all forms of transport. They therefore appeared more equitable.

In short, institutionalized and stabilized, weathered and, as it were, diluted by time, eclipsed by exactions which were more oppressive and seemingly more unjust, indirect taxation appears to have become an accepted custom. Its volume was not apparent; it was resented only when it struck unexpectedly and with harshness (salt), in its more spectacular applications (corn), but not where it fell heaviest (wine). It is surely significant that the petitioners in July did not explicitly associate their projected reform of the *Monte* with a reform of the gabelles, whose link with the *Monte* was so close; that in November 1378 there was talk in the *Pratiche*, with no opposition from the lesser guilds, of an increase in the gabelles; and that in August 1380 a gabelle on oil was reimposed in the *contado*.²

Indirect taxation, having surmounted its difficulties, had progressed to the point where it took first place among the receipts, contributing in no small measure to the economic subjection of the poorer people. Sensitive to the more brutal forms of injustice and exploitation, they only dimly perceived the long-term dangers from this Trojan horse.

(Translated by Janet Sondheimer.)

¹ Protests over wages: *Cronaca di Alamanno Acciaiuoli*, p. 21; indebtedness, devaluation, *prestanze*, *Monte*, *ibid.*, pp. 28-9. Rodolico, *op. cit.*, pp. 266-70 and 295, and *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1945), pp. 122-4.

² Proposal to increase gabelles: a cuirass maker is not against it, Rodolico, *La democrazia*, p. 277; gabelle on oil, *ibid.*, p. 285.

This article, written at Dakar (Senegal) in 1965, has certain bibliographical omissions. To mention only the most regrettable, it was not possible to consult D. Herlihy, 'Direct and indirect taxation in Tuscan urban finance c. 1200-1400', *Finances et comptabilités urbaines du XIIIe au XVIe siècles*. (Brussels, 1964), pp. 385-405.

Martin Becker's article 'Problemi della finanza pubblica fiorentina della seconda metà del Trecento e dei primi del Quattrocento', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXXIII (1965), pp. 433-66, which was published in 1966, did not appear in time to be consulted in the preparation of this article.

VI

P. J. JONES

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA: A TUSCAN CASE-STUDY IN THE MEDIÉVAL ORIGINS OF MODERN AGRARIAN SOCIETY

I

In a volume of 'Florentine Studies', sequel to 'Renaissance Studies', agrarian history may seem a base intrusion. Florentine history is urban history, its glory the Renaissance, and if to both there existed a rural background, it does not signify: somebody, we know, 'had to dig the potatoes'. The words are new but the sentiment old, and upon it rests a whole chronology of history. Yet if history dealt in numbers, and what most affected most men, the view would radically change. For not only was urban Florence based on rural foundations, Florentine citizens landlords, their subjects mostly peasants, their records mainly agrarian; nowhere more than in agrarian history, Florentine included, does the chronology of 'Renaissance' accentuate the 'paradox' of 'cultural change out of step with economic change'.¹

From as early as the tenth century Europe was renascent, exhibiting signs of economic and political growth, in rising population and wealth, urbanization, and the renovation of secular society and government; and for this the origins, according to some, lay in agrarian changes: in Dark Age developments, technical or administrative, in agricultural production.² Whatever the cause, once begun, the movement was sus-

¹ D. Hay, *The Italian Renaissance in its Historical Background* (Cambridge, 1961), p. 3; P. J. Jones, in *Riv. Stor. Ital.* (lxxxvi, 1964), pp. 287 ff.

² L. White, *Medieval Technology and Social Change* (Oxford, 1962), cap. 2; C. Violante, in *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, lxxiii (1961), p. 517.

tained, suffering only local checks and a partial reverse, mainly demographic, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and, in the process, institutions established, in late Antiquity and after, by exactly opposite conditions of manpower shortage, economic and political decay, were discarded or transmuted from 'medieval' to 'modern'. Of these one was the manor, which, with its associated structure of status and lordship, had spread, from possibly Roman beginnings, to most of the former western Empire. As we know, it was never universal, still less wholly uniform, in any part of Europe, and its detail is often hid from sight.¹ Even so, it was prevalent enough to be counted still among the most typical of rural institutions. Certainly none better illustrates, in its progressive transformation, the inadequacies of conventional chronology.

By transformation of the manor is implied various stages of transition from a system based on unfree labour and dependent, customary tenure, to one of free labour, competitive rents and contractual tenure.² In most manorialized areas of Europe this process was already advanced by the thirteenth century. It was a consequence of the different phases of growth: demographic growth, which broke up properties and holdings³ and redistributed population between new and old land, country and town; economic growth, which raised the price of land and produce and made farming a field for enterprise; and political growth, which challenged seigneurial power and dissociated land and lordship. In the changed relations which resulted between land and labour, lords and peasants, rulers and *seigneurs*, the manor began to dissolve: demesnes were let, works commuted, and often foodrents also; free tenancies multiplied, especially on reclaimed land, where demesne organization was rarely introduced; serfdom, personal and praedial, was steadily reduced; servile and seigneurial charges were suppressed, 'assized', or fixed as tenurial incidents; and peasant tenure hardened into hereditary right. By 1300 the most that remained, in many places, of the old agrarian order, was a system of perpetual tenancies, little different from peasant properties (to which they often gave rise), and

¹ Especially by the practice of granting out estates on what may be loosely but compendiously described as 'mesne tenancies': cf. *infra* 205.

² For what follows cf. generally: *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1942); G. Duby, *L'économie rurale et la vie des campagnes dans l'Occident médiéval* (Paris, 1962); W. Abel, *Geschichte d. deutschen Landwirtschaft* (Stuttgart, 1962); F. Lütge, *Geschichte d. deutschen Agrarverfassung* (ib., 1963); E. Power, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. VII (Cambridge, 1932).

³ Though cause and effect are here obscure: Abel, p. 69; Duby, p. 208 ff.; L. Génicot, *L'économie rurale namuroise au bas Moyen Age*, vol. I (Louvain, 1943), p. 66, n. 1, vol. II (1960), pp. 86 ff., 90.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

burdened with minor quitrents and occasional entry-fines. By 1500 this was all that was left of the manor almost everywhere. What medieval growth began, late medieval 'crisis' completed. Depopulation and economic disorder, though reviving conditions of manpower shortage, caused no general return to serfdom. Rather, by raising agricultural costs (particularly of labour) and reducing agricultural markets (particularly for grain), did they hasten the decline of demesne farming, villeinage, and manorial organization. Only in Europe east of the Elbe, long different from the West, was some beginning evident of a 'manorial reaction'. But the reconstituted 'manor' was not the traditional complex of demesne and tenant land, but an enterprise of new type, the *Gutsherrschaft* comprising mainly demesne worked by dependent, cotter labour. As such it was more a post-manorial than neo-manorial system, one of several which evolved in Europe from the modified relations of lords and peasants left by the declining manor.

In agrarian relations the decline of the manor might be seen as simply one factor, at once cause and effect, in a general advance by the peasantry and a corresponding loss by lords. Helped by the fortunate conjuncture of rising prices and fixed rents, peasants, it is said, were the main beneficiaries, in the period of growth, of agricultural expansion;¹ and peasants again were 'at many points the gainers' in the following period of 'contraction', when, by a similarly fortunate conjuncture of labour shortage and land plenty, emancipation was accompanied by a 'general "upgrading"' of tenants to larger holdings at smaller rents on better-class land.² By the same circumstances the landlord class, by contrast, is seen as involved, from the twelfth century, in a chronic crisis of fortunes,³ the effect of monetary inflation, aggravated in the later Middle Ages by falling rents and revenues. And certainly one unwearied theme, in the centuries of manorial breakdown, is the financial distress of feudal and clerical landlords, the dismemberment of old estates by sale, pledge, or mesne tenancy, the displacement of noble by middle-class families, *milites* or *burgenses*; all of which, with the added fact that peasant enfranchisement was often

¹ Lütge, p. 75 (and in *New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. II (Cambridge, 1958), pp. 27-8); cf. Power, p. 731; Ganshof, in *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 322.

² While rising wages made the late Middle Ages the 'golden age' of labourers: Nabholz, in *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 558; M. M. Postan, *Carte Nativorum* (Northants. Rec. Soc., 1960), p. liv. Cf. R. H. Hilton, *V.C.H. Leicestershire*, vol. II (Oxford, 1954), p. 187. W. Abel, *Agrarkrisen u. Agrarkonjunktur in Mitteleuropa vom 13. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1935). Cf. *infra* pp. 201, 225-6.

³ E. Miller, in *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., vol. III (Cambridge, 1963), p. 289; cf. Power, loc. cit.; Hilton, in *Past and Present*, December 1965, 4; G. Duby, *La société aux XIe et XIIe siècles dans la région mâconnaise* (Paris, 1953), pp. 472 ff.

P. J. JONES

the product of bargaining and sale, might seem to identify manorial change with tenurial revolution and a new mobility of fortunes, families and land.

More closely viewed, however, these neat impressions fade. In peasant society economic development was no purely liberating influence: for cultivators its effect was often to replace juridical by economic servitude, ties of bondage by ties of debt, legal by class inequality. Class differences particularly are represented as deepening, through all phases of development, from the twelfth to the fifteenth century.¹ Increasingly freed from seigniorial controls and exposed to economic and fiscal pressures, the symmetry of manorial society steadily broke up: peasant holdings were redistributed (not only among peasants),² and by a double process of fragmentation and cumulation, tenurial inequalities, 'abiding features of peasant life,'³ were widened to embrace the new extremes of an emergent upper 'kulak' class, settled from the thirteenth century on composite holdings, demesnes and manor farms, and an enlarged, lower cotter class, living by wage-labour.⁴

Hardly more uniform was the situation of landowners, misleadingly epitomized as 'lords'. Their fluctuations of fortune obey no obvious trend. The signs of financial malaise, developing about 1200, do not seem to mark any radical replacement of old families by new, nor does the replacement-rate, where measured, suggest great increase in social mobility, whether from economic or other causes, between the early and later Middle Ages.⁵ If seigniorial wealth in post-Carolingian and

¹ Power, p. 733; Nabholz, pp. 551-2, 559; Duby, *Économie*, pp. 531 ff., pp. 605 ff.; E. Kominsky, in *Past and Present*, April 1955; E. Miller, *ibid.*, July 1964, p. 26; Hilton, *loc. cit.*, pp. 168-70, 174, 183 ff., and in *Ec. H.R.*, 1948-50, pp. 122, 130 ff.; J. A. Raftis, *Tenure and Mobility* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 88, 91-2; M. David, in *Rev. Hist. de Droit*, 1959, pp. 174 ff., 295 ff. For reservations v. T. H. Aston, *Past and Present*, Nov. 1955, p. 9.

² As appears particularly from the rule adopted, from the twelfth century, in ecclesiastical leases, forbidding sales of customary land to undesirable persons (knights, burgesses, etc.); for its small effect v. e.g. J. Schneider, *La ville de Metz aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles* (Nancy, 1950), pp. 359 ff. Cf. *infra* pp. 211, 215.

³ Postan, *loc. cit.*, pp. xxxiv ff.

⁴ Though fragmentation of holdings was possibly at its worst in the thirteenth century, when population is thought to have outrun productivity (Miller, in *Past and Present*, *cit.*, p. 33; Génicot, *Études rurales*, 1962), pulverization continued, and what consolidation occurred benefited mainly wealthier peasants, the poorer remaining landless or quitting the land altogether: R. van Uytven, in *Rev. du Nord*, 1961, p. 313; Hilton, *V.C.H.*, *cit.*, pp. 186 ff.; Scott, *V.C.H. Wilts.*, vol. IV (Oxford, 1959), p. 41; Raftis, p. 209; F. M. Page, *Estates of Crowland Abbey* (Cambridge, 1934), pp. 115, 137-8, 149 ff., etc. Cf. *infra* pp. 230 ff., 234 ff.

⁵ Of causes other than economic, such as changes in class definition (*nobilitas*, etc.), the most important would have been variations in the extinction-rate of families; but this, on present estimates, would seem fairly constant between c. 1050 and 1500, though

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

feudal Europe was stabler than once supposed,¹ there is still evidence enough in records of sale, mortgage and mesne tenancy, that under the *Faustrecht* of earlier centuries as under the 'money economy' of later, upper-class structure and landholding underwent constant change.² One cause indeed of manorial collapse especially on church domains was a widespread 'decomposition' of estates, largely by mesne tenancy, beginning in the tenth century and accompanied in the eleventh and twelfth by formation of a class of medium landholders, alodiaries and tenants, vassals and *militēs*.³ It was this class, of lesser lords, which in the following period suffered most from economic change: in which land traffic was most intense, social mobility most rapid, and the rise most vigorous of *parvenu* families into what, by the fifteenth century, was another 'new noblesse'.⁴ The fortunes of *proceres* were generally more enduring;⁵ in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries their holdings even increased somewhat at the expense of minor estates;⁶ and so too did church property.⁷ But if economic development sharpened differences among lords as well as peasants,⁸ at no time do its effects suggest a general 'crisis' of ownership, still less a crisis arising from decayed manorial income. For seigneurial misfortunes other causes appear: on

also high enough to have been (with some assistance from family law and custom, cf. *infra*) the principal influence in social mobility during most of the Middle Ages: E. Perroy, in *Past and Present*, April 1962; L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 169 ff.; K. B. McFarlane, in *XIIIe Congrès Internat. des Sciences Hist., Rapports*, vol. I (1965), pp. 338-9.

¹ Duby, *Société*, pp. 241 ff., 261, 412 ff., and in *Rev. Historique*, 1961, pp. 6, 13-14, 22; G. Tellenbach, in *XIIIe Congrès*, cit., p. 321; K. F. Werner, in *Welt als Geschichte*, 1958-60.

² Génicot, *Économie*, cit.; Duby, *Rev. Hist.*, cit., p. 1; the 'astonishing' stability of the noblesse in the eleventh and twelfth centuries seems as much juridical as social or economic: Duby, *ibid.*, p. 22; *Société*, pp. 34 ff., 47 ff., 240 ff., 362 ff., 412 ff., 484, 634 ff.; Perroy, in *Annales* 1963, p. 158.

³ Ganshof, loc. cit., pp. 291 ff.; Duby, *Société*, pp. 63, 230 ff.; Werner, loc. cit., 1959, pp. 184 ff., 1960, p. 117; J. Richard, *Les ducs de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1954), pp. 50 ff., 73 ff., 99 ff., 260 ff.; C. E. Perrin, *Seigneurie rurale en Lorraine* (Strasbourg, 1935), pp. 634 ff., 652; P. Dollinger, *Classes rurales en Bavière* (Paris, 1949), pp. 82, 85; A. Verhulst, *De sint-Baafs-abdij te Gent*, p. 603; A. Dumas, in *Le Domaine* (Soc. J. Bodin, 1949), pp. 149, 153; in England mesne tenancies did not disrupt the manor, but here leases were much nearer later forms of renting; E. Miller, in *Settimane del Centro Ital. di Studi sull' Alto M.E.*, vol. XIII (Spoleto, 1966), p. 120.

⁴ Perroy, loc. cit.; Nabholz, loc. cit., pp. 544-5, 557 ff.; Génicot, op. cit., vol. II, p. 143; Duby, *Société*, pp. 522 ff., *Économie*, p. 578; J. Heers, *L'Occident aux XIVe et XVe siècles* (Paris, 1963), p. 110.

⁵ Both in the earlier and later Middle Ages: Duby, *Société*, pp. 60 ff., 491 ff., *Économie*, p. 578; Tellenbach, loc. cit., p. 321.

⁶ Duby, *Société*, p. 512; Génicot, vol. II, pp. 106-7; Richard, pp. 294 ff.

⁷ Despite debts and mesne tenancies: Duby, *Société*, pp. 294, 479, 485 ff., 512; Génicot, loc. cit.; Richard, pp. 50 ff., 68 ff., 76 ff., 232 ff., 298 ff.; Hilton, *V.C.H.*, cit., p. 271; van Uytven, p. 313. Cf. *infra*.

⁸ Duby, *Société*, pp. 492 ff., 528 ff., 554 ff., 623 ff.; but cf. Génicot, vol. II, pp. 106-7, 137 ff., 169, 178.

P. J. JONES

lay estates, divided inheritance and pious donations;¹ on church lands, mismanagement, aggravated, from the thirteenth century, by taxation and then *commendae*. What manorial records emphasize is less a movement of property from old owners to new, than a common initiative by old and new, from the twelfth century on, to exploit and overcome the results of economic development.² One resource was agricultural enterprise;³ but the main means was administrative. Much more than tenurial mobility, the effect of the declining manor was action to reform or replace it.

Reform at first was mostly addressed to getting more from the traditional system: partly by raising customary rents;⁴ partly by surcharges (*rentes*),⁵ entry-fines,⁶ and counter-inflationary commutation of money dues to kind;⁷ partly by reinforcing seigneurial exactions, particularly tallage.⁸ For a time, indeed, increased seigneurial charges (supplemented by tithe) may have represented the main remedy for deficient manorial rent.⁹ In the end, however, it was not by lordship but by land that revenues were redressed;¹⁰ and not by improved income, deriving from the manor, but by improved methods of management, co-existent but ultimately incompatible with the manor. The methods were principally two: demesne farming by wage-labour, and tenant farming

¹ Which would emerge from certain writings as the most critical factors in re-distributing property from the tenth to the fifteenth centuries: Duby, *Société*, pp. 47 ff., 81, 263 ff., 420 ff., 484; Génicot, loc.cit., pp. 86 ff.; Richard, p. 103; R. Boutruche, in *Annales* (1939), pp. 162 ff.

² Cf. A. Dopsch, *Herrschaft und Bauer* (Jena, 1939), pp. 203 ff.

³ Which included such measures as enclosure (*v. infra*) and which, down at least to c. 1300, yielded lords as well as peasants uncontracted benefits from the increased rents and tithes of reclaimed land.

⁴ Including possibly labour rents, at least in parts of England, with a corresponding reaction, from c. 1180, against peasant 'freedoms': M. M. Postan, in *Trans. Royal Hist. Soc.*, 1937; Kosminsky, pp. 17, 19; Miller, *Past and Present*, July 1964, pp. 25-6; Hilton, *ibid.*, Dec. 1965. But cf. Aston, loc. cit., and *infra* n. 9.

⁵ Schneider, p. 355, n. 39; Miller, loc. cit., pp. 29, 33; Hilton, *V.C.H.*, cit., pp. 179-180; G. Fourquin, *Les campagnes de la région parisienne à la fin du M.A.* (Paris, 1964), pp. 185 ff.

⁶ Which, where generously fixed or arbitrable, could raise rentals by as much as 25 per cent: Duby, *Économie*, pp. 475 ff.

⁷ Perrin, pp. 441, 656, 659; in many places rents had remained predominantly kind: Ganshof, p. 311; Dollinger, pp. 150-1; V. Chomel, in *Recueil de travaux offerts à Cl. Brunel* (Paris, 1955), p. 257; I. Guérin, *Vie rurale en Sologne* (Paris, 1960), p. 250; cf. *infra*.

⁸ Which came increasingly to resemble an increment of rent: Ganshof, pp. 313-17; Duby, *op. cit.*, pp. 489-90.

⁹ So much so that some would see, from the twelfth century, a compensatory generalization of all seigneurial incidents (*chevage*, *formariage*, etc.), culminating, in places, in a partial revival of serfdom (Duby, pp. 452, 485-7; Dubled, in *Vierteljahrsschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* [*V.S.W.G.*], 1963-64, p. 306 cf. *supra* n. 4). But the origin of these incidents is still obscure, and the new 'unfreedom' could equally well be a residuary condition: cf. Duby, *Société*, pp. 260, 609 ff.; *Brevia Placitata* (Selden Soc., vol. 66, 1951), pp. cxli ff.

¹⁰ Except perhaps in Germany: Power, pp. 732, 735.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

by lease, of which the first was possibly the earlier, the second destined to prevail. Demesne farming of land and stock certainly long persisted; and, after 1200, the labour increasingly employed for this was that of wage-workers (*mercenarii*): casual workers (*operarii*), resident workers (*famuli*),¹ or the lay monastic workers (*conversi*)² introduced by the Cistercians and others on manors of a new, consolidated 'grange' type, comprising wholly demesne. But as a rationalization of manorial economy the experiment proved premature, especially when labour costs increased in the later Middle Ages; and eventually demesne enterprise, wage-based or otherwise, was only maintained on a large scale (unless run at a loss)³ in regions where 'extensive' farming was practised or introduced.⁴ In Europe generally the main trend, from the thirteenth century, was toward indirect cultivation and the replacement, even on grange estates, of high farming by high rents as a means to higher profits. Between demesne and tenant farming, however, the difference was not always great. Not only were many leases (like the old-style mesne tenancies which continued to exist) grants of whole estates and lordships, in which tenants were virtually managers.⁵ Of the various types of contract, for all kinds of property,⁶ used or devised as lords went over to renting,⁷ a large proportion normally involved, beside strict terms of residence,⁸ some control of farming and maintenance, and many a certain element of partnership or wage-contract between owner and lessee. Such especially were the share-cropping grants *ad medietatem* — of land (*meytaderia*, *métayage*, etc.) and stock (*cheptel*, etc.) — in which lord and tenant variously shared working costs and capital and so in effect combined to exploit a holding instead of a demesne. It was to demesne in fact that commercial leases were first generally applied, and to such land in places they long remained confined; so that on many estates, about 1300, contractual rents from

¹ Functional successors of the old manorial *mancipia*, *prebendarii*, etc.: Duby, *Société*, pp. 317, 424; M. M. Postan, *The Famulus* (*Ec.H.R.*, Supplements, 2, 1954).

² Described as *mercenarii with habitus religionis*: D. Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1963), p. 206, n. 1.

³ For deficit demesne farming in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries *v.*, e.g. O. Martin-Lorber, in *Annales de Bourgogne*, 1957, p. 173; H. Jäger, *Entwicklungsperioden agrarer Siedlungsgebiete im mittleren Westdeutschland* (Würzburg, 1958), p. 84; cf. *infra* p. 219.

⁴ As in the corn-growing areas of east Germany (*supra*) or the districts converted to grazing in late medieval England; but how far English grazing was of demesne flocks seems uncertain. Small-scale demesne farming remained widespread; cf. *infra* p. 219.

⁵ 'Gouverneurs', etc.: e.g. Martin-Lorber, p. 176.

⁶ Saving only, with rare exceptions, land for colonization: cf. *infra* p. 222 n. 1.

⁷ Of 'stock and land' or land or stock alone; for life or lives, years or merely months; for money or food, fixed or partitary rents (or even sometimes services); with or without fines.

⁸ With accompanying duties not to sub-let or farm other land: e.g. Du Boulay, in *Ec.H.R.*, 1965, pp. 447-8; cf. *infra*.

P. J. JONES

demesne farms were the main source of income.¹ In this vestigial form, however, the old division between *terra dominicata* and the rest was too vulnerable to last. Once established, new tenures inevitably threatened the old; and from as early as the twelfth century a reaction is evident, especially within the Church,² against traditional holdings of all kinds, by mesne or customary tenancy. What churchmen preached laymen also practised. Assisted (down to 1300) by the needs of a land-hungry peasantry,³ they began to extend leases to tenant land as well: at first piecemeal, to assarted or casually vacant land, but then to holdings generally by systematic recovery through purchase, enfranchisement or eviction for arrears of rent⁴ or other peasant debt, much of which was owed to lords, partly for sale of liberties. The enfranchisement of peasants was the emancipation of lords. Progressively old semi-proprietary holdings were suppressed; and on customary as on demesne land a new class of tenancies emerged — if not also of tenants:⁵ short-term, inalienable, rackrented tenancies, from which by the fifteenth century an increasing number of owners were drawing the major portion of a buoyant landed income.⁶

Reorganization did not benefit landlords alone. A minority of peasants also gained; but only in consequence of other, larger changes, which new methods helped to produce in the old agrarian order: its social fabric, communal customs and even modes of settlement. Of the effects on settlement one early sign was the depopulation of villages which preceded the establishment of many grange-type manors in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁷ Here demesne swallowed tenant land, and in the process changed the local balance of 'champion' and 'woodland' settlement. But much the same often resulted when leasing brought demesne and tenant land under a common régime of indirect farming. While demesne holdings were frequently let in compact blocks as large 'manor' farms, so customary holdings, when converted to lease-

¹ Supplemented sometimes by tallage: Schneider, pp. 316-17; Duby, in *I^e Conférence Internat. d'Hist. Ec.; Contributions* (Paris, 1960), pp. 334-5.

² B. Schnapper, in *Rev. Hist. de Droit*, 1957, p. 358; I. Bog, in *V.S.W.G.*, 1958, p. 70.

³ Among whom short-term lettings were also a custom by the thirteenth century: Postan, *Carte*, pp. lii, n. 1, liii, n. 1, lvi; Raftis, pp. 74 ff.; Halcrow, vii, *Ec.H.R.*, 1955, pp. 348 ff., 356. Cf. *infra*.

⁴ A power which lords commonly managed to keep, even where tenant right was strongest: Lütge, p. 88; Dollinger, p. 9, n. 16; cf. *infra* p. 215.

⁵ Who, economic differences apart (*infra*), often combined customary and contractual holdings: e.g. Bader, in *Hist. Jahrbuch*, lxi (1941), p. 82; cf. *infra* pp. 236-7.

⁶ Despite a temporary lowering in places of the level of competitive rents (Hilton, *V.C.H.*, cit., p. 185; Halcrow, pp. 352 ff.; Du Boulay, p. 449); despite, too, widespread monetary devaluation, which was counteracted, in many cases, by tying rents to gold (Chomel, pp. 259 ff.). Except on the supposition that they saved much on labour costs, it is sometimes hard to see, in fact, how tenants met the rents of land lords had been running at a loss: Martin-Lorber, pp. 172-3, 174.

⁷ See most recently *Villages désertés* (Paris, S.E.V.P.E.N., 1965), pp. 146-7, 534-5.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

hold, were not only let on demesne-type contracts but also, from the thirteenth century, often combined into demesne-type farms, the occupiers being dispossessed, driven away, or reduced to cotter status.¹ In demesne and tenant farming alike new methods were therefore accompanied by depopulating enclosure and by the gradual segregation of a special class of holdings: compact, isolated farms, of greater than average size, distinguished from an early date by a particular class of names (*meytaderie, métairies, Meierhöfe*, etc.)² and, wherever prevailing acreages were high, by appropriation to a distinct upper-class of tenant farmers.³ This rearrangement of rural scene and society was accelerated in the late Middle Ages by increased demesne lettings, and, even more, by the dereliction, with falling population, of villages and land, some of it reverting to waste but much of it engrossed by consolidating lords and lessees. What depopulation began, was continued as a profitable movement of enclosure,⁴ partly for grazing, but also, as population revived, for mixed and arable farming (*remembrement, Bauernlegen*). Chief victims of both trends were minor, 'intercalary' settlements, numbers of which disappeared by shrinkage or amalgamation (*Zusammensiedlung*); and the final effect, recorded or forecast, was a new polarization of the rural population between farmsteads and villages (*Siedlungsballung*), the first housing cultivators, the second wage-labourers and artisans.⁵ With the new agrarian organization went a new agrarian landscape, and with both a new 'modern' agrarian system.

That the modern system was first medieval is a fact long familiar, and one which accords with the reappraisal of the later Middle Ages as a period, not of 'crisis' but of 'structural transformation' on lines to predominate for centuries.⁶ Structural change, however, was not a uniform process. In rural society particularly it was marked by sharp divergences of pace and effect. Not only did post-manorial régimes vary widely, in forms of tenancy and rent, the size and type of holdings, and the corresponding status of tenants;⁷ still in 1500, beside the new much of the old survived. In many districts of western Europe serfdom main-

¹ Ganshof, pp. 306-7; Lütge, pp. 76, 87; L. Merle, *La métairie et l'évolution agraire de la Gâtine poitevine* (Paris, 1958), pp. 58 ff., 80 ff. Cf. *infra* pp. 231 ff.

² Guérin, p. 265; Merle, loc. cit.; Duby, *I^e Conférence*, cit., pp. 338 ff.; A. Petit, *Rev. Hist. de Droit*, 1919, p. 367; cf. preceding note.

³ Including the emergent 'kulak' class (*supra*): Nabholz, p. 541; Duby, *Économie*, pp. 524, 591 ff.; Hilton, *V.C.H.*, cit., pp. 195, 198; Du Boulay, *Éc.H.R.*, 1956-6. Not everywhere, however, did consolidation help to create a peasant aristocracy: v. *infra* pp. 231 ff.

⁴ For enclosure raising rentals v., e.g., Hilton, loc. cit., pp. 189-90.

⁵ On this and foregoing see now particularly *Villages désertés*, cit. *passim*.

⁶ See most recently E. Pitz, *V.S.W.G.*, 1965, esp. pp. 355 ff., 363 ff. Cf. Heers, pp. 105 ff., 139 ff.

⁷ Cf. *infra* pp. 234 ff.

P. J. JONES

tained a vestigial existence and was even partially revived.¹ Traces remained also of demesne farming with labour services.² Classical manorialism was not yet obsolete. Far more widely persistent however was the vast residue of customary tenures, of partly manorial but partly older origin. In western Germany traditional tenures proved generally resistant to change; in England too by 1500 copyholds were attracting the protection of the law; while in France, during the fifteenth-century post-war reconstruction, there was even some temporary reconversion of leasehold land to perpetual tenancies for nominal rents.³ Such throwbacks prove that agrarian conservatism was no mere effect of 'historical inertia', 'quixotic landlordism' or a paternalistic preference to live 'content with ancient rent'.⁴ Nor is it explained by facile reference to the balance of forces between landlords and tenants.⁵ Not only did old and new practices commonly exist in the same areas and even on the same estates.⁶ The sub-manorial tradition, particularly of hereditary tenures, was much more enduring in some regions than others;⁷ and regional too were the main differences in the post-manorial system of tenant-farming. Wage-type tenancy in particular, especially pure *métayage*, was characteristic principally — managerial leases apart — of the Mediterranean South, where share-cropping was ancient, farms, even 'manor' farms, generally small, and the peasantry comparatively depressed.⁸ In northern Europe, by contrast, demesne and consolidated farms were often large holdings, let for money, on longer terms, to capitalist entrepreneurs.⁹ In both late and post-

¹ Power, p. 728; Nabholz, loc. cit.; Lütge, pp. 89ff.; Heers, pp. 79–80, 109–10; Fourquin, p. 169; Dubled, *V.S.W.G.* xlix–li (1962–4); Martin-Lorber, p. 179.

² Again sometimes a product of recent revival: cf. preceding note; Baker, *Ec.H.R.*, xvii (1964–5), p. 10. In the Metz region labour costs kept labour services alive: Schneider, pp. 335, 385, 417.

³ Bog, pp. 69, 72 ff.; Lütge, pp. 88, 101 (and in *Camb. Mod. Hist.*, cit., pp. 32–3); C. M. Gray, *Copyhold, Equity and the Common Law* (Harvard U.P., 1963); Petit, pp. 370 ff.; Merle, p. 166; Guérin, pp. 244 ff., 254 ff., Heers, p. 109; Duby, *Economie*, p. 596; T. Sclafert, *Cultures en Haute-Provence* (Paris, 1959), pp. 105 ff. Cf. A. Verhulst, in *Études rurales*, n. 10 (1963), p. 73.

⁴ Gray, p. 10; A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London, 1964), p. 55; Stone, p. 306. Customary tenures might in fact be of profit to maintain (Gray, loc. cit.), while commercial tenancies were no sure defence against financial difficulty: D'Haenens, in *Moyen Age*, 1959, 80 ff. Cf. pp. 197–8, *supra*, pp. 238 ff. *infra*.

⁵ Heers, pp. 79–80, 109–10.

⁶ *Infra* pp. 234ff.

⁷ In south and central Germany, for example, England, or, among French provinces, in the Ile-de-France: Lütge, pp. 77–8, 87–8; Fourquin, p. 189; H. J. Habakkuk, in *Annales*, xx (1965), p. 653.

⁸ Duby, *Economie*, p. 593, who suggests a connection between *métayage* and peasant poverty (cf. P. de Saint-Jacob, *Études rurales*, n. 1 (1961), 47 ff.); but another factor, in Italy at least, was the practice of 'promiscuous cultivation' (*coltura promiscua*): v. *infra* p. 227.

⁹ Of intermediate type were certain French *métairies*: substantial farms let for mixed rents to *laboureurs* of small or proletarian condition: Merle, pp. 89 ff.; Saint-Jacob, loc. cit.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

manorial systems a local typology emerges, regional and even inter-regional,¹ which presumably reflected general differences of economic growth.² Before causes can be determined, however, the variations themselves must be properly mapped and dated.

Dates particularly call for definition. Of all contrasts none is more marked than that dividing areas, like southern Europe and the Rhineland, where the manor was superseded early, in the period of expansion, and those, particularly England, much of France and most of south-west Germany, where manorialism lingered, commercial leaseholds began first on tenant rather than demesne land,³ and the end of demesne farming, labour services, and villeinage was accomplished late, after the Black Death. To conclude from this that regional differences were mere chronological stages in a common agrarian history would certainly be extravagant. Regional chronology, even when clarified, can at best redefine the problems of comparative development. Many remain untouched.⁴ But this inadequacy is emphasized by present doubts about the main phases of economic change itself. No longer is the rough distinction accepted between pre- and post-plague Europe. The change of economic conjuncture and demographic development has been shifted back to the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.⁵ And although with this revised chronology the progress of manorial decline may well be found to agree,⁶ it is still far from certain in what way.⁷ Uncertain too is the correlation with rural settlement and enclosure. Prior to 1300, it is true, *Bauernlegen* was probably confined to areas of precocious development. Depopulating changes in settlement certainly occurred,⁸ accompanied,

¹ Somewhat oversimplified by Habakkuk, pp. 649 ff. Cf. Power, pp. 734, 736-7; Nabholz, pp. 536 ff., 554 ff.

² Sweezy, in *Science and Society*, 1950, pp. 141, n. 9, 146-7.

³ At least in parts of England: E. Miller, *Abbey and Bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1951), 109 ff. Cf. Postan, *Carte*, cit. (who may be inclined, however, to antedate the general spread in Europe of genuinely short-term leases (pp. lxiv-lxv), encouraged partly by the appearance from as early as Frankish times of *champart* and *medietarie*, which Italian evidence would rather suggest were long or perpetual tenures: *infra*).

⁴ As why, for example, in the earlier Middle Ages mesne tenancies produced different effects on manorial development in England and the Continent (*supra* p. 197 n. 3), why England alone experienced a manorial revival c. 1200 (*supra* p. 198: cf. Miller, Duby, Verhulst, in *Settimane*, cit., pp. 253-4), or why customary tenures proved so tenacious in later medieval Western Germany (*supra* p. 202).

⁵ Heers, 86 ff. Cf. Verhulst, pp. 70 ff., 79-80.

⁶ As marked especially by demesne-leasing: Duby, *Le Conférence*, cit., pp. 334, 337 ff.; Heers, pp. 133 ff.; Verhulst, loc. cit.; C. Higounet, *Le grange de Vaulerent* (Paris, 1965), pp. 49-50.

⁷ Thus in England the reason for demesne-leasing, c. 1300, may have been that demand for land was still so high as to make renting more profitable than direct working: Halcrow, p. 350.

⁸ And on a scale unsuspected: v. esp. W. A. Boelcke, in *Zts. f. Agrargeschichte*, 1964, p. 157; cf. Duby, in *Villages désertés*, pp. 18 ff.; Higounet, *ibid.*, pp. 253-65.

P. J. JONES

in southern Europe, by dispersal and descent from higher to lower land,¹ further north by *Zusammensiedlung*. But the reasons for this are thought to lie in agricultural expansion or migration to towns and fortified boroughs (*castra*), and the effect was rather a rearrangement than contraction of settlement.² 'Enclosures' are assigned a more spectacular part in the depopulation (*Wüstungen*) after 1300 which, with the corresponding changes in agrarian organization, are now considered the consequence of economic not demographic factors. The Black Death was 'economically neutral', releasing tendencies latently at work.³ Of these, however, agricultural innovation (accompanied again by migration) continued to be important;⁴ while the main impact of enclosures and engrossment were in many places delayed: in England to the fifteenth century, in France and Germany, especially the East, till after 1500.⁵ Regional differences once again stress regional chronology.

II

In the charting of post-manorial Europe the place reserved for Italy at least would seem sufficiently clear. It was the country where manorial society was earliest affected by economic growth, where land first recovered value as a means to wealth not lordship, and where peasant emancipation was soonest seen to entail a new freedom for landlords to replace custom by contract, fealty by rackrents, and traditional forms of estate management by business methods of accountancy and administration.⁶ To be sure, it was also a country of great regional diversity, epitomized in the contrast, almost peculiarly Italian, between areas urban and feudal, commercial and agricultural, identifiable roughly with North and South. But what effect this may have had on specifically manorial development remains unclear. In Lazio and the South indeed manorialism of any kind is very imperfectly attested, at least before the Norman conquest, by which time, in Upper Italy, where the manor was firmly established, the traditional organization was already in decline.

¹ *Villages désertés*, pp. 15, 17, 137-8; Sclafert, p. 47; cf. *infra* pp. 205, 232.

² Jäger, pp. 15 ff.; Boelcke, pp. 157-8; DUBY, loc. cit., pp. 19-20, 21-2; Roncaglia, *Annales*, xx (1965), pp. 231 ff.

³ Pitz, pp. 359, 360; *Villages désertés*, pp. 14 ff., 184, 535 ff.

⁴ Jäger, op. cit.; Abel, in *Zts. f. Agrargesch.*, 1961, pp. 39 ff.; Pitz, pp. 355 ff.; *Villages désertés*, pp. 240 ff., 270-1, 274 ff.; van Uytven, p. 310; Heers, p. 107; dispersal of settlement also continued: Sclafert, pp. 101 ff.; *Vill. dés.*, pp. 223-5, 239; cf. *infra*.

⁵ Nabholz, p. 542; Merle, pp. 73, 76 ff.; Saint-Jacob, 46 ff.; *Villages désertés*, pp. 222 ff., 272, 276-7, 539 ff.

⁶ For what follows cf. P. J. Jones, *Riv. Stor. It.*, lxxvi (1964), pp. 287 ff., and in *Cambridge Economic History*, vol. I (2nd ed., 1966), pp. 340 ff.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

But the South is poorly documented for the early Middle Ages, while even the North is deficient in records of strictly manorial type. Partly for this reason Italy appears from the earliest date a region where landlords gave preference to indirect farming, drawing their principal income from seigniorial dues or rents, which by seemingly ancient custom were mostly food or partiarly rents, and letting out their properties, by long-term or perpetual grants of equally ancient origin (*libellus*, *emphyteusis*, etc.), partly direct to cultivators, but also, and increasingly from the ninth and tenth centuries, to various classes of mesne tenant for purely nominal payments. This interposition of mesne tenancies may well prevent, as nowhere else, an adequate view of the working manorial system; at the same time their multiplication in the post-Carolingian period is regarded as nowhere contributing more to its eventual collapse. Fragmentation, by fief or lease, of great manorial domains is linked with a larger, revolutionary process which, in the three following centuries, partly by urban influence and action, but mainly by the familiar means of manumissions, commutation, charters of village franchise, produced the end of the manor in Italy with its characteristic effects: the decay of serfdom and labour rents, the emergence of peasant copyholds, and, in town territory, the steady restriction of feudal jurisdiction. For Italian lords, in urban areas, recourse to seigniorial impositions (*soprusus*, etc.) was no lasting remedy for dwindling manorial revenue: they passed to communes. Correspondingly precocious was the introduction of new methods of management, especially by commercial leases, which, accompanied by adjustments in perpetual rents¹ and a mounting reaction against perpetual tenancies, began to spread in the double form of grants *afitto* (fixed rents) and mature *métayage* (*mezzadria*) from as early as the eleventh century. By the thirteenth century the new leases were coming into general use. And by the same date, well before any late medieval *Wüstungen*, there appear also, in North and Central Italy, where environment and agricultural régime were more adaptable than in the semi-arid South, the signs of complementary changes in landscape and rural settlement: of descent and dispersal, with some local depopulation, the product already in large part of enclosure and engrossment (*appoderamento*, *ingrossatio*).² That this transformation was further marked, in much of Italy too, by radical changes in landholding, need hardly be said; but that the consequence, at any stage, was a wholesale

¹ Notably by increasing the proportion of rents in kind. Italy was one of the areas where money rents retreated: cf. p. 198 *supra*, p. 217 *infra*.

² A factor ignored in the study of Italian deserted villages by J. Day, C. Klapisch-Zuber, in *Villages désertés*, pp. 419 ff.; cf. *infra*.

P. J. JONES

transfer of old estates to upstarts of burgher or peasant origin, is as doubtful here as everywhere else.¹ For the peasantry at least the main effect was a simple exchange of personal for economic dependence which, aggravated by class differences beneficial to the few, bound the great majority by harsh or usurious contracts² to the owners of land, capital and stock, and which even the temporary labour shortage after 1350 did little to abate.³

The precocity of Italian development has long been recognized and needs no emphasis. Less familiar, because less obtrusive, is the widespread conservatism which, even in commercial Italy, delayed or limited change; the great variety of systems which succeeded to the manor, from latifundistic *Gutsbetrieb* to family-farm share-cropping; and, most important of all perhaps, the policies and processes by which, in different regions, the post-manorial régime became established. To clarify this, in full detail, will doubtless never be possible. But a start can be made, and none better, with late medieval Tuscany, and especially Florence.

III

For reasons largely of record, much Italian agrarian history rests in fact on documentation specifically Tuscan or Florentine. From Tuscan sources particularly, Lombard, Frankish or post-Carolingian, comes some of the earliest evidence of the manorial system in Italy: of estates divided into demesne and peasant holdings (*massaricie, masie*); of *masie* variously composed of *petie terre* about a central vill or *castrum*, classed by manorial custom as roughly uniform and let, by verbal or written contract (*libellus*), on common terms of praedial servitude (*manentia*) for fixity of tenure and rent; and of rent confused increasingly with dues arising from fealty, commendation and lordship, in a manorial mixture of payments, which, although generally modest charges⁴ in money or more often kind,⁵ may yet have outweighed on many estates the tribute

¹ Land-traffic, here as elsewhere, seems to have been most lively among middle-class landholders.

² As the livestock contract 'ad capitale salvum', seemingly unknown in Northern Europe: *infra* pp. 221, 227.

³ *Infra*.

⁴ In the case of rents partly because tenants provided working capital (*res mobilia*) (e.g., *Arch. Soc. Romana di Storia Patria*, 1893, pp. 296-8, anno 819), but also because of a common 'beneficial' element in leases: cf. *infra*.

⁵ Superficially early Tuscan (and Italian) chartularies might suggest a preponderance of money rents; but this impression derives from *libelli*, often beneficial grants for reclamation or improvement. How misleading such grants may be as evidence of peasant exactions in general is retrospectively shown, for example, by *Regestum Pisanum* (ed. N. Caturegli, Rome, 1938), n. 483 (a. 1165); cf. *Le carte di S. Maria di Firenze*, vol. I (Rome, 1913), n. 111 (a. 1076).

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

of labour services. Services, where mentioned, were often merely seasonal or confined to certain holdings, demesne cultivation being possibly reserved to servile *famuli*.¹ Not all peasants were equally involved in the manorial régime. Distinguished, despite the levelling of lordship, by juridical and economic differences, many owed merely rents for their land, money or simple offerings, while a number were barely tenants at all but 'vassals' or 'alodiaries' (as later records call them), bound at best to seigneurial exactions. Imperfect though such facts must be as a measure of manorialization, they help explain why Tuscan estates, among the earliest to illustrate the manor, are also among the first to exhibit, between the ninth and eleventh centuries, the symptoms which in Italy at large presaged its decline. Of these not all, by their nature, are equally apparent. Most elusive, in Tuscan records, is evidence of the general dearth or domestication of servile labour and the flight of unfree tenants from their land. Easier to deduce is a decay of labour dues, the effect partly, it may be presumed, of subdivided holdings,² but partly also of commutation and an increase by beneficial grants, single and collective, for improvement, colonization, or the building of *castella*, of work-free tenancies, owing small perpetual rents (*censi*). From the displacement of services by rents the manorial system, on certain estates, would already appear, by the eleventh century, vestigial or defunct. Appearances are confused, however, by what, in Tuscany as elsewhere, was the most conspicuous change of all affecting the agrarian régime: the spread of mesne tenancies and the transfer, on nominal terms, from Crown, Church and nobility, of a growing quantity of rights and land, including manorial demesne,³ to a new middle-class of landholders or 'great *libellarii*'.⁴

How or with what reform of methods these men administered their properties, is difficult to say. On them has been laid the responsibility for an increase of charges on the peasantry, a demand for 'new exactions' (*soprusus, abusus, maltollectae*, etc.), contested with growing bitterness from the early eleventh century.⁵ From the terms employed

¹ Mentioned in the apurtenance clauses of charters, but also directly attested; e.g. R. Endres, in *V.S.W.G.*, 1916-18, pp. 285 ff. Tenant weekworks, however, were far from unknown: *ibid.*, pp. 274 ff. Cf. *infra*.

² On which v., e.g., P. J. Jones, 'An Italian Estate, 900-1200', *Ec.H.R.*, vii (1954), p. 26; D. Herlihy, *Speculum*, xxxiii (1958), p. 23 *seq.*

³ Though not in general differentiated in the complex of properties let, distinct grants of *donicata* do occur: e.g. g. Lami, *Ecclesiae Florentinae Monumenta* (Florence, 1759), pp. 85, 249, 269.

⁴ On this and the foregoing generally cf. Endres, p. 240 *seq.*; Jones, pp. 19 ff.; C. Calisse, *Arch. Soc. Rom.*, cit. (1884-5); Herlihy, *Agricultural History*, xxxiii (1959), p. 58 *seq.*, *Speculum*, 1961, pp. 92 *seq.*; G. Volpe, *Studi sulle ist. comunali a Pisa* (Pisa, 1902), cap. i.

⁵ G. Luzzatto, *Storia economica d'Italia*, vol. I (Rome, 1949), p. 213.

and other detail, these *superimpositiones* might seem in the main seignorial and so to imply, with northern analogies, a contraction of manorial rent. But their nature remains uncertain;¹ and so, even more, is their attribution to a particular class of landlords. All such payments properly show is that, peasant protests notwithstanding, it was still the policy of owners to exploit traditional resources, and in this there is evidence in plenty to prove overlords were at least as active as any mesne tenants. A reaction against mesne tenancies indeed is one demonstration of the fact. On Church domains particularly, grants of the kind, though often restricted to peripheral estates or accompanied by partial gifts of land, were early denounced as an abuse; and in fact for much of their progress from the ninth century on the evidence consists of laws and regulations to forbid or cancel long-term grants to all social classes 'nisi villanis'.² Success was only partial, but, with the stimulus of Church reform, was enough to secure, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the return by surrender, gift or resumption, of many mesne holdings³ and the endowment, on generous terms, of various new or reformed foundations, unencumbered for years to come with mesne tenancies altogether.⁴ Nor was this all. On many estates what reform had begun, policy then continued. Only the methods changed. From the twelfth into the thirteenth century and in certain cases beyond,⁵ Florentine chartularies indicate considerable transfers of property to the Church; but after about 1150 the main means of acquisition was purchase not donation, and the purpose less recovery than planned consolidation. This policy of engrossment⁶ is most evident on

¹ As appears especially from the movement of rents (*infra* p. 217), but also from terminology: *Regesto del capitolo di Lucca*, ed. P. Guidi, O. Parenti (Rome, 1910-39), n. 1642 (*nova exactio* = rent); *Formularium Florentinum Artis Notariae (1220-1242)*, ed. G. Masi (Milan, 1943), p. 5 (*multollecta* = rent).

² So in a Pisan document of 1115 (*Reg. Pis. cit.*, n. 256); but the principle is much older.

³ P. Ildefonso, *Delizie degli eruditi toscani* (Florence, 1770), pp. x, 173-5; *Carte della Canonica di Firenze*, ed. R. Piattoli (Rome, 1938), nn. 156, 190, etc. Cf. Jones, pp. 22-3, 31; Herlihy, *Speculum*, xxxvi (1961), pp. 96 ff. For further examples v. *Mem. e Doc. p. servire all'istoria del principato Lucchese* (Lucca, 1813 *seq.*), vol. IV, pt. 2, pp. 130, 143, App. 101, vol. V, pt. 1, pp. 417, 421, 424, 501, vol. V, pt. 3 (1813); 'Cartulario della Berardenga', *Bull. Senese di Stor. Pat.*, 1915 *seq.*, n. 571; L. Lisini, *Inventario delle pergamene di Siena* (Siena, 1908), pp. 92, 95, etc.

⁴ See particularly, in Florentine territory, the case of Vallombrosa (Dip. Vallombrosa, 1037 *seq.*), Camaldoli (*Regesto di Camaldoli*, ed. L. Schiapparelli, etc., Rome, 1907-22), and Passignano (affiliated to Vallombrosa c. 1050: Dip. Passignano). For a Lucchese parallel v. Jones, 29. Less immune were the estates of the Florentine Badia (*Carte S. Maria*, cit.) and S. Miniato al Monte (Lami, vol. I, pp. 27, 42).

⁵ *Infra* pp. 229, 240.

⁶ Which here, as elsewhere in Italy, may have been assisted by urban statutes encouraging *ingrossatio*: A. Lattes, *Arch. Stor. Lombardo* xli (1914), pp. 754 *seq.*, *Arch. Stor. Prov. Parmensi*, xiv (1914), pp. 207 *seq.*

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

new or reformed estates: of Vallombrosa¹ and Camaldoli, Passignano, Settimo² and the Badia;³ but hints of similar practice are found on older properties.⁴ And what was true of Florence was true elsewhere in Tuscany.⁵

Far more than the ownership of land, however, and its effective distribution,⁶ the records of this movement reflect its status and organization. The properties the Church acquired came from all classes, including many smallholders,⁷ and were often simple *petie terre* of undefined condition. But, down at least to the mid-thirteenth century, a good proportion consisted also of lordships and manors, partial or complete, with appurtenant demesne and *mansi* and rights over subjects and serfs;⁸ and even discrete parcels or holdings had frequently their tributary *coloni* or *villani*.⁹ Consolidated lordship in fact was one object of acts of engrossment. But whatever their purpose their testimony seems plain: over a widening range of properties, by reflection lay as well as ecclesiastical,¹⁰ there begin to emerge for the first time, with the multiplication of church deeds, the hidden detail of the agrarian régime; and this appears still largely of traditional type. Church deeds, however, form only part of a growing corpus of records

¹ Where, from the mid-twelfth century, purchases mixed with other acquisitions recur with a frequency impossible to illustrate, most of them small and piecemeal, but many costing £10, £20 or £30 and some considerably more (e.g. Dip. Vallombrosa, 4.9.1208 (£134), 4.10.1234 (£94 pis.), 12.5.1253 (£120 pis.), 29.1.1258 (£100 pis.), 16.9.1280 (£142 f.p.), 1.4.1283 (£565 f.p.)). Cf. generally Dip. Vall., CS 260, vols. 7, 10, 97, 126.

² Dip. Passignano, 10.9.1168, etc.; *Reg. Cam.*, cit.; J. Plesner, *L'émigration de la campagne à la ville libre de Florence au XIIIe siècle* (Copenhagen, 1934); P. J. Jones, 'A Tuscan monastic lordship in the later Middle Ages: Camaldoli', *J. Eccl. Hist.*, 1954, pp. 168-9; 'Le finanze della badia cistercense di Settimo nel XIV secolo', *Riv. Stor. della Chiesa in Italia*, x (1956), pp. 90-1.

³ Where purchases multiply about 1230, a number of them ranging from £500 to £700 or £800 and even more: Dip. Badia, 13.8.1230, 1.4.1231, 6.12.1231, 14.3.1236, 15.5.1236 (£1543 10s.), 16.5.1251, 27.5.1251 (£1211 3s. 4d.), 9.3.1253 (£1288 4s. 2d.), etc.

⁴ As those, for example, of the Florentine bishop (Lami, vol. I, pp. 52, 58-9, 268-9, 291-6, 613 *seq.*, vol. II, pp. 715, 718, 720, etc.), the cathedral chapter (A.S.F., MSS. vari, 510, pp. 114-15, 152, 186, etc.; Lami, vol. III, pp. 1449, 1453-4, 1659, 1663, 1666; cf. *infra*), and S. Maria Maggiore (MSS. vari cit., pp. 85-6, 89-90, etc.).

⁵ Volpe, pp. 66 *seq.*, 72; Lisini, *passim*; Jones, 'Estate', pp. 28-9, 31-2; P. Rossi, *Bull. Sen. cit.* (1900), p. 363; G. Prunai, *ibid.* (1943); etc.

⁶ Cf. *infra* pp. 214 ff.

⁷ *Aloderii* but increasingly also *libellarii* and customary tenants: *infra* pp. 228 ff.

⁸ Rights reinforced by imperial and papal privilege, e.g. Dip. Cestello, 3.3.1218; Dip. Vall., 4.3.1171, 12.2.1184, 17.6.1184, 4.4.1188, 22.8.1199, 22.4.1202, 23.11.1234, etc.; Dip. Pass., 10.10.1235, 21.9.1277, etc.; Dip. Badia, 27.1.1281, 8.9.1290; Lami, vol. I, pp. 52, 171, 185, 613, vol. II, pp. 729-30, 757 *seq.*, 788, 826-7; Plesner, pp. 51 *seq.*, 71 *seq.*; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 169.

⁹ E.g. Dip. Cestello, 30.10.1220, 26.10.1224; Dip. Vall., 20.5.1195, 17.8.1203, 28.3.1205, 21.4.1205, 22.8.1210, 17.10.1212, etc.; Lami, vol. I, pp. 159, 162, 165, 292-3, etc., vol. II, pp. 730, 757, 759, 764, 824, 855, etc.; Lisini, 125.

¹⁰ Though some were acquired from one church by another: Dip. Badia, 16.5.1251; Lami, vol. I, p. 161; vol. II, pp. 1453-4; *Reg. Pis.* nn. 309, 336, 338, 522; Jones, 'Estate', p. 30.

— statutes and formularies, rentals and inventories — which permit, from the late twelfth century, a closer view of agrarian society, and disclose what the summary tale of leases had too often previously concealed: the existence, beside contractual tenants (*libellarii*) and mere *fideles* 'pro jurisdictione',¹ of a large submerged mass of dependent cultivators, likewise classed as *fideles*, but also denominated serfs, tied to the land, and often burdened with *opere*. Only the landless *famuli* have practically disappeared.² For the rest, manor and seignury, in their specific Italian form, would seem to persist unchanged; and this not only on older domains but also on new. So powers of franchisal jurisdiction, with the humbler rights over villeins, are found still in the thirteenth century, not only on the lands of the Florentine bishop, cathedral chapter, or Conti Guidi,³ as of many comparable owners in neighbouring parts of Tuscany,⁴ but equally on those of Vallombrosa,⁵ Camaldoli, Passignano, and the Badia.⁶ And corresponding is the evidence of demesne and labour services.⁷ The sole apparent novelty in manorial administration is the presence on Vallombrosan and related properties of resident lay *conversi*; but of these the main recorded function was that of farm bailiffs, *massari* or *custodes curiarum*, indistinguishable from the *castaldi* or *villici* on the manors of other estates.⁸ Only the

¹ Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 169; cf. vassals owing only 'iuramenta set non fidelitates': Lami, vol. II, pp. 918 *seq.*

² Absorbed, as elsewhere in Europe, by the villein class, but still, in the early thirteenth century, not entirely unknown: D. Bizzarri, *Imbreviature notarili*, vol. I (Turin, 1934), p. xxxviii; *Form. Flor.*, 10-1; *Statutum Potestatis Communis Pistorii*, ed. L. Zdekauer (Milan, 1888), p. 223; cf. P. Santini, *A.S.I.*, 1886, p. 185.

³ Lami, vol. I, pp. 52 *seq.*, 158 *seq.*, 781 *seq.*; vol. II, 730 *seq.*, 763 *seq.*, 823 *seq.*, 855 *seq.*, 911 *seq.*; Vol. III, p. 1646; P. Santini, *A.S.I.* 5th. ser. 19 (1897), pp. 310 *seq.*; C. F. von Rumohr, *Ursprung d. Besitzlosigkeit d. Colonen in der neuen Toscana* (Hamburg, 1830), pp. 40-1, 49 *seq.* Cf. *supra* p. 209 n. 9.

⁴ *Doc. p. la storia di Arezzo*, vol. II, ed. U. Pasqui (Florence, 1916), nn. 456, 490, p. 167n.; *Liber Censuum del Comune di Pistoia*, ed. Q. Santoli (Pistoia, 1906), n. 325; *Cod. Pelavicino*, ed. M. Lupo Gentile (Genoa, 1912), *passim*; 'Cart. Berard' cit., 1915, nn. 139-40; 1916, nn. 201, etc.; Jones, 'Estate', pp. 20-1, 25-6.

⁵ Dip. Vall., 1.2.1231, 19.3.1235, 9.2.1237, 14.5.1239, 25.8.1239, 1240... , 26.8.1241, 15.8.1253, 20.8.1253, 20.3.1256, 25.3.1256, 23.12.1258, 18.7.1259, Jan. 1262, 24.3.1263, 10.1.1270, 7.2.1273, 9.2.1273, 6.5.1279, 8.6.1298, etc.; C.S., 260, 97, fo. 260r, 126, fo. 105v; Bonaini, *Annali delle Università Toscane*, vol. II.

⁶ Dip. Pass., 30.8.1206, 22.11.1224, 8.5.1225, 1.11.1277, 30.3.1278, etc.; P. Santini, *Doc. dell'antica costituzione di Firenze* (Florence, 1895), pp. 240 *seq.*, 273; Plesner, pp. 64 *seq.*; Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 169-70. Cf. p. 209 n. 8 *supra*, p. 211 n. 6 *infra*.

⁷ E.g. Dip. Cestello, 14.9.1212, 16.4.1265, saec. XIII; Dip. Badia, 16.5.1251, 13.3.1256, etc.; Dip. Vall., Jan. 1146/7, 19.5.1195, 8.11.1201, 23.11.1211, 16.5.1217, 23.12.1258, 8.10.1259, etc.; Dip. Pass., 10.3.1191, 10.2.1216, 24.10.1279, 8.10.1293; Santini, *A.S.I.* (1897), cit., pp. 287, 320; *Doc. dell'antica cost.*, cit., *Appendice* (Florence, 1952), p. 283; Lami, vol. I, pp. 165-7, 176, 182, etc.; vol. II, pp. 764, 908, 1133, etc.; *Liber cens.*, p. 111; *Cod. Pel.*, pp. 651 *seq.*, 681 *seq.*; Jones, 'Estate', p. 30, 'Camaldoli', p. 171. Cf. *infra* p. 211.

⁸ E.g. Dip. Vall., 8.2.1149, 6.7.1159, 10.5.1185, 6.10.1199, 15.5.1201, 22.10.1217, 23.1.1219, 10.1.1237, 15.5.1262, etc.; Santini, *App.*, p. 314. Cf. Gaudenzi, *Bibl. Iurid.*

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

Cistercians of Settimo, sent to replace the Benedictines in 1236, may also have replaced the manorial system by a pure grange economy.¹

As so often, however, in medieval history, the progress of records and events do not necessarily correspond. The Cistercian action, distinct though it seems, was the truer sign of the times. For it was precisely now, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when manorial records multiply, that the system they describe dissolved. Increased documentation indeed is itself part proof of this. The lordship so widely illustrated is a contested institution, and so too is villeinage; the 'demesne' (*domicatum*) recorded is frequently let out or not true demesne at all;² the labour rents, where defined, are of limited incidence and number;³ and in all these elements the old order is found most persistent in remote or frontier areas where rural society was more conservative or uniform. But the difference was only in degree. Everywhere the stereotyped formulas of manorial vocabulary concealed a growing diversity of personal condition: *homines* with land and dependents of their own; *fideles* and *coloni* engaged in crafts and trade; freeholders and *villani* installed in *castra* or towns; and townsmen seized of 'villein' holdings.⁴ And for this growing divorce of appearance and reality much of the evidence lies in records of manorial origin, but decreasingly manorial in substance: inquests and *memorialia* to protect threatened rights;⁵ 'confessions' and 'recognitions' of status and obligations;⁶ proceedings

Medii Aevi, vol. III (Bologna, 1901), pp. 295-6; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 171, 'Estate', pp. 27, 30-1; Knowles, p. 755.

¹ Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 91 *seq.*; the word 'grangia' (adopted also by Vallombrosa, *infra*) was introduced into Italy by the Cistercians: P. Aebischer, *Rev. portuguesa de filologia*, 1948, p. 210. On grange economy cf. *supra* p. 199.

² Lami, vol. I, 299; Jones, 'Estate', p. 27; Lisini, p. 71, etc.

³ Thirty-seven is a high number, weekwork a rarity: Dip. Pass., 6.10.1141, 7.11.1141, etc.; Dip. Cestello, 12.7.1269, 30.1.1281 (1 *op.* every 8 years); Lami, vol. I, pp. 166-7, 176, 180, 182, vol. II, pp. 764, 888, 908, etc.; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 229-30, 240-4, 273, etc.; *Liber cens.*, n. 325; Jones, 'Estate', p. 30. Weekwork is attested in Lunigiana, but also near Florence: Dip. Cestello, 14.9.1212. Cf. *supra* p. 210 n. 4.

⁴ Plesner, pp. 64 *seq.*, 127 *seq.*, 158 *seq.*; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 169, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 402, 'Florentine families in the fourteenth century', *Papers Brit. School Rome*, 1956, p. 204; R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte v. Florenz*, vol. IV, pt. 1, p. 180; *Forschungen z. Gesch. v. Flor.*, vol. III (1901), n. 1040; E. Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvii (1959), p. 465. Cf. *infra* p. 215 n. 2.

⁵ E.g. Dip. Cestello, saec. XIII; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 308-9; Lami, vol. II, p. 908; *Cod. Pel.*, pp. 40, 266, 658, 679, 681, 685, etc.; Rumohr, pp. 42, 49, 56-7; Jones, 'Estate', p. 28.

⁶ Particularly numerous from the late twelfth to the early fourteenth century, though in part a formality on the entry of heirs or new villein tenants: e.g. Dip. Badia, 15.9.1216, 30.8.1224, 21.8.1259, 10.1.1294; Dip. Cestello, 3.11.1242, 28.10.1257, etc.; Dip. Pass., 8-19.12.1266, etc. (by 1300 almost annual, as also at Vallombrosa: *supra*, cf. Dip. Vall., 2.3.1314, 12.2.1329, etc., CS 260, vol. II, 31.12.1347, etc., vol. 12, 27.12.1351, etc.); Lami, vol. I, pp. 60, 158, 168, 269-70, etc., vol. 11, 776, 786, etc. vol. III, pp. 1646, 1661; *Form. Flor.*, p. 48; Lisini, pp. 189, 404, etc.; Cioni, in *Misc. Stor. Valdelsa*, 1912; Imberciadori, *Bull. Sen.*, cit. (1937), p. 14.

P. J. JONES

against recalcitrant or 'fugitive' *coloni*;¹ disputes with village communities or coalitions of tenants;² and, most of all, contracts and charters, moderating or cancelling all claims of lordship and manor. Tuscan manorialism is best illuminated in its moment of decline.

How decline came about requires no particular commentary. The process was much as everywhere else in Europe. Peculiar only to Tuscany, as to all Upper Italy, was the intervention of communes, especially urban communes. But urban intervention was generally tardy and trimmed to political expediency. Well into the thirteenth century, indeed, town governments, composed as they were largely of serf-owning landlords, were ready to support lords against villeins, immigrants included,³ and even uphold franchisal jurisdiction;⁴ and even when, from about 1250, the advent of the Popolo produced more resolute action against serfdom and seigneurie, their primary aim remained political — to establish urban sovereignty — the preferred procedure peaceful purchase or redemption, and the governing principle to safeguard property rights, separating land from lordship.⁵ Of this no clearer proof exists than the famous Florentine enfranchisement decree of 1289 (unique of its kind in Tuscany), which, although phrased as a total ban on all future ties of fealty, 'ut jurisdictio comunis ampliatur', was immediately a measure reinforcing laws against the sale of dependents to foreigners, encouraging their transfer to Florence, and issuing in just such a compact between the commune and cathedral chapter.⁶ As such it simply takes its place in a series of similar acts

¹ Withholding rent, challenging status, etc.: Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 223-5, 227, etc.; Lami, vol. III, p. 1646; Rumohr, pp. 6, 31; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. I (1896), pp. 608, 687.

² Dip. Pass., 10.1.1241, 27.2.1255, 21.4.1281, etc.; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 508 *seq.*; Lami, vol. I, pp. 168, 610, 620, etc., vol. II, pp. 794 *seq.*, etc.; Dip. Pistoia, 21.9.1218; L. Zdekauer, *Studi in onore di F. Schupfer*, vol. II (1898), pp. 241 *seq.*; Lisini, pp. 277, 279; Volpe, p. 73.

³ E.g. Dip. Badia, 13.3.1256; Dip. Cestello, 21.1.1254, 17.2.1254, etc.; Lami, vol. II, p. 645; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 74, 227, 240, 501, *App.*, 399, etc.; Davidsohn, loc. cit.; Plesner, pp. 117 *seq.*; R. Caggese, *Classi e comuni rurali nel medio evo italiano*, vol. I (Florence, 1907), pp. 306-7; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvi (1958), p. 482; Lisini, *Atti Acc. dei Rozzi* (1888); De Stefani, *A.S.I.* 1894, pt. 2, p. 254. Different, however, was their attitude to immigrant *libellarii*, mesne tenants or otherwise, from which the citizenry was largely recruited, *infra* p. 215.

⁴ Dip. Pass., 29.11.1258; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 505, *App.*, 331, 342, *A.S.I.*, 1903, pt. 2, p. 60; *Mem. e Doc. Luc.*, cit., vol. IV, p. 127; Volpe, pp. 383-4; Caggese, vol. I, pp. 101, 320; *La repubblica di Siena e il suo contado* (from *Bull. Sen.*, 1906), pp. 12, 16-17, 29-30.

⁵ Rumohr, p. 86; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 355-61; Caggese, *Classi*, vol. I, p. 103, *Repubblica*, *passim*; Fiumi, loc. cit.

⁶ (*Anno* 1291) by which the chapter sold *servitia*, *fideles*, and *coloni* in Mugello and bought land near Florence: A.S.F., MSS vari 510, fol. 233; L. Rondoni, *I più antichi frammenti del costituito fiorentino* (Florence, 1882), n. vi; *Liber cens.*, n. 450; Davidsohn, loc. cit. Florentines were also licensed to acquire *fideles* (e.g. A.S.F., MSS vari 836, a. 1297), but by 1325 statute required them to dissolve the *vinculum fidelitatis* (*Stat. del Capitano del Popolo*, ed. Caggese, Florence, 1910, pp. 59 *seq.*); and the 1289 law was

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

whereby, in the thirteenth and following centuries, Florence and other communes began to acquire, wholly or in part, the feudal rights, and sometimes the lands, of lay and ecclesiastical lords.¹ And these in turn are only late accessions to a larger series of transactions, collective and individual, between lords, subjects and tenants, which defined, changed or abrogated seigneurial and tenurial obligations. Beginning early, the memorials of these are necessarily very incomplete. Collective contracts in particular must be largely inferred from the steady growth, between the mid-eleventh and thirteenth centuries, of rural (and borough) communes, of which the typical privilege was a share in village government and rights of jurisdiction. Rights of jurisdiction, as affecting all classes, were doubtless most exposed to attack by rural as by urban communes; and perhaps for this reason certain great proprietors appear increasingly anxious to consolidate land with lordship and identify subjects with tenants.² But rural communes, however mixed in population, consisted mainly of rustics, tenants already subject to confused rights of land and lordship, which even treaties between towns and feudatories did not invariably distinguish; and *cartae libertatis*, where their text survives, are generally found to regulate much more than jurisdiction. Beside or intermingled with acts remitting, leasing, or, more commonly, converting purely seigneurial dues, are grants limiting or commuting labour services, enfranchising *manentes*, conferring freedom of movement, inheritance or sale, or, more radically still, letting out or selling up all lands and rights together.³ Multiplied over Tuscany, it is tempting to see in such transactions the main instrument of manorial transformation. But side by side with collective grants, less obtrusive but possibly of equal effect, recur also, from the late twelfth century, deeds of individual manumission, commutation, or both, which in number are sometimes indistinguishable from mass enfranchisements.⁴

enforced at least against such suspect lords as the Alberti: A.S.F., Giudici di Appelli, 1311-42, fasc. vi, fol. 16r (anno 1330).

¹ Santini, *App.*, pp. 48 *seq.*, 65 *seq.*, 78 *seq.*, etc.; *Form. Flor.*, 101; *Capitoli del comune di Firenze*, ed. C. Guasti, vol. I (Florence, 1866), pp. 92, 94, 97, 99, 107, 177, etc.; Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, vol. III, pp. 324-5. For non-Florentine parallels v. e.g. *Liber cens.*, nn. 285, 323, 325-6, etc.; Pasqui, vol. II, pp. 167, 396, etc.; Caggese, *Repubblica*, p. 29; Barbi, *Boll. Stor. Pistoiese* (1899).

² *V.* (with some exaggeration) Plesner, pp. 17 *seq.*, 44, 51, 56, etc.; Jones, 'Camaldoli,' p. 169; Volpe, pp. 66 *seq.*, 72; Rossi, p. 376; Imberciadori, p. 22; Zdekauer, p. 252; *Mem. Doc. Luc.*, vol. V, pt. 1, p. 502. Cf. *infra* pp. 228 ff.

³ E.g. Dip. Badia, 12.2.1228; *Mem. Doc. Luc.*, vol. III, p. 122; I. Imberciadori, *Mezzadria classica toscana* (Florence, 1951), p. 44; Caggese, *Repubblica*, p. 72; Zdekauer, p. 252-3, and in *Bull. Sen.*, cit. (1896), pp. 374 *seq.*; Volpe, pp. 42, 49, and *Lunigiana medievale* (Florence, 1923), pp. 196 *seq.*

⁴ E.g. Dip. Cestello, 25.2.1204, 23.1.1228, 26.6.1229, 6.10.1229, 28.10.1257; Dip. Pass., 30.8.1206, 23.3.1247, 19.10.1279; Dip. Badia, 31.3.1210, 17.7.1252; Lami, vol.

P. J. JONES

Whatever their form, by acts like these, assisted by usurpation, the classical manor and seignury had been all but suppressed in Tuscany by 1300. The date is approximate only, for the means of change are clearer than the stages. For the decline of the manor especially the evidence is often indirect: demesne leasing,¹ the disappearance of *opere*. But the general trend is clear. On many, possibly most estates, the decay of services was virtually complete by the late twelfth century and on most of the remainder by the late thirteenth. On a few only did they linger to the end of the Middle Ages, subordinate and vestigial.² Similarly rights of lordship, never lightly relinquished, persisted on some secluded or privileged domains,³ and still more rustic *fidelitas* and *colonaria conditio*.⁴ But after 1350 lordship was residual and of no economic importance;⁵ while fealty, where it survived, was simply a formal incident of customary tenure.

IV

As everywhere else, customary or hereditary tenure, 'nomine feudi', 'fidelitatis' or 'affictus perpetui', was the only substantial survival from the old agrarian system. Upheld by tenant interest, it was also protected by increasing tenant right. Nowhere more than in Tuscany, indeed, or communal Italy generally, did perpetual holdings acquire the formal attributes of ownership. Denominated *patrimonia*,⁶ many in fact, by

I, pp. 165 *seq.*, 290 *seq.*, vol. II, pp. 794, 827, etc.; *Form. Flor.*, pp. 5, 10; Florence, Bibl. Laurenziana, Cod. Biscioni, 17, fol. 23; Bizzarri, nn. 190-1, 403; *Cod. Pel.*, nn. 239, 250, 257, 283, 308, etc.; Volpe, *Pisa*, p. 45, n. 1; Rossi, pp. 360, 362; Chiappelli, *A.S.I.*, xciv (1936), p. 5, n. 1; G. Sforza, *Mem. Stor. di Montignoso* (Lucca, 1867), pp. 344 *seq.*; Jones, 'Estate', pp. 26, 30, 32; Caggese, *Classi*, vol. I, pp. 139, 146, 289; P. Vaccari, *L'affrancazione dei servi della gleba* (Bologna, 1926).

¹ E.g. Dip. Cestello, 6.10.1200; Lami, vol. I, pp. 293, 295, vol. II, p. 826; Rumohr, p. 138. Cf. *infra* pp. 219 ff.

² Dip. Vall., 4.4.1314 (4 *op. man.*), 31.12.1355, CS 260, vol. 11 (31.10.1348), etc.; CS 39, vol. 178 (abbey of Dicciano, 1456); Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 178-9.

³ As, for example, of the bishop (Lami, vol. I, pp. 52, 56, 168, 189, 273; vol. II, pp. 761, 773, etc.), Settimo (Jones, 'Settimo', p. 93), Camaldoli (Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 173 *seq.*), Badia Tedaldi (Dip. Badia, 9.5.1330), the Bardi di Vernio (A.S.F., Stat. Comm. Sogg., 924, fols. 99r *seq.*), and other Tuscan, esp. ecclesiastical, lords: e.g. *Mem. Doc. Luc.*, vol. III, pp. 118, 139; *A.S.I.* (1964), pp. 497 *seq.*; Cecchini, in *Studi R. Filangieri*, vol. I (Naples, 1959), etc. Cf. Caggese, *Classi*, vol. I, pp. 139 *seq.*, *Repubblica*, pp. 57 *seq.*

⁴ E.g. on the bishop's estates (AA, A IV 2, A IV 3, A IV 9, A IV 11, 1300-92), or those of Vallombrosa (*supra* p. 211 n. 6), Passignano (CS 179, vol. 34, ii, fols. 24r *seq.*; 37, n. 2, fols. 1, etc.; 37, n. 3, n. 5, etc.), Buonsollazzo (Dip. Cestello, 2.1.1322), the Badia (Dip. Badia, 16.6.1338, etc.), as also of lay lords: Piattoli, *A.S.I.*, lxxxix (1931), pp. 42-3.

⁵ See for example the bishop's seignorial income from Castel Fiorentino (AA, unnumbered rent book (1374-86), fol. 27r; A IV 14, fol. 6r), or the *fodero* (26 d. per household) of the bishop of Volterra at Pomerance, etc. (Cat. 241, fols. 438 *seq.*, 780 *seq.*). Most account books disregard such income altogether.

⁶ For example on Passignano estates: CS 179, vols. 35, 37 n. 3, etc.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

charter, enfranchisement, or transfer to towns, were converted into properties.¹ Others were illicitly allodialized. But large numbers remained, and over these, by the thirteenth century, tenants had acquired an almost perfect, alienable *dominium*, secured now not only by custom or contract, but also by franchise and, still more, urban statute. One reason was that, as before, not all were peasant cultivators. On church lands particularly, a certain proportion were mesne tenants, magnates or townsmen, who by grant, inheritance or purchase,² possessed perpetual holdings; and such men made the law. The consolidation of tenant right, especially freedom of sale, was not untested. But all that lords were able to establish, directly or by statute, was the power to levy entry-fines on inheritance and sale,³ to demand licence for alienation,⁴ and to evict tenants for unpaid rent, neglect or (occasionally) failure to improve.⁵ Improvement (*meliioramentum*) was a common condition of hereditary tenures, originating as many did in grants for reclamation; but by the thirteenth century it had dwindled, in most cases, to a purely nominal duty.⁶ And purely nominal also were the corresponding rents. Hereditary rents were often indeed mere recognition dues, payments in pence and poultry, and of the rest a large

¹ When transferred to towns, governments sometimes continued to collect rents (*Liber cens.*, nn. 333-4, 341 ff., 456, 772, 801; G. Salvemini, *Studi storici* (Florence, 1901), pp. 19, 27), but Florence seems usually to have required redemption of holdings: *Capitoli*, vol. I, pp. 99-100, 598 seq.; P. S. Leicht, *Scritti vari* (Milan, 1949), vol. II, pt. 2, p. 419; cf. however, *Capitoli*, vol. I, p. 283; *A.S.I.*, cxxii (1964), 497 seq.

² With freedom of sale chartularies record a growing traffic in customary land (cf. Plesner, pp. 78-9, 87 seq., 94; *infra*), and among the beneficiaries were many townsmen, entering by payment or distraint (yet continuing to hold 'nomine fidelitatis'): e.g. Dip. Pass., 19.11.1301, 24.6.1330, etc., CS 179, 36 fols. 25v seq., 37 n. 2, fols. 20r seq.; AA, A IV 9 fol. 35v; Lami, vol. I, pp. 67-70, 188, 272, vol. II, p. 895. Cf. *infra* p. 238.

³ *Servitia, remansiamenta*, etc., common from the late twelfth century. For early examples v. Lami, vol. II, p. 762, 789; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 172; Dip. Cestello, 29.10.1172; Dip. Vall., 3.9.1200. Cf. Jones, 'Estate', p. 28; *Cod. Pel.*, n. 257; Santoli, *Bull. Stor. Pistoiese*, 1906, p. 1, n. 2; A. Neri, in *Misc. Stor. Valdelsa*, 1896; E. Lasinio, *Reg. delle pergamene in Massa* (Pistoia, 1916), pp. 4-5.

⁴ Unlicensed alienation was forbidden by all Tuscan statutes and disallowed by the courts; but here the law was only acknowledging rights enforced by lords on tenants after prolonged dispute (v. Dip. Vall., 20.8.1253, 7.2.1273, etc.; Dip. Cestello, 4.6.1290; *Capitoli*, vol. II, p. 22; Santini, *App.*, pp. 320-1; Lami, vol. I, pp. 171, 297; Bonaini, loc. cit.), and which ecclesiastical lords at least limited further by a claim to first refusal (often at beneficial price) and a ban on sales to other landlords, citizens included: CS 179, n. 36, fol. 28r; Jones, 'Settimo', 96; *Statuti di Pistoia*, ed. Berlan (Bologna 1882), pp. 115-16; *Breve Populi Pistorii* (1284), ed. Zdekauer (Milan 1891), pp. xxxvi-vii; *Capitoli*, loc. cit., etc.

⁵ E.g. Dip. Badia, 5.12.1224; Dip. Vall., 11.12.1202, 15.5.1262, 7.4.1263; Dip. Cestello, 19.6.1242, 25.1.1325, 20.10.1338, etc.; Santini, *Doc.*, p. 512; *Reg. Cap. Lucca*, nn. 1598-9, 1624. Not all statutes, however, allowed eviction, at least with equal freedom: cf. A.S.F., Stat. Comm. Sogg., 448, fol. 11 (Montagna Pistoiese, saec. XV).

⁶ But not entirely; there were still some beneficial leases, including collective *libelli* for colonization or castle-building: Calisse, *Arch. Soc. Rom.*, xvii (1894), pp. 122-3; Caggese, *Classi*, vol. I, p. 264; Volpe, *Pisa*, pp. 63 seq.

P. J. JONES

proportion were inconspicuous *censi*, totalling on many estates, *circa* 1300, a few devalued shillings, which entry-fines did little to redress.¹ Judged by residuary rights like these, the wreck of the manor, in Tuscany too, was the wreck of manorial lords.

And as such it has been seen. Dispossessed of seigniorial income and the profit from much of their land, manorial lords were doomed to debt and their properties to extinction. Of debt certainly there is plentiful record, in the twelfth and still more thirteenth century, and to the charge not only of lesser owners, but of great families and institutions like the Florentine Badia and cathedral chapter, Vallombrosa, Camaldoli, Passignano and Settimo.² It is clear also that trade in land and perpetual or allodialized holdings produced some fragmentation and dispersal of old estates.³ And there is much to support Dante's lament of decayed noble houses displaced by *gente nuova*.⁴ Yet nowhere more than in mercantile Tuscany is the evidence also emphatic that social mobility was not the end of noble families nor land traffic the ruin of ancient domains;⁵ and that debt, where contracted, was due less to destitution or any 'crisis' of manorial revenue, than to extraordinary causes, particularly taxation,⁶ or to calculated expenditure which, on

¹ For sample evidence see: Dip. Vall., 10.12.1233, 23.11.1234, 26.12.1271 30.12.1271, 2.1.1275, 10.5.1338, etc.; Guasti, *A.S.I.*, App. ix (1853), 200 *seq.*; Cag, *gese, Classi*, vol. I, p. 172; Davidsohn, *Forsch.*, vol. II, p. 18, n. 92; Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 171-2. Entry fines varied, but in tendency were low: on the bishop's estates in the fourteenth century they were assessed at 4d. pro £1 or less: Lami, vol. I, p. 276; AA, A IV 2 fol. 58r, A IV 14 fol. 6v, etc.

² A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 3rd Ser. 234, fol. 271, MSS vari 510, p. 164; Dip. Cestello, 6.3.1201, 14.9.1212, etc.; Dip. Pass., 30.8.1206; Dip. Badia, 12.2.1228, 12.7.1246, 8.1.1271; Dip. Camaldoli, 28.11.1263, 30.1.1264; A.S.F., Camald., App. 18, pp. 104, 114, 138, 144-5, 149; *Reg. Cam.*, nn. 1290, 1838; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 232 *seq.* (nn. 15, 18, 45, 48, etc.), 374, 484, *App.*, 152, 308; *Form. Flor.*, 21, 25. Cf. generally Lami, vol. I, p. 287, vol. II, p. 967, vol. III, pp. 1658 *seq.*; Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. I, pp. 513, 701, *seq.*, vol. II, pt. 1, pp. 453-4, vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 403 *seq.*; *Forsch.*, vol. III, pp. 3, 5, 9-11, 25, vol. IV, pp. 125-6, 268 *seq.*, 281 *seq.*, 291; Caggese, *Classi*, vol. I, p. 146, vol. II, pp. 263 *seq.*; Volpe, *Lunigiana*, p. 279; Jones, 'Estate', pp. 28, 30 *seq.*; Lisini, pp. 94, 97, 111, 118, 122, 151-2, etc.; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxxi (1961), pp. 147 *seq.*; Cherubini, *ibid.*, cxxi (1963), pp. 6 *seq.*

³ E.g. Cherubini, *A.S.I.*, cxxi (1963), pp. 3 *seq.*

⁴ Attributed by Salvemini (op. cit., p. 17) to inadequate rents. Cf. Davidsohn, *ubi supra*; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvii (1959), pp. 433 *seq.*; P. Guicciardini, *Cusona* (Florence, 1939-40), vol. I, pp. 44-5, 51.

⁵ Plesner, pp. 95 *seq.*, 101-2; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxiv (1956), pp. 21 *seq.*; Guicciardini, p. 32; E. Cristiani, *Nobiltà e popolo nel comune di Pisa* (Naples, 1962); Cherubini, *Riv. di Storia dell'Agricoltura*, v (1965), pp. 10-11; Noble families were helped by statutory *retrait lignager* of consortes: *Stat. Pot. Flor.*, ed. Caggese (Florence, 1921), p. 138.

⁶ Or related charges (repair of war damage, etc.): Dip. Badia, 3.2.1245, 2.2.1252, 14.5.1256; Dip. Vall., 20.6.1255; Dip. Cestello, 15.11.1254; Santini, *Doc.*, pp. 484, 496, *App.*, pp. 303, 306; *Cod. Pel.*, n. 315; Lami, vol. II, p. 860, vol. III, pp. 1654-5, 1658-60 (cf. A.S.F., MSS, vari, 510, pp. 183 *seq.*, 218-19); Plesner, p. 98; Jones, 'Estate', p. 31; Davidsohn, *Forsch.*, vol. IV, pp. 125-6; Santoli, pp. 6-7.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

church estates at least, included conspicuous investment in property.¹ The institutions represented as disastrously insolvent were also land-engrossers, buying more than they pledged or sold² in a market for property and credit which profited not only *nouveaux riches* but also churchmen and magnates.³ Engrossment, however, did not proceed on borrowed money alone. Though helped by gifts and loans, the main resource must have been current income; and if this was partly extraneous, a great proportion must also have come from land. A discrepancy is suggested between the real and apparent revenue and financial condition of lords, which can only mean that manorial transformation was also more than a single-sided process, transferring rights from lords to tenants by charter and enfranchisement.

Most acts of enfranchisement in fact, whether between lords and tenants or lords and towns, were in substance contractual, deeds of sale or exchange; and commonly the purchase-price was high. The price was often money,⁴ but often it was land: enfranchised peasants surrendered holdings,⁵ disfranchised lords bought property;⁶ and cash payments too probably were largely spent on land or recovery of holdings.⁷ In many instances, no doubt, land and holdings were simply let for customary rents. But customary rents, it is evident, were not all or mainly unprofitable *censi*. Nor, despite tenurial law, were they wholly immune from change. From the twelfth century at the latest there are hints of a policy to raise perpetual payments⁸ and convert them, where necessary, from money into kind. One widespread effect indeed of Tuscan charters of franchise, manumission and commutation, was to

¹ Plesner, p. 98; Jones, 'Estate', p. 31; Prunai, pp. 129 *seq.* Many debts were also temporary and cleared off.

² Partly from other churches in debt: Dip. Cestello, 15.11.1254; Lami, vol. II, p. 718, vol. III, pp. 1453-4; Jones, p. 30; Cherubini, *A.S.I.*, cxxi (1963), pp. 10 *seq.*, 29. Cf. *supra* p. 209 n. 10.

³ Cf. *supra* p. 208, *infra* pp. 228 ff. For clerical and magnate money-lenders cf. Davidsohn, *Gesch.*, vol. II, pt. 2, pp. 416 *seq.*, 427-8; Jones, pp. 28-9; Cherubini, *loc. cit.*

⁴ Especially in acts of manumission or feudal treaties with communes: Dip. Pass., 30.8.1206; Dip. Badia, 17.7.1252; *Form. Flor.*, p. 5; Santini, *App.*, pp. 48 *seq.*, 65 *seq.*, 78 *seq.*, etc.; *Capitoli*, vol. I, p. 99; *Delizie*, vol. X, p. 290; Rumohr, pp. 42 *seq.*; *Stat. Pot. Pist.*, pp. xiv-xv; *Cod. Pel.*, n. 315; Caggese, *Repubblica*, p. 72, n. 1; Jones, 'Estate', pp. 26, 32.

⁵ Freely or for payment: Dip. Vall., 23.3.1222; Dip. Badia, 31.3.1210; Dip. Cestello, 26.6.1229, 6.10.1229; Rumohr, pp. 42, 74, 81; Plesner, pp. 89 *seq.*; Fiumi, *A.S.I.* cxvi (1958), pp. 495-6; Bizzarri, nn. 190-1; Jones, *loc. cit.*; Sforza, pp. 344-6; so, in certain cases, did urban immigrants: Lisini, *Acc. Rozzi*, cit., p. 199; *Costituto di Siena (1262)*, ed. Zdekauer (Milan, 1897), p. 418.

⁶ *Supra*, p. 212 n. 6.

⁷ Mesne holdings in large part, but also, from the twelfth century, peasant tenures too: Rumohr, p. 152 n.; Jones, 'Estate', p. 29 n.; cf. *infra* pp. 228 ff.

⁸ *Reg. Cap. Luc.*, n. 1642; Lami, vol. I, pp. 614-15; Herlihy, *Agric. History*, xxxiii (1959), p. 68, *Ec. H. R.*, 1965, p. 238.

P. J. JONES

replace vestigial *servitia*, works and dues, by new, perpetual cornrents.¹ With manorial decline went also reorganization. By the mid-thirteenth century rents in kind were universally prevalent, and in this improved form at least, perpetual rents could yield substantial income.² Most important of all, however, traditional rents, by that date, were being altogether suppressed. Beside adjustments to customary holdings had begun to appear a far more radical means to improved rent: the modern commercial tenancy, on modern types of holding. And this henceforth it was the dominant concern of Tuscan lords to develop.

V

Concern with rent does not mean that in Tuscany 'modernization' was confined to tenant-farming. On the contrary, to the end of the Middle Ages many owners of all classes, including new proprietors, from the monks of the Certosa to the business houses of Albizzi and Medici, continued to work some land 'ad manus suas'³; and for this, from at least the thirteenth century, they relied, in the modern manner, on the paid services of wage-labourers,⁴ tenant-cultivators,⁵ and, in some cases, *conversi*.⁶ On only a few estates, however, did demesne farming retain significant proportions. Settimo, in the early fourteenth century, was still receiving quantities of demesne wheat, oil and wine from lands 'a proprie spese' near Florence and in the Mugello. At Camaldoli, in the late fourteenth century, demesne farms continued to supply up to half the grain revenue from estates in the Casentino. And in the

¹ Dip. Cestello, 25.2.1204, 28.10.1257, 12.7.1269; Dip. Vall., 27.4.1270, 23.12.1270, 15.7.1274, etc.; Dip. Badia, 16.2.1234; Lami, vol. I, pp. 54, 57, 58, 165, 290 *seq.*, 615, vol. II, pp. 747, 827, 839, 885, 895; Ildefonso, vol. X, pp. 208-9; Rumohr, pp. 23, 31 *seq.*, 42, 66-70; *Cod. Pel.*, nn. 101, 316; Volpe, *Lunigiana*, pp. 196 *seq.*; Caggese, vol. I, pp. 139; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 172, 'Estate', p. 31. Cf. *supra*, p. 213 n. 4.

² AA, A IV 11 (in fine), A IV 63, 'Memoriali di affitti', etc. (1309 *seq.*), fols. 37r, etc.; CS 179 (Passignano), pp. 37 n. 3 (in fine), 13r *seq.*, 35 *seq.*; Lami, vol. I, pp. 63, 162-3, 172, 298, vol. II, pp. 728-9, 751, 776-8, 825, 835-8, 842-6, 866, etc.; N. Mengozzi, *Feudo del vescovado di Siena* (Siena, 1911), pp. 12-13. Demesne rents were especially high: Lami, vol. I, pp. 293, 295, vol. II, p. 826.

³ See particularly the evidence of tax-returns: Imberciadori, in *Arch. Scialoja*, 1939; E. Fiumi, *Storia economica e sociale di S. Gimignano* (Florence, 1961), pp. 114-15, 122 — all of which is confirmed by fourteenth and fifteenth-century Florentine *estimi* and *catasti*.

⁴ Hired by the year, season, or day, and already regulated by statute (at Pistoia) in the late twelfth century (Caggese, *Classi*, vol. II, p. 290), but only illustrated in detail with the beginning of extant estate accounts c. 1300: Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 171.

⁵ Especially the new class of *mezzadri*: *infra*, p. 223 n. 9.

⁶ By the later Middle Ages often indistinguishable from wage-workers: Jones, *loc. cit.*, p. 178 n. 3; but they were a very mixed class, especially at Vallombrosa, where they included many corrodians, small tenants (presumably labourers), and, as before, bailiffs charged in part with demesne farming: Est. 338, fols. 31r *seq.*; CS 260, 125, fol. 135r; Cat. 185, fol. 424v. Cf. *infra*, p. 229.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

early fifteenth century, the demesnes of Vallombrosa, on one at least of its four main granges, were producing 5–12 per cent of grain and up to 76 per cent of wine.¹ At the same time these institutions engaged in transhumant grazing,² and in this activity at least they were joined by other landlords.³ But these were exceptional properties in largely unrepresentative areas,⁴ typical only in that, even for them, demesne revenue was subordinate to rent. On most estates, where practised at all, direct working was a marginal pursuit, restricted to specialized holdings (vineyards, *ortora*, an occasional farm or grange),⁵ higher in capital value than contribution to income;⁶ while on all estates indiscriminately demesne farming was a declining enterprise, largely because, as everywhere else, it was hard to run with profit. In fifteenth-century tax-records (*catasti*) complaints recur that demesne costs exceeded returns;⁷ and that this was not special pleading, is proved not only by accounts,⁸ but more obviously by the continued progress, between 1300 and 1500, of demesne leasing. On the old estates of bishop and chapter nearly all demesne was let by the early fourteenth century. At the same date Settimo's granges were predominantly at farm and by the fifteenth century had dwindled to mere remnants. Even at Camaldoli most *curie* were leased between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth

¹ Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 93–5, 'Camaldoli', p. 178; CS 260, 125 fols. 38v *seq.* Cf. Est. 338, fols. 22v, 24v; Cat. 185, fols. 421r *seq.*

² With flocks of 400–500 sheep and also some cattle: Jones, 'Settimo', p. 95; 'Camaldoli', pp. 180–1; CRS 499, fols. 250 *seq.*; CS 260, 125 loc. cit., 214 fols. 6v, 25v; Cat., loc. cit.

³ Including the Medici and other Florentines (Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 180; A.S.F., *Mediceo avanti il principato*, 87, fol. 426v, 99 n. 44, fols. 157r *seq.*) but also smaller men, notably butchers and inhabitants of pastoral areas: e.g. Cat. 232 (Montagna Pist.), 241, fols. 695 *seq.* (Volterrano).

⁴ At least of Florentine territory; in the Maremma large-scale demesne farming may have been more general, as in comparable areas of Lazio and the South: cf. Jones, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 411, Cf. *infra*, p. 236.

⁵ AA, A II 1 fols. 38v *seq.*, 48v, 77v, etc., A V 1 fols. 64r, 65r, A V 3 fols. 12v, 143r (bishop of Florence, 1390–1450); AI 787, fol. 33r (b. of Fiesole, 1466–67); CS 179, 11 fols. 12r, 24r, 39r, 42 *passim*. Cat. 192, fol. 299r (Passignano, 1300–1429); CS 51, 72, fols. 5r, 7v, 17r, 18v, 26r, etc., 73 fol. 143v, 74 fols. 55v *seq.*, 31 fol. 165r, 32 fols. 81r, etc., 34 fols. 66r, 67v (Certosa, 1399–1482); Cat. 184, fols. 8r, 164r; 185, fol. 428r; 192, fols. 307v, 350v, etc.; A.S.F., M.A.P., 87, fol. 423; Jones, 'Families', pp. 201, 202. Cf. Cat. 189, fols. 65r *seq.*, 198 fol. 58v (b. of Pistoia), 196 fol. 212v (archb. of Pisa), etc.; Mengozzi, p. 239. Even at Vallombrosa and Settimo demesne crops were mostly wine and oil: Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 93–5, 108; cf. *supra* note 1.

⁶ Of which they rarely provided more than a fraction, though sometimes it could rise to 20 per cent.: e.g. Cat. 192, fols. 307v *seq.* (Coltibuono, 1427); cf. Cat. 196, fol. 461r (S. Stefano da Cintoia).

⁷ E.g. Cat. 185, fol. 426r (Vallombrosa, 1429), 196, fol. 271v. Even when not declared, tax-returns may show a loss (Cat. 198, fols. 57v–9r; b. of Pistoia, 1428), though sometimes also a profit (Cat. 192, fol. 402v; S. Donato in Polverosa). Wages were mainly responsible, but of these (often paid in kind) there is so far only scattered evidence: CS 179 (Passignano), 11 fols. 24r (1298); Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 178; *Arch. Scialoja*, 1934, pp. 184 *seq.*; A. Fanfani, *Ec. e Storia*, vi (1959), p. 138.

⁸ E.g. Jones, loc. cit., p. 181.

century, and by 1500 also some demesne flocks.¹ And the same general trend is evident on all great estates. By the fifteenth century public and private records agree in showing most and often all land now to be let out, and similarly stock. Private records are typically leasebooks and rentals; and if accounts and *ricordanze* also register large profits from land, their source was mainly rent and a system of commercial leases, joint-enterprise with tenants, which medieval experience had proved and modern doctrine was long to maintain more economic than *conduzione diretta*, direct working by the owner.²

Commercial leases 'ad certum tempus' (initially up to 10, 20 or even 30 years) are first directly attested in Tuscany in the late twelfth century.³ By the early thirteenth they had spread so far as to be regularly represented in the earliest notarial formularies;⁴ and in the following decades to roughly 1300 deeds and statutes combine to suggest that, in the Florentine and certain neighbouring areas, terminal leases (now normally for 1-5 years) had come to prevail on the properties at least of townsmen.⁵ Also on older lands, however, of church and feudal magnates, they were rapidly advancing.⁶ By 1300, and still more 1350, leases, as testified by corresponding leasebooks, had invaded much if not most land of the Florentine bishop and chapter,⁷ Vallombrosa,⁸

¹ AA, 'Memoriali di affitti' (1309 ff.), *passim*, A IV 3, fos. 110v, 160v, 188r (1319-29), A IV 63, later fos. (1328), A IV 9, fos. 67v (1334), 155v (1336); Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 94-5, 108, 'Camaldoli', pp. 172-3, 178, 181.

² See for example the arguments of the eighteenth-century landowner-agronomist M. Biffi-Tolomei, *Saggio di agricoltura pratica toscana* (Florence, 1804), p. 8. Cf. from the neighbouring Bolognese the parallel observations of the seventeenth-century cardinal-bishop Malvasia: *Istruzioni di agricoltura*, ed. A. and E. Malvasia (Bologna, 1871), pp. 32-3.

³ Jones, 'Estate', p. 28; Lisini, pp. 110-11; Dip. Cestello, 6.10.1200, etc.

⁴ *Form. Flor.*, pp. 29-30; Bizzarri, p. lix, etc.; Bibl. Laur., Cod. Bisc. 17, cit., fol. 15r.

⁵ Not. I, 106; L. Bologna, *Riv. Dir. Ag.*, 1924; M. Luzzatto, *N. Riv. Stor.*, 1948, pp. 78 seq.; Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 129 seq.; Guicciardini, vol. I, p. 30; L. Ticcianti, *A.S.I.*, 1892; G. Mancini, *Cortona nel M.E.* (Florence, 1897), pp. 111 seq.; Lisini, *passim*; *A.S.I.*, App. V, no. 20; Banchi, *ibid.*, 3rd Ser., vol. III, pt. 2; Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, *passim*. Cf. printed statutes of Florence (1322-25), Pistoia (1296), Arezzo (1327), and Siena (1260 ff.).

⁶ Encouraged, in the case of the Church, by legislation restricting grants for more than 5 years (A.S.F., Carte Strozzi, 2nd Ser., 146, fol. 45r; *Capitoli*, vol. II, p. 23; *Formularium modernum et universale* (Florence, 1488?), p. lii; Jones, 'Settimo', p. 92), but also by perpetual tenants sub-letting on commercial lease: Dip. Pass., 6.9.1301, 23.2.1322; Dip. Vall., 4.4.1310, May 1345; CS 197, 37 n. 5, fols. 101v, 113v; Not. B 2528, 11.8.1338.

⁷ For the bishop *v.* AA, A IV 2 (1300-15), A IV 3 (1304-29), A IV 63 (1328), A IV 9 (1329-42), A IV 11 (1342-92), *passim* (before these books begin the episcopal chartulary (*Bullettone*) deceptively records only a few, fairly long-term leases, beginning *c.* 1250: Lami, vol. I, pp. 59, 158-9, 162, 164, 172, 620, 622, vol. II, pp. 729, 778-9). For the chapter *v.* Not. U 112 (a. 1311 ff.), which shows exclusively commercial leases.

⁸ Dip. Vall., 4.6.1238, 17.6.1241, 26.11.1244, etc., and especially: 22.3.1256, 16.5.1263, 11.4.1271, ... 5.1280, 10.5.1299, 4.12.1299, 9.9.1303, etc.; CS 260, vol. 122, fols. 70r, 71r, etc.; cf. *ibid.*, vol. 11.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

Passignano,¹ Camaldoli and Settimo,² as of many similar owners;³ so that new foundations, like the Florentine Certosa (1342), exhibit no other system. From the late fourteenth century ecclesiastical estates were largely indistinguishable from those of urban magnates, Medici, Strozzi or Rinuccini: rationally arranged properties, where commercial leaseholds predominated in number or value.⁴ And what was true of great estates was true even of the smallest. In the space of two centuries the agrarian régime had been transformed, revolutionizing rents, and raising the return from land to rival that from trade.⁵ And not only the return from land: livestock too, with or without land, had also come, from the thirteenth century, to be generally let by lease. Such grants in fact were used by more than landlords: they became a common form of investment for townsfolk, village tradesmen, well-to-do peasants; and here the promised profits could be usuriously high.⁶

From the first, indeed, terminal leases were extended to all kinds of property, not only land and stock, but mills and similar installations, houses, shops and other urban buildings; and to highly rated possessions like these they were often first applied.⁷ On agricultural land also, as locality and terms of tenure show, they were first introduced on the best, improved holdings, beginning near the towns;⁸ and throughout

¹ Where, as on the bishop's estates, terminal leases, casually recorded from the earlier thirteenth century (Dip. Pass., 1.3.1216, 20.8.1250, 12.3.1254, etc.), are suddenly revealed in widespread use by the first surviving leasebooks: CS 179, 37, n. 1, *passim*, etc.

² Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 172, 174 *seq.*, 'Settimo', 95 *seq.*

³ Dip. Badia, 17.8.1219, 4.3.1257, 26.12.1264, 22.8.1268, 20.7.1271, 10.5.1283, etc.; Bologna, 82; Jones, 'Families', p. 194 (cf. Not. B 2528, 21.8.1338); Dip. Arch. Gen., 5.1.1257; *Arch. Stor. Pratese*, 1928-9, p. 58.

⁴ AA, A II 1, A V 1, A V 3, 5 (Bishop's estates, 1391-1461); cf. Cat. 194, fols. 2r *seq.*, 602 no. 43, B.N.F., MS II, IV, 505, fols. 1r *seq.*; CS 78, vols. 1, 77-81, 243, 261, 438 (Badia, 1417-1503); CS 260, vols. 125, 214 (Vallombrosa, 1372-1423); cf. generally Est. 338 (1377), Cat. 184-5, 192 *seqq.* (1427 ff.) (for neighbouring areas: Cat. 189, 196). And the same is also attested of former feudal families, e.g. the Da Panzano (Jones, loc. cit., 194; Cat. 123), and Ubaldini (*Delizie*, vol. X, pp. 327, 329).

⁵ Jones, loc. cit., 198-9, to which may be added: Imberciadori, *Ec. e Storia*, v (1958) (9-10 per cent nett. from land); R. Gori, *Battista di Bondo Lanfreducci* (Univ. of Pisa, Tesi di Laurea), 66, 116 (10 per cent).

⁶ Jones, loc. cit., pp. 185, 195, 202; Ticcianti, loc. cit.; Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 138-9, 168-9, and *A.S.I.* (1958), p. 494; cf. Cat. 232 (Montagna Pistoiese: Pistoian citizens), 241 (Val di Cecina: Volterranean citizens). Butchers and other dealers in stock are once again prominent (cf. *supra*, p. 219 n. 3): Cat. 112 (Figline), fols. 145 *seq.*, 194 *seq.*; 199 (Anghiari), fols. 196 *seq.*; 241, fols. 337, etc. Cf. Cat. 89, fols. 815-16 (innkeeper), etc.

⁷ Or very early applied: AA, A IV 2, fol. 13r (1290s), cf. A IV 3, fols. 110r, etc.; Dip. Badia, 9.6.1221, 2.8.1232, 21.9.1256, 6.7.1284, etc.; Dip. Pass., 1.3.1216, 9.10.1265; Dip. Vall., May 1280. Cf. Jones, 'Settimo', p. 97; Lisini, pp. 110-1; Bizzarri, n. 217.

⁸ Imberciadori, in *Atti Acc. Georgofili*, 1941, p. 81; Jones, loc. cit., p. 96. For confirmatory evidence see, for Vall., Dip. Vall., 22.3.1256, 16.5.1263, for the cathedral chapter, Not. U 112.

their progress they were generally restricted to developed farm land.¹ Often in fact leases start with tentative grants of mere, isolated pieces, vineyards and orchards (possibly demesne, though rarely so described);² and even in the sequel many lands let on lease were 'terre spezzate' of this kind. But the proportion steadily declined. From an early date, beside pieces, there appear also farms (*poderi*), integral family holdings;³ and from the late thirteenth century on, the characteristic leasehold units, on old as well as new estates, were increasingly *poderi*,⁴ and *poderi* moreover which, though varied in size and composition, were not, like customary holdings, small anonymous aggregations of plots encircling a village, but large consolidated tenements, of two or more plough oxen,⁵ located, with specific names, in the open countryside, and comprising, with courtyards and stables, wells, ovens and outbuildings, stone-constructed farmsteads, prototypes of modern *case coloniche*,⁶ and often combined with 'case da signore' for managers and owners in *villeggiatura*.⁷ By the mid-fourteenth and still more fifteenth century, the typical estate of Florentine territory was a complex of *poderi*, with pieces and *poderetti*, all let, with stock and buildings, by forms of commercial lease.

Leasehold practice correspondingly evolved, though the essentials of leasehold tenure were early determined by statute and use. Like perpetual grants, leases, in Tuscany as elsewhere, were of two main types: for fixed rents, in money or kind, and share-rents: 'ad quartum', 'ad

¹ For reclamation long or perpetual grants continued to be used, but not exclusively; *v.*, e.g., *Form Flor.*, pp. 29-30; AA, A IV 2, fol. 27r (1304?), A IV 3, fol. 170r (1324), etc.; Dip. Badia, 14.1.1304; Dip. Vall., 31.5.1272; CS 179, 36, fol. 31r; AI 755. Cf. Jones, loc. cit.; Lisini, loc. cit., and *infra*, p. 232.

² Lami, vol. I, p. 164; AA, A IV 3, A IV 9, *passim*; Dip. Pass., 1.3.1216, 20.8.1250, etc.; Dip. Vall., 4.6.1238, 17.6.1241, 11.4.1271, etc., CS 260, 122, fols. 72v, 79r, etc. Cf. Ticciati, pp. 266-7; Imberciadori, in *Arch. Scialoja*, 1939, pp. 156, 158 *seq*; Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 129-30.

³ E.g. Bologna, pp. 81-2 (1224); Lisini, nn. 325 (1242), 363 (1246); Not. I 106, fols. 95 (1253), 105v (1255); Dip. Pass., 12.3.1254.

⁴ For growing prominence of leasehold *poderi* on old estates *v.*, e.g.: AA, A IV 2, A IV 3, A IV 63, etc.; Not. U 112; Dip. Pass., 5.12.1296, etc., CS 179, 37, n. 1 (1291 ff.); Dip. Vall., 10.5.1299, 4.12.1299, CS 260, 122, fols. 34r, 70r, etc.; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 175, 'Settimo', p. 113 *seq*.

⁵ And ranging up to 100-300 *staiora* in extent: Dip. Cestello, 22.9.1260, CRS 480, fol. 42v (1325), 479, fasc. 10 (1338), 482, fol. 115r (1334), etc.; A.S.F., M.A.P., 88, fols. 495 *seq*.; cf. Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 175 *seq*.; Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, loc. cit., and in *Studi A. Saporiti* (Milan, 1957), p. 345; Guicciardini, pp. 189, 234-5; Cherubini, *Riv. Stor. Agric.*, v (1965), pp. 23 *seq*. Resident families were correspondingly often large, with 8 or more adults: e.g. Cat. 89, fols. 614r, 743 (Gangalandi, 1427), 141, *passim* (Calenzano).

⁶ Some in fact were inside the city walls: Jones, 'Settimo', p. 97. Cf. R. Biasutti, *La Casa rurale nella Toscana* (Bologna, 1938), pp. 14 *seq*.; Imberciadori, loc. cit., pp. 158-161; Fiumi, loc. cit., p. 137; Guicciardini, pp. 205, 237; Cat. (1427) *passim*; A.S.F., Med. av. princ., 87, fols. 408v *seq*.

⁷ Cf. *infra*, p. 232.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

tertium', but predominantly, in the Fiorentino, 'ad medium' or *mezzadria*,¹ for half or even higher proportions, at least of specialized crops.² Twofold also were livestock leases.³ Unlike perpetual grants, however, leaseholds, especially *mezzadria*, were distinguished from the beginning⁴ by detailed conditions governing tenancy and farm-work, which cultivators had often to provide security to observe. The first condition required tenants to reside (*abitare*), assume no other land or work unlicensed,⁵ and not to let, alienate, or quit without due notice.⁶ During residence they undertook to 'work well' (*bene laborare*), an obligation elaborated by statute and lease to mean specified rotations, ploughings and dates of sowing and harvest; intensive cultivation by digging and manuring, including green-manuring (*sovescio*), to bring the land 'a caloria';⁷ ditching, pruning, and the increase (*propagginare*) of vines and olives; and a prohibition to cut vines or trees or cart away hay, straw and dung. Much of this regulation applied mainly to *mezzadri*. Specific to them were further clauses, determining the division of crops, stock and expenses, and protecting or limiting livestock in the landlord's interest.⁸

These terms of Tuscan tenure confirm the nature of leaseholds, notably *mezzadria*, as largely labour contracts.⁹ Outside the general rules, however, there were wide variations, both in the proportion of grants 'afitto' and 'a mezzadria', and in *mezzadria* itself. In *mezzadria*

¹ The first grants 'ad medium' in fact were perpetual tenancies, beginning in the ninth century (Imberciadori, *Ec. e Storia*, v, 1958) and still found in the thirteenth (Lami, vol. I, p. 292; Lisini, p. 364; *Cod. Pel.*, p. 101); but they were often restricted to oil and wine or lacked the tenorial features of mature *mezzadria*: M. Luzzatto, pp. 72 seq.

² *Fitti* too might be assessed on the basis of half-shares: Ticciati, p. 265.

³ 'A giogatico', 'custodia', etc. (fixed rents), or 'a soccida' (at halves).

⁴ See the early cases of *mezzadria* in Not. I, 106, fols. 95-6, 105r (1250s) (cf. *Bibl. Laur.*, *Cod. Bisc.*, cit., fol. 15v), which qualify somewhat Imberciadori's observation (*Mezzadria*, p. 46) that leases became increasingly specific.

⁵ The Badia also forbade tenants to take jobs in Florence: CS 78, 261, fol. 5v (1422).

⁶ *Disdetta*, commonly fixed at 6 months. Landlords too had to give notice, but could evict for breach of contract or neglect; they could also distrain on crops and goods for unpaid rent and other debts.

⁷ A characteristic Tuscan term which appears already in late thirteenth-century leases: CS 179 (Passignano), 37 n. 1, fols. 2v, 4v; Not., Simone di Dino, fol. 86r. For *calloria* owners owed compensation to evicted tenants: A.S.F., Stat. Comm. Sogg. 110, fol. 42r (1411).

⁸ Ticciati, loc. cit.; Bologna, loc. cit.; Imberciadori, *Atti Georg.*, cit., and *Mezzadria*, cit., *passim*; Luzzatto, loc. cit.; Jones, 'Camaldoli', 'Settimo', 'Families,' loc. cit.; which are amply confirmed by all existing leasehold records: cf. for good examples, CS 78 (Badia), vols. 77-81, 242-3, 261, CS 51 (Certosa), vols. 72-5.

⁹ *Mezzadri* indeed occasionally owed and quite often rendered paid or unpaid works (CS 51, 72, fols. 5r, 7v, 17r, etc., 74 fols. 71r, etc.; CS 179 n. 42, fol. 5, etc.). Both tenants 'afitto' and 'ameço' were also required to deliver rents, a legacy of carrying services. Another residue of customary tenure was the payment of seasonal *vantaggi* offerings (pork, capons, grain, money), often quite substantial.

most differences turned on the contributions of lord and tenant, especially to working capital (*scorte*). In addition to land, owners normally provided a house and buildings, which it was their responsibility to maintain, with vats, wine-presses, and other farm equipment. Of *scorte* also they usually bore some share. Rarely did tenants alone provide all capital,¹ or so much at least as to class them, even initially, as a 'peasant aristocracy'.² From the earliest date their contracts required some advance of stock, seed, and even implements, by lords;³ and, as appeared after the Black Death, their desire was rather that landlords should bear all capital costs and risks undivided. In this they were disappointed.⁴ But what customs governed *scorte*, before or after the plague, is difficult to determine, especially in the crucial matter of livestock and oxen. Though frequently, in tax-returns, landlords and tenants alike declared plough-oxen, and stock agreements sharply differed even on the same estate,⁵ the general use would seem to have been for owners, even small owners, to advance oxen or money for oxen, either debiting them to tenants to hold at their risk, or sharing them at halves, for surrender, repayment or division of price, profit and loss, on expiry of the lease.⁶ Lesser stock (*bestie minute*) tenants more commonly owned, but still were often forced to rent or borrow money to acquire;⁷ and similarly with other *scorte* (seed-corn, *sovesci*, vine-

¹ For cases where they did, or nearly so, v. AA, 'Mem. di affitti' (1325), fol. 13v; Dip. Vall., June 1392; Dip. Cestello, 25.10.1316; CRS 480, fols. 130r (1326), 133r (1326), 136v (1327), 499 fols. 100 *seq.* (1458-59); CS 179, 37 n. 2, fol. 66 (1311), etc.; *Lettere di un notaio (ser Lapo Mazzei)*, ed. Guasti (Florence, 1880), vol. II, p. 82 (1407); Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, p. 100 (1282); there is little mention of *scorte* in early fourteenth-century grants by the bishop, chapter, and Passignano.

² As argued by Imberciadori, *Atti Georg.*, 1941, 81. This is not say *mezzadri* were never prosperous or should be treated as a uniform class, if only because many took land indifferently *affitto* and *amezzo*: *infra*, pp. 236 ff.

³ Bologna, p. 81-2 (1224); Bizzarri, p. lix; Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, pp. 56, 93 (1257); Not. I 106, loc. cit., Not. A 943, fols. 15r, 19v (1257); advances in fact were already a feature of perpetual grants 'ad medium': *supra*, p. 223 n. 1: cf. Jones, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 414.

⁴ Jones, 'Families', p. 195; their obligations may even have been intensified: Mirri, *Annali*, i (1959), p. 555 (1352).

⁵ E.g. CS 78 (Badia), 261 fols. 10r, 19r, 21v, 37r (1421-8), cf. 78 fols. 123v *seq.* (1450s); CS 51 (Certosa), vols. 72, 213, *passim*; Cat. 184, fols. 48r *seq.* (Candeli), 139r *seq.* (S. Spirito), etc.

⁶ To references *supra*, p. 223 n. 8, 224 n. 5, and *infra*, p. 225 nn. 3-5, add for further examples: AA, A IV 9, A V 1, A V 3, A V 5, A V 55, *passim* (bishop's estates, 1329-1461); CS 51, 182-3 (prebendary's accounts, 1445-79); CS 179, n. 42 (Passignano, c. 1370); Cat. 89 (Giogoli), 108-9 (Ripoli, Antella), 123 fols. 503 *seq.* (M. Fioralle), 184 fols. 7r *seq.* (S. M.a Monticelli), 78r *seq.* (S. Trinita), 192 fols. 350v *seq.* (Buonsolazzo), etc.; Cherubini, loc. cit., 33 *seq.*

⁷ Especially from their lords, who frequently required stock to be held 'a socio' with them: Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 177, 'Families', p. 195; Mirri, loc. cit.; Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, *passim*; CRS 480, fol. 168r (Settimo); CS 179 loc. cit.; CS 51 loc. cit. and vol. 213, fols. 1v *seq.*; AI 633, fol. 32r, etc. Most revealing are the rural *catasti* such as cited in preceding note.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

props, manure, etc.), though not infrequently shared,¹ the costs were so divided as to involve many tenants in debts and loans (*prestanze*). All the relevant records in fact indicate that *prestanze*, not only for *scorte*, but even for food and implements,² were an inseparable condition of *mezzadria*;³ and this at all levels, in grants by small proprietors⁴ and by magnates like the Medici.⁵ And if much debt was seasonal, punctually discharged,⁶ the combined burden of debt and rent could also cause tenants to throw up their holdings,⁷ abscond, or default on their obligations.⁸ The impression grows that, as agricultural reformers were later to note,⁹ *mezzadria* was already for many a 'miserable system' (A. Young), yielding a bare subsistence¹⁰ and breeding discontent. It represented a 'proletarianization' of the peasantry.¹¹ And so equally did tenancy 'afitto'.¹²

A contrary conclusion has been lately drawn, with special reference to Pistoia, from an evident trend, in late medieval Tuscany, from *fitti*

¹ Jones, loc. cit.; Cherubini, loc. cit. The evidence of *catasti* and accounts suggests that lords more usually loaned the price than provided a portion of seed and similar *scorte*; and it was much the same as regards the pay of labourers: e.g. Imberciadori, loc. cit., pp. 100, 101, 104, 114; AI 633, fols. 22v, 49v; Cat. 109, fols. 321v, 323r. But cf. CS 51, 72 fols. 12r, 13v.

² E.g. AI, loc. cit., fols. 49v, 54v, 70r, 77v, etc.; CS 78, 261 fols. 8r, etc.

³ As appears especially from the complementary accounts of lords and *mezzadri*, of which lords' copies are well exemplified in CS 51, vols. 72 ff., 213; AI 633, 748, 754 (Ridolfi estates, c. 1450-80). Cf. M. Luzzatto, pp. 82-3; Imberciadori, in *Studi Saporì*, cit., pp. 840-6. Glimpses of tenants' accounts appear in *catasti*, e.g. Cat. 89, fol. 38v.

⁴ Cat. 89, fols. 815 seq. (Gangalandi), 112 fols. 205 (Figline), 544 (Castel Guinaldi), etc., 123 fols. 111r, etc. (Panzano), 506 (M. Fioralle), 199 fols. 211r, 276v, 277v (Anghiari).

⁵ Who in 1448 had advances in stock and money to their 121 tenants in Mugello, valued at 4763 flor., £10,978 18s. 2d. (flor = 83s.): A.S.F. M.A.P., 104, fols. 1-3.

⁶ E.g. AI, 633, fols. 95v, 101v; CS 51 (Certosa), 32 fol. 1v. Even tenants with stock and land of their own contracted *prestanze*: e.g. Cat. 150 (Mugello), fols. 16, 418, 438, etc. Cf. *infra*, p. 237.

⁷ Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 176, 'Families', p. 195; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvi (1958), p. 494, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 130-1; Imberciadori, *Studi Saporì*, cit., pp. 835-46. Cf. *infra*, pp. 231, 233.

⁸ Thereby incurring legal proceedings (e.g. Dip. Badia, 10.2.1297; Dip. Cestello, 10.1.1323; A.S.F., Grascia, 206, fols. 2r, 4r, 7v, 8r, etc. (1375); cf. *infra*, p. 233), though lords may often have let both debts and tenants go: Cat. 184, fol. 84r; CS 51, 74 fols. 2r seq. (1475; rent debts forty years outstanding). Some tenants borrowed from new lords to pay the old (Cat. 123, fol. 545), others owed debts to both (Cat. 109, fol. 209r).

⁹ Mirri, loc. cit.

¹⁰ From the tenant's share, with marketable surplus or not, landlords, who had a statutory right of pre-emption, often bought or claimed a part in discharge of debts: AI, 633, 82r seq. Unpaid works were also used for clearing debt.

¹¹ Cherubini, loc. cit., 56 seq. Cf. Imberciadori, *Ec. e Storia*, v (1958), pp. 258-68; M. Luzzatto, pp. 82-3.

¹² Under which tenants in practice also borrowed *scorte* and incurred debts with landlords: Cat. 123, fols. 70r, etc.; CS 51, 72 fols. 6r, 132v, 133v, 155v, etc., vol. 75, etc.; while *mezzadri*, who supplied all stock, could be deeply indebted to outsiders: Cat. 150, fol. 880.

to *mezzadria*.¹ The change was not universal. On some, especially church estates, *fitti* (often money *fitti*) consistently prevailed over *mezzadria*;² on others, lands were let interchangeably by both forms of grant;³ while others again exhibit a policy of varying leases with locality.⁴ The fact remains that, in Florentine territory particularly, *mezzadria* grew. By the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, owners once reliant on *fitti* were changing to *mezzadria*;⁵ on most estates *mezzadria* appears the dominant system; and rural communities were forming, where cultivators were almost all *mezzadri*.⁶ But that this, at Pistoia or anywhere else, was due to post-plague labour-shortage and improved peasant conditions, following a pre-plague climax of high rents and usury, is far from clear.⁷ Hints there may be that peasants felt slightly less aversion to *mezzadria* than *fitti*,⁸ though *fitti*, which were visibly rising in the earlier fourteenth century, show indications later of a tendency to drop.⁹ This agrees more obviously, however, with the presumed trend of late medieval rents than the progress of *mezzadria*, which was already widespread and, in places, predominant by as early

¹ Herlihy, *Ec. H. R.*, xviii (1965), pp. 243 *seq.*

² E.g. Est. 338 (1377), fols. 14r (Badia Fiesolana), 68r (bishop of Fiesole), 83v, etc.; Cat. 184, fols. 65r, 96r (Ognissanti), 211r, 237r (S. Marco), 260r, 627v, etc.; 192, fols. 283v (Badia: cf. *supra*, p. 223 n. 8), 402r (S. Donato in Polv.), etc. On the Florentine bishop's estates, where *fitti* predominated in the early fourteenth century, the fifteenth-century evidence is ambiguous: AA, A II 3, A IV 26, A IV 28, A V 3, 5, 55; B.N.F., MS II, IV, 505; Cat. 602 no. 43. In parts of France *mezzadria* does not appear on church land at all: Sicard, p. 17.

³ Jones, 'Families', p. 194.

⁴ Jones, 'Settimo', p. 97 *seq.*, 108. Cf. 'Camaldoli', p. 175 (though *fitti* preponderate).

⁵ E.g. Passignano (Cf. CS 179, vol. 36 (1334) and vol. 42; also Cat. 123, fols. 377 *seq.*, 403 *seq.*, 192 fols. 295 *seq.*), S. Salvi (cf. Est. 338, fol. 15r and Cat. 192, 303r *seq.*), and, to some extent, Settimo: Jones, 'Settimo', p. 108.

⁶ E.g. S. Donato a Mugnana (Cat. 110, fols. 276 *seq.*); cf. S. Andrea a Ripalta, etc. (Cat. 112, 548 *seq.*).

⁷ Herlihy, *loc. cit.* Precisely at Pistoia, indeed, bad relations between *mezzadri* and lords over *scorte*, debt and distraint, helped provoke a peasant rising in 1455: C. Paoli, *Boll. Stor. Pist.*, 1899, pp. 14-17. And if urban laws become eloquent against the iniquity of *contadini* (for a virulent e.g. see the Florentine provision of 5.10.1457), this was nothing new: Jones, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 419.

⁸ At least in bad times: CS 51 (Certosa), 72 fols. 89v, 153v, 155v (1430-31); cf. Sicard, p. 19. *Mezzadri* could have tax reliefs, or at least shared taxes (and tithe) with the owner: Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 130, 133; C. Falletti-Fossati, *Costumi senesi* (Siena, 1881), pp. 29-30; A.S. Siena, Stat. comm. sogg., 12 fol. 64r (1427); Dip. Cestello, 6.2.1384, etc.

⁹ For the rise see for example: AA, Mem. affitti, fols. 9v-10r, A IV 9 fols. 9r, 57r, 95r, 171v, 229r; CS 179 (Passignano), 36; Jones, 'Settimo', p. 98. For the drop: AA, A IV 14, fol. 42r, A II 1, fol. 25v, A V 55, fol. 23r, A IV 23, fol. 217r; CS 51, *loc. cit.* But ecclesiastical property was disturbed at this time (*infra*, p. 239); and there is also evidence of rent increases (AA, A V 55, fols. 16r, 17v, 24r, 26r) and that the return from fifteenth-century *fitti* could be high (CS 78 (Badia) 261, fols. 47r, 54r (1442), 78, fols. 33v, 358v (1455)). Cf. Herlihy, *loc. cit.*

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

as 1300.¹ In its subsequent propagation the post-plague period represents no landmark nor any lasting amelioration of tenurial conditions. The movement seems continuous, the release of a latent preference for share-cropping contracts, which in livestock leases had prevailed from the start.² And for this the usual explanation has rather been found in the small-scale, promiscuous husbandry developed in central Tuscany, and the associated emergence of consolidated *poderi*, farms designed to require the labour of a full peasant family, but still, by northern standards, small, ill-adapted to entrepreneurial tenancy, and demanding the active intervention of the landlord.³ From an early stage, certainly, *mezzadria* and *poderi* grow intimately together; and it was most obviously on *poderi*, especially larger *poderi*, that *mezzadria* came to predominate. Family-farm leasehold, then, and particularly *métayage* (*mezzadria poderale*), becomes the typical product of post-manorial Tuscany. And the inevitable question, how leases were introduced, becomes a double problem, of topography and tenure: of *poderi*, their origin and development.

VI

Terminologically the problem is easily answered. When first used, about 1200, the word 'podere' (in agrarian vocabulary) was simply a new name for an old thing: a holding, especially a peasant family holding. Unvaried yet by diminutives and pejoratives (*poderetti*, *poderuzzi*, etc.), it covered all types of tenement, including the morcelized *mansi* of customary tenure, distinguished by 1250 as 'poderia antiqua'.⁴ Difficulties begin to arise with the 'new' *poderi*, leasehold farms, which often appear quite suddenly in the records, and can only be studied closely on ecclesiastical domains, where leases may have penetrated slowly. Of 'modern' farms on church land some of the earliest mentioned, indeed, were acquired complete from laymen,⁵ and so were

¹ As round S. Gimignano and Siena: Fiumi, loc. cit., pp. 131, 140; Imberciadori, *Arch. Scialoja*, 1939, p. 156; but the same may be suspected of many Florentine estates: e.g. CRS 482 *passim* (Orsini), Dip. Certosa, 23.1.1316, 25.10.1316, etc. (Buondelmonti). Cf. Jones, 'Families', p. 194.

² And both before and after the Black Death commonly in the usurious form of grants *ad capud (capitale) saluum*.

³ Which the rural origin and business spirit of owners may also have encouraged: Landucci, *Giorn. Agrar. Toscano*, 1833, p. 371 *seq.*; Biasutti, p. 11; Ticciati, pp. 268, 273; Bologna, pp. 83-4, 236; Imberciadori, *Mezzadria*, p. 36 *seq.*, 51, *Campagna toscana nel '700* (Florence, 1953), pp. 169 *seq.*; Volpe, *Pisa*, pp. 116-17; Cherubini, loc. cit., p. 34.

⁴ Rumohr, pp. 70, 122; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 171.

⁵ E.g. Lami, vol. II, pp. 715, 718; Dip. Cestello, 22.8.1260.

a good proportion in the sequel.¹ Fully-formed *poderi*, however, were not cheap to come by. Nor was it simply with new property, reorganized by others, that ecclesiastical owners reformed their estates.² Most of their farms evolved from within, or where land was owned already; and even those on new land they did not all acquire ready-made. More often they proceeded by cumulative acquisition, combining lands and holdings into farms to let on lease,³ and this was clearly their practice on older property too. No sharp distinction is possible, in fact, between old and new holdings. On both the corollary of leasehold was *appoderamento*, enlarging existing farms or rearranging new.⁴ No doubt, even on established lands, some farms first appear as integral *poderi*, already ripe for leasehold. These were generally big farms, with centralized estate buildings and farm installations, and in most cases their origin is plain: they were 'home' or 'manor' farms, former *donnicata*, *curie* or granges.⁵ Others, it is likely, were customary holdings, recovered by manumission or escheat and converted to leasehold. Conversion to leasehold, with sharp rent rises, was certainly proceeding by the late thirteenth century, but often the lands affected were simple *terre*, not integral *patrimonia*, or *poderia*.⁶ Something more than this is needed to explain the tidy pattern of *terre appoderate* presented by most estates in the late Middle Ages. It appears in a deliberate policy, forecast already in the twelfth century,⁷ but pursued most assiduously from the mid-thirteenth, of systematic resumption of customary land. To the consolidation of ownership (*dominium directum*), proceeding in the years of

¹ E.g. certain major Vallombrosan farms near Florence: Dip. Vall., 1.4.1283, 16.3.1342, CS 260, vol. 11, 30.8.1346, 97 fols. 44v, 48r, 60r, 71r, etc. Cf. Jones, 'Settimo', p. 90.

² Though a policy there was of exchanging distant, profitless or customary land for better property elsewhere: Lami, vol. II, p. 714; Dip. Badia, 8.6.1259, 3.2.1270, etc.; CRS 480, fol. 10; Dip. Cestello, 28.10.1322, 1.7.1334, 15.8.1334. Cf. *supra*, p. 212 n. 6.

³ For good examples see the Vallombrosan farms 'agli Azzolini' (Dip. Vall., 23.10.1285, 30.11.1286, 23.2.1287, 8.11.1287, 9.1.1289, 29.8.1309, CS 260, 97, fol. 12r) and at Vigliano (Dip. Vall., 7.10.1234, 13.10.1234, 10.4.1235, 11.3.1242, 16.5.1263); Jones, loc. cit., and CRS 386 n. 3, *passim*.

⁴ See for example the bishop's purchases at Pieve Vecchio and Montughi: Lami, vol. II, pp. 718, 841 (1310-20), AA, A IV 3, fols. 93r, 95r, 96v, 105v, etc. (1314-18). Cf. Jones, loc. cit., and *infra* pp. 229 ff.

⁵ AA, Mem. affitti, fols. 3, 5v (1318), 7r (1310), 23r (1320), A IV 3, loc. cit., and fol. 138v (1322), etc.; CS 179 (Passignano), 37 n. 1 fol. 9r (1294), 34 II fols. 43r (1307), etc.; Jones, loc. cit., pp. 94, 100, 'Camaldoli', p. 175. Some of the earliest farms leased were in fact demesne, which suggests they were already compact holdings. Only on the Vallombrosan estates are clear examples wanting of 'manor' farms.

⁶ Lami, vol. I, pp. 55-6, 61, 179, AA, A IV 2, fols. 28v, 29r, 62r, A IV 3, 68r, 80v *seq.*, 85v, A IV 9, fol. 19, etc.; Dip. Vall., 15.11.1270, 12.2.1274, CS 260, 122 fols. 34r, 62v, 70r, 80r, 100r, 126 fol. 99r, 127 fol. 80r, etc.; CS 179, 37, n. 1, n. 3 fols. 4v, 13v (cf. 34 I fol. 111v).

⁷ *Supra*, p. 209.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

manorial decline, was added now consolidation of seisin (*dominium utile*).

The policy is most conspicuous at Vallombrosa.¹ Here, on the main monastic *curie* (Magnale, Ristonchi, Pitiana, S. Ellero), are recorded, with increasing intensity from 1250 to 1350 and beyond, many hundreds of transactions to acquire local land, sometimes full *poderia* but mostly *fractiones*, and mostly from local people or people of local origin.² To suppose this land was all customary and all the holders tenants would contradict the evidence; many acts had to do with small proprietors or properties. But close scrutiny leaves no doubt that, of the persons contracting, a large proportion (including emigrants) were *coloni* or *fideles*, and the land, if sometimes alod,³ in great measure copyhold in process of resumption. The forms of resumption varied, even in different dealings with the same peasant family, but, outwardly at least, most were voluntary. Evictions were few.⁴ Much more numerous were surrenders by acts of simple cession,⁵ gift,⁶ testamentary bequest,⁷ or, in the late fourteenth century especially, of entry into the class of monastic servants (*conversi* and *commessi*).⁸ By far the most common, however, were contracts of sale, piecemeal purchases of intermingled plots, on which, beside large outlays on wholly new *poderi*,⁹ Vallombrosa was spending, in the first half of the fourteenth

¹ Space forbids detailed documentation of what follows; but the text is based on complete genealogical and topographical analysis of Vallombrosan deeds (Dip. Vall., cf. Not. B 2528), chartularies (CS 260, vols. 6 *seq.*, 97, 122, 126 *seq.*), *estimi* (Est. 338, 21v *seq.*, Cat. 185, 421r *seq.*), and other sources, including the tax-returns of local villages (1364-1427) (Est. 227, fols. 171, 268r *seq.*; 229, fols. 216r *seq.*, 224r *seq.*, 248r *seq.*; 230, 122r *seq.*, 124r *seq.*; 231, 914r *seq.*; 232, 296r *seq.*, 306r *seq.*, 1010r *seq.*; 234, nn. 75, 80, 84-5; 236, 115r *seq.*, 180r *seq.*, 203r *seq.*; Cat. 153, 277r *seq.*; 324, 385r *seq.*).

² Resident in Florence or elsewhere: Dip. Vall., 11.4.1258 (cf. 23.12.1258), 17.3.1277, 21.1.1292, 19.10.1336, 2.8.1338, 25.10.1346, 10.12.1349, etc., CS 260, 97 fols. 40v, 71v, 126 fol. 111r, etc. Some, however, were Florentine families: CS 260, 97 fols. 71v (Alto-viti), 98r, 111r (Mozzi), 126 fol. 112v (Magalotti), etc.

³ E.g. Dip. Vall., 16.4.1259, 16.11.1261, CS 260, 97 fol. 108r (1338).

⁴ What rather appear are legal disputes or unexplained recoveries: Dip. Vall., 4.12.1260, 16.11.1261, 19.5.1271, 19.18.1303, CS 260, vols. 10 (30.9.1276), 97 fol. 203v.

⁵ Or 'refutation': Dip. Vall., 23.12.1258 (cf. 18.5.1259), CS 260, vols. 11 (5.2.1329), 97 fols. 22r, 23r (cf. 15v, 23r).

⁶ Or mainly gift: Dip. Vall., 18.12.1232, 10.12.1233, 13.2.1258 (cf. 12.5.1246), 21.10.1254, 19.5.1247, 9.8.1259), CS 260, 97 fol. 267r (cf. fols. 8r, 21v, 31r, 34r; Dip. Vall. 29.1.1240; Est. 234, n. 85, Cecco di Casetto).

⁷ Or mainly bequest: CS 260, 97 fols. 45v, 46r; Est. 231, fol. 915v, 232 fols. 308v, 1012r etc. (but these last perhaps were *conversi*; cf. next note).

⁸ Often elderly people who received, like corrodians, a life-annuity or holding (cf. *infra*, p. 230 n. 7): Dip. Vall., 26.12.1260, 9.8.1262, 9.8.1263, 3 Kal. 1.1275, etc., 15.2.1383 (cf. Est. 232, fol. 1011v, 234 n. 75, 236 fol. 119v), 24.2.1384, 26.3.1384; CS 260, vols. 11 (9.11.1318, 21.2.1321, 10.3.1346); 12 (25.1.1350, 10.11.1352); 97 fols. 21r, 39r, 74, 267r; 129, fols. 19v, 20r, 102v-3r; Est. 229, 217v; 232, 308r; 236, 205v, 206r.

⁹ 425 flor., 1100 flor., 1243 flor. etc.: cf. *supra* p. 228 n. 1; also CS 260, 97 fols. 62v (600 flor., Petrognano, 1322), 98r (800 flor., Pitiana, 1343).

century, a minimum of £100-£200 a year.¹ 'Free sale' clearly profited lords as well as tenants. Gradually but steadily peasants were losing land, and by something more insidious than the hazards of inheritance, infertility or plague.² Of those dealing with Vallombrosa some, the records would imply, simply faded out;³ others persisted, with morcels of property;⁴ but a notable number relinquished all and ended up *mezzadri*.⁵ The process was protracted and for a long transitional period commercial and customary holdings existed side by side, often in the same hands. But by the later fourteenth century they were so far separate that two distinct peasant classes had begun to appear: of landless 'lavoratori' (*mezzadri*) and smallholding cotters.⁶ And by the same date the monastic estates had correspondingly changed, from a tangle of perpetual holdings to a complex of compact *poderi*, composed of new or re-concentrated customary land; and these, down to 1500, the abbey continued to enlarge by fresh acquisitions or amalgamations.⁷

Similar activity with similar effects is found on many ecclesiastical estates: of the Florentine bishop and chapter, the Badia, Camaldoli, Settimo,⁸ and notably the Vallombrosan house of Passignano.⁹ And

¹ A sum corresponding roughly to the average early-fourteenth-century price of a copyhold *podere*: CS 260, 126 fols. 54r-6r.

² Though some inconclusive evidence there is that the Black Death played a part, removing certain families or encouraging their migration, and permitting engrossment of their lands: Dip. Vall., 10.12.1349, CS 260, 127 fol. 113r (1352).

³ Their holdings entirely absorbed, e.g.: Verde qd. Berlinghiero (Dip. Vall., 12.2.1274), Sinibaldus qd. Ricuperi (ibid., 15.2.1257, 25.1.1259, CS 260, 97 fol. 213v), Scarabellus qd. Alberti and his descent (Dip. Vall., 7.5.1312, CS loc. cit., fols. 16r, 20v, 22v, 26r, 27v, 29v, 107v, 109r, 113r-14v), Bandinus Ardiccionis (ibid., fols. 11v, 62v, 64r, 209v).

⁴ E.g. Becchus Ciani and his descent (Dip. Vall., 2.5.1311, CS 260, 11 (10.2.1346), 12 (10.5.1352, 27.5.1352?), 97, fols. 5r, 9v, 16r, 29v; Est. 234 n. 75 (Becco di Lapo), 236 fol. 118v), Andreas olim Mannelli (Not. B 2528 (22.10.1338, 27.1.1339), Dip. Vall., 24.2.1384, 26.3.1384, Est. 230, fols. 124r, 234 n. 84). Cf. *estimi*, cit., *passim*.

⁵ E.g. Martinellus Lapi and descent (CS 260, 11 (11.11.1346), 97 fols. 34v, 108r, 112r, 122 fols. 82v, 90v, 127 fols. 115v-6r, 121v-2r; Est. 229, fol. 248r, 231 fol. 914v, 232 fol. 1010v, 234 n. 75), Justinus Bartoli and descent (CS 260, 11 (11.11.1346), 79, fols. 23r, 31v, 34v, 129 fol. 95v; Est. 236, fol. 117v), Baglius Fei and descent (CS 260, 11 (9.11.1318), 127 fols. 109v, 115v; Est. 229, fol. 248r, 231 fol. 915v). Most *conversi* also transferred all their land, but not in every case.

⁶ See *estimi*, cit., *passim*. On certain manors the Vallombrosan *mezzadri* are almost all classed as propertyless 'miserabili' (Est. 227, fols. 269r *seq.*, 234 n. 80), but double-holding continued, in so far at least as *lavoratori* were sometimes younger members of copyhold families: ibid., 236, fols. 115r-5v. Cf. 234, n. 75 (Bartolo di Berto).

⁷ For acquisitions (by gift, 'conversion', etc.) *v.*, e.g. CS 260, 97 fols. 76r *seq.*, 83r *seq.*; for amalgamations ('auntener') *v.* Cat. 185, fols. 421v, 423v, 424r, 424v. There remained a residue of *poderetti*, etc., especially to maintain *conversi*: Est. 338, fols. 21v *seq.*; Cat. 185, fols. 424v *seq.*

⁸ AA, A IV 3, fols. 97v, 105r, 109v, 123v (1314-20); Rumohr, p. 94 (cf. Not. U 112); Dip. Badia, 18.5.1222, 1.7.1222, etc., 19.4.1271, etc.; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 169 n. 4, 'Settimo', p. 94 (cf. Dip. Cestello, 12.3.1230, 22.1.1237, 3.6.1246, etc.).

⁹ Where the manor of Poggialvento was transformed between the late thirteenth and early fifteenth century from a cluster of small *poderia* held by some 40 *coloni* (CS 179, 34

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

there are hints enough that what churchmen could do, laymen had long been doing better. On church land itself, indeed, *appoderamento*, like leasehold, was partly begun by laymen;¹ and evidence abounds in late medieval private record of Florentine and other Tuscan families swallowing up small holdings, by fair means or foul, to expand their possessions and *poderi*. Engrossment was not confined to tenure; concentration of holdings was accompanied by a re-consolidation of land in great estates.² For church and lay lords alike this double process was powerfully assisted by a visible deterioration in peasant conditions, which developed in the thirteenth century, the effect mainly of taxation and other financial pressures, which involved rustics and rural communes increasingly in debt, and compelled cultivators to sell up their holdings, become tenants or *conversi*, or abandon the country altogether for the town.³ In Tuscany, as long recognized, peasant dispossession began early.⁴ By the fifteenth century many villages existed where almost all land was *terra appoderata* in the hands of rich landlords, or where, as round Vallombrosa, the population was redistributed in two largely landless classes of cultivators and cottagers, leaseholders and small or

I, fols. 109 *seq.*) into an estate comprising mainly 8 large *poderi* (Cat. 192, 297v *seq.*) (though the property had been dislocated: *infra*, p. 239). For recoveries from *fideles* cf. Dip. Pass., 19.10.1279, 6.4.1281, 13.10.1287, 4.6.1294, 26.12.1295, 9.11.1299, 10.12.1302; Plesner, pp. 80 *seq.* For good non-Florentine parallels v. Rossi, pp. 363, 373 *seq.*; L. Dini, *Misc. Stor. Valdelsa*, 1895, pp. 152 *seq.*

¹ Sometimes *fideles* (e.g. the Affrettati family of Passignano: Dip. Pass., 8-19.12.1266, 21.9.1277, 1.11.1277, 10.10.1306, 30.1.1323, 7.11.1343, 30.11.1343, CS 179, 34 I., fols. 6r, 6v, 17r, 53r *seq.*, 77v *seq.*, 107v *seq.*; 37 n. 1, fol. 29v; 37 n. 3 in fine; 37 n. 4, fol. 7v; 37 n. 5, fols. 5v, 12v, 59r; 42, fols. 25r, 63r), sometimes outsiders (*ibid.*, 36, fols. 23v, 58r; 39, fols. 38v, 78r, 86v, 178r *seq.*), who accumulated holdings, though only, in certain cases, to surrender them eventually to the owner (*ibid.*, 37, n. 2, fols. 20r *seq.*, 37r; 37, n. 5, fols. 101v *seq.*, 113v; 38 n., 1, fol. 17r; 39, fols. 14v, 55r, 71v *seq.*; Dip. Pass., 1.7.1344, 3.5.1346, cf. *infra*, p. 238).

² For example the Guicciardini (Florence, Arch. Guicc., Lib. Ammin., vol. I, fols. 61r *seq.*, vol. II, fols. 133r *seq.*; P. Guicciardini, vol. I, pp. 187, 194, 203 *seq.*, 236 *seq.*, 284), Albizzi (Not. M 112, fols. 151v, 119v), Bardi (Guicciardini, pp. 97-8, 108-9, 138-9), Strozzi (Jones, 'Families', p. 188), Pucci (C. Merkel, *Misc. nuziale Rossi-Teiss* (Trento, 1897), pp. 199 *seq.*), Medici (A.S.F., M.A.P., 87, fols. 407v *seq.*; cf. Sacchetti, *Nov.* 88). Cf. B. Casini, *Ec. e Storia*, 1960, pp. 46-7; Fiumi, *S. Gimignano*, pp. 122, 136, 166, 192-3, 209 *seq.*; Werner, *Studi Medievali*, 1960, pp. 669 *seq.*

³ On the large question of rural debt in thirteenth-century and later medieval Tuscany v. Caggese, *Repub.*, pp. 73 *seq.*, 80 *seq.*; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, 1956, pp. 35-7, (1961), pp. 146, 154 *seq.*; Cherubini, *ibid.* (1963), pp. 10, 13, 28-9; Casini, *loc. cit.*; Rossi, pp. 379-80; Herlihy, *loc. cit.*, pp. 234, 239 *seq.*; Jones, 'Families', pp. 185, 188, etc.; cf. *infra*, p. 233. There is no doubt that debt, and especially taxation, promoted also the resumption of customary holdings: e.g. Dip. Badia, 14.9.1266, 19.4.1271, 5.12.1272; Dip. Vall., 6.5.1283, 24.7.1285; CS 260, 122 fols. 25v-6r, 76r; 123 *passim*; Dip. Pass., 28.8.1324, 27.3.1327, etc.; AA, A IV 9 fol. 284v. Vallombrosa even promised to protect a tenant against Florentine taxes: Dip. 29.9.1322.

⁴ Rumohr, *op. cit.*; Volpe, *Pisa*, p. 118.

perpetual holders.¹ But consolidation affected more than property. With the new tenurial structure went a new tenurial geography, a redistribution not only by class, but also by habitation, which concentrated the smallholders, as labourers and artisans, in the villages and *castra*, and dispersed the cultivators to farms on surrounding *poderi*. In Tuscany, as everywhere, 'enclosure' changed the landscape, and from medieval to modern.²

No aspect of *appoderamento* is unfortunately so obscure. That *poderi* became increasingly *acasati* ('housed'), transferring habitation from the villages to the fields, the documents leave no doubt. But of building of farmsteads, as distinct from the build-up of farms, direct evidence is sparse.³ By the time appropriate records begin, *circa* 1300, detached farms already existed in numbers, some of them demesne buildings, with *turres* and *palatia*,⁴ others certainly the work of improving copyholders,⁵ but most of indefinite origin; and late medieval estate accounts have more to say of re-buildings than new building, and, in new building, of 'case da signore' than 'case da lavoratore' transplanted to the land. In any case, dispersed settlement was nothing new in Tuscany. It had Dark Age antecedents. And its increase was not due simply to enclosure. Behind it lay a larger movement, of descent from the *castella* and exodus from the *ville*, which, gathering force from the twelfth century, slowly littered the landscape with ruined *castellari* and other depopulated relics of a declining *Dorfsystem*.⁶ Depopulation in turn, no doubt, had a variety of causes. In certain parts of Tuscany it resulted from physical changes which owed nothing to trends in settlement.⁷ Elsewhere, like *appoderamento*, it may have been accelerated by the late medieval population decline (begun perhaps in Tuscany before

¹ E.g. Brozzi (Cat. 128), Bagno a Ripoli (*ibid.*, 108), Gangalandi, Giogoli (*ibid.*, 89), Calenzano (*ibid.*, 141), Monticelli, S. Cristofano a Strada (*ibid.*, 87), etc. Cf. *supra*, p. 226 n. 6.

² That many districts had already been converted to the modern pattern of settlement, in which villages (*borgate*, etc.) became reserves of wage labour (*v.* L. Tansillo, *Il Podere* (1560) (Turin, 1769), 8; cf. Biffi-Tolomei, pp. 79, 81), is copiously attested, all other sources apart, by the Florentine *catasti*.

³ And where attested may be charged upon the tenant (though with possible compensation): CRS 480, fol. 60v (1319); CS 179, 39 fol. 95v (1325); AA, Mem. affitti, fol. 9v *seq.* (1308), A IV 3, fol. 22r (1308); Dip. Badia, 11.3.1322; Dip. Vall., 31.5.1272; Fiumi, S. Gimignano, p. 137; Ticciati, *Riv. di Agric. di Arezzo*, 1890, pp. 97 *seq.* Cf. *supra*, p. 222 n. 1.

⁴ Cf. *infra*, p. 234.

⁵ E.g. CS 260, 97 fols. 108r, 108v, etc.

⁶ Biasutti, p. 16; Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvi (1958), p. 471 *seq.*; Day, *Villages dés.*, pp. 442-3; Repetti, *Dizionario della Toscana*, vol. II (Florence, 1835), pp. 127-9, etc. For *castellari* (wholly or partly abandoned *castella*) *v.* Lami, vol. II, p. 766 (Sesto); Dip. Vall., 30.6.1202 (Montaguto), 27.8.1213, 24.6.1231 (Rignano); AA, A IV 9, fol. 39r (M. Rotondo), 46v (Decimo), cf. A IV 11, fol. 22r; Dip. Gestello, 18.3.1344 (Sambuco).

⁷ Cf. *infra*, pp. 235-6.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

the Black Death),¹ which led to some dereliction of land and, despite restrictive legislation, tying tenants to their holdings, to much internal migration;² while, before and after the Black Death, a strong inducement to migration was rural debt and destitution, which drew from public authorities, in the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a flow of contradictory laws, punishing peasants as fugitive debtors and offering them concessions to occupy vacant land.³ Continuous throughout, however, was the dispersion of rural settlement. By the fifteenth century, in Florentine territory, numerous *castella*, still populous in 1300, had been wholly abandoned for the open country or reduced to places of refuge, storage, or stallage for cattle.⁴ But if this supports the thesis that economic influences were the main cause of depopulation, the part played by *appoderamento* still awaits investigation.⁵ Provisionally it may be noted that many modern farms and villas occupy the sites of medieval settlements, and that where enclosure was at work this change was already proceeding in the later Middle Ages.

Characteristic once again is the development at Vallombrosa where, after a confused century or more of monastic property dealings, we find by 1400 that, of the principal *castella*, one-time centres of manorial administration and settlement, Magnale on its *monte* was becoming dishabited and replaced by the demesne grange at Paterno below, while

¹ Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxvi (1958), p. 461 *seq.*

² To the towns or to better land: Kovalevsky, *Ž.S.W.G.*, 1895, p. 414 *seq.*; Fiumi, *Studi in onore di A. Fanfani*, vol. I. (Milan, 1962), p. 281; Bowsky, *Speculum*, xxxix (1964), p. 24; Herlihy, *loc. cit.*, p. 243; Kohler, *Degli Azzi, Florentiner Strafrecht* (1909), pp. 66–7, 121–2, 126–7; Dorini, *Misc. Stor. Valdelsa*, 1914, pp. 80 *seq.*; A.S.F., *Abbondanza*, 102, fasc. xii (1353), *Grascia*, vol. I (1378), fols. 13r, 35v, *Prov. 44*, fol. 58 (1357), 46 fol. 102 (1359), *Atti Podestà 921* (26.8.1354). (For the latter references I am indebted to Prof. M. Becker.) Cf. *supra*, p. 230 n. 2.

³ Fiumi, *loc. cit.*, and S. Gimignano, p. 173; G. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society 1343–78* (Princeton, 1962), p. 93; A.S.F., *Prov. 114*, fols. 63v, 64r, 93v, 157v (1424), 115 fols. 97r, 119v, 209, 222 (1425); *Notizie sulla storia delle scienze fisiche in Toscana, cavate da un ms. ined. di G. Targioni-Tozzetti* (Florence, 1852), p. 114; P. Silva, *P. Gambacorta* (Pisa, 1911), pp. 141–2, 148 *seq.*; Lisini, *Provvedimenti economici di Siena nel 1382* (Siena, 1885), p. 59, etc.

⁴ E.g. *Cat. 110*, fol. 386 (Ripomortaia); 112 fols. 1r, 21, 25, 145 (Figline); 117 (Montelucio); 150 fol. 1013 (Borgo S. Lorenzo); 162, fols. 50 *seq.* (Romena); 199, fols. 143, 153r, 511v, 659v, 719v, etc. (Anghiari); 740, fol. 883 (Barbischio); 110 (Castelplonchio, Volignano; but cf. Repetti, s.v.); Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 172, 174. In such places *castella* survived as centres of defence, though sometimes mainly in the form of *casseri* or *torri* (*Cat. 119*; cf. next note). So the agronomist, Tanaglia, recommends a property with '... un castel vicino, Per difendere in guerra tutta entrata': *De Agricoltura*, ed. A. Roncaglia (Bologna, 1953), ll.289–90.

⁵ Thus, for the marked depopulation round Volterra and S. Gimignano in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the main reason has been found in general economic malaise: Day, pp. 437–8. Yet, at one place, Campo Chiarenti, said to be deserted after 1350 and without a parish church (Fiumi, *Studi Fanfani*, *cit.*, p. 279; Repetti, vol. I, p. 699) unpublished records show the Florentine Badia had long been concentrating property and in the fifteenth century had a bailiff (*fattore*) there, who on occasion was the local *capellano*: CS 78, 77 fols. 96v–97r; 261 fols. 13v, 21v.

P. J. JONES

at Ristonchi and Pitiana, the castles were destroyed, the population dispersed, and the plots and buildings united into central granges, with *palagi* and *torri*, for the management of surrounding *poderi*.¹ It was the same on other estates. From the later thirteenth century lords were engrossing plots inside *castella* to plant new 'palaces', or converting manors, outside *castella*, into villas or *palatia*, like the episcopal palace of S. Antonio at Montughi. And beside these were rising the towered country houses of magnate, merchant families on the sites of ancient manors and *castellari*. All over central Tuscany the *curtis* and *castrum* of the feudal past was emerging transformed in the *casa da signore*, part villa, part farm, part estate centre.² And within this villa landscape, as a final stage in *appoderamento*, the tributary farms were being grouped, as today, into new managerial units, entrusted to salaried lay officials, known, after commercial usage, by the new name *factores*.³ To the place of the *curtis* had succeeded the *fattoria*. The modern system, in all essentials, was complete.

VII

Not everywhere, however, or equally on all estates. The rise of the new, like the decline of the old system, was marked by acute differences of local development, especially in the progress of *mezzadria poderale* and the associated forms of rural structure and settlement.

Even round Florence itself *appoderamento* was far from fully established in the fifteenth century. There were farms 'a mezzadria' which still lacked farmsteads, the tenants inhabiting cottages, often independent of their land, in nearby villages or towns;⁴ *poderi* themselves,

¹ See particularly *estimi* and *catasti*, cit., *supra*, p. 229 n. 1; F. Morozzi, *Dello stato del fiume Arno* (Florence, 1762), p. 96, n. 2; at Ristonchi the fourteenth-century *torre* (still standing) served presumably as both grange and *castrum*. Cf. Repetti, vol. IV, p. 779.

² With granaries, *tinaia* (vat-houses), wine-presses (*canali*) and such expensive installations as olive-mills: Plesner, pp. 10 *seq.*, 14 *seq.*, 56, 89; Jones, 'Families', pp. 199-200 (and refs. there); Guicciardini, vol. I, 65, 91, 105, etc., vol. II, 18 *seq.* For Montughi v. Lami, vol. III, pp. 1681, 1684, 1739-40, 1752-3; Ristori, *A.S.I.*, 5th Ser., xviii (1896); AA, A V 2.

³ The term *factor* first appears in the later thirteenth century: Dip. Cestello, 18.4.1289. By the fifteenth century most estates, ecclesiastical included, had *fattori* and their farms arranged in *fattorie* (though older terms continued): Cat. 184, 192 *passim*; Lami, vol. I, pp. 180 *seq.*; AA, A IV 9, fol. 112r (1335), A II 1, fol. 150 (1399), etc.; CS 51 (Certosa), pp. 72 *seq.*; Plesner, pp. 211 *seq.*; Jones, loc. cit., pp. 200 *seq.*, 'Camaldoli,' p. 179; Fiumi, *S. Gim.*, p. 134; B. Rossi, *Il fattore di campagna* (Rome, 1934), pp. 138 *seq.*

⁴ A penultimate stage in *appoderamento* defined by Imberciadori as 'mezzadria non-poderale': *Ec. e Storia*, v (1958), pp. 255 *seq.* Cf. CS 78 (Badia), 79, fol. 39v, etc.; Est., 213, fol. 396; *Libro di ricordanze dei Corsini (1362-1457)*, ed. A. Petrucci (Rome, 1965), pp. 107-8, 110-11.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

though stabler in composition than the alienable *mansi* of manorial tenure, were commonly fragile units, expanding, contracting, or dividing (*spezandosi*), with the differing conditions of tenants or policy of lords;¹ and, as this fluidity implies, there was still plenty of land 'non appoderata' — *colti, terre spezzate* — unabsorbed by farms or great estates, and of widely varying ownership and tenancy.² Outside the Florentine *contado* and its Sienese and Aretine periphery, evidence of retarded development rapidly multiplies, and in forms suggestive of distinct regional trends. In the neighbouring Pisano, subsequently a district of large consolidated farms, let, like the Florentine, 'a mezzadria', *appoderamento* had barely begun by 1500 or even 1550. In the fifteenth century nucleated settlement still prevailed; the typical tenements were parcellized holdings; rents were mostly short-term *fitti*; and *mezzadria* was restricted to *terre arborate* or *vignate*.³ The explanation would seem to lie in agricultural conditions. Not only was this largely corn-country, where intensive *coltura promiscua* had failed to develop.⁴ Increasingly, in the later Middle Ages, land here was being converted to rough pasture and grazing. For this blame has been laid primarily on depopulation by war, plague, and government impolicy, especially following the Florentine conquest (1406), when many Pisans emigrated and encroaching Florentine landlords invested widely in cattle-raising.⁵ But it seems likely that, interacting with both these economic and demographic changes, a more radical influence was at work: a deterioration of the land itself which, caused possibly by careless management in the peak period of medieval colonization, was

¹ Cat. 184, fols. 7r *seq.*; CS 78, 78 fols. 28v, 30v (1450), 80 fols. 163v, 221v (1471 *seq.*); M.A.P., 87, fo. 420v, etc.; Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 100 *seq.*, 113 *seq.*, 'Camaldoli', p. 175 *seq.*; *Lettere di un notaio*, cit., vol. II, pp. 94-5.

² V. Cat. *passim* (though 1427 *catasto* law contemplates *poderi* as the natural units of farming), e.g. Cat. 184, fols. 164r *seq.* (S. Miniato: 130 pieces, totalling 150 *staiora*, 'tanti piccholi annoi sono impossibili E chonfini'). Cf. Imberciadori, loc. cit., p. 256; Fiumi, S. *Gim.*, pp. 129-30; *supra*, p. 222, *infra*, p. 237. 'Terre spezzate . . . che non formano appoderamento' persisted for centuries: CS 260, 214 (1792), fol. 45r.

³ Cat. 196 *passim*; A.S.F., Stat. Comm. Sogg., 928 (Vicopisano, 1406); B. Casini, *Il catasto di Pisa del 1428-29* (Pisa, 1964), and in *Studi Fanfani*, vol. I, p. 261 (with information generously supplied by Dott. Casini himself); Gori, pp. 96, 98, 109; for some possible cases of *appoderamento* v. Gori, pp. 103 *seq.*, Cat. 196, fols. 435r, 465r, 598, 617r, 651r, etc. The Lucchesia and Empolese may have formed a transitional area where *appoderamento* had made more progress: AI, 754, fols. 48v, etc.; CS 72, vols. 31-2, 38, 40.

⁴ Still in the eighteenth century the *poderi* of the clay lowlands were worked on a crop-fallow rotation: Carmignani, *Atti Georgofili*, 1819, p. 228.

⁵ A.S.F., Stat. Comm. Sogg., 636 (Pontedera), Prov. 138, fol. 90, Consoli del Mare 3, fol. 112, Balle 32, fol. 3r; Gori, p. 96 *seq.*; Silva, loc. cit., and *Studi Storici*, 1909, pp. 286 *seq.*; Caturegli, *Boll. Stor. Pisano*, 1950, pp. 31 *seq.* For Florentine investments v. R. Fiaschi, *Magistrature pisane delle acque* (Pisa, 1938), pp. 69 *seq.*; A.S.F., Med. av. princ., 81, fols. 548-9, 592 *seq.*, 104 fols. 420r *seq.*; *supra*, p. 219.

turning all the Tyrrhenian coastlands into marsh and malarial waste, unfit for sedentary cultivation and beyond the means of governments to reclaim.¹ This would relate the Pisano with the adjacent region, still more distinctive, of the Siense Maremma, an area akin in its arid climate, 'extensive' agriculture and transhumant grazing, to the Campagna and Mezzogiorno, where, as in the Mezzogiorno, post-manorial 'modernization' was limited to administrative change — to direct working by wage labour or various short-term tenancies of arable, pasture and stock — which left unaltered the traditional landscape of hill-top villages and treeless open fields, and *appoderamento* was delayed to very recent times and technology.² Tuscany, like Italy, had its 'North' and 'South'; and between the two extremes fifteenth-century records present all manner of local variations, in hill and plain, developed and undeveloped areas,³ from which the Florentine region emerges, what it long remained, the most precocious and advanced.⁴

Beside backward development in post-manorial organization, physical geography may also account partly for other, still more conservative features in late medieval Tuscany, particularly the widespread survival, not only in the villages but also on the land, of customary and small peasant holdings. A glance at the Florentine *catasti* suffices to show that, even in the most developed districts, engrossment and *appoderamento* had almost nowhere produced a simply stratified society of landless cultivators and labourers. *Mezzadri* could prosper enough to rent several farms,⁵ and quite often had land and, still more, stock of their own.⁶ Ownership, like land, remained much divided.

¹ Jones, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., pp. 364 *seq.* For the Tuscan and Pisan Maremma in particular v. Cat. 196; Volpe, *Pisa*, p. 50; Fiaschi, op. cit.; Mori, *Dominazone fiorentina a Pisa* (Pisa, Tesi di Laurea), p. 67 *seq.*; Pardi, *A.S.I.*, 1918, pt. 1, pp. 1 *seq.*; Baratta, *Boll. Soc. Geog. It.*, 1905; Cecchini, *Studi Fanfani*, vol. II, pp. 299 *seq.*, etc. There was some successful *bonifica* in the sixteenth-century Pisano, which may explain the progress of *appoderamento*.

² The Maremma also shared with Campagna and the South acute depopulation and a corresponding increase in pastoralism, the effect again partly of economic and political factors: Jones, loc. cit., pp. 364 *seq.*, 373, 381, 392, 411-13; Landucci, p. 373; Imberciadori, *Campagna*, pp. 58 *seq.*, 70, 302; *Stat. di Montepescali (1427)* (Siena, 1938); *Arch. Scialoja*, 1938, pp. 50 *seq.*, *Atti Geogr.* (1938), pp. 215-29; Salvagnoli, *ibid.*, 1850, pp. 15 *seq.*; Ciacci, *Gli Aldobrandeschi* (Rome, 1935), vol. I, pp. 74-5, 354 *seq.*, vol. II, pp. 316-17; Tofani, Bellucci, in *Italia Agricola*, 1949, pp. 86 *seq.*

³ As the pastoral Montagna Pistoiese (Cat. 232), Valdambra (*ibid.*, p. 117 or Cortonese (*ibid.*, 192, fols. 1 *seq.*; 215), regions still of mainly concentrated settlement with little *appoderamento*.

⁴ Imberciadori, *Campagna*, pp. 174, 249-50, 385; G. Dainelli, *Distribuzione della popolazione in Toscana* (Florence, 1917).

⁵ CS 78, 79, fol. 27v (1461); CS 51, 72, fols. 12r *seq.*, 17r, 18v, 24v, etc. (1397 ff.) Cat. 141, fols. 39r, 128r; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 176. There were also long tenancies, renewed for generations: Cat. 109, fol. 209r; CS 78, loc. cit.

⁶ For good examples see Cat. 141 (Calenzano). Cf. Cat. 109, fols. 321v, 323r; 142, fols. 549, 551, 554, 563, etc.; M.A.P., 82, fos. 561v *seq.*; *supra*. p. 225 n. 6.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

Close to Florence itself there were few parishes where all land and livestock was 'got up into the hands' of one or two great families;¹ further off, especially in hill and more secluded country, peasant properties multiplied.² Generally they were small, too small often for subsistence, and land (and stock) were very unequally apportioned, to the profit of a prosperous and usurious minority of *contadini grassi* and village tradesmen.³ So ownership was commonly combined with tenancy, all kinds of tenancy — *a fitto, a mezzo, a terzo, quarto, terratico*, etc.⁴ — and among these continued to be mixed many rustic *feuda* and *livelli*. They are found in all areas and all types of estate, of merchants such as the Bardi, nobles such as the Da Panzano.⁵ But like smallholdings they are found most in upland or poorer districts, or on the lands of institutions, most obviously the Church, and particularly of church lands episcopal estates. Few remained, in Florentine territory, on the great monastic domains.⁶ On the bishop's manors, however, concentrations of customary holdings persisted in various outlying areas (Mugello, Val d'Elsa, Val di Pesa), and continued to yield (with some ecclesiastical *censi*) a quarter or more of all temporal income. And in other Tuscan dioceses it was the same.⁷

The high quota of perpetual rents implied no change in their nature. As in the past, a great proportion were purely token dues, *fittolini*, often

¹ See, for example, conditions at Gangalandi (Cat. 89, fols. 470r, 517r, 699, 702, 714-16, etc.); Antella (Cat. 109, fols. 214 *seq.*, 271, 329r, etc.), Brozzi (Cat. 128), Colligalli, Valdigreve (Cat. 110, fols. 422 *seq.*). Engrossing monasteries like Vallombrosa and Passignano never succeeded in monopolizing the land within their lordships. Cf. generally, Fiumi, *A.S.I.*, cxiv (1956), pp. 23 *seq.*

² E.g. Cat. 112 (Figline), 116 (Montevarchi), 117 (Valdambra), 150 (Vicchio, Botena), 228 (Lamporecchio: joint-ownership of olive-mills); 205 (Rassinata, Montecchio, etc.), 215 (Cortona), 241 (Val di Cecina), 886, n. 168 (S. Martino a Corella). Cf. *Est.*, cit., *supra*, p. 229 n.1.

³ On whom see for example: Cat. 87, fols. 277 *seq.*; 116, fols. 871-4, 917 *seq.*, 946 *seq.*; 199 (Anghiari), 388r *seq.*; 241, fols. 441 *seq.* For livestock see particularly the Montagna Pistoiese (Cat. 232), where a few persons had many beasts and many had a few.

⁴ The last three especially in less developed, non-Florentine regions: Cat. 196, 241; AI 765.

⁵ The Bardi rents lasting to the nineteenth century: *Tesoro del Foro Toscano*, vol. VI (Florence, 1823), pp. 26 *seq.* Cf. Jones, 'Families', p. 194; *Libri degli Alberti*, ed. A. Saponi (Milan, 1952), pp. 187, 200-1. Cf. Dip. Peruzzi de' Medici, 1394-5; Cat. 116, fols. 510 *seq.*; 205 *passim*; Cherubini, loc. cit., 25 *seq.*, 48, 66 *seq.*; Sforza, *Montignoso*, 360 *seq.* Some *fitti perpetui* seem to be repayments (or interest?) of loans: Cat. 228, fols. 831v, 836, etc.

⁶ And then rarely comprised integral holdings: Cat. 192, fols. 295 *seq.*; Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 174-5 (cf. Cat. 199, fols. 30, 34, 445, 574, etc.). They were commoner on non-Florentine monastic estates. (Urban rents are not here considered.)

⁷ AA, A II 1, A IV 11, 14, 20, 23, 26, 28 *passim*, A V 3, 5; B.N.F., MS II, IV, 505, fols. 1v *seq.*; Cat. 150, fols. 11, 12, 74, 77, 79, etc.; 602, no. 43. The b. of Fiesole also drew some 25 per cent of income from perpetual rents (plus a few ecclesiastical *censi*): Cat. 193, fols. 11-3v, AI 787; cf. b. of Cortona: Cat. 192, fols. 1r *seq.* For other bishoprics see: Cat. 189, fols. 65r *seq.*, 196, fols. 193r *seq.*, 241, fols. 438 *seq.*, 717 *seq.*, 991, fol. 147; Stat. Comm. Sogg. 530, fol. 19v; Mengozzi, pp. 256 *seq.*

in arrears, and so confused by division, sale and inheritance, that not only rents but holdings also defied exact description.¹ For this reason, possibly, some clerical landlords, notably again the bishop, began, from the later thirteenth century, to farm their customary revenues *en bloc*, letting the *feudi*, *censi* and *omaggi* of particular districts on regular short-term leases.² By the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the custom had so far spread that the bishop, with certain other owners, was leasing entire estates this way, commercial rents included.³ More than administrative convenience, however, lay behind this practice.⁴ On the bishop's lands particularly, among the classes of lessee, who were often local people, clerical or lay, there also appear from an early date, with increasing and ominous frequency, urban *ottimati*, kinsmen by rank or blood of the aristocratic prelates and upper clergy of Florence.⁵ Nor was it only by managerial lease that Florentine magnates were invading church property to sub-let and exploit. Resuming the tradition, never lost, of perpetual mesne tenancies, they began to obtain also *livelli*, sometimes by direct grant or conversion of leases, sometimes by acquiring the holdings of *fedeli*.⁶ By the later fifteenth century a considerable portion of episcopal and other church possessions is found to have passed to Florentine families, Medici and others, by perpetual tenancies

¹ Cat. 193, fo. 3v ('non sanno Confini': b. of Fiesole); 991, fo. 147r (b. of Volterra: 'Nongli posso mettere per ordine per non havere piena notizia').

² Lami, vol. II, p. 729; AA A II 1, fols. 33, 35r, 37r, etc., A IV 2, fol. 1v, A IV 3 fols. 8r, 25v, 42v *seq.*, 45r, 51r, 114v, etc., Mem. affitti, fols. 3v, 4v, 14v, etc., A IV 9, fols. 5r, 43v, 46v, 48v, etc., A IV 14, fols. 2r, 12r, 19r, 37r, etc., A V 55, fols. 6r, 8r, 14r, etc.; Cat. 194, fols. 2r *seq.*, 602, n. 43. Cf. CS 260, 125, fols. 133r, 147r (1422 ff.). For some very early examples see Dip. Badia, 17.8.1219, Dip. Olivetani, 24.2.1255 (S. Miniato); but these precedents were not always followed up.

³ AA, A IV 3, fol. 187r (1329) A IV 14, fol. 2r (1373), A II 1, fols. 73r, 114v (1393), etc.; Cat. 194 cit., 602 cit. (which shows c. 40 per cent of episcopal income from non-urban property to derive from managerial leases). For a Siennese analogy (S. M. della Scala) v. *Statuti Senesie Volgari* (Bologna, 1863-77), vol. III, pp. 228 *seq.*, 288 *seq.*

⁴ Thus, although properties at farm tended to be outlying, rents were still commonly in kind; and on the Badia's estates no managerial leases are found, though in 1445 the monks complained that transport costs exceeded the income from their Valdelsan farms: CS 78, 243, fol. 362v.

⁵ AA, A IV 9, fols. 5, 19r, 43v, 48v, 165r, etc. (Peruzzi, Vicedomini, Mozzi, 1329-37), A IV 11 (pt. 3: Visdomini, 1392), A V 55 (1420), fols. 6r, 8r, 27r (Strozzi, Corsini); cf. Cat. 194, fols. 2r *seq.*, 602, n. 43 (Guadagni, Cavalcanti, etc.).

⁶ A class from which some, like the Niccolini, were originally descended: Lami, vol. I, pp. 64, 68-70; AA, A IV 9, fols. 180r, 227r, 237r, 244v, etc. (Acciaiuoli, Buondelmonti, Visdomini, Mozzi: 1338-40), A IV 14, fols. 2r *seq.* (1373 ff.), A IV 23, fols. 4r, 7v, 8v, 13v, 33r, 38r, 67v (Bardi, Albizzi, Corsini: 1421 ff.), A IV 32 *passim*, A V 55, fol. 8r (Strozzi, 1415), A V 3, fols. 24r, 25r, 30r, etc. (1446 ff.). Cf. Dip. Certosa, 24.8.1347; *Lib. Corsini*, 26 *seq.*, 32 *seq.*, etc.; CS 179 (Passignano), 35, fols. 180r, 201v, 216r, 224v, etc. (Bardi, Buondelmonti), 39 fols. 31r, 52r (Peruzzi); Dip. Vall., 18.1.1317, 2.12.1322, 11.5.1371. For the Niccolini, who retained and increased their perpetual holdings of Passignano v. Plesner, pp. 142, 222; Jones, 'Families', p. 193; Dip. Pass., 7.6.1323, 20.3.1324; CS 179, 3411; 35, fols. 243v, 288v; A.S.F., Decima repubblicana, 68, fol. 282v. Cf. *supra*, p. 231.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

and *feuda*.¹ In part the tenancies were a legacy of the perpetual grants sold by the state in the Eight Saints' War (1375-78), which, although concluded with a treaty promising restitution, encumbered ecclesiastical estates for several generations with a class of intrusive 'livellari'.² But a good number were new creations, in some cases unexceptionable grants for improvement,³ but many of more equivocal origin.

It was not only from local churches that Florentines took *livelli*,⁴ nor Florentines alone who encroached on church land.⁵ All over Italy in the later Middle Ages lords were letting estates to capitalist entrepreneurs; and on ecclesiastical property the means adopted, only too often, was the sale or grant to magnates for nominal rents in form or effect perpetual. For this fresh wave of 'pillage légalisé' the cause has been seen in failing temporal income, especially money income, aggravated by debt and taxation, *commendae* and other disorders, which brought poverty to many churches, extinction to many monasteries, and forced the clergy to alienate revenue.⁶ Not everywhere, however, was the dissipation of ecclesiastical property serious or sustained. Nor was leasing everywhere the consequence of financial weakness. It appears most in regions where farm units were large enough to yield double profits, to middlemen and owners; in practice rents were commonly high and terms of tenancy strict; and this on estates both clerical and lay.⁷

That leasing was no mere abuse of a debilitated Church is confirmed by the case of Tuscany. Here, certainly, tax and visitation records reveal much clerical distress and dilapidation and report complaints of poverty.⁸ Evidence recurs of ecclesiastical debt, partly provoked by

¹ AA, A IV 26 (1461 ff.), *passim*, A IV 28 (1475-1508), fols. 182r, 205r (Lorenzo de' Medici) and *passim*, and especially A IV 37 *seq.* (history of episcopal 'fiefs' to the eighteenth century); CS 260, 97, fol. 89r; Rumohr, 152 n.; G. B. Picotti, *Giovinezza di Leone X* (Milan, 1927), pp. 80 *seq.*, 131; G. Pampaloni, *A.S.I.*, cxv (1957), p. 192.

² As amply appears, in addition to *estimi* and *catasti*, from ecclesiastical records: AA, A II 1, fols. 46v, 151r; A IV 11 (pts. 2, 3); A IV 14, fols. 41r *seq.*, 174r *seq.*; unnumbered rental 1376 ff.; A IV 23, fols. 7v, 37v. Cf. Cat. 194, fols. 3r *seq.*; CS 260, 214, fols. 11r, 17v, 125, fols. 1r, 124r; *Lib. Corsini*, pp. 42 *seq.*; Jones, 'Settimo', pp. 109 *seq.* But this story has still to be told.

³ Or high rents: AA, A IV 26, fols. 77r *seq.* (1475); CS 78, 261, fols. 35r, 41v, etc.; Dip. Castello, 16.8.1476 (urban); CS 51, 213 (*ricordanze*, 1497 ff.); CS 260, 97, fols. 84v, 85v. Eighteenth-century writers idealized late medieval *livelli* as mostly of this kind: Anzilotti, *Bull. Sen.*, 1915.

⁴ Cat. 196, fols. 193r *seq.*; 991, fos. 146v, 147r; Med. av. princ., 81, fols. 600-1, 104, fols. 421 *seq.*; I. Masetti-Bencini, *Misc. Stor. Valdelsa*, 1912, pp. 21 *seq.*

⁵ Cf. parallel action by Siennese magnates, for example P. Petrucci: *Stat. Sen. Volg.* loc. cit.; Cecchini, *Bull. Sen.* (1948), pp. 29-31.

⁶ C. Cipolla, *Annales*, ii (1947), pp. 318 *seq.*

⁷ Cf. Jones, *Camb. Ec. Hist.*, cit., p. 417.

⁸ Such was their nature: Cat. 184-5, 192 *passim*, 991, fols. 146r *seq.*; Caturegli, cit.; F. Coradini, *Visita pastorale del 1424 compiuta nel Casentino* (Anghiari, 1941).

taxation, and partly met by sales 'ad vitam' or in perpetuity;¹ and there are characteristic examples of monasteries suppressed or amalgamated with others,² and of gross accumulation of *commendae*.³ But, true to the tradition of mortmain, losses were balanced by gains. To some religious houses commendatory abbots brought benefit not harm.⁴ The disruptive effects of taxation, even of the Eight Saints' War, would seem on most estates impermanent.⁵ Alienations were compensated by new acquisitions, and the decay of some estates by growth of others.⁶ On large domains particularly fifteenth-century account-books (some now composed on double-entry principles)⁷ disclose a business-like management, production organized for sale as well as consumption,⁸ and annual balances which were generally favourable,⁹ irrespective in most

¹ Cat., cit.; Dip. Badia, 24.2.1398, 9.7.1403, 19.11.1472, 12.10.1474; CS 78, 243, fols. 3r seq., 261, fols. 15v, 22v, 26v, etc.; Dip. Camald., 25.11.1481, 22.10.1486, 11.6.1495; Dip. Cestello, 28.7.1384; Dip. Vall., 28.7.1397, 23.6.1415, etc.; Est. 338, fol. 30r; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 183, 'Settimo', pp. 108 seq.

² E.g. Dip. Badia, 4.12.1421, 13.5.1435, 22.12.1450, 12.3.1451, 6.7.1463, 12.8.1467; CS 260, 97, fol. 89r; A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 3rd Ser., 234, fols. 276r, 283r; Lami, vol. I, pp. 270 n. a seq.; Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 173, 'Settimo', p. 112.

³ Most conspicuously by Lorenzo de' Medici on behalf of his son: Picotti, pp. 80 seq., 86 seq.

⁴ E.g. Jones, 'Settimo', p. 112; Dip. Badia, 9.9.1405. It is not evident that Gio. de' Medici did great harm to the Florentine houses held 'in commendam': Picotti, pp. 88, 109, 139.

⁵ Though prolonged over decades, recoveries by lot of state-sold property began straight after the Eight Saints' War: AA, A IV 14, fols. 174v seq. (1380-86), *Indice storico*, vol. V, pp. 199 seq., 437 seq.; Dip. Certosa, 1.9.1383, Vallombrosa, described in 1374 as 'potens et exuberans' (Dip. Vall., 7.12.1374) did not wait for 'extraction', but (despite debt: *supra* n. 1.) resumed by re-purchase: CS 260, 214, fols. 17v seq. Cf. CS 51, 72, fols. 54r, 57v, etc.; *Lib. Corsini*, pp. 69 seq.

⁶ Cf. monastic amalgamations, *supra*, n. 2. In the same way monasteries bought land of indebted churches and other religious houses: Dip. Certosa, 17.9.1342; Dip. Vall., 7.12.1374. For new acquisitions, especially after the Black Death and again in the fifteenth century *v. e.g.* Dip. Certosa, 4.2.1366, 19.2.1366, etc., 21.3.1379, etc., 3.12.1408, etc., 1448 ff.; CS 51, vols. 213 *passim*, 235, fols. 6r, 8r, 11v, 22v, etc.; CS 78, 77, fols. 121v seq., 210v seq., 78, fols. 29v, etc.; Jones, 'Settimo', p. 112; P. Lugano, *Bull. Sen.*, xlviii (1940); Fiumi, *S. Gim.*, pp. 134, 187, 216; Bowsky, *Speculum*, xxxix (1964), pp. 15-16. Cf. *supra*, pp. 229 ff.

⁷ An Italian peculiarity: CS 78, vols. 77 seq. Cf. Melis, *Storia della ragioneria* (Bologna, 1950), pp. 439, 538-9. From Florentine territory the example spread to Umbria: Astuti, Melis, in *Benedictina*, 1952, p. 315.

⁸ If consumption came first, so it did on lay estates, and, as there, still left high proportions of produce for sale: Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 179 seq. Exactly the same mixture of self-sufficiency and market reaction is found at Vallombrosa, the Badia and other large monasteries: CS 260, vols. 125, 214; CS 78, vols. 77-81; CS 51, vols. 32-4; cf. *supra*, p. 226 n. 4. The Badia accounts (which show about 50 per cent wheat consumed by the monastery, 80 per cent other corn, 66 per cent wine, and most oil) suggest that lean years and high prices yielded most return (CS 87, 79, fols. 153v seq.) though to some churchmen at least profiteering was forbidden (*v.* 1341 Vallombrosan constitutions: CS 260, 228, fol. 18v). A similar ban on livestock leases 'a capo salvo' was certainly not respected: Not. 2528, 22.10.1338 (Vallombrosa).

⁹ AA, A V 1 (1434-36), fols. 34r seq., A V 2 (1445); CS 51, 31, fols. 3v, 6v, 8v, 10v, etc. 32, fols. 1r, 100r, 122r, 136r, etc., 35, fols. 91v, 96v, 102r, etc.; CS 78, loc. cit.; Jones, 'Camaldoli', pp. 180-3.

FROM MANOR TO MEZZADRIA

cases of non-agricultural income from urban and industrial rents, government and other stock, and spiritualities.¹ Over most Florentine church land churchmen kept control, and their methods were those of laymen. Appropriately to an area of small-scale cultivation, bailiff-farming remained the rule; and where estates were let, rents were normally economic and lessees little different from factors.² *Livelli* (urban property apart) were only conspicuous yet on episcopal estates, and even here, seemingly, did not embarrass income.³ And to the extent that they passed to entrepreneurs residual customary holdings, they helped complete the transition from manor to *mezzadria*.⁴

¹ To the bishop's temporal revenue, however, urban rents seem to have contributed up to 40 per cent in the mid-fifteenth century (Cat. 602, n. 43; AA A II 3, A V 55, fols. 50r *seq.*, A V 56; cf. the Badia: Cat. 192, fols. 283r *seq.*, CS 78, 243, fol. 160). From spiritual revenue also (not regularly recorded in accounts) the bishop drew substantial help by diocesan taxation (CS 78, 261, fol. 8 (1421); AA, A II 1, fol. 59v (1390), A V 3, fols. 9v, 11r, 13v, 18v, 32r: 1447-8), as did Vallombrosa by papally sanctioned levies on the Order (Dip. Vall., 25.12.1400). Most churches held government stock, but the yield was very uncertain, so that the Badia, in the 1450s, was selling its holdings: CS 78, 77, fol. 244v, 78, fol. 246v, etc.

² Though on bishop's lands some drop in rents is evident in the later fourteenth century and the grasp of leasehold farmers was tightening: Jones, 'Camaldoli', p. 183; AA, A II 1, fols. 73, 114v, cf. p. 238, *supra*.

³ So at least it was judged in the eighteenth century: AA, A IV 48, 114 *seq.*

⁴ E.g. AA, A IV 23, fol. 67v.

VII

DAVID HERLIHY

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA: A RURAL COMMUNE IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

Santa Maria Impruneta, *Sancta Maria in Pineta*, 'Saint Mary in the Pine Grove', is a baptismal church or *pieve*, one of some sixty in the medieval Florentine *contado*.¹ The church itself, and the large rural commune which grew up around it, is only six miles south of Florence in the direction of the Chianti hills. Impruneta in the Middle Ages might almost have been considered a Florentine suburb. The centre of the commune is quite high, some 275 metres (Florence itself is only fifty metres above the sea). It is set upon an elongated ridge, which rises between and runs parallel to the two thin streams and narrow valleys of the Ema and the Greve. The Ema to the east and north, the Greve to the west and partially to the south, roughly delineate the *pieve*'s boundaries. Eighteen rural parishes or 'peoples', including Impruneta's own parish or *populus plebis*, made their living on about fifty square kilometres of high, hilly, and in parts quite rugged and inhospitable land.

So close to the city, Impruneta and its parishes figured often and

¹ The research in the Florentine archives necessary for this study was made possible through a fellowship awarded the author by the Guggenheim Foundation, and to the Foundation he would like to express his gratitude. The figure of 60 *pievi* in the Florentine *contado* is taken from the *Rationes decimarum Italiae: Tuscia*, I: *La decima degli anni 1274-1280*, ed. P. Guidi; II: *Le decime degli anni 1295-1304*, ed. M. Giusti and P. Guidi, *Studi e Testi*, 58 and 98 (Vatican City, 1932 and 1942). Impruneta's constituent parishes were, besides the *populus plebis*, Sant' Andrea a Luiano, San Cristofano a Strada, Sant'Ilario a Pitigliolo, Santa Maria a Montaguto, San Piero a Sangiorsale, Santa Maria a Carpineto, San Lorenzo alle Ruose, San Miniato a Quintole, San Martino a Bagnolo, San Piero a Montebuoni, Santa Cristina a Pancole, San Giusto a Mezzano, Santo Stefano a Pozzolatico, San Lorenzo in Collina, San Michele a Nizzano, San Martino a Strada, and San Giorgio in Poneta.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

prominently in Florentine history. Impruneta is an ancient *pieve*, and undoubtedly its location and boundaries approximate the outlines of a still older Roman *pagus*.¹ According to Johan Plesner's persuasive reconstruction, roads more than anything explain the location of these ancient rural churches.² Roads in late Roman times characteristically kept to the ridges which, protected from ambush and immune from floods, offered more security and better health conditions than the swampy lowlands. The road which gave Impruneta its importance was the ridge road, quite literally the 'high' way, which ran south-east from the city, groping its way along and over the ridges to the upper Valdarno and Arezzo. The name and location of one of Impruneta's parishes — San Miniato a Quintole (i.e. five miles from the city) — still recalls the passing of this ancient route.

In the later Middle Ages, however, there were better routes to Arezzo, and Impruneta found itself removed from the principal thoroughfares of the Florentine countryside. While avoiding its centre, two important roads still traversed its territory. Across the *pieve*'s eastern fringes ran the 'Strada in Chianti'. On the west, crossing the parish of San Piero a Montebuoni ran the still more important Via Senese to Poggibonsi, Siena and Rome. From at least the eleventh century, a castle had stood along this road at Montebuoni, and a hospital also, at a place called picturesquely the 'bad woman'.³ By the early twelfth century, the lords of Montebuoni were imposing heavy tolls upon the growing traffic which passed their fortress. In response, the young commune of Florence in 1135 made war against them, dismantled the castle and forced the family to move to the city.⁴ Giovanni Villani singled out the incident to mark the beginnings of the city's subjugation of its rural lords.⁵ The former masters of Montebuoni, called after their ancestral castle the Buondelmonti, found wealth, fame and even notoriety within the city, for Villani assigns them a major rôle in the outbreak, in 1215, of the deadly feud between Guelf and Ghibelline.⁶ But as great landlords within its territory and as

¹ Cf. Mario Lopes Pegna, *Firenze dalle origini al medioevo* (Florence, 1962), pp. 315 ff.

² 'Una rivoluzione stradale nel dugento', *Acta Jutlandica*, I (1938).

³ 'Le carte del monastero Vallombrosano di San Cassiano a Montescalari', ed. Giulia Camerani, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), no. 104, p. 518, 11 Feb. 1095 'ospetali illi qui est positus . . . in loco ubi dicitur Muliermala, iusta castrum Montebuoni'.

⁴ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica* (Florence, 1823), IV, 36.

⁵ Loc. cit., 'E così cominciò il comune di Firenze a distendersi, e colla forza più che con ragione, crescendo il contado e sottomettendosi alla giurisdizione ogni nobile di contado, e disfaccendo le fortezze.'

⁶ *Cronica*, V, 38. See also the lament of Dante, *Paradiso*, XVI, 143.

DAVID HERLIHY

patrons of its churches, the Buondelmonti continued to maintain close ties with their rural home.

Sometime probably between 1181 and 1185, the famous glossator and jurist Accorso was born at Bagnolo, one of Impruneta's villages.¹ In the 1320s, two prominent urban families, the Buondelmonti and the Bardi, engaged in a violent and protracted feud over the right of lay patronage over the church of Impruneta, in the course of which Florence was laid under an interdict by an irritated Pope John XXII.²

But perhaps Impruneta's greatest claim to renown was its possession of a miraculous painting of Our Lady, which made of it one of the most popular pilgrim shrines in the Florentine district. Francesco Guicciardini's 'Dialogue on the Government of Florence' takes place in Bernardo del Nero's villa near Impruneta, at which, in 1494, three prominent citizens had called after visiting the *santissimo luogo*.³ In times of peril for the city, Florence's Signoria would order the sacred tabernacle containing the picture to be carried in solemn procession to and through the city, to hear the prayers of the people and receive from them often substantial gifts. This governmental summons for the picture's wonder-working presence came frequently in the troubled years of the late Middle Ages, and for remarkably varied purposes: to halt or bring the rains, to bolster friends and weaken enemies, to hurry grain ships on to Pisa or Leghorn, or to help the city in its negotiations with the powerful king of France.⁴

The fame of the image and the popularity of the shrine help also to explain one of Impruneta's most distinctive features: the enormous wealth of its collegiate church. In the papal tithes of 1274-1280, supposedly fixed in proportion to ecclesiastical revenues, no other baptismal church in all the Florentine *contado* bore a higher assessment than Impruneta's 114 pounds.⁵ Only the archbishop of Florence enjoyed a richer benefice than the presiding priest, the *plebanus*, of Impruneta; no wonder the Bardi and Buondelmonti fought for control of the office. The *pieve* church owned probably 20 per cent of the land within its own territory and more outside, including an urban parish, Santa Maria

¹ F. Villani, 'Le vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini,' in *Cronica di Matteo Villani* (Florence, 1826), VI, 19. P. Fiorelli, 'Accorso', *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, vol. I (Rome, 1960), pp. 116-21.

² R. Davidsohn, *Firenze ai tempi di Dante*, transl. E. Dupré Theseider (Florence, 1929), pp. 35-7.

³ F. Guicciardini, *Dialogo e discorsi del reggimento di Firenze*, ed. R. Palmarocchi (Bari, 1932), p. 4. G. B. Casotti, *Memorie storiche della miracolosa immagine di Santa Maria Vergine dell' Impruneta* (Florence, 1714).

⁴ Cf. Luca Landucci, *Diario fiorentino*, ed. I. del Badia (Florence, 1883), pp. 68, 106, 139, 199, 291, 308, 330 and 368.

⁵ *Tuscia*, I, no. 590.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

Soprarno.¹ Impruneta's present large and graceful church is still standing testimony to the historic importance of its shrine and to its affluence. Constructed originally in the eleventh century (a still visible inscription bears the date 1054), the church was frequently and extensively repaired and rebuilt, especially after the damage suffered during the Second World War, and today only its thirteenth-century campanile may be considered authentically medieval. But the continuing work upon it was done with consistent taste, and the church is today one of the major charms of the Florentine countryside.

For its importance as an ancient and populous centre of rural settlement, for the fame and wealth of its shrine, the prominence of its families and the beauty of its church, Impruneta has clear claims upon the attention of historians. An examination of its history may also help elucidate two larger issues, which in recent years have attracted much scholarly attention. The first bears upon the problem of the relations — economic, fiscal and political — between the city government and the rural communes, between the urban dwellers and the peasants. This question is, to be sure, as old as historical interest in the medieval and Renaissance Italian town. In recent years, however, the issue has been enlivened and placed in a quite novel context by several historians, and most forcefully by Enrico Fiumi.² In numerous vigorously argued and richly documented works, Fiumi has critically scrutinized several long-credited ideas and assumptions concerning the ties between town and country. Since at least the time of Robert von Pöhlmann, but still more explicitly in the works of Gaetano Salvemini, Gioachino Volpe, Roberto Caggese and the many historians inspired by them, the policies of the urban commune towards the countryside have been represented as antagonistic and oppressive.³ Through market controls, unfair tax

¹ See below, p. 19, and R. Davidsohn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV (Berlin, 1908), 465.

² See especially his 'Sui rapporti economici tra città e contado nell' età comunale', *A.S.I.*, CXIV (1956), 18–68; 'Fioritura e decadenza dell' economia fiorentina', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXV (1957), pp. 385–439; vol. CXVI (1958), pp. 443–510; vol. CXVII (1959), pp. 427–502; and most recently his *Storia economica e sociale di San Gimignano* (Florence, 1961). For a valuable survey of recent writings on the question, see E. Cristiani, 'Città e campagne nell' età comunale in alcune pubblicazioni dell' ultimo decennio' *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, vol. XXV (1963), pp. 829–45; Cristiani's own views, largely sympathetic with those of Fiumi, are expressed in his *Nobiltà e popolo nel comune di Pisa dalle origini del podestariato alla signoria dei Donoratico* (Naples, 1962), pp. 173 ff.

³ Robert von Pöhlmann, *Die Wirtschaftspolitik der Florentiner Renaissance und das Prinzip der Verkehrsfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1878), especially pp. 17–39. While von Pöhlmann was seeking to show that communal economic policies gravitated towards liberalism in the fifteenth century, he still emphasized the 'zäh conservativen Charakter der Agrargesetzgebung des 15. Jahrhunderts' (p. 141). G. Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295* (Florence, 1899), pp. 119–26, was the first to suggest that communal policies towards the countryside were motivated by class interests. There is

DAVID HERLIHY

policies and private usury, the men of the city cruelly treated the helpless peasants and built their own prosperity upon rampant rural misery.

Roberto Caggese in particular argued that this exploitation of the countryside, rooted in the narrow and insensitive moral consciousness of the age, was the great scandal and failure of the medieval free commune, and the reason for its collapse in the crisis of the fourteenth century. His passionate words are worth repeating:

'... nor can we, through misplaced sentiment, lament over the society of Dante, of Boccaccio, of Giotto, of Thomas Aquinas, for it is certain that the failure of the communal governments has hastened and determined the modern conscience, which, for all its small and large mistakes, its small and large faults, stands to the conscience [of the communal age] as the shore of the seas to the short bank of a river. Progress has need of failures, of crises, of ruinations, even if these caresses of fortune claim victims, and even if the victim be an entire society, and a society such as that which created the purest fantasies of our art and the boldest efforts of our race.'¹

Fiumi rejects this concept of an exploitation of the countryside by the city and its citizens, just as he seemingly discounts the significance of social conflicts of any sort in the history of the medieval commune. For him, such conflicts were superficial, incidental and indecisive. In Fiumi's eyes, the story of Florence's own 'flourishing and decline' — the story indeed of the fate of all Tuscany's principal cities — is that of a collective and creative response to a challenge. By the late thirteenth century, swelling rural population was saturating the countryside and forcing massive immigration into the towns. Immigration in turn provoked within the towns novelties and departures in all aspects of urban life. As long as the challenge lasted, the towns flourished. After 1348, however, in consequence of the depopulations of the later Middle Ages, growth in the countryside, and challenge in the cities, ceased. Dwindling population cut short the Tuscan *fioritura*, which an expanding population had once so powerfully supported.

Whatever the value of Fiumi's own, blunt populationist theory, there is no doubt that his critical examination of older views, his exposure of numerous weaknesses and inconsistencies within them, has made necessary fresh and careful investigations of the relations between

a new edition of Salvemini's highly influential work with an introduction by E. Sestan (Turin, 1960), but without the valuable appendices. G. Volpe, *Studi sulle istituzioni comunali a Pisa* (Pisa, 1902), has recently been subjected to a searching criticism by Cristiani, *Nobiltà*. For Caggese, see the following note.

¹ R. Caggese, *Classi e comuni rurali nel medio evo italiano. Saggio di storia economica e giuridica* (Florence, 1907-8), vol. II, pp. 391-2.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

town and country. As he says: 'If there is one chapter of the communal history of Tuscany which one day ought to be objectively re-examined, that is the chapter relative to the economic relations between city and countryside.'¹

The problem of the city's treatment of its rural subjects blends into another question which has only recently attracted the interest of historians: that of 'the economic depression of the Renaissance'.² Few issues of economic history have in recent years provoked such contrary opinion, and few seem more in need of continuing research, particularly in the relatively neglected field of agriculture.³

The present study is essentially an examination of the social and economic structure and change in the rural *pieve* and commune of Impruneta from roughly the late thirteenth to the early fifteenth centuries, carried out with a consciousness of these current problems of late medieval rural history. It is based, for the earlier period, chiefly upon Impruneta's notarial chartularies preserved in the Archivio di Stato of Florence.⁴ Impruneta's surviving chartularies are numerous, though clearly only a fraction of what once existed. Moreover, at Impruneta, as for so many other rural areas, the series of chartularies breaks off right after the Black Death and is not resumed until the late fifteenth century. However, a good view of the commune in the early fifteenth century is provided by the comprehensive tax survey of 1427, the *Catasto*.⁵ These gaps preclude a rigidly statistical use of the sources, though some statistical methods will be tried. But for all their omissions, the chartularies and *Catasto* still offer a richly detailed and eminently human picture of the society and the life of this rural community.

The fifty square kilometres of medieval Impruneta offered several

¹ 'Rapporti economici', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIV (1957), p. 18.

² R. S. Lopez and Harry A. Miskimin, 'The Economic Depression of the Renaissance', *Economic History Review*, vol. XIV (1962), pp. 408-26, and the vigorous rebuttal by Carlo M. Cipolla, *ibid.*, vol. XVI (1964), pp. 519-29.

³ For a rich survey of recent studies on medieval Italian agriculture, see P. J. Jones, 'Per la storia agraria italiana nel Medio Evo; lineamenti e problemi', *Riv. Stor. Ital.*, vol. LXXVI (1964), pp. 287-348.

⁴ The notaries who worked in or near Impruneta are as follows: A.S.F., Not. B 1340-B 1348, Benintendi di Guittone (1296-1348); F 308 (4 chartularies), Filippo di Dino (1311-47); M 489, Michele di Bingo (1318-24); N 148, Niccolò di Lippo (1331-38); Z 56-Z 57, Zanobi di Bartolo Bernardi da Pozzolatico (1327-43); and I 104, Ildebrandino o Aldobrandino o Ildobrandino o Dino di Benvenuto (1276-1311). Entries are identified by date and folio number when the chartulary is paginated; when it is not, they are cited here by date only.

⁵ A.S.F., Cat., 307. For recent comment on the nature of the *Catasto*, see R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 21-31, and L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (Princeton, N.J., 1963), pp. 99-105.

DAVID HERLIHY

important resources for the support of its inhabitants. One of the most distinctive was an abundance of clay, which has left its mark upon the area's toponyms (Monte Rosso, Terra Rossa) as well as terrain. Pottery had been an important product of nearby Arezzo in Roman times, and at Impruneta, clay was being dug and bricks baked since at least the eleventh century.¹ By the early 1300s, the potters of Impruneta were making cups, jars, jugs, bricks and tile in hundredfold lots, and selling them to urban purchasers for what seems the reasonable cost of a few pennies per piece.² So important was this earthenware industry at Impruneta that the artisans involved in it had by the early fourteenth century organized their own guild.³ It included the heads of more than 10 per cent of Impruneta's families and at least two of the commune's most substantial residents.⁴ By the fifteenth century Impruneta's earthenware had found its way as far as Pisa, which certainly means that it was an object of maritime export.⁵ At Impruneta, the making of bricks, tile, pottery and *terra cotta* has been continued through the centuries and even today remains one of the principal supports of the local economy.

Impruneta also possessed an abundance of wood. Forest and woods, the 'pineta' or pine grove which gave the church its name, still survived to a considerable extent in the late thirteenth century. The value of these forests was the greater because of their proximity to the city with its voracious appetite for fuel. Ownership of them fell largely to Impruneta's rich church, and brought it a yearly income to the thousands of pounds.⁶ The exploitation of this precious resource was carefully regulated by the first half of the fourteenth century. Cutting was permitted no more than once every three, four, five or six years, to allow sufficient time for the wood to be replenished.⁷

¹ F. W. Walbank, 'Trade and Industry under the Later Roman Empire in the West', *The Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. II (Cambridge, 1952), p. 37. 'Carte di San Cassiano a Montescalari', no. 91, June 1091, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), p. 500, 'in loco Tegulaia.' Tegularii or tile makers are mentioned *ibid.* no. 120, 17 Jan. 1098, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXXI (1963), p. 94, 'terra que tenetur per Florentio et Johannes germani qui dicti sunt Tegularii.'

² *A.S.F.*, Not., M 489, fol. 82v, 10 Dec. 1322, '50 urceos terre ad tenendum oleum' and '50 cupercula' sold for 8 pounds 15 soldi, to be delivered on 1 Jan. B 1341, 10 Dec. 1339, sale of 500 'mezzinas crudas' to be delivered in three months for 6 pounds.

³ *A.S.F.*, Not., B 1340, fol. 291v, 23 March 1309, list of 23 members of the 'ars mezzinariorum et urceorum populi et plebatus sancte Marie Impruneta'.

⁴ Riccius Schelmi and Tecchus Lelli; see below, p. 258.

⁵ *A.S.F.*, Cat., 307, fol. 44r, declaration of Antonio di Domenicho that he owns 'nel porta di Singnia per andare a Pisa embrice orcie vasi chativi [*sic*] di stima di fl. xviii'.

⁶ *A.S.F.*, Not., F 308 (3), 2 Dec. 1345, lease of forests for four years for 280 florins. B 1348, 31 Dec. 1337, lease of 'nemora' for 2050 pounds.

⁷ Cf. *A.S.F.*, Not., B 1342, fol. 77r, 7 March 1323, lease of the 'boscha al Bagno' at San Martino a Bagno for 12 years for 53 florins, with the stipulation that the forest

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

Again, since at least the eleventh century, the small streams of the region drove numerous mills.¹ Most of them were the property of Impruneta's well endowed church. They had names: the Bonaguida, the Gualchiera, the Malanozza, the New Mill, the Low Mill (*di sotto*), and so forth. Most were located on the Greve, which, if small, moved rapidly enough on its way to the Arno plain. The grinding of grain was clearly the chief activity of these mills, but the name of one of them — the Gualchiera or fulling mill — suggests that they might also be used for properly industrial purposes.

But the chief resources of the region, and the chief occupation of its people, were and remained agricultural. The face of the land — high and often steep — itself recommended the cultivation of fruit trees. The Bolognese agricultural writer Pietro de' Crescenzi (d. c. 1321) explained how the high, hot and dry atmosphere of the hills added flavour and pungency to fruit.² Fruit is mentioned frequently in Impruneta's sources: figs, several varieties of pears, 'sweet green apples', almonds, nuts and chestnuts, and of course, the grape and the olive.³ Even today, Impruneta's wine has some small reputation, and its people celebrate the grape harvest with a public festival. On the other hand, Impruneta's high ridge was and is clearly less suited to cereals, which did better in the lower and richer alluvial soils of the valleys.

By the early fourteenth century, these resources in wood, water and land were supporting an extraordinary number of people. Impruneta's demographic records are sparse, but adequate enough to make possible approximate estimates of its population before the plague. In 1307, the centre of the *pieve*, the *populus plebis*, had 122 hearths.⁴ On the assumption of five persons per hearth, this would be a population of about 610 persons. The *populus plebis* then counted between 15 to 20 per cent of the *pieve's* population.⁵ The entire *pieve*, in other words, by a conservative

be cut only three times. B 1343, 9 Oct. 1328, lease of forest called 'la Ferra', with cuttings limited to periods from two to five years. For six-year cycles, see A.S.F., Cat., 307, fol. 446r, 'Tutti i detti boschi fruttano in sei anni somme c di stipe'.

¹ 'Carte di Montescalari', no. 49, 18 March 1084, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), p. 384, for mill on the Ema.

² *Opus ruralium commodorum* (Strassburg, 1486), vol. II, cap. 18, 'Fructus autem convencioniores sunt montium quam vallium. . . .'

³ A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fol. 84v, 23 Aug. 1299, lease mentions as rent 'fructus quatuor pirorum'. B 1340, fol. 324v, 23 Aug. 1310, mentions one 'modius castaneorum', one *staiò* of dried figs, and four *staiò* 'malorum viridum dulcium'. B 1344, fol. 103v, 7 Oct. 1326, lease of a 'giardina cum avellanis' at Montebuoni. B 1348, 30 Oct. 1336, *podere* said to contain 'quattuor pirus scilicet una ruggina una rabbiola una sementina et una bovilla'.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fol. 234v, 14 Oct. 1307, estimo of the *populus plebis* of Impruneta.

⁵ In 1323, 550 men from 16 of Impruneta's parishes (only the small parishes of San Giorgio in Poneta and San Michele a Nizzano were not represented) took a public

DAVID HERLIHY

estimate probably contained a population of about 3100 persons. This would represent a density of settlement of about 62 persons per square kilometre.

This was considerably below the density of settlement then achieved, for example, on the fertile lands of San Gimignano in the Elsa valley, where 74 persons inhabited a square kilometre in 1277-1291, and 85 by 1332.¹ But it seems an extraordinary number for Impruneta, which was not well endowed for the support of a packed population.

As recent research is continuously revealing, high population densities before the Black Death are characteristic of all of Tuscany. The province as a whole, according to Fiumi, may have then included 'not less than' two million people.² The figures are of course uncertain; but there is no uncertainty that Tuscany, in *c.* 1300, was supporting a population that it was not to have again until well into the nineteenth century. Little wonder that such figures have persuaded some historians that in the early 1300s the swollen medieval community was already at the point of bringing upon itself a Malthusian crisis.³

Whether or not Tuscany should be considered overpopulated before the Black Death, this extraordinary density of settlement is a pervasive fact in the light of which the economic, and in large measure the social, history of the medieval Tuscan countryside must be considered.

At Impruneta, high population clearly influenced the character of the agricultural economy. The notarial chartularies permit us to discern rather clearly the kinds of crops emphasized, and even the kinds of methods used, in the cultivation of the land. Before the Black Death, the cultivators of Impruneta quite frequently sold their crops of wheat, oil and wine well in advance (sometimes several years) of the harvest, typically for prices which concealed a substantial usury. The chartularies have preserved 231 of these sales. They are, of course, only a fraction of what once existed, but they are enough to indicate at least the relative values of the agricultural products sold. The peasant did not of course sell exactly in the proportion he himself produced, and these sales tell us more of the character of the market than the use of the

oath, A.S.F., Not., F 308 (2), 5 Nov.-10 Dec. 1323. 82 men, or 15 per cent of the total, were from the *populus plebis*. In later surveys, the population of Impruneta's own parish accounted for 20 per cent of the pieve's population (72 of 359 hearths in 1427, A.S.F., Cat., 307).

¹ Fiumi, *San Gimignano*, pp. 153 ff.

² 'La popolazione del territorio volterrano-sangimignanese ed il problema demografico dell'età comunale', *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. I (Milan, 1962), p. 290.

³ For further discussion of a possible 'Malthusian situation' in Tuscany before the plague, see my article, 'Population, Plague and Social Change in Rural Pistoia, 1201-1430', *Economic History Review*, vol. XVIII (1965), pp. 225-44.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

land. But they do show which product enjoyed the liveliest demand from produce merchants, money lenders and ultimately from consumers, and this in turn undoubtedly influenced actual cultivation.

TABLE I

SALES OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS AT IMPRUNETA, 1276-1350

<i>Product</i>	<i>1276-1300</i>	<i>1301-1325</i>	<i>1326-1350</i>
WHEAT:			
av. price per <i>staio</i> *	4.6 soldi	9.4 soldi	8.8 soldi
quantity sold	1196 <i>staia</i>	1154 <i>staia</i>	1475 <i>staia</i>
total price	271.5 pounds	542.8 pounds	646 pounds
percentage of all sales	65 per cent	65 per cent	54 per cent
OIL:			
av. price per <i>orcio</i> *	1 pound	2 pounds	2.3 pounds
quantity sold	78.5 <i>orcio</i>	91 <i>orcio</i>	128 <i>orcio</i>
total price	76.5 pounds	175.8 pounds	290.7 pounds
percentage of all sales	18.5 per cent	21 per cent	24 per cent
WINE:			
av. price per <i>cogno</i>	3.4 pounds	3.8 pounds	6.6 pounds
quantity sold	19.6 <i>cogni</i>	31 <i>cogni</i>	40.5 <i>cogni</i>
total price	67.5 pounds	118.2 pounds	261.6 pounds
percentage of all sales	16.5 per cent	14 per cent	22 per cent

* Price is only approximate. Some sales include several kinds of commodities under a single stated price, and the separate values had to be interpolated on the basis of values in other sales for the same year.

Source: Chartularies of Impruneta as listed p. 247, n. 4.

As Table I shows, wheat accounted for nearly two-thirds of the value of crops sold before harvest at Impruneta in the last quarter of the thirteenth century and the first quarter of the fourteenth, though then its importance slipped — an omen, as we shall see, of things to come.¹ Far and away, before the plague wheat was the most important commercial product of the area's agriculture. This may appear surprising, in the light of Impruneta's steep lands and thin soils, which were much

¹ See below, p. 272.

DAVID HERLIHY

better suited for grapes or olives. But it is not surprising in the light of the huge population to be supported both within and without the *pieve*, which created and sustained a powerful demand for cereals.

How Impruneta's cultivators were able to win large harvests of wheat from their poor land is not fully apparent. Undoubtedly, some peasants did no more than curtail the fallow periods, or increase the frequency of wheat plantings upon their lands, at the risk of diminished yields and ultimate soil exhaustion.¹ But if high demand for cereals created a real risk of injuring the land, it also, to an important degree, stimulated the development and application of techniques which were for the age remarkably advanced.

We are fortunately rather well informed concerning these methods of cultivation used at Impruneta. From the late thirteenth century, and still more in the early fourteenth, many surviving leases come to include technical regulations concerning the cultivation of the land which the lessee was expected to follow. These regulations, to be sure, concern only the area's richest and best equipped farms, where the peasant was aided in his work by high capital investment. We cannot, in other words, evaluate how widely these sophisticated methods were utilized. But they do at least indicate the level of technological consciousness and competence at Impruneta, and what they show is often surprising.

The system of cultivation required in these leases had progressed well beyond the simple, 'classical' two-field system, in which one-half the land was left uncultivated each year to regain its fertility. At Impruneta, the best farms were on a three-course rotation. By the early fourteenth century, it had been made obligatory for most of the church's own, numerous *poderi*.²

According to this system, cereals were planted in a field for two consecutive years; these were the years of 'grano' and 'ringrano' as later literature described them.³ In the third year, the field was allowed to lie fallow, 'ad bonam caloriam' as the leases say.⁴ The fallow field, the

¹ In 1427 some of Impruneta's lands were producing crops only 'per forza di choncime', A.S.F., Cat., 307, fol. 432r, 'E questa rendita richolgho per forza di choncime altrimenti non richolgone nulla.'

² Beginning with A.S.F., Not., B 1342, 5 Sept. 1322, clauses calling for this system of cultivation become a standard part of the *pieve*'s leases.

³ The methods described in Impruneta's leases were still being used in many Florentine rural areas in the nineteenth century. See the description of agricultural techniques written by Luigi Tempi, *Giornale del Commercio*, Florence, 6 March 1839, p. 38.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., B 1343, 5 Sept. 1322, 'et tertiam partem terrarum laborandum ad bonam caloriam scilicet vangaticcium seu favulem vel maggiesem'. Cf. the description of Luigi Tempi in 1839, 'Nel terzo anno, ossia prima dell' avvicendamento si fa caloria con le vangature.' See also Angelo Bellucci, *Giornale del Commercio*, 15 April 1842, p. 58, 'a caloria, o come altri dicono: a rinnovo'.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

terra maggensis, terra maggese, still required considerable attention. To facilitate the return of fertility, the soil was worked deeply with the hoe (*vanga*), which, according to a Tuscan proverb, has 'a point of gold'.¹ The field might also be several times ploughed during its year of rest.² Often the field, having rested over the winter, was planted in the spring with beans. This aided the restoration of its fertility, and gave the cultivator a bonus crop of food or fodder.³

After the harvest of the beans, the field was ready again for the planting of wheat, and the cycle of *grano, ringrano*, and *caloria* began again. In preparation for planting, the field was again ploughed three or more times.⁴ Substantial fertilization with animal manure was still necessary to achieve good returns in grain, and one of the peasant's chief obligations was the carting of manure from the stable to the fields.⁵ Frequently the landlord agreed to purchase still more fertilizer in the city, and the peasant had the obligation of bringing it to the farm.⁶ In other areas of the Florentine *contado* (though not apparently at Impruneta), green manuring was also widely utilized to supplement the often inadequate supplies of manure. Lupine in particular would be planted right after the wheat harvest in June, permitted to grow until the fall, then ploughed under in preparation for planting again with wheat. This ploughing under was called *sovescio*, and the landlord again often provided all or part of the cost of the lupine used.⁷

The yields which such intensive methods were achieving at Impruneta were, for the age, outstanding. In 1427, fields worked in such a fashion were considered for tax purposes to return in wheat six to one on the seed.⁸ Tuscan cultivators were not doing much better four or

¹ 'La vanga ha un punto d'oro.'

² A.S.F., Not., G 414, 25 March 1343, the tenant is required 'terram maggesem arare semel de mensibus aprilis et postea duas vices'.

³ So common was this planting of beans that the land being renewed is often called 'mocule' or 'favule', 'bean field', as well as 'vangaticcium' or 'hoed field'. See above, p. 252, n. 4.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., G 414, 25 March 1343, tenant is obligated 'et arare terram que seminetur grano tres vicibus ante semen'.

⁵ A.S.F., Not., B 1341, 27 Sept. 1339, tenant is obligated 'reducere cc salmas letaminis de stabulo et LI de spazzatura'.

⁶ A.S.F., Not., B 1341, 121r, 12 Sept. 1301, 'Et etiam promisit emere Florentia dictus presbiter [locator] sexaginta salmas letaminis et dictus conductor reducere et ponere super terris dicti poderis.'

⁷ A.S.F., Not., G 368 (1), 41v, 3 Sept. 1328, 'ita quod lupine et legumina que seminantur ad sovesciandum ponantur communitur' (i.e. the cost be shared). C 535 (3), 18 Sept. 1324, 'omnes lupinas seminandas super dictis bonis tam pro semine quam pro sovescio'.

⁸ A.S.F., Catasto 307, 418r, addition dated 13 Nov. 1428, a field returns 18 staia of wheat, 4 staia of beans and 3 of barley. The quantities needed 'per seme' were 3 *staia* of wheat, 1 of beans and one-half of barley.

five hundred years later, in the early nineteenth century, when six to one on the seed was still considered an adequate and expected return.¹

Thus, Tuscan agriculture even in the late thirteenth century was not boxed in by a primitive technology which had already exhausted all its resources, and this fact has clear relevance to the question of rural overpopulation before the Black Death. But knowledge is one thing, and implementation quite another. To utilize such techniques effectively required two things: a distinctive kind of farm, and a high investment in agriculture.

Before the late thirteenth century, we are unfortunately poorly informed as to how the cultivators settled the land and arranged their farms. The region does contain numerous *ville* or villages (at least eight in the parish of Impruneta alone), and these seem to have been the historic centres of its settlement.² Peasants in them lived close to their neighbours and sometimes to a church or castle. But they also lived far from the fields they cultivated, which often lay outside the territory of their own village. In 1093, for example, one peasant of the village of Morteto was leasing land there and in three other 'places' — apparently villages beyond the limits of Impruneta itself.³ As can be discerned through many such leases, the peasant characteristically worked large numbers of small fields, scattered widely within and without his village's territory.

There is ample evidence to show that even in the early fourteenth century, many — perhaps most — of the peasants in Impruneta and neighbouring *pievi* continued to live in villages and to work many, small, widely dispersed fields.⁴ This kind of settlement assured them protection

¹ Cf. Luigi Tempi in *Giornale del Commercio* (6 March 1839), p. 38, concerning land on the relatively fertile plain of Prato: 'Nel primo anno che succede a quello della caloria, si semina grano, vi occorre di seme staia 2 [per 4 stiora di terra] e il prodotto ordinario è di staia 10 a 12. Nel secondo anno . . . il prodotto è circa un quinto di meno del primo anno.'

² Villages mentioned at Impruneta are Doglia, Fabbiola, Montecchio, Morteto, Morzano, Cafaggio, Candeglia and Piatano. See A.S.F., Not., 308 (4), 22 Aug. 1319, for a division of an assessment among the 'quarters' of the parish. The village and castle of Montebuoni are mentioned already in the eleventh century (see above, p. 243, n. 4). Bagnolo is also one of the oldest of the *pieve's* villages, as it is mentioned already in 1042, *Le carte della canonica della cattedrale di Firenze (723-1149)*, ed. R. Piattoli (Rome, 1938), no. 47, p. 128, 1 July 1042 'in locus qui dicitur Bamgnolo'.

³ 'Carte di San Cassiano a Montescalari', no. 99, 31 Aug. 1093, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), pp. 510-11.

⁴ In spite of the growing importance of large, compact *poderi* at Impruneta, a majority of the transactions still concern small, detached fields. See the exchange in A.S.F., Not., B 1340, 237r, 29 Oct. 1307, where a house and six pieces of land are exchanged for a house and 33 pieces, both of these complexes apparently being complete units of cultivation. The inventory of ser Michele Binghi shows that his possessions at Impruneta, probably his family's farm, consisted of a house and 33 pieces, F 308, 19 Aug. 1324. In the neighbouring *pieve* of Antella, one 'cultus', certainly

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

and companionship, and distance from the fields did not seriously handicap them in their rather casual labours. But it should be evident that the intensive techniques of cultivation just outlined could not be easily applied within a framework of clustered village settlement and small, widely dispersed fields. In the best methods, cattle were essential, both for the work they performed and for their manure. They could not be kept at great distances from the fields they worked. Intensive hillside cultivation also required meticulous care of the land; to prevent erosion and run-offs, it had often to be shored up with walls, and better soil carried up from the valleys. This too demanded the peasant's continuing supervision and care. To utilize efficiently these intensive methods, the peasant and his animals had to live close to or upon the land they worked. The isolated, compact farm, containing the peasant's house right upon its lands — the classical Tuscan *podere*, in sum — was the unit of settlement in which these new, intensive and advanced techniques could be most efficiently applied.

As intensive methods of cultivation were gaining in importance at Impruneta in the late thirteenth century, so also was the system of settlement based upon isolated, compact *poderi*. Impruneta's chartularies have even preserved contracts arranging for the construction of the new peasant houses set right upon the cultivated land. One agreement, drawn up in 1336, called for the building of a house out of stone and mortar, 20 braccia (about 38 feet) long, 10 braccia (19 feet) wide and 9 braccia (17 feet) high, with an attic throughout.¹ Across from the house a shed (*capanna*) was to be built, 20 by 10 by 4 braccia (about 38 by 19 by 8 feet), and the yard between them was to be enclosed with a wall at least 20 braccia (38 feet) long and 4 braccia (8 feet) high. Within this court a walled oven (*furnum muratum*) was also to be built. On another *podere*, the lands of which touched the Greve river, a house was to be constructed with dimensions of 18 by 9 by 9 braccia (about 34 by 17 by 17 feet), and the farm was similarly to contain a shed, furnace and walled courtyard.²

These intensive methods of cultivation were not only best applied on compact farms, but they also required high capital investment. Houses had to be built, land purchased and rearranged, and cattle acquired and supported. Frequently additional fertilizer and seed had to be

a complete unit of cultivation, mentioned in 1269 consisted of a house and 20 pieces (I 105, fol. 11r, 15 Aug. 1269) and another 'cultus' of a house and 23 pieces (ibid., fol. 12v, 22 Sept. 1269).

¹ A.S.F., Not., B 1347, fol. 299v, 1 Aug. 1336, 'cum solario seu palco vel volta in tota dicta domo.'

² Ibid., fol. 300r, 1 Aug. 1336.

DAVID HERLIHY

purchased outside the farm, additional workers hired to help with the heavy seasonal work of hoeing and harvesting, and even loans, interest-free and often in fact uncollectable, given to the *laboratores* to insure the best cultivation.¹ These high and continuing outlays were undoubtedly beyond the means of most peasants and many landlords too. In 1274 for example, the rector of the church of Santo Stefano di Tizzano (in the *pieve* of Antella but just across the Ema from Impruneta) was reduced to selling part of his church's lands, in order to gain the capital to buy cattle to work his remaining property.² Undoubtedly, scarcity of capital explains the persistence, at Impruneta and elsewhere, of methods of cultivation considerably below the technical capabilities of the age. But though an intensive and highly capitalized agriculture spread only slowly at Impruneta, it still had noticeable effects upon the *pieve's* rural society.

In examining that society, there are two subjects of immediate interest: the distribution of the land and the distribution of wealth. Unfortunately, for the late thirteenth century, no systematic surveys have survived to illuminate for us the division of the soil, and we must again rely upon Impruneta's notarial chartularies. While these chartularies mention literally hundreds of pieces of land involved in their numerous contracts, the information they give clearly does not embrace all the *pieve's* territory. Further, they only rarely give precise measurements of the lands they mention. But the lands described still constitute a generous sample of Impruneta's terrain, and the chartularies do give one type of information which makes possible a rough estimate of land distribution. In identifying pieces of land, the notaries usually state the location of the property and the names of contiguous owners: 'on the north, the land of Cambuzzo *condam* Dini, on the west the land of the lady Gemma' and so forth. In entries dated between 1276 and 1300, there are no less than 1026 such references to neighbouring owners, from lands scattered all over the *pieve's* territory. The frequency with which the name of a given landlord appears in the list should provide a rough indication of the importance of his holdings.

¹ A.S.F., Not., I 105, fol. 52v, 17 Jan. 1277, lease of a *podere* at San Piero a Ema (*pieve* of Antella) for five years, in which the landlord agrees 'et prestare sibi per totum terminum predictum libras quattuordecim florinorum parvorum absque aliquibus usuris penis et interesse'. In the *Catasto* of 1427, loans extended by the landlord to his *lavoratore* were not recognized as true debts, nor was the value of cattle provided for working the *podere*.

² A.S.F., Not., I 105, fol. 33v, 1 March 1274, 'presbiter Donatus rector ecclesie sancti Stefani de Tizzano' sells land 'pro emendo de pretio infrascripto unum par bovum pro seminandis et laborandis terris aliis dicte ecclesie'.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

Thus, in the 1026 references to neighbouring owners, the church of Impruneta appears 194 times. This is 19 per cent of the total. On the assumption that frequency of references corresponds roughly with the actual importance of the lands owned, the church would have owned slightly less than 20 per cent of the lands of its territory.

A second distinctive group of landowners revealed by these references were prominent lay families, identified whether by a well known name, or by the title *dominus*, as signifying knighthood and nobility. These prominent lay landlords at Impruneta were by the late thirteenth century all city dwellers. In contrast to the substantial holdings of the church of Impruneta, lands owned by these great urban families constituted probably less than 5 per cent of the total.¹ The most important lay landlords in the *pieve* were the Buondelmonti, who, in moving to the city in the twelfth century, retained over the years large holdings in their ancestral parish of San Piero a Montebuoni and its surroundings. Second to them were their consorts the Scolari, similarly of ancient feudal origin.² The Bardi, a younger house of popular origin, claimed extensive and apparently growing holdings, particularly in the parish of San Cristofano a Strada.³ Other great urban houses — the Adimari, Rossi, Nerli, Gherardini, and Acciaiuoli — appear sporadically as landlords, but none of them seems to have owned extensive complexes of lands within the *pieve*.

The rich church of Impruneta and the great lay houses — the aristocracy, in sum, of thirteenth-century society — together owned probably less than a quarter of Impruneta's soil. Even so, this was probably a substantially higher percentage than in most Florentine rural areas. The remaining three-fourths of the land was distributed among a great number of small owners, including most of the family heads of Impruneta. The quarter of the land owned by the church and lay aristocracy did however have an economic and social importance greater than size alone might indicate. As far as the chartularies permit us to know, it was predominantly upon these lands that the new, intensive techniques were being applied. As we shall presently see, the exploitation of these lands also offered a rich opportunity for the more enterprising of Impruneta's residents.

The distribution of wealth at Impruneta can be studied through several tax assessments (*estimi*), three of which (from 1307, 1319, and

¹ They are mentioned as contiguous owners only 40 times.

² Cf. A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fol. 81r, 9 Aug. 1299, 'de domo de Montebuoni, scilicet Bondelmontibus et Scholariorum [*sic*]'.
³ In 1313, Pierus condam Bartoli de Bardis was also 'parrochianus et patronus' of the parish church of San Cristofano a Strada, A.S.F., Not., B 1950, fol. 69r, 2 July 1313.

DAVID HERLIHY

1330) antedate the Black Death.¹ In drawing up these *estimi*, the city first set an assessment total for the entire commune, and the figure was then divided among the commune's families.² Each family was assigned an assessment figure, which was supposed to indicate not the family's absolute wealth but its fair share of the total tax burden. The fair share was determined by calculating the family's assets, deducting its debts from them, and comparing the results with those obtained from other families. Since the wealth of these rural families consisted chiefly in land, which was hard to conceal and fairly easy to assess, the results of these surveys present a realistic picture of the distribution of wealth. On the basis of this assessment, the direct tax would be imposed, usually in terms of so many soldi per pound of assessment.

Table 2 shows the distribution of wealth at Impruneta as revealed in the *estimi* of 1307, 1319, and 1330. For purposes of comparison, the distribution of taxable wealth according to the *Catasto* survey of 1427 is also included.³ Graph 1 (see p. 260) illustrates the distribution for 1307, 1330 and 1427. The assessment of 1319 is not presented graphically as its distribution is almost identical with that of 1307.

Clearly, even in 1307, wide contrasts in wealth existed in rural Impruneta. But clearly too, the bulk of that wealth was controlled by more than a few families.

From what can be known concerning the distribution of land and of taxable wealth at Impruneta, it is possible to discern four major groups within its society before the Black Death. At the top of the social scale was the aristocracy of great ecclesiastics and prominent urban laymen who, though residents of the city, held lands within the *pieve* and therefore played an important rôle in its affairs. Beneath them was a group of substantial residents, comprising approximately the top 20 per cent of the taxpayers who in 1307 owned over one-half of the area's taxable wealth. The majority of the population, including approximately the middle 60 or 70 per cent on the scale of wealth, may be described as independent peasants, small landowners dependent on their own labours for support. The bottom 10 to 20 per cent of the population

¹ A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fols. 234v-235r, 14 Oct. 1307; F 308, 24 Aug. 1319; B 1345, fols. 154r-154v, 10 July 1330. *Estimi* have also survived from the parish of San Lorenzo in Collina, I, 104, fol. 50r, 30 Nov. 1280 (26 households; 457 pounds total assessment); from Sant'Andrea a Luiano, F 308 (2), 26 Aug. 1319 (30 households; 248 pounds assessment); from San Martino a Bagnolo, F 308 (2), 24 Aug. 1319 (56 households; 433 pounds assessment).

² See B. Barbadoro, *Le finanze della repubblica fiorentina* (Florence, 1929), who discusses the principles of the *estimo* and its application specifically at Impruneta (pp. 98 ff.).

³ A.S.F., Catasto, 307.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

TABLE 2

THE DISTRIBUTION OF TAXABLE WEALTH AT IMPRUNETA

The table shows what percentage of the tax assessment was borne by the lowest 10 per cent of Impruneta's families, the lowest 20 per cent, 30 per cent, and so on, for the *estimi* of 1307, 1319, 1330, and for the *Catasto* of 1427.

<i>Per cent of Families</i>	<i>Per cent of Wealth (1307)</i>	<i>Per cent of Wealth (1319)</i>	<i>Per cent of Wealth (1330)</i>	<i>Per cent of Wealth (1427)</i>
10	1·7	1·8	1·3	0·0
20	4·4	4·3	2·5	0·0
30	8·6	8·4	4·9	0·5
40	14·4	14·0	8·1	2·4
50	20·6	20·6	13·6	6·0
60	27·6	28·8	21·4	13·0
70	36·4	39·0	31·7	21·7
80	48·7	47·0	44·4	32·7
90	66·3	67·0	62·7	51·3
100	100	100	100	100
Number of Families	122	115	123	72
Total Assess- ment	1925 pounds	1078 pounds	930 pounds	4743 florins

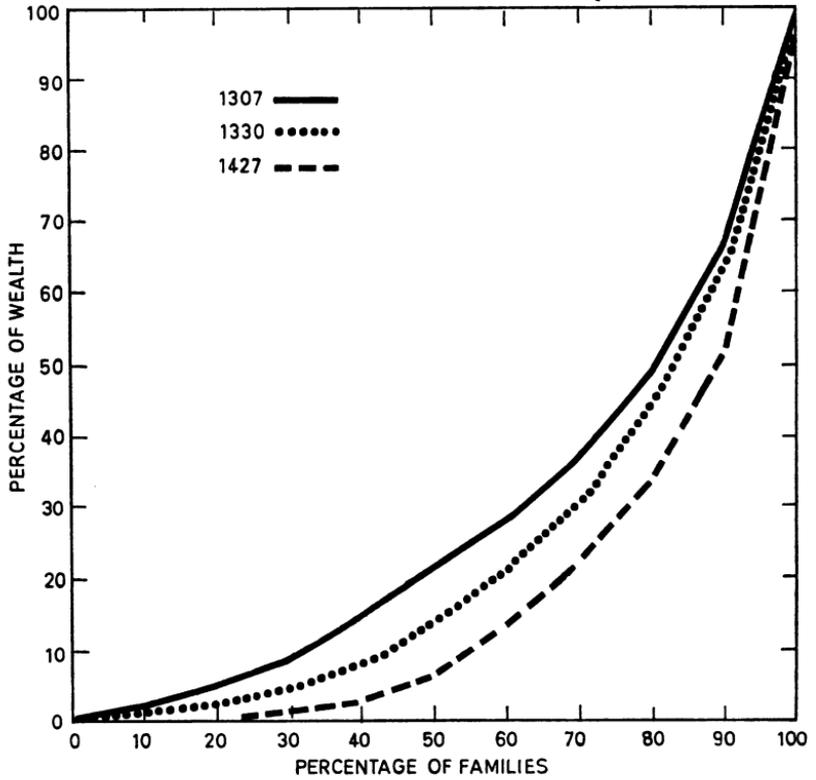
Source: B 1340, 234v-235r. 14 Oct. 1307. F 308, 24 Aug. 1319. B 1345, 154r-154v, 10 July 1330. A.S.F., Catasto, 307.

consisted of largely landless agricultural workers called the *lavoratori*.

To review the economic activities of these groups more closely, the great landlords, many of whom were not residents of the commune, were of course rentiers exclusively. Beneath them, the substantial residents — the 'middle class' of this rural society — show quite varied economic interests. Riccius Schelmi, for example, who with 48 pounds assessment was the seventh wealthiest resident in 1307, was professionally a potter (at least he was a member of the potters' gild), as was Tecchus Lelli, whose assessment of 27 pounds placed him in the upper 20 per cent of Impruneta's householders. Vannes Casini, third on the scale of wealth in 1319, was a potter too, but was also a landlord within

DAVID HERLIHY

GRAPH I
THE DISTRIBUTION OF TAXABLE WEALTH AT IMPRUNETA



SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

the *pieve* and even within the urban parish of San Frediano, and himself a cultivator.¹ Chellus Benintendi, fourth in taxable wealth in 1319, was actively engaged in the exploitation of the area's extensive forests and in agriculture, with an apparent special interest in grape cultivation.²

But the activity which seems to have engaged most of these substantial residents was the leasing and subleasing of the lands of the church and of the urban landlords. The *plebanus* and the prominent laymen did not have the inclination, and perhaps not the capital, to arrange for the cultivation of their lands in the most intensive and productive fashion.³ Many of these lands they therefore leased for fixed rents to the area's wealthier residents. With the capital and taste for such enterprises, these *fictaioli*, as they were called, took the *pieve's* forests, mills and farms, stocked them with cattle, fertilizer or tools needed for their most productive exploitation, and subleased them, usually for short periods, to the labourers who actually worked them. Casinus Dini, for example, in subleasing one of the *pieve's* *poderi* called 'il podere del molino' on the plain of the Greve, provided the cost of one-half the cattle needed to work it.⁴ Gherardus Orlandini, who leased a *podere* at San Lorenzo a Collina from a Florentine named Nerinus Fei, in subleasing it agreed to supply yearly 100 salme of fertilizer for the farm.⁵ This business of leasing and subleasing resulted inevitably in some complicated transactions. In the 1340s the urban banking house of the Acciaiuoli leased forest lands from the *plebanus*, for which they were to make the large payment of 1000 pounds.⁶ Being rather distant from the area, they subleased part of the forests to two residents, Bencinus and Casinus Dini, and these two subleased it yet again to Iohannes Corsellini.⁷

Fictaioli or middlemen of this sort are commonly encountered in the Italian countryside, and in some areas of Italy, in Lombardy for

¹ A.S.F., Not., B 1344, 33v, 6 Jan. 1325, Vannes Casini leases to his nephew a house in the urban parish of San Frediano. B 1345, fol. 6r, 27 March 1328, Vannes leases two pieces of land, including a vineyard at Nizzano. B 1345, fol. 6v, 27 March 1328, the *plebanus* of Impruneta leases a *podere* to Vannes. His assessment in 1319 was 40 pounds.

² A.S.F., Not., B 1343, 1 May 1325, Chellus takes in lease three-fourths of a 'boscata' at Impruneta, in the plain called Citonagnano. B 1343, 25 Oct. 1328, he takes 'nemora' for three years for 125 pounds rent. B 1344, 48r, 12 May 1325, Chellus gives in lease a *podere* at Candeglia for one-half the produce, agreeing to pay two-thirds the cost of *columbine* (pigeon droppings) used in the vineyards.

³ It was not unknown for an urban magnate to be in debt to the substantial residents. See the will of Pace Doni, A.S.F., Not., B 1347, fol. 281v, 18 May 1336, in which he confessed that he had received usurious profits from Bindus condam domini Bindi de Bondelmontibus.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., B 1347, fol. 72r, 5 Feb. 1334.

⁵ A.S.F., Not., B 1345, fol. 63v, 24 June 1329.

⁶ A.S.F., Not., F 308 (4), 18 March 1343.

⁷ F 308 (4), 18 March 1343 and *ibid.*, 29 Jan. 1346.

DAVID HERLIHY

example, they may have been responsible for a certain dilapidation of the ecclesiastical endowment.¹ But at Impruneta, this system seems clearly to have worked for the benefit of the church and the great lay landlords. Through it they gained capital for their lands and the careful supervision which they were not themselves able to provide. The system also gave Impruneta's wealthier residents a profitable outlet for their labour and their capital. To this rural middle class much of the *pieve's* prosperity must be attributed.

The mark of these *fictaioli* was that they themselves had some capital to invest, and we would like to know how they originally accumulated it. For many, it undoubtedly came from the careful farming of their own or leased lands. Guadengus Cambi, for example, Impruneta's richest citizen according to the assessment of 1319, appears in the chartularies as a tenant farmer; still according to the tax assessment, he had nine times the wealth of his landlord!² But for others, capital came from another practice: usury. As the numerous grain sales *ad novellam* (in advance of the harvest) themselves show, usury was rampant at Impruneta, and many of its richer inhabitants drew profits from it. Often the profits were staggering, as the will of one penitent resident, Chelanza Iuntini, shows.³ In it he confessed that the face value of the ten outstanding debts due him totalled 90.5 florins and 37 *staia* of grain. In fact they had been extended for only 68 florins and no grain at all. Chelanza's dishonest documents were concealing an interest charge of about 30 per cent.⁴ One could hardly hope for such profits through careful farming.

These *fictaioli*, whose economic interests consisted more in investment and organizing than in actual labour (though they were often labourers too) constituted the richest segment of Impruneta's resident population. Beneath them on the scale of wealth was the much larger group — some 60 to 70 per cent of the population — we are calling the independent peasants. The chartularies tell us comparatively little of these peasants. Most if not all of them owned some property, though they frequently supplemented their holdings through leasing additional lands, but scattered pieces rather than large, compact *poderi*. They paid

¹ C. M. Cipolla, 'Une crise ignorée. Comment s'est perdue la propriété ecclésiastique dans l'Italie du Nord entre le XI^e et le XVI^e siècle,' *Annales — Économies — Sociétés — Civilisations*, vol. II (1947), pp. 317-27. Cf. the comments by Jones, 'Lineamenti e problemi', p. 339.

² A.S.F., Not., B 1341, fol. 111r, 9 April 1301, where Bottiglius Schelmi leased a *podere* to Guadengus for two years for one-half the fruit. In 1319, Bottiglius bore an assessment of five pounds and Guadengus 45.

³ A.S.F., Not., B 1342, fol. 88r, 17 May 1333.

⁴ On the assumption that the grain was worth about 10 soldi per *staio*.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

rents which were high and fixed, if not exorbitant; flexible rents and share-cropping were restricted to new lands being brought under cultivation, or to entire *poderi*. Apart from these leases they appear in the chartularies chiefly as borrowers from usurers such as Chelanza Iuntini or as sellers of agricultural produce well in advance of the harvest, for characteristically debased prices.

At the bottom of the scale of wealth, the agricultural labourers comprised the lowest ten to twenty per cent of the population. In the chartularies, the word 'laborator' consistently carries the technical sense of 'share-cropper', a peasant who with little or no land and capital of his own worked the farm of another for one-half the produce.¹ These 'workers' were clearly distinct from the *factioli*, the men who leased *poderi* for fixed and high rents and themselves contributed capital to its exploitation, in which category many of Impruneta's richer citizens were found. Certain features distinguished these *laboratores* as a social group. With only a few exceptions, the assessment they bore in the tax return was characteristically very low, showing that they owned little or no land.² The *laboratores* were also a highly mobile group, undoubtedly for the reason that their scant holdings in land gave them few strong ties to any region. Bartolus Pucci for example, born at San Martino a Bagnolo, appeared in Impruneta's tax roll of 1307 with an assessment of only three pounds, disappeared in the assessment of 1319, then reappeared as a *laborator plebis* in 1325.³ Neri Salvucci, born at San Lorenzo in Collina, moved to Impruneta (his assessment in 1330 was only one pound), and rented a *podere* from Gherardus Orlandini, who subleased it from the Florentine Nerinus Fei.⁴ Two years later, he had changed his landlord and farm.⁵

These landless workers moved easily from farm to farm and parish to parish. With little capital to contribute to the working of the land, they were dependent upon the landlord not only for the farm but for animals, seeds, fertilizers and often advances in money. Usually, though not always, they held the farm in *mezzadria* or share-cropping arrangement. In spite of their humble place upon the scale of taxable wealth,

¹ At Antella, for example, the obligations of the worker under the *mezzadria* contract were defined by the 'usum et consuetudinem boni laboratoris', A.S.F., Not., I 105, fol. 4v, 16 Sept. 1276; *ibid.* fol. 57v, 28 Feb. 1277, 'secundum modum et ordinem et pactum quibus in dicta contrata dantur per alios laboratores'.

² The median assessment of the 26 *laboratori* mentioned in the leases from Impruneta was only three pounds, though one of them was Guadengus Cambi with an assessment of 65 pounds in 1307. The median assessment for the entire commune was ten pounds in 1307.

³ A.S.F., Not., B 1344, fol. 58r, 8 Sept. 1325.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., B 1345, fol. 73r, 24 June 1329.

⁵ A.S.F., Not., B 1345, fol. 237r, 5 Dec. 1331.

DAVID HERLIHY

they seem to have been better off than many of the independent peasants, who were struggling to survive on inadequate lands with inadequate capital. The negligible assessment of the *laboratores* exonerated them from the heavy tax burdens borne by the land-holding peasants. The farms they worked were well stocked and productive, and their families undoubtedly were better nourished because of it. They profited, in other words, from their own close association with the most advanced Tuscan agriculture.

Of these four social groups, three of them — the aristocratic landlords, the *fictaioli*, and even the landless workers — seem to have enjoyed prosperous times before 1348 (or better, 1340). This seems certainly indicated by the levels of rent at Impruneta, which our numerous surviving leases show were high and even growing to about 1340.

Thus, a *podere* in the village of Morzano returned to the church of Impruneta the following rents:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Source</i>
1280 15 July	21 pounds	I 104, fol. 39r
1280 14 Sept.	25 pounds, 5 dozen (<i>serques</i>) eggs, 1 pair capons	I 104 42r
1322 31 Oct.	50 pounds, 1 <i>modius</i> barley, 2 <i>salme</i> wine, 100 pounds pork, 100 cheeses, 2 pairs capons, 10 dozen eggs	B 1343
1326 8 Oct.	62 pounds, 10 soldi, etc., as above	B 1343
1330 14 May	92 pounds, 2 pairs capons, 15 dozen eggs	B 1343
1335 19 May	98 pounds, etc., as above	B 1347, fol. 161v
1337 21 Dec.	106 pounds, etc., as above	B 1348

Another of the *pieve's* farms at San Michele a Nizzano returned the following amounts:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Source</i>
1281 20 Jan.	21 pounds	I 104, fol. 52r
1322 24 Nov.	48 pounds, 2 <i>cogni</i> wine, 100 pounds pork, 2 pairs capons, 10 dozen eggs	B 1343
1325 10 Feb.	48 pounds, etc., as above.	B 1343
1328 6 Jan.	same	B 1343
1332 19 Jan.	56 pounds, etc., as above	B 1343
1335 24 Dec.	same	B 1347, fol. 225r
1337 6 July	62 pounds, etc.	B 1348

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

The rents from a *podere* at Montecchio show both the steady rise from the late thirteenth century, and the beginnings of a decline from about 1340:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Source</i>
1281 21 Dec.	35 pounds, 5 dozen eggs, 1 pair capons	I 104, fol. 84r
1297 17 Mar.	49 pounds	B 1340, fol. 3v
1324 26 Aug.	85 pounds, 1 <i>staiò</i> dry figs, 100 pounds pork, 1 pound wax, 10 dozen eggs, 2 pairs capons	B 1343
1329 5 Mar.	same	B 1343
1335 17 June	same	B 1343
1337 5 July	97 pounds, etc., as above	B 1347
1344 21 Dec.	86 pounds, etc., as above	F 308 (3)
1347 14 Mar.	85 pounds	F 308 (3)

Part of this considerable increase in rent represented only the steady debasement of the Florentine petty denario, which between the 1280s and the 1340s fell in value by nearly 50 per cent.¹ But as rents more than doubled over the same period, their real value was rising too.

These were the rents received by the *plebanus* from *fictaioli*, who in turn usually subleased the property to the *laboratores* who actually worked it. We cannot construct a consistent picture of the profits of the middlemen, as they frequently subleased the *poderi* in *mezzadria* arrangements which gave them rents defined only as one-half the harvest. But the fact that up to about 1340 they were willing and able to pay ever higher rents for the land must mean that returns to them remained good too. Even the *laboratores*, though they ultimately supported the high rents, benefited from the willingness of the investors to put large sums into agriculture. Undoubtedly interest rates, which usually paralleled rents, were also high. Owners of cattle who gave them in lease under a *soccida* or *custodia* contract were consistently gaining between 10 and 15 per cent per year on the value of their cattle, though out of these profits had to come the cost of sharing risks and of replenishing their stock.²

¹ The gold florin was worth about 34 soldi of petty denari in the 1280s and about 62 in the 1340s.

² A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fol. 350r, 20 June 1311, a 'par bovum' worth 48 pounds leased for a yearly payment of 14 *staià* of grain. Reckoning the value of the grain at seven pounds (10 soldi per *staiò*), we can calculate a return of 14.5 per cent. B 1341, 22 June 1338, a 'par bovum' worth 11 florins, leased for eight *staià* per year; this would be a return of about 11 per cent.

DAVID HERLIHY

But much in contrast to the apparent prosperity of the great landlords, *fictioli*, and even many workers, the condition of the independent peasants in the same period seems to have been bad and getting worse. Of this we have firm evidence in Impruneta's surviving fiscal documents.

Even in the period of apparent prosperity before 1340, the total tax assessment at Impruneta was falling precipitously. It was 1925 pounds in 1307, 1078 pounds in 1319, and 930 pounds in 1330; this figure is held until 1339 when it entered upon another period of steep decline.¹ This is only the local manifestation of a phenomenon characteristic of the entire Florentine countryside, the assessment of which was plunging since the late thirteenth century. In 1289, the total for the entire Florentine *contado* was about 448,000 pounds.² In 1327–28 under the Duke of Calabria, it was 250,000 pounds.³ In 1329–30, it was 200,000 pounds, and in 1339 it was cut again to 150,000 — continuing its fall to ever lower levels.⁴

In explaining this rapid and continuing drop, we can do no better than follow what contemporaries themselves said about it. In 1329, the tax commissioners reported that the inhabitants of 65 rural parishes were so impoverished that without a lowered assessment they would be forced 'to go begging through the world'.⁵ In 1339, the report of the commissioners appointed to distribute the assessment of 200,000 pounds in the countryside is still more revealing.⁶ The commissioners found it impossible to impose such a sum upon the rural communes. Unable to meet the fiscal demands upon them, poorer families had 'sold their goods and possessions to Florentine citizens and even clerics, and still they were burdened by various and diverse usurious debts'.⁷ The same fiscal pressures were forcing the richer residents to emigrate to the city, to escape 'the hard and intolerable burdens borne by the Florentine countryside'.⁸

¹ For the figures, see above, Table 2.

² Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, VII, 132, states that a tax of 6.5 per cent imposed upon the city and countryside netted 36,000 florins; the total assessment must have been 576,000 florins, or about 1,152,000 pounds. According to A.S.F., Not., R 192, fol. 41v, the city paid 22,000 florins and the countryside 14,000. The city's total assessment was therefore about 352,000 florins (704,000 pounds) and the *contado's* 224,000 florins (448,000 pounds).

³ Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 169.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁶ A.S.F., Provv., 29, fol. 120v, 7 June 1339. Cf. Barbadoro, *Finanze*, p. 201.

⁷ Loc. cit.: '... bona et possessiones eorum florentinis civibus vendiderunt et etiam clericis et etiam pluribus variis et diversis usurarum debitis sunt gravati'.

⁸ Loc. cit.: 'Si qui ex ipsis comitatibus et districtualibus aliquid habent in bonis, volentes tam dura et intollerabilia que subit comitatus Florentie evitare, ad civitatem Florentie sunt reverse, habitantes in ipsa civitate.'

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

These are not the misleading declarations of disingenuous taxpayers anxious to avoid their just payments, but the report of the city's own officials. Their fundamental accuracy is reflected by the fact that in 1339 the Signoria did indeed lower the assessment from 200,000 to 150,000 pounds, just as it had been repeatedly forced to lower the assessment since the late thirteenth century, just as it would be forced to do so again. To be sure, the tax relief afforded by this plunge of the assessment seems to have been largely illusory. In the face of frequent fiscal crises, the Signoria abandoned its good intentions and more than offset the lowered assessment by imposing higher rates. In the thirteenth century, the tax imposed never seems to have gone much beyond 6.5 per cent.¹ In 1338 the city was trying to collect from the countryside 75 per cent of its tax assessment.²

In 1339, the commissioners reported two social reactions to the fiscal oppression of the countryside: the rich were flocking to the city, and the poor, oppressed by debts and forced to sell their lands, were getting poorer. Both trends can be discerned with full clarity at Impruneta. The commune's prosperity had been based in large measure upon the enterprise and capital of its own wealthier inhabitants. But as impoverishment spread among the lower segments of Impruneta's society, so the tax burden upon the wealthier grew proportionately. The one escape was to emigrate to the city, and this many of Impruneta's richer residents were forced to do. The wealthiest resident at Impruneta according to the tax assessment of 1307 was Bingus Iohannis, with an assessment of 80 pounds. We know little about the source of his wealth other than that he was a substantial property owner and his brother, Cambinus Iohannis, was a member of the potters' gild.³ In 1313 Bingus purchased a house in the urban parish of San Felice in Piazza, where he took up residence with his family.⁴ Bingus's son Michele became a notary, and continued to live and work in the city, though he retained close ties with and did much business in his rural home. One of his chartularies has survived.⁵ He died shortly after making his will in August, 1324. Michele's mother Duccia and his 'heirs' are still carried

¹ See above, p. 266, n. 2.

² A.S.F., Provv., 36, fol. 99v, which mentions that two separate 'distributions' were being made in the countryside, one at the rate of 10 soldi per pound and the other at the rate of 5 soldi. See also A.S.F., Dipl. Cambio, 11 Aug. 1337 and Provv., 28, fol. 63v.

³ Cambinus Iohannis appears among the 'magistri et artifices artis facientes urceos et mezzinas de terra', B 1344, fol. 51r, 30 June 1325.

⁴ A.S.F., Not., F 308, fol. 28v.

⁵ A.S.F., Not., M 489, Michele di Bingo, 1318-24. In his will, preserved in F 308, 19 Aug. 1324, he is identified as 'Michele condan Binghi de Sancta Maria Impineta qui hodie moratur Florentia in populo sancti Felicis in Piazza'.

DAVID HERLIHY

on Impruneta's tax rolls in 1330 with an assessment of 45 pounds — second highest in the commune — although it may be doubted that they were in fact residents there. At any rate, his son Tommea disappears from subsequent lists of Impruneta's residents; the commune had lost to the city one of its richest families.¹

Most of the other emigrants to the city revealed by the chartularies come from families with means above the average. Another emigrant, Ser Lippus Ser Dini, whose profession as a notary immediately indicates a high social position, also established himself in the urban parish of San Felice in Piazza.² Martinus Venture, who emigrated after 1319, had borne an assessment of 10 pounds, which put him in the upper third of Impruneta's families.³ Feus Benintendi, whose son Nerinus Fei moved to the city, had similarly been in the upper 30 per cent of the commune's families according to the assessment of 1307.⁴ Niccolò Lapi, another emigrant, was a cousin of Bonaguida Casini, the third richest resident in 1319.⁵ The daughter of Gherardus Orlandini (third wealthiest in 1330) and apparently the son of Guadengus Cambi (first in 1319) similarly emigrated to the city.⁶

Emigration from Impruneta to the city thus involved many of the wealthier residents of the area, and this pattern is identical with what Johan Plesner discerned concerning emigration from the neighbouring Florentine area of Passignano.⁷ And in this movement, not only the attractions of the city but fiscal pressures too exerted a major influence. Most of these emigrants maintained close social and economic ties with their rural homes. But this exodus cannot be reckoned entirely beneficial for the rural economy. It took from the land many of the richest residents and those who were economically most active. But few emigrants were wealthy enough to live leisurely in the city as rentiers. Most had to find themselves a profession and a home, and this required

¹ Tommea appears, as a *pupillus* or minor, in A.S.F., Not., B 1344, fol. 186v, 2 Feb. 1328, but disappears in the list of 101 family heads in 1339, B 1341, 8 Sept. 1339, who gave permission for a new *estimo*.

² A.S.F., Not., B 1340, fol. 339r, 17 Feb. 1311, 'ser Lippus condam ser Dini de Sancta Maria Impineta qui hodie moratur in dicto populo sancti Felicis in Piazza' buys a house on the Via de la Cucula for 30 florins.

³ A.S.F., Not., B 1344, fol. 103v, 28 Sept. 1326, 'Martinus condam Venture de Doglia qui hodie moratur Florentia'.

⁴ His assessment was 17 pounds.

⁵ A.S.F., Not., 1345, fol. 185r, 18 Dec. 1330. They were sons of the brothers Lopus Brandi and Casinus Brandi.

⁶ Gherardus' daughter Lapa married Nerinus Fei mentioned above. See A.S.F., Not., B 1345, fol. 167r, 14 Sept. 1330. Segnorinus Ghaudenghi purchased a house in the city in 1312, F 308, fol. 6r, and apparently moved there, as his name disappears from the tax roll by 1339.

⁷ *L'émigration de la campagne à la ville libre de Florence au XIIIe siècle* (Copenhagen, 1934).

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

capital. Inevitably, emigration of this sort drained money from the countryside to the city, and from agricultural to urban investments. This was a boon to the urban economy, but for the countryside it was a serious deprivation.

But if richer families could escape to the city, the poorer inhabitants were in a more difficult situation. Of them the commissioners reported in 1339 that they were selling their lands to city residents and to clerics (groups technically exempt from the direct tax) and were still oppressed by usurious debts. Their plight and impoverishment at Impruneta is revealed not only in the tumbling size of the total assessment, but also in the changing distribution of taxable wealth. Between the surveys of 1319 and 1330 the total size of the assessment fell only slightly (from 1078 to 930 pounds), but its distribution among Impruneta's families was altered noticeably. The assessment of many of the commune's richer families actually grew over this decade; but the families poor in 1319 appear poorer than ever in 1330.¹ This is illustrated statistically in Table 2 and in Graph 1, from which it should be evident that the families in the lower half had lost proportionately the greatest ground between 1319 and 1330. In fact, because the community was simultaneously losing some of its wealthier members to the city, the depression of the poorer families was even greater than the curve reveals.

Fiscal evidence — the falling assessment and the sharpening contrasts in wealth — illustrates the deteriorating position of the small, independent peasants of Impruneta, but fiscal policies do not alone explain why this should have been so. The inability of poorer families to meet the fiscal demands of the city must also be attributed to the high rents and high interest rates which they had to pay to landlords and money lenders. To gain additional land which their very numbers made necessary, they had little choice but to lease it at high, fixed rents and to assume all the risk of crop failures upon it. To gain loans which crop failures in turn often made necessary, they had to pay horrendous interest rates to usurers such as Chelanza Iuntini. The hundreds of sales of grain in advance of the harvest at half its true value is itself an indication of the weakness and the plight of these independent peasants. High population densities, as Fiumi maintains, did indeed create a milieu favourable to some segments of the rural community — to the great landlords, the rentiers, the mesne tenants and even many workers. But this same condition, in aggravating hunger for capital and hunger

¹ The assessment of Chellus Benintendi rose from 36 pounds in 1319 to 53 in 1330. That of Pangnus Cambi from 11 to 25; that of Cione Iohannis from 15 to 17; that of Gherardus Orlandini from 25 to 136; that of Donatus Pelli from 8 to 12.

DAVID HERLIHY

for land, contributed as well to rampant usury, rent gouging and impoverishment in the countryside. To seek to find in population movements alone the secret of Florence's medieval *floritura* or later of its decadence is inevitably to confront paradox and contradiction.

The deterioration of the status of Impruneta's independent peasants undoubtedly helps explain another sign of approaching trouble: the end of the vigorous population expansion of the high Middle Ages in the countryside, and the beginnings of the huge depopulations of its closing centuries. In 1329 and again in 1339, the commissioners reporting on rural conditions had directly linked impoverishment and depopulation, in noting that some miserable peasants had no choice but to leave their homes and 'go begging through the world'.¹ As we have sought elsewhere to show, bad social conditions also had a direct and depressive effect upon the birth rate, and a low rate of reproduction seems to have played a major and perhaps critical rôle in the rural depopulations of the late Middle Ages.² Be that as it may, Impruneta's population had already ceased to expand by 1307, and remained stable for at least 40 years before the Black Death. At Impruneta as in most Tuscan areas, the Black Death was not to strike against a population vigorously attempting to expand, but one which had reached its peak level a half-century before and, in some places at least, was already declining.

Impruneta's economy and society before the Black Death thus shows some paradoxical contrasts. Improved techniques of cultivation were spreading, better farms were being built, and the great landlords, *fictaioli*, and even many labourers were enjoying prosperous times. But these same achievements were accompanied by a steady deterioration of the status of the small, independent peasants. This impoverishment, and ultimately the depopulation which it seems directly to have bred, inevitably undermined the prosperity of the entire community. A large rural population had supported both high rents and high interest rates, made labour cheap and helped create a good market for cereals. However, in the face of spreading impoverishment and depopulation, landlords and investors had little choice but to compete with lower rents and lower rates of interest for takers of their land and capital.

The year 1340, more even than the plague year of 1348, marks the great watershed in the economic history of medieval Impruneta. Before 1340, in spite of many, unmistakable signs of approaching troubles, rents

¹ See above, p. 266, nn. 6 and 7.

² See my 'Population, plague and social change in rural Pistoia, 1201-1430' *Economic History Review*, vol. XVIII (1965), pp. 225-44.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

had remained high and even rising, and the returns of rentiers and investors stayed firm. With reason did Giovanni Villani single out the years 1336-38 (when our leases show that rents were at their highest) as the time when the *stato* of his city had reached its peak brilliance.¹ But 1339 was a year of shortage, and 1340 brought with it combined plague and famine, soon to be followed in the decade of the 40s by the spectacular bank failures of the Bardi and Peruzzi, by renewed famine and finally by the great plague of 1348.²

The chartularies leave no doubt that already from 1340 the level of rents at Impruneta was sliding. A *podere* called 'Ischetò', the property again of the *pieve* church, returned the following amounts:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Source</i>
1329 25 April	125 pounds, 2 <i>modia</i> spelt, 2 <i>cogni</i> wine, 4 <i>orcìa</i> oil, 150 pounds pork, 1 pound wax, 25 dozen eggs, 5 pairs capons	B 1343
1333 22 Feb.	145 pounds, 150 pounds pork, 1 pound wax, 5 pairs capons, 25 dozen eggs	B 1344, fol. 13r
1337 7 April	155 pounds, 150 pounds pork, 25 dozen eggs	B 1348
1339 6 Feb.	155 pounds, etc., as above	B 1341
1347 Mar.	125 pounds	F 308 (3)
1347 15 July	25 florins (about 80 pounds)	F 308 (3)

Rents from the *podere* called 'dell'Abadia' in the village of Piatano at Impruneta followed an identical pattern:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Rent</i>	<i>Source</i>
1329 2 April	100 pounds, 2 <i>modia</i> wheat, 1 <i>modius</i> spelt, 12 <i>orcìa</i> oil, 8 <i>cogni</i> wine	B 1343
1337 6 July	250 pounds, 2 pounds wax, 4 pairs capons, 20 dozen eggs	B 1348
1338 21 Sept.	250 pounds, 150 cheeses, 200 pounds pork, 2 pounds wax	B 1341
1347 26 April	56 florins (about 168 pounds)	F 308 (3)

Rents from the *pieve's* lands outside its own territory similarly were falling. One-half a *podere* at Fiesole returned 30 pounds in 1324, 40 in 1329, and by 1344 only 34 pounds.³

This sinking level of rents almost at once brought the church of Impruneta into financial difficulties. In 1353, in spite of its extensive

¹ *Cronica*, XI, 91-4.

² *Ibid.*, XI, 114.

³ A.S.F., Not., B 1343, 15 Aug. 1324; 21 March 1329; F 308 (3), 19 Aug. 1344.

DAVID HERLIHY

lands, the church lacked sufficient grain to feed not only the numerous poor who came to its famous shrine in expectation of food, but also its own 'familia'. Already saddled with numerous, usurious debts, the *plebanus*, with the chapter's permission, was forced to sell some of the church's lands.² The era of ever rising rents, and ever growing prosperity, had ended.

At Impruneta, the Black Death and subsequent plagues and famines did not initiate so much as they reinforced trends in evidence since 1340 and in some respects even before.

The population, stagnant for at least a half-century before 1348, moved steadily downward. The Black Death itself had in fact a comparatively mild impact at Impruneta; in 1350 the *populus plebis* still counted 101 households, a fall of only 18 per cent from the 123 it had possessed in 1330.² But this was only a beginning; in 1356 the *populus plebis* numbered 101 households, 86 in 1365, 90 in 1384, and 74 in 1401.³ In 1427, according to the *Catasto*, Impruneta had 72 households and 432 persons.⁴ The decline seems to have been even more precipitous within the *pieve's* smaller parishes. San Lorenzo in Collina had 26 households in 1280, but only 8 in 1427.⁵ Sant'Andrea a Luiano had 30 in 1319, but only 9 in 1427.⁶ San Martino a Bagnolo possessed 56 households in 1319; by 1427 just 17.⁷ While Impruneta's own parish had by 1427 declined by about 42 per cent from its pre-plague level, these three smaller parishes, taken together, show a staggering drop of 70 per cent (from 112 to 34 households).

Just as an extraordinarily high population had been pervasive in setting the character of Impruneta's agriculture before the Black Death, so this continuing and massive depopulation inevitably affected all aspects of the region's economy. With a shortage of labourers the cultivated area contracted; the *Catasto* of 1427 abounds in references to lands 'wretched and uncultivated' (*trista e soda*) and to decrepit and abandoned houses, for which no tenant could be found.⁸

¹ A.S.F., Not., F 308 (3), 18 Aug. 1353.

² The figures of Florence's rural population according to the *estimo* survey of 1350 are given in E. Fiumi, 'La demografia fiorentina nelle pagine di Giovanni Villani', *A.S.I.*, vol. CVIII (1950), pp. 78-158.

³ The figures from 1356 to 1384 are taken from Fiumi, 'La demografia'. That of 1401 from G. Pardi, 'Popolazione del contado fiorentino nel 1401', *Comune di Firenze. Annuario Statistico*, vol. XV-XVI (1917-18), pp. 319-44.

⁴ A.S.F., Cat., 307, fol. 407r-451v.

⁵ *Estimo* of 1280, A.S.F., Not., I 104, fol. 50r, and *Catasto*, 307.

⁶ *Estimo* of 1319 in A.S.F., Not., F 308 (2), 26 Aug. 1319, and *Catasto*, 307.

⁷ A.S.F., Not., B 1345, fol. 168v, 24 Sept. 1330, and *Catasto*, 307.

⁸ A.S.F., *Catasto*, 307, fol. 438r, 'e la detta chassetta sta serrata perchè non truovo da pigionarla'.

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

Depopulation also affected the kinds of crops cultivated. To judge by sales, wheat had been the area's most valuable harvest before the Black Death, and its importance had been sustained by a dense population and a great demand for cereals. But a dwindling population weakened that demand and undermined cereal prices; a *staio* of wheat, in the debased currency of 1427, was reckoned at only 15 *soldi*. By then, as far as rents and returns recorded in the *Catasto* permit us to judge, wheat remained an important crop, but it was surpassed in value by wine, while oil too had spurted in importance.¹ This diminishing emphasis on cereals permitted a more balanced agriculture at Impruneta and one more suited to the character of its land.

Rents also remained fixed or fell, as landlords had to compete within a depopulated countryside to find labourers for their lands.² In other ways too the system of tenurial relations came to favour the peasant. Before 1340, many of the *pieve's* farms were leased for rents set in kind, with an emphasis upon payments in wheat. This forced the tenants either to grow cereals often on land unsuited for them, or to purchase them in the market, frequently at high prices and unfavourable terms. But already from 1340, some rents were being commuted to money payments exclusively, and this freed the tenant of the obligation to plant or purchase wheat.³ Still more generous a concession to the tenant was the abandonment on some *poderi* of high, fixed rents in favour of the *mezzadria*, a lease for one-half the produce.⁴ This flexible rent freed the peasant from the principal risk of a bad harvest. Moreover, the *mezzadria* traditionally committed the landlord to high investments on

¹ In 1427, the taxable produce from lands owned by the residents of the *populus plebis* within the territory of the *pieve* was 802 *staia* of wheat, 104 *staia* of *biada* or feed grain, 498 barrels of wine, 44 *orcio* of oil, 16 *staia* of figs and 2 *some* of fruit. The survey of Impruneta assigns no values to these quantities, but from prices used elsewhere in the *Catasto* (15 *soldi* per *staio* of wheat, 8 *soldi* per *staio* of *biada*, 26 *soldi* per barrel of wine from the hills, 5 pounds per *orcio* of oil, and 20 *soldi* per *staio* of figs) we can calculate the following relative values: wheat, 601.5 pounds; *biada*, 41.6 pounds; wine, 647 pounds; oil, 220 pounds; figs, 16 pounds. This of course represents only a portion of Impruneta's production (lands owned by churches and by urban residents are not included), but it should roughly indicate the relative importance of crops.

² A *podere* and mill in San Giorgio in Poneta, which was leased for 6 *modia* of wheat, one-half the wine, 100 pounds of pork, 4 pairs of capons and 20 dozen eggs in 1325 (A.S.F., Not., B 1343, 11 Feb. 1325), returned only 6 *modia* in 1345 (F 308, 2 March 1345) and the same in 1427, A.S.F., *Catasto*, 307, commune of San Giorgio in Poneta, declaration of Antonio di Bingo, pagination illegible. A *podere* at San Lorenzo a Collina, returning in 1337 120 pounds, 200 pounds of meat, 4 *cogni* of wine, 5 pairs of capons, 20 dozen eggs and a pound of wax (B 1343, 6 Oct. 1337), was apparently returning only 20 florins (80 pounds) in 1427, *Catasto*, 307, fol. 435r.

³ See above, p. 271, for examples.

⁴ A *podere* at Sant'Andrea a Luiano, in the place called Torti, was leased for 2 *modia* of wheat in 1337 (B 1347, 12 July 1337), and was returning one-half the produce to the *plebanus* in 1427, *Catasto*, 307, fol. 456v.

DAVID HERLIHY

his land, for the house, cattle, tools, seeds, fertilizer and loans to the worker. One-half the produce was still a high rent, but it may be doubted that the landlord's share was always conscientiously measured. According to a revealing *novella* of Franco Sacchetti, the wife of an urban landlord, a goldsmith, took as her lover her husband's *lavoratore* or *mezzadro*. 'I did it', she said in explanation to her irate husband, 'for the good of the household . . . in order that he would make for us an accurate measure, and give us honest *staia*.'¹

The pattern of land distribution was also changing. The *Catasto* of 1427 mentions 180 *poderi* worked by residents of the entire *pieve*. Of them, 33, or 18 per cent, belonged to churches or religious houses. The *pieve* church, in financial difficulties after the Black Death, was forced to sell some of its lands, but these losses were offset by the acquisitions of urban hospitals and religious communities, which enjoyed great popularity in the late Middle Ages. While the portion of ecclesiastical land did not change substantially after the plague, the property of the great urban families registered large gains. Of the 180 *poderi*, 56, or almost a third of the total, are identifiable as the property of great urban houses, with members of the Ricci alone owning 18. Not only had city landlords come to dominate the larger portion of the soil, but ownership was simultaneously being concentrated in fewer hands.

This extension of the land of the urban churches and families suggests a proportionate decline in the property holdings and the taxable wealth of the middle groups of Impruneta's society, the *fictaioli* and the independent peasants. Fiscal records confirm this assumption. The sum of the *estimo* assessment, falling since 1307, fell even further after the Black Death. From 930 pounds in 1330, it sank to 200 in 1350 and only 58 in 1401.² This last figure was only 3 per cent of what the assessment had been in 1307 (1925 pounds).

Moreover, contrasts in the distribution of taxable wealth, sharpening since 1319, grew sharper still by 1427. According to the *Catasto* survey, the top 10 per cent of the families of the *populus plebis* owned nearly 50 per cent of its wealth, and the lowest 20 per cent owned nothing at all (see Table 2 and Graph 1). This comparison of the *Catasto* with the earlier *estimo* surveys is not, to be sure, entirely fair. The *Catasto* was a reformed, more sophisticated and undoubtedly a fairer assessment, made necessary by a real breakdown of the older tax system in the countryside based on *estimi*. But it still illustrates the diminished social

¹ *Il Trecentonovelle*, ed. V. Pernicone (Florence, 1946), p. 237.

² The figure for 1350 is taken from A.S.F., *Estimo*, 303. That of 1401 from G. Pardi, 'Popolazione.'

SANTA MARIA IMPRUNETA

weight of the *fictaioli* and the independent peasants, who occupied the middle levels of Impruneta's social scale.

For the low rents, low cereal prices and high cost of labour were unfavourable to the traditional enterprise of the *fictaioli*, the leasing and subleasing of lands. While some of the *pieve's* farms were still exploited by lease and sublease, only three *fictaioli* can be found in 1427 among the residents of the *populus plebis*.¹

As for the independent peasants, the most numerous group in the pre-plague population, 39 families, or 55 per cent of the parish population in 1427 still owned some land. But many of these peasants in fact preferred to labour as *mezzadri* on the well-stocked farms of the great landlords, while their own lands were casually cultivated or entirely neglected.² According to the *Catasto*, 21 families (about 30 per cent of the population) were share-cropping within Impruneta's own parish in 1427. The portion for the entire *pieve* was still larger. Of 358 family heads recorded in the *Catasto*, 170, or nearly a half, are identifiable as share-croppers.

The great enlargement of this group of *mezzadri* or *lavoratori*, recruited largely from the formerly independent peasants, is the most distinctive change in Impruneta's society after the Black Death. As the *lavoratori* had little or no property, their growing numbers swelled the large group of apparent paupers at Impruneta in 1427, when 20 per cent of the parish's population was credited with no assets at all. But it would be wrong to equate this group with the desperate and hopeless poor. As we have mentioned, the *mezzadria*, in guaranteeing the workers good farms and sufficient cattle and capital at reduced risks, was not unfavourable to them or to the land they worked.

Impruneta's rural society before the Black Death had been chiefly characterized by the importance of its two middle groups, the prosperous *fictaioli* and the independent peasants. After the Black Death, the extremes of the social spectrum, the great landlords and the often landless labourers, gained greatly in prominence, while these middle groups declined.

In the light of Impruneta's history, what can be discerned concerning the relations of the countryside and city? Those relations changed, as

¹ A.S.F., *Catasto*, 307, fol. 407v, Bartolo di Frosino, 'tiene a fitto uno podere del piovano di S. Maria Impruneta'. Ibid., fol. 433r, Piero di Dato, 'tiene un podere a fitto da messer lo piovano di S. Maria Impruneta' for 9.5 florins per year. Ibid., fol. 433v, Dino di Matteo, '... uno podere ch'io o a fitto dalla pieve di S. Maria Impianeta' for 20 florins per year.

² Cf. the example of Antonio di Cristofano (ibid., fol. 417v), who owned a house and land at Impruneta, but 'la terra è soda e la chasa è ischoperta e non s'abita'. Antonio declared: 'sto nel podere di mona Filippa di Niccholò Brandi.'

DAVID HERLIHY

social and economic conditions in the countryside changed. Before the Black Death, the crowded peasants, many of them working inadequate lands with inadequate capital, still had to pay high rents, high interest rates, and oppressive taxes. It is hard to exonerate city dwellers and the city government itself from the charge of capitalizing upon their plight. This harsh treatment seems also to have been a major factor in initiating the great depopulations of the fourteenth century. But those same depopulations inevitably brought about improved social conditions for the peasant. Rents, interest rates and rural taxes all fell, and a new system of tenurial relations, favourable to the peasant, spread in the countryside. Of this system, the *mezzadria* was the cornerstone.

At Impruneta, was the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries an age of agricultural depression? In some respects, and for some groups, yes. There can be little doubt that the late medieval depopulations, in dragging down rents and interest rates, cut the ground from under the former prosperity of the landlord and investor. Inevitably too, the depression in agricultural returns affected other sectors of the economy. The propertied classes, committed under the *mezzadria* system to heavy investments in agriculture, had proportionately less capital for commercial and industrial enterprises. In real measure, the great commercial and industrial prosperity of the thirteenth-century city fell a victim to the fourteenth-century crisis in agriculture.

But for other groups, the appropriateness of this term 'depression' must seriously be questioned. The agricultural labourer, able to lease good farms on good terms with the aid of cheap capital, was better off than many of his forebears. 'Depression' with its connotations of unemployment, low wages or scarcity of capital, does not describe his situation, the situation in fact of a majority of the rural population.

There is this final point. The prosperity of the thirteenth century, for all its brilliance, touched only a narrow segment of society; it was also built in a critical measure upon the exploitation of the poorer classes, especially the peasants. The new system of rents and tenurial relations, as it emerged from out of the fourteenth-century crisis, was fairer to a larger portion of society, and was more stable because of it. Above all, it spared the society of Renaissance Florence from the fierce crises and reversals which, in the fourteenth century, had brought a catastrophic end to the prosperity of the medieval commune, and tarnished its achievement.

VIII

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE AROUND 1400: THEORY, POLICY AND REALITY

Much has been written on the Ciompi Revolt of 1378, but the existing studies have nearly all been strongly influenced by Marxist concepts of class struggle and have failed to take into consideration the prevailing economic ideas and the legal aspects of the problem. The emphasis heretofore has been on the misery of the masses and the exploitation of the workers in the woollen industry without considering sufficiently the stark realities of life and the impact of social theories and economic policies designed to put them into effect. Certainly, exploitation there was, and the right of the workers to organize and to form a guild of their own was without any doubt one of the main issues at stake. Still one may doubt whether a rhapsody on this single theme does full justice to the subject and is to be regarded as an unbiased approach. However much one feels inclined to sympathize with the harsh fate of the workers, is it entirely fair to deny all hearing to the employers or to forget the pressing duty of the Florentine government to maintain law and order? In other words, have the historians not been prejudiced by espousing one point of view and overlooking the complexities which are always present in dealing with historical phenomena?

The present study does not pretend to give a final answer to these perplexing questions, but it attempts more modestly to bring the problem into better focus by looking at it from a new angle. For this purpose it will be assumed that the reader is already acquainted with the main course of events: the Ciompi Revolt, its origins and its aftermath. What will be attempted is to illuminate the background of this

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

struggle by re-examining actual labour conditions in the Florentine textile industries in the light of prevailing social ideas and economic policies.

I

To economic and social theory, the Italian humanists of the Renaissance contributed naught or very little with the exception perhaps of Leon Battista Alberti's *Della Famiglia*, which, however, deals with household management rather than with economics as understood today. They were interested in loftier problems than the common business of life. It is, therefore, useless to turn to them for any enlightenment; instead, one has to consult the old-fashioned scholastics who, in their ponderous treatises on moral theology, deal extensively with the subject of social ethics. A moralist of major importance is Sant'Antonino of Florence (1389-1459) who, after being prior of the Dominican friary of San Marco, became archbishop of Florence in 1446. His writings show that he was not only well grounded in theory but exceedingly well informed about the conditions prevailing in the Florentine textile industry, both silk and wool.¹ Yet, his authority is rarely, if ever, invoked by any historian dealing with the organization or the social problems of this industry.

As a matter of fact, in the realm of social studies, the scholastics stood on a pinnacle which the humanists, despite their conceit and their contemptuousness, were never able to scale. While it is true that economics was not yet recognized as an independent discipline, scholastic economic doctrines were more sophisticated and more ingenious than most modern economists would be willing to concede. The emphasis was on social ethics in a broad sense: scholastic economics dealt with the application of justice to the exchange and distribution of goods, hence the theories of the just price or the just wage.² The concern of the scholastics with usury and the space devoted to it in most of their treatises is apt to create the erroneous impression that this one

¹ There are several studies devoted to the social doctrines of Sant'Antonino: Carl Ilgner, *Die volkswirtschaftlichen Anschauungen Antonins von Florenz, 1389-1459* (Paderborn, 1904), 268 pp., the earliest and still the best; Bede Jarrett, *S. Antonino and Mediaeval Economics* (London, 1914), 109 pp.; August Pfister, *Die Wirtschaftsethik Antonin's von Florenz, 1389-1459* (doctoral dissertation, Fribourg, Switzerland, 1946), 175 pp.; William Thomas Gaughan, *Social Theories of Saint Antoninus from his Summa Theologica* (Catholic University of America Studies in Sociology, vol. XXXV, 1950); Gino Barbieri, 'Le forze del lavoro e della produzione nella "Summa" di S. Antonino da Firenze', *Economia e Storia*, vol. VII (1960), pp. 10-36; Raymond de Roover, *San Bernardino of Siena and Sant'Antonino of Florence: The Two Great Economic Thinkers of the Middle Ages* (Kress Library Series, no. 19, Boston, 1967), 46 pp.

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Secunda Secundae, qu. 61, art. 1-3.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

problem was the source of all social evils. This may be an exaggeration, but it cannot be denied that the scholastics spent much time and effort in upholding a doctrine that was untenable and had to be abandoned in the end.

Usury does not concern us here. What is more relevant to our topic is the scholastic doctrine on the just price. Contrary to a widespread misconception, this is a subject on which the scholastics disagreed. Instead of one single doctrine, different authors supported different theories; it is possible to distinguish three different schools or currents of thought.¹

One of these currents is that of the nominalists, who favoured regulated prices under the pretext that public authorities were wiser than individuals. In actual practice, medieval authorities never set prices except in emergencies and then only those of a few prime necessities. One of the staunchest advocates of price regulation was the German nominalist, Henry of Langenstein (1325–97), who states that if the public authorities fail to set a fair price, the producer may do so himself but is allowed to charge only so much as will enable him to live and support a family on a level befitting his station in life.² This statement was given wide publicity by the economists and sociologists of the German historical school and was hailed by many, including the late R. H. Tawney, as a characteristic formulation of the scholastic doctrine on the just price.³ Why Langenstein's view appealed to so many people is not hard to guess. It agreed admirably with the preconceptions of all those — from Fascists to gild socialists — who looked upon the medieval gild system as a panacea for the ills of modern industrialism. Langenstein's doctrine even found its way into the papal encyclicals. If extended to wages, it meant, indeed, that the worker was entitled to a family wage which would enable him to raise a family 'in reasonable and frugal comfort'.⁴ This aim was supposedly achieved by means of the livelihood policy of the gilds. The trouble with this analysis is that Langenstein does not mention gilds or try to defend them; instead, he

¹ This point is emphasized in Raymond de Roover, 'The Concept of the Just Price: Theory and Economic Policy,' *Journal of Economic History*, vol. XVIII (1958), pp. 418–34.

² Henry of Langenstein, *Tractatus bipartitus de contractibus*, part 1, chap. 12, published in Johannes Gerson, *Opera omnia*, vol. IV (Cologne, 1484), fol. 191. There is no other edition of Langenstein's treatise.

³ R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (New York, 1952), pp. 41–2, 295. Tawney gives a correct formulation of Langenstein's theory, but he is mistaken in assuming that it is typical.

⁴ This is the expression used in the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (*Five Great Encyclicals*, ed. Gerald C. Treacy, New York, 1955, p. 22).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

rails against carpenters, bricklayers and viniculturists who apparently combined to raise the price of their services.¹

In any case, Langenstein's doctrine, far from being representative of scholastic views on the matter, does not seem to have exerted much influence. It was rarely quoted by any theologians of note until it was exhumed at the end of the nineteenth century.

The second doctrine is that held by John Duns Scotus (1265-1308), who contends that a trader is entitled to a normal profit and a compensation for risk beyond that which is necessary for the support of his family.² Thus the just price is determined by cost of production. Like Langenstein, Duns Scotus does not ask himself the question whether a producer will be able to sell his product above the market price. John Duns Scotus had very few followers. The late scholastics of the sixteenth century denounced his doctrine as dangerous and fallacious because it tended to favour inefficiency and prices ought to be set by current estimation without any regard to cost.³

This observation brings us to the third theory, which was accepted by the majority of the scholastics, both jurists and theologians. According to the jurists — canonists, as well as civilians — prices should be set by the community and not arbitrarily by individuals.⁴ How can a community set prices? Apparently there are two ways, either by the higgling and haggling of the market or by public regulation.⁵ The theologians reached the same conclusion and asserted that the just price was determined by common estimation, by which they meant the valuation of the market.⁶ They were well aware of the fact that scarcity

¹ Langenstein, *op. cit.*, part 1, chap. 50, fol. 206.

² *Quaestiones in librum IV sententiarum*, dist. 15, qu. 2, no. 22, published in John Duns Scotus, *Opera omnia*, vol. XVIII (Paris, 1894), p. 317. Cf. Max Beer, *Early British Economics* (London, 1938), pp. 50-1.

³ Domingo de Soto, *De justitia et jure*, lib. vi, qu. 2, art. 3; Luis de Molina, *De justitia et jure*, tract. 2 (*De contractibus*), disp. 348, § 8.

⁴ The glossator Accursius (1182-1260) added the words *sed communiter* to the old principle *res tantum valet quantum vendi potest*. Gloss 'funguntur', *Digest*, xxxv, 2, 63.

⁵ On the price theories of the jurists and the theologians prior to Thomas Aquinas, there is an excellent study by John W. Baldwin, 'The Medieval Theories of the Just Price: Romanists, Canonists and Theologians in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, new ser., vol. XLIX (1959), part 4, 92 pp.

⁶ *Ibid.*, *passim*; de Roover, 'The Concept of the Just Price', *op. cit.*, pp. 421-4. A conclusive text is the tale of the merchant who brings corn to a place where there is dearth and knows that more supplies are on the way. Thomas Aquinas answers affirmatively the question whether he is allowed to sell his corn at the prevailing price without revealing that additional supplies are due shortly. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Secunda Secundae, qu. 77, art. 3, obj. 4 and ad 4. The story is borrowed from Cicero (*De officiis*, iii, 12), who, however, gives a different answer. Cf. Arthur E. Monroe, *Early Economic Thought* (Cambridge, Mass., 1948), p. 56. Professor Armando Sapori also concludes on the basis of this text that Thomas Aquinas considered as just

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

tended to raise prices and abundance, to lower them, but they had no clear concept of the operation of supply and demand.

Long before Langenstein, Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) and his disciple, Thomas Aquinas (1226-74), rejected any direct connection between social status and price formation. Albertus Magnus emphasized strongly that in buying and selling no attention ought to be paid to the 'dignity' of the contracting parties and that the buyer should pay a fair price whether he be the Emperor himself or a simple peasant.¹ Following his master, Thomas Aquinas struck the same note and repeated that 'in a just exchange the medium does not vary with the social standing of the persons involved', but that 'whoever buys an article must pay what it is worth whether he deals with a rich or a poor man'.² In other words, prices should be the same to all, rich and poor alike.³ This rule, moreover, was in conformity with canon law which forbade victuallers to charge more to pilgrims and wayfarers than the price obtainable in the local market, a rule which the decretalists stretched to ban all forms of price discrimination.⁴

The same two writers made another contribution to the theory of price determination by trying to reconcile the two apparently conflicting concepts of cost versus market by pointing out that the arts and crafts would be destroyed if the selling price failed to compensate the producer for his trouble and toil.⁵ Albertus Magnus is even specific and explains that a carpenter will not continue to make beds unless in selling them he recovers his outlay and the value of his labour. In other words, goods will not be produced permanently below cost. This is quite correct, but curiously this important observation dropped out of

the current market price ('Il giusto prezzo nella dottrina di san Tommaso e nella pratica del suo tempo', *Studi di storia economica, secoli XIII-XIV-XV*, 3rd ed., Florence, 1955, vol. I, pp. 278-80).

¹ *Liber V Ethicorum*, tract. ii, cap. 6, *Opera omnia*, vol. VII (Paris, 1891), p. 349.

² *Quodlibetales*, Quodlibet vi, 10 (Parma ed., vol. IX, p. 547). The text reads as follows: '... sed in justitiam non variatur medium secundum diversas personae conditiones, sed attenditur solum ad quantitatem rei. Qui enim emit rem aliquam, debet tantum solvere quantum valet, sive a paupere sive a divite emat.'

³ This interpretation agrees with that of Desiré Barath, 'The Just Price and the Costs of Production according to St. Thomas Aquinas', *The New Scholasticism*, vol. XXXIV (1960), pp. 426-8.

⁴ *Corpus Juris Canonici, Decretales*: in X, c. *Placuit*, lib. iii, tit. 17, c. 1. This canon has a long history and was originally a capitulary issued in 884 by Carloman, king of Francia. It is quoted by San Bernardino, *De Evangelio aeterno*, sermon 33, art. 2, cap. 5, in his *Opera omnia*, vol. IV (Florence-Quaracchi, 1956), p. 148, in order to support a blanket condemnation of price discrimination.

⁵ Albertus Magnus, *Liber V Ethicorum*, tract. 2, chap. 7, no. 28, in op. cit., vol. VII, p. 353; Thomas Aquinas, *In X libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum*, lib. v, lect. 7 and 8 (Parma ed., vol. XXI, pp. 168 and 171). Cf. Max Beer, *An Inquiry into Physiocracy* (London, 1939), p. 66.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

sight and later scholastics focused all their attention on market price, neglecting entirely cost of production, as if the two were antithetical.

Odd as it may seem, the scholastics had no clear notion of competition. It was entirely alien to their way of thinking, and the word 'competition' was not part of their vocabulary. The French term, *concurrency*, in the meaning of 'concourse', that is, a flocking together of people, does not occur until the very end of the sixteenth century when it is used by Luis de Molina (1535-1601), who states that 'a large concourse (*concurrentium*) of buyers, more at one time than at another, and their greater avidity to buy, will cause prices to go up, whereas a paucity of buyers will cause them to go down'.¹ In English, the word 'competition' in the sense of rivalry in the market does not appear until the eighteenth century. It is found in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), but even he prefers the phrase 'perfect liberty' to denote free competition. This is quite in keeping with scholastic tradition.

If this analysis is correct — and there can hardly be any question — the just price may simply be defined as the current market price set by free competition with this important qualification: the scholastics did not question the right of the public authorities to interfere and to regulate prices, if need be, especially in times of dearth when there was a critical shortage of supplies. The jurists were of the same opinion. Alberticus de Rosate (d. 1354), for example, argues that it is perfectly legitimate for public authorities to regulate prices, weights or measures, provided such regulation be designed to promote the public good and not to favour a single individual or group of individuals.² The scholastic doctors were consequently more in favour of freedom and less in favour of restraints than is generally assumed, although their position was not one of unqualified *laissez-faire*.³

In view of this attitude, it is not surprising that the scholastics were unanimously opposed to monopoly. This follows only logically from their premises. The scholastics did not confine monopoly to the case of a single seller but extended it to cover any collusion among either sellers or buyers to manipulate prices to their own benefit and to the detriment of the commonweal. According to San Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), a popular preacher and learned theologian, monopolies are fraudulent and pernicious pacts by which merchants agree not to sell

¹ *De justitia et jure*, tract. 2, disp. 348, § 4.

² *Commentarium de statutis*, qu. 69, in *Tractatus universi juris*, vol. II (Venice, 1584), fol. 12.

³ This is also the position taken by Josef Höffner, 'Statik und Dynamik in der scholastischen Wirtschaftsethik', *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Forschung des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen*, Heft 38. The author is now the Catholic bishop of Münster in Westphalia.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

or to buy except at a certain price for the purpose of increasing their profits.¹ His contemporary, Sant'Antonino, is even more emphatic and denounces as monsters of iniquity those who, in a time of dearth, engross grain and other foodstuffs.² Such engrossers, according to the saintly archbishop, not only injure their neighbours but act against public welfare. Profits made in this fashion are filthy gain (*turpe lucrum*), which, like usury, is subject to restitution to the persons aggrieved if they can be found, and if not, to the poor.

The theologians in holding these views found full support among the jurists. The great post-glossator, Baldus degli Ubaldi (1327-1400), regards any monopoly as illicit whether it concerns the price of goods or of services. In his opinion, monopoly often takes the form of a 'conspiracy' against the public interest. As such, it is a criminal offence which, however, frequently goes unpunished because it is so widespread and so difficult to detect.³ 'Colleges', that is, guilds, whether of students or of craftsmen, are licit organizations if their purpose is the preservation of justice and the promotion of the commonweal, but they become unlawful combinations once they are aimed at establishing or maintaining monopolies.⁴

According to the scholastics, the just wage was but one aspect of the theory of the just price.⁵ It was a problem of commutative or contractual, rather than distributive, justice.⁶ The theologians of the thirteenth century have little to say upon the subject, but one must consider that there did not exist in the Middle Ages a large wage-earning class except in a few textile centres.

Thomas Aquinas defines a wage as a compensation for labour, almost as if it were the price thereof.⁷ Since the papal encyclicals insist that labour is not a commodity, the insertion of 'almost' is a godsend. However, Sant'Antonino does not make any reservation of this kind and frankly states that it is licit to hire workers and to direct their work

¹ *De Evangelio aeterno*, serm. 33, art. 2, cap. 7, particula 1, § 5 in San Bernardino, *Opera omnia*, vol. IV, pp. 153-4.

² *Summa theologica*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 23, § 16 (Verona ed. of 1740, vol. III, col. 327D).

³ Baldus, *Commentaria*, on Codex, iv, 58 (*De monopolis*), lex unica.

⁴ *Ibid.*, on Digest, iii, 4 (*Quod cuiusque universitatis*) 1.

⁵ Amintore Fanfani, *Le Origini dello spirito capitalistico in Italia* (Milan, 1933), p. 14.

⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *In librum III sententiarum*, dist. 33, qu. 3, art. 4, questiuncula 6 (Parma ed., vol. VII, p. 376). Commutative justice deals with exchanges and is based on equivalence between what is given and what is received in return. Distributive justice refers to the distribution of wealth and income; it is not based on equality and takes into consideration the rank of people in society.

⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologica*, Prima Secundae, qu. 114, art. 1, resp. The expression used is: '... pro retributione operis vel laboris, quasi quoddam pretium ipsius'.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

provided they be paid the just price without any fraud.¹ And how is this price determined? Simply, like other prices, by common estimation, which means apparently the ruling rate of the labour market.² It is true that Sant'Antonino asserts that wages are instituted for the purpose of enabling the workers to provide for themselves and their dependents according to their station.³ Does this imply that he refers to a family wage? It would be rash to jump to such a conclusion, since there is no intimation that employers should pay more than the ruling rate to workers who are burdened with large families or with particularly heavy charges.⁴ On the contrary, the context suggests that Sant'Antonino intended merely to state that wages provide the means of subsistence for those who have nothing else to offer than the work of their hands or their brain. One Catholic critic even finds that the Saint 'carries matters a little bit too far' when comparing the hiring of workers to that of horses or dwellings and forgetting presumably that human labour is not a commodity.⁵

According to Sant'Antonino, the just wage ought to be set freely, excluding any kind of fraud. This all-inclusive formula may give rise to some difficulties of interpretation. Among the fraudulent practices explicitly mentioned are payment in truck or in clipped and debased coin.⁶ With regard to the latter, it is not clear whether Sant'Antonino's reproof is aimed at individual cheaters or at the Florentine employers as a group who used their political influence to put pressure on the government to debase the silver currency, or *moneta di piccioli*, in which the workers were paid, so as to lower real wages without touching the nominal rates. As we shall see, this practice was a source of discontent. Following Aquinas, Sant'Antonino decries even more energetically employers who, out of avariciousness, withhold wages when they are due or pay less than the amount agreed upon by making deductions under the pretext of poor workmanship or negligence.⁷

Fraud, as used by Sant'Antonino, does not cover only deceitful practices to exploit the workers in one way or another, but also refers to any interference with the free operation of the labour market and any

¹ *Summa theologica*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 2 (Verona ed., vol. III, col. 297E). Cf. Manuel Rocha, *Les origines de Quadragesimo Anno: Travail et salaire à travers la scolastique* (Paris, 1933), p. 57; Amintore Fanfani, *Storia*, cit., vol. 1, pp. 107-8.

² Sant'Antonino, *Summa theologica*, pars. 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 8 (col. 269C).

³ *Ibid.*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 1, § 1 (col. 293D).

⁴ Rocha, *Travail et salaire*, p. 59. Cf. Jarrett, *S. Antonino*, cit., p. 76.

⁵ Rocha, *Travail et salaire*, p. 57.

⁶ Sant'Antonino, *Summa theologica*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 7 and 8 (cols. 267 and 268), and pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 and 5 (cols. 313 and 316).

⁷ *Ibid.*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 7 (col. 267B and C). Cf. James v, 4.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

combinations either of masters or of workers to lower or raise wages. This is in accordance with the scholastic aversion for any form of collusion. Although Sant'Antonino does not name the guilds, he accuses the silk and wool manufacturers of abusing their power and of not paying the going rate set by common estimation, but of forcing weavers and other workers, because they are poor, to accept a reduced wage, even though it is much less (*multominus*) than will support them and their families.¹ This passage is none too clear and has given rise to some discussion; it probably means that the employers, especially in a time of unemployment, took advantage of the plight of the textile workers to reduce wages even below the subsistence level.² In any case, to exploit workers in this fashion, Sant'Antonino adds, is as unjust as paying less than the just price because of a seller's pressing need for cash.³ He points out that his strictures apply to employers in general, but especially to the silk and wool manufacturers of Florence, where exploitation is prevalent.

Throughout his discussion, Sant'Antonino assumes labour relations to be on a free contractual basis, although he was well aware of the fact that individual bargaining put the labourers at a disadvantage and tipped the scales in favour of the employers, the more so because they were united in a guild.⁴ However, he suggests nowhere that the workers seek redress by combining and resorting to collective bargaining. If necessary, he seems to intimate that the state might intervene by imposing minimum wages.⁵ However, this point is not clearly stated. In general, Sant'Antonino seems to rely on the confessional as a potent remedy against social ills. This may not be more than a pious illusion.

There is one more point which is relevant and needs discussion. What did the scholastics say about wage differentials? This subject already attracted the attention of Thomas Aquinas who finds it natural for an architect who plans a building to be better remunerated than a mason or a stonemason who works with his hands under the other's orders.⁶ A more satisfactory explanation is, however, given by San Bernardino,

¹ *Ibid.*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 8 (col. 269C).

² Ilgner, *Die volkswirtschaftlichen Anschauungen*, cit., pp. 203-4; Wilhelm Weber, *Wirtschaftsethik am Vorabend des Liberalismus* (Münster, 1959), pp. 138-9.

³ Sant'Antonino, *Summa theologica*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 8 (col. 269D); Ilgner, *Anschauungen*, p. 208.

⁴ Ilgner, *Anschauungen*, pp. 208-9; Weber, *Wirtschaftsethik*, p. 139.

⁵ Ilgner cites several texts to prove that S. Antonino favoured state intervention, but it is by no means certain that they apply to wages (Ilgner, *Anschauungen*, § 54, pp. 211-12).

⁶ *Quodlibetales*, quodlibet 1, art. 14 (Parma ed., vol. IX, p. 468); *Opuscula*, opuscul. XVI (*De regimine principum*), lib. 1, cap. 9 (Parma ed., vol. XVI, p. 232).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

who states that skilled labour is better paid than unskilled, because skill is scarce, since it can be acquired only by strenuous apprenticeship and long experience.¹ Sant'Antonino goes back to Aquinas and, giving the same example of the architect and the mason, repeats that the reward of labour depends on its prestige, which is not quite true.²

Despite his having a greater sense of reality than most scholastic writers, Sant'Antonino fails to offer a practical solution to the problem of the just wage. Like Adam Smith, he recognizes that employers and workers do not bargain freely on equal terms.³ Yet, he has no remedy to suggest other than that the workers resign themselves to being exploited and expect their recompense in another world.

II

It would be a mistake to believe that the scholastic economic doctrines remained encased in theological treatises, instead of being translated into policy. Quite the contrary is true, as the case of Florence shows. The doctrines of the theologians were used, consciously or unconsciously, to bolster up the legislation of the Commune or to serve as moral justification for its policies. The scholastic abhorrence of monopoly, in particular, came in handy for this purpose.

Although Florence was a stronghold of the guild system, its government was dedicated, in theory at least, if not always in actual practice, to the principle that free competition should be preserved as much as possible and that no interference by private individuals with the operation of the market should be brooked. The avowed purpose was to secure an abundant supply of victuals and other commodities at fair prices and to protect the consumer from any form of exploitation.⁴ To achieve this laudable aim, the city of Florence adhered to what has been called a policy of provision.⁵ In so doing, Florence was by no means alone; such a policy was followed by nearly all medieval towns of

¹ San Bernardino, *De Evangelio aeterno*, serm. 35, art. 2, cap. 3 (*Opera omnia*, vol. IV, p. 198).

² Sant'Antonino, *Summa theologica*, pars 1, tit. 5, chap. 2, § 11 (col. 393D). Cf. Pfister, *Die Wirtschaftsethik Antonin's*, cit., pp. 63 and 145, n. 155.

³ Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, Bk. 1, chap. 8.

⁴ '... ad hoc ut maior copia victualium in civitate habeatur' (Statuto degli oliandoli fiorentini), quoted by Saponi, *Studi*, cit., vol. I, p. 294.

⁵ This is the terminology used by Eli F. Heckscher (*Mercantilism*, London, 1935, vol. II, pp. 58, 80) who contrasts it with mercantilist protectionism based on the 'fear of goods' and the 'gospel of high prices'. The policy of provision is well described by Henri Pirenne, 'Le consommateur au moyen âge', *Histoire économique de l'Occident médiéval* (Bruges, 1951), pp. 532-4, and in his *Les anciennes démocraties des Pays-Bas* (Paris, 1910), pp. 100-5, reprinted in Pirenne, *Les villes et les institutions urbaines* (6th ed., Paris, 1939),

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

western Europe from the island of Sicily to the shores of the North Sea.¹ This should not be attributed to altruistic motives, since its purpose everywhere was to favour the city or town dweller at the expense of the *contadini*, that is, the inhabitants of the surrounding country district, or *contado*.

The theory was that farm products should be brought to the urban market and sold there at competitive prices by the producer directly to the consumer, thus eliminating all middlemen. Such a policy was effective as long as the town was supplied from the neighbouring territory, but it broke down as soon as provisions had to be brought from greater distances, in which case it was often impossible to shut out the merchants.² Be that as it may, numerous Florentine statutes were enacted to implement the policy of provision. Much of this legislation undoubtedly remained dormant in normal times when there was no problem of provisioning the market, and came to life only when an emergency arose. Even then one should not have too many illusions about the effectiveness of these legislative enactments. In the absence of a well-conceived and well-organized rationing system, the existing regulations were difficult to enforce; nevertheless, they may have done some good and perhaps prevented calamities in the form of mass starvation and tumults.³ As experience shows, it is impossible to avoid restrictions and controls when there is a critical shortage of supplies.

In Florence, the carrying out of the policy of provision was entrusted to a committee which bore the significant name of *Ufficio dell' Abbondanza or della Grascia*.⁴ It was located in Or San Michele, and its principal tasks were to police the grain market, to fix maximum prices for food-stuffs, to take stock of available supplies and, if necessary, to import corn from abroad and to distribute it at reasonable prices, even at a loss to the public treasury.⁵ This last was often the most effective of all because it brought stocks out of hiding, lowered the price of corn, and helped to appease a starving populace ready to revolt.⁶ With medieval

vol. I, pp. 196-9. Pirenne's student, Hans van Werveke, uses the expression 'politique de ravitaillement' ('Les ville belges: histoire des institutions économiques et sociales' in *La Ville: II. Institutions économiques et sociales*, Brussels, 1955, p. 564).

¹ For Sicily, see Antonio Petino, *Aspetti e momenti di politica granaria a Catania ed in Sicilia nel Quattrocento* (Catania, 1952), p. 31.

² Raymond de Roover, 'The Concept of the Just Price', *op. cit.*, pp. 428-31.

³ Enrico Fiumi, 'Sui rapporti economici tra città e contado nell'età comunale', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIV (1956), p. 58.

⁴ *Idem*, 'Fioritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina,' *ibid.*, vol. CXVII (1959), p. 471.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 468 and 470. Cf. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, lib. 10, cap. 118 (refers to 1329).

⁶ Matteo Villani, *Cronica*, lib. 3, cap. 76. The reference is to the year 1353.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

authorities the fear of bread riots and other disturbances was frequently the beginning of wisdom.¹

In Florence, as in most medieval towns, the statutes strictly forbade the engrossing and forestalling of victuals. Engrossing consisted in buying up supplies and in withholding them from the market in order to drive prices up and to create artificial scarcity. 'To engross' was called *fare endica* or *fare incetta* in Italian.² The officials of the *Abbondanza* kept a watchful eye on the corn market. Among other things, it was not permissible for private individuals to purchase wheat or other grains beyond the quantity needed to feed their family for one year. All grain brought into Florence had to be offered for sale at the corn market. Even there, it was forbidden to buy in order to resell (*causa revendendi*).³ In general, no victuals — in particular, no corn — could be sent out of the district of Florence without special licence of the *Abbondanza* officials. Offenders exposed themselves to severe penalties.⁴ The retailing of bread was no less closely supervised than the corn market. Bakers could only sell bread in their own shops or at the market and were not allowed to buy more than two *staia*, or about one half a hectolitre, of corn at one time.⁵ Similar provisions regulated the cattle market and the retailing of meat and fish.⁶ Their number seems to indicate that they were difficult to enforce despite the sweeping powers conferred upon the officials entrusted with this task.

Forestalling included buying standing crops or intercepting provisions on their way to the market. Being against the policy of provision, forestalling was regarded almost everywhere as reprehensible. Florence was no exception to the general rule and it was illegal within a radius of six miles to buy any victuals that were being conveyed to the market.⁷ Butchers in particular were not allowed to go outside the gates to meet any peasants who were driving cattle to be slaughtered.⁸

Nothing, absolutely nothing, in all these provisions and regulations

¹ Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', p. 467.

² Robert Pöhlmann, *Die Wirtschaftspolitik der Florentiner Renaissance und das Prinzip der Verkehrsfreiheit* (Leipzig, 1878), p. 19, n. 4.

³ *Statuta populi et communis Florentie* (1415) ('Friburgi', 1778), vol. II, pp. 276-7 (lib. 4, rub. 165-7). Cf. *Statutum bladi Reipublicae florentinae* (1348), ed. Gino Masi (Milan, 1934), pp. 153 and 155 (rub. 118 and 120).

⁴ Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', pp. 469-70. Cf. *Statuta communis Florentie*, vol. II, pp. 273 and 274 (lib. 4, rub. 156 and 158).

⁵ *Statuta communis Florentie*, vol. II, pp. 292 and 294 (rub. 191 and 197).

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 244, 245, 251, 254 and *passim*.

⁷ Pöhlmann, *Wirtschaftspolitik*, p. 20; *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo degli anni 1322-1325*, ed. Romolo Caggese (Florence, 1910), pp. 33, 35, 36, 38 (lib. 1, rub. 27, 33, 36 and 43). *Statuto del Podestà dell'anno 1325*, ed. R. Caggese (Florence, 1921), pp. 225-6, 355, 377, 378 (lib. 3, rub. 63; lib. 4, rub. 67; lib. 5, rub. 15 and 16).

⁸ Pöhlmann, *Wirtschaftspolitik*, p. 21.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

was in contradiction with the teachings of the theologians and the doctrines of the jurists. The aim of the provisioning policy after all was to maintain rules of fair competition; regulation came into play only as a last resort in order to meet emergencies or abnormal situations created by threatening famine, which was precisely what the scholastics taught and advocated. Even the stringent measures enacted against engrossing were entirely in accord with the precepts of canon law, which branded as *turpe lucrum* (illicit gain) any profits made by buying grain at harvest or wine at vintage with the intent of reselling it later when prices had increased.¹

It has been said that the medieval towns favoured competition when they were buyers of agricultural products, but upheld, on the other hand, the monopoly privileges of the guilds, presumably because they were sellers of manufactured articles.² This is, however, an oversimplification. In Florence, at least, official hostility toward any form of monopoly, far from being confined to the implementation of the policy of provision, was extended to all aspects of economic activity.

In principle, monopoly was a conspiracy against liberty. This principle is clearly enunciated in the Ordinances of Justice of 1293, which were the fundamental laws of the Florentine Republic. According to rubric 21, all covenants, compacts, monopolies (*posturae*) and collusive agreements, whether written or oral, made by any guild, its consuls or its members, were declared null and void.³ This clause was taken over without modification in the amended version of 1295 and became the basis of all subsequent legislation and policy, whether or not it was consistently carried out.⁴ In accordance with the guiding principle formulated in the Ordinances of Justice, the Statute of the *Capitano del Popolo* (1322-25) outlawed all monopolies among guild members for the purpose of setting prices either in buying or in selling or of restraining trade in the commodities pertaining to their craft or business. This was to be regarded as a constitutional provision which could not be set aside by any decrees made by the Gonfalonier of Justice and the Priors, and, if so, such enactments were declared invalid *ipso jure*.⁵

¹ *Corpus juris canonici, Decretum Gratiani*, c. *Quicumque tempore*, causa xiv, qu. 4, c. 9. This canon was originally a capitulary promulgated at Nijmegen in 806; it was included in the collection of Abbot Ansegius and thus found its way into the early canonical collections and finally into the decretum of Gratian. Cf. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Legum Sectio 2*, vol. I, pp. 132 and 411.

² John M. Clark, *Social Control of Business* (2nd ed., New York, 1939), p. 23.

³ *Statuta communis Florentinae*, vol. I, pp. 426-7.

⁴ Gaetano Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295* (Florence, 1899), p. 388, appendix xiii.

⁵ *Statuto del Capitano del Popolo*, p. 144 (lib. 3, cap. 4).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

Besides this statute of a general nature, the Statutes of the Podestà (1325) and the *Capitano del Popolo* contain other provisions which deal with the monopolistic practices of particular craftsmen among whom the butchers and the brickmakers are singled out.¹ The latter are accused not only of combining, but of refusing to work, that is, of going on strike in order to get better pay. The brickmakers in question were probably small independent masters for there is no evidence that they were wage-earners.

As is clear from these texts, the anti-monopoly legislation of the Florentine Republic applied to the price of services as well as of commodities. It needs further to be emphasized that, according to the municipal statutes, only the public authorities had the power to fix prices, if necessary, for the common good, but that this function had not been delegated to the guilds, whose members had no right to set prices by collusion. This rule even antedated the Ordinances of Justice, as appears from a resolution voted on 26 June 1290 by the Great Council, which explicitly forbade guild members to impose their own prices to the detriment of the commonweal.²

Clauses banning monopolies and combinations are found not only in the municipal statutes, but more surprisingly are incorporated in the charters or statutes of both the major and the minor guilds. Even the Calimala Guild, whose members were chiefly importers of Flemish cloth which was bought in the grey at the Fairs of Champagne and dyed and finished in Florence, condemned in its statutes of 1332 the formation of any league or *postura* in order to set prices, be it in buying or in selling, under the penalty of a fine of £10 *a fiorino*, or about seven gold florins, for each offence. Members were required to swear that they would abstain from such practices and trade independently without conferring with others. Since the Calimala merchants operated abroad, where the Florentine government had no jurisdiction, it was presumably up to the guild to enforce the rules.³ Whether or not it did so is another matter. The statutes of the *Arte della Lana*, or Wool Guild, of 1317, of which only wool-manufacturers, or *lanaioli*, were active members, do not refer to any combinations among masters, but forbid most severely any coalition of workers subject to the guild's jurisdiction, as we shall see. On the

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 240 (lib. 5, cap. 30) and *Statuto del Podestà*, p. 254 (lib. 3, cap. 97).

² Alfred Doren, *Studien in der Florentiner Wirtschaftsgeschichte*: I. *Die Florentiner Wollentuchindustrie vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1901), p. 201; II. *Das Florentiner Kunstwesen vom 14. bis zum 16. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1908), p. 572, n. 1 (*Le Arti fiorentine*, tr. G. B. Klein, Florence, 1940, vol. II, p. 116, n. 2).

³ Paolo Emiliani-Giudici, *Storia politica dei municipi italiani* (Florence, 1851), appendix I, p. 142 (*Statuto dell'Arte di Calimala*, 1332, lib. 2, cap. 35).

other hand, the statutes of the Silk Guild, or *Arte di Por Santa Maria* (1335), invoke the authority of St Paul and the brotherhood of men to brand all monopolies, leagues and combinations among masters as iniquitous institutions and as contrary to true Christian charity.¹ Besides, the said statutes were approved by the Podestà only with the proviso that they contained no clause favouring monopoly or transgressing existing laws.²

The statutes of the minor guilds often included a rubric proscribing illicit covenants, such as monopolies. This was the case of the innkeepers, the locksmiths, the armourers, the dealers in old clothes, the saddlers, and the *linaioli* or linen-merchants.³ As a rule, the statutes of the minor guilds were periodically ratified by the Podestà and he did so only with the reservation that no provision either explicitly or implicitly allowed monopoly.⁴

The government of Florence were steadfast in trying to curb the efforts of the guilds to establish price agreements and to reduce competition. In following this policy, the Florentine government were acting only in conformity with scholastic doctrine, since the moralists were unanimous in decrying monopoly as an abuse which ought to be eradicated root and branch. However, in practice things did not work out as well as in theory. One pernicious effect of the anti-monopoly legislation was that it was used, or better misused, to prevent the workers from organizing and to suppress their brotherhoods as illegal 'conspiracies'. This is especially true of the textile industry where there existed a real proletariat dependent upon wages.

At this point it may be well to halt for a moment and to explain that the textile guilds — Calimala, Wool and Silk — were organizations set up by, and for the benefit of, the employers and that the workers were

¹ *Statuti dell'Arte di Por Santa Maria del tempo della Repubblica*, ed. Umberto Dorini (Florence, 1934), pp. 153-4 (Statute of 1335, rub. 134). On the correct interpretation of this provision, see Nicolò Rodolico, 'Proletariato operaio in Firenze del secolo XIV,' *A.S.I.*, vol. CI (1943), p. 29.

² *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, p. 207.

³ *Statuto dell'Arte dei Rigattieri e Linaioli di Firenze, 1296-1340*, ed. Ferdinando Sartini (Florence, 1940), pp. 9, 156, and 204-5 (rub. 19 of the statute of 1340); *Statuti dell'Arte degli Albergatori della Città e Contado di Firenze, 1324-1342*, ed. F. Sartini, (Florence, 1953), pp. 35, 117-18, 206, 285; *Statuti delle Arti dei Corazzai, dei Chiavaioli, Ferraioli e Calderai e dei Fabbri di Firenze, 1321-1344*, ed. Giulia Camerani Marri (Florence, 1957), pp. 88 and 96; *Statuti delle Arti dei Correggiai, Tavolacciai e Scudai, dei Vaiai e Pellicciai di Firenze, 1338-1386*, ed. G. Camerani Marri (Florence, 1959), pp. 29-30; Correggiai (1338-1345), rub. 15.

⁴ *Statuti delle Arti dei Fornai e dei Vinattieri di Firenze, 1337-1339, con appendice dei documenti relativi alle Arti dei Farsettai e dei Tintori, 1378-1379*, ed. Francesca Morandini (Florence, 1956), pp. 44, 114, 120, 127, 135, 152, 153; *Statuti delle Arti degli Oliandoli e Pizzicagnoli e dei Beccai di Firenze, 1318-1346*, ed. F. Morandini (Florence, 1961), pp. 190 and 259; Beccai (1346).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

sottoposti (underlings) who were subject to jurisdiction of the gild but who had no voice in the management of its affairs and were even deprived of civil rights, since they were represented in the city councils only by their masters, except during the short interlude of the Ciompi Revolt in 1378. Under those circumstances, it is not surprising that public policy and gild policy pursued the same aim: both strove to break up any attempt of the workers to organize themselves in an association, or union, of their own.

The Ordinances of Justice, like any other constitutional texts, deal only with generalities and leave details to be settled by special laws and regulations; hence it should not cause any surprise if these ordinances remain silent on the status of the textile workers. However, this silence is not maintained in the Statute of the Podestà (1325), which, allegedly to save the woollen industry from decay and to augment the prosperity of the city of Florence, explicitly denies to all wool-workers, including dyers, beaters and nappers, the right of forming a *corpus* or *collegium*, that is, a gild in opposition to the one dominated by the *lanaioli*, or clothiers.¹

After deploring the human tendency to commit evil under the colour of legality, the Statute of the Podestà, in another and more specific provision, forbids the workers of any gild, in particular those of the wool gild, to hold assemblies, to draft charters or to erect any brotherhood or any other association — whatever its name — even under the pretext or veil of worship (*sub religionis pretextu*), mutual aid or burial funds.² Such societies apparently could only be created with the approval and under the supervision of the official guilds. In fact, they did exist in this form and contributions were even deducted from wages by the employers like pay-roll taxes today.³

These provisions of the municipal statutes find their echo in those of the textile guilds. As early as 1301, the charter of the Calimala gild threatened with dire punishment and boycott any dyers, finishers or menders, who dared to participate in a *dogana*, or an illicit association.⁴ This clause is repeated almost *verbatim* in the revised charter of 1332, which is in the vernacular instead of in Latin.⁵ Even more rigorous and explicit were the prohibitions promulgated by the *Arte della Lana*, or the Wool Gild, which had under its jurisdiction a numerous and restive

¹ *Statuto del Podestà*, pp. 381–3 (lib. 5, rub. 28).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 398–9 (lib. 5, rub. 57).

³ *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, pp. 565–9 (amendment of 1446).

⁴ Giovanni Filippi, *L'arte dei mercanti di Calimala in Firenze ed il suo più antico statuto* (Turin, 1889), p. 160 (statute of 1301, lib. 5, art. 4).

⁵ 'Statuto dell'Arte di Calimala' published in Emiliani-Giudici, *Storia*, pp. 119–20 (lib. 2, rub. 6).

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

proletariat. According to the statute of 1317-19, drastic measures were taken against those who would rebel against the gild's authority and tutelage and attempt to organize 'a *dogana, postura* (monopoly), conspiracy, company, league, clandestine society, coalition or machine', that is, in plain English, a trade union; such bold fellows were subject to boycott and liable to a heavy fine of £200 *di piccioli*, if they were leaders, or only £100 *di piccioli*, if they were simple followers.¹ To discover the culprits, the consuls of the Wool Gild were authorized to use informers and to rely on anonymous denunciations. Moreover, all wool-workers were expected to promise by oath each year that they would refrain from joining any such plots. A supplementary clause defined any society or congregation of more than ten members as an illicit coalition or conventicle. Another article of the same statute of 1317-18 excluded any woolbeaters, carders or combers from a religious confraternity in honour of St Mark for fear that they would seize the opportunity to conspire against the Wool Gild.²

In contrast to the conditions prevailing in the Calimala and Wool Gilds, labour relations were apparently much more satisfactory in the Silk Gild. While the silk weavers and other operatives were still placed under the jurisdiction of the gild, although they were excluded from holding office in it, the statutes do not contain any oppressive provisions, probably because so many of the workers were highly skilled and the masters were afraid that they would emigrate and carry their skills to rival towns. Relations did not deteriorate until 1458, when the consuls were empowered to impose corporal punishment, send delinquents to the pillory or even subject suspects to torture, because so many offenders, it is explained, were poor people unable to pay fines.³

Labour conditions in the Florentine woollen industry were by no means exceptional but rather typical and resembled those prevailing in neighbouring cities and even in distant Flanders. In Bologna, for example, already in 1266 — which is earlier than any Florentine records — the Wool Gild, in its statutes, prohibited 'any clandestine society or conspiracy' against its jurisdiction and also required the dyers to swear that they had not joined any such machinations; however, to deter them from doing so, they were promised fair treatment in any disputes concerning their pay.⁴ Apparently the clothiers of Bologna

¹ *Statuto dell'Arte della Lana di Firenze, 1317-1319*, ed. Anna Maria Agnoletti (Florence, 1940), pp. 114-15 (lib. 2, rub. 19).

² *Ibid.*, p. 203 (lib. 4, rub. 32).

³ *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, pp. 590-1 (amendments of 1458, rub. 5).

⁴ *Statuti delle Società del Popolo di Bologna: II. Società delle Arti*, ed. Augusto Gaudenzi (Rome, 1896), pp. 291 and 311 (statute of 1266, rub. 18 and 107).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

were so eager to put down seditious labour movements that they even issued orders against woolbeaters congregating in the streets except in front of the workshop where they were employed.¹ In Siena, the story is much the same; the Wool Guild, according to its statute of 1292, did not tolerate the gathering together of any *sottoposti* or workers in a dissident organization of their own, whether clandestine or open.² In Flemish textile towns, the antagonism between clothiers and workers was even sharper. The former, who controlled the town governments, passed the most cruel legislation to cow the workers, to ban suspicious assemblies and to put down strikes.³ Ringleaders incurred blinding, perpetual banishment or even the death penalty.⁴ The result was an explosion which, shortly before 1300, swept the clothiers out of power in most of the textile towns and ushered in a long period of social unrest, which lasted for the better part of the fourteenth century and eventually sealed the ruin of the Flemish cloth industry.

Repressive measures were not lacking in Florence, either, even though the Florentine authorities were perhaps more sparing in applying the death penalty. Nevertheless, several cases — one notorious — are on record.

As happens frequently, the anti-monopoly legislation was used to catch the small fry rather than the big fish. Thus far, there is no evidence that any bankers or merchants or manufacturers were ever prosecuted as guilty of monopolistic practices.⁵ Such charges were brought, however, against two very different groups: against victuallers accused of asking for their wares more than the price fixed by the Officials of the *Abbondanza*, and against workers convicted of trying to organize their fellows in brotherhoods.

The first category of violators belonged invariably to the minor guilds, which had little or no influence in the government.⁶ In 1347,

¹ Raymond de Roover, 'La doctrine scolastique en matière de monopole et son application à la politique économique des communes italiennes', *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani* (Milan, 1962), vol. I, p. 176.

² *Statuti senesi scritti in volgare ne' secoli XIII e XIV*, ed. Filippo-Luigi Polidori (Bologna, 1863), vol. I, pp. 260-1: 'Statuto dei lanaiuoli di Siena del 1292', dist. 8, cap. 1.

³ R. de Roover, 'Just Price', op. cit., pp. 433-4.

⁴ Georges Des Marez, 'Les luttes sociales en Flandre au Moyen Age', reprinted from *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, vol. V (1899-1900); *idem*, 'Les luttes sociales à Bruxelles au Moyen Age', *Revue de l'Université de Bruxelles*, vol. XI (1905-6), pp. 287-323.

⁵ Marvin Becker, 'La esecuzione della legislatura contro le pratiche monopolistiche delle arti fiorentine alla metà del secolo quattordicesimo,' *A.S.I.*, vol. CXVII (1959), p. 12.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 16, 17, 20 and *passim*. Cf. Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza', op. cit., pp. 466-486. Fiumi questions Becker's interpretation that the victuallers were harassed only when the minor guilds were not represented in the government. Fiumi points out, rightly in my opinion, that the protection of the consumer was the main purpose of

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

during the year of dearth which preceded the Black Death, a baker was even hanged on charges of engrossing.¹ Probably, there were many people more guilty than he; the likelihood is, as the chronicler Giovanni Villani seems to imply, that he was a scapegoat sacrificed to set an example, to frighten his peers, and to placate a starving populace stirred up against engrossers who took advantage of their misery.

Along with the bakers, the butchers were among the chief offenders. In 1356, as a result of repeated violations of the anti-monopoly legislation, the charter of the Butchers' Guild was even suspended, but it was restored after a few months, probably for reasons of political expediency, because the butchers were a turbulent segment of the population whom the government did not wish to drive to extremes.² In any case, the policy of provision was not popular with the victualling guilds whose members were subject to its vexatious controls and unpredictable actions.

Next to the victuallers, the main 'victims' of the pretended anti-monopoly policy were workers unwise enough to stir up trouble. The most notorious case is that of the carder, Ciuto Brandini, who was hung in 1345 for having held meetings with his fellow-workers and for attempting to organize a brotherhood, that is, some kind of a labour union.³ The indictment, dated 30 May 1345, is still extant in the Florentine archives so that we know exactly what the charges were.⁴ As usual, the judges tried to besmear the man's character and the indictment describes him as a man of ill fame, evil conduct and foul language who, driven by a diabolic spirit inimical to the human race, was led 'to accomplish illegal deeds under the cover of legality' (this is a quotation from the statutes of the Podestà) by forming a conventicle or monopoly (*postura*). What he had really done, the indictment reveals, was to hold rallies near Santa Croce and in other places, in order to

the policy of provision and that the commune was never willing to relinquish its right to control, whether or not the minor guilds had any political influence. The policy of provision was not class legislation but was designed to protect the great mass of the population.

¹ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, lib. xii, cap. 73 *in fine*.

² Becker, 'Legislazione antimonopolistica', op. cit., pp. 19-26. Cf. Fiumi, 'Fioritura', op. cit., p. 484.

³ On Ciuto Brandini, one should consult the various studies of Niccolò Rodolico: *Il popolo minuto* (Bologna, 1899), pp. 58-61; *La democrazia fiorentina nel suo tramonto, 1378-1382* (Bologna, 1905), pp. 119-20; 'The Struggle for the Right of Association in Fourteenth-Century Florence', *History*, new ser., vol. VII (1922), pp. 183-4; *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1940), pp. 44-7. Cf. Victor I. Rutenberg, *Popular Movements in the Italian Cities during the Fourteenth Century and the Beginning of the Fifteenth* (in Russian, Moscow, 1958), pp. 89-95.

⁴ The text of the indictment was published twice by Rodolico: first, in *Popolo minuto*, pp. 157-60 (doc. no. 14) and later in *I Ciompi*, pp. 238-9 (doc. no. 1).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

induce the wool-workers to establish a *fraternitas*. Ciuto Brandini had even gone so far as to collect dues and to proceed to the election of officers. This was criminal and was viewed as a conspiracy against the régime and an attempt to introduce 'novelties' or revolutionary changes into the government, to disturb law and order, and to imperil the property rights and even the very life of the citizens. Ciuto Brandini with two of his sons was arrested during the night by the sergeants of the *Capitano del Popolo*. As the news of this arrest spread, his fellow-workers rushed to the Priors to obtain Brandini's release and even went on strike, but it was all to no avail: the government stood firm and refused to stay the execution.

Ciuto Brandini's case is certainly not the only one, but we are less well documented about the others. Perhaps a systematic search of the surviving records may turn up new evidence. At any rate, in 1343, two years before Brandini's trial, a certain Aldobrandini was put to death for inciting rebellion among the workers of two *lanaioli*, Salvo di Lotto and Matteo degli Albizzi. The same fate befell Francesco di Lapo, nicknamed Grillo, who also was accused of subversive activities.¹

As the records, including the text of Brandini's indictment and sentence, clearly show, the legal basis for preventing coalitions among workers originated in the principle that such combinations were monopolies and conspiracies in restraint of trade, because they interfered with the freedom of the labour market. This principle was entirely in line with the policy of the Florentine Republic and the doctrine of the scholastics on this subject.

III

The extent to which the Florentine woollen industry was capitalistic in character, has been a controversial topic for some time. The leading authority on the matter is still the German historian, Alfred Doren (1869-1934), whose masterly book, *Die Florentiner Wollentuchindustrie*, has, however, the serious shortcoming of being based chiefly on the guild statutes to the neglect of other sources, such as business records, with the result that he greatly exaggerates the size of the typical wool shop and frequently refers to 'gigantic plants', 'establishments similar to modern factories', or 'large-scale enterprises'.² The *lanaioli*, or Floren-

¹ Rodolico, 'Right of Association', op. cit., p. 183.

² *Wollentuchindustrie*, pp. 25, 34, 202, 249, 327, 400, 447 and *passim*; *Zunftwesen*, pp. 505, 560, 721. In all fairness to Doren, it must be stated that, as a result of adverse criticism, he has been more cautious in his later work — his *Economic History of Italy* (see below, p. 300, n. 2).

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

tine clothiers, are described by him as 'industrial magnates' or 'super-capitalists' who achieved 'a tremendous accumulation of capital in the hands of a few'. Such epithets may apply to Henry Ford, to John D. Rockefeller, or to Lord Leverhulme, but it is permissible to be more than a little bit sceptical about the existence of such industrial tycoons in the Middle Ages or the Renaissance. Doren's views, although inspired by the writings of Karl Marx, are now being challenged even by Russian historians who rightly point out that it is premature to talk about industrialism or large factories in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹

As a matter of fact, there were in Florence no woollen mills in the modern sense of the word, but it does not follow that Doren is entirely wrong in stressing the capitalistic character of the Florentine textile industry. Although the wool workers for the most part were employed in their own homes and used their own tools, they were not independent artisans but wage-earners who worked on materials supplied by their employers. In other words, the prevailing mode of production was the putting-out system, in which the employers, at each successive step, gave out the materials to be processed and received them back once the work was completed. It goes without saying that the employer who owned the raw materials also controlled and organized the entire manufacturing process.

In Florence, the division of labour was far-reaching. To make woollen cloth involved a series of twenty-six different steps, each of them performed by a specialist.² As a result, the Florentine woollen industry gave rise to a rather elaborate organization; to run a wool shop was by no means a sinecure and required a great deal of technical knowledge, managerial ability and constant attention to detail.³ Moreover, there is no evidence that the Florentine *lanaioli* or clothiers enjoyed any monopolistic advantages either in buying or in selling. Their raw material, wool, came chiefly from England and Spain and was purchased from importers who also bought and sold at market prices. English wool was the best, but it was subject to heavy export

¹ Victor Rutenberg, 'Storia del Medioevo italiano nelle opere degli scrittori russi e sovietici', *Archivio storico italiano*, vol. CXX (1962), pp. 363-4. Rutenberg refers especially to the work of P. P. Fridolin and M. A. Gukowski. The Russians argue, of course, that Doren misinterprets Karl Marx by antedating the emergence of industrial capitalism.

² A list with terminology is given in Florence Edler [de Roover], *Glossary of Mediaeval Terms of Business, Italian Series* (Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 324-9.

³ The managerial problems are emphasized by R. de Roover, 'A Florentine Firm of Cloth Manufacturers', *Speculum*, vol. XVI (1941), pp. 3-33; idem, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 167-93. Cf. appendices to Edler, *Glossary*, pp. 335-426.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

duties (of four marks per sack in the fifteenth century) levied by the King of England. Absorbed in the task of supervising production, the clothiers sent some of their cloth to agents abroad, but probably only a minor part: the bulk was sold locally to retailers and exporters who presumably were well informed about market conditions and did not pay more than the current price as determined by competition.

Since the *lanaioli* had no control over the price at which they bought their raw material, nor over the price at which they sold the finished product, they were tempted to reduce their costs in the only way in which they could be reduced: by pressing down wages. Moreover, since the woollen industry depended upon foreign markets, it was subject to violent ups and downs. Pressure on wages naturally became more severe when markets were closing, prices falling and workers begging for jobs. In this connection, it should perhaps be pointed out that the price which the clothiers received for their cloth also determined the wages which they could afford to pay, since they could not operate permanently at a loss. One should not overlook the fact that labour was the major item in the cost structure and represented around sixty per cent of the total outlay. Another thirty-five per cent went into the purchase of wool, the basic raw material.¹ All other items were apparently negligible; profits had to cover the cost of supervision and management besides interest on investment.

Little or nothing was invested in equipment. All the capital was circulating capital. It was a revolving fund used to buy wool and pay wages and it was replenished by selling the finished cloth. Because of the long duration of the manufacturing process — about six months from wool to cloth — the turnover of this fund was relatively slow, at best once a year, because most of the sales were on credit.²

The great Florentine fortunes were made in banking and trade, never

¹ R. de Roover, 'A Florentine Firm', p. 33. It is true that these figures are for the sixteenth century. They may be compared with those given by Federigo Melis, 'La formazione dei costi nell'industria laniera alla fine del Trecento', *Economia e Storia*, vol. I, pp. 31–60 and 150–90, in particular the table opposite p. 56. Melis has the following percentages: cost of wool, 42.2 per cent; manufacturing, 52.8 per cent; administrative expense, only 5.0 per cent. The same author in his book, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale, Studi nell'archivio Datini di Prato* (Siena, 1962), vol. I, Tables 27 (opp. p. 554) and 29 (p. 561) gives the following break-down:

raw material (wool) -	-	-	38.0 per cent
manufacturing -	-	-	56.4
general expense -	-	-	5.6
			100.0
Total cost -	-	-	100.0

² Melis, 'La formazione dei costi', pp. 161–7 and *Aspetti*, Table 93 (opp. p. 634). Cf. Amintore Fanfani, *Storia economica*, 2nd ed. (Turin, 1965), pp. 314–15.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

in manufacturing. The newly discovered secret account books of the Medici Bank show that only a minor part of the capital was invested in the wool and silk industries and that most of the profits originated in international banking and foreign trade.¹ This evidence is so decisive that it should settle the question once and for all, but it is confirmed by other data. Giovenco di Giuliano de' Medici (1392-1463) and his descendants, whose records form part of the Selfridge Collection at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration, stayed in the woollen industry and never went into international trade and banking; while they were rather successful as *lanaioli*, they did not acquire a huge fortune like their distant cousins, Giovanni di Bicci (1360-1429) and his sons. The *Catasto* records also prove that all the families who were in the top bracket and paid the largest assessments, such as the Strozzi, the Pazzi, the Rucellai and the Capponi, had made their fortune in banking and trade. It is true that these families, following a Florentine tradition, usually put some money into industry in order to give employment to the 'poor', but these investments were not to them a major source of income.

According to the Medici records — both those at Harvard and those in the Florentine State Archives — the capital of a typical *bottega di lana* or wool shop amounted to 4,000 florins.² In a few instances, the capital went up to 6,000 florins, but rarely; many *botteghe* were smaller and did not have a capital exceeding 2,000 florins, if that high. During a period of about twelve years, from 25 March 1408 to 29 May 1420, one of the Medici partnerships produced 1,025 bolts of cloth, which corresponds to an average of 85 or 86 cloths a year.³ According to Doren, the average annual output per firm was seventy cloths in 1380-82 for all four districts (*conventi*) of the Wool Guild, but the average for the *convento* of San Martino alone, where only English wool could be used, was somewhat higher and reached the figure of 91 pieces per annum.⁴ These data are quite plausible, but how are they reconcilable with Doren's view that the Florentine wool shops were business units of considerable size? Quite the opposite was true.

Competition in the Florentine woollen industry was probably very keen and only well-managed shops were able to survive and to operate profitably. There were probably many marginal producers who barely

¹ R. de Roover, *Medici Bank*, pp. 172, 193.

² Edler, *Glossary*, pp. 338-9; de Roover, *Medici Bank*, pp. 43, 60, 67.

³ *Ibid.*, Table 30 (p. 175). Table 30 contains an error: the period from 1 September 1415 to 29 May 1420 is 57 months, not 68.

⁴ *Wollentuchindustrie*, pp. 526-7.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

managed to keep afloat and who were steadily looking for opportunities to trim wages. The indictment of Sant'Antonino is eloquent in this regard.¹ Under those circumstances, it is not surprising that labour conditions in the woollen industry were unsatisfactory and a source of perennial friction, the more so because the employers, subject to severe competition in everything else, were united in a gild and used its machinery to keep wages down and to prevent the workers from organizing. Moreover, they used their influence in the government to achieve the same purpose and to get public support for the gild's policy. Gian Francesco Pagnini (1715-89), whose work, *Della Decima*, is still valuable today, even suggests that the policy of abundance or of provision was intended to prevent the cost of living from rising in order to keep wages at a low level.² Perhaps this is giving the Florentine government more credit than they really deserve.

Because of the complexities of the manufacturing process, the status of all wool workers was not the same and there were great differences from one category to another, not only in the degree of independence, but also in the methods of remuneration and other matters. In general, piece rates prevailed; since the work was done at home, the employer had no control over the use of time, but he could check output and quality.

Beating, carding and combing were about the only operations performed on the *lanaioli's* premises.³ They were usually entrusted to a foreman called *capodieci*, who hired his own helpers. Michele di Lando, one of the leaders of the Ciompi Revolt in 1378, was presumably a *capodieci*. Beating, carding and combing were menial and tedious tasks which required more brawn than real skill. Among all the wool workers, the beaters, carders and combers were the most unruly, the most downtrodden and the most poorly paid. Even Sant'Antonino describes them as a rowdy lot, vile in language and loose in morals, if not addicted to filthy vices.⁴ The pious archbishop places the blame squarely on the masters who did not repress licentiousness in their shops and accepted no responsibility beyond paying the wage agreed upon; even so, they often cheated by paying in truck or in clipped coin. In view of these conditions, it is not surprising that the beaters, carders and combers

¹ *Summa theologica*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 2 (Verona, ed., vol. III, cols. 310D, 311C).

² *Della Decima* (Lisbon-Lucca, 1765-66), vol. II, pp. 154-5; Romolo Broglio d'Ajano, *Lotte sociali in Italia nel secolo XIV* (Roma, 1912), p. 35; Doren, *Zunftwesen*, p. 570; *idem*, *Italianische Wirtschaftsgeschichte* (Jena, 1934), vol. I, p. 513.

³ *Statuto dell'Arte della Lana* (1317), p. 130; lib. 2, rub. 45.

⁴ *Summa theologica*, pars. 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 (col. 313A). Sant'Antonino uses the expression 'et permaxime a vitio turpissimo', which certainly refers to sodomy.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

took a leading part in the Ciompi Revolt of 1378 and in other riots. As already mentioned, Ciuto Brandini was a carder.

Spinning was a by-occupation of country-women with whom the clothier usually had no contact.¹ He used the services of sub-contractors, called *lanini* and *stamaioli* who went into the country with a mule or a donkey to deliver small parcels of wool and to collect the yarn after it was spun.² The spinners were presumably poorly paid, but their output was small and their job was not arduous. Since they were dispersed throughout the *contado*, it would have been difficult for them to combine, and they caused no labour trouble. Sant'Antonino has no good word for the *lanini* who made their rounds on holidays or who deducted more than their lawful share from the spinners' wages.³ At the request of the Wool Guild, parish priests in the dioceses of Florence and Fiesole were ordered to admonish spinners from the pulpit and threaten them even with excommunication for doing a deceitful job, especially in preparing warp threads, which had to be made of a single strand and not by doubling.⁴

About weavers, Sant'Antonino has little to say except that they were responsible if through malice or carelessness they wove defective cloth.⁵ In such a case, the clothier was not unjust if he deducted something from their wages to compensate him for the damage done. It is possible that Alfred Doren overrates the subjection in which the weavers were held.⁶ Most of them owned their looms, although it often happened that the employer helped them acquire a loom by making an advance repayable by weekly deductions from their wages. How far this practice led to exploitation is a moot question. Up to now business records do not show that weavers commonly pledged their looms to obtain advances from their employers and thus became bound to the latter, as Doren assumes.⁷ On the contrary, the account books indicate that the weavers did not stay long with the same employer and that the turnover among them was rather high. Of course, in times of depression, the least efficient weavers would be the first to be laid off and the last to be rehired. Whether or not the weavers of Florence were content with their lot, the fact is that, as far as we know, they did not play a conspicuous part in the Ciompi Revolt and, unlike their Flemish

¹ Doren, *Wollentuchindustrie*, p. 249.

² *Ibid.*, p. 256; Edler, *Glossary*, pp. 413-18.

³ *Summa theologica*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 (col. 313C).

⁴ *Statuto dell'Arte della Lana* (1317), pp. 151-2.

⁵ *Summa theologica*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 (col. 313E).

⁶ Doren, *Wollentuchindustrie*, pp. 267-77.

⁷ R. de Roover, 'Florentine Firm', p. 16.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

brethren, were not in the vanguard of a revolutionary movement.

In Florence, it was the dyers who were the most discontented element and the most resentful of the Wool Guild's jurisdiction over their affairs. Even prior to 1378, they repeatedly sought to break loose and to set up their own gild, but with little success.¹ Instead of being downtrodden, their status was much higher than that of any other wool workers; the dyers were small masters whose business required some capital. They did not as a rule accept orders from only one firm of *lanaioli* but usually had several as customers.² Even the Medici of the Giovenco di Giuliano branch did not disdain entering into partnership with a master dyer.³ The dyers complained because the Wool Guild regulated what they were permitted to charge and because they often had to wait a long time before being paid for their services or to accept payment in cloth, which they could sell only at a loss.⁴ These grievances were of long standing and were first formulated in 1342 during the brief lordship of the Duke of Athens. In 1370 the dyers formed a league in defiance of the statutes and went on strike in order to obtain redress, but the Wool Guild succeeded in breaking the strike, and they received small satisfaction except in the matter of tardy payments.⁵

After coming from the loom, cloth still had to be finished, that is, to undergo several operations, such as fulling, stretching, napping, and mending. Those steps were all of such short duration, that few of the Florentine clothiers had an output large enough to keep any one of the finishers steadily employed all the year round.⁶ As a result, the finishers were relatively independent in that they were not tied to a single employer but shifted from one to the other as jobs became available. Fullers were perhaps a little better off than the rest, because the fulling mills were located in the country. However, fullers rarely owned the mills, which they rented from wealthy landowners. The stretchers or tenterers, on the other hand, worked in large establishments called *tiratoi*, which were owned by private individuals in the fourteenth

¹ One successful attempt was made in 1342 during the brief rule of Walter de Brienne, duke of Athens. But this Dyers' Guild was abolished soon after the Duke's downfall.

² R. de Roover, 'Florentine Firm', p. 18; Marvin B. Becker and Gene A. Brucker, 'The *Arti Minori* in Florentine Politics, 1342-1378', *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. XVIII (1956), p. 101, n. 61.

³ Francesco di Giuliano di Giovenco de' Medici (1450-1528) formed successive partnerships with one or two master dyers between 1498 and 1511. The capital of the last of these partnerships was 800 florins, not a negligible amount (Edler, *Glossary*, p. 345).

⁴ Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, pp. 35, 50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

⁶ R. de Roover, *Medici Bank*, pp. 179-80.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

century and only gradually acquired by the Wool Gild after 1400. These *tiratoi* were equipped with frames and other apparatus which the tenterers rented from the owners of the building. Sant'Antonino in his *Summa* blames the tenterers for overstretching cloth until it tore. He disapproves even more strongly of menders whose art consisted chiefly in concealing defects which buyers would otherwise detect. For this reason, he regarded mending as a deceitful and reprehensible profession.¹

How much did the wool workers earn in a year? And what was their standard of living? It is rather difficult to answer the first question because the wool workers were not paid by the day; their remuneration was based on piece rates, which varied greatly from one category to another and even within the same category. As to the second, the difficulties are insuperable, since we still know so very little about the purchasing power of money. In any case, one may safely assume that the living conditions of the poor were wretched.

According to the account books of Francesco Datini's woolshop in Prato (1396), a weaver earned about £8 5s. *di piccioli* for weaving a piece of cloth about 55 *braccia* in length, which usually took about two weeks.² Thus, a certain weaver received a warp on 15 May 1396 and the weft yarn on different dates between 18 May and 24 May. He returned the woven cloth within ten days, on 26 May; this was rather quick.³ If we assume that such a weaver could turn out two pieces a month, his yearly earnings would be about £200 *di piccioli* or approximately 52 florins. It is interesting to compare these figures with wages some sixty years later based on data taken from the account books of the *lanaiolo* Lorenzo d'Antonio di Messer Lorenzo Ridolfi, a grandson of the famous decretalist. One of his weavers named Ruberto di Niccolò was paid £8 *di piccioli* to weave a piece of cloth for which the warp was supplied on 26 May 1464 and the weft on 4 June, and which was finished on 14 June, ten days later.⁴ If fully employed throughout the year, this weaver would have earned £192 *di piccioli* or about forty-three florins. In the meantime, however, the rate of the gold florin had gone up from £3 17s. to £4 8s. *di piccioli*. Consequently, there had been a drop in wages, perhaps compensated by a drop in the price level.⁵

¹ *Summa theologica*, pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 (col. 313E).

² The length of such a piece of cloth was about 35 English yards, since five *braccia* corresponded to about three yards. This cloth weighed 92 Florentine lbs. or 31·2 kilos.

³ Melis, *Aspetti*, vol. I, p. 685.

⁴ A.I., Estranei, no. 751, fol. 57. The length is not given, but the piece weighted 82 lbs. or 26·8 kilos.

⁵ According to his account books, the price of red wine which Andrea Banchi resold to his employees apparently dropped from £2 *di piccioli* per barrel in 1455 to £1 10s. *di piccioli* in 1460 (A.I., Estranei, nos. 76 and 84).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

To compute the annual earnings of wool workers other than weavers would be a hazardous undertaking without having full data which are simply not available. A sample of tax returns for the *Catasto* of 1458 of the Ferza ward (*gonfalone*) of the Santo Spirito quarter, where many of the wool workers resided, seems to indicate that quite a few of them were not completely destitute but owned some property, sometimes the house in which they lived, in addition to a vineyard or a small farm outside the city. However, they did not usually possess enough to pay more than the arbitrary minimum of three *soldi a oro* from which only real paupers were exempt. One bachelor, a *stamaiolo*, Salvatore di Piero di Donato, aged fifty-five, had mortgaged his house and reported that he no longer had either house or money, yet he was made to pay the minimum rate.¹ The same happened to a scourer who candidly stated that he had never been taxed previously because he owned nothing but his arms to work with.² Still more unfortunate was the fate of a wool beater who vainly appealed for relief from all tax payment because he was seventy years old and had had to sell household furnishings to buy bread.³ More than a low rate of pay, insecurity and unemployment were the great evils.

Sant'Antonino inveighs especially against two injustices: payment in truck and in debased coin.⁴ With regard to the first, he emphasizes the fact that, if the wage contract provides for payment in cash, the employer violates the agreement by paying in commodities for which the worker has no need and which he can only dispose of at a sacrifice.

The gild itself did not look with favour upon this practice, because it did not want workers or dyers to deal in any materials — whether half-finished or completely finished — pertaining to the woollen industry.⁵ The reasons for this policy were twofold: for one thing, sales at a discount by people who were not regular dealers spoiled the market for all, and, in the second place, made it more difficult to prevent filching. This was a serious evil which the gild vainly sought to stamp out by severely punishing filchers and receivers. For the same reason, pawn-brokers were forbidden to accept as pledges any pieces of woollen or silk cloth and unfinished material from suspicious sources.⁶ For example,

¹ A.S.F., Cat., no. 790 (Quart. S. Spirito, Ferza, 1457/8), fol. 445; 'Sono ora senza casa e senza danari e sono povero, sì ch'io mi vi racomando.'

² Cat., no. 791, fol. 496: 'Io non ebi mai graveza perchè io non òse none le bracia mia.'

³ Cat., no. 790, fol. 653: 'O auto a vendere le mie maserizie per avere del pane.'

⁴ *Summa theologica*, pars 2, tit. 1, cap. 17, § 8 (col. 268-9), pars 3, tit. 8, cap. 4, § 4 (col. 313) and § 5 (col. 316).

⁵ Doren, *Wollentuchindustrie*, pp. 458-9; Fanfani, *Origini*, p. 79.

⁶ Rodolico, *Democrazia*, p. 413; Mario Giardini, *I Banchieri ebrei in Firenze nel secolo XV* (Borgo San Lorenzo, 1907), p. xxiii, doc. no. 6.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

Tommaso di Francesco, a shearman, pawned a whole cloth belonging to his employers, Giovanozzo Biliotti & Co., who redeemed it after his death by paying eighteen florins and seventeen *soldi a oro*.¹ Cabbaging was still widespread in the English woollen industry during the eighteenth century; it seems to have been a problem peculiar to the putting-out system.²

With regard to payment in clipped and debased coin, Sant'Antonino did not make it clear whether the clothiers were guilty as individuals or as a group. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Florence had a monetary system based on a double standard: the gold florin, which remained more or less stable in weight and fineness, and a silver currency, the *moneta di piccioli*, which was steadily deteriorating. As a result, the gold florin, first issued in 1252 at the rate of one pound *di piccioli*, was worth seven pounds *di piccioli* toward the end of the fifteenth century. Between the two currency systems, there was no fixed ratio as in the bimetallic standard of the classical type; instead, the rate of the florin in *moneta di piccioli* varied from day to day, sometimes up and sometimes down, but mostly up. In accordance with the statutes, bankers and merchants belonging to the major guilds transacted their business and kept their accounts in gold florins, but the retail trade was conducted in *piccioli*.³ While the *lanaioli* bought wool and sold cloth in gold florins, they paid their workers in *piccioli*.⁴ As the chronicler Giovanni Villani relates, the *lanaioli*, whenever there was a shortage of money, induced the government to debase the silver currency without disturbing the gold florin.⁵ In other words, they had found the way to reduce real wages without changing nominal wages, by simply putting less silver into new coins of the same denomination. Their inflationary policy was bitterly resented by the masses.

Conditions in the silk industry were considerably better than in the woollen industry. Pagnini, who, despite his work being out of date, may very well be right on this matter, points out that the Florentine silk industry in the fifteenth century flourished side by side with the woollen industry; that silk manufacturing might be considered more beneficial to the economy than cloth-making because in addition to employing as many people, if not more, the mark-up was much higher on silks, a luxury product, than on cloth, and competition was likely

¹ Cat., no. 790 (Santo Spirito, Ferza, 1457/58), fol. 64.

² T. S. Ashton, *The Industrial Revolution, 1760-1830* (London, 1948), p. 54.

³ *Statuto del Podestà*, pp. 279-80 (lib. 3, rub. 128).

⁴ Rodolico, *Democrazia*, pp. 256-7.

⁵ G. Villani, *Cronica*, l. XII, cap. 97. Villani refers to the debasement of 1347. This debasement was followed by others.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

to be less severe. Being a pseudo-mercantilist, Pagnini also stresses the fact that part of the raw silk was produced in Tuscany and much in other parts of Italy, whereas all the wool of superior grade was imported from abroad, especially from England and Spain.¹

In comparison with the Wool Guild, the Silk Guild followed a far more liberal policy towards labour, and relations between employers and workers, if not always permeated by cordiality, were at least not marred by bitter antagonism and persistent hostility. To be sure, this policy was not inspired by humanitarian motives, but rather by what may be called enlightened self-interest: many of the workers in the silk industry, in particular the weavers of figured velvets and brocades, were highly skilled and difficult to replace; the guild was, therefore, afraid that, if mistreated, they might leave in disgust, move to another town, and establish or develop there a rival industry. This was, of course, what both the Silk Guild and the Florentine government sought to avoid by all means. On the contrary, they endeavoured to attract skilled labour from elsewhere and to induce those who had emigrated to repatriate themselves.²

The manufacture of silk fabrics was organized along the same lines as the woollen industry. The *setaioli* or silk manufacturers, who owned the raw material, were in complete control, although most of the work was performed by artisans at home or in establishments operated by small masters with the help of a few assistants. Yet, the problems of the two industries, while similar in certain respects, were not exactly the same. Silk fabrics were not as standardized a product as woollen cloth, and there were great variations in prices and costs between monochrome taffeta, for example, and brocade or polychrome figured velvet.

Since weaving was the most important step in the whole manufacturing process, it is perhaps best to concentrate on the earnings of different categories of weavers. According to the account books of the *setaiolo* Andrea di Francesco Banchi (1372-1462), piece rates ranged all the way from five to six *soldi di piccioli per braccio* for plain taffeta to 160 *soldi* or £8 *di piccioli* for brocaded velvets in three heights of pile.³ It is true that it took much longer to weave one *braccio* of brocaded velvet with an intricate pattern.⁴ Nevertheless, a weaver of this fabric, being

¹ Pagnini, *Della Decima*, vol. II, pp. 111-13.

² *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, pp. 560-61 (revision of 1443).

³ I owe this information on Banchi to my wife, Florence Edler de Roover, whose study, 'Andrea Banchi, Florentine Silk Manufacturer and Merchant in the Fifteenth Century', has now appeared in *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, vol. III (1966), pp. 221-85.

⁴ A Florentine *braccio*, or brace, corresponded to 23 inches or 58 centimetres.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

a highly skilled artisan, earned much more per year than a woman who wove only plain taffeta. If fully employed, her earnings would be only £125 to £145 *di piccioli* or about twenty-eight to thirty-two gold florins per annum, whereas a weaver of brocaded pile on pile velvet would receive up to £770 *di piccioli* or 170 gold florins in the same period of time. Such an annual income does not compare unfavourably with that of an assistant branch manager of the Medici Bank. Domenico di Michele, the weaver of brocaded velvets employed by Andrea Banchi, must have been rather well off, since he could afford to buy jewelry for his wife. True, Domenico was the best paid among Banchi's weavers and one could argue that his case was exceptional. Nonetheless, one can hardly contend that silk weavers were an exploited group. Since they were highly skilled, their services commanded a premium. Even the weavers of damask, in 1458-62, earned about seventy-five florins a year or about twice as much as the women weaving satin or taffeta, whose wages were on a par or even slightly below those prevailing in the woollen industry.

In 1429, the Silk Gild tried to regulate wages and issued a list of minimum piece rates for all kinds of work, including spinning, throwing, dyeing and weaving.¹ This scale was repealed within nine years when the Gild reverted to the policy of non-interference and freedom of contract, probably because the level of wages had been falling.² In any case, the *Trattato della Seta*, an anonymous treatise on silk manufacturing compiled around 1453, gives actual rates taken from business records, which are below those set up by the Gild some twenty years earlier.³ These data correspond so closely with the piece rates found in Banchi's account books, that the *Trattato* must be regarded as a reliable source of information.

In addition to fixing minimum wage rates, the Silk Gild in 1429 made a regulation which instructed the *setaioli* — even if they owned the looms — to treat weavers with due consideration as masters and not as journeymen.⁴ The enactment suggests that certain silk manufacturers had attempted to bring weavers under their complete control, but that such efforts were not countenanced by the Gild authorities for reasons already stated.

Cabbaging was a far more serious problem in the silk than in the

¹ *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, pp. 489-92 (revision of 1429).

² *Ibid.*, p. 539 (repeal effective 1 January 1439).

³ *L'arte della seta in Firenze, trattato del secolo XV*, ed. Girolamo Gargioli (Florence, 1868), pp. 75, 77, 78, 98.

⁴ *Statuti dell'Arte di Por S. Maria*, p. 487.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

woollen industry, because the materials used (silk, gold and silver thread, kermes) were much more valuable than wool. It is, therefore, not astonishing that the Gild made strenuous and apparently futile efforts to suppress this evil. It is mentioned in the first statute of 1335 and in all later revisions.¹ Licensed pawnbrokers were expressly forbidden to make loans secured by any materials pertaining to the silk industry and receivers were threatened with heavy penalties.²

Partly in order to prevent cabbaging, the gild statutes disapproved of the truck system and made wages payable in coin and under no circumstances in commodities.³ This rule was relaxed in 1429 when it was permissible to pay part of the wage in victuals, if the wage-earner agreed.⁴ Andrea Banchi sometimes gave his workers the opportunity to share in his bargains and to purchase grain and firewood, oil and wine below market prices. This should not necessarily be condemned as exploitation, provided there was no compulsion and the arrangement benefited the wage-earners. What the Gild decidedly discouraged was payment in any kind of silk stuffs, for the overriding reason that such a practice lowered the 'reputation' of Florentine textiles or, in plain language, because it lowered selling prices.⁵

As is well known, labour unrest reached a climax in the Ciompi Revolt of 1378, which resulted in the creation of three new gilds and secured for a brief time direct representation in the Florentine government of the hitherto unorganized wool workers. It does not seem that any of the silk workers participated in the disturbances. The three new gilds were: (1) the Gild of Dyers (*Arte dei Tintori*), which, besides dyers, included soap-manufacturers, makers of wool-cards and combs, weavers, stretchers, menders, wool-washers and other small masters connected with the woollen industry; (2) the *Arte dei Farsettai*, which grouped together a miscellaneous crowd of doublet-makers, tailors, shearmen, hatters, banner-makers, and barbers; (3) the *Arte dei Ciompi* or *del Popolo minuto*, which embraced all the remaining wage-earners of the woollen industry including the carders, the combers, the wool-beaters, the wool-sorters and even such sub-contractors as the *lanini* and the *stamaioli*.⁶ This third gild was far more numerous than the other two. Its existence, however, was ephemeral and it lasted only a few weeks. Officially recognized on 29 July 1378 the *Arte dei Ciompi* was formally

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 155 (statute of 1335) and 598-9 (revision of 1460).

² *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 80, 245, 253, 506-7.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 408, 459, 496-7, 540, 591.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 496-7.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 591 (amendment of 1458, art. 6).

⁶ Rodolico, *Democrazia*, pp. 186-8.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

suppressed early in September.¹ The other two guilds continued to be tolerated for some time, until they, too, were abolished in January 1382 by a triumphant coalition of employers and oligarchs who had regained control of the Florentine government.²

This is not the place to investigate the immediate and remote causes of the Ciompi Revolt or to deal with its political aspects and implications. The discussion must remain confined to the economic issues at stake. These issues are raised in three petitions which the lesser guilds and the wool-workers presented to the legislative councils of the Republic for the redress of their grievances.

The demands of the Ciompi were by no means as radical or as revolutionary as one might suppose.³ The masses sought to improve their lot, but they certainly did not seek a complete change of the existing economic system. As a matter of fact, in the absence of any planners, a planned economy would have been entirely inconceivable. Although communism was practised on a small scale by all religious communities, it was still considered impracticable as an economic system and relegated to the realm of utopia by political and social thinkers. The Florentine wool workers were men of their time and did not entertain such a project. They did not even question the existing social hierarchy; the best proof is that, in the excitement of their victory, they created several knights, among whom was Vieri di Cambio de' Medici (1323-95), probably the richest banker in Florence at the time.⁴ Even the symbolism — banners and coats of arms — adopted by the new guilds shows the pervading influence of medieval customs and ideas.

The ruling classes, of course, did not view the demands of the *popolo minuto* with equanimity, but with alarm and dismay, as a bold attempt to destroy the existing social order. To the *lanaioli*, in particular, the coalition of the wool workers was bound to spell the doom of the cloth industry by raising wages and, hence, costs. After all, in the eyes of the masters, the Ciompi were an ungrateful lot who bit the hand that fed them and who rebelled against legitimate authority.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 208-9.

² Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, p. 230.

³ Gene A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton, 1962), p. 384. Cf. Georges Renard, *Histoire du travail à Florence* (Paris, 1914), vol. II, pp. 102-3.

⁴ Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, pp. 110-12; *Il Tumulto dei Ciompi, Cronache e Memorie*, ed. Gino Scaramella, *R.I.S.*, vol. XVIII, 3 (Bologna, 1917-34), pp. 109-10, 145. Among the new knights were a carder, a baker, a wool-beater, none of whom had ever mounted a horse. This ridiculous performance took place amidst the applause and amusement of the crowd. One of the new knights was Luigi di Messer Piero Guicciardini, whose palace had been burned the day before.

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

As already mentioned, the masses in revolt against the government of the major guilds, on 21 July 1378 presented three petitions of which the first embodied the demands of the minor guilds, that is, of the small shopkeepers and independent artisans, such as carpenters, blacksmiths, stonecutters, etc., and the other two set forth the grievances of their allies of the moment, the unorganized workers of the woollen industry. These petitions were certainly put together by some clever notaries, experts in the art of drafting legal documents, who were able to express the aspirations of the masses in a more or less orderly fashion. The first petition was mainly political and it was designed to increase the influence of the minor guilds. The two petitions of the Ciompi also contain a great number of political clauses, but only the economic grievances are of interest here.¹

The main issue, to use modern terminology, was, of course, union recognition. As long as it was not secured, brotherhoods of workers were branded as illicit associations or conspiracies by virtue of the anti-monopoly legislation of the Florentine republic. This explains the importance that the Ciompi attached to this issue and the determination of their opponents to abolish the new guilds once they had been established. There can be no doubt that the wool workers intended to use their power to improve their bargaining position and to wrest better wages and working conditions from their employers. The latter, however, foiled this attempt by declaring an effective lockout which broke up the alliance of the workers and the minor guilds and led to the re-establishment of the *status quo ante*.

Next in importance was perhaps the suppression of the *ufficiale forestiere* of the Wool Guild.² This official who, as his name indicates, was usually a foreigner — supposedly to insure his impartiality — was appointed by the guild and given exclusive jurisdiction over all labour cases, not only disputes over wages but also infractions of regulations

¹ These three petitions are in A.S.F., Provv., 67: the first petition, fols. 1-4; the second petition, fols. 5-8, and the third, fols. 9-13. The first petition was published with some gaps by Gino Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze* (new ed., Florence, 1930), vol. I, pp. 594-9, appendix viii; it was republished, also with omissions, by Pio Carlo Falletti-Fossati, *Il tumulto dei Ciompi* (Florence, 1875), pp. 224-7. Falletti also published the second petition (first of the Ciompi), *ibid.*, pp. 228-33. The text of the third petition (second of the Ciompi) has never been published. A summary of the contents of the petitions presented by the Ciompi is also given in the *Diario compagniano*, published by Giuseppe Odoardo Corazzini, *I Ciompi, Cronache e documenti con notizie intorno alla vita di Michele di Lando* (Florence, 1887), pp. 101-4; and republished by Scaramella ed., *Il Tumulto dei Ciompi*, pp. 110-12. Cf. F.-T. Perrens, *Histoire de Florence* (Paris, 1880), vol. V, pp. 243, 246-8. Rodolico (*I Ciompi*, p. 119) mentions only two petitions, but there were really three. The matter is more correctly stated in Renard, *Histoire du travail*, vol. II, pp. 104-5.

² Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, pp. 12-14; Doren, *Zunftwesen*, pp. 255-6.

LABOUR CONDITIONS IN FLORENCE c. 1400

and charges of cabbaging and sabotage. The *ufficiale forestiere* even had the right to inflict torture in order to extort confessions. From his decisions, the workers had no appeal. One can understand why this official was odious to them and why they petitioned for the abrogation of his office. Some two years after the failure of the Ciompi Revolt, the *ufficiale forestiere* was restored but with somewhat curtailed powers, as the abuses were too evident and too cryingly unfair.

In Florence it was the practice to chop off the right hand of poor people who, if condemned to a fine, were unable to pay it within ten days.¹ Persons thus mutilated were henceforth unable to earn a living or to practise their trade. The Ciompi asked for suppression of this cruel custom which spared the rich and victimized only poor wretches.

With regard to taxation, the Ciompi favoured a fairer administration of the *estimo*, or direct tax, with generous exemptions for the poor, but they were against raising money by forced loans. In accordance with the scholastic doctrine on usury, the Ciompi also objected to the payment of interest on the public debt, the *Monte Comune*. Instead, the petition demanded the suspension of interest payments entirely and the amortization of the principal within twelve years by means of annual instalments. Needless to say that this proposal, after being reluctantly accepted, was soon repealed.² More than a century later, it was taken up again by Girolamo Savonarola (1452–98) and probably contributed to his downfall by making him unpopular with the large class of state creditors.³

Presumably in order to please their allies of the victualling guilds, the wool workers also demanded the abolition of the *Ufficio dell'Abbondanza*. One can see that this office was a thorn in the flesh of the victuallers, but it is harder to understand why the workers would be bent on its destruction, since their interest lay with cheapness and abundance of foodstuffs. This demand may have been made for reasons of expediency to secure the support of the victuallers, particularly the butchers, or perhaps for the reason that the *Ufficio dell'Abondanza* squandered public money or cheated the public by selling spoiled corn.⁴

¹ Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, p. 123.

² As a result of this measure, shares in the *Monte Comune* dropped to 13 per cent of nominal value; after its repeal, they went up again to 24 per cent (Capponi, *Storia*, vol. I, p. 358).

³ R. de Roover, 'Il trattato di fra Santi Rucellai sul cambio, il monte comune e il monte delle doti', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXI (1953), pp. 22–3. Louis F. Marks, 'The financial oligarchy in Florence under Lorenzo', *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London, 1960), p. 136.

⁴ There is some discussion on this question between Marvin Becker ('Pratiche monopolistiche', *op. cit.*, p. 26) and E. Fiumi ('Fioritura e decadenza', *op. cit.*, p. 486 n.).

RAYMOND DE ROOVER

These grievances are all formulated in the second petition. The third petition deals almost exclusively with political matters with the exception of one clause which requests that the rate of the florin be kept down to sixty-eight *soldi di piccioli* or £3 8s. *di piccioli* and not be allowed to go higher. A law was actually passed to put into effect this demand, but its sponsor, Benedetto degli Alberti, incurred the lasting hatred of the ruling oligarchy, who took revenge by sending him into exile.¹

Low wages and labour discontent were not the only problems which plagued the Florentine cloth industry. It also suffered from recurrent waves of unemployment whenever war, pestilence or other events closed market outlets. The poor, of course, were the main victims of these fluctuations, and any drop in output also led to a drop in employment. It is extremely likely that the War of the *Otto Santi* (1375-78), which preceded the Ciompi Revolt, had caused prolonged unemployment, a factor which would explain why the masses were so easily stirred up. In any case, in August 1378, while the popular government was in power, a law was passed which required the Wool Guild to guarantee a monthly output of 2,000 bolts of cloth or 24,000 pieces a year.² This scheme, of course, came to naught because the guild failed to co-operate. In 1382, production barely exceeded 19,000 pieces of cloth.³

How much the masses were concerned with this problem of employment is shown by the following incident. A *lanaiolo* named Jacopo Sacchetti fell into the hands of the mob and was freed only upon condition that he promise to invest 3,000 florins in a *bottega di lana* or a wool shop. As he raised the figure from 3,000 to 6,000 florins, he not only escaped lynching but was applauded by the crowd. By the way, this incident also shows that 6,000 florins was about the maximum invested in any wool firm.⁴

The former insists that the main purpose of this demand was to secure the support of the victuallers, whereas the latter stresses the inefficiency and corruption of the officials entrusted with administering the policy of provision. The text mentions only the 'Officio habundantie carniū', which refers only to meat. Perhaps the purpose was to placate the turbulent butchers. On the *Abbondanza*, see above, p. 287.

¹ Niccolò Rodolico, 'Le sorti del fiorino durante il governo delle Arti Minori in Firenze', *Saggi di storia medievale e moderna* (Florence, 1963), pp. 122-30.

² Rodolico, *I Ciompi*, pp. 147-8; Scaramella ed., *Il Tumulto dei Ciompi*, p. 130.

³ Doren, *Wollentuchindustrie*, pp. 526-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 468, n. 6. Doren misread 'pieces of cloths' for 'florins'. Cf. Robert David-son, 'Blüte und Niedergang der Florentiner Tuchindustrie', *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft*, vol. LXXXV (1928), p. 248. Jacopo Sacchetti was beheaded on 22 December 1379, for participating in a plot (Scaramella ed., *Il Tumulto*, p. 132).

IV

This analysis of labour conditions in Florence agrees with the doctrine that neither moralists nor jurists looked with favour upon any guilds, leagues or brotherhoods, whatever their name, formed by wage earners or journeymen in order to raise wages and exact better terms from their employers. Such combinations were outlawed as illicit conspiracies in restraint of freedom. Practice was in full agreement with theory. In Florence, the law was entirely on the side of the masters and did not curb the monopolistic activities of the Wool Guild while maintaining competition among the workers. The Ciompi Revolt was an early and futile attempt to redress the balance. The ruling classes fought tooth and nail to defeat the scheme and to restore freedom of bargaining in accordance with prevailing economic teachings and traditional policy. The day was still far off in which trade unions were to be recognized as legitimate associations and bargaining agencies.

IX

GENE A. BRUCKER

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION¹

The Ciompi revolution ranks among the most publicized episodes in Florentine history. For an event of such brief duration and limited results, it has stimulated a remarkable amount of contemporary writing. Gino Scaramella's recent edition of Ciompi sources contains more than one hundred pages of chronicles and letters written during, or shortly after, the revolution.² And in his Florentine history, Machiavelli devoted nearly as much space to the Ciompi as to the succeeding half-century. Much of this writing was inspired by a perennial interest in violence and disorder, in upheavals which disrupt the routine of human existence. But the particular fascination which this revolt has held for Florentines was the political programme of the Ciompi, and the implications of revolutionary change in economic and social institutions. The fears of the Florentine ruling class were articulated by Leonardo Bruni in his official history: 'There was no end or measure to the unbridled desire of the lawless rabble, who . . . lusted after the property of rich and honoured men, and thought of nothing but robbery, slaughter and oppression.'³

¹ I acknowledge my obligation and express my gratitude to Lauro Martines and Peter Riesenbergh, for their critical reading of this essay, and their suggestions for its revision.

² *Cronache e memorie sul tumulto dei Ciompi*, R.I.S., vol. XVIII, part 3 (Città di Castello, 1917-34). An earlier collection of Ciompi sources was published by G. Corazzini, *I Ciompi — cronache e documenti con notizie intorno alla vita di Michele di Lando* (Florence 1887). Although written a few years after the event, Stefani's chronicle is one of the most informative and judicious accounts of the revolution; *Cronaca fiorentina di Marchionne di Coppo Stefani*. R.I.S., vol. XXX, part 1 (Città di Castello, 1903-55). Another useful source is A. Gherardi, ed., *Diario d'anonimo fiorentino dall'anno 1358 al 1389*, in *Cronache dei secoli xiii e xiv* (Florence, 1876).

³ *Historiarum florentini populi libri XII*, R.I.S., vol. XIX, part 3 (Città di Castello, 1917-Bologna, 1926), p. 224, quoted by L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (Princeton, 1963), p. 42.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

Not until the nineteenth century was there any significant revision of this negative judgment on the revolution rendered by Bruni.¹ With the recent example of the French Revolution before them, liberal historians viewed the Ciompi more sympathetically. No longer denounced as rebels and villains, they were eulogized as heroes who had struck a dramatic if futile blow for liberty. But while this liberal interpretation was being formulated, scholars were also investigating another important aspect of the revolution: the connection between the political crisis and the social and economic tensions within Florentine society. This problem was examined by Alfred Doren, in his study of the woollen cloth industry, and also by Niccolò Rodolico, in two books dedicated to the revolution and its background.²

The successive stages of this crisis are graphically described in Rodolico's work. Forming the background to the drama was the commune's war with the Papacy, which had dragged on for three years. To combat the political leadership directing the war effort, a peace party was formed by a group of conservative aristocrats who were influential in the Parte Guelfa. These men sought to force the government to make peace by launching a massive campaign to cleanse the electorate of undesirables: parvenus, 'Ghibellines', advocates of popular government, enemies of the church. This campaign of proscription provoked a sharp reaction from those Florentines who were identified with the war. In June, they organized a counter-attack under the leadership of Salvestro de' Medici, and passed legislation to cripple the Parte's power. Meanwhile, in the streets, their followers were burning the houses of Parte leaders. This was the first, 'moderate' stage of the revolution. The defeat and abasement of the oligarchic forces did not calm the city, but instead stimulated unrest among the lower classes, which previously had remained indifferent to the political feuding. A wave of proletarian agitation culminated in a second explosion of violence in mid-July, which toppled the government and established the most democratic régime in Florence's history. This political order, in which cloth workers were represented, survived for only six weeks. Its downfall was precipitated by another swell of labour unrest in late August, which heralded the third and most radical phase of the revolution, and also the beginning of a Thermidorian reaction. To resist these

¹ For a brief survey of Ciompi historiography in the nineteenth century, see N. Rodolico, *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1945), pp. xi-xiii.

² A. Doren, *Die Florentiner Wollentuchindustrie vom vierzehnten bis zum sechzehnten Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1901); N. Rodolico, *Il popolo minuto* (Bologna, 1899); and *La democrazia fiorentina nel suo tramonto (1378-1382)*, (Bologna, 1905). Rodolico's interpretation of the revolution is repeated without alteration in his *I Ciompi*.

GENE A. BRUCKER

pressures of the *popolo minuto*, merchants and artisans formed a coalition which, on the last day of August, defeated the rebellious workers and expelled them from the régime.

According to Rodolico, the origins of the revolution can be traced to discord between economic groups in Florentine society which had existed for several decades. One dimension of this conflict developed within the guild community, between the merchants, bankers and industrialists in the seven greater guilds, and the artisans and small shopkeepers in the fourteen lower guilds. In 1343, the artisans had forced their way into the communal government, and for thirty-five years, the political history of Florence was dominated by a struggle for primacy between proponents of oligarchic and popular government. Labour discontent, which figured so prominently in the Ciompi upheaval, also had a long history. In the 1340s, the workers in Florence's cloth industry had begun to agitate for the right to form their own guild. Although this movement had been suppressed, its ideals and objectives survived in the proletarian consciousness. The political troubles of 1378 gave these labourers the opportunity to realize their goal, to free themselves from the domination of the cloth manufacturers.

Another important study on the Ciompi was recently published by the Russian historian, V. Rutenberg,¹ who accepts many of Rodolico's conclusions, but attacks the Italian scholar's 'bourgeois' orientation. Rutenberg placed the upheaval in a larger geographical context, and related it to other urban revolts in Perugia and Siena in the 1370s. But the Ciompi uprising was the most significant moment in this conflict between capitalist and proletarian, and it represented a critical stage in the development of the nascent class struggle. According to Rutenberg, the background for the revolution developed earlier in the century, when Florentine businessmen shifted from commerce and banking to cloth production, and when the system of production was revolutionized. Cloth manufacture became 'capitalistic'; and the large factory employing many labourers replaced the small *bottega* as the basic unit of production.² In such conditions, the exploitation and misery of the workers increased, and so too did their solidarity. Hos-

¹ V. Rutenberg, *Narodnye dvizheniia v rododakh Italii, XIV — nachalo XV veka* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1958). I am grateful to Prof. Samuel Lieberstein of Miami University of Ohio, for allowing me to use his very detailed notes on the book. There is an extensive summary of Rutenberg's work in E. Werner, 'Der Florentiner Frühkapitalismus in marxistischer Sicht', *Studi medievali*, 3rd ser., vol. I (1960), pp. 663-86.

² Rutenberg's analysis is developed in his book, summarized by Werner, pp. 663-6. His interpretation is not supported by the extant evidence, which indicates that the most flourishing period of the Florentine woollen cloth industry occurred before 1340, not after. Cloth production never again reached the level achieved in 1338, when

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

tility between the classes grew more intense during Florence's war with the Papacy (1375-78), when the workers suffered from chronic unemployment and a heavier tax burden.¹

Rutenberg's account of the revolution's course does not differ significantly from that outlined by Rodolico, although his analysis is developed within the framework of orthodox Marxist theory.² He concludes that the revolution failed because its proponents were not fully conscious of their historical rôle. For example, the workers believed that it would be possible to create a viable political order in co-operation with their former masters. Another serious weakness was disunity within the revolutionary ranks. Participating in the July revolt were the wage labourers, the true Ciompi, and a miscellany of other groups associated with the cloth industry: dyers, factors, apprentices. Unlike the Ciompi, these groups had an economic stake in the existing system of production, and they had limited objectives: guild autonomy and a share of political power. Once these demands were met, they ceased to be a revolutionary force and turned against the workers.³ This division was an important factor in the régime's downfall.

Of the criticisms which may be directed against these studies, the most serious is their excessive reliance upon chronicles, and their failure to use new material from the city's archival resources. A second weakness is conceptual. Neither historian has fully comprehended the complexity of Florence's economic and social structure, the intricate maze of relationships which bound its inhabitants together. They have described a rigid, stratified social order, composed of clearly defined groups, each with its own sense of identity and its ethos. Implicit, too, in these histories is the assumption that the attitudes and behaviour of individual Florentines were determined primarily, if not exclusively, by their socio-economic status.⁴ This simplistic view of history ignores the elements of accident and impulse, and the importance of personal bonds

(according to Giovanni Villani), the industry produced 75,000 pieces of cloth. For a summary and bibliography of the problem, see Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343-1378* (Princeton, 1962), p. 14.

¹ Rutenberg, pp. 142, 155.

² A more recent Marxist study of the revolution, which relies heavily upon Rutenberg, is E. Werner, 'Probleme städtischer Volksbewegungen im 14. Jahrhundert, dargestellt am Beispiel der Ciompi-Erhebung in Florenz', in E. Engelmann, ed., *Städtische Volksbewegungen im 14. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1960), pp. 11-55.

³ For Rutenberg's analysis of the weakness of the workers' movement, see pp. 169-73, 211-12, 231-39, 263-68.

⁴ Rodolico classifies Florentines according to guild membership, and to each guild category he assigns a specific political programme. Rutenberg defines classes strictly in terms of their relationship to cloth production.

which may transcend class ties. It also neglects the rôle of the irrational, which is never absent from the human scene, and which deserves particular consideration in moments of crisis.

It must be admitted, however, that the extant evidence, narrative and archival, does not provide answers to some of the most intriguing problems raised by this upheaval. Although detailed and informative, the chronicles rarely go beyond the level of simple description to attempt a causal explanation, or to probe into motivation. Official records of the revolutionary régime are fragmentary. Neither judicial documents nor minutes of council meetings have survived, nor do we have the records of the scrutiny for the Signoria, which was held in August. These lacunae are only partially filled by the surviving (but incomplete) protocols of the *balìa*, the committee which possessed supreme executive authority in these weeks.¹ Information on the Ciompi is particularly scanty. Little material exists on the economic condition of the cloth workers, and on their opinions and attitudes during the revolution.² The sources are also silent concerning the extent of labour unrest, the existence of secret associations of workers, the character and personality of the revolutionary leaders.

This article will focus upon four problems of Ciompi historiography, in which my reading of the evidence or discovery of new material has led me to conclusions which differ significantly from other interpretations. The first problem, the connection between economic discontent and the outbreak of disorder, has been a central theme of all recent studies on the Ciompi. But the second, the character of the régime which governed Florence in July and August, has received less attention. My objective will be to identify those individuals and groups which controlled the régime, and to clarify their relationships. Closely linked with this problem is a third: the political programme of the Ciompi government, and the degree to which it was implemented during its brief existence. This leads directly to the final question: a reassessment of the factors which contributed to the régime's downfall,

¹ The *balìa* records are printed in C. Guasti and A. Gherardi, ed., *I Capitoli del Comune di Firenze. Inventario e regesto* (Florence, 1866-93), vol. II, pp. 178-84. Only the decrees for 22-8 July and 25-30 August have survived. Also extant is a volume of deliberations of the Signoria and its advisory colleges for July and August; A.S.F., *Deliberazioni dei Signori e Collegi, ordinaria autorità* (henceforth abridged as *Delib. Sig. Coll.*), 21.

² Only one chronicle source, the diary of the *Squittinatore*, Scaramella, pp. 73-102, was sympathetic to the Ciompi and made an honest attempt to describe their objectives and aspirations. A source unnoticed by Scaramella is a fragment of a chronicle by a cloth shearer, Pagolo di Guido, but his account is monotonously factual, and he gives no hint of his reactions to the events which he witnessed; A.S.F., *Carte Strozzi*, ser. 2, 59, pp. 190-2.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

and to the permanent exclusion of the cloth workers from political power in Florence.

Central to the interpretation of Rodolico and Rutenberg is a conception of the Florentine cloth industry, first formulated by Doren in 1901, which emphasizes its modernity: capitalistic organization, large units of production, and intensive regulation and control of the labour force. But recent studies of specific cloth *botteghe* have significantly modified this picture. The factories owned by Francesco Datini and Giovanni de' Medici were small, employing directly only a handful of workers, and producing no more than 200 pieces of cloth annually.¹ The guild records of 1380 reveal that 279 firms were then engaged in cloth production, their output ranging from three to 220 pieces annually.² There were no industrial giants in Florence prior to the Ciompi revolution. Moreover, many important stages of the production process were carried out by petty entrepreneurs — dyers, fullers, stretchers, menders — who operated their own shops, employed their own workers, and occupied a very different position in the industry from that of the wage-earning proletariat.

Since these craftsmen play a crucial rôle in the revolution, it is important to define their status with some precision. They did not possess guild membership, but were *sottoposti*, subject to the discipline of the Wool (*lana*) guild, and occupying the same juridicial position as the lowliest manual labourer. But in economic terms, they ranked on a par with the artisans and shopkeepers who were organized into the fourteen lower guilds. The tax roll (*estimo*) of December 1378 contains the names of some 150 *sottoposti* who were assessed more than one florin, a levy which placed them in the upper ten per cent of the taxpaying population.³ Among the shareholders of the public debt (*Monte*) were fifty men identified in the registers as dyers, carders, washers and menders;

¹ F. Melis, *Aspetti della vita economica medievale* (Siena, 1962), vol. I, pp. 635-729; R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 171-85. De Roover has written an excellent critique of Doren's analysis of the cloth industry, which also refutes Rutenberg's picture of a highly centralized operation, controlled by capitalistic entrepreneurs, employing large numbers of regimented labourers in great factories. There is need for a comprehensive study of the Florentine (and Tuscan) cloth industries, to supersede Doren's work, which does not examine some of the important economic aspects of cloth production. The material is available in the *Lana* and *Mercanzia* protocols (A.S.F.), and in private business records.

² Doren, p. 526. Average output in the four *conventi* of the guild were 57, 65, 91 and 57 pieces annually. These are not actual production statistics, but the amounts for which the *botteghe* were taxed. They were not allowed to produce cloth in excess of their quota, without approval of the guild consuls.

³ This information was culled from the tax assessment of Dec., 1378; A.S.F., Prestanze, 367-72, 425. Some of the more affluent *sottoposti* from the quarter of S.

GENE A. BRUCKER

a handful of these *sottoposti* possessed over 1000 florins in *Monte* shares.¹ The records of the Wool gild furnish additional information on the economic status of these petty entrepreneurs. A prominent revolutionary figure was the cloth shearer, Scatizza, who in 1378 contracted two substantial business debts, totalling seventy florins.² A partnership contract between two wool carders stipulated that one partner would invest 190 lire, or nearly sixty florins, as his capital in the firm.³ Gild records also contain references to labourers who hired themselves to carders, shearers and dyers for annual salaries ranging from fifteen to thirty florins.⁴ The rents paid by these entrepreneurs were also substantial, in some instances as high as that paid by the smaller *lanaioli*.

Giovanni were: Giovanni di Savorigo, burler (2 florins, 19 soldi, 8 denarii), Giovanni di Niccolò, dyer (4-1-6), Stefano di Agnolo, shearer (2-8-4), Bino di Bino, mender (2-17-4), Giovanni di Nutino, burler (3-16-11), Lorenzo Cresci, dyer (4-15-5), Michele and Leonardo Domenici, carders (4-14-7); Prestanze, 369, fols. 67v, 68v, 70v, 82v, 89v, 118v, 128v. These assessments were substantially higher than the average paid by the artisans from the lower gilds.

¹ These large investors were: Francesco di Domenico, carder (1177 fl.), Niccolò di Ricco, dyer (2765 fl.), Sandro di Piero, carder (861 fl.), Alessandro di Jacopo, carder (3731 fl.); A.S.F., Archivio del Monte, 461, fols. 97r, 195v; 809, fol. 6v. Several others had shares totalling over 100 fl.; e.g., Monte, 249, fols. 25v, 82r, 82v, 91r, 105v, 123v, 221r. The *Archivio del Monte* is being reorganized, and the numbers assigned to the volumes are provisional. I wish to thank Dott. Guido Pampaloni of the Archivio di Stato for allowing me to consult his inventory of the archive.

² The references to his debts are in *Arte della Lana*, 76, fols. 24r, 34v. Scatizza was also a creditor, and in May, 1379, he obtained a licence from the podestà, authorizing the seizure and imprisonment of his debtors; A.S.F., Atti del Podestà, 2861, fol. 77v. His *prestanza* assessment was substantial; 1 fl., 15 s., 3 d.; Prestanze, 333, fol. 57r. Evidence of the robust economic condition of some of these *sottoposti* is scattered through the gild protocols: a fuller lends 300 fl. to a clothier; a shearer sells two houses to a wool washer for 160 fl.; another washer and a carder lend 125 fl. and 520 fl., respectively; a stretcher rents a stretching shed for 144 fl. annually; A.S.F., *Lana*, 81, fol. 89r; 82, fols. 5r, 87v; 87, fol. 57v; Atti del Podestà, 3091, fol. 74r.

³ *Lana*, 83, fol. 6r, 11 Jan. 1389, contract between Giovanni di Giovanni and Mariano di Niccolò, carders. For other examples of contracts between *sottoposti* of the *Lana* gild, see *ibid.*, fols. 9v-10r, a society of five shearers, 18 Jan. 1389; *ibid.*, fol. 28r, a partnership between a wool sorter and a broker, 16 Feb. 1389; and another between two fullers; A.S.F., *Mercanzia*, 1182, fol. 89r, Jan., 1381. The account book (1386-89) of Niccolò di Nofri Strozzi and Giovanni di Credi records payments to companies of *sottoposti*, 'a Giovanni e compagni per divetti', 'a Geri e compagni per rivedere', *Carte Stroz.*, ser. 3, 278, fols. 31v, 33v. During one calendar year, this company made payments totalling 468 l. (c. 125 fl.) to a certain Fruosino for carding wool. The size of this payment proves that Fruosino was not a simple worker but an entrepreneur who was himself an employer of labour. Gild loans to dyers and stretchers (*tiratori*) provide some evidence for estimating the amount of capital required to open these establishments. In June, 1379, Giovanni Pitti borrowed 1000 fl. to construct a stretching shed; *Lana*, 46, fol. 99r; in Dec., 1380, a dyer borrowed 300 fl. to set up a shop; *ibid.*, fol. 118v. For other large loans to dyers, see *Lana*, 47, fol. 100v; 48, fol. 90v (5000 fl.); 49, fols. 68r-68v (2700 fl.).

⁴ Most of the employees in these contracts were untrained apprentices, which accounts for their relatively low salaries. A carder, Niccolò di Cialmino, hired a *discepolo* for a yearly salary of 15½ fl.; another, Tommaso di Marco, paid 21 fl. for an assistant; *Lana*, 80, fols. 15r, 19r. A carder and a washer both paid salaries of 20 fl.; *Lana*, 79, fol. 15r. A washer paid 31 fl., a substantial stipend; *ibid.*, 82, fol. 42r.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

The economic activity of these *sottoposti* is also illustrated by the survival of an account book of two *pettinagnoli*, Lippo Dini and Francesco Vanni.¹ Their firm was engaged in the manufacture and sale of loom reeds (*pettini*) for the cloth *botteghe*, but Lippo and Francesco also bought, sold and exchanged cloth, and engaged in moneylending on a small scale. Rarely did the value of their business transactions exceed two or three florins. They did not maintain direct contacts with *lanaioli*, but with their factors, and with other small entrepreneurs who operated on their level, such as the wool carder, Lodovico di Viviano. Although their business contacts were mainly local, they did trade with merchants in Pisa and Pistoia. Their tax quotas exceeded two florins each, which placed them in the upper one-third of the households assessed in their district.² If Lippo and Francesco did not belong to the social world of the *Ricci*, the most powerful family in their neighbourhood, neither did they feel strong kinship with the poor workers who were assessed only two or three soldi, or were too poor to be inscribed on the tax rolls.

On the economic and social condition of these labourers the *Lana* records are less informative. Workers in the cloth industry were paid a subsistence wage, and when unemployed, they were forced into debt. Frequently, they were advanced money by their employers, to ensure the availability of their services when the *botteghe* reopened.³ They also borrowed money from their more affluent brethren among the carders and shearers, who were as merciless in demanding repayment as the most ruthless *lanaiolo*. Creditors exerted pressure upon their victims by sequestering their tools, clothes and even beds.⁴ Another device,

¹ This account book is in A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., ser. 2, 5. The entries run from 1372 to 1378.

² Lippo and Francesco were neighbours in the quarter of S. Giovanni, district of Vaio. Their *prestanza* assessments in April, 1378, were 2 fl., 3 s., 2 d. (Lippo); and 2 fl., 1 s. (Francesco); *Prestanze*, 339, fol. 184r. The tax officials inscribed the names of 134 artisans and labourers in that district who were assessed less than one florin; see particularly, *ibid.*, fols. 193v-201v.

³ Guild records contain numerous acknowledgements of debts owed by *sottoposti* to *lanaioli*; see for example, *Lana*, 76, fols. 11v, 15v, 18r, 24r. Tomaso di Parigi Corbinelli explained why he loaned 47 lire to Bartolo di Biagio, a carder: 'pro suis necessitatibus et ad hoc ut laboret pro eo'; *Lana*, 78, fol. 20r, 8 June 1380. For another example of this rationale, see *ibid.*, fol. 22r. That the practice was widespread is indicated by a guild decree of April 1375; *ibid.*, 45, fol. 105r.

⁴ Two examples of these sequestrations, among hundreds in the protocols, are recorded for 22 Sept. 1378, a few weeks after the Ciompi régime collapsed. A manufacturer named Antonio Betti sequestered a bed and furnishings from a carder named Leonardo, who owed him 15 l.; Nanni di Zuccherò, *lanaiolo*, seized a bed and other property belonging to Chimento Noldini, carder, for a debt of 25 l.; *Lana*, 76, fol. 5r. Some 35 orders of sequestration are recorded in the protocols from mid-September to mid-November. Among the creditors who ordered the seizure of their debtors'

GENE A. BRUCKER

occasionally employed by impatient lenders, was to request that manufacturers refuse work to their debtors, until they had paid their obligations.¹ Over the lives of these workers loomed the menacing figure of the guild's foreign official, who according to one carder's complaint, 'punishes us for every small fault.' The zeal of these officials, stimulated by the regulation which gave them one-fourth of all fines, is amply documented by the *Lana* protocols, which contain the names of scores of cloth workers who were penalized for violating guild regulations.²

From these records, there emerges a picture of a more complex industrial organization than that described by Rutenberg and Rodolico. The simple categories of rich *lanaiolo* and poverty-stricken labourer do not fit accurately the realities of this industry, with its numerous gradations of wealth and status, and its elaborate network of economic relationships. Matriculated in the Wool guild were rich owners of large factories, but also petty entrepreneurs with small production quotas, less prosperous than many unmatriculated *sottoposti*. Many of these small operators had themselves been factors, without legal status in the guild, employed by *lanaioli* as agents and overseers of labour. Conversely, men of good family were to be found among the ranks of the *sottoposti*. The Busini of S. Croce counted several dyers among their number, one of whom was chosen as official representative of the Ciompi in the revolutionary *balìa*.³ These dyers — together with the independent carders, washers and soapmakers — occupied a crucial position in the industry. They chafed under their subjection to the Wool guild; their goal was an independent corporation, with freedom to bargain with the manufacturers. But since they also employed hundreds of workers

property were: Domenico di Matteo, a weaver; Filippo di Giovanni, a washer; Lorenzo di Francesco and Michi, carders; and Francesco di Buonaccorso, a comber; *Lana*, 76, fols. 14r, 17r; 81, fols. 8r, 43v; 88, fol. 29v. A dyer, Barnabo Aldobrandini, imprisoned his debtor, Falco di Francesco, a carder, who had failed to pay him 4 fl., *ibid.*, 82, fol. 47v.

¹ For examples, see *Lana*, 78, fol. 49r; 88, fol. 63r.

² The protest against the foreign official was made by a carder named Simoncino; Brucker, p. 380. Some names of *sottoposti* fined in the months prior to the revolution are recorded in *Lana*, 46, fols. 75v, 76v, 77r, 78r. These lists do not include all who were penalized, but only those whose fines were reduced or cancelled by the consuls. *Lanaioli* were also fined by this official, although less frequently than the *sottoposti*. In August 1372, fourteen *lanaioli* were fined amounts ranging from 75 l. to 150 l.; these sums were reduced by the consuls to 5–25 l.; *Lana*, 45, fols. 115v–116r. For other examples, see *ibid.*, 46, fols., 34r, 46v, 60r, 65r.

³ A select list of representatives from the *popolo minuto* compiled in August 1378 included four Busini, and three men from two other prominent families, the Antellesi and the Cafferelli; A.S.F., *Tratte*, 63, fols. 363r–365r. Giovanni di Neri Pitti operated a stretching shed, a profession normally followed by men of low social origin; *Lana*, 46, fol. 99r.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

in their shops, their attitude toward hired labour did not differ substantially from that of the *lanaioli*.¹

Gild records throw little light upon the state of the industry and its personnel before the revolution. There had been a serious depression between 1368 and 1372, signalled by frequent references to 'bad times' in the protocols, and by a strike of the dyers, who shut down their shops to force the *lanaioli* to pay higher rates for their work.² A gild decree of April 1372 referred to widespread unemployment, which was a by-product of the depression.³ Thereafter, however, the picture changes. While there are no specific references to prosperity in the *Lana* protocols after 1372, neither are there complaints about declining production, unemployment or labour unrest.⁴ It has been assumed that the cloth industry was badly hurt by Florence's war with the Papacy, but the gild documents do not support this conclusion. Although direct imports of wool from England were suspended during the conflict, alternate sources of supply were available. And the city's traditional markets for cloth were not seriously affected by the papal interdict.⁵ Between November 1376 and March 1378 over thirty shops received increased

¹ The list of the *popolo minuto* mentioned above contained 23 dyers, and 25 labourers in dye shops. One dyer, Lorenzo Cresci, employed at least five workers in his *bottega*; *Lana*, 46, fol. 70v. Since these *sottoposti* were subject to the same economic pressures as the *lanaioli*, they treated their employees no less severely. Two examples from the gild protocols illustrate the point. Piero del Gagliardo had borrowed 17 fl. from Senuccio di Niccolò, a carder, which he was required to repay by working in Senuccio's shop at the extremely low wage of 20 s. per week; *Lana*, 85, fol. 12v, Sept., 1389. A carder named Paolo di Cristoforo had broken his contract with an employer, Zanobi di Pepi, a carder, and for 83 days' absence from his work, he was penalized 45 l.; *Lana*, 86, fol. 64r.

² Doren, p. 301, has printed two selections from the protocols which discuss the industry's difficulties in 1369 and 1370. For other references, see *Lana*, 45, fols. 50r, 75v, 88v.

³ This is printed in Doren, p. 230, note 2, but incorrectly dated 1371.

⁴ 'Propter iocunditatem temporis', a phrase included in a gild enactment of Nov., 1414; *Lana*, 48, fol. 106r. The references to depressed economic conditions cease at the end of 1372, and do not appear again until 1379 and 1380, when the gild records are replete with complaints of hard times, labour difficulties, and the poor state of the gild; *Lana*, 46, fols. 96r, 109r, 111r, 112r, 125r, 128v, 130r-131r.

⁵ New evidence concerning this problem has been discovered by R. Trexler, *Economic, Political and Religious Effects of the Papal Interdict on Florence, 1376-1378* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 1964), pp. 51-9, 96-103. Trexler believes that the industry's most serious problem was the shortage of capital, drained away by war expenditures. He admits that the market for Florentine cloth was not seriously affected by the interdict. The records of the *Mercanzia* court prove that Florentine cloth was sold throughout the war in Pisa, Siena, Venice, Hungary and the Levant; *Mercanzia*, 1177, fols. 111r, 215r; 1178, no pag., 30 August 1379; 1179, fols. 20r, 25r; 1181, fol. 30v. Florentine merchants often avoided potential difficulties raised by the interdict by employing agents from other cities, as, for example, in the purchase of insurance on a cargo of cloth to the Levant by two *lanaioli*. The insurance was bought from Genoese merchants, through the Lucchese bankers, the Guinigi; *Mercanzia*, 1178, no pag., 20 May 1379.

GENE A. BRUCKER

production quotas, ranging from twelve to sixty *panni* annually, while the protocols mention only one firm which reduced its output.¹

The evidence does not warrant the conclusion that the condition of the cloth workers deteriorated during the war because the industry was depressed.² The shops were open and busy, and unemployment was not a serious problem. Indeed, some cloth workers obtained well-paying, if temporary, jobs as soldiers in the communal armies. There are no references to wage reductions, nor to any manifestations of labour unrest, either in the gild protocols or in the communal court records.³ A serious grain shortage coincided with the outbreak of war in the spring of 1375, but the commune was not seriously troubled by annony problems during the war years.⁴ It is true that the poorer Florentines bore a heavier tax burden, and that a larger number of cloth workers paid forced loans during the war.⁵ Moreover, they did have perennial grievances concerning wages and working conditions, which they undoubtedly voiced in private, if not openly in the shops and the squares. 'For work which is worth twelve [soldi], they give us eight', complained one disgruntled carder at the height of the revolution.⁶ But no concrete evidence has yet been found to prove that these

¹ Lana, 46, fols. 46v, 50v, 58r, 60v, 64v, 66v, 69v, 72r, 73v, 77r, 78r, 80v. In addition to the single quota reduction, there are two references to cloth *botteghe* which ceased operation during the war; *ibid.*, fol. 70v; 76, fol. 27r.

² Rutenberg cites no specific evidence to support his contention that the living standard of cloth workers declined during the 1370s, and particularly during the war, p. 142. He states that cloth workers were paid between 4 and 10 s. per day; Werner, 'Probleme städtischer Volksbewegungen', p. 33. I think the upper figure more likely. The average wage paid in 1377 and 1378 to manual labourers employed by the commune was 9 s.; K. Frey, *Die Loggia dei Lanzi zu Florenz* (Berlin, 1885), p. 265; A.S.F., Archivio della Parte Guelfa, rosso, 120, fols. 30r-30v. In a gild document of 1390, a carder's daily wage is calculated at 11 s.; Lana, 86, fol. 64r. Assuming 20 working days per month, a labourer earning 10 s. daily would receive 10 lire or 3½ fl. monthly, which in times of normal food prices would be adequate to support a small family. The lowest categories of communal employees (messengers, guards, etc.) were paid from 5 to 8 l. per month; Lib. Fab., 52, fol. 112r; A.S.F., Camera del Comune, Uscita, 254, fol. 1r. The basic subsistence wage, paid to retired pensioners, varied from 4l. to 2 fl. per month; Provv., 102, fols. 8r, 140v-141r; 106, fols. 22r, 162r; Lana, 50, fol. 128v.

³ Brucker, p. 378. The contrast with lower-class turbulence in the 1340s is striking; *ibid.*, pp. 107-11.

⁴ In Jan. 1376, the treasurer of the commune's grain commission received 7400 fl. to finance food purchases; Camera del Comune, Uscita, 223, Capsa Conducte, 31 Jan. 1376. No additional money was paid to this commission from the communal treasury until October 1377, when 10,762 lire (roughly 3000 fl.) was appropriated; Uscita, 228, Capsa Conducte, 28 October 1377. No further payments, however, are recorded for the winter and spring of 1377-78; Uscita, 230, 231.

⁵ Rutenberg has noted the heavier tax burden of the industrial workers. The evidence can be found in the *prestanze* lists, which show a sharp increase in the number of assessments: from 1148 in June 1375 to 2594 in April 1378; Brucker, p. 316, n. 71.

⁶ Brucker, p. 380.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

grievances were more intense, and more widely articulated, in the early months of 1378 than in previous years.

Scattered through the gild protocols are a few fragments of information which hint at discord within the cloth industry during the war years. But the manufacturers were quarrelling, not with their hired labourers, but with the dyers and the factors. Throughout the war, the gild continued its programme of building and operating its own dye plants and stretching sheds. A primary objective of this programme was to force the independent entrepreneurs to maintain their prices at the levels established by the gild operations. In June 1377 the gild invested money in two dye shops, 'so that the manufacturers . . . desiring to dye their cloth will be better and more adequately served, and at better prices'. The gild also loaned 1000 florins to a cloth stretcher to build and equip his plant, on the condition that he charge no more than six soldi per cloth for his services.¹ The gild's sharpest criticism was levelled at its own factors, the supervisors who directed the daily operations of the *botteghe*. In April 1378 the gild consuls complained that many factors had abandoned their metier to enter the gild as *lanaioli*, and then 'they committed dishonest and evil acts against the gild for the purpose of making money'. To restrain this influx of new blood and tainted business practices into the gild, the consuls quadrupled the matriculation fees for factors.² Inevitably, these measures alienated the more affluent and ambitious *sottoposti*, and intensified their resentment against their superiors. Such gild activities help to explain why many factors and dyers joined the revolution and fought to destroy the hegemony of the Wool gild, and the political order which had established and protected that hegemony.

The sources, then, do not reveal any specific connection between workers' grievances and misery, and the first wave of disorders which erupted in June. But Florence was not a tranquil city in the early months of 1378. Three years of war had depleted resources and weakened morale, and had intensified partisan rancours. However, the material and psychological burdens of the struggle were apparently borne more easily by Florentines of low estate, than by the higher echelons of society. The first manifestations of panic, the first symptoms of irrational

¹ Lana, 46, fols. 88r-v, 99r.

² *Ibid.*, fol. 81r, 27 April 1378. The matriculation fee paid by factors with ten years of experience was raised from 25 l. to 25 fl. The measure may have been a response to increasing economic difficulties within the industry; it was clearly designed to lessen competition by reducing the number of *lanaioli*.

GENE A. BRUCKER

behaviour, occurred among the conservative patricians who controlled the Parte Guelfa. By pursuing their vendetta against 'Ghibellines', these Parte oligarchs precipitated the crisis which led to their own defeat, and to the later stages of the revolution which convulsed the entire society. This first phase of the upheaval was essentially a political realignment within the ruling group, with few overtones of economic and social conflict. Salvestro de' Medici and his followers were determined to crush their opponents, but they had no intention of making radical changes in the communal structure or in the economic order.¹

Thus, while the June revolution had removed some faces from the political scene, it had not altered either institutions or policies. But this first uprising did inaugurate certain trends which persisted throughout the revolution. Most significant was the introduction of violence into the political arena. A second innovation was the participation of all levels of Florentine society in political discussion and activity, on a scale not achieved since the disturbances of the 1340s. The city was transformed into a pulsating network of conventicles, groups which met secretly in churches, in taverns and private homes to discuss events and issues, and perhaps to plot. Taking part in these secret gatherings were the disenfranchised groups in the cloth industry, who now began to voice their grievances more emphatically, and to search for means to improve their lot. And in these meetings, the first tentative contacts were established between those artisans and cloth operatives who demanded more radical reforms, and the representatives of Salvestro de' Medici's faction who also favoured an extension of the revolution.

These three ingredients — violence, mass involvement in political discussion, contacts and perhaps conspiracy among bourgeois, artisan and labourer — combined to produce the revolt of 21–22 July, which toppled the régime and established a new political order. Taking part in this revolt were men from every level of Florentine society: a handful of patrician leaders, a substantial representation of artisans and petty shopkeepers from the lower guilds, plus a massive throng of *sottoposti* and wage labourers from the cloth industry.²

The complicity of Salvestro de' Medici and his associates in the régime's downfall is clearly indicated, if not conclusively proved, by the

¹ For my analysis of the June revolution, see Brucker, pp. 363–73. Cf. E. Werner's criticism of this interpretation, *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. XI (1963), pp. 1002–3. Some important new material on Florentine religious attitudes and practices during the war has been published by R. Trexler, *op. cit.*, pp. 103–61.

² For the background and events of the July revolution, see Brucker, pp. 373–86; Rodolico, *Ciampi*, pp. 97–128; Rutenberg, pp. 170–204.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

surviving evidence.¹ But the sources throw no light upon the motives of these patrician conspirators. Several hypotheses may be advanced to explain their behaviour; each may have some validity. These men were partisan leaders, with a large following among artisans, shopkeepers and manual labourers.² Some may have been intoxicated by visions of power, and by the prospect of becoming masters of a new political order. The activities of certain patrician radicals were strongly, perhaps decisively, influenced by personal enmities. The chroniclers noted Giorgio Scali's hatred of the Parte oligarchs who proscribed one of his relatives in 1374, his responsibility for the burning of Boninsegna Machiavelli's house, and his vendettas against two other enemies, Bese Magalotti and Nofri di Ser Piero.³ It is likely, too, that some of these leaders were as strongly influenced by fear as by lust for power. They were the principal targets for the revenge of oligarchs who had been exiled, and who were capable of organizing a counter-revolutionary effort. Particularly vulnerable were the 'new men' who had recently achieved status and political influence, and those who had been proscribed by the Parte Guelfa. The lawyer, Donato Aldighieri, and the druggist, Giovanni Dini, may have been convinced that their security could only be guaranteed by a popular régime, in which the lower levels of society were strongly represented.⁴ But even such patricians as Salvestro de' Medici and Tommaso Strozzi may have sensed their isolation and danger, alienated from their class by their position as leaders of the *popolo minuto*.

The cases of Tommaso Strozzi and Benedetto Alberti are the most perplexing in the roster of patrician radicals. They were wealthy businessmen, from two of the most illustrious families in the city. Although both had long been identified with the popular faction in Florentine politics,⁵ their own economic interests were so clearly threatened by revolution that one is tempted to search for hidden

¹ For the evidence of this complicity, see Brucker, p. 389, note 158.

² Those named in the chronicles as leaders of the conspiracy are: Benedetto Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi, Giorgio Scali, Giovanni Dini, Remigio Rondinelli and Guerriante Marignolli; Scaramella, pp. 55, 57. The chroniclers do not venture opinions on the motives and objectives of these leaders. Only one, Ser Nofri di Ser Piero, *ibid.*, p. 57, makes a moral judgment: '... messer Benedetto degli Alberti, il quale era reo uomo, coll'aiuto di Tommaso di Marco degli Strozzi, el quale fu poco savio e baldanzoso. ...'

³ Scaramella, pp. 15, 59-62; *Diario d'anonimo*, p. 359.

⁴ After the June uprising, several proscribed citizens were rebuffed in their attempts to regain their political rights; *I Capitoli del Comune di Firenze*, vol. II, p. 94. Among those rejected were Aldighieri; Maso di Nero, a ropemaker identified as a ringleader of the July conspiracy (Scaramella, p. 21); Giovanni Mozzi, a merchant from an old patrician family; and two lawyers, Messer Giovanni da Poggibonsi and Messer Giovanni di Messer Scolaio di Ser Berto.

⁵ Brucker, pp. 101, 128, 206, 211, 325, 364, 384.

GENE A. BRUCKER

motives to explain their activities. Unfortunately, the sources do not yield any clues. Tommaso Strozzi was the most aggressive and fanatical partisan in the cadre of patrician leaders.¹ Whether he was inspired by a simple love for power, or by an ideological commitment to popular government, he was a strong and ruthless partisan leader, not overly scrupulous in the methods which he employed against his enemies.² Benedetto Alberti's involvement in the revolution may have been dictated by a desire to protect his family's vast fortune. The most moderate of the patrician radicals, and the most popular with the rank and file, he may have hoped to use his prestige to moderate the revolution's course, and to direct its force into less destructive channels.³

Concerning the Ciompi leaders, the spokesmen for the cloth workers, the chroniclers are even less informative. These proletarian chieftains are identified only by their names and occupations: the shopkeeper Michele di Lando, the baker Meo del Grasso, the armourer Simone di Biagio, the burler Luca del Melano, the carder Jacopo del Testa, the shearer Jacopo di Bartolo, called Scatizza. In the absence of concrete evidence, one can only speculate about the combination of personal qualities, circumstances and fortune which propelled them to the front rank of the revolutionary government. The fiscal records indicate that many did not belong to the poorest stratum of society, but were men of small means: taxpayers, owners of real estate, proprietors of small businesses.⁴ But more significant than economic status was the background of military experience possessed by many of these Ciompi leaders. While exploring treasury records, Corazzini learned that Michele di Lando had fought in the Pisan war (1362-64), as the captain of a band of foot soldiers.⁵ Had he pursued his researches further, he would have discovered that several Ciompi leaders (Luca del Melano, Leoncino Francini, Stagio Dati, Simone di Francesco, Forese Lavanini,

¹ Stefani, *Cronaca*, rub. 590; Brucker, p. 107.

² Strozzi was responsible for the treason trial and execution in 1379 of Messer Donato Barbadori, a prominent diplomat and statesman, whom Stefani, rub. 827, believed was unjustly condemned. A petition of 1385 by one of Tommaso's relatives, Marco di Uberto Strozzi, displays another facet of his character. According to this document, Tommaso threatened Marco's life until the terrorized victim named Tommaso as his heir; Provv., 75, fols. 90v-91r.

³ In the scrutiny of 1382, Benedetto received 136 votes of 150 votes cast; Ildefonso di San Luigi, ed., *Delizie degli eruditi toscani* (Florence, 1770-1789), vol. XVI, p. 161.

⁴ The *estimo* levies of several prominent Ciompi leaders were well above the average in their districts: Jacopo di Bartolomeo, called Scatizza (2 fl., 9 s., 4 d.), Benedetto da Carlone (2-8-2), Michele di Lando (2-0-10), Simone di Biagio (3-2-11); Prestanze, 367, fol. 28v; 369, fols. 7r, 75r, 117v.

⁵ Corazzini, *Ciompi*, pp. 149-57. Michele shared command, with another *caporale*, over 28 foot soldiers. There is no evidence that he saw active service during the papal war.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

Michele Piccini, Luca di Guido), had served as *caporali* in the communal forces during the papal war.¹ The evidence does not permit us to conclude that the revolution was primarily the work of disgruntled army veterans, unhappy over the termination of their military service and high salaries.² But the concentration in the city of several hundred ex-soldiers, many of whom were normally employed in the cloth factories,³ is an important factor. It influenced the selection of the Ciompi leaders, and also conditioned the mentality of the rank and file. Soldiers accustomed to handling arms are less docile than labourers.

This mélange of evidence conveys some sense of the complex nature of the revolution, and the pattern of forces and pressures which provided its momentum. It was not simply a product of economic discontent, although friction between employer and worker was a major source of revolutionary energy. But this ferment was not limited to the cloth industry, and it did not arise solely from the grievances of the unskilled workers. Contributing to the protests and disorders were many economic categories: dyers and washers, factors and apprentices, foremen and brokers, carders and beaters; each with its own set of problems and its particular grievances. It is not improbable that other trades and occupations — workers in silk shops, tanning plants and foundries, unorganized tradesmen and vendors — joined in the uprisings, and hoped to ameliorate their condition through a reform of the political

¹ These records are in Camera del Comune, Uscita, 222, Capsa Conducte, 21 Dec. 1375; 223, 18 Jan. 1376; 225, 4 Feb. 1377; 228, 20 Sept. 1377. Luca del Melano was a prominent Ciompi leader; he and Luca di Guido were active in the radical workers' movement of late August, and were exiled after its suppression. Leoncino Francini was chosen Prior in July 1378, while Michele Piccini was selected one of the sixteen *gonfalonieri* of the companies at the same time. Stagio Dini, Simone Francesci, Pierozzo di Bartolomeo, Tommaso di Bartoli, all *caporali*, were appointed *sindaci* of the *popolo minuto* and thus were members of the *balìa* which possessed supreme authority during the Ciompi régime. Among the foot soldiers who played active rôles in the revolution were: Marco Fei, Matteo di Turino, Cambio Bartoli, all *sindaci*; Nofri Cinelli and Marco Davazini, leaders of the dissident Ciompi movement of late August.

² The troops received unusually high salaries: 7 fl. per month for the *caporali*, 6 fl. for the *balestrieri*. However, they apparently served for only short periods, not permanently. The payments in January 1376 were for 9 days' service in Città di Castello; in September 1377, the Florentine recruits were paid for 25 days' service in Lombardy, during the previous March. If it could be shown that several hundred cloth workers were in military service throughout the war, this would explain why there was apparently so little unemployment and labour unrest in the cloth industry. But the extant evidence is not sufficient to support this conclusion.

³ The records contain the names of 304 soldiers, residents of the city, who received pay in December 1375; Camera, Uscita, 222, 21 December. A comparison of this muster roll with tax records and scrutiny lists reveals that many of these soldiers were cloth workers. Among the 50 troops recruited from the district of Ferza in S. Spirito, were 12 men identified as cloth workers in the scrutiny list of July 1378, and the tax assessment of December 1378; Tratte, 58, fols. 254r-255r; Prest., 387, fols. 118r, 118v, 121r, 125v.

GENE A. BRUCKER

system. And while personal animosities and emotional attachments are not as significant as economic grievances or class enmity in revolutionary situations, they cannot be discounted entirely. Family quarrels, personal vendettas and private obligations, the thirst for revenge and the impulse for aggrandizement, and at least a modicum of ideology: all played some part in this revolution. Faintly visible, too, are the ramifications of a decision by the war commission to recruit contingents of cloth workers, to train them in the use of arms, to pay them well, and then abruptly to discharge them.

The government which was established in late July was a provisional affair, and since it survived for only six weeks, it left few records upon which to judge its character. Supreme authority was vested in a special commission or *balìa*, which had originally been created after the June revolt, and to which additions were made in late July. This body enacted legislation, and its decrees were put into effect by executive orders issued by the Signoria. Historians have not paid adequate attention to this *balìa*, its personnel, leadership and policies. Did it fairly represent all sections of Florentine society? Was it controlled by certain individuals, or by particular economic and social groups? Were its deliberations marked by the fissures which divided the society, or were its members united in a common effort to promote the public welfare? Was it conservative and traditional in its policies, or did its members espouse a radical programme of reform?

Theoretically, the *balìa* included representatives from every social stratum, from the highest to the lowest, with the exception of the aristocratic magnate families. Offices in the new régime were to be shared equally by the three categories within the gild community: the seven *arti maggiori*, the fourteen *arti minori*, and the three newly created gilds formed by the *sottoposti* of the Wool gild. But these divisions were artificial and did not reflect accurately the new balance of power, nor the social composition of the *balìa*. In reality, the old patrician class, comprising those families which had dominated Florentine politics for a century, was largely excluded from the *balìa*. Predominating in this body were gildsmen, artisans and small shopkeepers, who had never held office in the past. Their participation in the *balìa* signified a revolution in the office-holding class, the wholesale introduction of new blood into Florentine politics.¹ Also heavily represented were the

¹ Among the 37 members of the Signoria and colleges selected by acclamation on 22 July, only 5 were from families that had filled these offices in the past (Capponi, Medici, Falconi, Alberti, Attaviani), Stefani, rub. 796. Particularly significant is the

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

recently enfranchized dyers, carders, shearers, washers and menders who were engaged in some phase of the cloth manufacturing process. But the majority of these *ex-sottoposti* were operators of shops, not hired workers, and their goals and objectives did not coincide with those of the wage labourers.

The minimal representation of these Ciompi in the government can be seen through an examination of the economic background of the *sindaci* of the *popolo minuto*. This group of thirty-two men, which formed part of the *balia*, was specially chosen to represent the interests of the labouring class, the 'little people' of Florence. But while perhaps half of these *sindaci* were poor workers, a substantial number belonged to very different social categories. These included men who paid large *prestanze*: the notary, Ser Andrea Corsini, affluent merchants like Mezza di Jacopo Attaviani and Miniato Nucci, and the silk manufacturer, Michele di Ser Parente.¹ Furthermore, the relatively high tax assessments of the dyers, washers and menders among these *sindaci* suggest that many were not hired workers but masters of their own small *botteghe*, modest property owners, men with a minimal stake in the economic order.²

Numerically preponderant in the *balia* and in the Ciompi régime were men of small means and low social status, but not propertyless or destitute *miserabili*. Their basic instincts were conservative, not radical. They had participated in the revolution because they feared the oligarchs seeking to establish a closed political system, and the *lanaioli* who exercised jurisdiction over their economic activity. Perhaps they were also envious of the wealth of the patriciate. But they were not

fact that none of the lower gild office-holders in the old régime played an important rôle in the new government. For example, in one district (Chiavi, quarter of S. Giovanni), 3 artisans who had been Priors (Niccolò di Chiaro, Benghi Panze and Giovanni Amannati) were not even nominated for the scrutiny of the Signoria held in August; *Tratte*, 58, fols. 14r-15v. Three other former Priors (Giovanni di Cenni, Giovanni di Mone, Niccolò Montini) were nominated, but they may have been rejected in the scrutiny.

¹ The *sindaci* are identified in a provision which was adopted by the councils of 22 July, printed in C. Falletti-Fossati, *I Ciompi* (Florence, 1875), p. 117. The tax assessments of these men: Attaviani (2-17-4), Corsini (4-7-0), Nucci (10-6-9), Michele di Ser Parente (2-1-7); *Prest.*, 334, fol. 73r; 368, fol. 20r; 369, fols. 67r, 123v.

² *Balia* members whose tax assessments were sufficiently high to fit into this category are: Ciardo Berti, wine merchant (1-16-10), Baldo di Lapo, burler (1-0-8), Stagio Dini, yarn broker (0-16-8), Tommaso Bartoli, burler (0-16-9), Spinello Borsi, *lanaiolo* (1-5-1); *Prest.*, 369, fols. 13r, 84r, 102r; 372, fol. 61v; 425, no pagination. But half of the *sindaci* paid very low assessments, or none at all, and almost certainly were hired labourers. They were all described as carders in the tax rolls: Simone di Sandro (0-8-4), Filippo di Simone (0-2-5), Lorenzo di Riccomanno (0-3-11), Pierozzo di Bartolomeo (0-4-9), Giovanni di Giovanni (0-4-3); *Prest.*, 371, fols. 75r, 153v; 372, fol. 31r; 395, fol. 186r; 397, fol. 52v.

GENE A. BRUCKER

hostile to all wealth, for they were guided and influenced by two of the richest men in Florence: Benedetto Alberti and Tommaso Strozzi. These patricians were in a strategic position to influence the inexperienced members of the *balìa*. Around each of these leaders — Alberti, Strozzi, Giorgio Scali, Salvestro de' Medici — formed a clique of associates and dependents from the ranks of the artisans and cloth workers.¹ Certainly in the *balìa*, as well as in the guild community which it represented, personal bonds were important. In determining the course of events, these ties may have been as significant as economic interest or class consciousness.

The sources contain only scraps of evidence about these relationships and their influence on politics during the revolution.² The chronicler, Ser Nofri di Ser Piero, wrote that the patrician leaders of the Ciompi maintained intimate connections with a group of 'bandits' from the lower classes, and specifically identified the armourer, Simone di Biagio, and the carder, Scatizza, as henchmen and underlings of Benedetto Alberti and Salvestro de' Medici. But Ser Nofri and his father, Ser Piero di Ser Grifo, had their own band of supporters and their own network of alliances. In his chronicle, Nofri referred to a certain El Carota as 'the creature' of his father and himself.³ Personal ties of this nature were not a new phenomenon in Florentine politics, but during the Ciompi episode they played an unusually important rôle.⁴ For they provided this large and disorganized group of 'new men' with leaders, and therefore with some sense of security, in a milieu which was totally unfamiliar.⁵

¹ The sources do not describe their political activities in the Ciompi régime. On Salvestro de' Medici's reputation as 'father of the revolution', see Brucker, 'The Medici in the Fourteenth Century', *Speculum*, vol. XXXII (1957), p. 20.

² For a general discussion of patron-client relationships in Florence, see my article, 'The Structure of Patrician Society', in *Colloquium*, ed. N. Cantor, no. 1 (1964).

³ Scaramella, p. 58. Stefani, 826, also noted that Ser Nofri was very influential in the town of Figline on the Arno, 'che avea in quello paese grande seguito; perocchè quando era in Firenze ed in istato, era egli, e 'l padre quasi un signorello di tutta quella provincia.'

⁴ The most revealing source on the nature and proliferation of personal bonds during this period, and their influence on politics, is the correspondence of the Del Bene family. Letters which throw light on this problem survive from 1378 to 1381. In October 1378, Giovanni del Bene wrote from Ascoli, where he was serving as an official, to his cousin Francesco in Florence. He sought to obtain posts in Florence for two of his subordinates, one a physician, to whom he was 'perpetually obligated' and also a doctor of law, Messer Baldassare: A.S.F., Carte del Bene, 52, no pag. The 'new men' who entered politics in 1378 soon learned to manipulate the bonds which linked them to other political figures. When Francesco del Bene was vicar of the Valdinevole in 1381, he received many letters from artisans (including the ubiquitous Simone di Biagio), demanding favours and benefits for their friends; *ibid.*, 51, no pag.

⁵ For an earlier example of this confrontation of political veterans and *gente nuova*, see my discussion of internal politics after 1343; Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, pp. 105-6. But in

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

These bonds between patricians, artisans and labourers attest to the personal character of Florentine politics, even in this period of democratic and egalitarian influence. It was through such connections that Benedetto Alberti, Tommaso Strozzi and the other patrician leaders were able to influence the *balia*, and to moderate its radical impulses. For the enactments of this *balia* were fundamentally conservative. They were directed towards the liquidation of the revolution, the restoration of old forms and traditions, and the evisceration of the Ciompi programme which had been promulgated in July. The sources do not reveal whether the *balia*'s conservative orientation aroused strong opposition among some of its proletarian members. Its decrees were passed by large majorities, with only a handful of dissident votes.¹ These negative ballots could represent a conservative minority, but they might also have been cast by men who were protesting against the betrayal of the revolution.

Primary objectives of the authorities were the restoration of order and the creation of an atmosphere of legitimacy. The régime took advantage of every opportunity to advertise its connection with the past, particularly by means of ceremony and ritual. On 24 July, a large crowd assembled in the Piazza della Signoria to witness the official transfer of the banners to each of the city's sixteen military companies. When a measure of quiet had been achieved, the Priors marched through the streets with their retinue and their musicians, thus continuing an ancient custom. The sight of this procession moved one observer to comment that 'it greatly reassured those who wished to live in peace'.² The lifting of the papal interdict also enabled the régime to capitalize on the religious enthusiasm of the populace. On 5 August, a great throng of the faithful crowded into the church of S. Maria Novella to hear mass, and this was followed by a ceremony in the palace of the Signoria, and by public celebrations in the streets.³

Not until early August did the normal rhythm of life return to Florence, when most shops opened and men again went about their daily affairs.⁴ The last days of July were marked by a cessation of

the 1340s, the artisans had some limited experience in political activity, through their participation in gild affairs. The Lana *sottoposti* had never attended a gild meeting, witnessed a political debate, or participated in a vote.

¹ These votes were recorded for session of 25-7 August; 108:11, 112:18, 99:28, 116:17, 107:13, 112:20, 116:15; *Capitoli*, II, pp. 179-83.

² *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 370; Scaramella, p. 116.

³ *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 372-73.

⁴ Letters from the Datini archives of late July and early August reflect this trend. Two letters of 27 and 28 July note that 'le novità son sute qua e anchora sono', while a later note of early August reported: 'Le chose si venghono achonciando qua. Chredo

business activity, by frequent rumours of new uprisings, and by the assembly of armed forces in the streets to thwart any attack upon the régime.¹ Quietly and persistently, the authorities endeavoured to persuade the citizenry to surrender its arms. On 28 July, the captains of the military companies began a search for hidden weapons. But they treated the possessors of arms leniently and sought to avoid incidents.² It is likely that this policy of moderation did contribute to the pacification of the city, and did reduce tensions and allay fears which had been aroused by the disorders. But the subsidence of armed violence did not mean that social peace had been restored, but only that tensions and conflict had been forced underground. Fear that a single act of violence might rekindle the disorders prompted decrees forbidding private quarrels or denunciations of one citizen by another.³

The régime's most imaginative response to the problem of internal security was the creation of a civic militia. The *balìa* authorized the creation of a special armed force of 1000 crossbowmen which garrisoned the city, and undoubtedly restrained counter-revolutionary activity.⁴ This militia also served to reduce social unrest, for many of the troops were recruited from the lower classes. Their salaries, paid on schedule, enabled some poor Florentines to feed themselves.⁵ The formation of this militia dedicated to the régime's preservation may also explain the absence of organized opposition in the *contado*, where magnate families and patrician castellans might have promoted rebellion. During the revolution which accompanied the expulsion of the Duke of Athens in

andranno bene al piacere di Dio. È vero che si fa molto pocho', R. Piattoli, 'L'origine dei fondaci datiniani di Pisa e Genova', *Archivio Storico Pratese*, vol. VII (1927), p. 177.

¹ Scaramella, pp. 114-15.

² *Ibid.*, p. 115: 'E poi, el dì, andaro i gonfalonieri di compagnia per la terra con gente d'arme; e trovando uno con arme, piacevolmente gli diceano la dasse a porre giù; e così per assai si puose giù, ma no però al tutto giù si ponesse; ma la gente, pure per assai, si lasciò.' In the deliberations of the Signoria are directives sent to one of the rectors, ordering him to release three men who had been caught with weapons; Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 15r.

³ *Diario d'anonimo*, p. 372.

⁴ There is disagreement among the chroniclers over the size of this militia. Three cite the figure of 1000 crossbowmen; *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 371, Scaramella, pp. 114, 130; but another chronicler stated that 1500 were hired; Scaramella, p. 77. Stefani, 799, asserted that the commune 'diessi soldo a bene 2000 tra' balestrieri ed altri per due mesi', but in this figure he may have included the entire corps of communal employees in the Palazzo Vecchio.

⁵ For descriptions of troop musters to receive pay, see *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 371, 375. Payments to *caporali* are recorded in Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 27r, printed in *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 518. The chroniclers also differ on the pay schedules of the troops. One stated that the pay was 5 fl. per month; Scaramella, p. 130; while others described a more complex schedule of payment, based upon the type of service; *ibid.*, pp. 77, 114-115. The payments recorded in the *Deliberazioni* vary in size, from 5 to 19 s. per day. The average was 10 soldi per day which (at the rate of 75 s. per florin) would be equal to 4 fl. per month.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

1343, many subject towns and districts revolted. In 1378, however, these areas remained quiet. The Signoria also contributed to the security of the outlying areas by sending representatives to inspect the fortified places, and, presumably, to investigate the loyalty of the officials.¹

The régime also took pains to emphasize its legality and its continuity with the past by embracing traditional forms and procedures. In its promulgation of orders, the Signoria punctiliously followed the prescribed routines, and prior to every election, the notary read out the traditional injunction to choose 'well qualified men who are not Ghibellines nor suspect [of Ghibelline sympathy] nor excluded from office by communal ordinances'.² On 27 July, the Signoria decided to permit all castellans, vicars and podestàs in Florentine territory to retain their posts until their terms of office had expired. It was a gesture of confidence to a large group of office-holders, composed mainly of patricians, and perhaps also an admission of the régime's impotence to effect an immediate change in personnel.³ This decision also postponed the grant of offices to the newly enfranchized citizens whose commitment to the régime might have been strengthened by such benefices. However, the Signoria did scrutinize those who were selected to office, and one patrician with strong oligarchic sympathies, Angelo Castellani, was forced to give up his vicariate in the Apennines.⁴ The mortality rate of officials in the central bureaucracy was higher. Several notaries were dismissed from their posts and replaced by men more sympathetic to the new régime.⁵ And the officials in charge of the city prison, 'whose infamies are well known', were also removed from their posts.⁶

While the authorities moved cautiously with respect to current office-holders, they did act to consolidate the revolution by holding a

¹ For the dispatch of these officials by the Signoria, see Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fols. 11v, 13r, 19v, 25r, 27v.

² For an example of this formula, see Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 8v.

³ Ibid., fol. 4v. Among officials expressly confirmed in their posts were representatives of such prominent families as the Quaratesi, Strozzi, Altoviti, and Medici; *ibid.*, fols. 1r, 3v, 5r, 21r. For the identity of other patrician officials, see *ibid.*, fols. 55r-58v.

⁴ Ibid., fol. 10r.

⁵ Among notaries removed from their posts were the unidentified notary of the salt gabelle; Ser Nigi di Ser Giovanni, notary of the *prestanze*; Ser Giovanni di Ser Silvestro, and the unidentified notary of the *Dieci della Libertà*; *ibid.*, fols. 4v, 10v, 15r, 23r. Also cashiered were the treasurer of the salt gabelle (unnamed), and two officials in charge of confiscated ecclesiastical property, Piero Serragli and Bernardo Beccanugi; *ibid.*, fol. 5v. Rutenberg's statement, pp. 239-40, that the bureaucratic apparatus was left in the hands of the old officials must be qualified.

⁶ Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 22r, 25 Aug. No explanation was given for the removal of these officials, who are identified in Camera del Comune, *Uscita*, 232, fol. 3r.

new scrutiny for the major offices, i.e., the Signoria and its advisory colleges.¹ A special commission of 220 scrutators voted upon lists of nominees drawn up by the captains of the sixteen districts.² No records survive to indicate how many citizens received the approbation of the scrutators. One chronicler favourable to the new régime wrote that the scrutiny was held 'to give a share [of the government] to more people, and so each would be content and have a share of the offices, and so the citizens would all unite, and the poor man would have his share when his turn comes'.³

The fortuitous survival of nomination lists from four of the city's sixteen districts provides some evidence for evaluating this election.⁴ A total of 459 former *sottoposti* of the Wool gild were nominated for the Signoria in these four districts, which, if projected for the entire city, would indicate that less than 2000 newly enfranchized citizens were nominated for high office. Thus, no more than one-sixth of the new gildsmen (estimated at 13,000) were proposed for the supreme executive.⁵ Naturally, the more affluent were heavily represented in the scrutiny lists, while thousands of poor labourers were not even considered for the Signoria.⁶ To ensure the permanent exclusion of these undesirables from the supreme executive, the *balìa* decreed that only those citizens registered in the *prestanze* lists were eligible for communal office.⁷ Thus, the division within the revolutionary ranks between the

¹ *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 371; Scaramella, pp. 77, 115, 130.

² According to one chronicler, only the lists drawn up by the *gonfalonieri* of the companies were used in the balloting; Scaramella, p. 78. If this is correct, it represents a departure from the procedure in effect before 1378, which stipulated that separate lists of nominees were to be compiled by the *gonfalonieri*, the consuls of the guilds and the captains of the Parte Guelfa; D. Marzi, *La cancelleria della repubblica fiorentina* (Rocca S. Casciano, 1910), pp. 557-65. Perhaps the *balìa* decided to simplify the procedure to speed up the scrutiny (which required 13 days, from 9 to 21 August).

³ Scaramella, pp. 76-7. See also *ibid.*, p. 78: 'E così si fece il buono scuittino, che contentò molta gente, i quali non avevano mai auto parte d'ufficio, e sempre erano stati alle spese.'

⁴ The districts were: Ferza in S. Spirito (125 nominees), Ruote (122) and Bue (89) in S. Croce, and Chiavi (122) in S. Giovanni; *Tratte*, 58, fols. 16r-17v, 22r-24v, 254r-255v; 63, fols. 363r-365r.

⁵ The figure of 13,000 (which is probably too high) is cited in the chronicle printed in Scaramella, p. 77. It is possible, but unlikely, that lists submitted by gild consuls (if actually drawn up) included a larger number of cloth workers.

⁶ An examination of the 1380 *estimo* roll for the Ruote district of S. Croce reveals that some 50 cloth workers were not included in the scrutiny list; *Prest.*, 367, fols. 48r-56v. There may have been other labourers who were too poor to be included in the tax list. Those nominated for office were assessed an average of 9.7 s., as compared with 5.5 s. for those not nominated. More striking is the disparity in the number of relatively affluent taxpayers in the two groups. Among the nominees, a substantial minority (25 of 84) were assessed 10 s. or more. Eleven paid more than one lira. Only 4 of the 51 not nominated for the Signoria were assessed more than 10 s.

⁷ The text of this decree is not found in the *balìa* records, which are incomplete; *Capitoli*, II, pp. 178-84. But there is a reference to its enactment, in July 1378, by the

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

small entrepreneur of modest means and the impoverished wage labourer was reinforced by the scrutiny and institutionalized by *balìa* decree.¹

Besides holding the scrutiny, the authorities took further steps to give form to, and gain support for, the new political order. The proscription and exile of some thirty prominent oligarchs removed potential trouble-makers from the scene, and also demonstrated to the lower classes that the régime was protecting their interests by expelling their enemies.² The *balìa* quickly restored the political rights of citizens who had been purged by the Parte Guelfa. These pariahs were incorporated into the political order, but only after they had taken an oath to support the new government.³ But the *balìa* went further in its campaign to win popular support. It established machinery for the cancellation of bans against outlaws, those who had been convicted of crimes and had escaped from Florentine territory to escape punishment. Only rebels guilty of crimes against the state and counterfeiters were excluded from this amnesty.⁴ Perhaps concerned that internal strife would increase as a result of this decision, the *balìa* authorized the election of eight officials, empowered to negotiate peace agreements and terminate vendettas.⁵

Thus, the Ciompi government attacked political problems with energy and intelligence, and also with considerable success. It suppressed overt disorder and created a potent security force for its own defence.⁶ Through its sane personnel policy, it made the transition to

balìa, in Provv., 69, fol. 20r. It was also cited as justification for excluding two members of the dyers' guild who had been chosen consuls, in December 1379 and January 1380; Mercanzia, 1179, fols. 123r, 125r.

¹ Resentment against these measures restricting the size of the office-holding group may have inspired the Signoria's directive of 6 Aug., ordering the merchants' court to examine the lists of guildsmen selected for consular office, and instructing them to place the names of qualified guildsmen into the *borse*, even if they had not been approved by the guild; *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 516-17.

² The list of exiles is recorded in the *balìa* deliberations; *Capitoli*, II, p. 181. See also Stefani, rub. 799; Scaramella, pp. 37, 78-9. The administrative banishment of political suspects had not been a common practice in Florence. Henceforth, it was a standard device used by the régime in power against its enemies.

³ Scaramella, pp. 111, 114-15, 147. Some 78 families and individuals were thus reincorporated into the political order.

⁴ *Delib. Sig. Coll.*, 21, fol. 2r; Scaramella, p. 114; *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 370. The official records do not state which categories of crimes, if any, were excluded from the amnesty, but the chroniclers indicate that counterfeiters and rebels guilty of crimes against the state were not included in the amnesty; Scaramella, p. 130. This was in accord with the petition of the *popolo minuto* presented to the Signoria on 20 July; *ibid.*, pp. 110, 146.

⁵ *Delib. Sig. Coll.*, 21, fol. 12v, 4 Aug.

⁶ No plot of serious proportions was discovered during the tenure of the Ciompi régime, and only one official was accused of treasonous activity. Fino di Taddeo Tosi was sworn in as castellan of S. Gimignano on 27 July, *Delib. Sig. Coll.*, 21, fol. 3v, and

GENE A. BRUCKER

the new régime without disrupting the administrative machinery. Conservatives gained some comfort and security from the emphasis on tradition, while artisans, if not workers, were reassured by the new scrutiny, which radically transformed the composition of the office-holding class. The régime certainly had not won the loyalty and support of all segments of society, and the old patrician families, in particular, were adamant in their opposition. But their hostility did not crystallize into open rebellion. Perhaps their morale was low after the summer disorders, or they may have required more time to organize opposition. But two other factors must have entered into their calculations: the régime's energetic measures to protect itself, and its relatively mild treatment of its enemies. Only Lapo da Castiglionchio and Luigi Beccanugi were condemned to death as rebels, while other exiled oligarchs, who lost their political rights, were not despoiled of their property.

The critical areas of the régime's failure were economic and fiscal, not political and administrative. Here, the problems were complicated by forces outside its control. In their approach to these visceral issues, the authorities acted with greater caution and restraint than they exercised in their handling of political problems. And, unfortunately for the régime, such complex problems as tax reform and unemployment could not be solved easily and quickly, and their perpetuation aroused discontent in the minds of those who regarded the new order as the universal panacea for their difficulties.

The government was certainly aware that economic distress and hunger could lead to a renewal of disorder, and it applied all of the traditional remedies to this problem. One of the Signoria's first acts was the cancellation of the tax on milling grain, and this was followed by an order reducing the price of salt by one-half.¹ A proclamation issued on 9 August ordered all grain in the *contado* owned by Florentine citizens to be transported into the city by the 18th. This decree was later repeated, and the final date of delivery advanced to the end of the month. Officials in the *contado* were instructed to denounce those who did not comply with this order, and private citizens were invited to report the names of hoarders to the authorities.² From the extant evidence, it is not possible to gauge the effectiveness of these decrees,

a month later was deposed, *ibid.*, fol. 23r. He was in the custody of the *Capitano del popolo* for suspected treason, but the Signoria ordered his release. On the incident, see Scaramella, p. 79.

¹ *Delib. Sig. Coll.*, 21, fol. 1v; *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 370.

² *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 373-5; Scaramella, p. 130. The penalty for failing to comply with these decrees was confiscation of the grain.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

or to measure the extent of hunger among the poor. The chronicles make no mention of food riots of the type which erupted in the summer of 1368. But as late as 30 August, the Signoria ordered the distribution of 3000 bushels of grain without cost to the Florentine poor.¹

This act of communal charity suggests that the most serious problem was not the food shortage, but the inability of the *popolo minuto* to earn money to buy bread. Business activity had been suspended during the July disorders, and the régime's earliest efforts in the economic sphere were limited to ordering the shops to reopen. These decrees were issued at regular intervals on 24 and 27 July, and again on 1 August.² Although no further orders were promulgated after that date, one cannot assume that all, or even a majority, of the shops had reopened for business. Stefani wrote that 'nearly all of the *botteghe* were closed, and those which were open did not operate, and the Wool gild did not wish to do anything'.³ The chronicler's assessment of the economic scene is supported by evidence from official sources. On 15 August, a speaker in a council meeting urged the authorities to order the cloth factories to open, and to investigate why they were not operating.⁴

¹ Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 26v. The account books of the communal mills survive for these months, but they contain little pertinent information; Archivio della Parte Guelfa, rosso, 120. They reveal that grain and flour sold at prices ranging from 10-16 s. per bushel, and that between 7000 and 10,000 bushels of grain were transported to the mills each month, from July to December 1378. Grain prices were not high in the summer of 1378; a private sale of 13 s. per bushel was recorded for July; Mercanzia, 1177, no pag., and another of 20 s. in April 1379, *ibid.*, 1180, no pag., 9 May 1380. During famines, prices of 30 and 40 s. per bushel were not uncommon; Mercanzia, 1178, no pag., 4 June 1379, quoting a price of 40 s. in 1369; and *ibid.*, 1185, fol. 44r; 1186, fol. 3r, prices of 30 s. per bushel in August 1381 and January 1382. The grain harvest was adequate, but there was a problem of distribution, of assuring a regular supply in the city, and above all, of feeding the unemployed who had no money to buy bread.

² *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 370-71; Scaramella, p. 114.

³ Stefani, 799.

⁴ A.S.F., Cons. e Prat., 16, fol. 14v: 'Et ordinetur quod rectores et consules fiant ius et quod ars lane laboret; et sciatur quare non; et circa hoc deputetur.' A useful index of economic activity for these weeks is the income from the gabelle on contracts, which was paid weekly into the *capsa castrorum*. This was not only a measure of an important category of economic activity (property transactions, wills, etc.), but also an index of business confidence. The figures, drawn from Camera del Comune, Entrata, 184, 185, are given to the nearest florin:

Week ending: 5 July 293 fl.
12 July 448 fl.
19 July 395 fl.
26 July 13 fl.
2 Aug. 84 fl.
9 Aug. 113 fl.
16 Aug. 689 fl.
23 Aug. 350 fl.
30 Aug. 102 fl.

The income during the first three weeks in September, through the 20th, was only 121 fl. Not until December did the revenue from contracts approach the level of early July.

One difficulty was the physical absence of the entrepreneurs. Stefani noted that many patrician families had evacuated their houses and gone into the *contado*, while merchants had sent their goods to Pisa, Bologna, or to fortified places outside of the city.¹ Early in August, the *balìa* took note of this emigration, which 'has practically emptied the city'. Those who had fled were given six days to return, or lose their political rights.² Since many Florentine families habitually left the city for their villas in summer, the régime was demanding an alteration in the living habits of the upper classes. Given poor communications and the fears and hesitations of the wealthy, it is unlikely that a substantial number of patricians actually returned to Florence before the end of August.³ On 4 September, Benedetto Alberti testified to the government's failure to revive cloth production, when he proposed the appointment of a committee to solve the industry's problems and discords, 'so that the Wool gild will work.'⁴

There is no evidence that the régime took any direct action to reopen the *botteghe*. This inactivity can be explained by the force of tradition, for the communal government had never interfered in the internal operations of cloth manufacture. It is possible, too, that many former *sottoposti* in the *balìa* who operated their own shops were no more eager than the *lanaioli* for communal intervention in this delicate area. Least explicable is the attitude of the labourers themselves. Apparently, they preferred to negotiate directly with the employers, and did not insist that the government intervene on their behalf. Neither of the Ciompi

¹ Stefani, rub. 804. In his *ricordanze*, Carte Strozzi, ser. 2, 4, fols. 54r-54v, Paolo Sassetti wrote that he had received consignments of goods from Bernardo degli Agli and Giacomino di Goggio, who apparently feared that their houses would be looted. Agli's goods were hidden under a bed and in a trunk and were returned to their owner in November. Giacomino reclaimed his property on 20 September.

² Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 16r, 9 Aug.: 'Cum maxime audiverunt quod quamplurimi et maxima copia civium notabilium quasi derelinquentes urbem ad comitatum et ad alios partes se cum suis familiis transulerunt, et ob hoc videbatur Florentina civitas . . . viduatur.' The Signoria was implementing a decision of the *balìa*.

³ Stefani, rub. 804, stated that the majority of the *buoni uomini* had not returned to Florence by the end of August. The Signoria's deliberations contain notices of two men, Matteo Tinghi and Filippo dell'Antella, who requested permission to remain in the *contado*; Delib. Sig. Coll., 21, fol. 16v.

⁴ Cons. e Prat., 16, fol. 18r: 'Et ad hoc ut ars lane laboret, deputentur aliqui cives qui tollant omnem questionem et obstaculum.' The same counsel was offered by two other speakers, Simone Palmieri and Giovanni di Ser Jacopo; *ibid.*, fols. 18v, 20r. The *Lana* records contain statistical evidence of the sharp decline in production during 1378. In the gild deliberations for the last four months of the year are the declarations of 140 *lanaioli*, requesting the reduction of their production quotas; *Lana*, 76, fols. 1r-1v, 80r. The total reduction was 7,405 *panni*, or approximately one third of the production figure for 1380. So great a decline suggests that cloth production remained stagnant throughout the remainder of the year. Only three *lanaioli* requested an increase, totalling 88 *panni* in their output; *ibid.*, fol. 80v.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

petitions of 21 July and 27 August contained clauses requesting communal supervision or control of the cloth factories.¹ One chronicler did state that the Ciompi imposed production quotas on the manufacturers: 'They issued orders that the *lanaioli* must produce 2000 pieces of cloth each month, whether they wished to or not, under severe penalty.'² If this quota system was actually proposed, it would have been the most radical idea to emerge from the revolution. But these workers, who had overthrown a government, and had burned and sacked public buildings and private palaces, did not propose or even consider the commune's expropriation and operation of the cloth factories, to provide them with work and bread.

The régime's response to the fiscal crisis was similar to its cautious, tradition-bound approach to the problems of the cloth industry. Even before the revolution broke out, the treasury was in a dangerous state. The long and expensive war with the Papacy had cost over two million florins; a substantial portion of this sum had been raised through forced loans.³ The disorders of June and July intensified the treasury's difficulties. Revenue from taxes on imports declined as business stagnated; the gabelles on salt and on milling grain were reduced or abolished. To win the support of the outlying areas, the Signoria reduced the tax rate in the *contado* by one-third.⁴ Expenses increased as revenue declined. The civic militia was a costly operation, and lesser sums were spent on grain supplies, and the dispatch of special envoys to key fortresses in Florentine territory. Even the scrutiny for the Signoria absorbed 3000 florins, a sum which the treasury could ill afford, but which was dictated by political necessity.⁵

In such difficult circumstances, the *balìa* sought to pursue a policy which would keep the treasury solvent, and at the same time satisfy those who favoured tax reform. On balance, the régime opted for fiscal conservatism, although it did make sporadic gestures to placate the Ciompi. For example, it renewed the campaign to recover communal property which was illegally held by private citizens, and it appointed a special commission to review the commune's fiscal records since 1349.

¹ These petitions are summarized in Scaramella, pp. 28-9, 146-7.

² Scaramella, p. 130. This decree is not recorded in any other chronicle or official document, and I am inclined to doubt that it was ever promulgated by the régime. The paragraph in the chronicle from which it is taken contains several other errors of fact. Both Rodolico, *Ciompi*, pp. 147-8, and Rutenberg, pp. 233-5, accept it.

³ Stefani, rub. 795, estimated the cost at 2,243,000 fl. On the finances of the papal war, see Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, pp. 315-19.

⁴ *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 373.

⁵ The payment for the scrutiny was made on 30 August; Camera, *Uscita*, 232, fol. 22r. The treasury also reimbursed officials whose property was damaged during the disorders; *ibid.*, fols. 1v-2r.

GENE A. BRUCKER

On 6 August, the Signoria ordered all holders of communal property or rights to declare their possessions. It also appealed for informers to testify concerning the location of property owned by rebels, which was subject to confiscation.¹ These measures were designed to increase future revenue, and also to demonstrate the régime's determination to recover property which was held illegally. But such decrees did not solve the immediate problem of an empty treasury. Not until 27 August was the property of the city's most prominent rebel, Lapo da Castiglionchio, offered for sale to the highest bidder.²

However effective these acts may have been as political palliatives, they did not overcome Ciompi resentment over the jettisoning of the July reforms. These had stipulated that forced loans would not be assessed for six months, and that before the moratorium expired, a new assessment (*estimo*) would be drawn up, as a basis for levying direct taxes in the city. Interest payments on *Monte* shares were also suspended; owners of these communal bonds would be compensated for their investments over a twelve-year period.³ Such reforms cannot be described as radical; they did not envisage the repudiation of the commune's obligations. But they were designed to curb the exploitation of public resources by an affluent minority, to redress the fiscal balance in favour of the poor, who in the words of one chronicler, 'have always borne the expenses, and only the rich have ever gained any profit'.⁴

The Marxist historian could point to the *balìa*'s repudiation of these reforms as a classic illustration of simple workers being gulled by their crafty bourgeois associates. Benedetto Alberti and his patrician allies certainly did not favour the Ciompi reforms enacted in July,⁵ but they could not have persuaded their artisan colleagues to abandon them without convincing arguments. The most compelling reason was an empty treasury, and the immediate need for cash to pay for grain and troop salaries. To meet these expenditures, the *balìa* authorized the levy of a forced loan of 40,000 florins, and thus violated the six-month

¹ These decrees were dated 6, 14 and 17 August; *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 372, 374, 375. On the appointment of the special commission to review communal accounts, see *ibid.*, p. 374; Scaramella, p. 77.

² *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 376.

³ Falletti-Fossati, *Ciompi*, doc. 9, pp. 365-75.

⁴ Scaramella, p. 77: '... Però che sempre hanno portato la spesa, e non ebbono mai niuno guadagno se non e ricchi.' On the speculation in *Monte* credits in these years, see Brucker, 'Un documento fiorentino sulla guerra, sulla finanza e sulla amministrazione pubblica (1375)', *A.S.I.*, CXV (1957), pp. 168-70.

⁵ For Alberti's views on Monte reform in November 1379, see Rodolico, *Democrazia fiorentina*, pp. 277-8.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

moratorium.¹ Nor was the régime's ambiguous attitude toward the Monte entirely due to patrician chicanery. Uncertainty about the future of the funded debt had apparently aroused widespread criticism among all classes. A decree of 27 August announced the *balia*'s desire 'to calm the citizenry and satisfy the needs of widows and orphans, so that the commune, as far as possible, would maintain its faith and promises'. All interest payments on Monte shares which fell due between 1 July and 31 October were cancelled, but after 1 November the commune would again honour its obligations to its creditors.²

On the same day that it dealt with the funded debt, the *balia* also unveiled its programme for an *estimo*, the only feature of the July programme to survive intact. The measure provided for the election of forty-eight assessors, three from each of the sixteen districts, who were instructed to draw up a new schedule of tax assessments.³ Implicit in this reform was the promise of greater equity in the distribution of the tax burden. But for the moment, it remained no more than a promise, since the authorities continued to demand payment of all tax debts, as well as the sums due on the forced loan levied in August.⁴ And in its collection of old *prestanze*, the régime perpetuated the inequities which it was seeking to eradicate. Nearly all small *prestanze* levied against the poorer citizens were paid at reduced rates, *ad perdendum*, while wealthy Florentines who paid their full assessments were guaranteed the return of their money, with interest.⁵

Although the régime did remain solvent,⁶ its fiscal policy made more enemies than friends. It alienated the Ciompi by abrogating most of

¹ A provision passed in Sept. 1378 stated that forced loans of 65,000 fl. were authorized by the *balia* in August, but only 40,000 fl. were actually assessed; Provv., 67, fol. 23r. The August levy was not imposed upon all *prestanza* payers, but only upon the wealthiest, whose names and assessments are recorded in Camera, Entrata, 184, 185. The *prestanza* of 25,000 fl. collected in September was levied upon all citizens listed in the tax rolls; Prest., 337-40.

² *Capitoli*, II, p. 183. The vote on this measure: 116: 15.

³ *Ibid.*, II, p. 182. The assessors were authorized a salary of 4 fl. per month, 'per sodisfare allo sciopero di coloro che exerciteranno i detti ufici, e perch' egliino abbino volontà di bene fare.'

⁴ *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 375, decree of 25 August.

⁵ Payments on a *prestanza* levied in July were still being made in August. Cf., for example, Prest., 337, fol. 2v: Bartolomeo di Michele, carder, assessed 1 fl., 6 d., paid 10 s., 3 d. *ad perdendum*; and *ibid.*, fol. 16r, Niccolò and Angelo da Uzzano, assessed 107 fl., 9 s., 4 d., paid in full on 14 July, *omnino rehabendi*.

⁶ The Camera records of July and August, Uscita, 232, fols. 1r-5r, show that the salaries of officials were paid on schedule, and that even some non-essential expenditures were continued. Thus, on 4 August, the fund for the reconstruction of the Florentine cathedral received 223 fl., *ibid.*, fol. 2r. In addition to the suspension of the payments on Monte shares, the ecclesiastical foundations whose property had been confiscated did not receive the interest payments (5 per cent annually) on the value of their property; Provv., 68, fol. 49v.

GENE A. BRUCKER

the provisions contained in their petition of 21 July. The only salvaged piece of that programme, the *estimo*, was not enacted until late in August, when the régime was already tottering. By its tergiversation on the *Monte* issue, it weakened the faith of the creditors, both large and small, in the commune's fiscal responsibility, without satisfying those who wished to abolish the funded debt.¹ One may sympathize with this régime, struggling desperately to avert bankruptcy, forced to live with a programme which was politically and economically unrealistic.² But those who were discontented with the government's performance in this sphere did not understand that fiscal evils are rarely susceptible to rapid cure. Exasperated by administrative caution, inertia and weakness, the malcontents concluded that the régime's failure was due to the betrayal of the leaders who had been chosen to implement the revolutionary programme.

The sources make only fleeting references to the mood and temper of the city during the summer of 1378. It might be described as a façade of order and tranquillity which disguised inward turmoil and fear. Among the participants in the celebrations which marked the end of the scrutiny were hundreds of citizens who had not been reconciled to the new order. It is true that the exodus of many patricians had diminished the numbers who were totally antipathetic to the régime. But the moderate course steered by the government had not dispelled fear and apprehension. Any small property owner or petty merchant was a likely target for the hostility of unemployed workers. Apparently, there were no major eruptions of disorder by the Ciompi, but small acts of vandalism and aggression undoubtedly occurred. Stefani reported that hungry labourers committed acts of robbery, and another chronicler wrote that members of the civic militia 'addressed other citizens in brutal terms'.³

¹ By Oct., 1378, the price of *Monte* shares had fallen to one-half of their normal market value, from 25 to 13 per cent of their face value; Stefani, rub. 807.

² The Ciompi plan to liquidate the *Monte* in twelve years was chimerical; in October, 1378, *Monte* investments totalled 2,361,802 fl. Brucker, 'Documento fiorentino', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXV, p. 169. Nor was it politically feasible to repudiate the *Monte* debt, for too many small creditors had an economic stake in its maintenance. Only the *miserabili*, those without credits or property or a stable income, would have welcomed this radical solution to the commune's fiscal dilemma, and they were not represented in the régime.

³ Stefani, rub. 799; Scaramella, p. 130. According to two chronicle sources, fears generated by the crisis led to a flurry of buying and selling of property, and particularly of *recomperie*, or repurchases. But the precise nature of these transactions cannot be determined from the ambiguous language of the chroniclers: '... E in quello tempo che questi iscardassieri, pettinatori, lanini ebbono il dominio e furono maggiori, molte ricomperie furono fatte fare, per la terra, di cittadini, chie d'alquanti denari, e chi più e chi meno; e fatto istracciare iscritte e tagliare carte; e questi si ricomperavano

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

But fear was not a monopoly of the bourgeoisie; it also infected those who had promoted the revolution, and who knew that their victory was tenuous and their enemies numerous and powerful. The burned shells of palaces were visible symbols of the hatred which had not been purged from the city. These fears were nourished by hunger and unemployment, and also by apocalyptic prophecies, like the warning of the deranged preacher who shouted that 'at the twenty-second hour, God has given the signal for the shedding of blood and the kindling of fire'.¹

The unrest which spread among the lower classes in late August was also an expression of general dissatisfaction with the régime, its moderate and cautious approach to problems, its failure to enact the July reforms. Many workers had expected that the change of government would have an immediate and visible impact upon their lives and fortunes, and this had not occurred. Not all of their disenchantment can be blamed upon the ineptitude of the authorities; part derived from the naive character of Ciompi aspirations. The chronicler who was sympathetic to the revolution visualized a society in which rich and poor would live in harmony and peace, and he believed that this idyllic social order would be secured by a political system based upon equality.² In the judicial condemnations of Ciompi leaders, there are references to the primitive economic nature of their objectives. One cloth worker, Luca di Guido, announced to a friend that 'we will take over the city and kill and rob the rich who have expelled us, and we will be masters of the city and rule it as we wish, and we will be rich'. Identical sentiments were voiced by another Ciompi malcontent, Antonio di Recco, who painted this bright picture of the future: 'The time will come when I will no longer wander about begging, for I expect to be rich for the rest of my life, and if you will join me, you too will be rich and we will live in high estate in Florence.'³ These generalized sentiments may not reflect accurately the views of discontented labourers, but another document describes a conversation which does convey a sense of authenticity. One conspirator asked his comrade: 'When will these rulers be expelled?

per danari e facciano queste cose, el facieno per grande paugura'; Scaramella, p. 122; 'Ancora facciendo ricomperare i cittadini, minacciandogli d'ardere loro le case'; *ibid.*, p. 130. These passages hint that the Ciompi used their predominant position to force citizens to dispose of their property, but I have found no documentary evidence to support these charges in the notarial records, or in the protocols of the *Mercanzia* and the other civil courts.

¹ Scaramella, p. 119. For a detailed account of one of these prophecies which was circulating in Florence at this time, see *Diar. d'anon.*, pp. 389-90.

² Scaramella, pp. 76-8.

³ The condemnations are in A.S.F., Atti del Capitano del Popolo, 1197bis, fols. 130r-132r; 1198, fols. 31r-35r.

GENE A. BRUCKER

For I want the palace of Messer Benedetto Alberti for myself.' And his companion replied: 'It will be soon; it cannot be postponed much longer, and I have my eye on the farm of Giovanni Dini.'¹ Perhaps this dialogue reflected only dreams nourished by the exiles' tribulations, and not their practical objectives, but it does suggest that many poor workers were convinced that political victory would be followed by a dramatic rise in their personal fortunes.

It was on a petty and insignificant issue that the dissident Ciompi focussed their inchoate feelings of resentment and anger. The issue was the formation of a brotherhood, a *consorteria*, by the members of the *balìa*. These associations were not a novelty in Florentine politics; a *consorteria della libertà* had been created by the *balìa* which had been established after the June revolt.² Members of the brotherhood were permitted to bear arms in public, and to assemble at any time or place. The ostensible purpose of this union was to defend the régime and the members of the *balìa*, who might be subjected to attack or vituperation for their political acts. To this end, the members 'swore to band together, one with the other, in life and in death'. Some chroniclers reported that members of the *consorteria* also authorized salaries for themselves, and dinners at communal expense.³

The issue of salaries apparently aroused the strongest reaction among the disgruntled workers. For the carders, fullers and shopkeepers in the *balìa* these stipends were legitimate compensation for their political labours. Described by one source as 'so poor that they could scarcely dress themselves in a manner fitting to their office', these men could not afford to lose the income from their trade for a lengthy period.⁴ In their eyes, these salaries were the first tangible rewards accruing to them from the revolution. But the rank and file viewed these payments from a different perspective. Their comrades, chosen to represent their interests, had failed to solve their economic problems, and adding insult to injury, had voted themselves lucrative stipends and special privileges. Most resentful were the labourers at the bottom of the social scale, too poor to be taxed, too lowly to be considered for office. Quick to take advantage of this rift in Ciompi ranks, opponents

¹ A.S.F., Atti dell' Esecutore degli Ordinamenti della Giustizia, 900, fols. 29r-30v.

² Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, p. 372.

³ Scaramella, p. 79. See also *ibid.*, p. 116; *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 376.

⁴ Scaramella, p. 41. On this point, see Rodolico, *Ciompi*, p. 154. Members of the *balìa* received no pay for their services, nor did the Priors or the College of the Twelve *buoni uomini*. The Sixteen *gonfalonieri* of the companies received miniscule salaries. Those elected on 22 July were paid on 7 Sept.; they each received 5 lire, 5 s. for 45 days of service; Camera, *Uscita*, 233, fol. 1 r.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

of the régime whispered to the malcontents: 'You will never occupy any of the offices, for they want them all for themselves and they will feed you with an empty spoon.'¹

The tumultuous events in the last four days of August can be reconstructed from the chronicles, even though these sources do not delve into the motives of the protagonists. Discontent was particularly intense in the working-class districts of S. Spirito and S. Giovanni. So acute was this hostility that an official from the latter quarter, a wine-seller named Morello, appealed to the Signoria for protection, since his neighbours had threatened to burn his house.² A group of these workers had organized a meeting, probably on the 27th, at which they chose eight of their number to serve as their leaders. These 'eight saints of God's people', as they were called by their comrades, were genuine representatives of the *popolo minuto*.³ They drew up a set of petitions to be presented to the Signoria, and at a mass meeting of some five thousand Ciompi in front of the church of S. Marco, the decision was taken to march to the palace of the Signoria. The historical setting of the July revolution was re-enacted in every detail: a milling throng of workers, troops who refused to disperse the crowd, and a group of frightened officials inside the palace. The petitions were read to the assembly in the square, and notaries who copied them were urged to modify, delete and substitute words and clauses by the men who crowded around them. As finally drafted, the document was delivered to the Signoria by a renegade patrician, Luca da Panzano, and it was hastily approved by the Priors and their collegiate advisers.⁴

The official transcript of these petitions was later destroyed, and their contents are known only from the garbled reports of two chroniclers. Most of the clauses aimed at excluding *balìa* members from office, and revoking their privileges and perquisites. Thus, Salvestro de' Medici and Giovanni di Mone were deprived of their communal revenues, while the *sindaci* of the *popolo minuto* were banned from office for ten years. The *consorteria* was dissolved, and according to one

¹ Scaramella, p. 79. The chronicler added: 'e molti cittadini gli avvertieno che facessono quello che fu danno loro.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 119.

³ Only two of these 'eight saints' possessed enough property to qualify for *prestanza* assessments: Agnolo di Cenni, quarter of S. Spirito, Prest., 332, fol. 2v, assessed 10 s., 3 d.; and Simone di Andrea, quarter of S. Maria Novella, Prest., 334, fol. 81v, who was assessed 5 s., which was not paid. A third member of the committee, Matteo di Ser Salvi Gai, was the son of a notary of modest means. His tax assessment exceeded 3 fl.; *ibid.*, 335, fol. 88v.

⁴ For the narration of these events and the citation of the sources, see Rodolico, *Ciompi*, pp. 150-5.

GENE A. BRUCKER

chronicler, 'no one was to receive any salary for any office'.¹ All of these provisions were punitive and negative. The only positive clauses were reaffirmations of two points in the July programme: a two-year moratorium on debts and the liquidation of the *Monte*. As an expression of proletarian protest, it was a weak and unoriginal document, for it did not confront any of the fundamental problems raised by the revolution.

The authorities made no attempt to force the issue with the Ciompi leaders, but instead temporized and granted limited concessions, without capitulating entirely to the workers' demands. Although they readily accepted the petitions, they claimed that these were not valid unless approved by legislative councils. And since the latter had not been convened for six weeks, they promised to call a general assembly of the electorate as soon as the new Signoria entered office.² This delaying tactic proved effective, for it gave the supporters of the régime time to organize their defences against this new threat.

Their actions took two forms: the neutralizing of the Ciompi representatives in the government, and the launching of a secret campaign to discredit the rebels, to depict them as bent upon the destruction of the city and the despoliation of its inhabitants. Michele di Lando was a key figure in these developments, for he was popular and influential with both artisans and workers. He was finally won over to the régime by a large bribe, after he had failed to gain any material advantages from his negotiations with the rebels. Michele persuaded the other Ciompi in the government to follow his lead, by promising them that they would not be forced from office. In a solemn ceremony held in the Priors' chapel of the palace, the leaders swore an oath to reveal nothing of their agreement. It was one of the best kept secrets in the history of Florentine conspiracies.³

While opposition to the Ciompi was slowly coalescing, the rebels were pursuing a strange and contradictory course, in which belligerence alternated with timidity and inertia. From the first moments of the protest movement, the Ciompi leaders appeared to be hypnotized by their petitions, and to consider their passage and implementation as the

¹ Scaramella, p. 117. This may not be accurate. The more reliable *Squittinatore* noted only that the petition demanded the reduction of the salaries of the *Otto di guerra* from 15 to 5 fl. per month. Stefani, rub. 800, makes no reference to this issue.

² Rodolico, *Ciompi*, pp. 156-7. Corroborating evidence is contained in a letter written two weeks after the event (9 September) by Nanni Bonifazii; Scaramella, p. 151.

³ Rodolico, *Ciompi*, pp. 163-5, summarizes the evidence of Michele's 'bribe', and of the secret accord reached in the palace of the Signoria. The sources are the *Squittinatore*, Scaramella, p. 81, and Stefani, rub. 803.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

keystone of their operation. Thus, they sent periodic delegations to the Signoria, demanding that they swear again and again that their petitions would be approved. On the 27th, a throng of Ciompi followed Luca da Panzano on an aimless march through the streets. Rumours circulated that Luca had hoped to employ his band to settle old scores against private enemies, by burning and pillaging their houses. But his plans went awry, when he failed to obtain the flag of the Parte Guelfa.¹ In another, and more serious, show of strength, the Ciompi constituted themselves as a screening committee, approving or rejecting those who were drawn for the new Signoria.² They may have feared that an unsympathetic group of priors would cancel their petitions. But the effect of this illegal action upon the guild community was pernicious, for it reaffirmed the growing suspicion that the Ciompi were a lawless rabble.³

The erratic behaviour of these agitated workers, their oscillation between febrile action and passive inertia, indicates defective leadership and the lack of unity within the movement. But it was precisely this pattern of activity which, by its irrational and unpredictable character, intensified the fears and doubts concerning Ciompi motives and objectives. One rumour, which was widely circulated, claimed that the rebels planned to establish themselves in one part of the city, and from that base of operations to ransack the other quarters.⁴ It is doubtless true that the Ciompi ranks contained criminal elements eager for the opportunity and excuse to loot and burn. But had this been the principal objective of the leaders, they would not have pursued the elaborate ritual of formulating their grievances and presenting them to the authorities. And one must agree with Rodolico that workers who demand the services of friars to provide them with spiritual comfort

¹ Scaramella, pp. 80, 151.

² This arbitrary action of the Ciompi was noted by four witnesses; Scaramella, pp. 80, 118, 131, 151. The lack of respect shown by the Ciompi leaders to the Priors also distressed some citizens; *ibid.*, p. 119: 'que' signori otto . . . giugnendo nella presenza del gonfaloniere del giustizia, senza fare riverenza niuna. . . .'

³ The opinion of a later chronicler, Giovanni Monaldi, cited by Rodolico, *Ciompi*, p. 161, was shared by many *buoni uomini*: 'Se i Minuti avessero vinto, ogni buon cittadino che avesse, sarebbe stato cacciato di casa sua, et entratovi lo scardassiere, togliendovi ciò che avesse; in Firenze et in contado morto e deserto era ciascuno che nulla avesse.'

⁴ Scaramella, p. 119: 'che doveano pigliare una parte pareo loro, e ivi co' loro seguaci andare a stare; e poi, dell'altra città pigliare, cioè v'era e rubare ed ardere e uccidere i cittadini;' and *ibid.*, p. 131: 'Più volte andarono al gonfaloniere della giustizia per lo gonfalone, e volevano due di utoli per rubare la città; e mai nol consentì loro; e portossi francamenta, come che fosse di loro ginea.' Stefani, rub. 804, presents a more detailed picture of Ciompi plans for sacking the city, but he refuses to comment on their veracity.

GENE A. BRUCKER

were probably not intent upon mass destruction and rapine.¹ According to another report, the Ciompi were planning to choose a despot to rule the city. This rumour was linked to a certain nobleman from the Marches, Bartolo da Sanseverino, who was invited to consult with Ciompi leaders at their headquarters in S. Maria Novella. But after the crisis had passed, Bartolo was absolved of any complicity in a plot to establish a dictatorship.²

That these rumours and allegations were not based upon fact is suggested by the condemnation of one of the 'eight saints', Piero Cini, a wool carder from S. Frediano. The indictment against him contained no reference to a plot to sack the city or impose a dictatorship. Instead, he was convicted of conspiring with other Ciompi leaders 'to hold the larger authority and quasi dominion of . . . Florence, over the priors and colleges and other officials'.³ As a formula of Ciompi objectives, this phrase is extremely vague. But from the activities of the Ciompi leadership, one can discern, in embryonic form, a plan for institutional reforms to guarantee the representation of the workers in the communal government. The crux of this programme was the establishment of the 'eight saints' as a permanent element in the commune's institutional fabric. Their function would be similar to that of the other colleges: to advise the Signoria and to vote on all provisions submitted for approval. From this strategic position, they would be able to influence communal politics.⁴ The 'eight saints' may also have decided to establish themselves as an independent corporate body, similar in structure and function to the Parte Guelfa. According to one source, their leaders had chosen a staff of administrators — counsellors, notaries, treasurers — to assist them. 'They were found to have twenty-six bushels of small coins and I don't know exactly how many thousands of gold florins,' the source continued, 'and these they were disbursing,

¹ Rodolico, *Ciompi*, p. 166.

² On this rumour, see Stefani, rub. 804, who cites the evidence for this belief, 'fu quasi verisimile, perocchè l'avieno onorato e ben veduto,' but admits that he does not know whether the rumour was true. See also Scaramella, p. 131: 'Chi dicea che volevano fare un signore.' For the references from *Consulte e Pratiche* records of Messer Bartolomeo's innocence, see *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 377, note 3.

³ Piero's condemnation is printed in Rodolico, *Democrazia fiorentina*, pp. 441-5.

⁴ Stefani's account, rub. 802, describes this plan in greatest detail: 'che questi Otto ed altri che si eleggessero successivamente di priorato in priorato, stessero in palagio de' Priori, e che niuna cosa che toccasse alla città, non si facesse senza la diliberazione di costoro, e diliberata per gli Priori, e poi per costoro potesse ire a' Collegi, poi a' consigli.' Stefani may have exaggerated the degree to which this plan was actually formulated; this specific charge is not included in Piero Cini's condemnation. Other chroniclers are more vague in their description of the plans developed by the 'eight saints'; Scaramella, pp. 119, 151.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

and allocating, and paying out, according to their deliberations.¹ This scheme was the most original, and potentially the most significant, of the ideas in the Ciompi repertory. For it envisaged a régime in which the interests of the cloth workers were permanently represented, and in which these could not easily be submerged or diluted by the pressures of other groups.

The end of this 'brief hour of the Ciompi', as Rodolico has described it, came quickly on the last day of August. Two of the rebel leaders had made yet another journey to the palace to demand action on the petitions. In a stratagem that was planned in advance, Michele di Lando attacked them with sword in hand and ordered their seizure. The régime was now prepared for a direct confrontation with the rebellious workers, and Michele harangued a crowd in the square with cries of 'Death to those who wish a *signore*'. This was a signal for armed guildsmen to march into the square, where they were joined by the Ciompi bands. After some discussion, in which the priors appealed to the workers to surrender their standards, the battle was launched by the butchers, traditionally in the forefront of every scene of mass violence. Despite their spirited defence, the Ciompi were overpowered and fled from the square. In the words of one chronicler, they were 'beaten and crushed, without leadership and without spirit, for they had been betrayed by their own'.²

This final stage of the revolution was a crucible which simplified the ambiguities and complexities of Florentine society, and momentarily reduced the issues to simple terms. The battle on the last day of August 1378 stands out as the most naked confrontation between haves and have-nots, between possessors and the dispossessed, in the history of the Arno city. For this brief moment, personal and factional quarrels, which animated so much of Florence's public and private life, were submerged by more elemental passions. The chroniclers faithfully mirrored this state of mind. In the midst of recording these events, one writer broke off his account to copy lines of doggerel ridiculing the Ciompi, 'these carders and combers and washers, these men who were born yesterday'. More conventional was the reaction of another witness, who concluded his narrative with a bitter denunciation of 'these Ciompi, robbers and

¹ Scaramella, p. 151. The report of the size of the Ciompi treasury may well be exaggerated.

² For an account, not distinguished for clarity, of the Ciompi defeat, see Rodolico, *Ciompi*, pp. 167-71. While participating in the fighting as a member of his district's militia, Buonaccorso Pitti killed a stonemason 'che gridava come arabiato di fare sangue, diciendo: muoia, muoia'; A. della Lega, ed., *Cronica di Buonaccorso Pitti* (Bologna, 1905), p. 44. An account of another homicide on that day is in *Atti del Capitano del Popolo*, 1120, fols. 111r-12v.

GENE A. BRUCKER

traitors and murderers and assassins and gluttons and malefactors'.¹ Such outbursts of invective are rare in these normally prosaic accounts, and they attest to the intensity of emotion aroused by this experience.

The student of the Ciompi revolution is strongly tempted to find similarities between that event and the social and economic conflicts of the modern world. For Marxist historians, the temptation has been irresistible. Their sympathies are naturally with these proletarians; they applaud their momentary triumphs over the bourgeoisie, and their tentative and halting efforts to construct a political order for the benefit of the working class. Michele di Lando is contemptuously dismissed as a base traitor, a tool of the capitalists. But the revolution's failure is not attributed simply to betrayal. One scholar concludes that the Ciompi had not yet developed a sense of unity and solidarity, but were handicapped by their preoccupation with their material interests. Another emphasizes the immaturity of this labour movement, and the inability of the workers to comprehend the realities of the class struggle. A third historian argues that the revolution failed primarily because the cloth operatives did not make common cause with the peasantry.² With more experience and insight, these scholars suggest, the workers would have comprehended their historical rôle, and resisting the tricks and wiles of their bourgeois antagonists, they would have created a genuine proletarian state.

It is doubtful whether the most sophisticated Ciompi leader ever dreamed of that possibility, or would have considered it a desirable solution. The most striking characteristic of these rebels was their innate conservatism, their respect for tradition, their adherence to old forms and rituals. They adopted, without significant modification, the century-old structure of communal government, based upon guild associations which were anachronistic, and no longer corresponded to the realities of the Florentine economy.³ Not only did the Ciompi accept this cumbersome political heritage; they went out of their way

¹ Scaramella, pp. 121-2; *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 394. The unwavering hostility of the lower guildsmen to the Ciompi is symbolized by a petition, 24 February 1379, requesting that the last day of August be declared a public holiday, 'et quod per gratiam omnipotentis Dei ex meritis eiusdem beati Juliani ipsa die . . . proxime preteriti civitas Florentie extitit liberata de manibus eorum qui ipsam tenebant quodammodo tyrannice occupatam'; *Prov.*, 67, fol. 152r. St Julian was the patron saint of the innkeepers' guild.

² These judgments are made by Rodolico, *Democrazia fiorentina*, p. 199; Rutenberg, pp. 211-12, 232; Werner, 'Probleme', p. 51.

³ Cf. the irrational division of the workers and *sottoposti* into the three new guilds; Scaramella, p. 77. Included in the Ciompi guild were factors and yarn brokers, as well as labourers in dye shops and stretching sheds.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

to resurrect antiquated ideals and symbols. At the height of the July disorders, the Ciompi collected a group of sixty prominent citizens and bestowed upon them the accolade of knighthood.¹ The workers had also imbibed the prejudices of the upper classes. Deeply suspicious of the 'Ghibellines' who had been proscribed by the Parte Guelfa, they forced them to swear an oath of loyalty to the régime, before permitting their assimilation into the political community.²

It is the conservative, tradition-bound orientation of the artisan class which also explains the moderate course charted by the Ciompi government. These men needed little encouragement from their patrician allies to sabotage the more radical features of the Ciompi programme which had been inserted into the July petition. In early August, they voted to rescind the ban on interest payments to *Monte* shareholders.³ A few days later, they cancelled the two-year moratorium on small debts, and decreed that every debtor could be imprisoned, and his property seized.⁴ Those reforms which the *balia* did accept were based upon precedents in the Florentine political experience. The abolition of the *Monte* was not a new idea; its gradual elimination had been contemplated since the 1360s, but never fully implemented because fiscal resources were absorbed by war expenditures.⁵ And the proposal to replace forced loans with a system of direct taxation was a return to the commune's fiscal methods of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.

Nor did the Ciompi programme contain provisions of a truly radical character.⁶ The workers did not demand the abolition of private property, the repudiation of debts, or even the reduction of interest rates. If they were planning a massive redistribution of wealth, they carefully disguised their intentions. Although their proposals for the reorganization of the cloth industry were never formulated with precision, these plans were not as revolutionary as some scholars have claimed. The disciplinary power of the Wool guild over workers and jobbers was abolished, and each new guild assumed the responsibility for

¹ Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, p. 381.

² Scaramella, p. 76. In October 1378, the Asini, a family with Ghibelline antecedents, were declared eligible for office as Guelfs. The chronicler commented: 'non volte mai il popolo minuto acconsentire che fosson guelfi;' *ibid.*, p. 87.

³ Scaramella, p. 130: 'Il detto di [3 Aug.] riposoro gli assegniamenti de' danari del monte, che prima gli avean levati.'

⁴ *Diar. d'anon.*, p. 374: 'E oggi, di xvi d'agosto 1378, andò un bando, che ciascuna persona che dovesse dare a niuna persona per qualunque modo o ragione, sia e poss'essere convenuto in avere e in persona, e possa [e] debbia pagare.' The size and social heterogeneity of the Florentine creditor class can be seen from the petitions for imprisonment of debtors, 1378-80; *Atti del Podestà*, 2859-64, *passim*.

⁵ Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, p. 95.

⁶ For a summary of the July petition, see Brucker, *Flor. Pol.*, pp. 382-4; and for the Ciompi manifesto of late August, see above, pp. 347-48.

controlling its membership.¹ Wage and piece rates would presumably be fixed by negotiations between the guilds. It is not possible to gauge, with certainty, the impact of these changes on the industry. Even though the Ciompi guild was disbanded, the associations of independent dyers, shearers and menders survived until 1382. And while the Wool guild's relations with its former *sottoposti* were not smooth, the industry did not founder, and manufacturers continued to produce cloth and to earn profits.²

One can explain the moderation of the Ciompi programme by pointing to the inexperience and naiveté of the workers, or by arguing that medieval men could not grasp such subtle concepts as the abolition of private property or state ownership of the means of production.³ Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that, like every other group in Florentine society, the *popolo minuto* accepted a capitalistic economic system. They had been nurtured in a milieu in which buying and selling, borrowing and lending, working for wages, were as familiar as the physical landmarks of the Arno city.⁴ And despite its harsh exploitation and its inequities, this social order, by contemporary standards, was remarkably fluid and flexible, with genuine if limited opportunity for individual advancement.

Pertinent to this argument are the post-revolutionary careers of two Ciompi leaders, Michele di Lando and Luca del Melano. The son of a market woman, Michele worked as a foreman in a cloth factory, while his wife operated a pork-butcher's shop. Driven into exile by the régime established in 1382, he stayed briefly in Lucca and then moved to Modena and became a *lanaiolo*.⁵ Luca del Melano was expelled from

¹ No records of the Ciompi guild have survived, nor are there any entries in the *Lana* protocols for the summer of 1378. The *Lana* guild was forced to discharge the foreign official, the detested symbol of the guild's authority over the workers; *Lana*, 46, fol. 94r. But in August 1379, this post was again filled; *ibid.*, fol. 102r.

² The matriculation figures for these years are: 1375 (39), 1376 (32), 1377 (46), 1378 (17), 1379 (42), 1380 (35), 1381 (24), 1382 (26); *Lana*, 20, *passim*.

³ See, for example, Werner's analysis, *Studi medievali*, ser. 3, vol. I (1960), pp. 682-84.

⁴ Evidence in the *Lana* protocols suggests that some labourers were imbued with the moral values of the bourgeoisie. A wool washer named Sandro di Ciore complained to the guild that his son Bastiano 'dilapidat bona sua et male incontinenter et inutiliter tractat negocia ipsius Sandri, ludit ad zardum et alia inutilia et inhonesta committit'; *Lana*, 88, fol. 12v, 22 Sept. 1390. Another washer, Agnolo di Nero, made a similar complaint against his son Donato, a carder, 'qui non bene gerit facta sua', *ibid.*, 78, fol. 58r. The father of Piero di Manetto, a carder, denounced his son for failing to pay his debts; *ibid.*, 79, fol. 26r. For a similar complaint, see *ibid.*, 78, fol. 39r.

⁵ The details of Michele's career are summarized by Corazzini, *Ciompi*, pp. xlix-cv. His sojourn in Modena is documented by a letter addressed to 'Michele di Lando, *lanaiolo*, in Modena,' probably written by Tommaso Strozzi in Ferrara, and dated 11 February 1385. The letter was intercepted by the *Dieci di Balìa* and recorded in its protocols. It was discovered and edited by Corazzini, *A.S.I.*, ser. 5, vol. XII (1893), p. 4.

THE CIOMPI REVOLUTION

Florence for participating in the Ciompi uprising of late August. Upon his return in 1382, he established himself as a poultry vendor in the Mercato Vecchio. In 1384, he brought suit in the merchants' court against a former employee for breaking his labour contract, and to recover a debt of 70 lire. This former cloth worker had joined the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie.¹

In so far as Ciompi aspirations can be defined from fragmentary sources, they possess three distinctive characteristics. They were political, personal, concrete. It was through the commune that the workers hoped to improve their economic condition. The personal and concrete quality of Ciompi objectives is very apparent in the petitions drawn up on 21 July and again in late August. The bulk of these documents pertain to rewards, benefits and punishments to be meted out to specific individuals. Ser Piero di Ser Grifo was expelled from office; Giovanni di Mone and Salvestro de' Medici received grants of communal revenue. In August, when the workers were more intent upon punishment than rewards, Giovanni and Salvestro were deprived of their incomes, the *Otto di balia* received a salary reduction, and the *sindaci* of the *popolo minuto* were barred from office for ten years.

With a political vision so focussed upon the personal and the specific, and so divorced from the ideological and the abstract, the Ciompi could welcome all men into their orbit, and accept allies and leaders from any quarter. Initially, they placed their trust in the patricians who had conspired with them to bring down the old régime. During the protest movement of late August, thousands of workers marched through the streets behind that unscrupulous adventurer of magnate origins, Luca da Panzano. Three other bourgeois politicians — Anibaldo Strozzi, Guerriante Marignolli and Mezza Attaviani — joined the workers' revolt in these days, and were accepted into the proletarian fold. And after their defeat, the exiled Ciompi leaders made common cause with aristocratic magnates and wealthy merchants, in conspiring to overthrow the régime which had expelled them.²

¹ Luca was identified as a *riveditore* or burler; *Tratte*, 58, fol. 254r. His condemnation is recorded in *Capitoli*, II, p. 189, and in Stefani, rub. 807. The details of his lawsuit are in Mercanzia, 1188, fols. 318v-19v, 2 Sept. 1384. Luca's fate was less tragic than that suggested by M. Gukowski, who thought it likely that he had been hanged for his participation in the August rebellion; 'Chi fu a capo della sommossa dei Ciompi?', *Studi in onore di Armando Saporì* (Milan, 1957), p. 712.

² For documentation of these conspiracies, involving magnates, merchants and workers, see Corazzini, *Ciompi*, pp. 192-9; *Atti del Capitano del Popolo*, 1197 bis, fols. 9r-12r, 130r-132r, 142r-144r; 1198, fols. 31r-35r, 103r-107r. Participating in the plot of August 1379 were three prominent patricians (Benedetto Peruzzi, Piero Canigiani and Antonio da Uzzano) and 20 cloth workers living in exile in Bologna; *ibid.*, fols. 103r-103v.

GENE A. BRUCKER

The Ciompi revolution was something less than a gigantic conspiracy against wealth, tradition and the social order, as it was depicted by Leonardo Bruni and other Renaissance historians. Nor does it fit neatly into the mould cast for it by recent scholarship: the first significant rebellion of Europe's industrial proletariat, a harbinger of the economic and social tensions of the modern world. It was a characteristic Florentine *imbroglio*, neither very bloody nor very destructive,¹ and as strongly influenced by personal hatreds and loyalties as by any spirit or sense of class. The historical significance of the Ciompi episode was its utilization by the Florentine patriciate to justify the increasingly narrow social base of politics, and the progressive exclusion of the lower classes from office. In the fifteenth century, Florentines continued to describe the revolution in apocalyptic terms, as a harrowing experience which should never be forgotten.² So the legend of the Ciompi terror was elaborated, and the evil character of the depraved workers impressed upon generations of citizens. Even after six hundred years, the myth has not been exorcised from the minds of the Florentine bourgeoisie.

¹ Chronicle estimates of the casualties vary from 10 to 20 killed during the revolution's course.

² See, for example, the anonymous writer printed by Scaramella, pp. 35-41; and above, p. 349.

X

GEORGE HOLMES

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME
THE POPE'S BANKERS

In the last years of the Avignon papacy the chief financial agents of the Apostolic Chamber were the companies of the Alberti Antichi controlled by two prominent Florentine citizens, Benedetto di Nerozzo and Niccolò di Jacopo Alberti. In 1372 they had been given a virtual monopoly in the transfer of moneys from the collectories of Europe to Avignon and they had an elaborate organization capable of dealing with this business, including branches and representatives in many parts of Europe from Naples to London.¹ This arrangement collapsed suddenly in 1376. The bitter prosecution of the War of the Eight Saints between Florence and the Papacy led Gregory XI on 31 March in that year to declare all citizens of Florence outlaws.² The property of Florentines resident at Avignon was confiscated. At the end of 1376 and the beginning of the following year some of the sales of their houses, several of which were bought by French merchants, were recorded in the accounts of the Chamber.³ In a commercial lawsuit at Florence in the next year it was assumed 'that after the said sentence all the Florentines . . . were driven from the city of Avignon and were robbed of what they had there by the officials of the pope and the rulers of the city by virtue of that sentence, except for a few reserved by the pope . . . *Item* . . . not one Florentine could stay or do business in Avignon or its

¹ Y. Renouard, *Recherches sur les Compagnies Commerciales et Bancaires utilisées par les Papes d'Avignon avant le Grand Schisme* (Paris, 1942), pp. 33-6; *idem*, *Les Relations des Papes d'Avignon et des Compagnies Commerciales et Bancaires de 1316 à 1378* (Paris, 1941), pp. 284 seq.

² G. A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society 1343-1378* (Princeton, 1962), pp. 310-311.

³ V. A., *Introitus and Exitus*, 347, fol. 92.

GEORGE HOLMES

environs'.¹ Florentines were indeed forbidden by their own commune in October 1376 to go to Avignon or to any other place where the papal court was resident or to trade in such a place.² One notable exception was made for Aghinolfo di Cherico de' Pazzi who obtained permission to stay and established a successful banking organization within the orbit of the Avignon obedience.³ In general however the position of Florentines at Avignon and the Curia must have become untenable. The War of the Eight Saints produced the sharpest break in the old commercial relationship between the Apostolic Chamber and the Florentine merchants which went back to the thirteenth century and was to extend into the sixteenth. It had been, and was to become again later, a natural and almost inevitable relationship. The Pope commanded the largest financial organization in the world: the Florentines were the world's bankers. They were almost indispensable to each other. This time however the breach was severe. It lasted over a decade and even then was only gradually repaired in the midst of the complicated politics of the Schism period. The next Florentine company to hold the commanding position of the Alberti Antichi — a world-wide organization with substantial control of the movement of papal moneys — was the company of Cosimo de' Medici. Cosimo not only recovered but improved on the position of the Alberti for he and his father had a unique personal connection with the Curia. How this originated is the subject of this essay.

The War of the Eight Saints was closely followed by the Schism of 1378. Florence was from the first committed to the Roman obedience and remained so, though often without much enthusiasm and with a strong preference for peace and unity, until the eve of the Council of Pisa in 1408. Florentines who sought papal employment therefore went to Rome rather than to Avignon. The financial records of the Roman popes of the Schism, especially during the earlier period, are scanty. It is however certain that the favoured bankers of Urban VI (1378-89) were not Florentine and probable that Florentines did relatively little business with the Chamber during his pontificate. The war with

¹ 'Item che dopo la dicta sententia tuti i fiorentini e altra gente di firenze furo caciati de la cita di vignone e furono robatti e tolti loro quella che auevano nela cita di vignone pegli uficiali del papa a retori dela dicta cita e per vigor e cagione dela dicta sententia se non certi riservati pel papa . . . Item che dopo la dicta sententia data pel papa veruno fiorentino non pote ne puote stare ne vsare ne traficare in vignone ne in alcuna parte dintorno a vignone ne nel paese' (A.S.F., Mercanzia, 1173, 13 March).

² A.S.F., Provv., 64, fol. 159, 18 October 1376.

³ It was made possible by a special connection with the Duke of Anjou: 'Et quod illustris princeps dominus andegauensis ipsum Aghinolfum retinuit nec eum inde recedere permisit . . .' (Provv., 64, f. 230). Cf. Eugenio Gamurrini, *Istoria Genealogica delle Famiglie Nobili Toscane* (Florence, 1668-85), vol. III, p. 118.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

Florence had naturally forced Gregory XI to seek alternative non-Florentine assistance. In 1375 and 1376 he made use of the firm of Andrea Ticci of Pistoia who advanced some substantial loans.¹ The bankers who eventually supplanted the Florentines for a long period however were the Guinigi of Lucca. Most of the evidence for this is derived from their family archives which happen to provide a useful substitute when the papal financial records are almost entirely lost. On 13 November 1376 at Livorno, in the course of his disastrous journey back to Rome, Gregory XI ordered his collectors to deliver their money destined for transfer to the Chamber to the representatives of Francesco Guinigi.² There are summary accounts of the Guinigi dealings with the Chamber covering the periods February to November 1377, January 1380 to October 1384, and December 1386 to December 1387 which show that they handled considerable sums of papal moneys at the end of Gregory XI's pontificate and throughout that of Urban VI. Between 7 February and 17 November 1377 Francesco Guinigi's firm received 26,490 cameral florins from the collectors in Hungary, England and Poland and paid out 32,894 florins for papal expenses.³ In the year January 1380 to January 1381 Michele Guinigi's company at the Curia paid out 11,735 cameral florins for Urban VI and received from various sources 5919 florins.⁴ Another account for December 1380 to September 1384 records 110,743 cameral florins collected by Michele Guinigi and 110,662 paid out.⁵ Between 1 January and 23 November 1387 the sums recorded are 95,384 florins received and 97,254 paid out.⁶ With the resources of the Roman Papacy seriously curtailed as they undoubtedly were at this period these figures are large enough to support the idea that the Guinigi were the main papal bankers and had ousted any Florentine firm from a leading position. Boniface IX, elected in 1389 in spite of the efforts of the commune of Florence to promote a more friendly candidate,⁷ continued for a time to use the Guinigi. They appear to have remained prominent in the financial

¹ V.A., *Introitus and Exitus*, 343, 344, 346. Cf. Renouard, *Recherches*, pp. 61-2; *Idem*, 'Notes sur une compagnie mercantile pistoienne du XI^e siècle', *Bollettino Storico Pistoiese*, XLIV, (1942).

² A.S. Lucca, Archivio Guinigi, vol. 1, f. 134; cf. *Calendar of Papal Registers*, IV, pp. 155-6.

³ A.S. Lucca, Archivio Guinigi, Pergamene ✕ 5.

⁴ Archivio Guinigi, Pergamene ✕ 22.

⁵ Archivio Guinigi, Pergamene ✕ 30.

⁶ Archivio Guinigi, Pergamene ✕ 32, 33.

⁷ M. de Bouïard, *La France et l'Italie au Temps du Grand Schisme d'Occident* (Paris, 1936), p. 137.

GEORGE HOLMES

business of the Papacy until about 1392.¹ They were replaced by fellow-countrymen, notably Lando Moriconi and Bartolomeo Turco² but in the course of the 1390s, Lucchese activity at the papal court declined and Florentine companies began to recover their old control.

In the last decade of the fourteenth century and the first decade of the fifteenth century the most prominent Florentine bankers at the Curia — and increasingly the most prominent of all bankers there — were the representatives of four families: the Alberti, Ricci, Spini and Medici. Three of these families contained prominent enemies of the ruling faction in the republic. The political relationship between Florence and the Papacy was transformed by the events before and during the Council of Pisa (1408–9) but it is conceivable that in the long period of strained relations under Urban VI and Boniface IX the political colouring of these families was a recommendation for them at the Curia and helped them to establish the virtual monopoly of business which they enjoyed in the early fifteenth century. The Alberti family had suffered catastrophic changes of political if not of financial fortune since the days of the Avignon papacy. The principal partners of the Alberti Antichi, Niccolò di Jacopo and Benedetto di Nerozzo, had died in 1377 and 1388. Their relatives were scattered by banishment from the city between 1387 and 1401. They could no longer do business in Florence but they established a number of banking houses in widely scattered European cities loosely connected by their family relationships.³ The principal banking members of the family in Italy at this time were two sons of Benedetto di Nerozzo, both exiled in 1387, Lorenzo, established in Padua and Venice, the father of Leon Battista, and Ricciardo, established at Bologna. The Alberti must have had the advantages of old associations with the Curia as well as an unparalleled range of business connections in other parts of Europe which made them particularly well suited for the ready transfer of taxes, *servitia* and legal fees. It is usually impossible to tell from the references in the sources

¹ This impression is suggested for instance by the details of payments of episcopal services to the Chamber from England collected by W. E. Lunt, *Financial Relations of the Papacy with England 1327–1534* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962), Appendix II, and by various financial documents of the period 1389–91 in V.A., *Armarium XXIX*, vol. 1. See also the full account of banking houses used by Boniface IX by A. Esch, 'Bankiers der Kirche im Grossen Schisma', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, XLVI, 1966 (which appeared too late to be used fully in this essay) especially pp. 321–6.

² Esch, *op. cit.*, pp. 326–50.

³ L. Passerini, *Gli Alberti di Firenze* (Florence, 1870); G. Mancini, *Vita di L. B. Alberti* (2nd ed., Florence, 1911); R. Cessi, 'Gli Alberti di Firenze in Padova', *A.S.I.*, ser. 5, vol. XL (1907); F. Melis, 'Malaga nel sentiero economico del XIV e XV secolo', *Economia e Storia*, vol. III (1956).

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

which particular Alberti firm is involved. In 1400-1 Lorenzo himself is said to be 'Rome commorans'¹ but later on most of the business went through the hands of a factor who was prominent in the cameral records for many years called Aldigerio di Francesco Biliotti.² A second family which was involved in the same political disgrace was also prominent at the Curia. The Ricci were punished with exclusion from office for 20 years for their part in the conspiracy of 1400.³ Several members of the Ricci family appear in papal records in the first decade of the fifteenth century. In 1401-3 Matteo Ricci is doing business at Rome through a factor called Jacopo di Francesco del Bene.⁴ In 1407 Pigello Portinari is acting for Filippo de Ricci.⁵ It was Filippo who became *depositarius* to Innocent VII and Gregory XII.

The most successful Florentines at the Curia during this period were perhaps the Spini company, usually referred to as the company of Antonio di Jacopo and Doffo de Spini.⁶ This firm had connections with the Chamber at least from 1390.⁷ In 1393 Doffo di Neri Spini was recorded as having lent 2000 florins to Boniface IX⁸ and in a register of payments of *servitia* in 1397-1402 he was the most common agent of payment.⁹

Finally we come to the principal subject of this essay, the Medici family. As Professor de Roover has shown,¹⁰ the Medici family had at this time two banks at the Curia which derived from, and were continuing, the business established by Vieri di Cambio de' Medici. Both belonged to members of the line of Averardo or Bicci de' Medici which had been specifically excluded from the condemnation of other members of the family in 1400.¹¹ The bank which belonged to Giovanni di Bicci

¹ V.A., *Obligaciones et Solutiones*, 55, fols. 179v, 198v., 204v.

² Factor of Lorenzo Alberti of Florence in 1402, proctor of Ricciardo Alberti and Co. of Genoa in 1405 (Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 2664, fol. 147, 267), factor of Lorenzo in 1407 (C. Guasti, 'Gli avanzi dell' archivio di un Pratese Vescovo di Volterra', *A.S.I.*, ser. 4, vol. XIII, 1884, p. 38). His full name rarely appears but in V.A., *Obligaciones et Solutiones*, 55A, fol. 101, he is 'Aldigerius Francisci de Biliottis de Florentia Campsor in Romana Curia'.

³ A. Borlandi, *Il Manuale di Mercatura di Saminiato de' Ricci* (Genoa, 1963), pp. 22-34.

⁴ Vat. Lat. 2664, fol. 13, etc.

⁵ V.A., Reg. Vat., 335, fol. 153.

⁶ In a list of companies registered with the *Arte di Cambio* in 1399 is 'Scolaius Neri de Spinis, Antonius Jacobi del Vigna et Soc. viz. Doffus Neri de Spinis, Pierus Cennis Bardelle et Bartholomeus Andree.' (*A.S.F.*, *Cambio*, 14, fol. 117v.) Some details about them are given by F. Novati, *Epistolario di Coluccio Salutati*, vol. IV (Rome, 1905), p. 10.

⁷ V.A., *Armarium XXIX*, vol. 1, fol. 190 (6 July 1390).

⁸ V.A., Reg. Vat., 324, fol. 137-137v. (27 August 1393)

⁹ V.A., *Obligaciones et Solutiones*, 55.

¹⁰ R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank 1397-1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 38 *seq.*, and *idem*, 'Gli antecedenti del Banco Mediceo e l'azienda bancaria di messer Vieri di Cambio de' Medici', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXXIII (1965).

¹¹ Passerini, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 292.

GEORGE HOLMES

de' Medici was managed by himself until his return to Florence in 1397 and thereafter owned by him jointly with Benedetto di Lippaccio de' Bardi (with respective shares of three-quarters and one quarter) and managed until 1416 by Ilarione di Lippaccio de' Bardi. The other, established in 1411, was owned by Giovanni's nephew Averardo de' Medici and managed by Andrea di Lippaccio de' Bardi. The interests of the two Medici and the subordinate interests of the three Bardi brothers were therefore very closely bound up. In the two decades between 1390 and 1410 Giovanni de' Medici and his bank appear frequently in the papal records but rather less than the Spini and the Alberti. The next decade however was the decisive one in the early history of the Medici family. In the next ten years, in spite of some abrupt reversals of fortune, the Medici rose from a position of parity with the other ecclesiastical bankers to a clear superiority which was the basis of their fortune in the rest of the fifteenth century. The crucial factor in this story is the connection between the Medici and the Pope in the pontificate of John XXIII between his election in 1410 and his flight from Rome in 1413.

The preference for the employment of Medici bankers in the pontificate of John XXIII was very likely due in the first place to an old friendship between Baldassare Cossa before he became pope and Giovanni di Bicci. Cossa entered the Curia as Chamberlain under Boniface IX and later rumour had it that he abused his position to make money out of the market in provisions and in loans for curial expenses by a nefarious partnership with professional bankers. 'He deposited' says Dietrich of Niem, 'great sums of money with certain merchants or rather wicked usurers at the Curia. With these moneys Baldassare cleverly and most ingeniously made very large profits. . . .' The indignant German goes on to explain how the curial bankers offered to suppliants at Rome who had got into financial difficulties loans with a concealed rate of interest of 25 per cent for 4 months, secured by obligations which were enforced by the court of the *Auditor Camerae*.¹ The diatribes of Cossa's enemies are not reliable evidence but there is a hint of support for this particular accusation in the fact that he appears frequently in the records of the period 1399-1401 as an agent for payments into the Chamber in the same way as the banking houses.²

¹ Theodorici de Niem *De Vita ac factis Constanciensibus Johannis Papae XXIII . . .*, cap. V, in E. H. von der Hardt, *Magnum oecumenicum Constantiense Concilium* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1696-1700), vol. II.

² The payments by the hands of 'Baldassare Cossa cubicularius' recorded in V.A., *Obligaciones et Solutiones* 55 (1397-1402) are in fact more numerous than those of any individual banker. Some examples of his activity are quoted by M. Jansen, *Papst Bonifatius IX. und seine Beziehungen zur deutschen Kirche* (Freiburg i.B., 1904), pp. 119-20.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

Another accusation made at Constance was that Cossa's cardinal's hat had been purchased in 1402 for 10,000 ducats which the 'mercatores de Medicis' had paid for him.¹ Again it is an unreliable accusation but it opens the possibility that Cossa had had close relations with the Medici bankers at Rome before he became a cardinal and even that he made the acquaintance of Giovanni di Bicci before the latter's return to Florence from Rome in 1397.² In 1403 Cossa made his remarkable reconquest of Bologna on behalf of the Pope. For seven years, until his election to the papal throne itself in 1410, he ruled at Bologna as cardinal legate, no longer merely a notable of the Curia but a political power and an important neighbour of the Florentine republic. During this period his close association with Giovanni di Bicci ceases to be hypothetical and becomes certain. It is shown firstly by his personal account with Giovanni di Bicci recorded in Giovanni's *Libro Segreto*, his private accounts of the finances of his partnerships. The *Libro Segreto* is not helpful about the nature of the payments but it records large sums received from Cossa and paid to him between 1404 and 1409 which show if nothing else that the two men did a lot of business.³ Secondly there are a number of short business letters from Cossa to Giovanni di Bicci amongst the Medici papers. Those which are dated fall in the years 1404-5. None of them is very revealing since they are mostly simple orders for payment but they are often addressed to Giovanni as 'amicus meus carissimus' and partly written in Cossa's own hand.⁴ A hopeful retainer who wrote in 1420 to ask if he had been remembered in Cossa's will described Giovanni as one of the dead man's 'cari e fidatissimi amici'.⁵ Whether or not the relationship was more than one of business convenience, Giovanni di Bicci had certainly been acting as a financial agent for Cossa on a substantial scale long before he became pope.

¹ H. Finke, *Acta Concilii Constanciensis* (Münster, 1896-1928), vol. IV, p. 851.

² Cossa was at the Curia by October 1392 (A. Theiner, *Codex Diplomaticus Domini Temporalis S. Sedis*, vol. III, Rome, 1862, p. 70) and *Cubicularius* by August 1394 (*Repertorium Germanicum*, vol. II, col. 104). Giovanni di Bicci was in business at Rome at least from 1386 to 1397 (de Roover, 'Gli antecedenti', pp. 7-9).

³ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 153, no. 1, fols. 35v-36, 52v-53 and 81v-82. The first entry is a credit to Cossa of 8,937 cameral florins received by 'giuliano di giovanni nostro fattore in bologna dalo deto messer lo cardinale', dated 28 August 1404, followed by a further credit of 2,527 florins dated 28 April 1405 (fol. 35v). The account continues with further credits dated at various times in 1406-8 on fol. 52v. The largest is 16,165 florins on 5 July 1407 and the total of credits over 42,000 florins. All but 1306 florins 15 s. 7 d. of this is balanced by payments by Medici to or for Cossa and a general settlement of account on 6 September 1409 is noted (fol. 53). But there is no explanation of the meaning of the entries.

⁴ E.g. A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 1, nos. 208-215.

⁵ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 1, no. 221.

GEORGE HOLMES

Another factor of a quite different kind which may have assisted the Medici in acquiring their eventual predominance was an institutional development at the Chamber: a development little noticed by historians¹ but probably important in the world of ecclesiastical finance. This was the custom of appointing a Depositary of the Papal Chamber, *Depositarius Camere Apostolice*, a merchant charged with a special responsibility for receiving and disbursing the Chamber's revenues and assisting papal finance. There had often in the past been merchants especially favoured by the Chamber and especially prominent in its business, like the Alberti and the Guinigi. But the existence of a clear institutional relationship between the Chamber and a single firm seems to become more marked during the Schism period, possibly because it was demanded by the very weak state of papal finances. The Lucchese Lando Moriconi and Bartolomeo Turco are found holding this position in the 1390s.² Gabione Gozzadini, a member of a prominent Bolognese banking family, was appointed to it by Boniface IX on 26 November 1401.³ He held the office for two years, was described by the Lucchese chronicler Sercambi as 'Treasurer of Holy Church' and was reviled for his receipt of the proceeds of papal extortion in Germany in a characteristic letter by Dietrich of Niem.⁴ His family was ruined in 1403 when Cossa came to Bologna and determined to destroy their power.⁵ Thereafter the depositary seems always to have been a Florentine. Innocent VII appointed Niccolò de' Ricci and Co. about 22 April 1406.⁶ Ricci continued to act in the same capacity when Innocent VII was succeeded by Gregory XII.⁷ In the summer of 1409 a third pope, Alexander V, was elected by the Council of Pisa. He turned to another Florentine firm and appointed Doffo di Neri Spini; or at least this is what Spini claimed in his *Ricordanze*, which is the only evidence: 'e chiamassi papa Alessandro e Io doffo de nero Spinj fu suo dipositario.'⁸ Alexander V

¹ Cf. the brief remarks of W. E. Lunt, *Papal Revenues in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1934), vol. I, p. 19.

² Esch, 'Bankiers der Kirche . . .', pp. 326-7, 344.

³ Giovanni Gozzadini, *Nanne Gozzadini e Baldassare Cossa poi Giovanni XXIII* (Bologna, 1880), p. 233. He is described as 'depositarius' in papal records on 28 November 1402 and 15 February 1403 (V.A., Reg. Vat. 320, fols. 48v, 109v).

⁴ *Le Croniche di Giovanni Sercambi*, ed. S. Bongi (1892), III, p. 75; H. Heimpel, *Dietrich von Niem* (Münster, 1932), pp. 303-13.

⁵ Gozzadini, op. cit., p. 243 seq.

⁶ *Dilectis filijs Nicolao de Riccijs et socijs mercatoribus florentinis Romanam Curiam sequentibus. . . Cum vos hodie pro officio depositariatus apostolice sedis Camere exercendo cum. . . Camerario nostro certa conuenciones et facta feceritis* (V.A., Reg. Vat. 334, fol. 92-92v).

⁷ On 27 February 1407 he is described as 'olim . . . depositarius' (Reg. Vat. 335, fol. 59) but 'depositarius' again on 15 July 1410 (fol. 204) so presumably he was reappointed.

⁸ A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 2a serie, filza 13, fol. 31.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

died in May 1410 to be succeeded as pope of the Pisan obedience by Baldassare Cossa, John XXIII. For the first year of his pontificate John maintained the connection with the Spini, the office of depositary being held by a factor or partner of Spini called Piero Bardelli, who was sufficiently prominent to be denounced at the Council of Constance by several people as Cossa's agent in the iniquitous traffic in benefices.¹ There is an account book of John XXIII's Chamber for the first year of his pontificate which shows many payments to Bardelli as depositary.² When the Medici took over control of papal finances there was therefore an established office in existence which gave a special relationship with the Chamber to one firm of bankers at a time.

To explain the relationship between the Medici and John XXIII as pope we must first sketch briefly a few of the main events of his pontificate. John XXIII was elected in May 1410 by the cardinals who had supported the council of Pisa. For most of the next year he was fairly inactive and remained at Bologna. Then he embarked on an ambitious policy to establish his position. There were still two other popes, Benedict XIII and Gregory XII. John's chief enemy in Italy was King Ladislas of Naples who supported Gregory and controlled Rome; his main ally was Louis of Anjou who claimed the throne of Naples against Ladislas. In March 1411, John issued bulls proclaiming the levying of a tenth on the clergy of all those provinces which supported him. Since he was the pope of the council of Pisa, this included the greater part of Europe. With Louis and a large army of mercenaries he went south, entered Rome in triumph in April 1411 and heavily defeated Ladislas in May at Roccasecca. This victory was not however exploited. Louis returned to France soon after. John XXIII continued to employ *condottieri* but not to use them effectively. He made a serious bid for further support in November when he preached a crusade against Ladislas which might have brought him substantial sums from the sale of indulgences. But military success did not come to him, and he made peace with Ladislas in June 1412, buying the king's support at a high price. A year later Ladislas turned against him. John fled from Rome in June 1413 to take shelter in the suburbs of Florence until November when he returned to Bologna and went on to the negotiations with the Emperor Sigismund leading to the Council of Constance. He arrived at

¹ *Acta Concilii Constanciensis*, vol. IV, pp. 775, 844, 854, 861. That he was a representative of the Spini is shown by references to him in 1398 (V.A., *Obligaciones et Solutiones*, 55, fol. 74, 'socius') and 1413 (G. Camerani Marri, *I documenti commerciali del fondo diplomatico mediceo nell'Archivio di Stato di Firenze* (Florence, 1951), p. 30, 'factor').

² B.N.F., Magl. XIX, 80.

GEORGE HOLMES

Constance in October 1414, fled in March 1415 and was deposed by the council. John XXIII's reputation is amongst the blackest even in papal history. Among the Italian popes of the Schism however he stands out — at any rate above Boniface IX, Innocent VII and Gregory XII — for his energetic attempt to recover the papal position in Rome and Italy. This required money and he seems to stand out from his contemporaries equally for the ambitiousness and relative success of his attempts to raise it. In particular he succeeded in gaining the support of the French crown for a subsidy to be levied on the French clergy, a remarkable if temporary revival of earlier papal powers, and he imposed extremely heavy taxation on those parts of the Papal States which he controlled.¹ In contrast also with the earlier Italian popes of the Schism the financial records of John's pontificate, though scattered and largely unpublished, are relatively abundant. From the fragments of evidence still in the Vatican Archives and other fragments in Prato (from which Guasti published some extracts in the last century),² in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence and amongst the Medici records, it would be possible to reconstruct a good deal of the financial history of his pontificate. One of the most prominent features of these records is the pope's association with his Florentine bankers.

One way in which the Medici connection with the Chamber was strengthened was through a change in the depositary. On 18 March 1411 Pope John's Chamber made an agreement with two Florentine merchants, Jacopo di Francesco del Bene and Francesco di Giachinotto Boscoli, for them to act as joint depositaries. The papal letter of 8 March empowering a cameral notary to make the contract gave as the reason for the arrangement: 'Cum apostolica camera in magnis necessitatibus constituta dinoscatur existere et ad subleuandas ipsius indigencias de vno uel pluribus depositariis qui manus subventrices pecunias hoc presertim tempore mutuando et diligenciam circa exactionem debitorum camere et alia oportuna exhibeant oporteat prouidere.'³ The contract itself, which has some extra interest as the only document of its kind apparently surviving from this period,⁴ laid down the conditions which each side was to observe. The two bankers were to be 'depositarii Romane et apostolice Camere' for two years dating from 13 March 1411 and for three further years if they so wished. They were to lend the Camera 10,000 florins immediately and for their

¹ P. Partner, *The Papal State under Martin V* (London, 1958), p. 22.

² Guasti, 'Gli avanzi dell' Archivio di un Pratese', cit.

³ V.A., Reg. Vat., 342, fol. 171-171v.

⁴ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 99, no. 42.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

period of office;¹ they were also to lend immediately a further sum of 10,000 florins which they would recover at the rate of 1000 florins a month from the Chamber's revenues.² They were to follow the Curia wherever it went and to maintain there at the Chamber's expense a bank, a 'domum scampium siue banchum ad exercitium dicti officij ydonea', and they were to draw up accounts with the officials of the Chamber each month.

In return the Chamber made substantial concessions to them. It was stressed that papal revenues of whatever kind, except for those of the territories of Bologna and Forlì, were to pass through their hands.³ They were to have the right to appoint the treasurers in all those places where such officials were normally appointed by the Chamber, including Avignon and the Venaissin. If at the end of their term of office they were creditors of the Chamber they could recover their debts from any papal moneys in the hands of Giovanni de' Medici, Andrea de' Bardi and Filippo and Bartolomeo Carducci. All payments which were in future made out of papal income were to be made by the depositaries; they were entitled to charge at the rate of one *bolognino* for each cameral florin paid by themselves or their deputies or receivers and also to make a similar charge on any other payments made from the Chamber through any other channels, except payments to officials and courtiers of the Curia.⁴ This may represent a general charge of as much as two or three per cent on payments by the Camera.⁵ Their ability to maintain

¹ 'Item quod predicti Jacobus et Franciscus depositarii pro exercitio dicti officij teneantur et debeant Romane ecclesie et Camere predictis ad presens mutare et tenere in et super officio dicti depositariatus decem milia floreni auri de camera.'

² '... de quibuscunq[ue] introitibus redditibus fructibus atque prouentibus Bulle ac Registri litterarum apostolicarum et alijs quibuscunq[ue] pecunijs ac bonis Romane ecclesie et Camere prefatarum...'

³ 'Primo quod omnes et singula florenorum et pecuniarum summe Introitus fructus redditus et prouentus debiti et qui deberentur imposterum Ecclesie et Camere ac domino nostro et successoribus antedictis aut eorum alicui quocunq[ue] iure uel modo occasione uel causa spiritali uel temporalis uel mixta seu alias quocunq[ue] aut qualitercunq[ue] ad manus dictorum depositariorum uel illius seu illorum quem uel quos iisdem depositarij duxerint deputandum seu deputandos perueniant et peruenire debeant integraliter Introitibus fructibus redditibus atque prouentibus Ciuitatum Bononiensis ac forliuensis earumq[ue] Comitatum Territoriorum atq[ue] districtuum dumtaxat exceptis et reseruatjs.'

⁴ 'Item quod omne pagamentum quod et que de pecunijs fructibus redditibus ac prouentibus ecclesie ac Camere seu domini nostri aut successorum prefatarum quocunq[ue] et qualitercunq[ue] et quibuscunq[ue] personis occasionibus uel causis et ubicunq[ue] fieri deberet et fiet imposterum fiat et fieri debeat dari et solui dumtaxat per ipsos depositarios seu deputandos aut deputandum ab eis et non per alium uel alios ullo modo. Et si fieret per alium uel alios quam per ipsos aut deputandos ab eis quod de tali solutione ac pagamento eis debeat per ipsam Cameram vnus bononinus pro quolibet floreno prout de alijs est expressum.' In the next clause it is 'vnum Bononinum de Bononia uel valorem ipsius Bononini pro quolibet floreno de eadem Camera apostolica'.

⁵ K. H. Schäfer (*Die Ausgaben der apostolischen Kammer unter Johann XXII*, Paderborn, 1911, p. 80*) quotes a rate of 38-40 *bolognini* to the florin in 1422-23. At this period the

GEORGE HOLMES

surveillance of the payments made by the Chamber was ensured by the provision that they were to have copies of all retainders of troops made by the Pope, so that they should know the payments due in this main sector of papal expenditure,¹ with the right to levy their *bolognino* on all wages actually paid to the troops. In short they became, as long as they held their office, privileged officials of the Chamber with a legal right to handle nearly all the income and expenditure of the papacy and to charge a standard rate for doing so.

The two newly-appointed depositaries were in reality set up in business, or rather provided with capital, by three Florentine companies, Giovanni di Bicci's company at the Curia, Andrea de' Bardi and Co. 'di corte', i.e. the curial branch of Averardo de' Medici, and Filippo and Bartolomeo di Giovanni Carducci and Co., Florentines trading at Bologna. The capital advanced was 7833 $\frac{1}{2}$ cameral florins — 3333 $\frac{1}{2}$ from Carducci, 2000 from Bardi and 2500 from Medici — made up to the necessary 10,000 florins specified in the contract with 1666 $\frac{2}{3}$ from Del Bene and 500 from Boscoli. A further 10,000 florins was advanced in the same proportions to be in deposit with the depositaries for ten months.² Of the two depositaries themselves Del Bene had been

cameral florin seems to have contained about 3.5 gr. of gold and the silver *bolognino* about 1.1 gr. of silver (*Corpus Nummorum Italicorum*, vol. X, 2a, Rome, 1927, pp. 18–19, 24–25) which, if the ratio between gold and silver values was about 10.5 (C. M. Cipolla, *Studi di Storia della Moneta*, Pavia, 1948, p. 154) would mean 33.6 *bolognini* to the florin. This may serve as a very rough guide.

¹ 'Item quod ipsi depositarij et uterque ipsorum habeant et habere possint et recipere copiam omnium et singulorum Capitulorum habitorum et habendorum cum gentibus armigeris quibuslibet nunc conductis et imposterum conducendis ad stipendia prelate ecclesie. . . .'

² A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 138, no. 44 (I am grateful to Dr Andreas Grote for giving me a photograph of this document): 'Sia manifesto ad qualunche persona chegli è vero che a dì xviii d'aprile mccccxj filippo e bartolomeo frategli e figliuolj di giouannj carduccj cittadinj et mercatantj fiorentinj di firenze per se et per compagnj di bologna et Giouannj de medicj e compagnj di corte e Andrea di Lippaccio de bardi e compagnj di corte e ciascuno de dettj nominatj diedono in accomandigia a Jacopo di francesco del bene cittadino e mercatante fiorentino et a Francesco di giachinotto boscholj cittadino fiorentino fiorinj settemila octocentotrentare et vn terzo dorò di camera cioè i dettj filippo e bartolomeo e compagnj fiorinj tremilatrecentotrentare e vn terzo di camera el detto giouannj de medicj e compagni fiorinj dumila di camera el detto Andrea de bardi e compagni fiorinj dumilacinquecento di camera e che i dettj accomandatarij douessino tenere nella detta accomandigia la soprascritta quantità cioè Jacopo di francescho del bene cioè fiorinj Millesecentosesantasei e due terzi di camera e francescho di giachinotto boscolj fiorinj cinquecento di camera e oltre acciò i dettj accomandatarij fussono tenutj dare in deposito per diecj mesi proxinj dal dì comincia la detta accomandigia a dettj Jacopo del bene et francesco boscholj fiorinj settemila Octocentotrentare et un terzo di camera . . . sicchè in tucto diecimila fiorinj sieno gli stantj mentre che durar douessi l'accomandigia e diecimila fiorinj di camera fussono i dipositatj pel detto tempo di dieci mesi et con pattj et modi et forma per quel tempo e sì come si contiene e contengono e fa mentione in vna scritta priuata facta tralle dette partj a dì xviii d'aprile mccccxj soscritta. . . .'

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

at one time a factor of Matteo de' Ricci at Rome¹ while Boscoli was an old employee of Giovanni di Bicci's branch at Naples who later became manager of Averardo's Rome branch.² They seem to have remained depositaries for the stated term of two years and then not to have been reappointed.³ The last that we hear of them is an agreement between them and their backers on 20 October 1413.⁴ According to this the depositaries were still owed 18,955 florins 33s. 6d. by their account with the Chamber up to 11 September 1411 and 4860 florins 6d. by their account since that time. Money which they received from the Chamber was to be apportioned among the backers and the depositaries according to their contribution to the original *accomandigia*. This does not of course tell us anything about the profit they had made. Their original appointment had come at the beginning of John XXIII's period of serious military and financial operations and had probably been made in expectation of the business to be done: the French king had agreed in February to support the taxation of the clergy⁵ and the march on Rome began at the beginning of April. Their tenure of office covered the period of success. Throughout this time the Medici family must have had a very favourable relationship with the Chamber through the depositaries.

For the rest of 1411 and part of 1412 John XXIII was pursuing an active military policy which involved large and rapid spending in which the bankers at the Curia played an essential part by lending in anticipation of income. The main banking houses all contributed. The Medici contributed a large and, as the pontificate went on, an increasing proportion of the necessary money. This can be shown by listing the bigger loans which are mentioned in the surviving records. No doubt the list is incomplete and it is not intended to be systematic but it probably shows fairly enough the relative importance of the companies to the Papacy.

¹ Vatican Library, Vat. Lat. 2664, fol. 13.

² De Roover, *Medici Bank*, pp. 255, 38, 138.

³ B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 81, is an account book of the Treasurer of the Chamber apparently starting from the point when he took over from the depositaries: 'Item quod incepti officium Thesaurarii die prima Junii mcccxcj et habui depositarios usque ad diem xiiij Martii mccccliiij in quo inceptus est iste liber in quo tempore omnia scribebantur per depositarios viz Franciscum de Boscholis et socium et ego tantum scribi feci quitantias . . .' (fol. 242).

⁴ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 138, no. 44.

⁵ N. Valois, *La France et le Grand Schisme* (Paris, 1896-1902), vol. IV, p. 188.

GEORGE HOLMES

- 23 March 1411 Filippo Carducci. 10, 4000 fl. (for wages of Braccio). To be repaid by the depositaries (Reg. Vat., 342, fol. 187).
- 27 March The depositaries. 4000 fl. To be repaid from *servitia* of certain sees (fols. 218-19).
- 29 March Jacopo di Tommaso Tani. 3000 fl. (Reg. Vat., 342, fol. 191v).
- 26 April Spini, Andrea de' Bardi, Guidetto Monaldi, Guglielmo ? (all of Florence). 6000 fl. To be repaid from gabelles of Rome (342, fol. 223).
- 13 June Alberti, Ricci, Spini. 3600 fl. To be repaid from gabelles of Rome (343, fols. 111v-12v).
- 19 June Andrea Bardi, Alberti, Ricci, Spini. 4000 fl. To be repaid from charitable subsidy in France (343, fol. 20).
- 5 July Alberti (1400), Giovanni de' Medici (1900), Spini (1400),¹ Ricci (1400), Andrea de' Bardi (1400). 7500 fl. To be repaid from gabelles of Rome (343, fol. 30).
- 7 August Medici, Andrea de' Bardi. 3000 fl. To be repaid from profits of Register (343, fol. 53v).
- 7 August Spini, Ricci, Alberti. 3000 fl. To be repaid from profits of Bull (343, fol. 55).
- 1 September Alberti (1400), Medici (1800), Spini (1400), Ricci (1400). 6000 fl. To be repaid from gabelles of Rome (343, fol. 84v).
- 10 October Alberti (15,000), Medici (15,000). 30,000 fl. To be repaid from subsidy in France (343, fols. 103v-105).
- 31 January 1412 Alberti, Ricci, Medici, Spini, Andrea Bardi (1400 each). 7000 fl. To be repaid from gabelles of Rome (343, fol. 213v).
- 24 April Andrea Bardi (1500), Alberti (1500), Ilarione de' Bardi (3500), Ricci (1500), Spini (1500). 9500. To be repaid from profits of Bull and Register (344, fols. 81v-82v).
- 9 May Spini. 4000 fl. (344, fols. 82-3).

Even ignoring the activities of his nephew Averardo, Giovanni di Bicci is still the biggest lender to the Pope and this fits with the general impression conveyed by the cameral account books¹ that he and his

¹ B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 79, 80, 81.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

partner at the Curia, Ilarione de' Bardi, played the leading part in the vast number of smaller transactions.

On 17 June 1412 John XXIII made peace with Ladislao of Naples on onerous terms including the payment of 95,000 florins within one year.¹ The Florentine government received its first news of this important treaty from Ilarione de' Bardi,² the managing partner of Giovanni de' Medici's bank at Rome. This was because the Medici bank was the main agent for the finding and transfer of the money. Two valuable mitres were delivered to Matteo Barucci of the Rome branch on 16 and 19 August 1412 to serve as pledges for a loan.³ On 4 October other plate had been delivered to Ilarione 'for 2769 florins for the execution of the peace between . . . Pope John XXIII and . . . Ladislao'.⁴ A document dated 12 October summarized Ilarione's position in the affair at that time. He had received 20,231 florins from other bankers in the name of the Pope, mostly from the Alberti and Spini, and had promises making the total up to 25,231 florins and he still had the mitres and other valuables. He had paid 7000 florins of this through the depositaries to Paolo Orsini for wages of war. The Pope now owed Ladislao 42,500 florins (presumably the first half of his obligation under the treaty, to be paid in the first half-year). Ilarione was to pay the king 13,000 florins immediately and promise him a further 8000 in three months' time of which 2769 would be loaned by 'tu et dicta societas de Medicis'. He was also to promise to give the king in three months another 14,000 florins or hand over the two mitres.⁵ The 14,000 florins were difficult to find. The three months had expired when Ilarione wrote a long letter from Rome to Giovanni di Bicci at the beginning of February 1413.⁶ The mitres and other valuables were by this time in Giovanni's keeping in Florence and the Pope was above all anxious that they should not fall into the hands of King Ladislao and if possible that they should not leave the safety of Florence.⁷ Ilarione had been involved in troublesome negotiations

¹ P. Fedele, 'I capitoli della pace fra re Ladislao e Giovanni XXIII', *Archivio Storico per le provincie napoletane*, vol. XXX (1905), pp. 194-211. The crucial clause is on p. 206. Dietrich of Niem was not far out when he said that John XXIII won over Ladislao 'cum summa centum millium florenorum, sibi per quendam Florentinum per ipsum Balthasarem transmissorum' (*De vita . . . Johannis Papae XXIII*, cit., cap. xxiv).

² A. Cutolo, *Re Ladislao d'Angio-Durazzo* (Milan, 1936), vol. I, p. 386.

³ Vatican Library, Barberini Lat. 2668, fols. 58v-60.

⁴ Fedele, op. cit., pp. 211-12.

⁵ V.A., Reg. Vat. 344, fols. 202-3. The figures are confirmed by a later quittance in Reg. Vat. 341, fol. 301, which acknowledges that Ilarione had paid Ladislao 35,000 florins in all.

⁶ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 88, no. 122 (4 February 1413).

⁷ ' . . . per nesuno modo voleva di firenze uscisono. . . '

GEORGE HOLMES

between the Curia and Ladislas. For some reason, perhaps simply lack of funds, he was not going to advance the 14,000 florins himself. He was anxious to be rid of the responsibility of the pledged valuables¹ and he regarded the arrangement which he had managed to make as the best of a bad job.² The arrangement was that another Florentine business man, who had had dealings with Cossa at Bologna but was not a curial banker, Filippo di Giovanni Carducci (already known to us as the third backer of the depositaries) would advance the 14,000 florins. But, because Carducci had other business with the Papacy which he did not wish to be confused with this, he preferred to do it through a third party in Florence, Tommaso di Federigo Sassetti.³ Sassetti was to pay Giovanni di Bicci 14,000 florins in Florence with which Giovanni was to satisfy King Ladislas. Giovanni was to hand over the mitres as pledges for 12,800 florins and to have other pledges to cover the rest and Ilarione had paid Carducci 600 florins to make up the difference between Florentine florins in the contract with Sassetti and cameral florins to be paid to the King.⁴ With his letter Ilarione enclosed two bulls dated 30 January 1413 to Giovanni and to Sassetti authorizing the transaction on behalf of the Pope.⁵ The money was paid. The next document is dated 2 November 1413 long after King Ladislas — perhaps because he did not receive the second instalment of his bribe under the treaty — had turned against the Pope again and driven him out of Rome. Pope John had been for some months sheltering under the walls of Florence. In this document the Treasurer of the Chamber acknowledged a debt of 14,000 florins to Sassetti plus 750 florins interest. Giovanni di Bicci had paid Sassetti 7000 and once again held one of the mitres. He was to pay another 6750 florins to recover the second, while Sassetti retained the minor valuables for the 1000 outstanding.⁶ Possibly therefore when John XXIII left Florence less than a week later Giovanni di Bicci was again saddled with the two mitres,

¹ '... chome vedete noi vegniamo a paghare f. 6000 di camera per eser fuori di questi pegni e d'esser cierto d' avere i denari a di 17 daprile. ...'

² '... considerato tutto mi pare de chatiui partiti avere preso il meno reo. ...'

³ 'Chome voi vedete i carducci fanno fare questo fatto in nome di tomaso sasetti perchè non vogliono poi il papa potesse impaciarli per d. da lui anno avete ma loro sono quelli il fanno. ...'

⁴ 'Nel acordo ch'io sono rimaso chon Filippo charducci sia che io gli o dato f. 600 di camera e lui promette ad 17 d'aprile proximo avvenire tomaso di federigho sasetti vi dare f. 14 M nuovi per nome della camera di papa giovanni XXIII e voi quando arete i detti d. gli asegnarete le dette mitere che sono pro suma di f. 1280 e io qui gli o dato pegni per compemento infino a f. 14 M. ...'

⁵ Reg. Vat., 341, fols. 279-81.

⁶ A. Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi Medicei Vita* (Pisa, 1788-9), vol. II, pp. 12-13.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

but it is rather more likely that they were recovered by the Chamber.¹

Papal finance in general in the last two years of John's pontificate is more obscure. The flow of money continued at a high level through the summer of 1413 and the Medici seem to have been the most prominent bankers.² It is from this later period as it happens that we have what appear to be the earliest surviving accounts of the Medici branch at the Curia. One brief account covers dealings with the Treasurer of the Chamber from 10 April to 7 June 1413.³ It shows the Medici paying out 28,679 florins, mostly to troops, and receiving 31,612 florins, mostly in payments for benefices such as *servitia*. There is another brief account from September to November 1413 with smaller sums.⁴ These are amongst the cameral records. Lastly there is the Medici bank's own version of its account with the Chamber from May to October 1414, ending on the eve of the Pope's departure for Constance, recording a variety of payments on the Pope's behalf, now on a much smaller scale of course, and an inflow of money from *servitia*, vacancies and annates in many parts of Europe.⁵ The branch, with Ilarione at its head, followed the Pope out of Italy in his unwilling pilgrimage to the Council.

Later writers reported that the young Cosimo de' Medici, Giovanni's son, also went with the Curia to Constance. The legend is very likely true; the Pope issued a safeconduct for him at the same time as he issued them for Ilarione and for the Alberti factor at the Chamber.⁶ It may not be entirely fanciful to suppose that this was an important episode in the life of the future arbiter of Florence. It was probably his introduction to the world of papal politics and it may have strengthened his links with the humanists. The financial enterprise of Pope John attracted humanists as it attracted bankers. Poggio Bracciolini, Leonardo Bruni and Manuel Chrysoloras himself are only the star names in the crowd of humanists that went to Constance in the Pope's train to make that

¹ The only clue is a statement by Ilarione that he paid Giovanni de' Medici on 16 November 1413 1700 cameral florins 'di comandamento del detto nostro signore per reschottare le mittre' (B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 79, fol. 92v).

² B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 81, an account book of the Treasurer of the Chamber March 1413 to September 1414.

³ B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 79, fols. 86v-88, headed 'Apresso scriueremo più denari Ilarione di Bardi in nome di gouone de medici e Compagni di corte a paghati per la camera apostolica . . .'

⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 88v; 5455 florins received, 4850 paid out.

⁵ A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 87, no. 58.

⁶ 'Cum contingat dilectum filium Cosmum dilecti filii Johannis de Medicis Cuius honorabilis atque mercatoris Florentini natum familiaremque nostrum Romanam Curiam sequentem per nostris ecclesie Romane ac suis negocijs ad diuersas mundi partes sepenumero se transferre. . . .' (Bologna 27 September 1414). The safeconducts for Ilarione Bardi and Aldigerio Biliotti have the same date. (Reg. Vat. 346, fols. 259-60).

GEORGE HOLMES

provincial town briefly the main centre of humanist effort. Many years later Poggio recalled in his funeral oration on Leonardi Bruni that Bruni had filled the office of papal secretary in the time of Gregory and Alexander and John 'whose pontificate was most lucrative . . . for his indulgence attracted great sums of money' ('cujus Pontificatus quaestuosissimus fuit . . . multasque tum pecunias Johannis indulgentia contraxit'). For a few months in 1410 and 1411 Bruni returned to Florence as Chancellor but the difficulty of that office and the hope of greater gain ('tum novi exercitii difficultas, tum majoris spes emolumentum') took him back to the papal curia¹ and he accompanied Pope John in his retreat from Rome to Florence and Bologna and on to Constance. He returned to Florence after the flight of John XXIII in 1415, took up residence in the city, was granted citizenship in the following year, and was of course to spend the rest of his life in Florence, to become its greatest living humanist, write its history and act as its chancellor from 1427 to 1444, throughout the period of Cosimo's rise to power.

Banking and humanism were major links between Florence and the Curia and bankers and humanists mingled in both places. We find Poggio at Constance in 1417 thanking the Venetian humanist Barbaro for a letter which has been transmitted to him by Matteo Barucci, the Medici factor.² Two of the otherwise obscure factors at the Curia, Aldigerio Billiotti of the Alberti and Carlo di Ghieri of the Spini, figure in one of Poggio's jokes set down many years later.³ The complex of relations involving the Medici family, the humanists at Florence and Rome and the papal curia itself, which was to be so influential in the 1430s, had its roots in the court of John XXIII.

In purely financial terms the close association with John XXIII had probably put the Medici at the head of the curial bankers. At the Chamber itself they had been handling more money in closer association with the Pope than the other firms. In itself the business of lending money to the Pope was probably unwelcome. So it seems at least from Ilarione's attitude to the mitres and, a few years later, from the instructions given to Bartolomeo de' Bardi when he went to Rome as manager in 1420: he was to avoid lending to the Pope if possible and in any case

¹ *Leonardi Bruni Arretini Epistolarum Libri VIII . . .*, ed. L. Mehus (Florence, 1741), vol. I, pp. cxx-cxxi.

² 'Matthaeus Barucius noster' (A. C. Clark, 'The Literary Discoveries of Poggio', *Classical Review*, vol. XIII (1899), p. 125).

³ Carlo returning to the Curia from a six-month stay in Avignon said that all Florentines in Avignon went mad after a year. Aldigerio, *homo perfacetus*, remarked that Carlo had suffered the same fate in half the time (Poggio, *Opera*, Basel, 1513, fol. 181). The story could have originated under either John XXIII or Martin V.

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

not to go above 2000 florins.¹ Financial help to the Pope however was the price a banker must pay for favour at the Chamber. The branch's profits came from the innumerable routine transactions involved in transferring money to and from the papal court. It is probable that for much of John XXIII's pontificate the Medici had a bigger share of these transactions than anyone else. Moreover they had achieved their position at the best possible moment when more money was flowing into the Chamber than at any other time during the Schism. This was all vital to the fortunes of the family because the Rome branch produced more than half of the total profits of the Medici banks.²

This relationship with the Chamber collapsed because John XXIII was persuaded to go to Constance in the autumn of 1414, fled from the council in March 1415, was captured in May and deposed in the same month. Giovanni di Bicci's devotion to the ex-Pope, however motivated, remained. The year 1419 saw the ransom of Baldassare Cossa from his imprisonment with the Count Palatine Ludwig, his return to Florence and his reconciliation with Martin V. In all these events the Medici played a considerable part. It was an agent of Giovanni di Bicci, Bartolomeo de' Bardi (later branch manager at Rome), who arranged the release and return. He was with Cossa at Heidelberg on 6 December 1418 to agree to pay the ransom of 38,500 Rhenish Gulden, equivalent to 3,500 cameral florins. The payment was apparently made in April 1419 through the Medici branch in Venice.³ Cossa then returned to Italy escorted by Bartolomeo, arriving in Florence in June 1419.⁴ There are two surviving letters from Bartolomeo to Medici on the journey, one from Cossa himself, written at Sarzana on 5 June, asking for help and advice as he approached Florence, and another written from Naples in July by a nephew, Michele Cossa, thanking Giovanni for his help in 'la liberacione di monsignore'.⁵ Though Niccolò da Uzzano⁶ and Bartolomeo Valori certainly took an interest in the rescue of Cossa, who was generally respected as an old political ally of Florence, it seems

¹ De Roover, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

² De Roover, p. 47.

³ Cossa's promise to repay the ransom to Giovanni di Bicci (6 December 1418) and Bartolomeo's order for the Medici's German correspondents to pay the Count (16 April 1419) are both printed in *A.S.I.*, vol. IV (1948), pp. 432-7.

⁴ A letter of 9 May 1419 from Bartolomeo Valori says 'Io ebbi ieri lettera da Basilea della Magna da B. de' Bardi andò per la liberacione di papa Iohanne olim.' Another of 25 May describes Cossa's journey back in company with Galeotto de Ricasoli and 'B. de Bardi, fattore di G. de Medici' (*Regesti editi dal R. Archivio di Stato in Lucca*, vol. III, ii, Pescia, 1933, pp. 84, 88).

⁵ *A.S.F.*, *M.A.P.*, filza 5, nos. 637, 638; *A.S.I.*, vol. IV (1843), pp. 437-8; *M.A.P.*, filza 1, no. 219.

⁶ A. Dainelli, 'Niccolò da Uzzano nella vita politica dei suoi tempi', *A.S.I.*, ser. 7, vol. XVII (1932), p. 186.

GEORGE HOLMES

likely that Giovanni di Bicci played the major part. He also helped to smooth the way with Martin V, at that time resident in Florence. In March 1419, Giovanni still had in his possession a mitre which had been delivered to him by Archbishop Nicholas of Salerno on the orders of John XXIII on 9 April 1415 when John was in flight from the Council.¹ He also had certain 'scripturae et registra' of the late Pope. The return of the records and the mitre was demanded by the papal chancellor on 12 March and the return of the mitre, with a threat of excommunication, again on 22 March.² By 24 March the mitre had been returned.³

Not long after he had been accepted back into favour by Martin V and granted a new cardinalate Cossa died. His will, dated the day of his death, 22 December 1419,⁴ appointed Giovanni di Bicci and three others, Bartolomeo Valori, Niccolò da Uzzano and Vieri Guadagni, as his executors. It appears to have been Giovanni who managed the financial side of the will. His papers contain a number of letters from clamouring and suspicious Neapolitan relatives of the dead man asking for the shares of the inheritance.⁵ The final memorial of the relationship between Cossa and the Medici is of course the tomb in the Baptistry at Florence constructed by Donatello and Michelozzo in the next few years and commissioned, according to tradition, by Cosimo. Its ambiguous inscription 'Ioannes Quondam Papa XXIII' annoyed Martin V and is presumably the last testimony to the Medici devotion to Baldassare Cossa.⁶

The final stage of this story is the recovery of the Medici position under the new Pope. Martin was elected on 11 November 1417. The expenses of his coronation were borrowed from the Spini⁷ and on 1 December he appointed Carlo di Ghieri, a representative of the Spini, as his depositary.⁸ The fact was recorded with satisfaction by Doffo

¹ The Archbishop's testimony in V.A., Armarium XXIX, vol. 5, fols. 36-36v.

² *Acta Concilii Constantiensis*, vol. III, pp. 291-2; Fabroni, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 14-15.

³ V.A., Armarium XXIX, vol. 5, fol. 37.

⁴ *A.S.I.*, vol. IV (1843), pp. 292-5.

⁵ There are a number in A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 1.

⁶ H. W. Janson, *The Sculpture of Donatello* (Princeton, 1957), vol. II, pp. 59-61.

⁷ F. Miltenberger, 'Versuch einer Neuordnung des päpstlichen Kammer in den ersten Regierungsjahren Martins V (1417-20)', *Römische Quartalschrift*, vol. VIII (1894), p. 393.

⁸ A.S., Rome, Primo Camerale, 1711: 'Item die prima mensis Decembris prefatus dominus noster papa recepit in Camporem siue depositarium et Custodem pecuniarum Camere apostolice Carolum de chieri mercatorem florentinum Romanam Curiam sequentem qui eadem die fidelitatis in forma dicti officij consueta prestitit Juramentum.' He appears fairly frequently in earlier years as a representative of the Spini, mostly as 'Carolus Geri'. He was perhaps the son of the 'Geri de Testa, compagno di Antonio d'Jacopo e di Doffo degli Spini' mentioned in 1407 (H. Sieveking, 'Die

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

Spini in his *Ricordanze*, '... e chiamassi papa martino e così si chiama e la nostra compagnia fece suoi dispositari e cambiatori.'¹ The Spini retained this position for the first two years of Martin's pontificate, accompanying the papal court in the spring of 1418 back through the Alps to Florence, where it stayed for two years before finally returning to Rome in September 1420. In October 1420 Piero Bardelli who had held the office for the Spini in the early days of John XXIII is again described as 'depositarius'.² During the early years of Martin V the Medici returned to the position which they had held before the time of John XXIII as prominent bankers at the Curia competing with others and without any special official position. A new partnership for the branch at the Curia was drawn up in 1416 with Giovanni di Bicci and Benedetto and Ilarione de' Bardi as the main partners supplying the capital of 7000 florins and Matteo d'Andrea Barucci as the manager bound by the agreement 'stare fermo in chorte di Roma'.³ This was replaced on 16 September 1420 in the general reorganization when Cosimo and Lorenzo and Ilarione Bardi took over from the ageing Giovanni di Bicci. The main partners were now Cosimo and Lorenzo and Ilarione with Bartolomeo Bardi as managing partner.⁴ The personal allegiance of Giovanni to Cossa did not of course stop the branch transferring its activities to the Curia of Martin and following his itinerary. Barucci lent him 1200 florins at Constance on 4 May 1418.⁵ In the rather scanty cameral records of the period 1417-20 the most prominent names are those of the Medici, the Spini and the Alberti, with the Spini predominating.⁶

The Spini were clearly the main rivals of the Medici. Giovanni di

Handlungsbücher der Medici', *Sitzungsberichte der kais. Akademie der Wissenschaften Wien*, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, vol. 151, 1905, p. 60) also called 'Gerius teste de Gerolamis de Florentia' in 1403 (Vat. Lat. 2664, fol. 53v). 'Carlus Geri de Florentia' is already in Rome in 1402 (Vat. Lat. 2664, fol. 56).

¹ A.S.F., Carte Strozz., serie 2, filza 13, fol. 31v.

² B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 82, fol. 11. Other instances can be seen in G. Amati, 'Notizia di alcuni manoscritti dell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano', *A.S.I.*, ser. 3, vol. III (1866).

³ De Roover, p. 202; A.S.F., M.A.P., filza 94, no. 166.

⁴ De Roover, p. 203; M.A.P., filza 153, no. 2. The entries in M.A.P., filza 153, no. 1, fol. 107, quoted by de Roover, pp. 203 and 449, do not seem to me to support his unlikely suggestion that the curial branch was split into two parts, one following the council and Martin V and the other Cossa. After Cossa's flight and deposition in 1415 there was no ordinary curial business to be done for him. Professor de Roover is also mistaken in thinking that Barucci was depositary (p. 198). The reference to Barucci in Lunt, *Papal Revenues*, vol. II, p. 508, is to him as Ilarione's factor and the reference to him in A.S.F., C.S., Archivio 79, vol. 119, fol. 11, is to him as Ilarione's partner in the curial branch from 1416 to 1420.

⁵ V.A., Armarium XXIX, vol. 4, fols. 104v-105.

⁶ For instance in Armarium XXIX, vol. 6 (register of cameral documents mostly 1420), B.N.F., Magl., XIX, 82 (book of payments to condottieri in 1420 mostly through the Spini) and the early pages of V.A., *Introitus et Exitus*, 379 (1418-19).

GEORGE HOLMES

Bicci complained that they caused trouble after the death of Cossa by persuading the auditor of the Chamber to stop payments by Cossa's executors until they had been satisfied of debts outstanding from the days of his legateship and pontificate.¹ The sudden turn of fortune which ended the Spini predominance and finally cleared the way for the Medici came at the end of 1420. The Spini went bankrupt. The event is recorded simply in Doffo Spini's *Ricordanze*: 'Then on 11 November 1420, St Martin's day, our company failed. . . .'² The cause of the bankruptcy is unknown, but it is well attested. In December 1420, the papal vice-chamberlain was already trying to make arrangements for the partial satisfaction of creditors at the papal court 'post rupturam Banchi siue Societatis de Spinis mercatoribus Florentinis et post diuersas vociferationes et varia remedia per nonullos creditores viz. Curiales et Romanam Curiam sequentes dicte Societatis pro eorumdem satisfactione. . . .'³ Several years later their creditors at Florence were apparently being paid two shillings in the pound.⁴ This was the end of the Spini at the court of Rome. When Giovanni di Bicci was there with Bartolomeo Valori as ambassador of the commune of Florence in January 1422, his instructions included an order to recommend the Spini to Martin V's kindness because they were being harassed by creditors.⁵

By this time Bartolomeo de' Bardi, the Medici manager at the Curia, had been appointed depositary.⁶ It was the beginning of a long and extraordinary association. The tenure of that office by Medici representatives was to last continuously for 22 years and intermittently for another 40. Bartolomeo de' Bardi was succeeded in 1429 by Antonio da Pescia and he later by Antonio della Casa and Roberto Martelli, all of whom combined the management of the Rome branch with the

¹ . . . et da hora hanno cominciato quelli delli Spini a farci fare certi comandamenti dall' Uditore (original: "a luditore") della Chamera cioe alli esecutori che non paghino, sicche brigha e faccenda sara assai. . . . Questi domandono sono tutti per debiti fatti nel tempo ch'era legato di Bologna et poiche fu Papa.' (Fabroni, op. cit., II, p. 11, wrongly assigned to Averardo. Original M.A.P., filza 5, no. 958.)

² 'Di poj adj xj di nouembre 1420 Il dj samartino fallj la nostra compagna . . .' (fol. 18).

³ *Armarius* XXIX, vol. 3, fol. 83.

⁴ A.S.F., Mercanzia, 10870, proceedings in 1422 and after, relating to the affairs of 'Antonius Jacobi del Vigna, Doffus Neri de Spinis, Pierus Cennis Bardelle, Loysius Jacobi de Corsinis, Laurentius et Johannis fratrum et filiorum olim Scolai Neri de Spinis'.

⁵ B. Dami, *Giovanni Bicci dei Medici nella vita politica* (Florence, 1899), p. 117. The affair was still causing trouble in 1425 (*Commissioni di Rinaldo degli Albizzi*, ed. C. Guasti, vol. II, Florence, 1869, p. 333).

⁶ The earliest entries which I have noted so describing him are in March 1421 (*Introitus et Exitus*, 379, fols. 31, 31v).

HOW THE MEDICI BECAME THE POPE'S BANKERS

office of depositary.¹ The association therefore extended continuously through the rest of the pontificate of Martin V and through that of his successor Eugenius IV until his return to Rome in 1443. Thereafter it was undermined by Cosimo's dealings with Francesco Sforza, but the depositaries were still sometimes Medici men and there were other links such as the great scheme to exploit the papal alum mines.

The Medici-papal connection is important in many ways. Firstly and most obviously it was the main strength of the Medici financial position. Throughout Cosimo's career, as Professor de Roover has shown, the branch at the Curia was the most profitable of his various enterprises. It was the source of business for other branches because so many transactions were with Rome. Its turnover was so substantial that it came to require no capital investment and was indeed the source of capital for the other branches. Even after the wreck of its medieval economy the European importance of the papal Curia was still so great that it conferred enormous wealth on those who were happy enough to be its chief financial agents. That the Medici bank became the greatest business organization in the world and Cosimo reputedly the richest man was primarily due to the superior position of the Medici in the financial affairs of the Curia.

The connection was closest in the pontificate of Eugenius IV and at this time it became important not only for the family but also for the politics of Florence as a whole. When Cosimo was exiled in 1433 he was already a close associate of Eugenius IV. Next year Eugenius fled from insurrection at Rome to refuge in Florence. It has generally been thought that he played a crucial part in the extinction of the abortive anti-Medici rising in the autumn of that year which preceded Cosimo's restoration. A few years later Cosimo was able to use his influence to bring the Pope and the council with the Greek Church to Florence in 1439. The presence in Florence of such an important ally of the commune, to whom he was personally linked by the closest financial ties, for several years at the crucial period of Cosimo's political career must have been an important factor in strengthening his influence. The ramifications of the connection also extend into art and literature. Cosimo was a humanist and a patron. He was part of the close cultural connection between Florence and the Curia which is seen for instance in the career of his friend Poggio. Florence and the Papacy were perhaps never so close politically or culturally as in the 1430s. There were many reasons for their intimacy and Cosimo's position was certainly not the main one,

¹ De Roover, p. 198.

GEORGE HOLMES

but in a sense he was the most important person in that complex of financial, political and cultural links.

Cosimo's position and all that it involved sprang, as we have seen, from the dealings of Baldassare Cossa and Giovanni di Bicci. As Giovanni closed his accounts and handed the business over to his sons the connection was becoming well established. On 27 April 1420 Martin V granted Cosimo's younger brother Lorenzo the title of *scutifer*.¹ In June 1421, Giovanni di Bicci recorded in his private account book that he had asked the Pope for spiritual advice about his debts to dead or untraceable creditors and had been granted permission to atone for them by contributing 350 florins to the repair of Roman churches — which is a curious anticipation of the advice which Eugenius IV is supposed to have given to Cosimo many years later.²

¹ A.S.F., Dip. Mediceo.

² '... per iscarire de la nostra cocienza fe noto al papa il caso suplicando me desse licenzia poterle dispensare per l'anime di questi tali cocedetolo per sua bolla con questo che i ripara delle chiese di roma di sa pagholo e del altre io ne dessi fiorini trecentocinquanta di chamera e resto a que luoghi piatosi e poveri mi paresse ...' (M.A.P., 153, no. 1, fol. 122v).

XI

PETER PARTNER

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY IN THE EARLIER FIFTEENTH CENTURY

The War of the Eight Saints between Gregory XI and the Florentines in 1376 marks the end of the traditional Guelf political theory in Florence.¹ Perhaps it would not have done so, but for the outbreak of the Great Schism two years later, and but for the final collapse of the Angevin Kingdom of Naples in 1381. By these events the political system set up in Italy by the thirteenth-century Popes in conjunction with the Florentine bankers and the French crown was finally overturned. From 1378 until 1409 there was a 'Roman' Pope opposed to and irreconcilable with the French monarchy, and the basic premises on which Guelf politics had operated since the death of Boniface VIII in 1303 no longer obtained.

The Great Schism was perhaps the most revolutionary of all the events to affect political thought at the end of the middle ages. Under its pressure not only did the publicists and political thinkers change their terminology, but so also did the more conservative class of diplomats and negotiators. As late as 1366, Florentine diplomats had anticipated the return of the Papacy to Italy with loyalist Guelf raptures, full of historical reminiscence. In 1419 and 1434 on the occasions of Martin V and Eugenius IV entering Florence, the vocabulary of Guelf welcome had been muted almost to silence.²

Italian politics had allowed an active rôle to the Papacy and a passive

¹ My article 'Florence and the Papacy, 1300-1375' in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (ed. Hale, Highfield and Smalley, London and New York, 1965), pp. 76-121.

² For the 1366 embassy, reference *ibid.*, p. 110. For Martin V, *Commissioni di Rinaldo degli Albizzi* (*Documenti di storia italiana*, vol. I, 1867), pp. 294 ff. (but contrast the language of the *Parte Guelfa* on pp. 302-4); Filippo di Cino Rinuccini, *Ricordi storici dal 1282 al 1460* (ed. G. Aiazzi, Florence, 1840), pp. LV ff.; 'Diario fiorentino di Bartolomeo di Michele di Corazza, anni 1405-1438,' ed. G. Corazzini, *A.S.I.*, 5th ser., vol. XIV, 1894, pp. 256-98. For Eugenius IV see *Commissioni*, vol. III, pp. 587-8, and cf.

PETER PARTNER

one to Florence after 1346: after 1378 these positions tended to be reversed. Except for a short time, Florence had from 1346 onwards remained neutral in the great struggle between the Angevin-papal alliance and the Visconti power which sought to dominate Italy. But this struggle was nonetheless always one for commercial predominance, for ports and markets, to which the great Tuscan trading city could not remain indifferent. If the Papacy and the Angevin kingdom had not fought the 'Ghibelline' tyrants of north Italy, in the forty years following 1334, Florence would have been compelled to do so, since she and the other Guelf communes of Emilia, Umbria and Tuscany stood directly in the line of Milanese expansion. As things were, she had to fight a major war with Milan only in 1351-53, at a time when the then Pope pursued a policy of appeasing the Visconti. Although in 1375 she had even allied with Milan against the Papacy, it was suicidal for Florence to disregard the Visconti threat. As the conquests of Giangaleazzo Visconti began to dazzle north Italy in the late thirteenth-eighties, it became apparent that the old counter-balances to Visconti power had ceased to exist. The great French army which Louis of Anjou led to conquer southern Italy in 1382 retreated in broken and starving fragments in 1384. Its presence had given Florence Arezzo, but it was unlikely that any further French force would be despatched against the Visconti, who were the close relations by marriage of the French crown. From 1386 Florence became uncomfortably aware of an imminent Visconti menace to Tuscany, and of her own almost complete isolation in Italy. Charles III of Durazzo, the supplanter of Joanna of Naples and the friend of the Florentine oligarch government, was murdered in February 1386, and his heir was a child. The Kingdom of Naples and the Papal State were stricken by political chaos and civil war; power in central Italy was in the hands of irresponsible *condottieri*: Rinaldo Orsini, Onorato Caetani, Alberigo da Barbiano. In so far as Florentine policy had contributed to the political disorders in central Italy which made the Schism and its sequel possible, she was to be pretty handsomely punished for her sins.

In times as troubled as these, new political theories emerge. The new 'conciliar' theories of church government, which emerged during the Great Schism, are well known. The Florentine publicists, drawing on a more learned and sophisticated humanism than had been the

A. Fabroni, *Magni Cosmi Medicei Vita* (Pisa, 1788-9), vol. II, pp. 89-90; *Concilium Florentinum: Documenta et Scriptores*, vol. III, *Acta camerae apostolicae et civitatum Venetiarum Ferrariae, Florentiae, Ianuae, de Concilio Florentino* (ed. G. Hofmann, Rome, 1950), pp. 48-54.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

property of earlier generations, argued the Florentine political cause in terms whose sustaining thought was that of republican liberty,¹ but the political situation in which these theories grew was not one which had been wished for by the Florentine diplomats; on the contrary, it was the product of years of crisis and emergency. From 1390 to the death of Giangaleazzo Visconti in 1402, the Florentine régime was in open conflict with Milan, and forced to fight two great wars. The unpolitical balance in Italy did not end with Giangaleazzo's death: from 1409 to 1414 Ladislas of Naples pursued a similar struggle for hegemony, which Florence was forced to resist; and again from 1423 to 1428 she was locked in conflict with Filippo Maria Visconti.

The struggle between Florence and Milan may well be considered as one between republican liberty and despotism. But in considering what this 'civic liberty' meant, the social basis of the Florentine régime cannot be passed by. There was nothing radical about the Florentine government, which from the suppression of the Ciompi rising of 1378 onwards was based on a conservative oligarchy. The oligarchs held the reins for fifty years, and even after the return of Cosimo de' Medici in 1434 the oligarchy was modified in composition rather than changed in principle.² The defence of civic liberty was in this sense the defence of a conservative interest, and we may expect it to be marked by continuity of policy as it indeed was.

Florence was therefore unlikely to abandon lightly her traditional attitude to the Papacy, even if the revolutionary years after 1375 forced her to modify it. For Florence the Papacy was above all an important element in the Italian balance of power. Secondly, it was important in the European system of inter-state relations, particularly in its effects on French and Spanish policy in Italy. Thirdly it was an international economic power which had traditionally been a source of profit to Florentine bankers, and which possessed sanctions capable of making life very difficult for Florentine merchants abroad — as they had learned at the time of the War of the Eight Saints.

Quite the most striking thing about Florentine relations with the

¹ H. Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature in Florence at the Beginning of the Quattrocento* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), and *idem*, *The Crisis of the Italian Renaissance*, revised edition (Princeton, 1966).

² For the Medicean oligarchy, L. F. Marks, 'The Financial Oligarchy in Florence under Lorenzo', *Italian Renaissance Studies* (ed. E. F. Jacob, London, 1960), pp. 123-47. Cf. also E. Fiumi, 'Fioritura e decadenza dell'economia fiorentina', *A.S.I.*, vols. CXV-CXVII (1957-59), especially vol. CXVI, pp. 467-8 and vol. CXVII, pp. 492-502. I cannot follow the arguments of H. Baron, 'The Social Background of Political Liberty in the Early Italian Renaissance', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, vol. II (1959-60), pp. 444-51.

PETER PARTNER

Papacy during the Great Schism is her loyalty to the Roman Urbanist obedience, from 1378 until the period preceding the calling of the council of Pisa in 1409. The attraction of French power was never enough to convert Florence to the Clementine fold; even the French alliance of 1396 was explained away to Boniface IX in the terms: 'you need pay no attention to this league, because . . . it is directed neither against the Pope nor against the King (of Naples), and because we want to live and die as Italians, and to let France and all other powers go hang.'¹ Urban VI was extremely unsatisfactory for Florence in many ways, and towards the end of his pontificate relations were poor; but the threats of a withdrawal of obedience by Florence were not very serious. The financial interests of Florence, both in the Roman Curia and in Urbanist Naples, urged her obedience; the Clementine schism had been organized by prelates of known anti-Florentine sentiment in the interest of Robert of Geneva, the butcher of Cesena. Had French support ever been promised to Florence alone, her allegiance to Rome might have faltered; but always in the background Visconti influence undermined her policy at Paris. The sole occasion on which a French prince brought an army to Italy on her behalf, that of the Count of Armagnac in 1391, was a disastrous failure; John of Armagnac died miserably after his defeat by Jacopo del Verme.

On one subject of overriding importance, the succession to the throne of Naples, papal and Florentine policies were divergent but not contradictory. After the death of Charles of Durazzo Urban VI offered Florence a treaty which would give the Pope the control of the young Ladislas during his minority, and would enforce the payment by Florence of unpaid monies due to the Pope under the peace treaty which had ended the war of the Eight Saints. These proposals were refused, and Florence pursued her support of Ladislas independently of Urban.² But from the time of the deterioration of relations with Milan, which was acute by the death of Urban VI in 1389, Florence needed papal support badly, and was beginning to be ready to pay for it. In fact, the Papacy was not strong enough to give it, and throughout the period of the Florentine struggle with Giangaleazzo the situation of the 1360s was repeated in reverse, with Florence bearing the brunt of the struggle,

¹ A. Mancarella, 'Firenze, la Chiesa, e l'avvento di Ladislao di Durazzo al trono di Napoli', *Archivio Storico per le Province Napoletane*, n.s., vol. VI (1920), p. 54. For the political history see also H. Baron, 'A struggle for liberty in the Renaissance: Florence, Venice and Milan in the early Quattrocento', *American Historical Review*, vol. LVIII (1952-53), pp. 265-89, 544-70; D. M. Bueno de Mesquita, *Giangaleazzo Visconti* (Cambridge, 1941), especially pp. 83-120; M. de Boüard, *La France et l'Italie au temps du grand schisme d'Occident* (Paris, 1936), pp. 88 ff.

² Mancarella, article cited above, pp. 113 ff.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

and Boniface IX maintaining a usually benevolent neutrality. Thus the first war of Florence with Giangaleazzo was ended by an arbitration award in which a papal envoy took part.¹ Florence was willing once more to finance the Curia, for a consideration. In 1394, against a loan of 18,000 florins, Boniface granted Florence in pledge the small port of Castrocaro on the Adriatic — a most important grant, at a time when Giangaleazzo was seeking to strangle Florence by cutting off her port facilities.²

The financial stringency of Boniface IX in these years was as severe as any Pope had experienced in the later middle ages; and Florence, whose merchants were in any case still largely excluded from papal banking business, was not able to make up his deficits.³ More interesting is the question of the free communes in the Papal State, and particularly of the two largest, Perugia and Bologna. The revolutions of these towns against the Pope in 1375 had launched the War of the Eight Saints, and their communal independence had persisted until the advent of Boniface IX. In 1393 Florence was very willing to help negotiate their return to papal obedience — going as far as to say to the Perugians that they should 'resign themselves into the hands of the supreme pontiff, whom to serve is the greatest liberty, and whose orders it is sacrilege not to obey'.⁴ A good distance stands between this admonition and the injunctions to raise the banner of liberty against tyranny which Florence had given Perugia in 1375.

The real difficulty with the larger communes in the Papal State — as also with the more powerful *condottieri* — was that Florence wished them to be substantially independent of papal authority, so as to give herself greater freedom of diplomatic manoeuvre, and to enlarge her own military strength. Florence liked to be able to include the Papal State communes in the leagues of 'free' Tuscan communes which she organized and led, and she also wanted to be free to employ Papal State *condottieri* as and when she pleased.⁵ But she then had to face the

¹ J. Delaville la Roux, 'Un anti-grand maître de l'ordre de Saint-Jean de Jérusalem', *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, vol. XI (1879), pp. 525-44.

² R. Piattoli, 'Il problema portuale di Firenze dall'ultima lotta con Giangaleazzo Visconti alle prime trattative per l'acquisto di Pisa (1402-05)', *Rivista storica degli Archivi Toscani*, vol. II (1930), pp. 157-90. Castrocaro had earlier been granted with Bagnacavallo in pledge to the English mercenaries of Gregory XI.

³ E. Göller, 'Aus der Camera apostolica der Schismapapste', *Römische Quartalschrift*, vol. XXXII (1924), pp. 82-104.

⁴ H. M. Goldbrunner, 'Die Übergabe Perugias an Giangaleazzo Visconti (1400)', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, vol. XLII/XLIII (1963), pp. 285-367, at p. 349 n.⁶

⁵ Cf. P. Partner, *The Papal State under Martin V* (London, 1958), p. 87; *idem*, in *Europe in the Late M.A.*, p. 98; Bueno de Mesquita, 'Some Condottieri of the Trecento', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, vol. XXXI (1946), p. 21.

PETER PARTNER

fact — and she did not like facing it — that the effect of this policy was to further weaken the papal temporal power to such an extent as to make it very hazardous for a Pope to enter a major Italian war. The Papacy was also not unnaturally resentful of Florentine meddling inside papal territories. The underlying difficulty was that the initiative in organizing collective defence in 'Guelf' Italy against Milanese aggression had passed from a powerful papal-Angevin alliance enjoying French support to a single Tuscan commune. Venice pursued a cautious policy which justified itself by later events; her whole political tradition restrained her from entering a Guelf alliance, and she had not yet fully formulated the expansionist aims on the mainland which were later to make her the ally of Florence in a war with Milan. Ladislas of Durazzo, whom Florentine support had placed on the throne, was also unwilling to take political risks on behalf of the Tuscan Guelfs; appeals made to him as their 'only hope' were without effect. The Piedmontese possessions which had helped to induce the Angevin rulers of Naples to oppose the Visconti were not in his control. It was for these reasons that when Florence and the League of Bologna appealed for help to the Papacy, Ladislas, and Venice after 1396, none of these powers would help her.

The fate of Perugia, one of the most important subject towns in the Papal State, is instructive.¹ When Boniface IX came to the papal throne Florence was willing to go to considerable lengths to reconcile the commune with him. But both Pope and Florence pursued a policy too favourable to the exiled nobles, and the commune in 1393 fell into the hands of the formidable Biordo Michelotti, who soon added most of papal Umbria to his Perugian dominions. Michelotti's murder in 1398 gave the Pope the chance to resume control, but also revealed the fatally weakening effects of Florentine-papal disunity. Again, as in 1393, the Florentines assisted in arranging a form of reconciliation between Perugia and the Church, and even paid the substantial *census* payment claimed by Boniface from Perugia. But Florence was politically and financially too weak to prop up Perugia, which under the pressure of papal financial demands and of her own civic disunity was unable any longer to defend her independence. Perugia therefore in 1400 fell into the hands of the strongest bidder — Giangaleazzo Visconti. Both Florence and Boniface IX had suffered a serious defeat. It was untrue, as the Florentines at one point suspected, that Boniface IX actually wished Visconti to take Perugia; but on the other hand he was far too weak politically to defend the city from him; he had to be content with

¹ Goldbrunner, article cited above.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

the formal obeisance to papal sovereignty (and the promise of money) contained in the treaty of submission to Milan.

The fate of Bologna was not dissimilar to that of Perugia. Preserving an independence precariously balanced between Florentine and papal interests, Bologna like Perugia became the prey first of an indigenous *signore* — Giovanni Bentivoglio — and then in 1402 of Giangaleazzo Visconti. The final collapse of Bologna before Milanese pressure followed the defeat of the Florentine-Bolognese army at the battle of Casalecchio (24 June 1402); thus Florence fought to protect territory which was technically part of the Papal State while the Pope continued to preserve neutrality.¹ But the final result of the tradition of Bologna to the Visconti, following the earlier loss of Perugia was that a very substantial proportion of the Guelf area of Emilia and Umbria was lost both to Florence and to the popes.

The death of Giangaleazzo Visconti in September 1402 saved both Florence and Boniface IX from further encroachment; how far he would have gone, had he lived, towards uniting northern and central Italy must remain a matter of speculation. From that date for the next six years the situation developed in a confused manner, whose final issue in the Council of Pisa was nevertheless in a sense decisive for the relations of Florence with the Papacy for the subsequent forty years. The determining factor was the development of the imperialistic pretensions of Ladislas of Durazzo, the ruler of the kingdom of Naples. Once Ladislas had seized Rome for the second time in 1408, and then had moved on to take over Perugia, it was quite evident that there was a danger to Tuscany from the old Milanese pressure from the south, instead of the north. Until 1408 Florentine diplomats had seen no direct threat to their interests in the protectorate which Ladislas had virtually established over the Roman Papacy.² Now they hastened to ally with the powerful and able papal legate in Bologna, Baldassare Cossa, in order to assist him in defending what remained of the Papal State against Ladislas. The opinion rapidly grew in Florence that only a Pope more determined to defend his temporal possessions against Ladislas than was Gregory XII, could protect Florentine interests.³

The church council which assembled in the recently acquired Florentine possession of Pisa in 1409 marks an important stage in the commune's changing attitude to the Papacy. French participation in

¹ Cf. Bueno de Mesquita, pp. 370 ff.

² Cf. Partner, *The Papal State*, pp. 17-20; de Bouïard, pp. 308 ff.; A. Cutolo, *Re Ladislao d'Angiò-Durazzo* (Milan, 1936), vol. I, pp. 323 ff. Florence had however been alarmed by the seizure of Perugia by Ladislas.

³ De Bouïard, p. 355.

PETER PARTNER

the council which elected Alexander V meant that for the first time since 1378 the French princes whose help Florence needed recognized the same Pope as the Italians. But it also revealed how much French weakness and French political division had affected the traditional pro-French party in Italy, even when the possibility of a return to the old Guelf policies seemed to exist. When Louis II of Anjou came to Italy to fight Ladislas for the Pisan Pope, Florentine support was full and determined only for a few months. Within a couple of years Louis returned to France, having had only a marginal effect on Italian politics, and never having assumed the position of undoubted leader of a great Guelf coalition.

The Cretan Pope elected at Pisa, Alexander V, was at least partially dependent on Florentine patronage. His successor John XXIII, the former legate of Bologna, elected in 1410, was notoriously a close friend of Florence and the Florentines, whose connection with the Medici bank even before his accession to the papal throne is shown elsewhere in this volume.¹ Florentine bankers now again became the most important at the Curia, and Florentine policy again becomes very closely linked with that of the pope. But this correspondence of interests was, as under Boniface IX, only partial; once more the material and political weakness of the various partners in the reconstituted Guelf alliance made it a very fragile one. Florence did not hesitate in January 1411 to make a separate peace with Ladislas, while John XXIII remained closely allied with Louis II until Louis's departure from Italy in the summer of 1411. Only in 1412, after several Florentine embassies had gone between Rome and Naples, did the Pope make peace with Ladislas at the price of the abandonment of Gregory XII by the latter: Florence under this peace took custody of several papal cities as security for the payments due to Sforza for his *condotta*, and the Medici bank were the main agents for other very large payments due under the treaty.²

When in 1413 Ladislas resumed his attack on the Papal State, Florence proved as unwilling to fight to defend John XXIII as Boniface IX had been to defend Florence against Giangaleazzo Visconti. When John XXIII arrived at the gates of Florence on his flight from Ladislas on 16 June 1413 the city actually refused to admit him. Florence was unwilling to fight without further allies — very understandably. She was attempting to replace the defunct Angevin alliance by one including the Emperor Sigismund and Venice, but the weakness of the first and Venetian hostility to him made this a hopeless task. In the summer

¹ G. Holmes, above, pp. 362-76.

² Holmes, loc. cit.; Partner, *The Papal State*, pp. 24-5.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

of 1414, with the armies of Ladislas in occupation of most of central Italy, Florence made another separate peace with him which guaranteed to John XXIII no more than the possession of Bologna — and even this, Florence told the Pope, had cost her substantial concessions.¹ Just before Ladislas died in August 1414 the situation of 1402 was reversed — Florence neutral and indeed actively consenting to the dismemberment of the Papal State, the Pope an apparently helpless prey to the final aggressive campaign of the tyrant. In 1414 as in 1402, it had been shown that the Guelf alliance would not function against a strong Italian power without foreign assistance. Foreign power had brought the Guelf alliance into existence, and foreign power was necessary to keep it in being.

Far less would the Guelf alliance function against the opposition of a foreign power. The revival of Spanish imperialism in Italy in the early fifteenth century, linked as it was with the Spanish association with the anti-Pope Benedict XIII, was one of the most formidable threats to Martin V after his election at the Council of Constance.² When in 1420 Alfonso of Aragon was 'adopted' as her heir by Joanna Queen of Naples, a menace to the restored Roman Papacy appeared which in its international and clerical ramifications was a more serious threat than that presented by *condottieri* like Braccio. The Florentine attitude to both Braccio and to Alfonso was from a papal point of view unsatisfactory. Braccio was a Florentine mercenary of many years standing whose creation of a vast *signoria* in Umbria was not interpreted by Florence as a threat to herself — his tyranny in Perugia did not offend Florentine susceptibilities any more than the later tyrannies of Sforza in the March or of the Bentivoglio in Bologna. That the papal temporal power could not be restored while Braccio lived was to Florence irrelevant — the urchins who sang beneath Pope Martin's windows in the streets of Florence that Martin was 'not worth a farthing', while 'our friend Braccio takes all' were only expressing in a rather unkind way the policy of their government.

Thus Florentine policy crossed papal aims in the Papal State, but the difference extended also to the Neapolitan Kingdom. Muzio Attendolo Sforza, the great *condottiere* rival of Braccio in the struggle for power in central Italy, was also one of the main contestants for power in the Kingdom of Naples. In 1419 Martin V had revived the Angevin claim for Naples by declaring his intention of investing Louis of Anjou with

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

² K. A. Fink, *Martin V. und Aragon* (Berlin, 1938); J. Ametller y Vinyas, *Alfonso V de Aragon y la crisis religiosa del siglo XV* (Gerona, 1903).

the Kingdom after Joanna II's death. In 1420 Sforza was secured as *condottiere* for the Angevin and the Church. The result was the 'adoption' of Alfonso of Aragon by Joanna, and the engagement of Braccio as an Aragonese *condottiere*.¹

The revival of the struggle between French and Spanish interests for the possession of southern Italy was not welcome to Florence. Had Angevin-papal power been comparable with the strength it had displayed in the fourteenth century, Florence might have decided to throw in her lot once more with the Guelf cause. But France was weak, a prey to civil war, and dismembered by English policy at the treaty of Troyes. Florentine policy aimed at neutrality; the skill of Florentine diplomacy can only be admired, in that Florence succeeded in negotiating a truce between the Pope and Alfonso, and in avoiding involvement in the war. Florentine attempts to secure an Aragonese alliance, though they at first seemed near success, failed.²

Florence had to pay a price for her neutrality. From the very beginning of his pontificate, Martin V practised a conciliatory policy towards Milan, facilitating the Milanese designs on Genoa which led to the transfer of the city to the Visconti in 1422.³ The Pope negotiated with Filippo Maria Visconti to try to get his armed support in the struggles in the Neapolitan Kingdom; to do this was to encourage once more the Milanese push to the south, and to cause a clash between Florence and Milan in the papal province of the Romagna. In this area Florence employed several of the most important small tyrants as *condottieri*, particularly the Manfredi of Faenza whom she frequently defended from papal displeasure. Florence had regarded the papal assumption of power in Bologna without enthusiasm, but had eventually lent the legate there money to raise troops for defence.⁴ In 1423 Milanese troops occupied Forlì in Romagna, ostensibly to protect the child-ruler and papal vicar of the city, Teobaldo Ordelaffi. The result was a Florentine-Milanese war in Romagna, in which the Pope — in spite of the fact that most of the war was fought on his territory — preserved neutrality. When the legate in Bologna, Condulmer, the future Eugenius IV, concluded a league with Florence, Martin V promptly disavowed it. An equal diplomatic astuteness to that with which Florence had preserved neutrality in the quarrels of the Kingdom was now shown by Martin in the war of Romagna. Just as Florence had acted as

¹ Partner, *The Papal State*, pp. 52–62.

² Ametller y Vinyas, vol. I, pp. 218–23, 265–6, 499–505.

³ Partner, *The Papal State*, p. 55. Cf. *Storia di Milano* (Milan, 1955), vol. VI, pp. 185–6.

⁴ Partner, *The Papal State*, p. 177 n.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

mediator in the war of the Kingdom, so Martin V now mediated in Romagna — indeed negotiations in the Roman court were continuous from the beginning of the war in 1423 to the abortive peace of Venice in 1427 and the final peace of Ferrara in 1428. During the negotiations Martin gave little ground to Florence; in particular he prevented Florentine employment of the Sforza army in 1425¹ and countenanced the presence of Milanese troops in Romagna for as long as he needed Milanese support in the Kingdom. Albergati the papal legate supported the Visconti point of view against Venetian greed in 1427; he remarked that no more could have been required from Filippo Maria Visconti than the Venetian-Florentine proposals, had he been their prisoner.² In the Pope's view, Florentine support of Braccio and the Bracceschi clique of mercenaries was an offence which outweighed any ties which might have bound him to Florence.

The entry of Venice and Savoy into the coalition against Milan in 1426, and the continuance of Aragonese hostility to the Papacy, changed the Italian balance even before the conclusion of the peace of Ferrara. When the peace of Ferrara was being negotiated in December 1427, Visconti used the threat of handing over Genoa to Alfonso of Aragon, to put pressure on the papal mediator.³ In the following year Filippo Maria Visconti, Sigismund and Alfonso of Aragon were meditating joint action in Italy and the calling of a church council in order to place pressure on the Pope.⁴ With Joanna of Naples and Martin V both nearing their graves, and with ecclesiastical resistance to the Papacy still high in Europe, the imposing political position which the genius of Martin V had built up was already beginning to decline. On the other hand the Venetian alliance had broken Florentine isolation at last. At the price of sponsoring Venetian imperialism on the Italian mainland, Florence had at last found an effective counter-balance against Milan. It was a position which she was determined to exploit;

¹ E. Pontieri, 'Muzio Attendolo e Francesco Sforza nei conflitti dinastico-civili nel regno di Napoli al tempo di Giovanna II d'Angiò-Durazzo', *Studi Storici in onore di Giacchino Volpe* (Florence, 1958), vol. II, pp. 787-883, at p. 878. For the Kingdom the article of G. Beltrani, 'Gli Orsini di Lecce e di Taranto durante il regno di Giovanna II', *Archivio Storico per le provincie Napoletane*, n.s., vol. XXXVI (1956), pp. 94-125, is important, especially at pp. 110-16.

² 'E più altro gli domanderesti voi avendolo in prigione?' Giovanni Cavalcanti, *Istorie Fiorentine*, ed. F. Polidori (Florence, 1839), vol. II, p. 396 (in documentary appendix). For these negotiations see R. Cessi, 'Venezia alla pace di Ferrara del 1428', *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, n.s., vol. XXXI (1916), pp. 321-74, and the detailed but tendentious book of P. de Töth, *Il beato cardinale Nicolò Albergati e i suoi tempi* (Viterbo, 1935).

³ Cessi, article cited above, p. 339; de Töth, vol. II, pp. 99-100; Cavalcanti, loc. cit.

⁴ K. A. Fink, 'König Sigmund und Aragon', *Deutsches Archiv*, vol. II (1938), pp. 149-71.

PETER PARTNER

she had no intention of being dragged back into the system of ungrateful Rome. When in 1428 Martin V sought Florentine help against the rebellion in Bologna, and put out feelers towards an alliance with Venice and Florence, the Florentine reply was that the terms of the peace of Ferrara prevented her from intervening in Bologna, and that her own interests prevented her from entering anything which could be construed as an alliance against Aragon.¹ Florence preferred to use the political position which the peace of Ferrara conferred on her, in order to attack Lucca and to pursue her traditional aims of hegemony in Tuscany. How dear to Florence were the communal liberties of the Tuscan towns appeared particularly clearly in the course of this war. Lucca continued to be attacked by the Florentines even after she had expelled the tyrant Guinigi; Siena, who assisted Lucca, claimed that with the consent of Martin V she had appealed for help to Filippo Maria Visconti, the only ruler of Italy who could defend Tuscany from Florentine tyranny.²

The succession of Martin V by Eugenius IV in 1431 removed the Papacy from a period of power and order to one of subordination and chaos. 'Whoever would have thought', wrote the curialist Poggio, 'that the golden period which Martin's prudence conferred on us, would deteriorate into such disaster and calamity?'³ Few things show more clearly how personal was the papal monarchy, than the political effects of the change from the wily Roman aristocrat who ruled both the Papal State and the Neapolitan Kingdom through the Colonna family and their connections, to the Venetian friar. Martin V had removed Gabriel Condulmer from his post as legate in Bologna on account of the cardinal's pro-Florentine sympathies;⁴ as a pro-Florentine who was also a Venetian it was inevitable that when he came to the papal throne Condulmer would tend naturally to fall into

¹ K. A. Fink, 'Martin V. und Bologna (1428-1429)', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, vol. XXIII (1931-32), p. 191. A.S.F., Cons. Prat., 49, fol. 32v. When Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Nello and Agnolo di Filippo Neri were negotiating the peace treaty with Milan, the Pope insisted on the clause excluding Bologna from Florentine interference; so if Florence now wants to exclude Bologna from the proposed league with the Pope, 'la santità sua debbe remanere ben contenta, che contro a quello non si vengna al presente che esso medesimo affermò volle e fortificò'. Fol. 33v, the legal experts consulted by the Florentines want it stated explicitly in the treaty that it is not directed against Alfonso of Aragon: 'Et questo pare loro necessario, considerato la natura de' catalani, che volentieri trouerrebbono ragioni di potere rubare i mercatanti.' Cf. N. Coll Julia, 'Aspectos del curso catalan y del comercio internacional en el siglo XV', *Estudios de Historia Moderna*, vol. IV (1954), pp. 157-87.

² Instructions for Siense embassy to Perugia, in appendix to Cavalcanti, *Istorie Fiorentine*, vol. II, p. 396.

³ Partner, *The Papal State*, p. 194 n.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

the political framework of the Venetian-Florentine alliance, and to abandon the cautious neutrality of his predecessor. From the beginning of his pontificate, partly because his personal sympathies lay there, and partly because the Visconti understanding with Sigismund and the anti-papal party at Basle thrust him, Eugenius IV cooperated closely with Florence. It was unfortunate for Eugenius that when he succeeded to the Papacy in 1431 Visconti troops were already fighting in the north of the Papal State, in order to assist Siena in the war against Florence. Eugenius put pressure on Siena, and united with Florence to engage the *condottiere* Fortebraccio (Niccolò della Stella). Thus began a close military and political alliance which lasted for over ten years.¹

For a number of reasons — the Council of Basle above all, but also the Colonna-Montefeltro revolt,² the descent of Sigismund into Italy, and the deterioration of the papal position in the Kingdom — Eugenius was from the start in an infinitely weaker position than his predecessor. His relations with Florence and Venice therefore tended to be dependent from the beginning. The political disasters which he experienced in 1434, and the measures he took to deal with them, made his dependence even greater. In the spring of 1434 Florence was poor, weak and suffering from the disastrous miscalculation of the war with Lucca; and her internal factions were bringing her to the point of revolution.³ But she had at least in the preceding year made peace with the Visconti and ended the war with Lucca. For Eugenius IV no such respite had been offered. The removal of Visconti military pressure from Tuscany only freed the Milanese *condottieri* for operations in the

¹ Fortebraccio's *capitula* with the Pope in Vatican Archives, Diversa Cameralia, 22, fols. 49-52, dated 7 September 1431. He was in the service also of Florence and Joanna of Naples. Florence contributed substantial sums to his *condotta*: Reg. Vat., 370, fols. 26, 33, July-August 1431. He was named captain-general of papal forces, 10 September 1432, *ibid.*, fol. 102v.

² The Colonna rebellion is well known. For Guidantonio da Montefeltro's seizure of Città di Castello in 1431, and for its defence in which Florentine troops under Bernardino degli Ubaldini took some part, Reg. Vat., 370, fol. 18b (15 July 1431): 'intelleximus que pro liberatione et defensione civitatis nostre castelli et retentione eiusdem in obedientia nostra et Romane ecclesie per dilectos filios communitatis florentinorum strenue et prudenter gesta sunt.' Florentine mediation, *Commissioni*, vol. III, pp. 531-2. The original threat on 28 May 1431 was from Niccolò Fortebraccio, but Montefeltro then established himself in the town and would not leave it until placed under heavy pressure in February 1432. Cf. J. Guiraud, *L'État pontifical après le Grand Schisme* (Paris, 1896), 173; L. Fumi, *Inventario e spoglio dei registri della Tesoreria apostolica di Città di Castello* (Perugia, 1900), pp. 7-14; *idem*, 'Il conte Guidantonio di Montefeltro e Città di Castello', *Bollettino della R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per l'Umbria*, vol. VI (1900), pp. 377-407; G. Franceschini, 'Il poeta urbinato Angelo Galli e i duchi di Milano', *Archivio Storico Lombardo*, n.s., vol. I (1936), pp. 117-142.

³ L. Osio, *Documenti diplomatici tratti dagli archivi Milanesi*, vol. III (Milan, 1872), pp. 75-6: 'Florentini sunt in tam malis conditionibus constituti, ita debiles, ita divisi, ita percussi, ut ad expugnationem eorum quicumque sufficient . . .' (16 April 1432).

PETER PARTNER

Papal State. Piccinino and Francesco Sforza ravaged the Papal State from the Bolognese to Umbria and northern Lazio. By February 1434 Eugenius was practically without military forces of his own. He appealed in vain for Florentine troops; when they failed to come he sent envoys to Sforza at Calcarella north of Rome, and engaged him in the service of the Church, at the price of a very large sum of money and of the cession of huge areas of the Papal State.¹ This change of masters came too late to save Rome, where there was a revolution on 29 May; Eugenius fled in dramatic circumstances from the city, and on 23 June was in Florence. Saving his stay in Bologna and the period when the Council was being held in Ferrara in 1438–39, Eugenius spent the following nine years there.

The engagement of Sforza by Eugenius at Calcarella in March 1434 led to his joint engagement by the Pope, Florence and Venice in September. According to the humanist, Flavio Biondo, who was one of the two papal negotiators at Calcarella, this was the turning point of Sforza's career:² it was also something of a turning point in Italian politics. There followed an event of no small importance: the fall of the Albizzi régime and the return of Cosimo de' Medici. Practically on the day on which Cosimo's sentence of banishment was revoked, a new Florentine treaty with Sforza was signed.³ Between Sforza and Cosimo de' Medici a connexion was swiftly formed which lasted far longer than Sforza's engagement to the Church, and was of enduring importance for the future of Italy.

¹ Reg. Vat. 370, fol. 158, to Niccolò da Tolentino, *capitaneus florentinorum*, 12 February 1434: 'Visis litteris devocionis et deliberacione intellecta facta per dilectos filios populum et communem florentinum, magnam animi consolacionem suscepimus.' Ibid., fol. 156v, to the same, 19 February. The Pope hopes he has reached Orvieto (as asked in the last letter): 'Ceterum quoniam Franciscus de Cutiniola civitates terras et loca nobis et Romane ecclesie subiecta inuadendo et occupando continuo, urbi hostiliter appropinquat'; asks him to move his forces in order to defend Rome. But Eugenius's hopes were deceived in Niccolò da Tolentino, who instead of attacking Sforza's main force in the Roman district had chosen the easier course of ravaging his possessions in the March of Ancona. By 15 May, just before the revolution broke out in Rome, Sforza was no longer the enemy of the Church but her ally. Ibid., fol. 165, to the Florentines: 'Nonnullarum nobis relatione compertum est . . . Nicolaum de Tollentin,' quem ad stipendia uestra credimus [*scimus*, cancelled] militare, profecturum esse in prouinciam nostram Marchie Anconitane cum ipsius comitiua tamquam hostis et aduersarius statui dilecti filii nobilis uiri francesci sforze comitis Cutignole.' As Sforza is now reckoned as a friend of the Roman Church, the Pope asks Florence to tell Niccolò to withdraw. Cf. G. Mercati, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti* (Rome, 1939), pp. 102–7, 113–15, 126–9; Pier Candido Decembrio, *Vita Francisci Sfortiae*, *R.I.S.*, vol. XX, part 1, pp. 632–8 (text), pp. 641–6 (notes).

² The treaty of Calcarella is not lost, as is generally thought. It is in the notebook of the well-known Milanese secretary, Nicodemo dei Tranchedini da Pontremoli, in the Vatican Library, MS. Chigi F IV 103. I hope to edit and publish the text in the near future. For Flavio Biondo's opinion, see B. Nogara, *Scritti inediti e rari di Biondo Flavio* (Rome, 1927), p. 171. There is no mention of Florence in the treaty.

³ Pier Candido Decembrio, *Vita Sfortiae*, loc. cit., p. 664 (note).

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

For Florence the great advantage was that she secured a mercenary who, although expensive in terms of money, in terms of territory was compensating himself entirely at the expense of Florence's ally, Eugenius IV. The situation was a little like that of 1420, when Braccio had, with the tacit agreement of Florence, carved a sizeable state for himself out of papal territory — but with the difference that whereas after 1420 Martin V had proved to have the will and the means to evict and destroy Braccio, Eugenius IV was powerless for a long time to do anything more than acquiesce in the shameless aggrandisement of Sforza with papal lands. The difference between the policies possible to an undisputed Pope, and those possible to a Pope threatened by a council, is inescapable.

As with Braccio, the understanding between Florence and Sforza had important consequences in the Kingdom of Naples. After the death of Joanna II in 1435 Florence inclined with Eugenius to the Angevin candidature, which his need for French support at Basle made virtually compulsory upon the Pope. In 1436 the papal bull granting the Kingdom to René of Anjou upon conditions (which were never in fact fulfilled) was deposited in the hands of none other than Cosimo de' Medici.¹

As one of the greatest landowners in the Kingdom, Sforza was bound eventually to take sides in the struggle there between René of Anjou and Alfonso of Aragon. Florence always feigned neutrality to Alfonso, even when her neutrality was far from benevolent, but Sforza fought him almost from the beginning, until it became evident that a Spanish victory in Naples was inevitable. But only to a limited extent was Sforza's opposition to Alfonso co-ordinated with the papal military operations under Vitelleschi or with those of the Angevin partisans.² Sforza's actions in the Kingdom like his actions elsewhere were determined by nothing but his estimate of his own immediate interest. The alliance of 1434 was in no way a repetition of the great Guelf coalitions of the preceding century: in the Kingdom it was weak, but its great strength lay in the adherence of the non-Guelf power of Venice.

It would be unjust to Florence and Venice not to record that, however self-interested their motives, the protection and financial backing which they gave to Eugenius between 1434 and 1439 were indispens-

¹ J. Haller, 'Die Belehnung René's von Anjou mit dem Königreich Neapel (1436)', *Quellen und Forschungen*, vol. IV (1902), pp. 184-207.

² Cf. N. F. Faraglia, *Storia della lotta tra Alfonso V d'Aragona e Renato d'Angiò* (Lanciano, 1908), pp. 67 ff., 135 ff.

PETER PARTNER

able for one of the greatest oecumenical achievements of the middle ages, the Council of Ferrara-Florence. To a certain extent the Papacy owed its very continued existence to them. The leading figures in the papal régime, the disreputable cardinals Vitelleschi and Scarampi, were in close relations with the Florentine political leaders — though Florentine policy seems to have played a part in Vitelleschi's overthrow and murder.¹ How close Eugenius's own relations were with the Florentines is a matter for some speculation. His close connection with the Albizzi régime which preceded that of Cosimo de' Medici throws some doubt on the suggestion that he connived in the coup d'état against the Albizzi which took place a few weeks after his arrival. The continuous close relations of the Medici bank with the papal administration are known.

The financial connections of the Roman Court with Florence were based, politically, on the joint responsibilities of the allies for paying their troops, and principally Sforza. Venice and Florence were liable to pay huge monthly sums to Sforza.² Although they seem to have been removed from the office of depositary of the Apostolic Chamber in 1435, the Medici were closely and profitably involved with the Curia, to some extent irrespective of political relations good or bad, until the end of the pontificate.³ The financing of the Council of Ferrara-Florence

¹ N. Valois, *La crise religieuse du XVe siècle. Le pape et le concile (1418-1450)*, vol. II (Paris, 1909), pp. 264-72. For Scarampi's relations with the Medici see P. Paschini, 'Da medico a Patriarcha d'Aquileia, Camerlengo e Cardinale di S. Romana Chiesa', *Memorie Storiche Forogiuliesi*, vol. XXIII (1927), pp. 1-56; *idem*, 'Ludovico Cardinale Camerlengo e i suoi maneggi sino alla morte di Eugenio IV (1447)', *ibid.*, vol. XXIV (1928), pp. 39-72, XXVI (1930), pp. 27-74. A remanaged version of the same articles published as *Ludovico Cardinale Camerlengo (†1465)* (Rome, 1939).

² Osio, *Documenti diplomatici milanesi*, vol. III, p. 120; A. Theiner, *Codex diplomaticus domini temporalis S. Sedis*, vol. III (Rome, 1862), p. 326; Piero Candido Decembrio, *op. et loc. cit.*; Reg. Vat. 366, fols. 43v, 45v, 46, 48v, both Florence and Venice were required to pay 10,500 gold florins each monthly to Sforza for his *condotta* (February-June 1435). From 1433-5 the officials of the *Monte Comune* of Florence were paying large sums to the pope under an agreement made with Giovanni Vitelleschi. Reg. Vat. 373, fols. 1v, 31, 84; *Introitus et Exitus*, vol. 390, fol. 38, vol. 397, fol. 107; A.S.R., *Archivio Camerale*, pt. 1, vol. 1468, fol. 11v. The origin of these payments is obscure; it may be connected with the Colonna deposits (p. 397, n. 2, below).

³ R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 194-218. Int. et Exit. 394, which runs from July 1434 to June 1435, shows the Medici still acting as depositary. The year's income handled by them on this account was however only 13,348 florins 46 sol. (fol. 133v), with the Chamber 'overdrawn' by 10,418 florins, 20 sol. 10 den. But in March 1435 a different accounting system begins, recorded in Int. et Exit. 397, in which the place of the depositary in the accounts is taken by the papal official Franciscus de Lignamine de Padua (fol. 25) and later in the year by the acting papal treasurer, the Bishop of Parenzo (fol. 90). In Int. et Exit. 400, which begins in March 1436, Francesco de Lignamine has the same function and is referred to as the *receptor* acting on behalf of the Treasurer. Nor do the Medici re-appear as depositaries in Int. et Exit. 402, July 1437-July 1438. The Medici account with the Chamber from July 1434-February 1436 is in Int. et Exit. 397, fols. 99-108,

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

was to a considerable extent done through the Medici bank.¹ Pledges of various kinds were made against the mounting papal debts. In 1438 against a debt of 10,000 florins to the Medici the Pope assigned up to 50,000 florins of the 100,000 florins which stood in the papal account in the Florentine *Monte Comune* — presumably the script had depreciated to a fifth of its nominal value.² In 1441 the papal town of Borgo San Sepolcro on the Florentine borders, which had been effectively under Florentine protection since its recovery in 1436, was pledged to Florence against a Medici loan of 25,000 florins.³

A special study of the political relations of Eugenius with Florence from his arrival in the city in 1434 until his departure in 1443 would be of the greatest interest, but it remains to be done. On the whole, the alliance remained a close one down to and rather beyond the battle of Anghiari in 1440, which was in some respects the peak of its military success — it is notable that this victory was secured not by Francesco Sforza, whose support cost the allies so dear, but by Michelotto Attendolo. From 1438 to 1441 there was a most important common interest in expelling Niccolò Piccinino and the Milanese party from Bologna: and Florence was (contrary to much of her former tradition and practice) encouraging papal forces to operate in the Romagna. She was annoyed when in despite of her wishes Vitelleschi had operated in the March of Ancona against Sforza's possession of Foligno.⁴ Jealousies were bound to emerge. Both Florence and Venice had profited from papal weakness by making inroads on various parts of the Papal State. In Città di Castello and Borgo San Sepolcro Florentine influence

the credit totals being 14,548 florins 46 sol. the first year and 23,142 florins 9 sol. 3 den. the second. For the splitting-up of papal accounts at this time see Partner, 'Camera papae: problems of papal finance in the later middle ages', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, vol. IV (1953), pp. 64-8, and *idem*, 'The "budget" of the Roman Church in the Renaissance period', *Italian Renaissance Studies* (cited above), pp. 259-60.

¹ J. Gill, 'The Cost of the Council of Florence', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, vol. XXII (1956), pp. 299-318. Cf. *Acta camerae apostolicae*, etc., ed. G. Hofmann, pp. 67 ff., 83 ff.

² Reg. Vat. 366, fol. 286, 15 May 1438. For the transfer to the Pope of the deposit of 100,000 florins in the *Monte Comune* belonging to the Colonna, as a part of their settlement for their rebellion in 1431, see Reg. Vat. 372, fol. 9v, 16 May 1432. The Colonna concerned were Antonio prince of Salerno and Odoardo duke of Marsia; the deposit was to be refunded if they paid 25,000 florins in cash within two years. Francesco de' Boscoli was ordered to administer the deposit of 100,000 florins and collect the interest, 7 November 1435, Reg. Vat. 365, fol. 53.

³ Theiner, *Codex Diplomaticus*, vol. III, p. 348. Loans of 10,000 florins each from Florence and Venice to the Holy See, Reg. Vat. 366, fol. 347, 5 June 1439.

⁴ N. Valois, *La crise religieuse du XVe siècle. Le pape et le concile* (Paris, 1909), vol. II, p. 265 n. Cf. Fabroni, *Cosmi Vita*, vol. II, pp. 161-3: 'Pareva a me che per lo benedi questi stati [viz., Florence and the Church] Monsignore lo cardinale attendese all'acquisto di Romagna, che più utile cosa no si poteva fare' (20 July 1439).

was supreme. Venice was beginning to gobble up Ravenna in the north of the Papal State: her arrest of Ostasio da Polenta in early 1441 marked an important stage in this aggression. In Romagna Florence began to quarrel with Eugenius over his refusal to confirm Antonio Ordelaffi in the occupation of Forlì.¹ An indication of mounting tension came in September 1441, when the *condottiere* Baldaccio d'Anghiari, who had been operating in the Bolognese Appenine earlier that year on behalf of the Florentines and the Pope, was executed out of hand by the Florentines for treason; the execution seems to have offended Eugenius.²

The rift between Eugenius and Florence went deeper than this. In the complex and rapidly shifting game of Italian politics the Pope had two overriding interests, to free the Papal State and to secure an Angevin victory in the Kingdom. To secure these objects he had made the immense sacrifice which the treaties with Sforza entailed. Already by the spring of 1440 he was acknowledging that he had neither forces nor money to aid René of Anjou any further.³ In November 1441 the peace of Cavriana was made, which for the moment settled the differences between all the major powers of Italy save for those between Alfonso of Aragon and his adversaries. From this peace the papal envoys left discontented. Florence, Milan, Venice, Sforza and Piccinino were temporarily reconciled. But the Papal State remained largely occupied by Sforza's troops, and there was probably a secret agreement that Bologna, instead of being returned to the Pope as the treaty provided, should 'remain in its accustomed liberty.'⁴ Sforza went south into the Kingdom to become at long last the ally of René of Anjou. But for Eugenius it was too late. Having fought and suffered for nine years, he saw his allies — particularly the Medicean faction in Florence — emerge in safety, while his States were to be exposed indefinitely to the cupidity of Sforza and the other *condottieri*. In April 1442 Cosimo de' Medici negotiated for his friend Sforza the last of his *condotte* for the

¹ Flavio Biondo, *Scritti inediti e rari*, pp. 12-13. Cf. Partner, *The Papal State*, pp. 76-7. Little help from Guiraud, *L'État Pontifical*, p. 225.

² L. Passerini, 'Baldaccio d'Anghiari', *A.S.I.*, 3rd ser., pt. 1 (1866), pp. 131-66; Flavio Biondo, loc. cit.; R. Cardarelli, *Baldaccio d'Anghiari e la signoria di Piombino nel 1440 e 1441* (Rome, 1922), especially pp. 105 ff.; M. Longhi, 'Niccolò Piccinino in Bologna', *Atti e Memorie della R. Dep. di Storia Patria per le provincie di Romagna*, 3rd ser. vol. XXIX (1906), pp. 483-4. C. S. Gutkind, *Cosimo de' Medici* (Oxford, 1938), pp. 151-2, makes Baldaccio a member of the Roman family of Anguillara, which he was not, refers to him as 'the victor of Anghiari,' a battle in which he took no part, and makes his execution take place in 1443 instead of in 1441. Cardarelli throws much light on Baldaccio, but the reasons for Eugenius's displeasure at his execution remain obscure.

³ Osio, *Documenti diplomatici milanesi*, vol. III, pp. 202-3.

⁴ Cf. Longhi, article cited above, pp. 489-503. If this secret agreement took place, Milan can hardly be said to have 'sold the liberties of Bologna to the Papacy' (C. M. Ady, *The Bentivoglio of Bologna*, Oxford, 1937, p. 21).

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

Church.¹ But at the same moment a diplomatic revolution was brewing in the papal Curia. In the Kingdom the final agony of the Angevin cause was taking place: in June 1442 Naples fell and René made his way sadly to Florence. In August Eugenius at last turned against Sforza and excommunicated him. On whose military support was he to depend? He could certainly expect none from Cosimo. The papal volte-face was made possible by the volte-face of Filippo Maria Visconti against his son-in-law Sforza. To turn against Sforza, Eugenius had acquired the support of the Visconti and the armed aid of Piccinino, against whom he had fought since 1431, and whom he now made the *condottiere* of the Church. The victory of Alfonso of Aragon had given the Pope the freedom of diplomatic movement which Martin V had almost always enjoyed. At the same time, the decline of Felix V and the Council of Basle strengthened his hand in Europe. From this time until Eugenius's death there was only bitter hate between him and Cosimo, the complement of his hostility to Sforza.

The last few months of the Pope's stay in Florence must have been extremely uncomfortable. On 7 March 1443 he at last left the city, with the Signoria uncertain until the last moment whether to let him go or not. A month later Scarampi negotiated the treaty of peace and alliance with Alfonso of Aragon which confirmed the Aragonese king in possession of the Kingdom.² The diplomatic revolution, carried out at the expense of Sforza and the league, was complete. But until Sforza had been defeated, the object of the revolution was not accomplished, and the defeat of Sforza was not an easy matter. The intervention of Alfonso of Aragon against him was not decisive. In June 1443 the younger Piccinino was ejected from Bologna by a popular revolt. In November 1443 the elder Piccinino was defeated by Sforza at Monte Loro. Milan had now joined Venice and Florence in the support of Sforza. The decisive defeat of the younger Piccinino in August 1444 forced Eugenius to come to terms. The main intermediary was Cosimo de' Medici, and the peace of Perugia of October 1444, by which Eugenius again guaranteed Sforza's possessions in the papal March of Ancona, was perhaps a first trial of Cosimo's notion of an Italian balance of power.³

If the peace of Perugia was Cosimo's attempt at establishing an Italian balance, it was an unsuccessful one. Within a few months war

¹ Osio, vol. III, p. 267.

² Faraglia, *Storia della lotta tra Alfonso V e Renato d'Angiò*, p. 327; O. Raynaldi, *Annales ecclesiastici* (Lucca, 1747-56), ad a. 1443.

³ C. Cipolla, *Storia delle Signorie Italiane* (Milan, 1881), pp. 416-17.

PETER PARTNER

had broken out again. In 1445 Eugenius once more secured the support of Filippo Maria Visconti against his son-in-law. Sforza had the alliance of the Montefeltro and of some of the Malatesta family,¹ but his position in the March steadily worsened, especially after the defection of his son-in-law Sigismondo Malatesta early in 1445. After the fall of Rocca Contrada in October, the whole area began to slip out of his hands.

In 1446 the peak point of Florentine hostility against Eugenius IV was reached, with Cosimo's incitement of Sforza to undertake his ill-advised attempt to seize Rome. Behind this lay not only Cosimo de' Medici, but the ruined Cardinal of Capua, Niccolò Acciapaccia, the former head of the Angevin party in the papal court.² The expedition was ill-fated and unsuccessful; none of the places in papal territory from which Sforza expected help gave it him, and he returned in confusion to his diminishing dominions in the March. Cosimo had already obtained, however, what was probably his greatest and most permanent gain at the expense of the Church, the supremacy of the Bentivoglio party in Bologna. In spite of the murder of Annibale Bentivoglio in 1445, his party had remained in control; now in November 1446 the child Sante Bentivoglio, Cosimo's protégé, was sent from Florence to Bologna to take nominal charge.

It might have seemed at the end of 1446 that badly strained relations — or worse — were going to persist between Florence and Rome for a long period. But in fact great changes were imminent upon the Italian scene. Venice was already stretching out covetous hands towards Cremona, and her alliance with Florence and Sforza was in its death throes. In a few months Filippo Maria Visconti would be dead, and the great Milanese inheritance would entirely displace the papal March of Ancona in his son-in-law Sforza's ambitions. And in February 1447 Eugenius also was to die, and his anti-Medicean policy was to die with him. Nicholas V was already a known friend of the Medici, the ex-tutor of the Albizzi, born on the edge of the Florentine dominions, and free from the burden of conflicting hatreds and obligations which Eugenius had contracted in his years of power. But Nicholas's attitude to Florence was dictated quite as much by politics as by sentiment.

¹ For Montefeltro politics see the articles of G. Franceschini, 'Notizie su Oddantonio da Montefeltro primo duca d'Urbino', *Atti e Mem. della R. Dep. di Storia Patria per le Marche*, 7th ser. vol. I (1948), pp. 83-99; 'La prima giovinezza di Federico da Montefeltro ed una sua lettera ingiuriosa contro Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta', *ibid.*, 7th ser., vol. XI (1956), pp. 27-75; 'Violante Montefeltro Malatesti Signora di Cesena', *Studi Romagnoli*, vol. I (Faenza, 1950), pp. 133-90.

² J. Simonetta, *Rerum gestarum Francisci Sfortiae Commentarii*, R.I.S., vol. XXI, pt. 2 (Bologna, 1932-59), p. 161.

FLORENCE AND THE PAPACY

Sforza was now willing to abandon hope in the March and to allow it to return (apart from his family enclave at Pesaro) to its papal rulers. The danger to the Papacy in Italy now came from Alfonso of Aragon, whose campaign in Tuscany in 1447 was as dangerous to the Papal State as to Florence. The way, in fact, was almost clear for the joint assumption by the Papacy and Florence of the policy of equilibrium in Italy whose first great achievements were the treaty of Lodi in 1454 and the Italian League of 1455.

At this period of fragmentation of Italian politics, it is not surprising that Florentine-papal relations over a long period should prove difficult to fit into any tidy scheme. Both parties pursued, in fact, policies which were remarkably consistent; and in some questions such as Florentine intervention in Bologna and the Romagna, the same problems tended to recur from one decade to another. There is also, I hope to have shown, a fairly close parallel between Florentine relations with Braccio and with Francesco Sforza. But the two dominating issues were Milan and the Kingdom; it was policy here which shaped the papal-Florentine relationship.

The question of 'Guelf' or 'non-Guelf' policies in Florence was already dead before the fifteenth century began. The 'medieval husk' through which 'Early Renaissance' Florentine policy was supposed to be breaking, is a myth which a recent distinguished historian has seen fit to perpetuate. To what extent some of the common interests between Florence and Papacy which made up the Guelf cause survived into this period has been suggested above. It may be as well to mention also the survival of one of the traditional sources of friction — taxation of the Florentine clergy by the commune and the Pope. On several occasions, the last one in this period being in 1443-44, the commune successfully taxed its clergy, and papal protests seem to have been of little avail.¹ But in this the commune now evidently had the upper hand, as was the

¹ V. A., Reg. Suppl. 120, fols. 68-9. The clergy of Florence complain that over the past four years the commune has exacted a subsidy from them of 80,000 florins, and kept no account of church revenues (14 January 1421). Partner, *The Papal State*, p. 70, n., in 1421 the Florentines protest against a papal attempt to exact a caritative subsidy from the clergy. C. Monzani, 'Di Leonardo Bruni Aretino', *A.S.I.*, 2nd ser., vol. V, pt. 2 (1857), p. 31: the Florentine commune asks permission to impose a subsidy of 100,000 florins upon the clergy of Florence and her Tuscan *raccomandati*. This demand led to a threat of excommunication by the Pope in January 1427, Pastor, *Ungedruckte Akten*, vol. I, pp. 16-19, and cf. *Commissioni*, vol. III, p. 157; Raynaldus, ad a. 1429, para. 14. In September 1431 the Signoria were imposing an annual subsidy of 25,000 florins for four years, to total a further 100,000, *Commissioni*, vol. III, pp. 533-4. An undated letter in Cod. Vat. Chisianus D. VII. 101, fols. 44v-45v, refers to a 35,000 florins subsidy granted by Martin V, and a further 9,000 florins per year for the commune and 1,500 per year for the *studium*; also to a new tax called the *balcellum* for 25,000 florins. Now it protests against the new demand for

PETER PARTNER

case with the lay power elsewhere in Italy and in Europe. Both civic anti-clericalism and the cool and mercenary pursuit of self-interest in foreign policy are to be found in Florence from the thirteenth century onwards. Florentine Guelfism came into existence as the result of certain international and Italian political conditions, and died when those conditions changed. To describe the conditions as 'medieval' or 'Renaissance' adds nothing to our knowledge of them.

In one respect which has not been mentioned, however, Florence and the papal Curia shared a common outlook — they employed, up to a limited extent, the same servants. The papal secretaries Leonardo Bruni and Poggio Bracciolini both became Florentine chancellors after long and distinguished service in the Curia. The Camaldolese general Ambrogio Traversari was another most distinguished man of learning who retained important contacts at Florence while being employed by the Curia — as Giovanni Dominici had been before him. Less noted papal secretaries who were also Florentines and humanists were Jacopo d'Angelo da Scarperia, and Andrea Fiocchi. The cultural inter-relation of Florence and the Curia while it was actually at Florence under Eugenius needs no emphasis. Whatever the political differences between Florence and the Papacy in the mid-fifteenth century, their spokesmen shared a common discourse and were never likely to have trouble in making their respective viewpoints understood.

100,000 florins. In 1432 this subsidy was written onto the books of the *Monte Comune*, and credited there to the clergy. The commune on 3 May 1433 was still defending these taxes, alleging that 'edificatur in urbe nostra notabile templum, et in medio tanti turbinis bellorum opus et machina non desistit'. The Pope on 3 July 1437 accepted the subsidy imposed on the clergy by the Signoria, excused from their sentences any who might have incurred ecclesiastical censure, and allowed the clergy to receive the interest from their deposits in the *Monte*, Reg. Vat. 370, fol. 265. New taxation was demanded, which the Pope on 10 August 1438 refused, V. A., Arm 39, vol. 7a, fol. 184b, and cf. *Acta camerae apostolicae*, ed. G. Hofman, p. 45, 'A cardinali raccomandere la parte de la imposta de' preti.' This refusal also was waived in the end, and on 28 January 1443 the Pope refers to his authorization for new taxation of the clergy according to an *estimo* now deposited in the offices of the *catasto*, Reg. Vat. 367, fols. 164-5 and cf. fols. 169-70 infra, fol. 172v. On 19 December 1444 the Pope says that this subsidy of 60,000 florins should be paid, provided the Florentine government observes the agreement about the terms of payment, Reg. Vat. 363, fol. 102v-103v.

XII

MICHAEL MALLET

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: ASPECTS OF THE PERIOD OF THE FIRST FLORENTINE DOMINATION

The acquisition of Pisa by Florence in 1406 was one of the most significant territorial adjustments which took place in Italy during the period of the later Middle Ages. It not only marked the final collapse of one of Italy's great maritime states, but also raised Florence to the front rank of those that remained. It would perhaps not be an exaggeration to say that much of the political, economic and cultural prestige which accrued to Florence during the course of the fifteenth century owed its impetus to this event. However, most of the historians who have devoted space to Pisa in the fifteenth century have spent more time reflecting on the past glories of the ancient republic and her ignominious fate, than on the consequent advantages and benefits which Florence derived, and in which to a certain extent her new subject city shared.

As a result of this attitude there was for long a tendency to see only the black side of Pisan history in the fifteenth century. The picture was built up from the evidence of angry and bitter Pisan chroniclers, from the arrogant statements of some more articulate Florentines, and from a haphazard selection from the more likely sources of information about Pisan discontent (complaints, petitions for redress of grievances, etc.) and Florentine tyranny (ill-considered instructions to officials, hurried security measures, etc.).

In fact the most influential sources for this traditional view of Pisa under the first Florentine domination were the speeches of Simone

MICHAEL MALLETT

Orlandi and Burgundio Leoli to Charles VIII in 1494 and 1495.¹ Bearing in mind the context in which these speeches were delivered, one must regard their historical content with deep suspicion, and yet the depressing picture of fifteenth century Pisa which they portrayed remained for a long time unquestioned. Pisa, humbled by her old enemy, was said to have been subjected to a brutal and vindictive tyranny; her citizens were excluded from all offices and all share in government, and yet were burdened with pitiless and crushing taxation. Her wealthiest and proudest families were driven into exile or deported to Florence, thus throwing the weight of the tax burden on to those who were least able to bear it. Her economy was deliberately stifled; the wool and silk industries were banned as was wholesale trading and international commerce by Pisans. Her guilds were made subject to the Florentine guilds which suppressed all possible competition with their own products. Her population was at the mercy of a large, ill-paid and ill-disciplined mercenary garrison whose activities were encouraged by corrupt and self-seeking Florentine officials.

The consequences of this treatment were that the population declined dramatically and the weight of taxation fell on an ever decreasing body of tax payers. Houses were abandoned and wrecked, and the economic life of the city came to a halt. Shops rotted in idleness and grass grew in the streets.

Finally the Florentines were not content with ruining the city of Pisa

¹ '... lamentandosi acerbissamente, i pisani essere stati tenuti ottantotto anni in sì iniqua e atroce servitù che quella città, la quale aveva già con molte nobilissime vittorie disteso lo imperio suo insino nelle parti dell'Oriente, e la quale era stata delle più potenti e più gloriose città di tutta Italia, fusse, per la crudeltà e avarizia de' fiorentini, condotta all'ultima desolazione. Essere Pisa quasi vota d'abitatori, perché la maggiore parte de' cittadini, non potendo tollerare sì aspro giogo, l'aveva spontaneamente abbandonata; il consiglio de' quali essere stato prudentissimo, avere dimostrato le miserie di coloro i quali v'aveva ritenuti l'amore della patria, perché per l'acerbe esazioni del publico e per le rapine insolenti de' privati fiorentini erano rimasti spogliati di quasi tutte le sostanze; né avere più modo alcuno di sostentarsi, perché con inaudita empietà e ingiustizia si proibiva loro il fare mercatanzie, l'esercitare arti di alcuna sorte eccetto le meccaniche, non essere ammessi a qualità alcuna d'uffici o d'amministrazioni nel dominio fiorentino, eziandio di quelle le quali alle persone straniere si concedevano. Già incrudelirsi da' fiorentini contro alla salute e le vite loro; avendo, per spegnere in tutto le reliquie de' pisani, fatto intermettere la cura di mantenere gli argini e i fossi del contado di Pisa, conservata sempre dai pisani antichi con esatissima diligenza, perché altrimenti era impossibile che per la bassezza del paese, offeso immoderatamente dalle acque, ogn'anno non fussino sottoposti a gravissime infermità. Per queste cagioni cadere per tutto in terra le chiese e i palagi e tanti nobili edifici pubblici e privati, edificati con magnificenza e bellezza inestimabile da' maggiori loro.' This was the substance of Burgundio Leoli's oration to Charles VIII in Rome in 1495 as reported by F. Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. C. Panigada (Bari, 1929), vol. I, p. 118. For Orlandi's speech see F. T. Perrens, *Histoire de Florence depuis la domination des Médicis jusqu'à la chute de la République (1434-1531)* (Paris, 1888), vol. II, p. 79.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

but they also adopted a policy of deliberate neglect of the Pisan *contado* and its vital drainage system. Consequently agriculture declined, and malaria and marsh fever became rife; the exhausted and impoverished population were thus subjected to a new threat from disease. In fact in the words of Perrens: 'désormais, le silence règne dans Pise et même sur Pise. Les rares auteurs qui en disent un mot encore jusqu'à la révolte désespérée de 1494, se bornent à enregistrer les noms des châtelains et quelques autres misères.'¹

This is a picture of Florentine ruthlessness and brutality which few could now believe in its entirety; indeed a good deal of revisionary work has been done in the last sixty years. However, much remains to be done before a clear picture of the true state of Pisa in the fifteenth century can emerge. Aspects of the traditional view need to be examined independently before the overall story of the first Florentine domination of Pisa can be rewritten.² In this essay I shall attempt to consider some of these aspects in the light of recent research and of potential sources which still remain to be explored.

The work of revising, and to some extent documenting, the traditional view of this period has been undertaken along general lines by three historians, each selecting a different part of the century for their enquiry. The most valuable of these studies is that of Silva who took as his field the early years of the Florentine domination from the capture of Pisa to the end of the Lucchese war in 1433.³ The main conclusion to which Silva came was that although the policy of Florence towards Pisa during this period was certainly repressive, the reason was more a natural fear for the security of a prized possession, than traditional enmity and arrogant brutality. There was heavy taxation but this was necessary to meet the heavy administrative expenses and the cost of a large garrison, and also to pay off some of the debt which Florence had incurred in her efforts to capture Pisa. Pisan citizens were deported to Florence but this was to reduce the possibility of a Pisan rebellion at a time when enemies were at the gates. The Pisan economy was depressed in this period and this was in part due to Florence's policy of stifling economic

¹ F. T. Perrens, *Histoire de Florence depuis ses origines jusqu'à la domination des Médicis* (Paris, 1883), vol. VI, pp. 159 ff. Perrens was probably thinking in particular of the 'Ricordi di Ser Perizolo da Pisa', *A.S.I.*, vol. VI, 2 (1845), which is certainly a notably sparse chronicle.

² One should perhaps mention at this juncture the recent work of Gino Benvenuti, *Storia della Repubblica di Pisa (Le quattro stagioni di una meravigliosa avventura)*, 3 vols., Pisa, 1962. Benvenuti's work cannot seriously claim to fill any lacuna in Pisan historiography as it is entirely derived from outdated sources and contains virtually no reference to any of the specialist work done in recent years.

³ P. Silva, 'Pisa sotto Firenze dal 1406 al 1433', *Studi Storici*, vol. XVIII (1909-10).

MICHAEL MALLET

competition in her subject cities; but it was also in part due to the war with Ladislas, the Genoese occupation of Leghorn, and to the long wars with Milan and Lucca. Silva found plenty of evidence of a genuine Florentine desire to do something for Pisa whenever the security of the city was not immediately threatened, as in the years following the death of Ladislas. However, he did still introduce some element of exaggeration into his picture of those early years by over-emphasizing the wealth and beauty of the city before the Florentine occupation.¹ Quite apart from the already crippling effect of Visconti rule immediately before 1406, it has become increasingly apparent that Pisa's wealth and economic importance had declined considerably in the fourteenth century. Silva himself pointed out elsewhere that a declining population, and abandoned and ruined houses were apparent in Pisa before the entry of the Florentines.²

The crippling effects of the defeat at Meloria, of growing Florentine commercial rivalry, of the internal struggles of the Raspanti and the Bergolini, and perhaps above all of Pisa's unhealthy environment have all been stressed by historians. Indeed a good deal of work has been done on Pisa in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in recent years, and it is no longer possible to believe that all her troubles stemmed from the Florentine occupation in 1406.³

The second period during the first domination which has been subjected to closer scrutiny is that between 1451 and 1469 which was covered by the work of M. L. Mori.⁴ Mori's approach was both more superficial than that of Silva and more inclined towards the traditional view of the period with which she was dealing. She found in fact that although external pressures and threats had declined by the middle of the century, the Florentine attitude towards Pisa remained repressive and tyrannous. The Florentines, she said, could not forget the humiliations inflicted on them by the Pisans in the twelfth and thirteenth

¹ Silva, 'Pisa sotto Firenze', pp. 138-9. He refers particularly to the famous description of Pisa of Goro Dati (*Istoria di Firenze*, Florence, 1735, p. 100), but one wonders if Dati really knew Pisa, or at any rate knew it in 1406.

² P. Silva, 'Il governo di Piero Gambacorta in Pisa e le sue relazioni col resto della Toscana e coi Visconti', *Annali della R. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, vol. XXIII (1912), p. 122.

³ See particularly E. Cristani, *Nobiltà e popolo nel comune di Pisa* (Naples, 1962), and D. Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance; a Study in Urban Growth* (New Haven, 1958). On the other hand Professor Melis has stressed the danger of exaggerating the economic decline of Pisa in the late fourteenth century; see F. Melis, 'La formazione dei costi nell'industria laniera alla fine del Trecento', *Economia e Storia*, vol. I (1954), and *idem*, 'Uno sguardo al mercato dei panni di lana a Pisa nella seconda metà del Trecento', *Economia e Storia*, vol. VI (1959).

⁴ M. L. Mori, *La dominazione fiorentina a Pisa dal 1451 al 1469* (Pisa, 1936).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

centuries. As a result a policy of ruinous taxation, exiling of leading citizens and deliberately corrupt administration was continued, and by 1464 the position of Pisa was worse than ever. By 1494 Pisa was so weakened that having recovered her liberty she was too exhausted to carry on on her own.¹

Mori's evidence in support of this thesis is thin, and there is a tendency throughout her argument to draw general conclusions from isolated examples. The continuation of the practice of pulling down houses is documented by two examples in 1453,² and a fierce indictment of Florentine injustice and lack of respect for personal liberty is supported by a single reference to the case of Agostino di Niccolò di Guido de' Panicucci, whose imprisonment caused a considerable uproar when even the hand-picked pro-Florentine Priors protested.³ Furthermore her deprecation of the efforts of the Pisans who succeeded in holding out against Florence for fifteen years during the Pisan War seems unjust.

Above all one must regard with some suspicion her view that 1464 marked a climax in Pisan sufferings at the hands of the Florentines.⁴ In fact this was a year in which a particularly violent outbreak of malaria swept the city, and such years had occurred more or less frequently throughout the history of the old republic. One of the causes of Pisa's decline in the fourteenth century had been her unhygienic living conditions, as a result of being sited in the marshy flood plain of the Arno. Endemic malaria was a cross which Pisa had always had to bear, and by the end of the thirteenth century the city was always half infested in the summer. The result was an annual exodus from the city which had been apparent from very early days.⁵ Therefore evidence in 1464 of a difficulty in finding citizens to sit on the councils, and of a rapid decline in the tax receipts and an increase in tax arrears, does not indicate the final stage in the collapse of a once proud city, the population of which had been decimated and impoverished by a steady growth in disease, but rather one of the periodic outbreaks of malaria, augmented on this occasion by genuine bubonic

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 19. 'Ma se le guerre quasi continue, combattute da Firenze nel periodo che va dalla seconda pace di Ferrara alla morte di Cosimo il Vecchio, furono davvero una delle ragioni dello sfruttamento di Pisa da parte di Firenze, la quale, avendo bisogno di molto denaro, naturalmente lo chiedeva dalle città soggette, la causa principale va ricercata nell'odio vivissimo che da secoli esisteva fra le due città.'

² *Ibid.*, pp. 33-4.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 56-7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-3.

⁵ Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance*, pp. 47-53, emphasises the importance of Pisa's unhygienic living conditions as a factor in her decline.

MICHAEL MALLETT

plague, which had driven more people than usual out into the country for the summer. All the Florentine officials were authorized to leave the city except for a commissary who fulfilled the functions of Captain and Podestà.¹ This in itself indicated special conditions as there is no evidence of officials abandoning their posts in this way at any other time. In fact there is no evidence that this epidemic of 1464, and those later ones of 1479, 1482 and 1486 which caused the university to retire to Pistoia and Prato for the summer,² were anything more than periodic spasms of a malaria infected community such as Pisa was.

It was also in 1464, according to Mori, that the Florentines refused once more to abolish the office of Podestà of Pisa whose salary was paid by the Pisans. She makes much of this point as an example of the way in which the Florentines were determined to wring the last ounce of gold out of Pisa even if it meant maintaining relatively useless officials.³ In fact a study of the Florentine *Tratte* and *Provvioni* reveals that between 1432 and 1472 the office was almost continually suspended in response to Pisan requests, a Podestà being appointed for approximately ten out of the forty years.⁴ Between 1432 and 1451 the salary was still collected during the periods of suspension, but was spent on essential building and repair works in the city. From 1451 to 1463 the salary was remitted whenever the office was suspended, and from 1465 to 1472 there was no Podestà and a nominal 600 lire of his salary was collected. Between 1463 and 1465 a Podestà was appointed but with a salary reduced from 3300 lire for six months to 2300.⁵ In 1472 the office was completely restored until 1491, when it was finally abolished, but the salary was paid out of the *Gabelle delle Porte*, and not by the Pisans directly.⁶

¹ A.S.F., Provv., 155, fols. 10 (18 April 1464) and 99 (15 July 1464). In these and other sources describing the situation in Pisa in 1464, the epidemic is always referred to as temporary.

² G. B. Picotti, 'Lo Studio di Pisa dalle origini a Cosimo Duca', *Bollettino Storico Pisano*, vol. XII (1943), p. 44.

³ Mori, *La dominazione fiorentina*, pp. 43, 45 and 47.

⁴ The actual periods of suspension were as follows:

1 Nov. 1432-1 Aug. 1435 (A.S.F., *Tratte*, 67, fol. 38; Provv., 123, fols. 118 and 124, fol. 252).

1 Aug. 1437-1 Sept. 1439 (*Tratte*, 67, fol. 38; Provv., 127, fol. 322v).

1 Sept. 1440-1 Dec. 1444 (*Tratte*, 67, fol. 38; Provv., 131, fol. 37).

1 June 1447-1 Oct. 1452 (*Tratte*, 67, fol. 38; Provv., 138, fol. 124v; 139, fol. 140; 140, fol. 288v; *Balie*, 27, fol. 12).

1 Apr. 1453-1 Oct. 1457 (*Tratte*, 68, fol. 28; Provv., 145, fols. 327 and 148, fol. 143).

18 July 1459-18 Feb. 1463 (*Tratte*, 68, fol. 28; Provv., 152, fol. 31v; *Balie*, 29, fol. 93).

18 Jan. 1466-18 Jan. 1472 (*Tratte*, 68, fol. 28; Provv., 156, fol. 180 & 157, fol. 247v).

⁵ Provv., 153, fol. 2v (12 Apr. 1462).

⁶ Provv., 163, fol. 154 (22 Dec. 1472) and A.S.F., *Balie*, 39, fol. 65 (21 June 1491).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

One point which Mori did make and which has been enlarged upon by other writers, and particularly Costa whose unpublished thesis covered the period of the government of Lorenzo in Pisa, was that of growing Medici interest in Pisa.¹ Costa emphasized the point, which many of the older authorities had admitted, that under Lorenzo de' Medici Pisa's burden of misery was slightly alleviated, and Medici private interests began to intrude into every sphere of Pisan life. The Medici seemed in fact to be trying to establish a sort of private patri-mony based on Pisa and its *contado* which did something to improve conditions in the city but was nevertheless, according to both Costa and Mori, not evidence of any general Florentine change of heart.

To what extent Lorenzo's activities were those of a Florentine statesman or of a private capitalist is a problem which has always claimed a good deal of attention, but certainly his activity in Pisa is very evident. One of the most outstanding examples of Medici interest in Pisa was the resuscitation of the Studio Pisano in 1472, with several faculties transferred entirely from Florence. Since 1406 the life of the university had become spasmodic with few records surviving and little sign of any active interest on the part of the authorities. However, from 1472 until 1494 great efforts were made to attract both teachers and students to Pisa, and this venture is one aspect of fifteenth-century Pisan history which has been examined in some depth.² In 1473 it was ordered that all Florentines studying abroad should return to study at Pisa, and in 1489 the building of the Sapienza was started.³ The student body was at first not large but its activities and the encouragement of it figured prominently in both the Pisan and the Florentine records of the period.

Another aspect of Pisa in the fifteenth century which has received special attention has been the state of the churches in the city and *contado* during the latter half of the century. Caturegli's study, based on the records of the archiepiscopal visitations, reveals a gloomy picture of poverty and neglect, of abandoned churches and illiterate and over-worked clergy.⁴ This situation is attributed to three factors; depopulation, the drawing together of isolated communities which was a common feature of Italian fourteenth and fifteenth-century social history, and the prevailing atmosphere of religious indifference. None of these factors applied particularly to the Pisan *contado*, and in fact

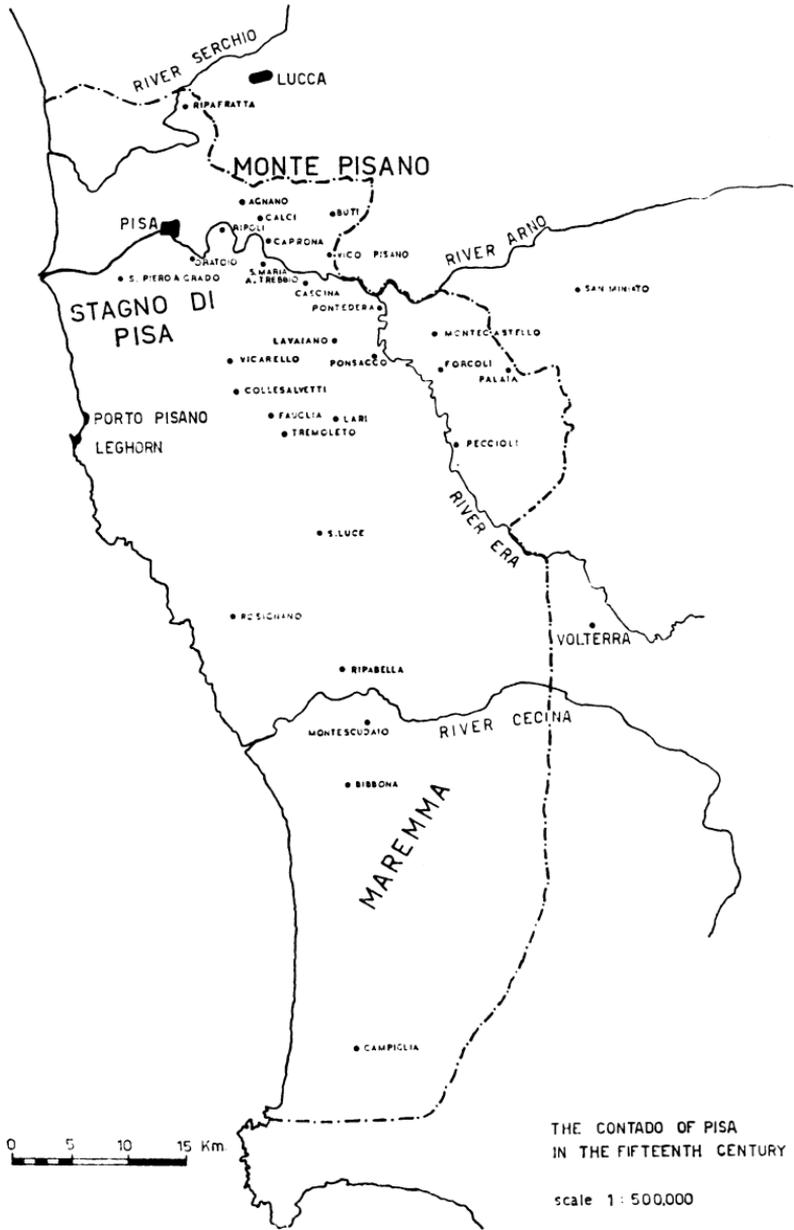
¹ L. Costa, *Pisa ai tempi di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, unpublished thesis in Archivio di Stato, Pisa.

² See particularly Picotti, 'Lo Studio di Pisa', *passim*.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-9.

⁴ N. Caturegli, 'Le condizioni della chiesa di Pisa nella seconda metà del secolo XV', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XIX (1950).

MICHAEL MALLET



PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Caturegli points out that the available evidence for the diocese of Arezzo indicated an even worse state of affairs.¹ Nor, at the same time, could the situation be blamed on the Florentines for it seemed that the appearance of Florentines as archbishops and vicars in the diocese of Pisa in the fifteenth century tended to raise the general standard of ecclesiastical supervision and control in the diocese. Caturegli concludes that 'la visione della chiesa pisana della seconda metà del '400 ci presenta, un pò, l'immagine di quella che era la chiesa pretridentina'.²

The Pisan guilds have also attracted some detailed attention from historians in recent years, and although the studies have tended to be institutional rather than economic, they have supported Silva's view that in the first part of the century at least the Pisan guilds were subjected to the sort of control from Florence which was the normal practice within the Florentine dominions.³ Whether Lupo Gentile's theory that the Pisan guilds were completely emancipated in 1459 is valid is open to dispute, but suffice it to say here that if they were it would have been unusually generous treatment for the guilds of a subject city.⁴

Finally, although the economic state of the individual Pisan guilds remains to be examined, it is along the lines of economic history that the most useful approach to the problem of clarifying our view of Pisa in the fifteenth century has been made in recent years. Dott. Bruno Casini in a series of studies has been publishing and analysing the tax records of the early part of the century, and his findings have already produced comment from one of Italy's leading economic historians, Amintore Fanfani.⁵ One indisputable fact which emerges from these registers is that the number of tax payers in Pisa declined considerably in the early years of the Florentine occupation.⁶ To what extent this

¹ Caturegli, 'Le condizioni della chiesa di Pisa', pp. 105-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 109-10.

³ M. Lupo Gentile, 'Le corporazioni delle arti a Pisa nel secolo XV', *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore*, 2nd ser., vol. IX (1940); C. Violante, 'L'organizzazione di mestiere dei sarti pisani nei secoli XIII-XV', *Studi in onore di Armando Sapori* (Milan, 1958), vol. I; D. Corsi, 'Lo statuto degli orafi di Pisa del 1448', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XIX (1950); A. E. Vitolo, 'Notizie sull' arte degli speziali di Pisa da alcuni manoscritti dell'Archivio di Stato', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XIV-XVI (1945-47).

⁴ For further discussion of this subject see p. 421.

⁵ B. Casini, 'I fuochi di Pisa e la prestanza di 1407', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XXVII (1958); *idem*, 'Contribuenti pisani alle taglie di 1402 e del 1412', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XXVIII-XXIX, 1959-60; *idem*, *Il Catasto di Pisa nel 1428-29* (Pisa, 1964); A. Fanfani, 'Lavoratori e contribuenti a Pisa nel 1407', *Economia e Storia*, vol. VI (1959). See also Casini, 'Aspetti della vita economica e sociale di Pisa nel catasto del 1428-29', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XXXI-XXXII (1962-63), pp. 3-114. The *taglia* or tithe was a direct levy, the *prestanza* was, at least in theory, a forced loan.

⁶ A marked decline in the population of Pisa during the early Renaissance had already been noted by A. Rossi, 'Lo sviluppo demografico di Pisa dal XII al XV secolo', *Boll. Stor. Pis.*, vol. XIV-XVI (1945-47).

MICHAEL MALLET

was due to emigration and declining population, and to what extent to different methods of assessment and to reduced economic potential is hard to assess. One of the problems involved in handling this sort of record is to discover what proportion of the population was excluded on the grounds of poverty, quite apart from those who were automatically excluded on other grounds, such as the religious, soldiers and foreign settlers. There are indications that even the 1428-29 *Catasto*, which appears to be the fullest of these records, still omits the lowest strata of society.¹ However, we do now have some reliable guide to the economic condition of individual Pisans in these years which is one of the aspects which I shall be considering in this essay.

Casini and Fanfani have also provided a series of tables to illustrate the fluctuating state of the professions in Pisa both with regard to numbers and relative economic potential. But here the evidence is of less value both because the profession of a tax payer is often omitted from the registers, and because many of the professions are represented in the tables by only one or two families, whose tax assessment are not a reliable guide to the economic potential of the profession as a whole.² Any attempt to assess the average economic potential of a profession on the basis of the tax assessments of two or three families, which frequently differed widely, is bound to be arbitrary, and to proceed from this to a comparison of the potential of a number of professions assessed in the same manner would seem to be an exercise fraught with difficulty. The tables produced for the 1402 and 1412 *taglie* and the 1407 *prestanza* in fact show vast differences in the relative economic potential of the various professions; but it would be highly dangerous to attempt to draw general conclusions from the differences revealed by this type of survey, unless it is confined to a few of the leading professions.³

¹ Dott. Casini has pointed out to me that in some cases families described as renting houses from wealthy Pisans in the returns of the latter do not themselves appear in the registers.

² To take but one example to illustrate this point, in 1407 there were three linen manufacturers registered in the *prestanza* account. One had an assessment of 3 florins, 15 soldi and 4 denari; the other two were assessed at 7 soldi and 9 denari each. Thus the average assessment of the linen manufacturers was 1 florin, 10 soldi and 3 denari which put them in 22nd place out of 146 professions in a table of economic potential. But two-thirds of the known members of the profession had an assessment which should have placed them nearer to 100th position (see Fanfani, 'Lavoratori e contribuenti', pp. 122 and 129-30).

Apart from the 1402 account in which assessments were calculated in *fiorini a fiorino*, e.g. 29 soldi to the florin, all these accounts contain assessments in *fiorini a oro* with 20 soldi to the florin, 12 denari to the soldo.

³ The profession of *servente* (servant: particularly used of those employed in institutions) is a case in point. In 1402 there were eight heads of families claiming this profession and the average *taglia* assessment placed them at the bottom of the table of

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

However, despite these pitfalls the available economic material does offer the most useful line of approach to a reappraisal of Pisa in the fifteenth century, and it is the general economic life of Pisa which is the first aspect of the period which I shall consider in this essay. The other aspects which I have chosen for study are the Pisan guilds, the state of the Pisan *contado*, and the Florentine private interests in both city and *contado*.

Economic life in Pisa

In considering the economic life of Pisa in the fifteenth century two questions immediately spring to mind. First how far is the traditional picture of the economic depression in Pisa under Florentine domination justified? Secondly, if it is not justified, then to what extent were the Pisans themselves prevented either by Florentine regulations or by crushing taxation from participating in large scale economic enterprises? In other words to what extent was the economic activity of the city carried on by an alien community?

The first of these questions must for reasons of space be treated briefly here, but suffice it to say that it is abundantly clear that from a purely economic point of view Pisa as a commercial centre enjoyed a period of revival under the first Florentine domination. Some of the evidence for this will appear throughout the course of this essay, but at this stage attention must be drawn to the extent to which the Florentines set out to attract international trade and foreign merchants to Pisa and its ports. The concessions which were granted to further this aim fell into two main categories; tax exemptions and rent-free housing, etc., which encouraged foreign merchants to settle in the city, and customs concessions which encouraged the passage of goods through the city.

In 1419 foreigners coming to live in Pisa or Leghorn were given complete exemption from taxes for twenty years, and this concession was renewed in 1441.¹ In the same year one house was offered to each family of potential immigrants, free of rent for ten years. The only stipulation imposed was that any immigrant artisans might be called upon to assist in the galley yards. As a result of these concessions many

professions. By 1407 the number had fallen to three with assessments of 1 florin, 3 soldi and 4 denari, 2 soldi and 11 denari, and 2 soldi and 4 denari respectively. The resulting average of 9 soldi and 6 denari was sufficient to place them 54th from the bottom of the table. This apparent radical improvement in the fortunes of the *serventi* was entirely due to the relatively high economic potential of one family, while a number of other families in the same profession had presumably ceased to be taxed at all. By 1412 no member of the profession was included in the assessments.

¹ Provv., 109, fol. 193v (23 Dec. 1419), and 132, fol. 70 (9 June 1441).

MICHAEL MALLET

foreign merchants, particularly Genoese, Piombinese, and Catalans settled in Pisa, and indeed by the 1480s there were indications that the concessions had perhaps served their purpose too well. The Signoria began to urge Florentine officials in Pisa to ensure that foreign merchants paid taxes as soon as the concession periods were up, and to see that they did not receive favourable treatment at the expense of Florentines.¹

The concessions allowed on goods passing through Pisa formed an elaborate system of customs remissions and exemptions which was also initiated in 1419.² The concessions applied not only to merchandise passing through between Florence and the interior, and the sea, but also to goods imported by sea to be re-exported by sea within twelve months. The latter goods were not subject to any duties in Pisa unless they changed hands in Pisa, in which case they paid export duty only. Also in 1419 goods being exported to Lombardy and beyond were granted exemption from export duties.

These very wide concessions were somewhat curtailed in 1430 and again in 1440,³ however they existed in some form or other throughout the century and special concessions were also given to the goods of Catalans, Lucchese, German and Bolognese merchants.⁴

When one adds to the foreign merchant colony the large number of Florentine firms which were established in Pisa during the fifteenth century, one can have some idea of the extent to which the Florentine policy of revitalizing Pisa as a commercial centre was successful. The customs house, which in 1425 had been established in the Palazzo Gambacorta, was in 1452 moved to a larger building, and in later years further expanded.⁵ At the same time the staff was steadily increased to cope with the growing amount of traffic passing through the city.⁶

Just as this commercial activity must have had its effect on the general economic life of the city, providing jobs for large numbers of

¹ A.S.P., Archivio dei Contratti 280, fol. 394 (28 Sept. 1482).

² Provv., 109, fol. 194v (23 Dec. 1419), published by G. F. Pagnini, *Della Decima e delle varie altre gravanze imposte dal Comune di Firenze* (Lucca, 1765), vol. IV, p. 45.

³ A.S.F., Archivio dei Consoli del Mare, 3, fols. 34-5 (23 Feb. 1430); Provv., 130, fol. 304 (5 Feb. 1440).

⁴ Catalans had always been particularly favoured in Pisa and concessions for them were renewed at intervals throughout the fifteenth century. German merchants received special concessions in 1421 (Provv., 111, fol. 177).

⁵ Provv., 143, fol. 149v (10 June 1452). 1500 florins were to be spent on the new building, and the customs system was reorganized (see G. Scaramella, 'Notizie e statuti della dogana fiorentina', *Studi Storici*, vol. V, 1896). In 1461 four new warehouses were built (A.S.P., Archivio dei Contratti, 280, fol. 220) and in 1474 yet another warehouse was added (Provv., 165, fol. 183v).

⁶ The staff of the customs house in Pisa was increased in 1446 and again in 1463 (Provv., 137, fol. 207, and 152, fol. 271).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Pisans, and clients and customers for the hosting trades and the shopkeepers, so also must the Florentine determination to become a maritime power have had a similar invigorating effect. The Pisan shipbuilding industry had declined considerably in the final years of the Republic, and in 1402 there were few workmen left who were in any way associated with the industry. With the decision taken in 1421 to launch a communal galley system with a programme for the building of six long galleys and two great galleys immediately, the Pisan arsenal was once more revived.¹ Also of course these galleys had to be manned and many of the crews were Pisans. In 1428 although only six heads of families claimed the profession of sailor, a number of younger sons and relatives were reported to be away on the galleys.

However although there are these indications of a revival of commercial activity in Pisa, and of the invigorating effects of this revival in certain areas of the local Pisan economy, one is still faced with the problem of to what extent the Pisan merchant and banking class was able to participate in this activity.

Certainly the evidence of the 1428–29 *Catasto* in particular does not give a very encouraging picture of the economic life of the Pisans. The population had certainly declined considerably and many taxpayers claimed that they could no longer afford to live in the city. The 1428 records contain, for the first time, many families who were declared '*miserabili*' due to their apparent complete inability to pay taxes.² High debts were a feature of many entries. Nevertheless there are signs that even in 1428, which was approaching the worst period for the Pisans, economic conditions were not as bad as has sometimes been thought.

In the first place there were still Pisans who possessed considerable wealth, and these did not all belong to the pro-Florentine Bergolini families. The outstanding example was Giovanni Maggiolini, the richest Pisan in 1428.³ The Maggiolini were a Raspante family, e.g. anti-Florentine, and both Giovanni and his father, Piero, spent some years in exile in Lucca during the early years of the Florentine domination. Piero Maggiolini had had the third highest assessment for the

¹ The Florentine communal galley system, a direct imitation of the Venetian system, was set in motion with the founding of the office of the Sea Consuls (Prov. v., 111, fols. 198v–200; published by G. Müller, *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane coll' Oriente cristiano*, Florence, 1879, pp. 271–81). For a full account of this venture see the author's *The Florentine Galleys in the Fifteenth Century* (Oxford, 1967).

² Casini, *Il Catasto di Pisa, passim*. The complete *catasto* registers are to be found in A.S.P., Archivio dei Fiumi e Fossi. In fact the majority of those declared '*miserabili*' were old people living alone and incapable of earning a living.

³ B. Casini, 'Patrimonio e consumi di Giovanni Maggiolini, mercante pisano, nel 1428', *Economia e Storia*, vol. VII (1960), and *idem*, *Catasto di Pisa*, pp. 434–50.

MICHAEL MALLET

taglia of 1402, and the second highest in 1412. In both cases the highest assessment had gone to Giovanni and Bartolomeo da Scorno. In 1428 Giovanni Maggiolini's gross wealth was estimated at 23,080 florins, of which about 3000 florins was invested in property. A further 9000 florins of this capital was represented by goods, mostly silk in the Maggiolini warehouse in Pisa. Giovanni Maggiolini had in fact wide commercial interests and 1600 florins of his capital was described as 'chambi in Bruggia'. This was the position after twenty-two years of Florentine domination in which time the Maggiolini had borne one of the largest shares of Florentine taxation. Giovanni estimated that 25.12 per cent of his annual expenditure was made up of taxes, *prestanze*, etc. (400 florins out of 1562). This was not a proportion that one would describe as crushing, particularly in view of the fact that the Maggiolini family lived in reasonable style in three rented houses with five slaves.

Following Maggiolini came Jacopo di Corbino, a relative newcomer to the upper bracket of Pisan taxpayers, whose gross wealth was estimated at 15,796 florins.¹ Jacopo was a leather merchant and tanner who had over 11,000 florins worth of goods, including Spanish hides, in his warehouse. Next on the list came Guglielmo and Piero de' Paganelli, described as 'cittadini e mercanti pisani', with gross capital of 13,617 florins.² The Paganelli were bankers as well as merchants, and owned considerable estates outside Pisa. Amongst their possessions there were three slaves. Others who had declared gross capital of over 10,000 florins were Buonacorso Buonconti³ and Piero di Stefano Gaetani.⁴ Buonconti's father, Banduccio, had figured high in the lists of 1402 and 1412, and he was a considerable merchant with a shop in Florence, and a branch in Genoa. Gaetani was also a merchant and shipowner who specialized in trade with Sicily. He had three slaves in his household, and amongst his possessions was a summer palace in Ripoli.⁵

Below the 10,000 gross capital mark but above 5000 were such figures as Bartolomeo di Neri *detto* Maschiano⁶ and Lupardo da Vecchiano,⁷ who were both cloth merchants, Gaetani's trading partner

¹ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, p. 114.

² *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 183.

⁵ The Gaetani had lost one of their ships wrecked off the coast of Sardinia in recent years.

⁶ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, pp. 398-9.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 212. Lupardo owned a good deal of property in Pisa and the *contado* in addition to his commercial interests.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Antonio da Settimo,¹ Jacopo Vernagalli² and Gaspare di Ser Benvenuto da Lavaiano,³ merchants and landowners, and Piero di Ser Colo Galletti,⁴ a landowner at this time living in Bologna, who had figured prominently in the tax records since the beginning of the century. In fact sixty Pisan families had a gross wealth of over 2000 florins.

Besides the actual indications of wealth contained in the 1428-29 *Catasto* record, a number of interesting points emerge. In the first place, although there were 2660 families assessed for the *taglia* of 1402, and only 1779 for that of 1412 and 1752 in the *Catasto* of 1428-29, there was considerable continuity amongst the wealthier families. Between 1402 and 1412, 1037 families disappeared from the records, but of the 76 families who in 1402 had assessments of over 20 florins, 62 were still included in the assessments in 1412, and at least 50 of them were still present in 1428.⁵ This would seem to contradict the traditional theory of all the wealthier Pisans being deported or going into exile, leaving the tax burden to fall on those least able to bear it. In fact apart from the *catasto* record these assessment lists are not always explicit about whether a family was still actually resident in Pisa; however the evidence available at least for the first group of Pisans deported to Florence in 1407 suggests that the selection was rather haphazard, and by no means confined to the wealthier families.⁶ Those families which had disappeared from the tax registers by 1428 came on the whole from the middle and lower economic groups, and the reason for their disappearance may well have been in some cases a decline in fortune which took them into the non-taxed class, rather than actual emigration.

A second interesting point is that the majority of the leading taxpayers in 1428-29 were merchants, many with specific interests in international trade.⁷ Certainly as a group they bore no comparison either in wealth or scope of activities to the Florentine merchants in Pisa, but they do not seem to have been excluded from commerce. In

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

² *Ibid.*, p. 408.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 72-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 274.

⁵ Evidence of the continuity of a family fortune is not always easy to follow over a period of years, and the numbers of the original wealthy families surviving in 1412 and 1428 must be regarded as minimums. There were in addition other families of which the names survived but of which it is not possible to be certain that it was the same branch of the family as that which was amongst the wealthy in 1402.

⁶ See Ida Masetti-Bencini, 'Nuovi documenti sulla guerra e l'acquisto di Pisa (1404-1406)', *A.S.I.*, 5th ser., vol. XVIII (1896), pp. 239-41, for a list of the 105 Pisans and their families exiled to Florence in 1407. Of these about half appeared in the 1407 *prestanza*, but only 14 figured amongst the top 80 assessments.

⁷ Of the fifteen wealthiest Pisans in 1428-29, eleven had extensive commercial or industrial interests.

MICHAEL MALLET

1443 special concessions were granted to Pisan merchants and Pisan goods using the Florentine communal galleys,¹ and Pisans played their part in the Florentine galley operations both as patrons of the galleys and as advisers to the Sea Consuls on commercial and maritime policy.²

Thirdly attention has been drawn in a recent thesis to a tendency amongst the wealthier Pisans to abandon trade which was ceasing to be either practicable or profitable, in favour of investment in land.³ Such a tendency was of course not only true of Pisans in the fifteenth century, and although the 1428–29 *Catasto* does emphasize the amount of land owned by Pisans, it does not throw very much light on the extent to which this was either a recent or an accelerating process. It does show however that Battista di Bondo Lanfreducci, who has been cited as an example of the shift of the merchant class on to the land, was not even amongst the top 150 taxpayers in Pisa, and therefore the significance of his activities as a serious gentleman farmer should not be over-emphasized.⁴ A good deal of work in fact remains to be done on Pisan landholding in the fifteenth century; the Alliata papers reveal Niccolò di Mariano Alliata building up a considerable patrimony in the 1460s and 1470s,⁵ and in the new *estimo* of 1481 a large part of the Pisan contado was still in the hands of Pisans.⁶ This factor must be borne in mind when considering the problem of the impoverishment of the Pisan aristocracy and merchant class in the fifteenth century. Even in 1494 among the Pisan families who retained sufficient wealth to be able to advance money to Charles VIII were the Gismondi, Gaetani, Gualandi, Casapieri, Rossermini, Uppezighi, and Del Mosca.⁷

Yet another interesting feature revealed by the 1428–29 *Catasto* is the large number of slaves employed in Pisan households. The possession of a slave was in itself a sign of some economic standing, and slaves were worth sometimes as much as seventy florins. In Pisa in 1428 there

¹ A.S.F., Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 1, fol. 178v.

² In 1429 a special advisory council of merchants was called together by the Sea Consuls to discuss the inauguration of a galley route to Constantinople. To this council both Florentine and Pisan merchants were invited, and the single galley which was to be sent as a result of this conference was to have two patrons, one Pisan and one Florentine (Prov. v., 120, fol. 159v, 27 May 1429).

³ R. Gori, *Un tipico esponente dell'aristocrazia fondaria pisana nel Quattrocento; Battista di Bondo Lanfreducci, mercante e proprietario*, unpublished thesis in A.S.P. See also P. Pecchiai, 'Il libro dei ricordi di un gentiluomo pisano del secolo XV', *Studi Storici*, vol. XIV (1905).

⁴ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, pp. 228–9.

⁵ A.S.P., Archivio Alliata, 412, *passim*.

⁶ A.S.F., *Estimo*, 324, *passim*.

⁷ 'Ricordi di Ser Perizolo da Pisa', p. 392.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

were 59 slaves owned by Pisans, of whom although a few were described as old and useless, the vast majority were in their prime.¹

The final point which I should like to emphasize in connection with these tax records concerns the taxation itself. Unfortunately it is difficult to assess the real weight of the tax burden in the early and crucial years, as although we have the individual assessments for the 1407 *prestanza* and the 1412 *taglia*, we do not know how these were computed, nor how often the contributions were collected. We do know that in 1428 when Giovanni Maggiolini was paying 25·12 per cent of his annual expenditure in taxes, Urbano da Cigoli, a judge of moderate means, was paying 13·3 per cent.² Fanfani points out that the average *prestanza* assessment in 1407 was one florin, eight soldi and five denari, which was the equivalent of 7 per cent of the annual earnings of a shepherd.³ It could also be said that it was the equivalent of less than 0·1 per cent of the annual expenditure of Maggiolini, and both comparisons are of course entirely misleading. A shepherd, being one of the poorest members of the community, would have paid no *prestanza* at all, and if one computes the average assessment one can only compare it with an average income. Fanfani's comparison proves very little and certainly not onerous taxation.

The *catasto* in itself was not an onerous tax, but it was liable to be levied several times a year. Thus a barber who earned 40–50 florins a year was only assessed at five soldi, and a leather worker who earned 36 florins was assessed at four soldi.⁴ In both cases the assessment was little more than 0·5 per cent of annual earnings; but this trivial imposition took on a very different complexion if it was imposed frequently.

However one cannot escape the overall impression that taxes were not as crushing, nor the Pisans as poor, as they liked to make out. It is certainly not possible to agree with Silva that in 1428 'nessuno pisano più si dedicava a lavori manuali e agricoli; dei traffichi, così lucrosi un tempo, non era il caso di parlare ormai più, perché ne mancava quasi del tutto la base, il capitale circolante'.⁵ At the same time one must not go to the other extreme and underestimate the extent of the economic depression in Pisa in the 1420s and 1430s. This depression seems to have

¹ For further discussion of slavery in Renaissance Tuscany and Florence in particular, see A. Zanelli, *Le schiave orientali a Firenze nei secoli XIV e XV* (Florence, 1885), and Iris Origo, 'The Domestic Enemy; Eastern slaves in Tuscany in the 14th and 15th centuries', *Speculum*, vol. XXX (1955).

² Casini, 'Giovanni Maggiolini', p. 60.

³ Fanfani, 'Lavoratori e contribuenti', p. 138.

⁴ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, pp. 35 and 108.

⁵ Silva, 'Pisa sotto Firenze', p. 539. In the *Catasto* records over 100 heads of families claimed the profession of agricultural worker.

MICHAEL MALLET

hit particularly the professional classes, and the men of moderate means who owned their own shop or ran their own business. The decline in population had a good deal to do with this, and this was a problem of which the Florentines were very well aware. Certainly they exiled some of the more important citizens, but they also used all sorts of devices to attract inhabitants to Pisa. The *catasto* record itself is full of examples of families who agreed to return to Pisa if they were allowed the tax allowance of fifty florins per head.¹ The withholding of this allowance from those who lived in the *contado* but were assessed in Pisa was a considerable weapon in the hands of the *catasto* officials, for with a sizeable family a taxpayer could find the assessment of his net capital increased by 5-600 florins if he persisted in living outside the city.

The Pisan guilds

In 1406 just as the administration of Pisa fell largely into the hands of Florentines, so the control and supervision of the Pisan guilds was entrusted to the Florentine guilds, and in the 1420s to the Sea Consuls in Pisa, who were in a sense representatives of the Florentine guilds. Control by the Florentine guilds involved naturally enough an attempt to limit competition from Pisan goods, and an attempt to draw financial profit from the Pisan guilds. Hence the Pisan guilds were expected to pay special dues and a part of their own *matricole* to their Florentine counterparts, and any revision of the Pisan guild statutes had to be approved in Florence. In addition free-lance workers were allowed to establish themselves in Pisa without being forced to join the relevant Pisan guild and pay dues to it.

It was this last practice which became the greatest grievance of the Pisan guildsmen. They saw in it an attempt to break the corporate spirit of the guilds, to ruin their monopolies, and in fact to deprive them of any economic significance. But it is not necessary to read any particular vindictive or destructive purpose into this move. In the first place it was an obvious corollary to the position of dependence of the Pisan guilds that Florentine artisans should be allowed to establish themselves in Pisa without joining the Pisan guilds. It would have been pointless to make a Florentine woolman who was a member of the Florentine *Arte della Lana* and wished to set up a shop in Pisa join the Pisan wool guild, which was itself dependent on that of Florence.

The other group of artisans who benefited from freedom from the guilds were foreign immigrants, and in this case the leniency offered

¹ Forty-eight families were described in the *catasto* as having made agreements of this type.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

them was probably another device for attracting foreigners to settle in Pisa. Nothing was a greater deterrent to the free movement of labour than the strict gild regulations of the time, and it was very natural that Florence, wishing to encourage foreign merchant and artisans to go to Pisa, should soften some of these regulations.¹

Finally there is some evidence that the Florentines wished to attract Florentine artisans to settle in Pisa in order to create a body of loyal citizens who could be used to assist in the defence of the city and to discourage a Pisan revolt.²

Whatever the motives behind the treatment of the Pisan gilds the important point was that this treatment was exactly the same as that meted out to all the subject cities. In fact the artisans of the Florentine *contado* were even more strictly controlled. Furthermore there is a good deal of evidence that the Pisan gilds regained some of their independence during the course of the century. Violante found that the new statutes of the tailors' gild formulated in 1454 contained no reference to dues to be paid to the Florentine gild.³ However these new statutes had to be approved in Florence, and at this stage a clause was inserted permitting Florentine tailors to set up shop in Pisa without paying dues to the Pisan gild.

In 1459 came the decree of the Five Governors of Pisa making the Pisan gilds once more autonomous.⁴ However it is possible that this should not be regarded as a decisive moment in the history of the Pisan gilds, as the decree was not confirmed in Florence until 1475. Furthermore the Seventeen Reformers in 1491 also formally lifted the obligation for the Pisan gilds to pay dues to those of Florence.⁵

The gild which is always said to have suffered most from Florentine domination was the Wool Gild, which some writers, relying on the evidence of the *provvisione* of 1409 *contra lanifices pisarum*, have described as completely suppressed and moribund.⁶ Once again however it should be pointed out that the imposition of restrictions on local wool industries was a standard feature of Florentine rule. The wool industry was the mainstay of the Florentine economy and it was only natural that she should not allow competition from her own subject cities. The

¹ Violante, 'L'organizzazione di mestiere dei sarti', p. 455.

² A.S.F., M.A.P., IX, 244 (10 Feb. 1454).

³ Violante, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

⁴ Lupo Gentile, 'Le corporazioni delle arti', *passim*.

⁵ A.S.F., Balie, 39, fol. 64v.

⁶ A.S.F., Arte della Lana, 125, fol. 14. For discussion of this measure see P. Silva, 'Intorno all'industria e al commercio dell'arte della lana in Pisa', in C. M. Cipolla (ed.), *Storia dell'economia italiana*, vol. I (Turin, 1959), pp. 159-161 (article originally published in *Studi Storici*, vol. XIX, 1910) and E. Bruzzi, *Sulla storia dell'arte della lana in Toscana* (Prato, 1939), p. 39.

MICHAEL MALLET

normal policy was to limit local wool industries to the production of cloths for home consumption only.

In fact in Pisa the wool industry had declined considerably during the fourteenth century and had already virtually given up trying to compete with the luxury cloth made in Florence.¹ Pisa had also become a great market for imported cloth which made it even more difficult for the local woolmen to survive.² One of the last acts of the government of the old Republic had been to impose protectionist controls on the import of cloths in an attempt to revive the industry. In 1407 there were 20 woolmen amongst the heads of families who declared their profession for the *prestanza* assessment, but there were 76 shoemakers, 49 tanners and 41 wine merchants. Twelve professions were larger than that of the cloth manufacturers.³ On the other hand in 1412, three years after the supposed assault on the Pisan woolmen had been launched, there were still 21 woolmen appearing in the register of the *taglia*.⁴ On this occasion the numbers of some of the other trades had fallen considerably, and the woolmen were by no means as outnumbered as they had been in 1407.

By 1428 the number of woolmen was eighteen, but with the help of the greater volume of evidence available one can see that in fact this involved seven workshops. *Panni pisaneschi* were the main products of these shops, but one also specialized in *panni tachulini* and *arbagi*.⁵ In the warehouse of the cloth merchant Simone di Lotto da Sancasciano over one quarter of the cloth listed in 1428 was of Pisan manufacture.⁶ Furthermore the Pisan customs accounts throughout the century reveal a certain number of Pisan cloths being exported; never a great number it is true but enough to indicate a surplus after satisfying the demands of the home market. In the first half of 1415, 140 Pisan cloths were exported inland and 38 by sea.⁷

These figures indicate a very limited wool industry which was indeed relatively insignificant compared to that of Florence. But they

¹ Silva, op. cit., pp. 147-9.

² F. Melis, 'Uno sguardo al mercato dei panni di lana', *passim*.

³ Casini, 'I fuochi di Pisa', *passim*, and Fanfani, 'Lavoratori e contribuenti', pp. 124-5.

⁴ Casini, 'Contribuenti pisani alle taglie', p. 154.

⁵ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, *passim*. The wool workshops were those of Luca di Jacopo da Volterra, Antonio di Andrea di Ser Betto, Antonio di Filippo, Francesco di Guido Bocchetta, Michele di Antonio di Niccoluccio, Checco di Mostardo, and Niccolò and Gabriele di Ranieri da Fauglia.

The *panno tachulino* was presumably a coarse cloth made partly with linen; the *panno arbagio* or *arbascio* was a coarse heavy wool cloth.

⁶ B. Casini, 'Patrimonio ed attività del fondaco del taglio di Simone di Lotto da Sancasciano, fratelli', *Studi in onore di Amintore Fanfani*, vol. II (Milan, 1962).

⁷ A.S.P., Archivio del Comune, B, 28, *passim*.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

do not indicate the forcible suppression and prohibition of the industry. In 1428 one of the more impoverished woolmen declared that the reason for the depression in the Pisan wool industry was the great number of foreign cloths which were now passing through Pisa.¹ Pisa was in fact becoming a market for wool and cloth rather than a producer herself, and this process had already been abundantly apparent in the latter years of the fourteenth century. The change was also reflected in the numbers and wealth of the cloth merchants in the 1428 *catasto*. However even as late as 1473 it was still possible for the councils in Florence to discuss the damage being done to the Pisan wool industry by the unrestricted import of Lombard cloth;² an indication that there was still an industry which merited some attention.

Another aspect of the position of the Pisan guilds in the fifteenth century which deserves mention is the small group of guilds which seem to have received encouragement under the Florentine domination. Most notable of these was the Tanners' guild and the Pisan leather industry.

Tanning had long been one of Pisa's important industries both because of the ease with which supplies of foreign hides and the raw materials necessary for tanning could be imported, and because the Arno could be used for washing and soaking the leather. In the thirteenth century the tanners had been the largest single profession in Pisa and were particularly noted for their imitation of fine Spanish cordovan leather.³ By the end of the century the original three tanners' guilds had become six, and the slow cold water tanning process was beginning to give way to the initially less efficient but more economic hot water process. The division of the industry into six guilds was partly a topographical division and partly based on differing products and skills, and the location of the leather shops in 1428-29 largely followed the traditional distribution.⁴

The first centre of the Pisan tanning industry had been the Piazza S. Nicola, the commercial heart of the medieval city. By the end of the thirteenth century three guilds were concentrated in this area, the *pellarii de Ponte Novo*, the *coriarii de Santo Nicholò*, and the *cordovanerii*. In 1428 there were still five shops in the parish of S. Nicola, and two

¹ Casini, *Catasto di Pisa*, p. 368.

² Provv., 164, fol. 111 (23 July 1473).

³ C. J. Singer, *The Earliest Chemical Industry; an Essay in the Historical Relations of Economics and Technology illustrated from the Alum Trade* (London, 1948), pp. 84-7.

⁴ For a useful description of the Pisan leather industry in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries see Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance*, pp. 137-45. The thirteenth century statutes of the leather guilds were published by F. Bonaini (ed.), *Statuti inediti della città di Pisa dal XII al XIV secolo* (Florence, 1854-70), vol. III, pp. 899-994.

MICHAEL MALLET

more in the neighbouring parish of S. Donato. Across the river in the Kinseca quarter was the gild of the *coriarii de Santa Maria Maddalena*, which by 1428 had spread rather outside the parish of Sta. Maria Maddalena. Although there were still four shops in that parish and one that had only recently closed, it was the neighbouring parish of S. Cosimo which had become the more popular area for the tanners with eight shops established there. The other important focal point for the tanners was the quarter of Fuori Porta where the *coriarii aque frigide de Foriporta* and the *coriarii aque calde de Spina* were concentrated. By 1428 there were six shops left in this area, although one suspects that the cold water tanners of Fuori Porta, who had in the thirteenth century concentrated on cheap leather, must have been largely put out of business by the growth of the more economical hot water process.

The published tax records of the early years of the fifteenth century indicate a certain contraction in the number of leather shops in Pisa with a tendency for some of the remaining ones to grow. In 1402 there were 28 *cuoiari* recorded; in 1407 there were 49, and in 1412 42 in the rather more complete *taglia* record. Amongst the Pisan tanners in 1412 the wealthiest and most prominent were Ser Giovanni di Andrea dal Campo, Antonio di Giovanni di Puccio, Bartolomeo di Francesco *detto* Besso, Giovanni di Peretto, and Piero Pancaldi. Of these only the first figured amongst the leading seventy taxpayers in Pisa. In 1428 there were 39 *cuoiari* representing 31 active shops. Of these Jacopo di Corbino was the second wealthiest Pisan, and other tanners amongst the first seventy taxpayers were Antonio di Pagno da Marti, the sons of Ser Giovanni di Andrea dal Campo, and Jacopo di Francesco di Ruffino. Other long-established firms of moderate substance were those of Cristofano di Manfredi, Bartolomeo di Francesco and Arrigo di Nuto.

Although many of these tanners owned land, the bulk of their capital was invested in stock made up largely of Spanish, Portuguese and Barbary hides, and myrtle. The merchants who supplied many of these hides were the Florentines Bernardo d'Ugucione, Giovanni Quaratesi, Giuliano Manovelli and Angiolo Barucci, and the Catalans Gaspare Portelli and Giovanni Sportieri. The customs accounts for the later part of the century show the leather import market still dominated by Quaratesi and Portelli with the addition of Gabriele Ridolfi as a large-scale importer of hides. By this time Irish hides also were arriving in large quantities.

The evidence from the Pisan customs accounts suggests that not only were the imports of hides very considerable, but also that the bulk of these hides were tanned in Pisa and dispatched inland as tanned leather.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Very few untanned hides left Pisa on the inland routes, whereas tanned leather formed the largest commodity recorded in the inland export records.¹ Consignments of this leather were sent as far afield as Perugia, Spoleto, Faenza, Imola, and Bologna, and the appearance of leading Florentine tanners like Antonio Donati in Pisa suggests that there was a tendency for the Tuscan tanning industry to be concentrated there, possibly at the expense of the local Florentine industry. In 1491 the Seventeen Reformers selected the Pisan leather industry as one of the aspects of the subject city's economy which merited encouragement and high duties were imposed on imported tanned leather, while duties were relaxed for imported Tuscan hides.²

Other industries which flourished in Pisa in the fifteenth century were the soap and hat-making industries. Both were old-standing professions in Pisa and both supplied a considerable surplus to local needs for export in Florence's fifteenth-century maritime trade.³ The soap industry profited from the fact that each of the communal galleys had to load 2000 lbs. of soap before sailing on any voyage,⁴ and in 1441 the importation of foreign soap was banned to assist the industry.⁵ In the next year duty concessions were conferred on soap manufacturers provided that their output reached 50,000 lbs. a year.⁶ The Seventeen Reformers also helped the Pisan soap industry by lifting the duties on the manufacture and export of soap,⁷ and in 1493 restrictions on the production and sale of ashes and soda in Pisa were raised to assist the industry.⁸ Finally it was once again the Seventeen Reformers who gave assistance to the Pisan hatters by lifting the duties on the manufacture and sale of hats.⁹ One can see perhaps in this policy of encouragement, as well as in that of the Florentines towards the Pisan leather industry, a move towards a planned economy with certain industries allotted to the subject cities even at the expense of parallel industries in Florence.

¹ See Tables I and II for the import of hides and export of tanned leather to and from Pisa in the second half of the fifteenth century.

² Balie, 39, fol. 66 (21 June 1491).

³ For the story of Lazarius Talliapanis, one of the great Pisan hatters of the thirteenth century, see Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance*, pp. 177-80. For the soap industry in Pisa see J. M. Pardessus, *Collection des lois maritimes antérieures au XVIII siècle* (Paris, 1828), vol. III, p. lxiii.

⁴ A. Schaub, *Das Konsulat des Meeres in Pisa* (Leipzig, 1888), p. 221.

⁵ Provv., 132, fol. 289v (13 Dec. 1441). This enactment also permitted the import of oil free of duty by soap manufacturers.

⁶ Provv., 133, fol. 114 (13 July 1442).

⁷ Balie, 39, fol. 66v (21 June 1491).

⁸ Provv., 184, fol. 32 (28 June 1493).

⁹ Balie, 39, fol. 66v (21 June 1491).

TABLE I
IMPORTS OF HIDES AND LEATHER INTO PISA IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

<i>Account Book</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Spanish</i>	<i>Barbary</i>	<i>Sicilian</i>	<i>Sardinian</i>	<i>Irish</i>	<i>Portuguese</i>	<i>Other</i>	<i>Tanned Leather (lbs.)</i>
39	Oct. 1466-Apr. 1467	1166	1502	—	8005	33,950	7137	33	14,557
40	Oct. 1467-Apr. 1468	—	—	—	—	2520	2060	3101	4238
41	Oct. 1468-Apr. 1469	6409	5223	417	1283	4776	2715	917	216
42	Apr. 1469-Oct. 1469	7807	1370	1317	4808	—	8	320	36,332
43	Apr. 1470-Oct. 1470	218	—	3672	—	8023	5440	209	34,482
44	Apr. 1473-Oct. 1473	—	3702	634	93	1790	370	1603	12,273
45	Oct. 1476-Apr. 1477	—	—	—	—	4500	6056	467	2430
46	Apr. 1477-Oct. 1477	—	500	1010	1529	96	7135	737	5018
47	Apr. 1478-Oct. 1478	137	926	3398	554	3679	1994	1891	47,757
49	Oct. 1482-Apr. 1483	—	—	—	—	24,010	216	6090	48,756
52	Apr. 1492-Aug. 1492	169	—	90	159	—	784	3083	15,381

(The figures quoted in this table are the numbers of hides, except in last column where the quantity of tanned leather is reported in lbs.)

Note. The remaining volumes of the Pisan customs accounts are to be found in A.S.P., Archivio del Comune, B, at the numbers indicated. As can be seen they are very far from complete, and the statistics computed from them can only be a very rough indication of the trends of trade.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

TABLE II
EXPORTS OF HIDES AND LEATHER
FROM PISA TO THE INTERIOR

<i>Account Book</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Tanned Leather</i>	<i>Hides</i>
39	Oct. 1466–Apr. 1467	344,352 lbs.	4112
40	Oct. 1467–Apr. 1468	280,534 lbs.	1263
41	Oct. 1468–Apr. 1469	226,579 lbs.	107
42	Apr. 1469–Oct. 1469	339,898 lbs.	1239
43	Apr. 1470–Oct. 1470	430,055 lbs.	277
44	Apr. 1473–Oct. 1473	327,055 lbs.	793
45	Oct. 1476–Apr. 1477	188,894 lbs.	—
46	Apr. 1477–Oct. 1477	215,949 lbs.	—
47	Apr. 1478–Oct. 1478	222,851 lbs.	352
49	Oct. 1482–Apr. 1483	156,297 lbs.	—
52	Apr. 1492–Aug. 1492	177,265 lbs.	10

The Pisan contado

It is perhaps for their policy in the Pisan *contado* that the Florentines have been most misunderstood and maligned. Although historians have now generally recognized that Lorenzo made efforts to improve conditions in the *contado*, these have generally been imputed to purely selfish interests. The legislation of 1475 which made the Sea Consuls responsible for improvements in the Pisan *contado* has usually been considered to be the only flicker of official interest in the problem, and Mori considers it proof of how little was done that in 1509, after fifteen years of continuous fighting in the area, the Sea Consuls' work had to be done again.¹ Although the bitterest attacks on the Florentines for deliberately ruining the Pisan *contado* in order to starve the Pisans or alternatively decimate them by disease are now usually discounted, there is still a general feeling that by sheer neglect and maladministration the Florentines allowed the *contado* to become derelict and unproductive.²

The principal problem in the area around Pisa was the persistent conversion of arable to pasturage by the many absentee landlords, both Pisan and Florentine, and by the religious houses.³ This was not a peculiarly fifteenth-century problem nor in fact a peculiarly Pisan one; it was an inevitable result of large-scale landholding in an area which

¹ Mori, *La dominazione fiorentina*, p. 68.

² R. Fiaschi, *Le magistrature pisane delle acque* (Pisa, 1939), pp. 43–4; Targione Tozzetti, *Relazioni di alcuni viaggi* (Florence, 1748), vol. II, p. 199; E. Repetti, *Dizionario geografico, fisico e storico della Toscana* (Florence, 1841), vol. IV, pp. 348–9. Repetti produces some evidence of Florentine activity before 1475, but mostly of rather specific projects in Pisa itself.

³ Pagnini, *Della Decima*, vol. II, p. 34; see also Provv., 157, fol. 247v (13 Mar. 1467) and 180, fol. 100 (19 Dec. 1489).

MICHAEL MALLET

was not naturally highly fertile.¹ Much of the Pisan *contado* was very low lying and subject to flooding when the capricious Arno was in spate after the melting of the snows in the Apennines. These areas were made usable by an elaborate system of dykes and drainage ditches, the upkeep of which was partly the responsibility of local communes and partly of the landowners themselves. However, if the land was used for pasture, the drainage of it ceased to be so important; the animals themselves tended to break down the dykes and fill in the ditches, and neither the landlords nor the villages were prepared to do much about it. Some lands reverted to their natural state of marsh and became both useless and unhealthy. The problem was naturally exacerbated by the wars of the first half of the century, when the passage of armies not only further damaged the drainage arrangements, but also impoverished the villages so that they could not afford repairs.

How widespread the damage actually was is open to doubt. In the first place it was only the Arno valley itself which was affected by the problem, whereas the Pisan *contado* extended far into the hills to the south and to a certain extent to the north of the river. Secondly there is evidence that the corn crops from the lower Arno valley were plentiful in several years during the fifteenth century. In 1424, 1427 and 1429 there were reports of good corn crops,² and in 1456 similar reports attributed the success to the work done by the Sea Consuls.³ 1478 also appears to have been a good year as concessions were given for the export of Pisan grain to Piombino and Lucca.⁴ These are facts which have escaped those who have concentrated on the two or three years when bad crops caused a thunder of complaints and recriminations.

Fiaschi in his important volume on the drainage of the Pisan *contado* stressed the fact that 1475 was not the beginning of an official interest in the state of the low-lying part of the Pisan *contado*. He showed that the old Pisan Republic had recognized and made provisions for the problem in the fourteenth century.⁵ But he also joined the other detractors of

¹ Herlihy, *Pisa in the Early Renaissance*, pp. 116-17, pointed out earlier examples of this same trend in the Pisan *contado*.

² Provv., 114, fol. 72 (10 Dec. 1424); 117, fol. 48v (7 June 1427); 120, fol. 174v (30 May 1429).

³ Provv., 147, fol. 122 (12 Oct. 1456).

⁴ A.S.F., Dieci di Balìa, Missive dentro il dominio, 4, fol. 34; 5, fols. 81 and 108; 6, fol. 89.

⁵ Recent studies based on the use of air photographs are revealing systematic work of bonification in the Arno and Serchio valleys in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Giulio Schmiedt, 'Contributo della fotografia aerea alla ricostruzione del paesaggio rurale nell' alto medioevo,' *Agricoltura e mondo rurale in occidente nell' alto medioevo* (*Atti della Tredicesima Settimana di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo*, Spoleto, 1967).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Florence when he remarked that between 1406 and 1475 the Florentines did nothing about it.¹ In fact as early as 1421 the Signoria was given the power to decide on how the Pisan *contado* should be divided into arable and pasture.² By 1438–39 laws were being enforced to prevent the pasturing of herds of animals within four miles of Pisa, and in certain other areas of the *contado*.³ In 1447 the conversion of land from arable to pasture without special permission was forbidden, and in 1456 these orders were repeated.⁴ In the next year the damming of ditches to improve the fishing in the Stagno di Pisa was strictly forbidden,⁵ and in 1463 the use of buffaloes in the area around Pisa was banned, and domestic animals could only be pastured on the property of the owners.⁶ A chorus of protest from Florentines who had rented pasturage greeted this last measure, and it had to be slightly amended.⁷ But nevertheless Tommaso Soderini and Lorenzo Lenzi, who had rented large pastures near Pisa, now found these unusable and were allowed to withhold the rent.⁸

Such cases indicate one way in which Florentines got a bad name in the *contado*, as does the instance of Piero Strozzi, who caused severe flooding in the Stagno in his attempts to get salt out of it.⁹ But they were cases of individual Florentines pursuing their own interests, at times regardless of the harm done to others, and they were certainly not indicative of a deliberate and organized attempt to ruin the Pisan countryside.¹⁰ The government throughout steadfastly set its face against the harmful practices of individual Florentines, and in 1475 came the much quoted authority to the Sea Consuls to deal with the problem, and the establishment of the *Opera della Riparazione del Contado di Pisa*, later known as the *Ufficio dei Fiumi e Fossi*.¹¹ But in fact the Consuls, the Canal Officials, the *Ufficiali dell' Abbondanza di carne e pesci* who were

¹ Fiaschi, *Magistrature pisane delle acque*, pp. 43–4 and 71.

² Provv., 111, fol. 14 (29 Apr. 1421).

³ Provv., 129, fol. 294v (20 Feb. 1439).

⁴ Provv., 138, fol. 90v (14 June 1447) and Consoli del Mare, 3, fol. 112 (12 Oct. 1456).

⁵ Provv., 148, fol. 15v (21 Feb. 1457).

⁶ Provv., 154, fols. 171–174v (6 Oct. 1463).

⁷ Provv., 157, fol. 67 (16 June 1466).

⁸ Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 6, fol. 119 (7 June 1474).

⁹ Silva, 'Pisa sotto Firenze', p. 536.

¹⁰ The Signoria at times granted licences to individuals to break the pasturing laws, sometimes with the condition that the land to be converted into pasture was not already being used for corn (Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 1, fols. 5–6, July 1441), but licences were usually accompanied by the insistence that the laws as a whole must be obeyed.

¹¹ Provv., 166, fol. 20 (17 Apr. 1475), and Fiaschi, *Magistrature pisane delle acque*, pp. 49–61. The statutes published by the Sea Consuls in 1475 were published by Fiaschi, *op. cit.*, pp. 479–502.

responsible for the maintenance of meat and fish supplies, and the *Ufficiali delle Torri* who were responsible for the upkeep of fortifications, had all been asked to consider the problem much earlier in the century.¹ The Sea Consuls were authorized in 1455 to supervise the work of repairing roads and dykes, and cleaning irrigation ditches which had been entrusted to a local official, Lorenzo di Giovanni de' Sardi.² The work was particularly urgent at this moment as there had been a period of wars and neglect since 1448, and the Consuls were given strong powers to enforce the assistance of local communes, and to collect special levies from local landowners to finance the work.

In 1457 this authority was extended for a further period as it was said that the work of the Sea Consuls was being very effective,³ and in 1463 the Canal Officials, who had been created in 1458 to implement a plan for a canal to run from Pisa to Florence, were also required to divert their energies to the *contado*.⁴ In the same year, the *Ufficiali dei danni dati* were established with authority to impose fines on those who disobeyed the pasturage regulations, and damaged drainage works and public constructions in the *contado*.⁵ Finally, in areas where there was less hope of clearing the land for any other cultivation, particularly in the Val di Serchio, the growing of rice was encouraged by the Florentine administration.⁶ This is the first evidence of rice cultivation in northern Italy, and an obvious use for this sort of land.

It is also apparent that all these good intentions and legislative activity were not unavailing. In 1456 and 1457 the work of the Sea Consuls in the notoriously marshy and unhealthy Stagno di Pisa was said to be producing good results,⁷ and the activities of Gasparre della

¹ The *Ufficiali dell'Abbondanza* were authorized in 1451 to act in the Stagno of Pisa to safeguard the fishing (Prov. v., 141, fol. 268v), and the *Ufficiali delle Torri* in 1455 were made responsible for clearing up some of the damage done in the *contado* by the recent wars (Prov. v., 146, fol. 270).

² Prov. v., 146, fol. 270 (14 Dec. 1455).

³ Prov. v., 147, fol. 122 (12 Oct. 1456).

⁴ Prov. v., 154, fols. 171-174v (6 Oct. 1463).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Prov. v., 159, fol. 211v (23 Dec. 1468) and A.S.P., Archivio dei Contratti, 280, fol. 405 (26 Mar. 1483). See also *Cambridge Economic History of Europe*, vol. I (Cambridge, 1942), p. 32. The suggestion to grow rice came from the Pisan, Leonardo di Colto de' Colti, who sought a guarantee from the Florentines that the land which he proposed to use for rice growing would not become the object of any drainage schemes for at least ten years.

⁷ Prov. v., 147, fol. 122 (12 Oct. 1456); 'Hora s'a informazione che detti due uffici [*Sea Consuls* and the *Provveditori delle Gabelle di Pisa*] per vigore di detta legge anno facto fare grande opera in far fare fossi che sbocchino lo stagno et etiamdio moltissimi fossi che chavano l'acqua dal piano di Pisa et vedesene partorire grandissimo utile che moltissimi terreni erano affogati dall'acqua diventano asciutti che sarà cagione si ricorrà gran somma di grano che non si ricoglieva . . .'. See also Prov. v., 148, fols. 15v (21 Feb. 1457) and 130 (7 May 1457).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Volta as superintendent of the drainage work were particularly praised in 1478.¹ It was said that his continual personal supervision of the work of local gangs on ditching, etc., was of such value that if he were taken off to become Gonfalonier of Justice, a post to which he had indeed been nominated, the work would get out of hand. As he was still in charge of the building of the bridge at Caprona in 1481, this plea seems to have been effective.² Other officials who were officially mentioned as doing good work in this area were Betto Rustichi, Battista Strozzi and Francesco Spini.³

The Sea Consuls also devoted a good deal of money and energy to repairing the banks of the Arno after the frequent floods. This work not only involved replacing the palisades at the mouth of the river, but also levying contributions of money and labour from local communes, and supervising the work on the banks up at least as far as Cascina.⁴ Sometimes old galleys were used to shore up the banks, and in 1444 Brunelleschi was employed to produce a plan for building up the bank of the river near Porta San Marco in Pisa.⁵

The local industries of the Pisan *contado* seem to have been treated in much the same way as those in the small towns round Florence. Any potential competition with Florentine products was strongly discouraged, but on the other hand genuine local industries which had an economic justification and did not compete with the work of the Florentine guilds seem to have enjoyed comparative freedom. The small iron foundries of the Monti Pisani round Buti and Calci seem to have prospered in the fifteenth century with a constant supply of iron coming in from Elba, and the local timber resources for smelting.⁶ In 1473 positive encouragement was given to the linen cloth industry in the Pisan *contado*,⁷ and another much favoured local industry were the fisheries which provided luxury fare for the table of the Signoria in Florence.⁸

The Pisan *contado* was therefore of great interest to Florence and it would be surprising if we were to find evidence of deliberate neglect.

¹ M.A.P., XXXV, 13 (4 Jan. 1478).

² Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 10, fol. 32 (28 Apr. 1481).

³ *Ibid.*, 11, fol. 250 (29 Nov. 1483), and 13, fol. 89v (1 Dec. 1487); Archivio dei Contratti, 280, fol. 461 (23 Apr. 1490).

⁴ Provv., 154, fols. 2, 81 and 113 (1463); 167, fol. 229 (29 Jan. 1476); Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 9, fol. 184 (1 Feb. 1481), and 12, fol. 151 (2 Dec. 1486).

⁵ Missive della 2a Cancelleria, 2, fol. 120v (16 Sept. 1444).

⁶ P. Ginori Conti, *Le magone della vena del ferro di Pisa e di Pietrasanta sotto la gestione di Piero de' Medici e comp.* (1489-92) (Florence, 1939), *passim*.

⁷ Provv., 164, fol. 275v (16 Feb. 1473).

⁸ Provv., 141, fol. 268 (16 Feb. 1450), and 271, fol. 76v (27 Oct. 1480).

The grain crop raised in the Arno valley was a vital factor in the Florentine economy. When the crop was good Florence could live off it cheaply; when it failed not only was a considerable amount of energy diverted into importing corn from Sicily, Provence, etc., but also of course the cost was much higher. It would indeed be strange in the circumstances if Florence deliberately neglected and ruined the source of her own food supply. Furthermore, as the century went on more and more wealthy Florentines bought land in the Pisan *contado*. Some of these certainly used the land as pasturage; but many not only sought to draw the normal profits in kind which a landlord expected from his estates, but also used their new estates as country residences. Such men were interested in the improvement of their own lands, and were sufficiently influential to take some steps towards the improvement of those of their neighbours.

Florentines in Pisa and the Pisan contado

In 1494 it was said that there were more Florentines in Pisa than there were Pisans,¹ but this was probably an impression very easily gained as the resident Florentines were for the most part important figures in the city. In the two months following the revolt in November 1494 there was a mass exodus of these Florentines, ending in the middle of January with the ejection of the last 400.² In 1496, the Pisans filled a large volume with the details of all the Florentine-owned land in the Pisan *contado* which they had seized.³ A study of the extent and importance of this private Florentine interest in Pisa and its commercial, industrial and agricultural prosperity has not yet been attempted.

Immediately after 1406 an attempt was made by the Florentine government to keep Florentines and Pisans apart by imposing a fine of 1000 florins on any Florentine who married a Pisan.⁴ But this policy was soon abandoned,⁵ and intermarriage and the appearance of Florentines as beneficiaries in Pisan wills, and vice versa, became not uncommon. It was partly as a result of such marriages as those of Dionigi Pucci and Guglielmo de' Bardi to Giovanna d'Antonio Gambacorta and Caterina della Gherardesca that Florentines became landowners in the Pisan *contado*. But normally the lands were purchased either direct from Pisan or local landowners, or from the *Capitani della Parte Guelfa* who were responsible for the administration and disposal

¹ G. Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze* (Florence, 1875), vol. II, p. 212.

² G. Portovenere, 'Il Memoriale', *A.S.I.*, vol. VI (1845), pp. 293, 295, 296.

³ A.S.P., Archivio del Comune, C, 123, *passim*.

⁴ Provv., 98, fol. 32 (29 Apr. 1409).

⁵ Provv., 101, fol. 9 (26 Mar. 1412).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

of the confiscated estates of Pisan rebels. Unfortunately few records of the administration by the Captains remain, but there does seem to have been a considerable sale of these lands in the early 1470s.¹ It is not until the later years of the century that we have any comprehensive surveys of Florentine holdings in the Pisan *contado*, although the Florentine *catasto* records from 1427 onwards can be used for this enquiry.²

The principal investors in Pisan land were the Medici and for their holdings there remain private inventories which portray the Medici as possessing far more extensive estates round Pisa than the Pisan *estimo* or even the Florentine *catasto* give them credit for. An inventory of 1492 from the Medici archives gives details of a palace and several shops in Pisa, 3000 *staiora* of land and a cheese factory at Vico Pisano, 27,000 *staiora*, of which 16,000 was arable, in the area of Collesalvetti and Vicarello, four large estates made up predominantly of pastures in the Maremma between Campiglia and Lari, 7850 *staiora* in the Val di Serchio bought from the Capponi, and smaller holdings at S. Piero a Grado, Oratoio and Ripafratta. Finally there was a summer palace at Agnano in the Monti Pisani.³ The total value of these lands was over 40,000 florins.

The 1480 *Catasto* attributed to Lorenzo de' Medici the palace, seven houses and ten shops in Pisa, and lands in the Maremma, and round Collesalvetti, Vicarello and Ripafratta.⁴ Tanai di Vieri de' Medici was the only other member of the family interested in the area according to the 1480 *Catasto*, and he possessed an estate for his own use at Tremoleto near Lari, a house in Pisa in the Via Sta. Maria, and smaller plots of land rented from the Archbishop of Pisa at S. Piero a Grado, Lorcholi and Pescaia.⁵

On the other hand the Pisan *estimo* records of 1481 and 1491, which are our sources for the general picture of Florentine holdings in the

¹ Provv., 163, fol. 154 (22 Dec. 1472). The *Monte* was authorized to take charge of the sale of these lands.

² A.S.P., Archivio dei Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586. These are lists, taken from the *estimi* of 1481 and 1491, of Florentine possessions in the Pisan *contado*.

³ M.A.P., CIV, fols. 418-24. See A. Niccolai, *Palazzzi, ville e scene medicce in Pisa e nei dintorni* (Pisa, 1914), pp. 42-4.

The *staioro* was the amount of land which could be sown with a *stai* or bushel of grain. The size of the Pisan and the Florentine *stai* originally differed considerably, the former being nearly three times the latter. However M. Luzzati in a recent article ('Note di metrologia pisana', *Bollettino Storico Pisano*, vol. XXXI-XXXII, 1962-3) has pointed out that immediately after 1406 there was a move to adapt Pisan measurements to Florentine standards, and the Pisan *staioro* became gradually stabilized at ca. 5·6 *are* or $\frac{1}{2}$ rood.

⁴ A.S.F., *Catasto*, 1016, fols. 451-76.

⁵ *Catasto*, 1017, fol. 560.

MICHAEL MALLETT

Pisan *contado*, credit Lorenzo with only about 4000 *staiora* in all in 1481, and about 4500 in 1491.¹ It seems very likely that these two lists should be treated as complementary, as a close comparison of the estates listed reveals scarcely any similarities, and while the 1481 record omits almost all mention of the Ripafratta and Val di Serchio area, the 1491 list is equally reticent about the southernmost part of the Pisan *contado*, Campiglia. However, even so the total of Lorenzo's holdings comes well short of his known possessions, and it is probable that the same may apply to the estates of other Florentine families recorded in these *estimi*. Nevertheless, these lists, together with the *catasto* records, do provide a guide to the names of the Florentines concerned in Pisan landowning, even if the sizes of their estates are suspect.

The *estimo* for 1481 reveals that Averardo de' Medici also had considerable estates round Cascina and Fauglia; and it throws some light on another Medici enterprise, the *Magona dei bestiami*, an organization for the rearing of oxen and domestic animals to be hired out to local landowners. Many of the smaller tenants and freeholders hired their beasts of burden from the Magona, paying for them usually in grain, but occasionally in cash. To support its herds the Magona used large pastures in the Maremma, which were probably those attributed to the Medici in the more comprehensive inventories. In 1492 the Magona was managed by Giovanbattista di Piero di Pone, and also had the use of a house in Pisa owned by the Medici.²

Although the Medici palace in Pisa had been bought in 1441 by Cosimo,³ and the beginning of the accumulation of estates in the Pisan *contado* dated from this period, it was Lorenzo who accelerated the process and acquired the bulk of the land. Various motives have been imputed to him for his interest in Pisan estates, but it is certainly true that with commercial profits declining Florentine merchants were tending to buy up stable and durable commodities such as land and works of art. Land in the Pisan *contado* was readily available and reasonably cheap, and it was not altogether surprising that the Medici should choose this area to invest in. It has been argued by some that

¹ Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586. Entries are interspersed throughout these volumes largely on a topographical basis and the computation of the total estates of individuals is rather difficult. In most cases the area of each estate is quoted, but occasionally I have had to make an estimate of the size of the estate based on its reported value or rent, bearing in mind the value of land in that particular area. As specific references to these lists and to the 1496 Pisan list (Archivio del Comune, C, 123) would become very complicated, I have not attempted to give them and the date quoted will be an indication of the list referred to.

² M.A.P., LX, 218 (30 June 1492); Catasto 1016, fol. 472.

³ Niccolai, *Palazzi ville e scene mediche*, p. 44.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Lorenzo was deliberately building up a family patrimony linked closely to Florence's vital seaports in order to strengthen his family's control of the government of the Republic, thus emphasizing the development of his own position from that of first citizen to princely ruler.¹ However, as will be seen later, the Medici were by no means the only Florentine family investing in Pisan land, and it would be a mistake to exaggerate the extent to which they were doing anything out of the ordinary or possibly sinister.

At the same time, there has been a divergence of views between those who have felt that the Medici bought up Pisan land because it was cheap, and then sought to help Pisa improve her economic position in order to raise the value of their newly acquired lands;² and those who have seen a genuine Medici interest in and liking for Pisa which prompted them to spend much of their time in the city and to build up estates nearby.³ One suspects that Lorenzo would not have spent so much of his time in Pisa if he was solely interested in increasing the value of his own lands.⁴ However, the defect of both arguments is that they tend to overemphasize the importance of a personal Medici interest in Pisa. Efforts were being made to help Pisa before the Medici came to power, and afterwards many other Florentine families rapidly developed similar interests in the economic development of the city and the *contado*.

This interest in Pisan land amongst leading Florentine families is very easily documented; following closely behind the Medici as land-owners in the Pisan *contado* came a group of affiliated families whose commercial and social interests were very much linked to those of Florence's leading family. Most prominent among this group were the Martelli, several of whom served as managers of Medici branches, and whose name in the person of Ugolino Martelli was used for the Medici branch in Pisa.⁵ Ugolino Martelli and his brothers Antonio and

¹ A. Anzilotti, *La crisi costituzionale della repubblica fiorentina* (Florence, 1912), pp. 9-13.

² Perrens, *Histoire de Florence depuis la domination des Médicis jusqu'à la chute de la République*, vol. I, p. 549.

³ Capponi, *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. II, pp. 162-3, and Niccolai, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁴ A close study of the catalogues of the *Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato* (4 vols., Rome, 1951-64) and of P. G. Ricci and N. Rubinstein, *Censimento delle lettere di Lorenzo di Piero de' Medici* (Florence, 1964), can give some idea of the amount of time which Lorenzo spent in Pisa. The indications are that in the years 1474-78 he spent a very large part of each year in the city. During the remaining years of his rule he almost invariably visited Pisa during each year, usually in the autumn but sometimes also in the spring.

⁵ R. de Roover, *The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1963, pp. 276-81. De Roover states that the Medici had probably withdrawn their interest

MICHAEL MALLET

Bartolomeo were the leading figures in the direction of the communal galley system in the 1450s and 1460s, and several of the younger members of the family served on the galleys. Ugolino himself held five major government posts in Pisa and Leghorn between 1443 and 1476,¹ and two members of the family, Martello di Niccolò and Martello d'Ugolino, Knights of St John, were appointed to the Priorate of Pisa in 1456 and 1495 respectively.²

Along with this growing position in the city, Antonio Martelli and his son Niccolò built up considerable estates in the *contado*. In 1481 the *estimo* described them as holding over 1300 *staiora*, mainly in the Cascina area at Sta. Maria a Trebbio, and in 1491 they were credited with over 1700 *staiora*. A further 2500 *staiora* were rented from the Archbishop of Pisa, and Ugolino Martelli had a house in Leghorn. By 1496 the Pisans had seized 2200 *staiora* of Martelli land in the Cascina and Ripafratta areas.

Other families whose names were normally linked to that of the Medici and who also joined the rush for Pisan land were the Canigiani and the Pucci. Adouardo and Gherardo Canigiani served in the Medici branches in Bruges and London, and in Pisa ten members of the family held important posts during the century. In 1480 the family had an estate in the Val di Serchio.³ Five members of the Pucci family owned land in the Pisan *contado*, including Dionigi Pucci, a professor at the University of Pisa, who held over 1000 *staiora* at Palaia.⁴ Another Medicean who deserves notice was Bernardo Fantoni, Medici factor in Pisa during the 1470s. He built up an estate for himself with a country house in the Val di Serchio.⁵

Another leading Florentine family in Pisa were the Capponi. Ever since Gino Capponi had played the leading part in the capture of the city in 1406, the family had shown an interest in the commercial and political life of it. Members of the family were Captain of Pisa four times, and Sea Consul nine times during the century; and by 1494 six

in the Martelli company by the 1460s, but in 1475 the new partnership of the company (A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 5a serie, 1462, fols. 1-4) still revealed the presence of an *amico segreto* who put up 2000 florins of the total capital of 10,300 florins. In view of the previous connection of the Medici with the Martelli, it seems not unlikely that the 'amico segreto' was in fact Lorenzo.

¹ Ugolino was Captain of Pisa in 1462 and 1476, Captain of Leghorn in 1443, Sea Consul in 1445 and 1467, and also *Provveditore della Dogana* in Leghorn in 1463.

² P. Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane* (Milan, 1819-74), Martelli, tables I and III.

³ Catasto, 993, fol. 212.

⁴ Picotti, 'Lo Studio di Pisa', p. 46; Catasto, 1023, fol. 295, and Fiumi e Fossi, 1579.

⁵ Catasto, 998, fol. 264. Francesco Fantoni also owned large estates in the Cascina area (Archivio del Comune, C, 123).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

of them owned land in the *contado*.¹ Neri di Gino Capponi and Co. was one of the largest commercial houses in the city.

Close behind them came the Rucellai, commercially particularly interested in the iron trade and large-scale buyers of cast-iron from the Magona of Pisa.² Bernardo Rucellai and Co. was their trading name in the city and four members of the family possessed land outside. Bernardo himself had 1350 *staiora* round Montecastello in 1481, and by 1496 the Pisans held over 2700 *staiora* of land in Cascina, Collesalvetti and Val di Serchio belonging to Jacopo Rucellai.

Gabriele Ridolfi, another of the leading merchants in the city, had estates near Cascina, and two other members of the family, Carlo and Bernardo d'Inghilese, had also invested in the area. Piero Neretti and Filippo Rinieri and Co., also a prominent merchant house in Pisa, were known in the Val di Serchio for the estates of Francesco di Piero Neretti and Giovanni Neretti.³ Giuliano Salviati had his lands in the same area and also around Peccioli,⁴ and Averardo Salviati, who had been a galley conductor, had a house in Pisa and lands near Ponsacco.⁵

The Soderini interest had grown up round Tommaso, who besides being a very prominent figure in Florentine politics, had been Captain of Pisa four times and had held at least four other important offices in the city.⁶ He owned nearly 1000 *staiora* of land near Cascina, and at least two of his sons followed his example.⁷ Another member of the family, Gian Vittorio, was Professor of Civil Law at the University of Pisa, and in 1496 had nearly 2000 *staiora* of land in the Cascina area held by the Pisans.⁸

Other prominent estate owning families were the Ristori, with particular interests in Leghorn in the person of Jacopo who was resident there and owned a house and two shops as well as lands outside,⁹

¹ For Capponi landholdings see Catasto, 994, fols. 380 and 1001, as well as the *estimo* lists.

² Ginori Conti, *Le magone del ferro*, p. 58.

³ Catasto, 1010, fols. 25 and 391.

⁴ Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586.

⁵ Catasto, 1006, fol. 82. For other records of Salviati land purchases in the *contado* of Pisa see Carte Strozzi., 12 serie, CCCXXXIV, 31 and 332 (1464-67).

⁶ Tommaso was Captain of Pisa in 1452, 1464, 1474 and 1485. It was during this last term of office that he died. On other occasions he was one of the Five Governors of Pisa and the *contado* (1458 and 1460).

⁷ Tommaso's own holding is described in Fiumi e Fossi, 1579. The estates of Giovanni di Tommaso, which may have included those of his father who had died by that time, are described in Fiumi e Fossi, 1586. Those of Francesco di Tommaso, Bishop of Volterra, who had been a student at Pisa, appear in Catasto, 1001, fol. 467, and Fiumi e Fossi, 1579.

⁸ Picotti, 'Lo Studio di Pisa', p. 47; Niccolò di Lorenzo Soderini also had two houses in Pisa and estates in the Maremma (Catasto, 1001, fol. 470).

⁹ Catasto, 1019, fol. 94, and 1004, fol. 516; much of this land was bought in 1477.

MICHAEL MALLETT

the Alamanni,¹ the Minerbetti,² the Bardi,³ and the Albizzi. The Albizzi were a family more interested in the political and maritime side of Pisan life than the commercial, and their estates were built up by members of the family who had held a succession of posts in the city. Antonio di Luca degli Albizzi, whose father had been Captain of the Flanders galleys in 1429, and who was himself a seaman, had built up a large estate at Lavaiano near Lari. He had devoted a good deal of energy and money to reclaiming and draining his lands from the 1430s onwards, and by 1480 his son Luca di Antonio was reaping the benefit of a prosperous estate.⁴

Another family closely linked to the sea were the Mannelli, whose scion Raimondo had been Florence's hero in the naval battle of Rapallo in 1431. Raimondo himself settled in Barcelona as a merchant, but four other members of the family served as patrons on the galleys, and Jacopo di Francesco had a house in Pisa in 1449 which was presumably used as a sort of family rest house between voyages.⁵

Apart from these family interests, many noted individual Florentines owned lands in the *contado* of Pisa. Strozza di Marcello Strozzi, whose father had been the first Florentine Captain of Leghorn, had a pasture near Pontedera,⁶ and Lorenzo Strozzi, the first known English consul in Pisa, had a summer house at Ripafratta.⁷ The Della Stufa family, which provided several noted galley seamen, had a house in Pisa,⁸ as did the Tornabuoni.⁹ Filippo di Jacopo Villani, whose father had been one of the leading merchants in Pisa in the early part of the century, had a 500-*staiora* estate at Ripafratta,¹⁰ and the Quaratesi, represented in Pisa by Giovanni Quaratesi and Co., besides their shop on the Ponte Vecchio and house in Pisa, had lands in the *contado*.¹¹ Gianozzo Pitti had an estate at Peccioli and a house in Pisa,¹² and two members of the Paganelli family also owned land in this area.¹³ Agnolo Niccolini

¹ Catasto, 992, fol. 444, and 993, fol. 223.

² Catasto, 1012, fol. 230.

³ Catasto, 993, fol. 339 and 992, fols. 160 and 392.

⁴ A.S.F., Capitani della Parte Guelfa, 66, fol. 104v; Catasto, 1021, fol. 230. Alamanno degli Albizzi had also bought a house in Pisa in 1437 (Capitani della Parte Guelfa, 66, fol. 28v).

⁵ Catasto, 993, fol. 25.

⁶ Catasto, 1009, fol. 446.

⁷ Catasto, 1012, fol. 61.

⁸ Catasto, 1016, fol. 305.

⁹ Catasto, 1013, fols. 380 and 408.

¹⁰ Catasto, 1018, fol. 334.

¹¹ Catasto, 993, fol. 438.

¹² Capitani della Parte Guelfa, 66, fols. 8v and 64v.

¹³ For the estates of Ridolfo di Francesco Paganelli see Catasto, 993, fol. 241, and Archivio del Comune, C, 123; for those of Antonio Paganelli see Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586.

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

had a farm at Ponsacco and further land at Peccioli,¹ and Bernardo del Nero rented 1000 *staiora* at Cascina.² Tanai de' Nerli was another leading figure of the post-1494 period who had estates in the Pisan *contado*.³ Roberto Lioni owned over 1000 *staiora* in the Cascina district,⁴ and Bartolomeo Gualterotti had even larger estates between Rosignano and Lari.⁵ The Gaetani family, themselves Pisan by origin but by this time resident in Florence, had lands near Peccioli,⁶ and Carlo Carducci owned houses and farms in Cascina, as well as two houses in Pisa.⁷

Much of this interest in Pisan land was a normal corollary of the general interest in landowning shown by the wealthy Florentines in the fifteenth century. But at the same time it is interesting to note how often the purchase of estates in the Pisan *contado* seems to have been related to some parallel interest in Pisa itself, either commercial, political or maritime. The leading Florentine merchants and merchant houses in Pisa during the fifteenth century were the Medici, the Martelli, the Capponi, Giovanni Cavalcanti, Bernardo Rucellai, Piero Neretti, Bernardo Uguccione, Antonio da Rabatta, the Masi, Giuliano and Andrea Salviati, the Quaratesi, Andrea de' Bardi, Gabriele Ridolfi, Bernardino de' Nerli, the Strozzi, Gherardo Canigiani, the Benci and Rosso Cerretani. All these merchants appeared frequently in the customs accounts, and they handled the bulk of the cargoes of the communal galleys.⁸ They all presumably either owned or rented premises in Pisa itself and a majority of them owned estates in the *contado*.

At the same time, although it would not have been strictly possible for certain families to monopolize the government offices in Pisa, as for most of the century these were filled by drawing from the *borse*, it was possible for individuals to gain an unusual number of posts in Pisa. This was the result of the right of renunciation by which anyone nominated to a post could renounce within a certain space of time and on payment of a small fine. This right was used freely, particularly when posts in Leghorn were concerned, and it would sometimes happen that when half a dozen men, who had no wish to spend six months or a

¹ Catasto, 1006, fol. 79, and Fiumi e Fossi, 1579.

² Catasto, 992, fol. 158. Nierozzo del Nero had an estate at Fabbrica bought in 1469 and also a house in Palaia (Catasto, 993, fol. 359).

³ Catasto, 995, fol. 270.

⁴ Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Fiumi e Fossi, 1579 and 1586, and Catasto, 1008, fol. 580.

⁸ Only for a few years in the 1460s are there any complete records of the cargoes of the Florentine galleys and the merchants who unloaded them. See Consoli del Mare 7, fols. 61-73v.

MICHAEL MALLET

year in Leghorn, had renounced a post there, it would fall to a man who lived there already or had family interests there which encouraged him to accept it. It is in this way that one can perhaps explain the case of Alberto d'Antonio degli Alberti, who never held a post in Pisa, but was three times Captain of Leghorn and once Captain of the citadel there.¹ Another example was Antonio di Leonardo de' Nobili, who became castellan of the fortress of the Palazzotti in Pisa after four officers had refused the post.² Nobili had held a number of offices in Pisa; he was Sea Consul three times and Captain of the galleys once, and therefore was quite accustomed to living there.³

Other notable examples of individuals apparently collecting offices in Pisa were Domenico Pandolfini, who, in the space of eighteen years 1472-90, served twice as Sea Consul and three times as Podestà of Pisa;⁴ and Niccolò di Matteo Cerretani who combined two periods of office as Sea Consul and one as Captain of Pisa with three major galley posts.⁵ But perhaps the most striking example of all was that of Agnolo di Neri de' Vettori, who, when it was unusual for a man to hold more than three posts in Pisa during his career, managed to get himself posted there no less than nine times in his career. He was Captain of the citadel three times, Sea Consul twice, Captain, Podestà, *Provveditore delle Gabelle*, and commissary of the Ten of Pisa once each.⁶

All this adds up to a strong private as well as public Florentine interest in Pisa and its *contado*. Many of the wealthiest and most influential Florentines had a stake in the economic future of Pisa, and it was by no means just the Medici whose self interest suggested a policy of benevolence and encouragement to Pisa.

In fact, although one must never forget that in the fifteenth century Pisa had become one of Florence's subject cities, a position which was naturally galling and humiliating to her own proud aristocracy, one must remember that she was by far the most important of those subject cities. She was Florence's gateway to the sea, the artery through which her life blood, her commerce, flowed. She was also a home for many of Florence's wealthiest citizens and a centre for the Medici court.

It would probably be true to say that of the two speeches which

¹ *Tratte*, 68, fol. 11; 69, fol. 9, and 225 bis, III, fol. 7v.

² *Tratte*, 226 (unpaginated), 3 Sept. 1463.

³ *Tratte*, 225 bis, III, fol. 5, and 81, fols. 69 and 117.

⁴ *Tratte*, 81, fol. 69, and 69, fol. 26.

⁵ *Tratte*, 68, fol. 10, 80, fols. 390 ff., and 81, fol. 117.

⁶ Litta, *Famiglie celebri*, Vettori, table I, and *Tratte*, 69, fols. 1 and 26; 82, fol. 129; 222 (unpaginated); 225 bis, III, fol. 2. See also *Consoli del Mare*, 7, fol. 152 and *Missive della 2a Cancelleria*, 4, fol. 47 (22 May 1472).

PISA AND FLORENCE IN THE 15TH CENTURY

Guicciardini inserts in his *History of Italy* as delivered before Charles VIII in 1495, that of the Florentine emissary, Francesco Soderini, gives a rather fairer account of the condition of Pisa under Florentine rule than does that of Burgundio Leoli. Soderini errs when he is reported as saying that the Pisans had always been treated fairly by the Florentines, and that under Florentine government 'Pisa had not declined in either wealth or population'. But he is not far wrong when he remarks: 'As far as trade, the guilds, and offices were concerned, the Pisans were bound by the same laws as the other subject towns of the Florentines.' At the same time he is right in pointing to the development of Leghorn, the revival of the Studio, the constant care for the *contado*, and the encouragement given to settlers, as positive achievements of Florentine rule.¹

¹ Francesco Guicciardini, *Storia d'Italia*, ed. C. Panigada (Bari, 1929), vol. I, p. 120: 'Né essere, circa le mercatanzie arti e uffici, legati i pisani con altre leggi che fussino legate l'altre città suddite de' fiorentine . . . non era Pisa diminuita né di ricchezze né d'uomini.'

XIII

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

FLORENTINE CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

When, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Leonardo Bruni analysed, in his *Laudatio Florentinae urbis*,¹ the basic principles of the Florentine constitution, he introduced a new concept into the political literature of Florence. Of the two fourteenth-century descriptions of Florence we possess, only one enumerates briefly her magistracies;² and the much longer survey appended, early in the fifteenth century, by Gregorio Dati to his *Istoria di Firenze*³ continues this descriptive tradition. As for the Statutes, we would be disappointed if we expected from them systematic accounts of the functions and limitations of the highest magistracies and of their mutual relationships, or of the rights and duties of the citizens. While comprising a vast amount of detailed legislation that was extraneous to government and public administration, they are liable to leave out important aspects of constitutional law.

¹ Extracts ed. by Th. Klette, *Beiträge zur Geschichte und Litteratur der italienischen Gelehrtenrenaissance*, vol. II (Greifswald, 1889), pp. 84-105. On the manuscripts, see H. Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature in Florence and Venice at the Beginning of the Quattrocento* (Cambridge, Mass., 1955), p. 69, n. 1; on the date (1403 or 1404), *ibid.*, pp. 970-104. J. E. Seigel, "Civic humanism" or Ciceronian rhetoric?, *Past and Present*, vol. XXXIV (1966), pp. 19-23, has revived the earlier view that it was composed in 1400 or 1401.

² *Florentie urbis et reipublice descriptio* (1339), ed. C. Frey, *Die Loggia dei Lanzi* (Berlin, 1885), pp. 119-23. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica* (ed. I. Moutier, Florence, 1823), XI, 91-4. Only the *Descriptio* contains a brief account of magistracies. On medieval Italian descriptions of towns see J. K. Hyde, 'Medieval descriptions of cities', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. XLVIII (1966), pp. 308-40.

³ Ed. G. Manni (Florence, 1735), pp. 132-44, and L. Pratesi (Norcia, 1904), pp. 140-70. On these editions, see Baron, *Political Literature* *cit.*, p. 64. On the date of the *Istoria* (between 1406 and 1413), *ibid.*, pp. 63-8; the ninth book, which contains the survey of Florentine institutions, includes several additions made later in the century.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

This is partly due to the nature of the Statutes, which were designed to select and codify, in their successive versions, new legislation and to eliminate inconsistencies that resulted from it.¹ As far as political institutions are concerned, new laws might accordingly be included, while the original laws setting up these institutions are omitted. Thus, while there are detailed regulations of the election of the Signoria in the Statutes of 1415,² there is no article which describes the precise nature and extent of its authority; and much the same is true of other executive or legislative institutions. That this should be so is largely the result of the Statutes' function codifying legislation which, in so far as it was concerned with reforms of political institutions, would take basic principles governing the working of these institutions for granted.

Neither did the Statutes cover the entire field of government and administration. This, in its turn, may have been due, to some extent, to the transitory nature of many offices and councils. To cite one example only: in 1411, two new councils were created, that of 200 and that of 131, to act as councils of first instance in specific cases.³ Now the Statutes compiled four years later refer to the Council of 131,⁴ but not to the more important one of 200; was this because the officials in charge of compiling the Statutes considered it to have only a transitory character? Moreover, as has already been pointed out, the Statutes could be, and often were, superseded or amended by successive legislation. As a result, when public records referred to statutory law, the term used normally was 'secundum ordinamenta' which was wide enough to comprise both Statutes and such subsequent legislation.

Conversely, successive compilations of the Statutes were liable to preserve laws that had lost much of their original importance. Thus the anti-Magnate legislation of the Ordinances of Justice was included in the Statutes of 1415, as it had been in their fourteenth-century predecessors,⁵ although the Magnates had long ceased to be a threat to the public order.⁶ But the Ordinances of Justice continued to be re-

¹ See R. Davidsohn, *Geschichte von Florenz*, vol. IV, 1 (Berlin, 1922), pp. 71-3. The earliest complete Statutes are those of the Captain of the People of 1322-5 and those of the Podestà of 1325 (ed. R. Caggese, Florence, 1909 and 1921). They were followed by revised Statutes in 1355, 1409, and 1415.

² *Statuta populi et communis Florentiae* ('Friburgi', 1728), vol. II, pp. 481-91, 495-8.

³ See N. Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434-1494)* (Oxford, 1965), p. 69.

⁴ *Statuta cit.*, vol. II, pp. 693-4.

⁵ The original law of 1293 has been published by G. Salvemini in the appendix to his *Magnati e popolani in Firenze dal 1280 al 1295* (Florence, 1899), pp. 384-432. *Statuta* of 1415, vol. II, p. 407 ff. ('Tractatus Ordinamentorum Iustitie').

⁶ On the Magnates in the fourteenth century, see M. Becker, 'A study in political failure. The Florentine Magnates: 1280-1343', *Mediaeval Studies*, vol. XXVIII (1965), pp. 246-308.

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

garded as a kind of Magna Carta of 'popular' government whose repeal must be hotly resisted, although single Magnate families could be, and increasingly were, exempted from them.

Narrative sources are consequently sometimes more instructive than the Statutes in providing us with evidence for contemporary constitutional thought. But such evidence is necessarily cursory and scattered, and cannot compare, in comprehensiveness and cohesion, with the analysis provided by Bruni in his *Laudatio* and in later writings. The value of this analysis for us depends largely on the extent to which it can be considered a faithful expression of contemporary political thinking.

Dr Baron, in his detailed discussion of the *Laudatio*, has rightly rejected the view that Bruni was 'ready . . . to sacrifice the substance of things to eloquence'.¹ The question remains to what extent Bruni's accounts were affected by the rhetorical topos of *amplificatio*; in a letter to Francesco Pizolpasso he explicitly justifies his panegyric on Florence by pointing out that, unlike history, 'laudatio . . . multa supra veritatem extollit'.² Moreover, in his analysis of the Florentine constitution, Bruni is influenced by Aristotle and Cicero. The use of classical political philosophy could help him to arrive at a sharpened awareness of contemporary conditions and problems, but it could also have the effect of forcing these into a schematic theoretical framework. Before taking Bruni's judgements on the Florentine constitution at their face value as expressions of contemporary political thought, it is therefore advisable to corroborate them by additional evidence.

Bruni's earliest attempt to analyse the Florentine constitution occurs, as we have seen, in his *Laudatio*. About ten years later, he sent Sigismund, king of the Romans, a brief description of the political institutions of Florence;³ and he returned to this subject in his Greek treatise *On the Florentine Polity*, which he appears to have written at the time of the Council of Florence in 1439.⁴ There are some important differences

¹ *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, 1955), pp. 168, 514-15 (revised ed., Princeton, 1966, pp. 196, 504-5). Henceforth references to this work will be to the first edition, which contains the notes *in extenso*.

² *Epistolarum libri VIII*, VIII, 4, ed. L. Mehus (Florence, 1741), vol. II, p. 112. On *amplificatio*, see Cicero, *De oratore*, III, 26, 104: 'Summa autem laus eloquentiae est amplificare rem ornando.'

³ Ed. Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature*, pp. 181-4; on the date, *ibid.*, pp. 175-81.

⁴ *Περὶ τῆς τῶν Φλωρεντίνων πολιτείας*, ed. C. F. Neumann (Frankfurt a.M., 1822). For the date, see Baron, *Crisis*, p. 630. A manuscript with corrections by Gemistos Plethon was in Bessarion's library (MS. Marc. 406); see R. et F. Masai, 'L'œuvre de Georges Gémiste Pléthon . . .', *Académie royale de Belgique, Bulletin de la classe des lettres et des sciences politiques*, 5th ser., vol. XL (1954), p. 548. Bruni also discusses the principles

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

between these three works. While in the *Laudatio* classical influence is still limited to Roman authors, the 'letter to the Emperor' and the treatise *On the Florentine Polity* show Bruni's attempt to apply Aristotle's classification of constitutions to Florence. The Greek treatise is the fullest and best-informed of the three accounts, which may largely be due to Bruni's having been for many years Florentine chancellor when he wrote it. It also contains some subtle changes that may reflect political developments after Cosimo de' Medici's return from exile in 1434. But despite such differences, Bruni's interpretation of the nature of Florentine government remains basically the same throughout these three works. Its two basic principles, according to the *Laudatio*, are *ius* and *libertas*; 'towards these two joined together all institutions and laws of the republic are directed as towards a constellation and port.'¹ In his *History of the Florentine People*, he makes Giano della Bella say that *libertas populi* is contained in two things, *legibus atque iudiciis*; whenever these are more powerful than single citizens, liberty is preserved.² Justice, he says in the *Laudatio*, is equal for all, rich as well as poor, and it is this 'justice and equality' which produces *humanitas* among the citizens.³ Also in the 'letter to the Emperor' he stresses equality, *paritas et equalitas*, towards which all Florentine laws are directed; in it he says, consists true liberty.⁴ But here he gives equality an additional political meaning. In order to prevent the oppression of one class by another, the Magnate families are excluded from government and placed under specially severe legislation: for the Florentine laws aim at reducing the pre-eminence (*supereminentiam*) of individual citizens to the level of equality and the mean (*paritatem mediocritatemque*).⁵ The supreme authority in the State is vested not in one citizen, but in a magistracy of nine, the Signoria, whose term of office is limited to two months: in this way, the government is prevented from becoming tyrannical and from being used as an instrument of private ambition.⁶

of Florentine liberty in his funeral oration on Nanni Strozzi of 1428, ed. E. Baluze-G. D. Mansi, *Miscellanea*, vol. IV (Lucca, 1764), pp. 2-7 (for the date, see Baron, *Crisis*, pp. 430-6).

¹ Ed. Klette, op. cit., p. 98: 'Ad haec duo simul coniuncta quasi ad quoddam signum ac portum omnia huius reipublicae instituta provisoque contendunt.'

² *Historiarum Florentini populi libri XII*, ed. E. Santini, *R.I.S.*, vol. XIX, pt. 3, p. 82: 'Mihi quidem videtur libertas populi duabus rebus contineri: legibus scilicet atque iudiciis. Quoties enim illa duo plus possunt in civitate quam singuli cives, libertas servatur. . . .' This passage must have been written in 1422 (see *ibid.*, p. 81, l. 21).

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 104-5.

⁴ Ed. Baron, op. cit., p. 182: 'Leges igitur nostre omnes ad hoc unum tendunt, ut paritas sit et equalitas inter se civibus; in quo est mera ac vera libertas.'

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 182-3.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 183, and *Laudatio*, cit., p. 99.

Its power is further limited by the need to seek the consent of the Colleges (i.e. the Twelve Good Men and the Sixteen Gonfaloniers of Companies) and of the legislative councils for all the more important decisions; for, as Bruni says in the *Laudatio*, what concerns the many must be decided by the many.¹ 'In this way, freedom reigns and justice is preserved most scrupulously, as nothing can be achieved by the covetousness of single citizens against the will of so many men.'²

These safeguards against autocratic power are no longer mentioned in Bruni's last political treatise. By 1439, Cosimo de' Medici's ascendancy had been established for over four years, and although by no means as yet fully consolidated — in January 1441 the electoral controls introduced in 1434 were in fact abolished³ — there was clearly a case for the chancellor of the Florentine republic and protégé of Cosimo's not to harp too much on the suppression of autocratic tendencies. At the same time, there is no indication whatsoever in Bruni's last treatise on politics that the letter and spirit of the Florentine constitution had been changed by the rise to power of Cosimo; it is probable that in 1439 Bruni did not consider the Medicean electoral controls a lasting innovation.⁴ If anything, his last political treatise gives a more faithful analysis than his previous writings of the oligarchical régime which had prevailed before 1434, and which was in fact to survive to a large extent under Cosimo.⁵

Political equality, according to Bruni, is, however, not only ensured, in a negative manner, by checking excessive power. In a positive way, equality means that the citizens are able to participate on equal terms in the government of the republic. He stresses this positive aspect of the concept of equality in his funeral oration on Nanni Strozzi of 1428: 'Liberty is equal for all, subject only to law. . . . The hope of attaining

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 99–100: ' . . . Quod enim ad multos attinet, id non aliter quam multorum sententia decerni. . . .' Cf. *Corpus iuris civilis, Codex*, 5, 59, 5, 2: 'quod omnes similiter tangit, ab omnibus comprobetur.' On the medieval use of this maxim, see P. S. Leicht, 'Un principio politico medievale', in *Rendiconti dell' Accademia dei Lincei*, classe di scienze morali, etc., 5th ser., vol. XXIX (1920), pp. 232–45, and Gaines Post, *Studies in Medieval Legal Thought* (Princeton, 1964), ch. 4; for its use in Florence, cf. *Le Consulte della Repubblica Fiorentina*, ed. A. Gherardi, vol. I (Florence, 1896), p. 175 (1285): 'quae tangunt omnes debent ab omnibus approbari.'

² *Laudatio*, cit., p. 100: 'Hoc modo et libertas viget et iustitia sanctissime in civitate servatur, cum nihil ex unius aut alterius libidine contra tot hominum sententiam possit constitui.'

³ See Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence*, p. 16.

⁴ They had been extended, in 1438, until Jan. 1441; their future fate was to be decided in the meantime by the *Balia* which had been created in 1438 for three years. *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 66–7.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

public office and of rising to higher status is equal for all. . . .¹ This equality of opportunity serves as a powerful stimulus for intellectual and economic advance: 'It is wonderful how this opportunity to attain office, as enjoyed by a free people . . . helps its citizens to awaken their natural abilities. . . .'²

In the 'letter to the Emperor', Bruni uses Aristotle's constitutional classification to describe the Florentine constitution as *popularis*³ or democratic. Regard for the feelings of his addressee must have prevented him from affirming, as he does in the funeral oration on Nanni Strozzi, that of the three 'legitimate' forms of government, this was the only one in which there was true liberty and equality before the law. In his Greek treatise, on the other hand, he describes the Florentine constitution no longer as a democracy, but as a mixture of democratic and aristocratic elements; in brief, as a mixed constitution on the Aristotelian pattern.⁴ The short terms of offices of the highest Florentine magistracies, as well as their appointment by lot, were, according to Bruni, democratic; that new laws had first to be approved by a small body of citizens before being presented to the councils, and that these had neither the right to initiate or to amend legislation, he considered, on the contrary, to be an aristocratic feature.⁵ Again, the exclusion of some of the greatest Florentine families from government was in his view democratic; but that men of the lowest social rank shared their fate was aristocratic: 'shunning extremes', he adds in the vein of his earlier treatises, 'this city prefers men of the middle condition'.⁶ However, while mixed of democratic and aristocratic elements, the latter prevail over the former: on balance, the Florentine constitution

¹ Op. cit., p. 3: 'Aequa omnibus libertas, legibus solum obtemperans. . . . Spes vero honoris adipiscendi ac se attollendi omnibus par. . . .'

² Ibid.: 'Atque haec honorum adipiscendorum facultas potestasque libero populo . . . quantum valet ad ingenia civium excitanda. . . .'

³ Op. cit., p. 182: 'Nostre igitur rei publice gubernatio popularis est; que tertia speties gubernandi legitima fuit a nobis superior nominata'; 'que speties a Grecis democratia, a nostris vero popularis status nominatur.' Bruni is not quite consistent in his terminology. In a letter to Flavio Biondo (*Epistolae*, VIII, 1; vol. II, pp. 105-6), he follows Aristotle in classifying the *popularis status*, i.e. democracy, as one of the perverted constitutions, after tyranny and oligarchy. In his political treatises, on the other hand, as also in his letter to the Council of Basle, of 1436 (ibid., X, 2, vol. II, p. 239), he treats it as one of the good constitutions.

⁴ Op. cit., p. 68: 'Ἡ μὲν δὴ πολιτεία τῶν Φλωρεντίνων οὐτ' ἀριστοκρατική ἐστὶ, οὐτε δημοκρατική παντάπασιν, ἀλλὰ μεμιγμένη τις ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων.'

⁵ Ibid., p. 88: δημοτικά μὲν οὖν ἐκεῖνα, ὅτι ὀλιγοχρόνιοι εἰσὶν αἱ ἀρχαί. . . . "Ἐπι δὲ το κλήρω λαμβάνεσθαι τοὺς ἀργοντας, καὶ ἀπ' οὐδενὸς τιμῆματος δημοτικόν.

⁶ Ibid., p. 68: ὅτι τισὶν ἐπιφανεστάταις συγγενείαις, διὰ τὸ προὔχειν πλήθει τε ἀνδρῶν καὶ δυνάμει, οὐκ ἐξεσι λαβεῖν τὰς ἀρχὰς ἐν τῇδε πόλει, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐναντίον τῇ ἀριστοκρατίᾳ. πάλιν δὲ τοὺς βαναύσους καὶ τὸν ἔσχατον δῆμον, οὐκ ἀποδέχεται ἡ πόλις πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν, ὃ δοκεῖ ἐναντίον εἶναι τῇ δημοκρατίᾳ οὕτω τὰ ἔσχατα φεύγουσα, ἡ πόλις πρὸς τοὺς μέσους ἀποκλίνει. . . .

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

has an aristocratic or oligarchical rather than a democratic slant.¹ Yet just as *mediocritas* remains a basic principle of that constitution, so do liberty and equality: the short terms of office of the government and its Colleges aim at equality and liberty, 'which we worship and guard as the end and goal of the entire constitution'.² Once more, then, we find these two notions singled out as cornerstones of the Florentine form of government.

Bruni was not alone in defining them in legal as well as political terms.³ The same interaction of freedom and equality in the Florentine constitution is also affirmed by Poggio, in a letter of 1438 to the Duke of Milan, with whom Florence was then at war: 'neither individual citizens nor the aristocrats rule the city, but the entire people are admitted with equal right (*aequo iure*) to public offices; as a result of which high and low, noble and non-noble, rich and poor alike are united in the service of liberty, for whose preservation they do not shun any expenses, or fear any labours. . . .'⁴

As Dr Baron has pointed out, Bruni was the first to attempt an analysis of the Florentine institutions that showed their interaction and unity.⁵ He was also the first to use Aristotle's *Politics* for an enquiry into the nature of the Florentine constitution. It was hardly by accident that he probably wrote his treatise on the Florentine Polity shortly after completing, in 1438, his translation of the *Politics*.⁶

But Aristotle was not the only source of his interpretation of Florentine political institutions; Cicero and the Roman historians provided him, as well as Salutati and Poggio, with ample evidence for the Roman concepts of *libertas*, *aequalitas* and *ius*. Thus when we read in Bruni's panegyric on Florence that *libertas* and *ius*, 'simul coniuncta', represent

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 68, 70: ἡ πόλις πρὸς τοὺς μέσους ἀποκλίνει, μᾶλλον δὲ πρὸς τοὺς ἀρίστους τε καὶ πλουσιωτέρους. . . .

² *Ibid.*, p. 88: δημοτικὸν δὲ κἀκείνο, ὅτι καὶ λόγῳ καὶ ἔργῳ τὴν ἐλευθερίαν μάλιστα σέβομεν καὶ τηροῦμεν, ὡσπερ τέλος καὶ σκοπὸν ἀπάσης τῆς πολιτείας.

³ See also above, p. 445.

⁴ *Epistolae*, ed. T. de' Tonelli, vol. II (Florence, 1859), p. 183 (Terranova, 15 September [1438]): 'Non enim unus, aut alter imperat, non optimatum, aut nobilium fastus regnat, sed populus aequo iure adiectus ad munera civitatis: quo fit ut summi, infimi, nobiles, ignobiles, divites, egeni communi studio conspirent in causam libertatis, proque ea conservanda nullos effugiant sumptus, nullos labores, nulla discrimina reformident.' Poggio too postulates a causal link between Florentine liberty and the intellectual achievements and moral virtues of the Florentines (p. 184). Poggio's letter is a reply to Decembrio's rhetorical eulogy of Florence; see E. Walsler, *Poggius Florentinus* . . . (Leipzig-Berlin, 1914), pp. 184-5, and Baron, *Crisis*, p. 354.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁶ See Baron, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino, Humanistisch-Philosophische Schriften* (Leipzig-Berlin, 1928), pp. 175-6, and E. Garin, 'Le traduzioni umanistiche di Aristotele nel secolo XV', *Atti dell' Accademia Fiorentina di scienze morali 'La Colombaria'*, vol. XVI (1947-50), p. 67.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

the ultimate goal of all her institutions, we may remember that for the Romans, 'the very existence of *libertas* depended on the rule of law.'¹ In his 'letter to the Emperor', Bruni describes that goal as *paritas* and equality, 'in which true liberty consists'; for the Roman republicans *libertas*, *ius* and *aequalitas* were closely connected concepts, and Cicero identified *aequa libertas* with *aequam ius*.² Moreover, the different shades of meaning which were present in the Roman notions of *aequa libertas* and *aequum ius* are present also in the humanist adaptations of these notions to make them fit Florentine institutions: while in the *Laudatio* Bruni stresses equality before the law as an outstanding characteristic of Florentine freedom, in his later writings he discusses *aequalitas*, *libertas* and *aequum ius* in terms of fundamental political rights, as well as of law that was equally binding on all classes, and so does Poggio. At the same time, Bruni's analysis of the Florentine government as a mixed constitution, in which conflicting interests balance each other, but with the balance tilted towards the upper class, although derived from Aristotle, may also reflect his knowledge of the 'contentio libertatis dignitatisque',³ the conflict between freedom and social status, under the Roman Republic, and of the attempts to find a solution for it. Similarly, if Bruni considers collegiate government and short terms of office guarantees of republican liberty against autocracy, so did Livy.⁴

But while drawing on his knowledge of classical history and philosophy, Bruni also echoes Florentine political ideas that we can trace back to the fourteenth century and beyond. Above all else, the idea of liberty was deeply rooted in the political traditions of the Florentine republic. An ambivalent concept, for it was used by the Florentines, often simultaneously, with the meaning of republican freedom at home and of independence from foreign rule,⁵ its republican connotation was thrown into fresh relief by the two episodes of despotic rule which Florence experienced during the fourteenth century. Both the rule of Charles of Calabria from 1325 to 1328 and that of Walter

¹ Ch. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge, 1950), p. 17. See also H. Kloesel, *Libertas* (Diss. Breslau, 1935), pp. 25-6.

² See Wirszubski, p. 11: "'Aequa libertas", "aequum ius" and "aequae leges" mean the same thing, namely a law equally binding on patricians and plebeians. . . .' Cf. e.g. Cicero, *Pro Cluentio*, 146: 'Hoc enim vinculum est huius dignitatis, qua fruimur in re publica, hoc fundamentum libertatis, hic fons aequitatis; mens et animus et consilium et sententia civitatis posita est in legibus.'

³ Livy, IV, 6, 11. Cf. Wirszubski, pp. 74-9.

⁴ Livy, III, 39, 8: 'qui comitia, qui annuos magistratus, qui vicissitudinem imperiandi, quod unum exaequandae sit libertatis, sustulerunt.' Cf. II, 1.

⁵ See Rubinstein, 'Florence and the despots. Some aspects of Florentine diplomacy in the fourteenth century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser., vol. II (1952), pp. 30-2.

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

of Brienne from 1342 to 1343 were followed by sharp republican reactions. In July 1329, the councils passed a law to the effect that the city must never submit to the autocratic rule of one man, 'since liberty is called a celestial good which surpasses all the wealth of this world'.¹ After the expulsion of the Duke of Athens in 1343 the Florentine Signoria informed the Pope that although the Duke had sworn to preserve Florence *in libertate*, that is 'in solito et consueto officiorum regimine', he had in fact usurped tyrannical power.² Moreover, the conviction that their city owed her greatness to her republican liberty came to the Florentines easily enough. Thus Cino Rinuccini affirms, in about 1400, that in Italy republics are greater than despotic states.³ In the same vein, a speaker in a *pratica* of 1424 could say that 'liberty makes cities and citizens great'.⁴

In innumerable State letters, written during the wars Florence fought first with the Papacy (1375-8) and then with Giangaleazzo Visconti of Milan (1390-1402), as well as in his *Invectiva* against the Milanese Chancellor Antonio Loschi, the first humanist head of the Florentine Chancery, Coluccio Salutati, used the vocabulary of the New Learning to praise Florentine liberty, but did not make any substantial addition to its definition in terms of political philosophy or constitutional analysis. This was left to his disciple Bruni, who was also the first to see the political implications of the new theory on the Roman origins of Florence, according to which the city had been founded not, as was the traditional belief, by Caesar, but before Rome had become subject to the power of one man.⁵

Just as Bruni's concept of Florentine liberty owes much to Florentine political traditions, so does his concept of equality. His view that equality is secured by curbing the pre-eminence of single great families, while specifically referring to the legislation against the Magnates, also

¹ A.S.F., Provv., 25, fols. 51v-52r; extracts in G. degli Azzi, 'La dimora di Carlo, Duca di Calabria, a Firenze', *A.S.I.*, ser. 5, vol. XLII (1908), p. 285: 'Cum libertas celeste bonum dicatur orbis opes preteriens, et ex ea tribuatur unicuique quod velit fatiendi potestas, ex qua iustitia virtutum perfectissima viget in civitate in qua existit . . . provisum . . . fuit, quod civitas comitatus et districtus Florentie non possit nec debeat imperpetuum summitti . . . alicui persone. . .'

² Letter of 19 July 1344 and instruction to ambassador to the Pope of 31 July, in C. Paoli, 'Della signoria di Gualtieri duca d'Atene in Firenze', *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani*, vol. VI (1962), pp. 277-9, 280-1.

³ *Risponsiva alla Invettiva di Messer Antonio Lusco*, ed. D. Moreni, in *Invectiva Lini Colucci Salutati in Antonium Lussum* . . . (Florence, 1826), p. 220.

⁴ Quoted by Baron, *Crisis*, pp. 338, 602: 'Libertatem habere magnificat civitates et cives . . . que sub thirannide sunt, civium sunt deserte. . .'

⁵ *Laudatio*, cit., pp. 93-4: Cf. Salutati, *Invectiva* . . . in *Antonium Lussum* . . . , cit., pp. 28 ff. See Baron, *Humanistic and Political Literature*, cit., pp. 99-100, 104-6.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

reflects one of the basic themes of Florentine politics during the fourteenth century. Bruni follows traditional lines of thought in ignoring the contradiction between political and legal equality inherent in the special penal legislation against the Magnates; for if the Ordinances of Justice were designed to reduce the political power of that class in favour of greater political equality, they also deprived it of equality before the law.¹ Such equality existed, at least in theory, within the new popular régime as created by the Ordinances of Justice; but political equality remained an ideal in a régime which was, apart from the period of more democratic government between 1343–82, dominated by the Greater Guilds. The short terms of office of the highest magistracies were devised to prevent the seizure of power by single families, but also helped to spread the distribution of offices more widely. They were supplemented, during the fourteenth century, by the introduction of elections by lot for the Signoria and other magistracies, and by the *divieto* legislation which temporarily disqualified citizens from offices which they or their relatives had held recently, as well as barring members of the same family from simultaneous membership of magistracies.² *Divieto* laws stated explicitly as their purpose equality in the participation in government and administration;³ at the same time their application effectively prevented the great families from monopolizing power.⁴ The law introducing elections by lot in 1328 opens with the solemn declaration that public offices should be accessible to all those who by their way of life have been shown fit to hold them. Such citizens should be able 'gradually to ascend to and to attain public office'; while 'those whose life does not render them worthy of it, should not climb up to government posts'.⁵ We are reminded of Bruni's praise

¹ See Salvemini, *Magnati e popolani*, pp. 177 ff. (new ed. by E. Sestan, Milan, 1966, pp. 146 ff.).

² For the Signoria and the Colleges, cf. the regulations of the Statutes of the Captain of the People of 1355 printed in D. Marzi, *La cancelleria della repubblica fiorentina* (Rocca S. Casciano, 1910), pp. 566–9. For fifteenth-century *divieto* regulations see *Statuta* of 1415 cit., vol. II, pp. 831–4, and the chancery compilation in A.S.F., *Tratte*, 1096.

³ Qu. by G. A. Brucker, *Florentine Politics and Society, 1343–1378* (Princeton, 1962) p. 67, n. 45: 'Ut magis inter cives Florentinos equalitas servetur in honoribus et oneribus.'

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 67–8.

⁵ A.S.F., *Capitoli*, 30, fol. 45r (8–9 Dec.); in *Delizie degli eruditi toscani*, ed. Ildelfonso di San Luigi, vol. XII (Florence, 1779), p. 288: 'Cupientes ut deinceps cives civitatis Florentie gradatim perveniant ac adscendere [*corr.* descendere] possint ad honores et munera qui sufficientes et habiles vita et moribus bonorum et legalium civium aspirante consensu [i.e. by the scrutiny commission] fuerint comprobati, et ne prosiliant ad gubernationem et regimen civitatis predictae quos vite conservatio dignos ad predicta non facit. . . .' Cf. Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, X, 108. On the introduction of elections by lot see Davidsohn, *Geschichte*, cit., vol. III (Berlin, 1912), p. 863.

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

of Florentine equality: 'the hope of attaining public office and of rising to higher status is equal for all. . . .'¹

However, Bruni omits an important aspect of the Florentine concept of equality, which was often combined with its political aspect, namely fiscal equality. 'Aequalitas in honoribus et oneribus' was a pious wish at a time when, in fact, crass inequalities in taxation existed. Bruni's omission is the more striking as the *Catasto* of 1427 was widely considered an important progress in this direction. 'The usual cause of [civic] discord is the uncertain distribution of either offices or taxes', says a speaker in a *pratica* in 1431; 'now the taxes are well distributed there remain the defects in the distribution of offices.'² Perhaps Bruni did not believe that, despite of the *Catasto*, fiscal equality deserved to be praised, together with legal and political equality, as a characteristic of the Florentine constitution. He may have shared Matteo Palmieri's pessimistic view that in matters of taxation 'true justice is impossible', but that, since civic unity so much depends on it, the least imperfect system, which treats the citizens in equal fashion, ought to be adopted.³

Nor is this Bruni's only omission of this kind. He discusses the place of the councils in the Florentine constitution, but not the freedom of speech in them; and he does not mention the restriction of government affairs to the Palace of the Signoria. Republicans regarded both as basic principles of the city's constitution. A law of 1375 declares that nothing is more important for the preservation of liberty than freedom in debates;⁴ and the Statutes of 1415 guarantee freedom of speech in the councils: every councillor had the right 'dicendi libere velle suum'.⁵ Palmieri demands that 'all counsel be free, true, and open', at a time when the nascent Medici régime was beginning to clamp down on that freedom. Giovanni Cavalcanti, writing in about 1440, states that he

¹ See above, pp. 446-7.

² Ed. F. C. Pellegrini, *Sulla repubblica fiorentina a tempo di Cosimo il Vecchio* (Pisa, 1880), pp. xxxvi-xxxvii (21 February 1431): 'Causa discordiarum solet esse quia aut honores aut onera non certe distribuuntur inter cives. Onera non sunt bene distributa per Catastum; restat ut defectus sit in honoribus distribuendis.'

³ *Della vita civile*, ed. F. Battaglia (Bologna, 1944), p. 116: 'Quivi è impossibile l'ordine della vera iustitia. . . . Impossibile è certo in questa materia giugnere al vero, ma con ogni diligenza debbe essere cerca la meno errante via, perchè è una delle principalissime parti a conservare l'unione civile. . . .'; p. 118: 'Sia in somma quell'ordine in distribuire gravezze sopra qualunque altro lodato, il quale le particolari sostanze de' cittadini parimente consuma. . . .' One of the manuscripts containing the *Vita civile* was written between 1430 and 1440 (see G. Scaramella, in *R.I.S.*, vol. XIII, pt. 1, p.v., n. 12).

⁴ Quoted by Brucker, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

⁵ *Statuta cit.*, vol. II, pp. 669-70. There were, however, limitations of this right: e.g. speakers were not allowed to say 'verba iniuriosa contra aliquem in aliquo consilio', or to discuss matters that had been specifically prohibited by the government (*ibid.*, pp. 391-2).

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

had prophesied as early as 1420 that a tyrannical government would replace the constitutional one, because the government of the republic was being carried on outside the Palace of the Signoria.¹

There is certainly no mention of such dangers in Bruni's treatise on the Florentine Polity, which in all probability was written about the same time. But to what extent was Bruni altogether describing existing political conditions, rather than political ideals? This is a question which may fairly be asked, although it is somewhat marginal to our present enquiry into the nature and sources of Florentine constitutionalism. We have discussed the influence of classical authors and of local traditions on Bruni's attempts to analyse the Florentine constitution; to what extent does he give a faithful picture of contemporary political realities? Equality, one of the key notions of this analysis, is a case in point.

Bruni was, of course, perfectly aware of its ambivalent nature and used it both in its political as well as in its legal meaning. While in the *Laudatio* he stresses the latter, in his subsequent writings he is primarily concerned with the former.² 'Liberty is equal for all . . . the hope of attaining public office . . . is equal for all, provided they possess industry and natural gifts. . . .'³ In 1428, this was certainly wishful thinking.

For one thing, after the collapse of the Ciompi Revolt of 1378, the political inferiority of the Lesser Gilds had found its institutional expression in the fact that members of those gilds became eligible for only a quarter of the vacancies in nearly all magistracies. In the highest of all, the Signoria, two members only were artisans, the Gonfalonier of Justice being always a member of the greater gilds. But also for the citizens belonging to the predominant greater gilds, there was more than one way in which the ideal of political equality could be deprived of some of its practical meaning. The system of appointment by lot necessitated periodical scrutinies carried out by special commissions, which qualified citizens for specific categories of offices. After the scrutinies, *Accoppiatori* filled the purses of the three highest offices with the name tickets of those citizens who had been successful in the scrutiny. These officials, whose functions were primarily of a technical nature, had considerable discretionary powers enabling them to give some citizens greater opportunities than others of having their name

¹ *Istorie fiorentine*, I, 1, ed. F. Polidori (Florence, 1838), vol. II, p. 30: 'mi pareva che nella Repubblica ne dovesse seguire tirannesco e non politico vivere, che fuori del palagio si amministrasse il governo della Repubblica;' and he was assured that, in fact, 'il Comune era più governato alle cene e negli scrittoi, che nel Palagio. . . .'

² See above, p. 449.

³ Loc. cit.

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

actually drawn. For the *polizza*, or name ticket, a citizen had acquired for the Signoria could either be placed in a purse for the Priorate, or in that of the Gonfalonier of Justice, that is of the highest official in the State. Moreover, ever since 1387, there were two kinds of purses for the eight Priors, the so-called general purse and the little purse, the *borsellino*, which contained less names than the former, and the *Accoppiatori*, in providing a citizen with a name-ticket for the Priorate, could choose between these two purses. Since the names of three of the eight Priors had to be drawn from the *borsellino*, such discrimination could have significant results in giving some citizens greater opportunities of being actually appointed to office.¹

Furthermore, while the scrutinies for the three highest offices formed the basis for the appointment to government, they could also be used for other purposes. Thus, the membership of the Council of 200, which was created in 1411, was recruited from the citizens who had either been appointed to those offices, i.e. the Signoria and its Colleges, or whose names had been drawn for them, but who had been temporarily barred from accepting the office in question by having such disqualifications as having held it recently (*seduti o veduti*).² In this way a distinction emerged among the theoretically equal citizens, between those who had been qualified for the highest magistracies and those who had not; a distinction which, in view of its evident political implications, was to become increasingly important under the Medici.

These practical limitations of the fundamental *aequalitas* of Florentine constitutionalist theory has its counterpart in the *de facto* prominence of the patriciate before 1434. This prominence was not limited to the greater opportunities the *ottimati* in fact enjoyed in being appointed to offices and councils. It was a Florentine custom for the government to ask the advice of specially summoned meetings (*pratiche*) of influential citizens before taking important decisions; and since it could summon any citizens it wished, patricians were heavily represented in these meetings. The same applies to the special councils with full powers which were created in revolutionary situations. One such *Balia* recalled Cosimo de' Medici from exile in 1434; if we go through its membership list,³ we find that of the 86 households which had been assessed in the *Catasto* of 1427 for a capital of over 10,000 fl., 43 were represented in that council either by the taxpayers or by a brother or son.⁴

¹ See Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence*, pp. 45-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 69, 117.

³ *Ibid.*, Appendix II.

⁴ These statistics are based on the 'tables on wealth' compiled by L. Martines, *The Social World of the Florentine Humanists, 1390-1460* (London, 1963), Appendix II.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

In these circumstances, Bruni's claim that there existed in Florence a basic equality in attaining high public office can hardly be taken at its face value; as we have seen, he himself felt the need to modify it in his last treatise on the Florentine constitution, which consequently gives a more faithful picture of the political régime that prevailed in Florence before, as well as after, 1434.¹ Yet whatever the historical veracity of Bruni's descriptions, and whatever the influence on them of rhetoric and classical learning, there can be no doubt that they also reflected traditional Florentine ideals. If these ideals were far from being realized before 1434, they were to stand an even more serious test under the Medici régime.

The humanist writings we have reviewed so far belong to the first four decades of the fifteenth century, when the traditional republican régime was either still intact, or was only just beginning to be transformed by the growing ascendancy of the Medici and their party. Our next comprehensive evidence on Florentine constitutionalist thought comes from the years 1465 and 1466, when that ascendancy was being successfully, though as it turned out only temporarily, challenged, after having been greatly consolidated in 1458. That this should be so, is perhaps not surprising: constitutionalist ideas are often formulated in opposition to prevailing trends.² This time, our evidence is chiefly provided by the minutes of debates in the *pratiche*.³ If it lacks the clarity and systematic approach of Bruni's writings, it constitutes a more immediate, and on the whole probably more faithful expression of public opinion.

That we have to wait until 1465, that is over thirty years after the beginning of Medici supremacy, for more than incidental statements of constitutionalist theory does not mean that republican opposition to the Medici did not exist before 1465. Such opposition to the Medici régime was, in fact, substantial and lasting, especially during its formative period, between 1434 and 1458,⁴ when even Mediceans had to admit that their principal instrument of political control, elections of

¹ See above, pp. 447-8.

² For a near-contemporary example in France, cf. Commynes, *Mémoires*, ed. J. Calmette, vol. II (Paris, 1925), pp. 219 ff., on the States General held at Tours in 1484.

³ A.S.F., Cons. Prat., 57 and 58. Nearly all the relevant minutes have been edited by G. Pampaloni in *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX (1961), pp. 241-81, and CXX (1962), pp. 521-81. On the debates, see Pampaloni, 'Fermenti di riforme democratiche nella Firenze medicea del Quattrocento', *ibid.*, vol. CXIX, pp. 11-62, and Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, pp. 140 ff.

⁴ See Rubinstein, pp. 22-9, 75-8, 91-2, *et passim*.

the Signoria *a mano* by the *Accoppiatori*, was unpopular.¹ Legislation devised to strengthen or extend Medicean controls was liable to be passed by the statutory councils by very small majorities, and was sometimes defeated; and even the special Medicean councils, or *Balie*, were not invariably as subservient as might have been expected.² But the volumes in which the Chancery entered the voting results in the councils (*Libri Fabarum*), while briefly registering the contents of the bills, whether successful or not, and the number of votes cast for and against, omit to record, except on very rare occasions, speeches made in connection with the proposed legislation.³ For information of this kind, we have to turn to the minutes of the *pratiche*. However, since these meetings of influential citizens were summoned by the government, they were unlikely to include oppositional elements during the periods when Medicean controls were functioning; and even during the intervals, when elections by lot were temporarily restored, freedom of speech must have been effectively limited by fear of possible consequences. Thus, during the decisive debates in the summer of 1458⁴ which culminated in the summoning of the *Parlamento* of 11 August and in the triumphant reaffirmation of Medici supremacy, Girolamo Machiavelli could urge the members of the *pratica* to speak the truth fearlessly, *deposito timore*, and to say what they really felt;⁵ while on 1 August the Signoria had explicitly promised them freedom of speech, *libertatem loquendi*.⁶ After the *Parlamento*, Girolamo Machiavelli was exiled on the ground that he had been leading the opposition against the measures planned by the Mediceans; the Eight of Ward specifically condemned him for having 'attempted and said most grievous things'.⁷

After the death of Cosimo, there was a change of atmosphere. In September 1465, mounting opposition to Piero and his friends culminated, amidst general jubilation, in the abolition of elections *a mano*.⁸

¹ Cf. e.g. Matteo Palmieri, 28 March 1449 (Cons. Prat., 52, fol. 76r): 'Nec dubium esse securis fore marsupia esse aperta [i.e. *a mano*] quam clausa. Et quamvis videatur magis populare ut claudantur, tandem illi popularitatis securitatem anteponendam.' Cosimo de' Medici himself admitted this (*ibid.*, 52, fol. lv; 6 December 1446).

² See Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, pp. 14-15, 19, 74, 76-8, 97 ff.; on *Balie*, pp. 86-7.

³ The rare entries of this kind are very brief and summarize speeches made in favour of bills.

⁴ See Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, pp. 92-102.

⁵ Cons. Prat., 55, fol. 49r: 'ut deposito timore tandem vera velint dicere, et ita verbis sentire, sicuti eximie sentiunt.'

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 63v (Lorenzo di Gino Capponi): 'ob libertatem loquendi datam se dicturum', etc.

⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 71r (17 August 1458), Bernardo de' Medici, for the Eight: 'ipsum multa gravissima tentasse ac dixisse adversus civitatis status [sic] et libertatem.'

⁸ See Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, pp. 142-3.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

The first Signoria to be appointed after this event, which entered office on 1 November, was headed by a determined republican, Niccolò Soderini, and began its term of office by granting speakers in the *pratica* freedom of speech.¹ During the following months, the minutes of these meetings contain remarkable, and in their fullness unprecedented, debates on political and constitutional problems. Niccolò Soderini's preference for large *pratiche* probably contributed to this. During the republican régime of 1494–1512, such *pratiche* were regarded as more democratic, small ones as more aristocratic,² and a similar distinction no doubt existed earlier.³ Before 1434, it had been customary for the Signoria, in times of crisis, to summon large numbers of citizens to their council chambers, instead of the normally small groups of leading citizens (*savi cittadini*).⁴ Large *pratiche* appear to have been rare between 1434 and 1465; but the minutes are extant of that of July 1458, which was summoned to discuss political reforms.⁵ Accordingly, Niccolò Soderini was warmly praised by members of the *pratica* for having initiated his term of office by summoning 'the people, i.e. this numerous assembly', and the hope was expressed that his successors follow his example. For, as one speaker puts it, 'it has not been customary for a long time that the assembled people is informed of its own affairs, and may state its opinion on them.'⁶

Freedom of speech is, in fact, singled out in the November debates by one speaker after another as one of the basic principles of Florentine republicanism, and is taken to mean, specifically, the freedom to express one's views in *pratiche*: *libertas contionandi* and *consulendi*.⁷ Differences of opinion, it is argued, far from being identical with civic

¹ See *pratica* of 3 November 1465, ed. Pampaloni, *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX (1961), pp. 246, 248, 250.

² See F. Gilbert, 'Florentine political assumptions in the period of Savonarola and Soderini', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XX (1957), p. 190.

³ The *pratica* of 3 November 1465 is described by the secretary who drafted its minutes as an assembly composed 'ex omni genere . . . ut ne infime quidem sortis opifices deessent'; but during the meeting it is suggested that 'de omnibus rebus ad Collegia et sapientiores cives referendum esse' (ed. Pampaloni, *op. cit.*, pp. 242, 245).

⁴ Cf. e.g. Pellegrini, *Sulla repubblica fiorentina*, Appendix 14, 15, and 19 (*pratiche* of March 1431).

⁵ See above, p. 456, n. 4. Its minutes are in *Cons. Prat.*, 55. On 2 July 1458, it consisted of 220 citizens (*ibid.*, fols. 27r–28v).

⁶ Ed. Pampaloni, p. 246 (3 November, Dietisalvi Neroni): 'convocastis populum, id est hanc frequentissimam contionem'; p. 245 (3 November, Carlo Pandolfini): 'diu iam insolitum hoc est, ut congregatus in hoc loco populus de rebus audiat suis, de quibus sententiam dicat.' Cf. also pp. 247 (3 November, Franco Sacchetti), 259 (13 November, Tommaso Deti). But not everyone was equally pleased: 'Non damno', says Domenico Martelli (13 November, p. 258), 'has tam publicas et frequentes contiones: laudarem magis si digeste res in contiones adducerentur. . . .'

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 250 (3 November, Mariotto Lippi): 'In primis libertatem contionandi restitutam esse rem preclaram dixit. . . .'

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

discord, are only conducive to the discovery of truth.¹ Accordingly, citizens must not be made to suffer for their freely expressed opinions.² This demand is underlined by the observation that the *consuetudo libere loquendi* had been lost to such an extent that even the wisest counsel could bring with it the greatest danger.³ One speaker demands that the Florentines imitate their Roman ancestors who, according to Sallust, had strengthened their State through industry at home, just rule abroad, and freedom of speech.⁴ The same argument drawn from Roman history had already been used in the debates of July 1458.⁵ An oath which in May 1466 all citizens over fourteen had to swear on the orders of the Signoria included the promise that 'every citizen should be free to say in the council chambers what he wishes, as long as he does so' with reverence and honesty'.⁶ This corresponds to the freedom of counsel as laid down by the Statutes of 1415;⁷ and this fundamental right is restated later in the same month in yet another oath, sworn this time by members of the republican faction.⁸

According to Dietisalvi Neroni, one of the leaders of that faction, public welfare, *utilitas publica*, consisted of three things: *securitas civium*, *libertas sententiarum*, and *aequalitas tributorum* — civic security, freedom of opinion, and fiscal equality.⁹ Elsewhere he points to the observance of justice and to the equal distribution of offices as essential conditions for

¹ Ibid., pp. 251–2 (4 November, Carlo Pandolfini): 'Discordia enim non est civium differentia sententiarum, imo vero id est . . . ut eliciatur veritas.' Cf. p. 273 (Domenico Martelli).

² Ibid., p. 260 (13 November, Luigi Pitti): 'ut sint libere sententiae, ne cui mali evenire possit ex libertate.'

³ Ibid., p. 271 ([23 November], Giannozzo Pitti): 'Placere sibi consuetudinem inductam libere loquendi, que amissa adeo erat ut summum periculum ei fuerit qui optime locutus fuerit.'

⁴ Ibid., p. 253 (4 November, Domenico Martelli): 'Imitari convenire maiores nostros romanos, qui, ut ait Salustius, tribus rebus rem p. auxerunt: domestica industria, foris iusto imperio. . . Tertia re ut animus sit in consulendo liber.' Cf. Sallust, *Catilinae Coniuratio*, 52, 21: '[maiores nostros] magnos fecere . . . domi industria, foris iustum imperium, animus in consulendo liber.'

⁵ By Donato di Cocco Donati and, significantly, Girolamo Machiavelli (Cons. Prat., 55, fols. 24v and 26v; 2 July).

⁶ Ed. A. Mucicchi, *La fazione antimedicca detta del Poggio* (Florence, 1911), App. 4, from A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 2a ser., 96, no. 1: 'havendo libertà ogni cittadino dire [sic] in sulla ringhiera liberamente quello gli parrà, parlando sempre con riverentia et honestà'; see above, p. 452. The *ringhiera* was the tribune used by speakers in councils and *pratiche* (for the former, cf. e.g. Sacchetti, *Le Centonovelle*, lxxx, ed. V. Pernicone (Florence, 1946), p. 176; for the latter, Cavalcanti, *Istorie cit.*, II, 1 (vol. 1, pp. 28, 29)).

⁷ See above, p. 452.

⁸ B.N.F., II, I, 106, fol. 61r: the 'cittadini intendino essere liberi et a consigliare et a giudicare le cose pubbliche . . .' (ed. Pampaloni, in *Bull. Senese di st. p.*, vol. LXXI, 1964, pp. 233–8). On these two oaths, see Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence*, pp. 156–8.

⁹ Ed. Pampaloni, *A.S.I.*, vol. cit., p. 252.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

civic concord.¹ Dietisalvi's views reflect traditional republican principles. Franco Sacchetti had put these in a nutshell during the debates which led to the restoration of elections by lot in September 1465: 'the foundation of peace in democratic cities is equality in matters of offices and taxes; our ancestors had provided for it, among other things, through rotation of office.'² As for political liberty, he considered it to have been restored by the return to elections by lot, which, as we have seen, were also assumed to serve to create equality of opportunity.³ His view was not, however, shared by everybody; some republicans felt that only after the last of the surviving Medici institutions, the Council of One Hundred, was abolished, would republican freedom be fully restored.⁴

The principal condition for an effective republican restoration was, however, that private citizens should no longer be able to exercise control over the government. Pope Pius II, who had visited Florence in 1459, said of Cosimo that State affairs were debated in his house;⁵ conversely, Luca Pitti, one of the leaders of the anti-Medici faction in 1465-66, demanded, in almost identical terms, that government must be conducted in the Palace of the Signoria, and that more attention be paid to that Palace and to the citizens at large than had been done in the past.⁶ Luca Pitti's demand echoes the complaint Cavalcanti had made about twenty-five years earlier;⁷ but in the meantime, the guidance of political affairs had increasingly passed into the hands of the Medici.

The oath which about 400 citizens swore on 27 May 1466 contains the political programme of the opposition to Medici rule: 'the city is to be ruled in the customary way by a just and popular government, the Signoria is to be elected by lot in future, as it is nowadays, and in no other way, and the citizens should not suffer any violence, so that they may be free to debate and judge public affairs. . . .'⁸ Florentine consti-

¹ Ibid., p. 258 (13 November): 'Et concordia quidem nutrir arbitror iustitie observantia et honorum distributione equali et tributorum exoneratione. . . .'

² Cons. e Prat. 57, fol. 45v (11 September 1465): 'Fundamentum quietis civitatum popularium aequalitatem esse honorum et tributorum. Id curasse maiores nostri in magistratis mutandis et ceteris rebus recte ab illis constitutis.'

³ Ed. Pampaloni, p. 247 (3 November 1465): 'Iam reddita libertas populo est per sortes summa concordia civium.'

⁴ Filippo di Cino Rinuccini, *Ricordi storici dal 1282 al 1460, con la continuazione di Alamanno e Neri suoi figliuoli al 1506*, ed. G. Aiazzi (Florence, 1840), p. c.

⁵ *Commentarii* (Rome, 1584), p. 89: 'consilium de republica domi suae agitari.' Cf. Rubinstein, *Government of Florence*, p. 128.

⁶ Quoted *ibid.*, p. 156.

⁷ See above, pp. 452-3.

⁸ MS. cit., fols. 60v-61r: '. . . e apresso che la città si governi come consueto di giusto e popolare governo, et che per l'avvenire la tratta de' nostri Magnifici Signori si faccia a sorte come si fa al presente et non altrimenti nè in altro modo, et etiamdio neghare et provvedere che nessuna violenza o novità sarà fatta a nessuno cittadino straordinariamente, acciò che ta' cittadini intendino essere liberi et a consigliare et a giudicare le cose publiche. . . .' (Pampaloni, ed. cit., p. 233).

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

tutionalism in 1465–66, by linking the traditional principles of liberty and equality with elections by lot, and by emphasizing the importance of freedom of speech and of government by constitutional agencies, reflects the impact of the Medici régime on Florentine political attitudes. The views expressed by the members of the *pratiche* are accordingly more pragmatic than Bruni's theory of the Florentine constitution; however, they show the continued importance of classical constitutional theory on Florentine political thinking. Thus Agnolo Acciaiuoli pointed out that of the three forms of government, government by one, by a few, and by many, the last provides States with the greatest stability, 'quia amore et benevolentia gubernantur.'¹ When Niccolò Soderini proposed a reform that was bound to make Florentine government more oligarchical, one speaker argued that Florence had prospered under a democratic régime, a *popularis administratio*, while another countered this by pointing out that according to Aristotle a *popularis administratio* was the lowest in rank of the constitutions.² But it was a far cry from such occasional remarks to Bruni's attempt to analyse the Florentine constitution in Aristotelian terms. Florentine constitutionalism of 1465–66 has its roots in communal political traditions rather than in humanist writings.³ It is significant that speakers in the *pratiche* could look back to the good old days around 1418, when 'Florence was at the height of her power and reputation', as an example of ideal Florentine government: in those days, civic virtues flourished and the Florentines preferred the common good to private interest, and thus increased and defended the Florentine empire.⁴ But if Florentine republicans were longing for the system of government which had prevailed before the Medici came to power, for many of them its oligarchical aspects were, no doubt, despite all the egalitarianism professed in the *Pratiche*, an additional attraction. This was clearly the deeper meaning of Niccolò Soderini's outburst, in a *pratica* of July 1466, that 'who has not governed before 1433, does not know how to govern'.⁵

¹ Pampaloni, *A.S.I.*, vol. cit., p. 246 (3 November 1465): 'Sed esse preterea alia addenda: civitates enim aut unus gubernat, aut pauci aut multitudo; et que ab uno aut paucis gubernantur non habere firmitudinem, sed cum a populo gubernantur, quia amore et benevolentia gubernantur.'

² *Ibid.*, p. 261 (14 November, Manno Temperani): 'hanc rempublicam nostram florentissimam esse factam populari administratione...'; p. 258 (13 November, Domenico Martelli): 'Est enim popularis administratio et infima, ut ait Aristoteles.'

³ This contrast between pragmatism and humanist political theory was to be given its fullest and most subtle expression in Francesco Guicciardini's *Dialogo del reggimento di Firenze* of 1521–25.

⁴ Ed. Pampaloni, in *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), p. 523 (2 January 1466; Manno Temperani).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 572.

CONSTITUTIONALISM AND MEDICI ASCENDANCY

The republican revival of 1465 was followed, in September 1466, by a Medicean reaction which not only restored the political controls of the régime that had been recently abolished, but further strengthened them; elections *a mano* of the Signoria were now decreed for no less than twenty years. In 1478, the Pazzi conspiracy created yet another serious threat to the régime, but the unsuccessful attempt on Lorenzo's life was not followed, as the conspirators had hoped, by a popular rising, and there was no organized republican opposition as in 1465-66. However, the conspiracy had given rise to a situation in which at least one Florentine citizen was led to voice, once more, some of the principles of Florentine constitutionalism.

In his dialogue *De libertate* of 1479,¹ Alamanno Rinuccini proceeds from a philosophical definition of liberty to a violent attack on Medici tyranny, which he contrasts with the good old times when republican freedom reigned in Florence longer and more splendidly than anywhere in Italy.² Like Bruni, he considers freedom and equality the twin principles of good government: 'who does not know', he says, 'that the equality of the citizens is the chief foundation of liberty?'³ In emphasizing the legal aspects of equality, he follows the arguments of the *Laudatio* rather than of Bruni's later writings: observance of her laws had made Florence great and prosperous; now they are valued little, and Florentine justice, which was once sought from the furthest places, is a thing of the past.⁴ Yet Rinuccini does not altogether omit the political aspects of equality: in republics, he says, elections by lot make it possible for all those citizens who help the community by paying taxes to participate in government; such elections are accordingly most appropriate to liberty and justice. But now the highest magistracies are filled by simple election, with the result that instead of men distinguished by wisdom or nobility, clients of the Medici are appointed.⁵ Rinuccini similarly contrasts the traditional freedom of speech with the present silence in the councils, as 'our Catos take the advice of a few men only';⁶

¹ *Dialogus de libertate*, ed. F. Adorno, *Atti e memorie dell' Accademia toscana di scienze e lettere 'La Colombaria'*, vol. XXII (1957), pp. 270-303. The work was completed on 10 April 1479. On the *De libertate*, see Adorno, 'La crisi dell' umanesimo civile fiorentino da Alamanno Rinuccini al Machiavelli', *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia*, vol. VII (1952), pp. 19-40, and V. R. Giustiniani, *Alamanno Rinuccini, 1426-1499 . . .* (Cologne-Graz, 1965), pp. 243-8.

² *De libertate*, loc. cit., pp. 282-3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 283: 'quis ignorat aequalitatem civium libertatis precipuum esse fundamentum?'

⁴ *Ibid.* Cf. *Laudatio*, cit., pp. 103-4; see also above, pp. 445-6.

⁵ *De libertate*, cit., p. 285.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284: 'Nunc autem, cum paucissimos ad maximarum rerum consultationem adhibeant Catones nostri. . . .'

NICOLAI RUBINSTEIN

yet that freedom 'is of the greatest advantage to free cities, where the citizens freely state what they consider best for the commonwealth'.¹ We seem to hear the echoes of the debates of 1465-66; but their optimism contrasts with Rinuccini's pessimistic belief that under Lorenzo de' Medici things were going from bad to worse, their readiness for action with his professed belief that withdrawal from public life was the only solution left to honest citizens. For the last time under the Medici régime, Rinuccini states some of the basic beliefs of Florentine constitutionalism: equality before the law, elections by lot providing equal opportunities for all citizens, and freedom of speech. That his concept of equality should have an oligarchical slant reflects a characteristic trend in Florentine constitutionalist thought. And like Manno Temperani in 1466, he looks back, nostalgically, to the good old days before the rise of the Medici, when the citizens cared so much for the preservation of liberty and equality, and when Florence excelled all other cities in Tuscany not only because of her power but also as an exemplar of good life, 'bene vivendi exemplar'.²

Fifteen years later, the Medici were expelled from Florence. On 2 December 1494, a *Parlamento* restored the republican constitution in the form which had prevailed before 1434. But while republican liberty could thus be considered revived, political equality became, almost immediately, a central problem of constitutional legislation. As we have seen, the concept of equality had been subject to democratic as well as oligarchical interpretations. Under the influence and leadership of Savonarola, it assumed a decidedly democratic slant. The reaction against the conservative reform of 2 December led, three weeks later, to the creation of the Great Council, which placed the government of Florence on a broader foundation than it had ever possessed. The official reform scheme which had proposed a Great Council, and which was finally adopted, pleads for a fundamental change on the grounds that 'tyranny is now defunct and that every one desires liberty and equality and stability'.³ It thus voices, once more, although with a fresh meaning, constitutionalist principles that had survived the Medici régime.

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 280: 'Quae res civitatibus liberis maximam affert utilitatem, ubi cives in consultando quod optimum esse reipublicae censent non simulate dicunt.'

² *Ibid.*, pp. 283, 286; see above, p. 460.

³ A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., 2a ser., 95, no. 12: 'Ma hora che è spenta la Tyrannide altutto et che ognuno è volto a libertà et equalità et fermezza. . . .'

XIV

FELIX GILBERT

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION IN FLORENTINE POLITICAL THOUGHT

Two Italian cities, writes Jacob Burckhardt in his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, have been of the greatest significance for the entire history of the human race: Venice and Florence — 'cities which cannot be compared to anything else in the world.'¹ Although Renaissance historians now may be inclined to focus their attention less exclusively on these two cities, Florence and Venice still remain primary centres of interest and attraction. In the same passage in which Burckhardt emphasized the eminence of Venice and Florence in the complex of Renaissance civilization, he stated that 'no contrast can be imagined stronger than that which is offered us by these two'. Thus a comparison of Venice and Florence, an investigation of how they differed, has usually served to point up the particular features of each. But the two cities did not exist in separate worlds. Although the cities were different, Venetians and Florentines were in steady contact and there was a lively exchange of ideas between them. This essay will be concerned with the intellectual relations between Venetians and Florentines and particularly how Florentine political thought was influenced by the image of Venice.² But before proceeding with the story proper, the problems inherent in this topic should be indicated.

The first difficulty is that Italian cities had no written constitutions.

¹ The quotations from Burckhardt can be found in Part I: 'The state as a work of art' of his *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*.

² A previous study devoted to a part of this subject is Renzo Pecchioli, 'Il "mito" di Venezia e la crisi fiorentina intorno al 1500', *Studi Storici*, vol. III (1962), pp. 451-92. See also Gaeta's review of Pecchioli's article in *Bollettino dell'Istituto di Storia della Società e dello Stato Veneziano*, vol. IV (1962), pp. 387-93.

FELIX GILBERT

What we call their constitutions were a set of laws and regulations which established the functions and composition of councils and set forth the qualifications and duties of the magistrates. These laws and regulations issued over the course of centuries lay buried, for the most part, in folios in the chancelleries. Thus the most striking and prominent features of the government of a city-state might be quite generally known, but precise and detailed knowledge of how a government functioned was difficult to acquire.

But the influence which constitutional forms of a city-state might have had on the constitution of another is further complicated because men were inclined to reject the entire idea that one government might be or ought to be patterned after another. Each city was thought to be a unique formation; each city had its own patron saint: Venice was the city of St Mark; Florence of St John the Baptist; Milan of St Ambrose.¹ It was assumed that the patron saint held his protecting hand over the fate of the city. The institutions which had been created in earliest times when the city had acquired its patron saint were believed to be sacred. According to a legend believed in Venice since the twelfth century, St Mark had rested in the lagoons at the place where later Venice was founded, and God had shown him in his dreams that this was the place where he would be buried and at this place a city would arise and under his protection would grow to greatness and power. The towns and lands which Venice conquered surrendered to San Marco and were obliged to have the *laudes* of San Marco sung in the churches at all festival days. The older the institutions of a city the more purely were they believed to carry the imprint of the city's saintly protector. And this had an impact on politics far into the sixteenth century. After the death of the last Visconti, when the Milanese attempted to regain freedom, they named their newly established republic the 'Ambrosian Republic' and tried to revive institutions which they believed had existed in the times of Sant' Ambrogio. The Florentines, under the influence of Savonarola, believed themselves to be charged with a special mission by God and proclaimed their city the 'City of Christ'. Close association of a city's existence with an individual saint formed an obstacle to the imitation of foreign political institutions.

Yet this belief in the uniqueness of one's city did not exclude all interest in political experimentation. The norm of a perfect society at which every city ought to aim always existed. In the fifteenth century

¹ See Hans Conrad Peyer, *Stadt und Stadtpatron im mittelalterlichen Italien* (Zürich, 1955).

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

the spread of a more extensive knowledge of classical political writings provided new material for attempts to transform the existing political order according to abstract principles. Nevertheless, the idea persisted that each city-state was unique. In some respects, one might even say that the revival of the ancients resulted in a secularization of previous beliefs: the figure of the patron saint was merged with that of the lawgiver, and the idealization of the classical world strengthened the view that 'return to the beginnings', to the institutions which had been established when the city was founded, was the only true way of making political changes and reforms.

When the ideas and terminology of classical political theories began to permeate the thinking of the literati and of the ruling groups the reputation of Venice as the model of a free republic began to rise. In this development political events played as much a part as changes in the intellectual climate. During the fourteenth century in a slow but irresistible process the smaller Italian city-states had been absorbed by the greater Italian powers; by the beginning of the fifteenth century only two republican city-states — Venice and Florence — had survived among Italy's great powers. But they were, as Burckhardt remarked, cities of contrast. To him, Florence was 'the city of incessant movement', whereas Venice appeared as unchanged and unchangeable. Thus, while Florence, which underwent several revolutions and frequent changes of government, could hardly serve as a model for imitation, the Venetian government seemed to approach the realization of a perfect republic.

Thus in analysing the relation between Venetian and Florentine political thinking, we must keep in mind that it was not a reciprocal relation; the connection is limited to the problem of the influence which the view of the excellence of Venetian institutions had on Florentine political thought. Because the traditional resistance against the adoption of foreign forms of government was strong, the question must be raised whether and when the discussion of Venice as a pattern for imitation reached beyond a small group and had an impact on political practice. Moreover, because Venice became the pattern of an ideal republic only in the fifteenth century and the emergence of this image was closely tied up with humanist thinking, it must be asked whether the view of the excellence of Venetian institutions represented chiefly the application of an ideal classical pattern to Venice, or whether it was based on an intimate knowledge of the functioning of Venetian institutions. Thus, an investigation of these questions is closely connected with the broader issue of the growth of realism in political thought.

The story of Venice as a political model begins in the fifteenth century, but Venice was regarded as a miracle inspiring a myth ever since it emerged as a community of significance.¹ And some aspects of this myth shaped the view which people held about Venice as a political pattern.

Venice was never a city like other cities. The 'churches, monasteries and houses, all built in the sea' as Comines stated,² aroused the wonder and the admiration of travellers of earlier centuries as much as it does today. Venice's extraordinary situation invited even in the fifteenth century typographical descriptions — some in prose, some in verse — which are so detailed and so precise that they could almost serve as a modern guide book.³ Visitors were astounded at the sight of canals that replaced streets, and gondolas that replaced wagons and carriages. The mosaics, the rare and precious stones in which San Marco and the other churches of Venice abounded, evoked awed comments and the envy of the citizens of other states. The ceremonies and rituals surrounding the election and the death of a Doge, the arrival of ships from the Orient, the confluence of merchants from every part of the world offered spectacles which could be seen nowhere else. From the time of its foundation it appeared that a fairytale had become reality in Venice.

The myth that Venice inspired from early times had its political aspects: the one was that Venice was the city of liberty; the other, that Venice was a city of domestic peace and stability.

Liberty (*libertas*) had a double meaning. If it was used in reference to political institutions *libertas* indicated a régime that was not tyrannical. But *libertas* could also be used to characterize the position of a city-state in relation to other city-states and then it signified independence. The Venetians believed they possessed *libertas* in both these meanings. As writers frequently mentioned, Venetian independence was celebrated in two paintings, one to be seen in the Hall of the *Consiglio Maggiore*, the other in the Hall of the Senate. Both depicted the events

¹ On the 'myth' of Venice, see Gina Fasola, 'Nascita di un mito', *Studi storici in onore di Gioacchino Volpe*, vol. I, pp. 455-79, and Franco Gaeta, 'Alcune considerazioni sul mito di Venezia', *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, vol. XXIII (1961), pp. 38-75, with a detailed bibliography.

² '... de veoir tant de clochiers et de monasteres, et si grant maisonnement, et tout en l'eaue', *Mémoires*, bk. VII, ch. 18.

³ In general, see A. Medin, *La Storia della Repubblica di Venezia nella Poesia* (Milano, 1904), and, for examples, see V. Rossi, 'Jacopo d'Albizotto Guidi e il suo inedito poema su Venezia', *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, vol. V (1893), pp. 397-451, and Sabellico, *De Venetae urbis situ*, in *Opera*, vol. II (Basle, 1560), pp. 251-78, or the rather typical, but also rather envious description in Giovanni Ridolfi's report about his travels to Venice and Milan in 1480, B.N.F., Magl. II, IV, 195, fols. 209 ff.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

of 1177 when Emperor and Pope concluded their peace in Venice and when, according to Venetian writers, the Pope conferred special privileges on the Doge, granting him political status equal to Pope and Emperor.¹ About the freedom that reigned within Venice, writers liked to refer to the statement in St Thomas Aquinas' *De regimine principum*, that of all the rulers in Northern Italy the Doge of Venice alone was not a tyrant and had only limited powers.² The notion of the stability of the Venetian government grew steadily and it had become accepted opinion in the fourteenth century. Petrarch's words in praise of Venice almost summarized the notions which in previous centuries had been formed about the 'miracolissima Venetiae civitas': 'a city rich in gold but richer in repute; strong in power but stronger in virtue; built on solid marble but more stably and solidly established on the more secure foundations of its citizens' concord, fortified and made safe by the intelligence and wisdom of its sons rather than by the sea which surrounds the city.'³

These two themes — that of Venice as an independent republic and as a model of stability and changelessness — recur almost regularly. In the fifteenth century, when political circumstances accentuated the importance of Venice, speculations about the nature of the Venetian government also became more elaborate. A crucial turn was given to these discussions by the humanists who began to identify Venice with classical models of republicanism. Members of the Venetian ruling group encouraged these efforts to present the Venetian constitution as a modern embodiment of ancient political wisdom. This was clearly in their political interests. A political myth was a precious political asset because it unified the citizens and reinforced their willingness to undergo sacrifices for their commune.⁴ When the writings — the histories and laudations — of humanists like Salutati, Bruni and Loschi extolled Florence and Milan and compared them to Athens, Sparta and Rome, Venetian patricians became understandably anxious to find

¹ 'Et illa hystoria est picta in aula civitatis Venetiarum. Ed est etiam picta in aula civitatis Senatorum', Bernardo Bembo, 'Commonplace Book', British Museum, Add. MS. 41,068A, fol. 44; Bernardo Bembo's commonplace book is chiefly a collection of excerpts from other writers.

² 'Omnes principes Italiae sunt tiranni Duce Venetiarum excepto. Qui habent regimen temperatum. Verbi sunt Sancti Thome', *ibid.*, fol. 45. The relevant passage is to be found in *De regimine principum*, IV, ch. 8, i.e. in the part written by Ptolemy of Lucca.

³ Petrarch, *Lettere senili*, bk. IV, no. 3: '... urbs auri dives sed ditior fame, potens opibus sed virtute potentior, solidis fundata marmoribus sed solidiore etiam funamento civibus concordie stabilita, salsis cincta fluctibus sed salsioribus tuta consiliis.'

⁴ For a general statement of Venetian civic spirit by a Venetian patrician, see Bernardo Giustiniani's funeral speech for Francesco Foscari in *Orazioni, Elogi e Vite . . . in lode di Dogi . . .*, ed. G. A. Molina, vol. I (Venice, 1795), pp. 21-67.

FELIX GILBERT

humanist writers who would do the same for Venice; they searched anxiously for a humanist who would serve as public historiographer and write the history of Venice praising the achievements of Venetian politics and the public spirit of Venetian citizens.¹ Venetian nobles and even the Venetian government were particularly interested in those humanist treatises which described the Venetian government in terms of classical political theories. The most important notion developed by humanists in the fifteenth century was that of the Venetian constitution as a realization of the classical idea of mixed government: the Doge represented the monarchical element; the Senate the aristocratic element; and the *Consiglio Maggiore* the democratic element. This concept of the Venetian constitution exerted a great influence in the development of European republicanism far into the eighteenth century.

The notion was probably first adumbrated by Pier Paolo Vergerio in a fragment on the Venetian republic.² He characterized Venice as an aristocracy but he added that Venice was a particularly well-constructed aristocracy because its government had also some monarchical and democratic features. This concept was fully worked out only in the middle of the fifteenth century and this development is connected with the name of one of the best-known Venetian patricians of that time, Francesco Barbaro, and with his intellectual circle.³ Barbaro was the patron of the Greek scholar, George of Trebizond, whom Barbaro had brought from Crete to Venice in 1417. From Rome, in December 1451, Trebizond wrote to Barbaro that 'your ancestors who have founded your republic have certainly taken from Plato's *Laws* everything that makes the life of a republic long and happy. For it would be quite incredible that things could be so completely identical by accident.

¹ See G. B. Picotti, 'Le Lettere di Lodovico Foscarini', *L'Ateneo Veneto*, vol. XXXII (1909), pp. 21-49, particularly p. 43, and M. Foscarini, *Della Letteratura Veneziana* (Venice, 1854), pp. 245-8. These writers used the letters of Lodovico Foscarini, but they did not exhaust the material, concerned with the search for a public historiographer, in the codex containing Foscarini's correspondence (original in Vienna; a copy in Treviso, Biblioteca Comunale, MS. 85).

² *De republica veneta fragmenta*, ed. E. A. Ciconia (Venice, 1830). A manuscript of this treatise in Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, no. 4576, Cl. Lat. XIV, cod. CCLV, shows variations; but they do not change the contents. The relevant passage runs: 'Venetorum respublica optimatum administratione regitur. Ideoque aristocratiam greco vocabulo licet appellare quae inter regium popularemque principatum media est. Hec vero et tanto est melior quod, quoniam utriusque laudabilium extremorum participat, ex omni genere laudabilis recte politice simul commixta est.'

³ On Barbaro's relations with George of Trebizond, see Percy Gothein, *Francesco Barbaro* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 147-51, Deno John Geneakopulos, *Greek Scholars in Venice* (Cambridge, 1962), particularly pp. 30-1, and Giorgio Castellani, 'Giorgio da Trebisonda, maestro di eloquenza a Vicenza e a Vinegia', *Nuovo Archivio Veneto*, vol. XI (1896), pp. 123-42; the following is based on Castellani's article although I give fuller quotations from the correspondence between Barbaro and Trebizond.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

Plato said that no republic could live long and happy if it did not contain elements of all forms of government: of one-man rule, of aristocracy and of democracy.¹ George of Trebizond added that the Venetian constitution corresponded even in its details to Plato's ideal republic. Barbaro in his answer expressed his delight about George of Trebizond's discovery. He asked him to write an introduction to his translation of Plato's *Laws* in which he should point out the similarity between Plato's theories and Venice's political practice, and he promised that he would distribute this book among his Venetian compatriots and George of Trebizond would receive a rich compensation.² George of Trebizond wrote such an introduction³ and Barbaro was pleased to hear that through the Greek scholar's efforts 'as the Athenians took pride in Solon, the Spartans in Lycurgus, the Venetians could take pride in Plato as their law-giver'.⁴ George of Trebizond then dedicated the entire translation including the preface to Barbaro, but before he could harvest from his dedication the promised gain, Barbaro died. So he then composed another dedication, this time to the Doge, and this dedication finally brought him the expected benefits. The Venetian Senate decided to give him a remuneration 'which would be honourable and useful to George and to our state'.⁵ And in October 1460 George of Trebizond was appointed to the chair of humanities and rhetoric in the School of San Marco. The Venetians were proud to give their approval to a thesis which linked together Venice, Plato and

¹ 'Leges quoque Platonis, ex quibus aperte intellexi, Majores vestros, qui Reipublicae vestrae fundamenta jecerunt, ex his certe libris omnia, quibus Respublica diu felice esse possit, collegisse. Non est enim credibile, casu ita omnia confluisse, ut ad unguem praeceptis illius convenient. Nullam, inquit ipse, beatam diu fore Rempublicam, nisi quae ita constituta sit, ut omnibus regendarum civitatum modis, Principis dico unius, Optimatum, Populique potestate gubernetur: quod nulli umquam sic exacte accidisse, quam vobis, perspicuum est', George of Trebizond to Barbaro, 5 December 1451, in *Francisci Barbari et aliorum ad ipsum Epistolae*, ed. M. A. Quirini (Brescia, 1743), no. 198, p. 290.

² Barbaro to Trebizond, 7 March 1452, *ibid.*, no. 199, pp. 292-5. Sections of this letter were published by Bessarion in his *In calumniatorem Platonis* (Aldus edition, 1516), fol. 87v. Bessarion wanted to demonstrate the unreliability of George of Trebizond who was now attacking Plato, but, as Barbaro's letter showed, had once admired him. Bessarion was also incensed about George of Trebizond changing the dedication of his translation of Plato's *Laws*, but for this Barbaro's death seems a sufficient explanation.

³ The preface, which only elaborates the ideas expressed in the letter to Barbaro, is preserved in Vatican Codex Lat. 5220, but has never been published; for some quotations from the preface, see M. A. Quirini, *Diatriba praeliminaris* (Brescia, 1741), p. 127.

⁴ 'Legi Praefationem tuam in leges Platonis . . . opera tua feceris, ut sicut Athenienses Solone, Lacedaemonici Lycurgo, ita nos Veneti Platone, legum nostrarum conditore, gloriari possimus', Barbaro to Trebizond, 13 January 1452, *Epistolae*, no. 206, p. 300; a very similar observation can be found already in Barbaro's letter of 7 March 1452.

⁵ ' . . . quando presertim eiusmodi remuneratio talis esse potest que civitati nostrae atque ipsi Georgio honori pariter usuique futura sit', quoted by Castellani, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

FELIX GILBERT

the idea of a constitution which combined all three forms of government.¹ In later years Venetians frequently referred to these ideas as containing the truth about their system of government and almost one-hundred years after George of Trebizond, Gasparo Contarini systematized this view of Venice in his famous and influential book.

The idea of a mixed government combining monarchical, aristocratic and democratic elements was, however, only one of the various notions classical writers employed in defining the nature of a good republic. Mixed government did not necessarily mean a combination of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. People ascribed to Plato the view that mixed government must contain three forms of government because he had written that a well-organized government ought to stand on the middle ground between monarchy and democracy.² Aristotle already observed that Plato, in the outline of his ideal republic, actually envisaged a mixture of democracy and oligarchy rather than a combination of all three forms of government.³ In Aristotle's own discussions of mixed government this combination of oligarchy and democracy received most attention.⁴ In other passages, however, Aristotle seems to suggest that aristocracy was superior to all other forms of government⁵ and the view of the excellence of aristocracy was reinforced by the authority of Cicero.⁶

Thus, not all humanist writers who praised Venice as a realization of the classical precepts for an ideal republic saw in the Venetian government a combination of all three forms of government; some regarded Venice as a mixture of oligarchy and democracy, others as an aristocracy. For instance, Francesco Patrizi, who in his treatise on republics expressed his admiration for the immutability of the Venetian government, regarded Venice as excelling all other states in 'justice, power, wealth and splendour';⁷ according to Patrizi a perfect republic

¹ George of Trebizond stated this thesis also in his *Comparationes Philosophorum Aristotelis et Platonis*, in a chapter of the second book, entitled: 'Quod divinitus illud Platoni dictum est, optimam rem publicam non esse simplicem, quodque id solis Venetis contigit.'

² Plato, *Laws*, bk. III.

³ Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. II, ch. 3.

⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. IV, chs. 9 and 10.

⁵ Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. IV, ch. 6.

⁶ Cicero's *De re publica*, with its emphasis on mixed constitution, was not known before the nineteenth century. The humanists were not concerned with the finer shadings of the classical views on constitutions, so that a modern interpretation of the classical theory — like that by Kurt von Fritz, *The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity* (New York, 1954) — has little relevance to the ideas of the fifteenth century.

⁷ '... apud Venetos, quorum Res Publica justitia, imperio, opulencia, et civium splendore, non modo in omni Italia, verum in universo quoque terrarum orbe praeclarissima habetur', *De Institutione Reipublicae Libri IX* (Strasburg, 1608), p. 71.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

required a mixture of democracy and oligarchy.¹ But there were a great number of writers — probably the majority of those dealing with this subject — who characterized Venice as an aristocracy. Poggio Bracciolini, relying on Cicero's view that an aristocracy was the best form of government, advanced the thesis that Venice was the only truly aristocratic government that had ever existed. In Venice 'the best citizens rule and serve the well-being of the state without regard to their personal interests'.² Likewise, Sabellico in his treatise on the Venetian magistrates declared that Venice was that aristocracy which Plato had praised. Eternal harmony which reigned in Venice guaranteed that the city would withstand all the attacks of ruthless fortune.³ The most extensive and detailed account of Venice as an aristocracy was given by Francesco Negri.⁴ Like Poggio, Negri asserted that the only state in which an ideal government, namely, an aristocracy, had come to life was Venice.⁵ And Negri justified this thesis by a long praise of Venice's great men and of its political, intellectual and artistic achievements.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-5.

² Poggio's laudation of Venice can be found in Poggius Bracciolini, *Opera omnia*, ed. Riccardo Fubini, vol. II (Turin, 1966), pp. 919-37; see p. 925: '... et aristocratiam, quam nostri optimatum appellant, et eam Cicero in libris de legibus optimam esse ait ... Talem profecto nunquam nisi apud Venetos fuisse verissime affirmarim, apud quos soli optimates civitatem regunt, obtemperantes legibus intentique omnes ad publici status utilitatem, omni rei privatae cura post habita.' Poggio's treatise is one of the best humanist summaries of all the elements of the Venetian 'myth' — situation, government structure, public spirit; it describes as characteristic of an aristocracy that common good is placed above private interest and that the people are well treated but excluded from government. For a short account of the contents of Poggio's piece, see Ernst Walsler, *Poggius Florentinus Leben und Werke* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1914), pp. 291-2; Walsler explains Poggio's reasons for writing this work (see below, p. 472) 'and directs attention to the fact that a praise of Venice, composed by Poggio's son Gianfrancesco (Biblioteca Marciana, no. 4370, Cl. Lat. XI, Cod. CXXXVIII), uses extensively his father's manuscript.

³ 'Haec est Aristocratia illa, quam divinus Plato numquam statis laudatam credidit ... his namque auspiciis Venetum imperium, quod late hodie terra marique patet, non solum est auctum, sed perpetua etiam ordinum concordia nullos saevientis fortunae reformidat impetus', *De Venetis magistratibus*, in *Opera*, vol. II (Basle, 1560), p. 279.

⁴ *De aristocratia*, Biblioteca Marciana, no. 2753, Cl. Lat. VI, cod. VI. On Francesco Negri, see Giovanni Mercati, *Ultimi contributi alla storia degli umanisti* (Vatican City, 1939), pp. 24-109 and the appendix, particularly 40*-58*. On the basis of a version of Negri's manuscript in the Vatican Library, Card. Mercati showed that a connection existed between Negri's treatise and the book of the Count of Porcia, *De reipublicae venetae administratione* (Treviso, 1477), and suggests that Negri elaborated Porcia's book. It is true that the organization of the two works is very similar and some connection may have existed, but this relationship does not seem to me very significant. Porcia's book is poor and empty, Negri's manuscript, even if not very penetrating or profound, full of substance.

⁵ Negri, *De aristocratia*, fol. 11v; '... tertiam aristocraticam appellaverunt quam nos quidem optimam merito partem vocamus: optimam inquam: et quae optimo principe digna est et quae non minus optimam urbem optimam plebem optimumque reddit imperium', and Negri continues that this form of government exists only in Venice.

FELIX GILBERT

It has been mentioned that the Venetian ruling group promoted these praises of Venice because they served to strengthen the civic spirit. On the other hand most of the humanist authors composed these flattering descriptions because they wanted to gain the protection and favour of the Venetian government or of individual Venetian nobles. This purpose is evident and unconcealed in the case of Francesco Negri and it is not without significance that Negri had no qualms about calling Venice an aristocracy. Negri must have been sure that such a characterization of the Venetian government would be welcomed by the men who were in power in Venice. We can assume that whatever particular description of their constitution the Venetians believed to be most appropriate, whether they accepted the thesis that their constitution contained monarchical, aristocratic and democratic features, that it was a mixture of oligarchy and democracy or a pure aristocracy, they all regarded the aristocratic element as the prevailing one in the structure of their society.

II

The question of the influence which the image of Venice as an ideal republic exerted on politics in fifteenth-century Florence cannot be answered in clear and simple terms. As we shall see later some circles in Florence shared the high estimate of Venice by the humanists and regarded Venice as an ideal republic. But in general the praise of Venice did not shake the conviction that Venice and Florence were very different political formations. The gap between them grew wider.

Of the various humanist writers on Venice whom we discussed, Poggio alone was a Florentine. He had his personal reasons for composing a laudation of Venice. He was deeply incensed about taxes which, unjustly in his opinion, the Florentine government asked him to pay.¹ He thought of leaving Florence and settling in Venice. Disgusted with the arbitrariness and unreliability of the Florentine democracy, he painted in radiant colours the strict observations of law and justice in an aristocracy. Thus Poggio, five hundred years before Burckhardt, regarded restlessness as characteristic of Florence, stability as characteristic of Venice. The application of the terminology of ancient political science to Venice and Florence only reinforced the feeling of the distinctiveness of these two cities.

The Florentine views about the different and alien character of

¹ See Walser, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-1.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

Venice emerged clearly when adoption of Venetian forms of government became a question of practical politics. In the winter of 1465–66 and the summer of 1466, after the death of Cosimo Medici and before his son Piero had gathered the reins of government firmly in his hands, an attempt was made to limit the power of the Medici, perhaps even to deprive them of their power. The institutional changes which the opponents of the Medici tried to introduce are not known to us in detail.¹ The main features seem to have been to make the eligibility to government offices a permanent privilege of a restricted group. In the deliberations on this, one of the speakers stated that of the three forms of government only a system in which the people ruled guaranteed stability.² Florence possessed such a system; Florence was a democracy. This argument was repeated by another speaker who said that innovations were dangerous and that the changes which were now suggested would introduce an aristocracy in imitation of the Venetian republic; in the opinion of this speaker 'our republic has most brilliantly flourished under a democratic form of government'.³ The speaker saw the principal difference between aristocracy and democracy, between Venice and Florence, in the manner in which offices were filled. In Venice magistrates were elected; in Florence men were assigned to offices by lot.

It is evident, however, that in rejecting imitation of the Venetian model Florentines were guided not only by rational arguments but also by emotions. The two republics were old political enemies and regarded each other with distrust and hostility. From the diatribe against the greediness of Venice which Villani inserted in his chronicle⁴ in the fourteenth century to the anti-Venetian letter of Benedetto Dei, in which the author defended Cosimo Medici's alliance with Milan in the

¹ This episode of Florentine history has been treated in the article by Guido Pampaloni, 'Fermenti di riforme democratiche nella Firenze medicea del Quattrocento', *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX (1961), pp. 11–62, who suggests that the plan was to create a Great Council. See also Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici (1434 to 1494)*, pp. 146–7. The relevant source material has been published by Pampaloni, loc. cit., pp. 240–81, and *A.S.I.*, vol. CXX (1962), pp. 521–81.

² *A.S.I.*, vol. CXIX, p. 246: 'Civitates enim aut unus gubernat, aut pauci aut multitudo; et que ab uno aut paucis gubernantur non habere firmitudinem, sed cum a populo gubernantur, quia amore et benevolentia gubernantur.'

³ *Ibid.*, p. 261: 'Quod autem affertur novum eiusmodi est ut afferri videatur statum optimum et imitationem quandam rei p. Venetorum. Cum autem videam, inquit, hanc rem p. nostram florentissimam esse factam populari administratione . . . ;' see also pp. 261–2 the speeches of Giovanni Pitti and Domenico Martelli. Because the expressions 'aristocrats' and 'democrats' are rather vague, they seem appropriate English terms for characterizing the opposing Florentine groups. Aristocrats are in favour of a small strictly limited ruling group of wealthy and old families, democrats aim at a broadening of this ruling group, but, of course, nobody thought of including workers or men who were in an entirely dependent position.

⁴ *Cronica*, bk. XI, ch. 90.

FELIX GILBERT

fifteenth century,¹ references to this traditional enmity between Venice and Florence are frequent.

But although feelings of being different may have been the prevailing mood in the Florentine attitude towards Venice, there were factors which worked in the opposite direction. Venice and Florence alone had been left as independent and powerful republics on the Italian political scene; republicanism created an ideological bond. This aspect of the relation was usually emphasized in the speeches with which ambassadors began their diplomatic missions: there was a close relation between those two city-states because of the 'similarity in their forms of public rule and in their ways of living and conducting business'.² Nevertheless, the feeling of a certain ideological affinity was transformed into common political action only when the interests of both cities were threatened by the same enemy. It is true, however, that business ties formed bonds between individual members of the Venetian and Florentine ruling group. Of Florentines, the Medici and their circle had close friends in Venice; Cosimo took up residence in Venice when he and his family were driven out of Florence in 1433; and the Medici continued to maintain the contacts with members of the Venetian nobility which had been established in the times of their exile. Of Venetians those patricians who delighted most in the new world of humanism cultivated friendships in Medicean Florence. Francesco Barbaro was a friend of the Medici family, and especially close to Lorenzo de' Medici, Cosimo's younger brother.³ Barbaro's Florentine contacts extended to other members of the Florentine ruling group. Among the Venetian nobles who enjoyed friendship with Florentines in the second part of the fifteenth century was Bernardo Bembo; he served several terms as Venetian ambassador in Florence and belonged to the circle of Marsilio Ficino.⁴ Bembo's popularity with the Florentine ruling group was so great that a special attempt was made to prevent his recall from Florence. In later years Bembo seems to have been the chief expert in the Venetian government for Florentine affairs; he was

¹ See Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance*, revised edition (Princeton, 1966), p. 401.

² 'Similitudinem gubernandi publice et privatim vivendi et negotiandi . . .', from an oration at the reception of a Venetian embassy, 17 March 1472, A.S.F., Signori, Legazioni e Commissarie, Risposte Verballi d'Oratori, 2, fol. 42v, but see also *ibid.*, fol. 45v, where, on the occasion of the reception of another Venetian embassy in 1474, exactly the same thought is expressed. The repetitive use of all such formulas weakens the thesis of the importance of republican ideology in the actual conduct of foreign policy, as advanced by H. Baron, *op. cit.*, pp. 387-403.

³ Gothein, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-4.

⁴ See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Supplementum Ficinianum*, vol. II (Florence, 1937), p. 346.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

usually charged with taking care of the Florentine ambassadors who came to Venice.¹ A slightly younger Venetian aristocrat with close connections in Florence was Pietro Delfino. Lorenzo Magnifico, with whom Delfino had come in contact through his duties as general of the Camaldulensian Order, esteemed Delfino highly, and Delfino was also a particular friend of Lorenzo's brother-in-law, Bernardo Rucellai, with whom he corresponded on intellectual problems and political events. It is from Delfino that we have one of the few direct testimonies of Florentine admiration for the Venetian constitution. In a letter addressed to a Venetian friend, Delfino stated that he had heard in Florence about Poggio's treatise in praise of Venice and that he was sending to Venice a copy of this manuscript. Delfino added that he had been able to observe that the whole of Florence shared Poggio's high opinion of the Venetian system of government.² When Delfino wrote 'entire Florence' (*universa Florentia*) he doubtless meant the Florentine ruling group, the circle around Lorenzo Magnifico. One can probably say that in the fifteenth century admiration for Venice was limited to members of the Florentine aristocracy who favoured an oligarchic régime. But among them this attitude was almost traditional. Already Rinaldo degli Albizzi complained that Florence had not a government like that of Venice; and the same attitude can be observed in the strange abortive conspiracy which was undertaken in 1459 or early in 1460.³ Benedetto Dei, one of the conspirators, and our only witness of this event, was an adherent and probably an agent of the Medici. He and his companions wanted to introduce a reform which, after the Venetian model, would entrust the government of Florence to a Doge and to members of about two hundred Florentine families.

In the fifteenth century, admiration for Venice and the wish for changing the Florentine government in accordance with the pattern of the Venetian constitution was limited to the Florentine aristocrats, and even a particular group among them; they alone had access to the

¹ For instance, see the report of the Florentine ambassadors Giovanbattista Ridolfi and Paolantonio Soderini from Venice, 12 August 1491, A.S.F., M.A.P., filza XIX, fol. 619.

² 'Cum essem Florentiae proxima Quaresima, convenit me civis quidam mei studiosus ac nationi Venetae valde affectus. Is . . . pollicitus est mihi orationem quamdam Poggii in laudem Venetarum olim editam. . . . Mitto itaque illam ad te, ut intelligas, quanti fecerit homo Florentinus rempublicam nostram. Et profecto idem fere universa Florentia de nostris sentit, cuius rei sum optimus testis. . . .' Pietro Delfino to Bernardino monaco, 27 April 1487, published in Martène et Durand, *Veterum Scriptorum et monumentorum . . . amplissima collectio*, vol. III (Paris, 1724), p. 1146. On Delfino, see Josef Schnitzer, *Peter Delfin, General des Camaldulenserordens, 1444-1525* (Munich, 1926).

³ See Maria Pisani, *Un avventuriero del Quattrocento. La vita e le opere di Benedetto Dei* (Genoa, 1923), particularly pp. 102 ff.

FELIX GILBERT

knowledge needed to introduce features of the Venetian constitution into the Florentine system. One may question whether the various treatises on Venice which we have discussed were widely known. Even if they were, their authors did not offer much detailed information about Venetian political life or give a concrete or realistic picture of the functioning of Venetian institutions. The intellectual aim and ambitions of the humanists were satisfied when they had identified the Venetian government with one of the categories of classical political thought. Then they might explain that this system of government was suited to realize virtues like justice, fortitude or charity, or they might assert that the Venetians were 'new Romans'.¹ In Sabellico's comparison of Roman and Venetian achievements which he inserted in his history, Venice came out best. Its constitution was better than that of the Roman republic and Venice excelled all states that had ever existed. But from these treatises the reader will not get much information about the institutions which distinguished Venice, only that Venice had a Doge, a Senate and a large council. A few arrangements of the Venetian constitution attracted attention. For instance, the combination of election and of the use of lots which the Venetians employed in filling vacancies among their magistrates is frequently described in detail.² Likewise the ceremonies surrounding the death of a Doge and the election of his successor. Special praise is given to the care with which secrecy was maintained.³

Some of these writings contain a list of magistrates. Such an enumeration forms the contents of one of Sabellico's treatises on Venice,⁴ but although Sabellico was relatively well informed, this listing gave no clear picture of the functioning of the various magistrates nor did he study the relationships which existed among them. The most extended and best-informed discussion of the Venetian government in the fifteenth century was Paolo Morosini's letter to Gregory of Heimbürg.⁵ But despite many interesting details, particularly about the administration of justice and about the procedure in the various councils, Morosini did not explain how these various governmental agencies were connected with each other and how such a collection of magistrates could

¹ 'Veneti appellatur Romani novelli', Bembo, 'Commonplace Book', loc. cit., fol. 44. See also B. Accolti, *De praestantia virorum sui aevi*, in Philippi Villani *Liber de civitatis Florentiae famosis civibus*, ed. G. C. Galletti (Florence, 1847), p. 119.

² For instance, by Patrizi, op. cit., p. 116.

³ For instance, see Poggio, op. cit., p. 934.

⁴ See above, p. 471, n. 3.

⁵ *De rebus ac forma reipublicae venetae Gregorio Heymbürg, Germanorum doctori praeclarissimo*, published in Valentinelli, *Biblioteca Manuscripta ad S. Marci Venetiarum* (Venice, 1868-73), vol. III, pp. 231-64.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

effect a centrally directed policy. Florentine politicians who came as ambassadors to Venice were probably better equipped than literati to acquire knowledge of Venetian institutions. It is significant that alone Dei, who was close to the Medici, put his finger on the crucial issue when he intimated that the centre of the Venetian government was a council strictly limited and controlled by a finite number of patrician families.

Thus, at the end of the fifteenth century, when the French invasion and the flight of the Medici opened a new chapter in Florentine constitutional developments, all the praise which had been bestowed upon the Venetian government had not resulted in the acceptance of Venice as a model for Florence. The great majority of the citizens remained convinced that Venice and Florence were very different formations — Venice an aristocracy and Florence a democracy — and that it was best to preserve a city's ancient and original form of government. Moreover, only a few men possessed insight into the real functioning of the Venetian government; the tendency towards imitating the Venetian government can be found only in the group around the Medici. These men thought that an adoption of the Venetian constitution, perhaps with a member of the Medici family as Doge and a council limited to families loyal to the Medici, might be desirable and give to the rule of the Medici in Florence stability and permanency.

III

With the overthrow of the Medici in 1494, we enter upon a period of Florentine history in which the constitutional forms of Venice became an openly discussed and important issue of Florentine politics. In 1494 the Florentines established the Great Council after the Venetian model. And the hall in which its meetings took place was constructed according to the measurements of the hall of the Venetian *Consiglio Maggiore*. In 1502, the highest Florentine office, the Gonfalonierate of Justice, became a lifetime position: Florence became headed by a Doge. However, these two reforms, both undertaken in the Venetian pattern, ought to be sharply differentiated. The institutional innovation of 1502, the creation of the *Gonfaloniere a vita*, was, as we shall see later on, urged by the Florentine aristocrats and was in line with the interpretation that Venice was mainly an aristocracy. But the motives for the creation of the Great Council in 1494 were quite different. Through a *parlamento*, which followed the overthrow of Piero de' Medici, power had been placed in the hands of a small oligarchy, more

FELIX GILBERT

or less the same group which had been predominant before the revolution — only without Piero de' Medici as the head. The establishment of the Great Council on 23 December 1494 aimed at broadening the government. In this respect it was an anti-aristocratic movement. Thus, in 1494 the Venetian pattern served democratic purposes. And eight years later it served the opposite aim of an aristocratic reaction. How was it possible for the Venetian pattern to be used for different ends?

In order to answer this question we must investigate the motives which determined the adoption of the pattern of the Venetian *Consiglio Maggiore* in 1494,¹ and this in turn means an analysis of the attitude of Savonarola, who was the most powerful spokesman for the adoption of the Venetian model by Florence. Savonarola's political attitude in 1494 has aroused much discussion, for it is not easy to understand or to explain.² Savonarola was not a systematic thinker; he was a powerful preacher and his sermons, even after almost five hundred years when they are read but not heard, still have a compelling and moving force. When his sermons had a practical aim he was able and anxious to bolster his point by rational arguments taken from philosophy, theology, or history. But his arguments always remained subordinated to the purposes of his sermon. He could employ different, even contradictory, arguments, whenever his aim had changed. Savonarola did not hesitate to use a variety of rationalizations because he was a visionary to whom ideas came by inspiration. With increasing involvement in Florentine politics his approach to political problems became more sophisticated. But in the winter of 1494 his political approach was rather naive. For Savonarola there were two types of government: monarchies and republics.³ The republican form was more appropriate to Italy; Savonarola seemed unaware of the distinction which the humanists had made between aristocratic and democratic republics. If the republican government in Florence did not work, this was caused by the selfishness and viciousness of individual citizens who tended towards tyranny. These were the assumptions behind Savonarola's intervention

¹ For these events see Nicolai Rubinstein, 'Politics and Constitution in Florence at the End of the Fifteenth Century', *Italian Renaissance Studies*, ed. E. F. Jacob (London, 1960), pp. 148-83.

² On Savonarola's politics, see the two articles by Donald Weinstein, 'Savonarola, Florence, and the Millenarian Tradition', *Church History*, vol. XXVII (1958), pp. 3-17 and 'Millenarianism in a Civic Setting: the Savonarola Movement in Florence', *Millennial Dreams in Action; Essays in Comparative Studies*, ed. Sylvia L. Thrupp (The Hague, 1962), pp. 187-203.

³ The crucial sermon is the one of 14 December 1494, published in Savonarola, *Prediche Italiane ai Fiorentini*, ed. F. Cognasso, vol. I (Perugia and Venice, 1930), pp. 181-97.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

in Florentine politics in December 1494. From 14 to 21 December, with exception of the 20th, he preached daily until, on 22 and 23 December, the Florentine councils adopted a constitutional reform and established the Great Council. In Savonarola's sermons the foremost admonition was that of the need for a moral conversion: the citizens ought to place the common good above private interests. They ought to live virtuously and treat each other with love and charity. Savonarola's demand for moral reforms extended into the sphere of political reform because the existing government system gave dominating influence to a few ambitious citizens and prevented unity and harmony. Savonarola drew two practical conclusions from this situation. Firstly, he insisted on the necessity of introducing new institutions.¹ The vehemence with which he justified the need for departing from the past and for the imitation of foreign institutions indicates the strength of the resistance to deviation from the traditional concepts of Florentine politics. Savonarola's sermon of 17 December, which is chiefly devoted to this issue, is a very impressive document.² It contains a poetic description of the meeting of two women, one representing Truth, the other Tradition. Savonarola wanted to show that tradition was inferior to truth. Secondly, Savonarola recommended speed in effecting institutional reforms. This suggestion arose from the tense internal situation in Florence which was threatened by outbreaks of violence. But Savonarola seems also to have feared that delay would give those who held power an opportunity for reinforcing their position.³

In political terms one can say that Savonarola's demands were democratic. They aimed at curtailing the power of the Florentine oligarchy. But Savonarola himself hardly saw his suggestions in these political terms. To him the struggle was not one of aristocrats versus democrats, of an oligarchic régime against a more broadly based government, but of good against evil, of virtue against vice. In Savonarola's view the existing régime of a small élite was bad, not because a régime of few was inferior to a régime of many, but because the few who ruled were evil men.

Savonarola's recommendation of the Venetian model must be seen in this context. Savonarola was not interested in the question of whether Venice was an aristocracy or a democracy or a mixed government. The Venetians were no better than the Florentines. If Venice lived without internal revolutions and dissensions — and Savonarola

¹ Particularly in the sermon of 16 December, *ibid.*, pp. 215–26.

² *Ibid.*, particularly pp. 228–31.

³ Sermon of 15 December, *ibid.*, particularly p. 210.

FELIX GILBERT

accepted this myth of the harmonious stability of the Venetian government — then the Venetian institutions were better than those of Florence and ought to be imitated by the Florentines.¹ Savonarola singled out the Venetian *Consiglio Maggiore* and the Venetian method of electing officials as particularly suited for adoption by Florence. Actually, he regarded the creation of a Great Council as the necessary precondition for the crucial innovation, the introduction of an elective system: the Great Council was the instrument which served to place office-holding on an elective principle. Certainly, Savonarola regarded as crucial an enlargement of the circle of citizens directly involved in the ruling of the city. If citizens had a chance to receive honours they would live more virtuously.² From Savonarola's sermons one does not get the impression that he had concrete or detailed ideas about the changes which ought to be made, and one might wonder whether he had very clear ideas about the Venetian constitution. He was not aware that these measures might work a revolutionary change replacing one social group by another. He looked upon these reforms from the point of view that they would result in moral improvement.

It is reliably reported that Savonarola's recommendation for imitating Venice was encouraged and perhaps inspired by others. If Savonarola himself had no clear notions about the political consequences involved in the establishment of a Great Council, were these others equally unaware of the implications of this suggestion?

We have little information about the exact course of events which preceded the acceptance of the law of 23 December establishing the Great Council. We know that a large number of proposals were submitted to the government but only a few of them are preserved. And their authorship cannot always be established. Thus, our knowledge of the extent and the character of the controversies which were going on in Florence is fragmentary. In the few drafts we have, the impact of Savonarola's recommendation can certainly be noticed. Emphasis is placed on the adoption of the Venetian procedure of election rather

¹ The decisive recommendation of the Venetian government was made by Savonarola in his sermon of 14 December, *ibid.*, p. 195, but see also the sermon of 21 December, *ibid.*, particularly p. 293: 'La reforma de' Veneziani sarebbe el vostro bisogno . . . e la esperienza lo dimostra che non essendo però loro migliori degli altri non s'è udito nella città loro in tanto tempo che hanno retto le dissensioni e rivoluzioni che sono state qui in te, ne' tempi passati. Però ti bisogna, Firenze, levare via questo tuo modo vecchio . . . la volontà di Dio è che tu non ti regga più come tu hai fatto insino a quei ne' tempi passati. . . .'

² *Ibid.*, p. 195: 'E così ancora credo sia bene per dare animo a ciascuno di portarsi virtuosamente, che gli artefici fussino in qualche modo beneficiati ed allettati a portarsi bene, per essere onorati.'

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

than on the creation of the Great Council. Few Florentines seem to have recognized the revolutionary impact which the establishment of the Great Council would have. Although there was agreement on the principle that membership in the Great Council should be granted only to those citizens whose ancestors — father or grandfather — had been entitled to hold office, there were disagreements about the precise form in which this principle should be carried through. Very few, however, seemed to have had any clear idea of the size which the Great Council might have. An exception was Piero Capponi who, because of his courageous stand against the French, was then probably the most influential member of the Florentine ruling group. In his proposal Capponi expressed the view that the Great Council might be much larger than people seemed to think; he insisted therefore on the importance of having also a smaller council which would control the actual conduct of affairs. As pattern for such a smaller council Capponi referred to the Venetian Council of the *Pregadi*. This corresponds to our observation that precise knowledge of the Venetian constitution would be found chiefly among Florentine aristocrats; only an aristocrat like Capponi realized the crucial significance of the Council of the *Pregadi* in the Venetian aristocratic system of government.

The final outcome of these discussions and proposals, the law of 23 December, reflected less the Venetian pattern than one might have expected after Savonarola's intervention. It is difficult to decide whether the departures from the Venetian model were due to a lack of knowledge of Venice, to recognition of the impossibility of transferring Venetian institutions to Florence, or to an unwillingness to follow foreign examples. In the law of 23 December the Florentine Great Council was called Council of the People and of the Commune and this name indicates that the Great Council was meant to be an outgrowth and continuation of traditional Florentine institutions rather than an innovation. Although, in addition to the Great Council a smaller council was established, the functions of this Florentine Council of the Eighty were much more limited than the functions of the Venetian Council of the *Pregadi*.

The establishment of the Great Council and the introduction of elections for offices failed to bring internal harmony and peace to Florence. For us, this is easily understandable because the Florentine Great Council lacked the homogeneity of its Venetian pattern: it contained both aristocrats and men of the middle classes, and conflicts between them were unavoidable. The Florentines did not see their domestic difficulties in this light. Nevertheless with increasing internal

FELIX GILBERT

tension views about the usefulness and applicability of the Venetian pattern began to take a new and more pronounced shape. In opposition to the dissatisfaction of the aristocrats who regarded the Great Council as the principal cause for their diminished authority, the middle classes defended the Great Council. It became to them the bulwark of Florentine democracy. In the sermons of the following years Savonarola emphasized this aspect of the Great Council.¹ In Savonarola's references to Florentine politics defence of the Great Council became his main theme, and his argument about the meaning and significance of this institution shifted. Savonarola now mentions the existence of three forms of government: of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy.² Florence, he says, is a democracy, a *vivere popolare*, and the democratic nature of the Florentine government is embodied in the Great Council.³ Savonarola continued to insist that foreign institutions, if they had shown themselves to be conducive to good life, should be studied and imitated but he mentioned as possible patterns Lucca and Siena as well as Venice.⁴ In Savonarola's defence and praise of the Great Council the notion that the Great Council was constructed after the Venetian model began to disappear. According to Savonarola Florence had become a reformed city and the centrepiece of this reform was the Great Council. But it was God who had granted Florence this remarkable institution. In Florence a perfect social order had been realized; other cities ought to look up to Florence and imitate her.⁵ Other partisans of Florentine democracy gave to these arguments a somewhat different turn. Certainly, the Great Council was the 'soul of Florence' and it was given to Florence by God. But it represented also the ancient and original form of Florentine political life: its *antico vivere popolare*.

IV

If, after 1494, the partisans of a democratic political organization began to minimize the rôle which the Venetian model had played in the

¹ 'Il Consiglio grande è la tua salute; se tu tieni saldo el consiglio, non avete paura di uomo del mondo . . .', sermon of 18 October 1495, Savonarola, *Prediche*, vol. II, p. 426, but see also the sermons of 19 February, 21 February, and 9 March 1496, *ibid.*, vol. III, part 1, pp. 76, 133; part 2, p. 478.

² Sermon of 11 October 1495, *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 408.

³ '... il reggimento tuo naturale è vivere popolare . . .', sermon of 24 February 1496, *ibid.*, vol. III, part 1, p. 186.

⁴ See the sermon of 18 October 1495, *ibid.*, vol. II, p. 427.

⁵ '... li predicatori susciteranno l'altre città e diranno a' popoli: andate a Firenze, andate a lei, che ell' ha el vero lume; pigliate da lei la forma del governo,' sermon of 19 March 1496, *ibid.*, vol. III, part 2, p. 196, but see also the sermons of 4 April and 10 April 1496, *ibid.*, pp. 486 and 580.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

introduction of the Great Council, the utterances of their opponents, of the aristocrats, show that they saw in Venice the embodiment of their political ideal: an aristocratic government.¹ When the government asked for advice on issues like the opening of new sources of revenue, or improvements in the administration of justice, speakers of the aristocrats frequently pointed to the manner in which such affairs were handled in Venice. The main concern of the aristocrats, however, was a constitution which would restore to them political control and the aristocratic plans for such a reform were modelled after Venice. This aristocratic attitude is exemplified by Bernardo Rucellai, one of the most vehement advocates of an anti-democratic revision of the Florentine constitution. Rucellai regarded the Venetian constitution as almost perfect. Its ideal character was one of the topics which was discussed in the Rucellai Gardens, where prominent Florentine politicians and literary men met and debated literary and political subjects.² It was also Rucellai who, in consultations about public matters, most frequently adduced the example of Venice. In Venice, Rucellai explained, unity and harmony existed because the citizens placed the public good before their own interests. But the exemplary organization of the political life in Venice was the result of a long development. In the early years of its existence also Venetian politics had suffered from internal conflicts and tensions. The Venetians had changed and reformed their original institutions until the present situation had been achieved. According to Rucellai the Venetian constitution was a mixed government: the Doge embodied the monarchical element, the aristocratic element was represented by the Senate. The great masses of the people, however, had no part in the government.³ The conclusions which Rucellai drew were that Florence ought not to consider the constitution of 1494 as sacrosanct and unchangeable but in need of improvement, and the most needed change was a strengthening of the influence of the Florentine aristocrats. This could be effected by the creation of a smaller council on the pattern of

¹ The developments discussed in this section are described at greater length and with documentary illustration in my book, *Machiavelli and Guicciardini; Politics and History in Sixteenth-Century Florence* (Princeton, 1965), pp. 49-78.

² See my article, 'Bernardo Rucellai and the Orti Oricellari', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, vol. XII (1949), pp. 101-31.

³ This characterization of the Venetian system of government comes from Rucellai's *De Bello Italico* (London, 1733), pp. 17-18: 'Ea enim res Veneta est situ ipso urbis, ac legibus munita; ut admixta, particepsque earum artium, quae ad regnum, optimates, ceteramque bene institutam rempublicam pertinent; et ab intestina, externaque vi maxime tuta sit; et diurnitate imperii immota crescat ceterarum ruinis: quippe quae octingentos jam annos amplius senatori ordine, haud admissa plebe, unis moribus, neque fere mutatis legibus vivit.'

FELIX GILBERT

the Venetian Council of the *Pregadi*. This council, composed exclusively of Florentine aristocrats, would handle all the important government business.

Rucellai's views were those of most of the Florentine aristocrats. From 1498 on, almost regularly, rumours went around about plans to 'hand over the government to three hundred prominent citizens'. These plans developed from rumours into issues of practical politics when, in the first years of the sixteenth century, a crisis occurred which threatened the political existence of Florence. The financial means needed for fending off the external enemy could be provided only by the aristocrats and they made a reform of the constitution in their favour a precondition of giving help. The consultations which were held pointed to the introduction of a small council which would be controlled by the aristocrats and would become a decisive factor in determining Florentine politics. But this was not the solution that was finally reached. The constitutional innovation of 1502 was the election of a *Gonfaloniere a vita*; the highest official, the head of the government, would now hold his position for his lifetime. Instead of getting a council of *Pregadi* the Florentines got a Doge.

The aristocrats agreed to this measure because they believed that the creation of the *Gonfaloniere a vita* was only a step in making the Florentine constitution similar to that of Venice and that this first reform would soon be followed by another one which would complete the process of imitation by adding the lacking middle link, a Senate. This further step was never taken and the aristocrats ascribed responsibility for this failure to the *Gonfaloniere a vita*, Piero Soderini, who did not want his powers curtailed by a council dominated by aristocrats. Thus, the aristocrats became vehement opponents of Soderini and their hostility contributed to the inglorious collapse of the Soderini régime in 1512. In the short period between Soderini's flight and the return of the Medici the aristocrats were in complete control. The first step which they undertook was to revise the constitution and to create that small aristocratically dominated council for which they had striven for the last fifteen years. The introduction of the law that established this council on 7 September 1512 referred to 'the governments of ancient and modern republics which have had a long life and ruled in peace and harmony'; obviously the modern republic to which this sentence alluded was Venice. These well-organized republics, so the law continued, possessed a Senate and the introduction of a Senate in Florence had been frequently recommended by thoughtful citizens. But only now people recognized the wisdom of this advice. This law

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

was in force only a very short time, but this was the period of the closest similarity between the Venetian and Florentine constitutions.

Nevertheless, even the law of 7 September 1512 gives no clear answer to the question to what extent the notions about the ideal nature of the Venetian constitution were based on a detailed knowledge of the functioning of Venetian institutions. There are significant parallels between the development and functioning of the Venetian Council of the *Pregadi* and the Senate created by the Florentine law of 1512. In both, *Pregadi* and Senate, there were two kinds of members: those who received membership because they were holding high government posts and those who became members through election by the Great Council. In both cases, the function of the Senate was to elect ambassadors, to appoint administrators for dominated territories, and to handle government finances. But there were also differences; the Venetian *Pregadi* were elected for one year only. In Florence the senators had membership for life and fifty of them would be chosen by the three highest Florentine magistracies sitting together. The latter regulation assured aristocratic domination of this body because when the law was passed the aristocrats controlled these magistracies. The power of the Senate as the controlling factor in Florentine politics was further reinforced by the rule that the Senate would elect the Signoria and the Ten. In Venice the election of the highest officials remained in the hands of the *Consiglio Maggiore*. On the other hand, the financial power of the Venetian *Pregadi* was greater than that of the Florentine Senate. In Florence the Senate would initiate financial legislation and after approval by a two-thirds majority, the proposed financial legislation would go to the Great Council for acceptance or rejection by a simple majority. In Venice the handling of financial affairs was left entirely to the *Pregadi*. These variations in the handling of financial affairs are not without interest; they point up the differences between Venice and Florence. In Florence influence on taxation was left to the Great Council because the constitutional reform had to be passed by the Great Council, and some concession to the democratic forces was needed in order to make the reform acceptable. On the other hand, because of the strength of democratic elements in the Great Council, the aristocrats were anxious to make the Senate as powerful as possible in administrative affairs. Such compromises were unnecessary in Venice, because the *Consiglio Maggiore* was socially homogeneous and the Council of the *Pregadi* was mainly a smaller, more manageable committee of the larger council. The Florentines rightly regarded the Council of the *Pregadi* as the crucial factor in the Venetian government,

FELIX GILBERT

but such a council transplanted to Florence fulfilled there an entirely different function. In Venice, the Council of the *Pregadi* represented the executive arm of the aristocratic ruling group which was fully and exclusively gathered in the *Consiglio Maggiore*; in Florence an aristocratic Senate was to wrest control from a democratic Great Council.

In Florence the idea of mixed government as it was realized in Venice was a weapon in the political struggle. Certainly, some Florentines, like Bernardo Rucellai, had information about details of the Venetian constitution. But for most of them concrete knowledge of the functioning of Venetian institutions was not really involved in their appeals to the Venetian example: it was the Venetian political myth which influenced Florentine political thought in the republican period between 1494 and 1512.

V

After 1512 no change in Florentine constitutional legislation was inspired by the Venetian example. But this did not mean that speculations about the exemplary character of the Venetian institutions ceased. On the contrary, political theorizing and speculation were even intensified,¹ and the pattern of Venice continued to play a crucial rôle in political deliberations. This was natural. If the overthrow of the Medici in 1494 had opened the door to political experimentation, their return in 1512 necessarily strengthened this trend. With two breaks in political continuity tradition lost its hold over the minds of men: they became more interested in foreign patterns and more willing to accept them.

Nevertheless, for a number of years after 1512 political speculation evolved in rather narrow channels because power was in the hands of the Medici and political behaviour and action were determined by this fact. The middle classes and the bulk of the population were dissatisfied with the situation, but stunned by the slaughter of Prato and humiliated by the unheroic collapse of the Soderini régime, they remained in grumbling silence. Their dissatisfaction found its expression chiefly in rumours reviving Savonarola's prophecies of a complete change and reform. The aristocrats were busy jockeying for positions of influence with the Medici. Moreover, in 1513, the coming of the younger Lorenzo de' Medici to Florence revealed an entirely new possibility: the establishment of an absolutist ruler in Florence. Most of the aristocrats were

¹ The political literature of this period has been carefully treated by Rudolf von Albertini, *Das florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Uebergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Berne, 1955); see also the third chapter of my book on *Machiavelli and Guicciardini*. Footnotes will be limited to indicating the provenance of passages particularly relevant to our problem.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

horrified by the possibility of such a development and concentrated in their thinking on proving that an absolutist régime was not feasible in Florence and on suggesting stop-gap measures, such as the formation of a small advisory committee which they hoped might restrain Lorenzo.

But with the death of Lorenzo in 1519, yet another change in the political scene took place. The death of the last legitimate male descendant of Lorenzo il Magnifico unavoidably aroused discussions about the political future of Florence. Moreover, the two senior members of the Medici family, Pope Leo X and Cardinal Giulio, gave indications that they intended to liberalize the government system. We have a few of the blue-prints for a Florentine constitution which were now drawn up. In all of them the example of Venice played an important rôle. Guicciardini wrote that the Venetian government 'is the most beautiful and best government that any city, not only in our times but also in the classical world, ever possessed; the reason is that it embodies all three forms of government: those of one, of a few and of many'.¹ The views about the value of the Venetian constitution which had been formed in the fifteenth century were now taken as generally recognized truth.

But when these ideas were applied to the elaboration of a constitutional programme for Florence we find few references to details of the Venetian institutions and frequent statements that particular Venetian arrangements were not suited for Florence. Alessandro de' Pazzi referred to the Venetian council of the Ten, but he had doubts that such an institution would be appropriate for Florence.² Guicciardini was acquainted with the procedure followed by the Venetians in electing a Doge but he rejected it for Florence because it invited bargaining and compromises. Moreover, in Guicciardini's opinion the minimum age which the Venetians had set for becoming a Doge was too low.³ For all these writers the crucial feature of a mixed government and the most important institution in Venice was a Senate. And they regarded the creation of such a body to be the most needed reform in Florence. But in details they all deviated from the Venetian pattern.

Thus these projects again raised the question whether a fuller discussion of Venetian institutions did not take place in Florence,

¹ '... [il governo viniziano] è el piú bello ed el migliore governo non solo de' tempi nostri, ma ancora che forse avessi mai a' tempi antichi alcuna città, perché participa di tutte le spezie de' governi, di uno, di pochi e di molti. . . .' Francesco Guicciardini, *Dialogo e Discorsi del Reggimento di Firenze*, ed. R. Palmarocchi (Bari, 1932), p. 138; this passage comes from the *Dialogo del Reggimento di Firenze*.

² *A.S.I.*, vol. I (1842), p. 430.

³ Guicciardini, *op. cit.*, pp. 131, 147.

FELIX GILBERT

because imitation of the details of the Venetian pattern was considered unfeasible, or whether precise knowledge of the working of the Venetian constitution was lacking.

An observation by Guicciardini in his dialogue on the *Reggimento di Firenze* is suggestive in this context. Guicciardini maintained that the members of the Venetian *Consiglio Maggiore* were called nobles for reasons of prestige, but that in fact they were private citizens. If in Florence those who were members of the Great Council and as such entitled to hold office were called nobles, it would appear that there was no difference between the Venetian and the Florentine system: 'The government of Venice is as democratic as ours and ours is no less aristocratic than is theirs.'¹ This remark indicates that Guicciardini was unaware of the caste character of the Venetian nobility which excluded shop owners and craftsmen; and its hereditary character impeded the ascent of new men into its ranks. Because the Venetian *Consiglio Maggiore* was limited to a hereditary ruling group there was more truth behind the characterization of Florence as democratic and Venice as aristocratic than Guicciardini assumed. The somewhat vague character of the knowledge which Florentines possessed about Venice is underlined by the fact that whenever in Guicciardini's dialogue observations were made about Venice, the speakers sought confirmation for the correctness of their statements from Paolantonio Soderini, the one participant in the dialogue who had been Florentine ambassador in Venice.² Information gathered on diplomatic missions seems to have been the best source that was available for information about the Venetian government. This suggests that, even in this period, Venice interested Florentines because of the idea of Venice as a realization of mixed government rather than of their having concrete knowledge of Venetian institutions.

This can be seen from the writings of Machiavelli, the only Florentine political thinker who was not an admirer of Venice. The harshness of his judgments about Venice has been frequently remarked upon.³ It is true that Machiavelli rejected Venice as an ideal pattern. But he did not deny the Venetian constitution all merits. Machiavelli recognized that among modern republics Venice stood out.⁴ He praised the

¹ '... se noi chiamassimo gentiluomini e' nostri, e questo nome appresso a noi non si dessi se non a chi è abile agli uffici, troveresti che el governo di Vinegia è popolare come el nostro e che el nostro non è manco governo di ottimati che sia el loro. Pagolantonio è stato due volte imbasciadore a Vinegia, e credo dirà el medesimo che dico io,' *ibid.*, pp. 106-7.

² For example, see previous note.

³ See Federico Chabod, *Machiavelli and the Renaissance* (London, 1958), pp. 81-2.

⁴ *Discorsi*, I, ch. 34; *Istorie fiorentine*, bk. I, ch. 28.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

Venetian speed in handling emergency situations;¹ he lauded the Venetian efficiency in administering justice² and the continuity of government.³ But there were features for which he had less admiration.⁴ His main objection to Venice was that the Venetian constitution, although fitting for people who were willing to live in peaceful isolation,⁵ was unsuited for expansion and for the conquest of an empire. Briefly, Venice offered Machiavelli an example for his favourite thesis of the deficiency of the military organization in the Italian city-states. The neglect of military power was particularly inexcusable in Venice because the Venetians were greedy and ambitious.⁶ It was inevitable that they would suffer defeat and whenever this happened they became abject and lacked the courage which might have saved them.⁷ They relied on their money, not on power.⁸ It was natural that Machiavelli, as a democrat, was anxious to destroy the image of aristocratic Venice as an ideal republic. Beyond this, he does not seem to have had much further interest in Venice. His remarks on the Venetian nobility are still more misleading than those of Guicciardini.⁹ But although Machiavelli repudiated Venice as a pattern for Florence, his outline of a Florentine constitution¹⁰ contained the same basic elements as the drafts of his contemporaries. His ideal republic had three parts: Gonfalonier of Justice, Senate, Great Council, and he thought that Senators should be elected for life. If Machiavelli, who made no use of the Venetian pattern, outlined the same fundamental structure as the admirers of Venice, it seems a justified conclusion that general notions about an ideal government rather than detailed knowledge of Venice determined the character of the political projects of this period.

VI

In 1527 another change of régime took place in Florence. Again the Medici were driven out of the city; again a discussion began on the

¹ *Discorsi*, I, ch. 34.

² *Discorsi*, I, ch. 49.

³ *Discorsi*, I, ch. 50.

⁴ See, for instance, *Discorsi*, I, ch. 36, Machiavelli's criticism of the Venetian prohibition to hold lower offices after having held offices of higher rank.

⁵ *Discorsi*, I, ch. 5.

⁶ *Istorie fiorentine*, bk. I, ch. 29.

⁷ *Discorsi*, III, ch. 31.

⁸ *Discorsi*, II, ch. 10.

⁹ *Discorsi*, I, ch. 6.

¹⁰ I mean the *Discursus florentinarum rerum post mortem junioris Laurentii Medices*; for the separation of the concept of mixed government from the idea of Venice in Machiavelli's thought, see also Giorgio Cadoni, 'Libertà, repubblica e governo misto in Machiavelli', *Rivista Internazionale di Filosofia del Diritto*, vol. XXXIX (1962), pp. 462-84.

FELIX GILBERT

form of government which Florence ought to take; and again Venice was adduced as an example which Florence ought to imitate. But the allusions to Venice in the constitutional projects which were then suggested were more detailed than previously and revealed a much more intimate knowledge of the working of Venetian institutions. The reason was that, between the discussions at the beginning of the twenties and the revolution of 1527, a work had been written that provided a detailed analysis of the Venetian government. This work is Donato Giannotti's dialogue *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani*.¹ Although the manuscript was printed only in 1540, it circulated freely in Florence in 1527-28.² Giannotti's dialogue represents the climax of Florentine political thinking on Venice in the Renaissance period.

Giannotti wrote his dialogue while he was living for some months in Padua and Venice. He departed from Florence at the end of 1525 accompanying Giovanni Borgherini whom Giannotti made one of the main speakers of the dialogue. Giannotti returned to Florence in November or December 1526 but he left again in February 1527, this time as chancellor of Alessandro de'Pazzi who had been made Florentine ambassador at Venice. Giannotti came back to Florence in the summer of 1527 and by then the manuscript of his dialogue on the Venetian Republic was completed. Changes which Giannotti made before its publication in 1540 are insignificant.³

When Giannotti started out for northern Italy in 1525 he was thirty-three years old and had been a lecturer on poetry, rhetoric and Greek at the Studio in Pisa. He belonged to the circle around the philosopher Francesco Cattani da Diacceto who was the teacher and mentor of many young men of prominent Florentine families. There is every reason to assume that the purpose of Giannotti's treatise on Venice was to gain for the author standing and reputation in the world of letters. Many features of the work reveal and emphasize his familiarity with

¹ On Giannotti, see Roberto Ridolfi, 'Sommaro della vita di Donato Giannotti', in *Opuscoli* (Florence, 1942), pp. 55-164, and for some important additions to the factual account of Giannotti's life Randolph Starn, 'Additions to the correspondence of Donato Giannotti: a list and sampling of fifty-four unpublished letters', *Rinascimento*, vol. XV (1964), pp. 101-22; Starn's article contains a bibliography. For an analysis of Giannotti's thought, see Albertini, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-66; p. 148, note 3, gives a succinct, although somewhat oversimplified statement on the rôle of Venice in Florentine sixteenth-century thought. For the factual course of events, see Cecil Roth, *The Last Florentine Republic* (London, 1925). I use the edition of Donato Giannotti, *Opere*, ed. G. Rosini (Pisa, 1819).

² Ridolfi, *op. cit.*, p. 84; the source is *Lettere di Busini a Varchi*, ed. Milanese (Florence, 1861), p. 30.

³ For a justification of the statements made in the text, see my article 'The date of the composition of Contarini's and Giannotti's books on Venice' *Studies in the Renaissance*, vol. XIV (1967), pp. 172-84.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

humanist ideas. He chose the dialogue form which was regarded to have been the classical vehicle for conveying knowledge. The description of the harmonious setting in which the conversation took place — a secluded room in Pietro Bembo's house in Padua — and the introductory reflections on *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa* are meant to evoke the atmosphere of a Platonic or Ciceronian dialogue. Giannotti justified the choice of his topic — the analysis of an existing government — by the example of Aristotle who treated similar subjects; as usual in humanist writings, Rome forms the ideal norm for politics. There are many admiring remarks about the leading humanists of Padua as mirrors of knowledge and behaviour. Bembo appears as a great intellectual figure to whom people come from all parts of the world. Leonicus, the famous teacher of Greek philosophy in Padua, is mentioned as one of the chief sources of information about Venice. And the main speaker in the dialogue who explains the functioning of the Venetian government is that somewhat elusive but widely admired Venetian patrician and humanist, Trifone Gabriele.¹ In the same year of 1526 in which Giannotti began to write his work on Venice two books appeared which might have provided stimulus for the undertaking: a contemporary and friend of Giannotti, Antonio Brucioli, who had been forced to flee from Florence in 1522 because of his involvement in a conspiracy against the Medici, published his *Dialoghi* which discussed political themes and outlined the scheme of an ideal republic,² and Pietro Paolo Vergerio, then a lawyer in Venice, published in April 1526 a dialogue, *De republica Veneta*, in which the speakers were Bembo and Leonicus, the two great Paduan humanists whom Giannotti admiringly mentioned.³

But if Brucioli's and Vergerio's Dialogues provided a stimulus for Giannotti, the utopian and idealizing character of their treatises must also have aroused Giannotti's opposition. For, despite the humanist appearance of this dialogue Giannotti presented a much more concrete and realistic treatment of political problems than the humanists. Giannotti was quite aware of this difference between his approach and theirs, and he was openly critical of their methods. To Giannotti it seemed a lack of judgment to pretend that Venice was superior in all

¹ On this circle in Padua, see V. Cian, *Un Decennio della vita di M. Pietro Bembo* (Turin, 1885).

² See Albertini, *op. cit.*, pp. 79–83.

³ Vergerio's treatise is a praise of the Doge as example of a perfect prince, but the statement at the end of the book might have had some influence on Giannotti's plans: 'Alterum librum excudet paulopost, in quo de legibus Venetis et Magistratibus copiosa disputatio futura est.'

FELIX GILBERT

respects. The Venetian institutions might be better than those of any other city-state but in military deeds Venice was not the equal of Rome.¹

Giannotti found the humanist histories of Venice of little practical use. Leonicus and the Venetian patrician, Marcantonio Michiel, had placed documents and old chronicles at his disposal. He studied them carefully and found that they contained 'interesting facts worth considering'² which the polished humanist histories did not mention, but which were more revealing than the published historical accounts. The sources which he used seemed to show the impossibility of the story that Venice had received its definite constitutional form at the time of its foundation, and so he gave a description of the gradual development of Venetian institutions which, even if it is not our view, shows a remarkable historical sense.³

Giannotti was critical of all previous descriptions of the Venetian system of government, and his particular target was Sabellico's treatise on the Venetian Magistrates. In Giannotti's opinion a pure listing of the existing magistrates was of little use. A state is like a natural body; in order to understand how it functioned it is necessary not only to describe its various parts but to show 'how they hang together and are dependent upon each other'.⁴ In carrying out this plan Giannotti discovered the importance of features in the Venetian administrative system to which insufficient attention has been given previously.

Not all sections of Giannotti's work are new or original, however. Frequently he is descriptive rather than analytical. He explained that because his book was addressed to non-Venetians, he had to describe Venice's external features, its situation, its canals and streets, its means of transportation. And although Giannotti's picture of life in Venice is pleasant enough, these topics had been frequently treated before. Like others before him he was attracted by the picturesque and complicated procedure for the election of a Doge. But the lengthy details of this description, though they might show the reader Giannotti's familiarity with Venetian customs, contributed little to an understanding of the functioning of Venetian institutions. Giannotti gives a rather traditional

¹ Giannotti, *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani*, p. 19.

² *Ibid.*, p. 76: '... cose degne d'essere intese e considerate.'

³ *Ibid.*, p. 53. A valuable discussion of Giannotti's sources can be found in Giuseppe Sanesi, *La Vita e le Opere di Donato Giannotti* (Pistoia, 1899), pp. 91-102. Michiel was the possessor of a manuscript of the Dandolo chronicle, which he annotated on the basis of documentary material. (It is the *Cronica Andreae Dandoli Ducis*, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, no. 3746, Cl. Lat. X, cod. CXXXX, and Michiel's annotations are published in the Muratori edition of Dandolo.)

⁴ Giannotti, *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani*, p. 21: '... come l'uno sia collegato con l'altro, che dipendenza abbia questo da quello.'

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

outline of the Venetian government which he says resembles a pyramid with the *Consiglio Maggiore* as the broad base, the Senate and the *Collegium* as the narrower superstructure, and the Doge as the apex. Giannotti emphasized, however, that this outline must be filled out with details if it is to be true to life. And this is where the originality of Giannotti's approach is revealed.¹ Instead of describing in succession the nature and function of the various parts of this pyramid, Giannotti asked what the main tasks of government are and then he investigated the rôle which these institutions have in fulfilling them. This method directs attention to the importance of two features of the Venetian government. The one is the Council of the *Pregadi*. In contrast to the larger *Consiglio Maggiore*, the *Pregadi* is a deliberative body. In this council both general policy and particular measures are discussed and voted on. But because the important officials have to present and justify their proposals and recommendations in the *Pregadi*, this council serves also as a place where the capacity of individuals for political leadership can be tested and gauged. Thus the procedure in the *Pregadi* guarantees that only men who are equal to their tasks are selected for responsible positions.

The other crucial element in the Venetian administration are the *savi* who usually act together with the Council of the Doge. They meet every day; they discuss whatever new business has come up and decide upon the questions which have to be brought before the *Pregadi*; and they supervise the work of the other government agencies. They remain in office for six months, but all do not leave office at the same time; only half of them are replaced every three months so that continuity in administration is assured.

Thus, in Giannotti's hands the customary survey of Venetian institutions becomes an analysis of decision-making and leadership-selection in an aristocracy. The intellectual roots of his realistic approach are not difficult to establish. When Giannotti discussed what he considered to be the principal functions of government he characterized them as the election of magistrates, the introduction of legislation, the conduct of foreign affairs and war, and the organization of the judiciary. According to Aristotle the right to decide on these matters constitutes the criterion for determining the character of a government.² Thus Giannotti not only referred to Aristotle in justification of his subject, but, as could be expected from a lecturer in Greek, he applied concepts from Aristotle's *Politics*.

¹ Ibid., pp. 48-51.

² Aristotle, *Politics*, bk. IV, ch. 11.

FELIX GILBERT

Giannotti's knowledge of Aristotle assisted him in presenting a concrete and realistic analysis of the Venetian government, but his political realism was rooted in the Florentine political situation in which he had grown up. The régime which the Medici had established after their return in 1512 demonstrated that constitutional forms did not always indicate, and might even conceal, the locus of real power. In the decade before Giannotti's dialogue, Machiavelli had approached the study of politics with the intention of revealing the true driving forces behind the external façade, and Giannotti was a friend and admirer of Machiavelli.

But Giannotti was not a disciple who followed blindly the precepts of the master. The differences between Giannotti's and Machiavelli's views on Venice bring Giannotti's ideas into stronger relief. Machiavelli would never have chosen the Venetian government as the subject of a special treatise. Moreover, to Machiavelli, the aristocratic character of the Venetian system which Giannotti emphasized excluded the possibility that such a republic could function satisfactorily and serve as a model for others. Nor did Giannotti share Machiavelli's stress on power and on the struggle for greater power as the one and only significant factor in politics. Giannotti believed that a state could remain securely in possession of a relatively limited territory;¹ whereas Machiavelli's contempt for the mercenary system formed an integral part of his views on the rôle of power in politics, like views cannot be found in Giannotti's dialogue. The most significant difference between the two is that Giannotti upheld the tradition that the administration of justice is the principal task of government.

Giannotti's dialogue contains a long exposition of the Venetian judicial system.² He placed particular emphasis on two aspects of the Venetian administration of justice: that it provided possibilities of appeal to financially weak and politically powerless people, and that extensive precautions were taken for securing impartiality. The lack of political interference was presented as a striking feature of the Venetian administration of justice. Evidently Giannotti was concerned with the question of how harmony and internal stability were to be obtained in a society in which power was concentrated in the hands of a small group of nobles. To Giannotti the solution seemed to be that the main need of those who did not belong to the ruling group was legal protection and security; since the Venetian government fulfilled this need the population was content and loyal. Clearly the sections on the Venetian

¹ Giannotti, *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani*, p. 17.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 180-214.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

judicial administration, which to the mind of the modern reader seem disproportionately detailed, were written with the Florentine situation in mind. Giannotti was aware of the conflicts between aristocrats and democrats in Florence, and he explained how and why these tensions had been overcome in the Venetian republic. Giannotti did not propound that Venice had a mixed government; indeed, this concept is not mentioned in his dialogue. But he was certainly aware of Aristotle's view that a good republic represented a mixture of oligarchic and democratic elements. Giannotti's discussion of the Venetian judicial system implies that an oligarchy could function only if the democratic elements of the social body were kept satisfied.

We have said that with his dialogue on Venice Giannotti wanted to establish his position in the literary world. But the political interest which permeates the book is so intense that Giannotti must have had a political aim connected with the Florentine political situation in the years the manuscript was written. This was a peculiar time of Florentine history. The Medici rulers, Leo X and Clement VII, soon abandoned their plans for liberalizing their régime after the death of the younger Lorenzo. Clement VII sent Alessandro and Ippolito, two fourteen-year old boys, to Florence with the obvious intent of making them rulers of the city. Because of the youth of these two boys Florentine affairs were directed from Rome by the Pope, and Florentine pride was hurt by the city's inability to decide upon its own fate. The prospect of the permanent establishment of a Medici dynasty in Florence horrified almost all groups of the population. The masses of the population followed the Savonarolan tradition of identifying the Medici régime with tyranny. The aristocrats resented their loss of political control; and some of the aristocratic families who were closely connected with the Medici began to turn away from them. Ippolito and Alessandro were of illegitimate birth and some of the relatives of the Medici were unwilling to accept bastards as heads of their family.

In the years of the composition of Giannotti's dialogue this opposition became more evident because the entire political scene had become fluid. It was obvious that Francis I would seek revenge for his defeat at Pavia; in the spring of 1526 the League of Cognac, which united the Pope and the French King against Charles V, was concluded. However, the campaign against the Spaniards soon ran into difficulties, and it was realized that, as a result of the war against Charles V, the position of the Pope might be weakened and opportunities might arise for the overthrow of the Medici régime in Florence. Although Venice was a partner in the League of Cognac, its government was very reluctant to

FELIX GILBERT

take decisive action against Charles V, and many Florentines who were opposed to the Medici assembled in Venice. Giovanni Borgherini was a speaker in Giannotti's dialogue because he had been Giannotti's companion and patron on his travels to northern Italy in 1526; in the same year Borgherini became the son-in-law of Niccolò Capponi, the recognized leader of the Florentine anti-Medicean aristocrats.¹ Another Florentine who at this time resided with his family in Venice was Lorenzo Strozzi.² He was in close contact with Borgherini and became a friend of Giannotti. Lorenzo Strozzi was a near relation of the Medici; his wife, a daughter of Bernardo Rucellai, was a niece of Lorenzo il Magnifico, and his brother Filippo was married to a sister of the younger Lorenzo. Lorenzo Strozzi had always opposed the Medicean tendency towards absolutism and in 1526 his hostility against Clement VII was increased by the treatment which his brother Filippo received

¹ It is strange that this relationship between Giovanni Borgherini and Niccolò Capponi seems never to have been noticed; this relationship gave particular weight to the recommendation which Borgherini wrote to Capponi on behalf of Giannotti in July 1527 (see Ridolfi, op. cit., p. 82).

² For Lorenzo Strozzi's political views, the life which he wrote of his brother Filippo and Francesco Zeffi's *Vita di Lorenzo Strozzi* are of interest, see *Le Vite degli Uomini Illustri della Casa Strozzi*, ed. Pietro Stromboli (Florence, 1892). Machiavelli's *Arte della Guerra* was dedicated to Lorenzo Strozzi, and he remained a loyal friend of Giannotti also after 1530, as Giannotti's correspondence shows. On Lorenzo Strozzi's close relations to the Borgherini, see the letter of Ulisse da Fano to Lorenzo Strozzi, 27 June 1519, A.S.F., Ugucione-Gherardi, CCXX, fol. 162. On Lorenzo Strozzi's close relations to the branch of the Medici from which Lorenzino came, see Strozzi's letter to the father of Lorenzino, Pierfrancesco, published in L. A. Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici e la Società Cortigiana del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1891), p. 441; Lorenzo Strozzi was Lorenzino's procuratore still in 1531, see *Archivio di Stato di Firenze, Archivio Mediceo avanti il Principato, Inventario*, vol. III (Rome, 1957), p. 268. Pierfrancesco Borgherini, the older brother of Giovanni Borgherini, was in friendly relations with Giovanni delle Bande Nere, see the letter in A.S.F., M.A.P., filza CXXII, fol. 141. About the doings of the two Medici boys, Lorenzino and Cosimo, in Venice in 1527, some information can be gained from the letters of Giovanfrancesco Zeffi, who was in charge of them, *ibid.*, filza CXVIII. Giovanfrancesco Zeffi wrote on 12 June and 7 July 1527 two letters to Ruberto Bonsi in Florence, describing the structure of the Venetian government (A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., seconda serie, XCV, fols. 222-7; they are not lost as Roth, op. cit., p. 109, n. 41, assumes. Roth also confuses the author of these letters Giovanfrancesco Zeffi, who was the companion of the two Medici boys, with Francesco Zeffi, the tutor of the children of Lorenzo Strozzi and author of Lorenzo Strozzi's Life.) In the first letter, Zeffi explains that 'trovandomi in questa magnifica città, capo d'una republica la quale per li suoi buoni governi più centinaia di anni è stato non solo immobile ma sempre è in argomento proceduto', he believed that knowledge about Venice might be useful for the 'reforma di una vera republica' which was going on in Florence. The description of Venice which Zeffi gave is brief and uninteresting, but as an expression of the tendencies of the group to which Zeffi belonged, even if in a subordinate position, the existence of these letters is characteristic. For other Florentines acquainted with Giannotti, and in Venice simultaneously with him, see Michele Lupo Gentile, 'Studi sulla storiografia fiorentina alla corte di Cosimo I de' Medici', *Annali della R. Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa*, vol. XIX (1906), particularly the essay on Segni; the anti-Medicean tendency emerges clearly from the material published by Gentile.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

at the hands of the Pope. Lorenzo Strozzi's animosity against the branch of the Medici family headed by Clement VII showed itself in his great intimacy with members of other branches of the Medici family. If the two bastards, Alessandro and Ippolito, had not been put forward by Clement VII, two other boys, descendants of the younger branch of the Medici family, namely Lorenzino, the son of Pierfrancesco de' Medici, and Cosimo, the son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, would have been heads of the Medici family. These two boys were also in Venice at that time and they were solemnly welcomed as persons of high standing by the Venetian government. Alessandro de' Pazzi, the Florentine ambassador to Venice whom Giannotti served as chancellor in 1527, was another nephew of Lorenzo il Magnifico and he too was a pronounced adherent of Florentine freedom.¹ There is no proof that these Florentines, who were closely connected with each other, were actively preparing an overthrow of the régime of Clement VII. But they would not have regarded such an event as a cause for regret.

This group of Florentine aristocrats formed the circle in which Giannotti moved. These men must have discussed what ought to happen in Florence if the régime of Clement VII was overthrown, and Giannotti must have written his dialogue with these considerations in mind. All these men were aristocrats and their traditional interest was the establishment of an aristocratic republic. Because the bulk of the Florentine population was disgruntled with the Medici régime it would applaud any change of régime. But an aristocratic *coup d'état* could result in the creation of a stable government only if some satisfaction could be given to the democratic elements of the population. Giannotti's dialogue showed that in Venice an aristocratic régime managed to keep the masses of the population satisfied; that constituted its relevance for the Florentine political situation.

While Giannotti was still in Venice the victorious progress of the troops of Charles V resulted in the hoped-for collapse of the Medici régime in Florence. Niccolò Capponi, Borgherini's father-in-law, now became Gonfalonier as leader of the aristocratic opposition against the Medici, and Giannotti, on the recommendation of Borgherini, became First Secretary of the Ten, occupying the post which Machiavelli had held under Soderini.

¹ See above, p. 487. His speech congratulating Cardinal Giulio de' Medici in 1521 on restoring liberty to Florence was believed to have been lost, but it is in the Biblioteca Nazionale in Florence, and I am preparing its publication. Alessandro de' Pazzi broke with the Florentine republicans when the radicals gained the upper hand in Florence.

FELIX GILBERT

For Capponi and his aristocratic friends the problem of the constitution which Florence ought to receive was posed anew, and Giannotti's knowledge of the Venetian institutions gave him an important influence in these deliberations. On Capponi's request he composed a paper explaining the institutional changes and innovations which he regarded as desirable and necessary.¹ It is not surprising that in Giannotti's project the example of Venice played a pivotal rôle, but memoranda which others composed also referred to Venice and showed that their authors were acquainted with Giannotti's dialogue.² All these projects envisaged a mixed government in which the Senate would hold the key position. Great emphasis was placed on a feature of the Venetian government which Giannotti had stressed: namely, that the Gonfalonier, like the Doge, should act together with a small body of officials who would control and supervise the entire administration, take care of the conduct of current affairs, and give continuity to the government. Giannotti in his dialogue on Venice had indicated that Venice drew most of its political strength from the unified control and direction of policy by a small body of high officials, and this idea was now accepted as an essential feature of constitutional reform in Florence.

All these memoranda of the years 1527-28 aimed at limitation of the power of the Great Council in favour of the patrician ruling group. But none of them was written in a situation in which the shaping of Florentine institutions was entirely in the hands of the aristocrats. Although the overthrow of the Medici régime had been planned as an aristocratic *coup d'état*, as such it had failed. A decisive factor in forcing the withdrawal of the Medici from Florence had been

¹ Giannotti, *Opere*, vol. III (Pisa, 1819), pp. 27-47. For an analysis of this *Discorso sopra il fermare il governo di Firenze*, see Albertini, *op. cit.*, pp. 113-15. However, I cannot agree with Albertini's view that this project was written in 1527; there seems to me no possible doubt that Roth, *op. cit.*, p. 109, n. 44, is right in placing this project in the year 1528; to the arguments adduced by Roth a strong further argument can be added. Giannotti speaks of 'pratica nuovamente ordinata', and the law, reorganizing the *pratica*, was issued on 18 August 1528.

² In addition to Giannotti's project, there were two projects by Niccolò Guicciardini, published by Albertini, *op. cit.*, pp. 377-99, and analysed by him on pp. 117-21. Furthermore, a memorandum, entitled *Modo di riordinare la città di Firenze ed i suoi magistrati*, can be found in B.N.F., Carte di Machiavelli, Cassetta 6, no. 80; this memorandum breaks off without ending, it is certainly not by Machiavelli, it shows strong Venetian influence and is close to Giannotti, but shows also differences from him. In any case, this memorandum emphasized a strong executive with fifteen *procuratori* at the top of the pyramid. A further constitutional project can be found in Carte Strozzi., seconda serie, XCV, fols. 82-7; it is more traditional than the other memoranda, maintains the Signoria, of which, however, only one-third should be changed every two months; the author wants to abolish the Gonfalonier and suggests a senate with life membership. Then there are the two letters by Zeffi, see above, p. 496, n. 2. A 'Parere' by Ceccotto Tosinchi in Carte Strozzi., seconda serie, XCV, fol. 22, does not seem to me to belong to this period; it might be from 1502 or 1512.

THE VENETIAN CONSTITUTION

a widespread popular movement, and the democratic forces were not content to leave all powers to the aristocrats. Thus the situation which developed in 1527 was very similar to that after the overthrow of the Medici in 1494. The democratic elements forced the aristocrats in power to grant a reopening of the Great Council, and the constitution which had existed before 1512 was again put in force. Thus the aristocrats began again their old struggle for a strengthening of their position in the government, and the memoranda which recommended to the Florentines an imitation of the Venetian pattern were written for this purpose. But this campaign for an aristocratic reform of the Florentine constitution was in vain. The powers of the Gonfalonier, Niccolò Capponi, were not enlarged but curtailed. And in April 1529, Capponi was deposed. In the years of the last Florentine republic the influence of the radical faction of the middle classes steadily increased until they completely ruled the city.

The victory of these radicals was probably unavoidable. Under progressively mounting pressure from without, the appeal of those who called upon the Florentines to unite as equals was stronger than the voices of those who stressed the social differences in Florentine society.

In contrast to the defenders of the aristocratic position who composed elaborate constitutional projects placing the aristocrats firmly into the centre of power, the democrats did not and could not express their views in detailed constitutional schemes. The economic, social and intellectual eminence of the upper group in an Italian city-state prevented an elaborate rationalization of democratic thought. The democrats appealed to tradition, and their strength lay in the emotions which such an appeal aroused. Thus, with the democrats gaining the upper hand in Florence the last Florentine republic returned to its beginnings, to the traditions of medieval Florence. It emphasized the legal and economic equality among its citizens; it recreated the old citizen militia; it fought as a Guelph city with the French king against the Ghibelline emperor, and Florence was again proclaimed to be the City of San Giovanni and of Christ. The heroism with which the last Florentine republic conducted its futile resistance against the return of the Medici came from the revival of the spirit of the medieval commune.

We might see behind the victory of the Medici the beginning of a new development: the city-state giving way to the territorial state. But to many contemporaries the defeat of the Florentine republic was the end. When in 1538 Giannotti prepared his dialogue *Della Repubblica de' Veneziani* for the printer, the work had lost the political aim and

FELIX GILBERT

meaning which it had possessed when he wrote it: 'Because we cannot discuss our own affairs, we discuss the affairs of others.'¹ At the same time Francesco Guicciardini was writing his *History of Italy*, in which he described the events of 1494 that had led to the establishment of the Great Council.² All the arguments which we saw at work — for and against the imitation of foreign institutions, for and against the suitability of the Venetian constitution as a model — are set forth in two brilliantly constructed invented speeches. Yet there is no indication about the value of these arguments; it is as if Guicciardini wanted to convey to the reader how little practical importance these arguments had. But in a study of the influence of the Venetian constitution on Florentine political thought it might be best to leave the last word to a Venetian. From 1528 to 1529, the Venetian ambassador in Florence was Antonio Suriano. Giannotti was among his close friends, and there can be no doubt that Suriano had real insight into Florentine affairs. But when he came to describe the Florentine situation in his final report before the *Pregadi*, Suriano saw only differences between Venice and Florence; the weakness of Florentine politics seemed to him so deeply ingrained that he saw no chance of Florence ever becoming a stable republic. Florence is, said Suriano with a certain contempt, a democracy in which people who do not understand the art of government rule. 'Rarely have such democratic republics had a long life'.³

¹ '... poichè non possiamo ragionare de' fatti nostri, ragioneremo di quelli d'altri . . .,' Giannotti to Benedetto Varchi, 10 June 1538, *Opere*, vol. II, p. 200.

² *Storia d'Italia*, bk. II, ch. 2.

³ 'Lo che procede dall' esser questo governo popolare, mentre la plebe, la quale attende alle arti meccaniche, non può saper il modo del vero governo; e però rare repubbliche popolari si vede essere state diuturne,' *Le Relazioni degli Ambasciatori Veneti*, ed. E. Albéri, serie 2, vol. V (Florence, 1858), p. 411.

XV

J. R. HALE

THE END OF FLORENTINE LIBERTY: THE FORTEZZA DA BASSO¹

Covering an area of some 118,884 square metres, the Fortezza da Basso² is the largest historical monument in Florence. But quite apart from its size, it deserves study on two accounts: it is the first mature statement of the new principles of fortress design that were to provide a norm for the next three centuries,³ and it became a symbol of despotism as powerful in the eyes of sixteenth-century Florentines as was the Bastille to eighteenth-century Frenchmen.

The Florentines had always been touchy on the subject of fortresses within the city. As their sister republic, Venice, relied for defence on the lagoon, so the Florentines relied upon their walls. With a constitution designed to prevent the accumulation of power in the hands of one family, and with a mood that made Cosimo de' Medici reject the original plans for his palace as too ostentatious, Florence — unlike Milan, or Ferrara, or the petty despotisms of the Marche and Romagna — was not the place for a political leader to try to fortify himself. The Duke of Athens had found this to his cost,⁴ and with Florentine

¹ I wish to acknowledge that Professor Guido Morozzi, Soprintendente ai Monumenti per le Provincie di Firenze, Arezzo e Pistoia, took a generous interest in my work. I am also indebted to Dr Randolph Starn, who read this essay in MS. (and is in no way responsible for any errors that remain), and to the hospitality of Professor Myron Gilmore, Director of the Harvard Centre for Renaissance Studies at I Tatti.

² On the name Fortezza da Basso, v. Appendix below, pp. 531–2.

³ J. R. Hale, 'The Early development of the Bastion: an Italian chronology c. 1450–c. 1534,' in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. J. R. Hale, J. R. L. Highfield and B. Smalley (London, 1965), pp. 466–94.

⁴ For his treating the Palazzo della Signoria as a personal stronghold, creating a personal guard and attempting to disarm the citizens — two more parallels to Alessandro de' Medici's policy — v. Marchionne Stefani, *Cronaca Fiorentina, R.I.S.*, vol. XXX, pt. I, esp. pp. 199–200. And Vasari: 'il duca aveva in animo di fare una fortezza sopra la costa di S. Giorgio', i.e. where the Belvedere was eventually built. For this,

republicanism becoming more self-conscious during the century and a half that followed his expulsion, it seemed less and less likely that Florence would permit a citadel to be built athwart its walls. Machiavelli, addressing himself to a tyro prince, declared that even if a ruler wished to build a fortress in order to bridle a restless people, it would not work: it would only enrage them the more and bring about his ruin. And he cited the Castello Sforzesco to prove his case.¹ Yet in 1534 work began on a building that was to test his thesis more intimately, the Fortezza da Basso.

The outcry that went up when this bridle was slipped in place owes something to the tradition: citadels for tyrants, walls for a free people; but it owes something, too, to the peculiar nature of Florentine republicanism. The city's sense of freedom had persisted throughout periods of undoubted oligarchical rule, it had swallowed rigged elections and partisan foreign policies, it had survived, between 1512 and 1527, the piecemeal dismantling of republican institutions. Something of it stubbornly lived on after the Republic's defeat in arms in 1530 and the establishment of Alessandro de' Medici as 'duca'. Then, in 1534, for the first time in Florentine history, appeared the concrete, visible evidence that freedom was in fetters. It was this even more than the constitutional changes of 1532² that made it clear that the word republic was about to become meaningless.

In 1533 Alessandro tactlessly had his own arms carved over the newly enlarged fort at the Porta alla Giustizia.³ Giannotti, writing the first chapter of his *Della Repubblica Fiorentina* in the next year while the Fortezza da Basso was being built, referred to such works as evidence that a republic was being challenged by a tyranny,⁴ and when the first garrison was installed in 1535, that apolitical but keen Medicean, Giorgio Vasari, echoed his party's glee that they had acquired a 'yoke for their critics'.⁵ He reaffirmed this opinion in his portrait of Alessandro

and for the Duke's aim of transforming the Palazzo della Signoria into 'a strong fortress', see the Life of Andrea Pisano, *Lives* . . . , tr. Mrs. J. Foster, vol. I (London, 1845), pp. 151-2.

¹ *Discorsi*, II, 24.

² On which see A. Anzilotti, *La costituzione interna dello stato fiorentino sotto il duca Cosimo de' Medici* (Florence, 1910), pp. 29-30.

³ 'A Giovanni di Lorenzo detto Bicci scarpellino £84 sono per havere intagliato l'arme dell'illustrissimo Signore Duca in pietra per la porta della Iustitia', A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fol. 335r. On this fort, see below.

⁴ *Opere politiche e letterarie*, ed. F.-I. Polidori (Florence, 1850), vol. I, p. 66.

⁵ 'Si vedevano sù per le mura, circondandole attorno, un pieno di soldati, facendo corona al giogo de mal contenti', K. Frey, *Der literarische Nachlass Giorgio Vasaris* (Munich, 1923), p. 42. Letter of 11 December 1535 to Pietro Aretino. Description of

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

(plate 1). The picture was painted in Alessandro's lifetime, and Vasari explained its iconography in a letter to Ottaviano de' Medici who was concerned, if glancingly, with the construction of the Fortezza. The artist's opinion, therefore, is not likely to be at variance with that of the Medici themselves. He explains that the human figures who decorate the legs of the stool ('round, to show his unending dominion') represent the Florentine people, who need neither arms nor legs, for they are made to obey, not to act of their own volition. Underneath the stool is the shadowy figure of Volubility, from whose bridled mouth run bonds which wrap round the term-like extremities of the 'Florentines'. 'This', Vasari wrote, 'is to show that this unstable people are bound and steadied by the fortress that has been built, and' — he adds — 'by the love that his subjects bear towards His Excellency.' The garrison took over in December.

In the spring of the same year the critics had already registered their alarm with the Emperor. In April both Cardinal Ipolito de' Medici (who was hoping to replace Alessandro) and the Florentine exiles sent embassies to Charles V in Barcelona. The cardinal warned Charles that among other misdeeds, Alessandro 'was at the moment building a fortress at great expense as the sole guarantee of his safety', while the exiles put it more strongly, saying that every condition of tyranny was present in Florence now that 'a great fortress was being built with the blood of that unhappy people, as a prison and slaughter-house for the distressed citizens.'¹

It is not surprising that at the formal confrontation next year between the exiles and Alessandro with his representatives before the Emperor in Naples, the Fortezza should figure among the exiles' gravamina. Not only had Alessandro disarmed the citizens — even going so far as to impound the weapons hung as votive offerings in the churches — but he had built a fortress, 'a thing totally inappropriate to a free city, as the examples of Venice, Siena, Lucca and Genoa clearly show.'² To which the answer was that the very presence of the exiles was a sufficient explanation; with such malcontents to take advantage of the disturbed state of Italy, every means had to be taken to preserve the government which had been planned for the benefit of Florence

the portrait in G. Bottari, *Raccolta di Lettere sulla Pittura, Scultura ed Architettura* (Milan, 1822), vol. III, pp. 22-3.

¹ Francesco Settignano, *Memorie Fiorentine*, A.S.F., Manoscritti, 125, fols. 190r and 184r.

² From the debate printed in F. Guicciardini, *Opere Inedite*, ed. G. Canestrini, vol. IX (Florence, 1867), p. 336.

³ *Ibid.*, 369.

both by pope and emperor. Not a very satisfactory answer, but a sufficient one, for, as we shall see, Charles V himself was convinced that the Fortezza was a necessity.

Henceforward, the connection between the Fortezza and Medicean tyranny became a liberal dogma. Lorenzino's *Apologia* for assassinating Alessandro, though generalized and rhetorical, associated the building of fortresses with the evils of tyranny,¹ and the historians perpetuated this sinister view. According to Segni, for example, it was built because the Medici determined 'to place on the necks of the Florentines a yoke of a kind never experienced before: a citadel, whereby the citizens lost all hope of ever living in freedom again'.²

This has remained the standard view,³ but before accepting it in its black and white republican form, we must see if there was a military, as distinct from any private political motive behind the construction of the Fortezza. As always when dealing with the first half of the century, there is a danger of following too readily the opinions of the most diligent and the most eloquent historians, who were republican almost to a man.

The principle that fortresses were useful in subduing subject peoples as well as defending the towns of the *dominio* from outside enemies was well established in Tuscany. Volterra was gripped by its *rocca* in 1472. Citadels were begun in Borgo San Sepolcro in 1500, in Arezzo (after the revolt in Val di Chiana) in 1502, in Pisa after its defeat in 1509; the project for the Fortezza Vecchia in Leghorn dates from 1518. Nothing like a citadel was projected for Florence itself, however, even when the city expelled the Medici once more in 1527 and prepared its defences to withstand a siege.

Though Florence fell in 1530 as a result of blockade and treachery rather than by direct assault, considerable thought had been given to strengthening its walls. As Busini explained to Varchi, the fortifications had been improved before the siege, but these improvements had fallen far short of what should have been done. Partly this was because republics always take a long time to make up their minds and grasp at any argument that may delay drastic action, and partly it was because the Florentines thought that their hills amounted to an outer line of defences, that the besieging armies would retire to winter

¹ See the version printed in L. Lazzarini, *Lorenzino de' Medici* (Milan, 1935), p. 217.

² *Storie fiorentine* (Leghorn, 1830), vol. II, p. 400.

³ It cropped up again in the Risorgimento, e.g. 'Delenda Carthago.' *Le fortezze erette dai tiranni per mitragliare i popoli. La fortezza di Perugia, e i forti di S. Giovanni e di S. Giorgio [the Belvedere] in Firenze* (Florence, 1859).

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

quarters, and that the Pope could not afford to keep them for long in the field. All these expectations had proved illusory.¹

That this attitude was shared by others is shown by the creation, on 18 April 1531, of a new body, the *Cinque Uomini Provveditori delle Fortezze della Città et Dominio Fiorentino*.² Though this was a party measure, it was to enable all citizens and subjects to feel safe in any emergency that might arise in the future.³ The magistrates, four of whom were to be chosen from the greater and one from the lesser guilds, were to adopt as their seal, 'S. Giovanni, advocate and protector of our city'. They were to conduct their affairs — this was four months before the arrival of Alessandro in Florence — as with the full authority of the whole Florentine people, and were to restore, modify or extend⁴ the city's fortifications as seemed best to them.

Their first extant order — and the fragmentary nature of the sources for the entire period covered by this study must be borne in mind — was a proclamation to ensure such effectiveness as the existing walls possessed.⁵ It was acknowledged that many houses had been demolished in order to make room for the new bastions built on the eve of the siege and to ensure a clear field of fire from the walls, but the *provveditori* considered that as it was in the city's interest to maintain and extend its fortifications, no rebuilding or new building was to be allowed within 500 *braccia*⁶ of the walls (interpreted as a line drawn from point to point of adjacent towers or bastions) on three sides of the city, and 300 on the hilly side of the Oltrarno. Beyond that, only small agricultural buildings would be licensed, up to a limit of 1000 *braccia*. There was to be no tampering with the existing walls or bastions (which had been built very hastily), no removal of building materials, no animals were to work or stray within 25 *braccia* on pain of a fine of twenty-five florins plus two jerks of the rope for their owner. And the records show a steady expenditure on walls and gates in the next two

¹ *Lettere di Giovambattista Busini a Benedetto Varchi sopra l'assedio di Firenze*, ed. G. Milanese (Florence, 1860), pp. 128–9.

² The *provisione* setting up this magistracy survives in a copy in A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 10 rosso, fol. 77v ff. They are also called 'procuratori'.

³ '... accioche e loro ciptadini et qualunche altro habitante in quelli viva sicuro senza avere alcuno sospetto da tucto li accidenti che potessino nascere', *ibid.*, fol. 77v.

⁴ 'affare di nuovo', 'nuova hedificatione', *ibid.*, fol. 78v.

⁵ Undated, but in full, A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, XCVIII, fols. 112r–113v; recorded and dated A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 10 rosso, fols. 80r–80v.

⁶ The Florentine *braccio* at this time was 23½ inches according to a line drawn by the military engineer Giambattista Bellucci, Florence, Bibl. Riccardiana, MS. 2587, fol. 27v.

years, strengthening them and adapting them further to the use of artillery.¹

These works can fairly be considered as in the general interest of Florence; they affected the walls. The first hint of a citadel appears in February 1532 when, in connection with the government's scheme to confiscate arms in order to emasculate any tendency to revolt, Francesco Vettori wrote to Filippo Strozzi saying 'I should like to see them in a secure place; a fortress would be suitable, either where the *capitani* have already started work, or somewhere else'.² Where the *capitani* di Parte Guelfa, who were in charge of building operations, had been at work was outside the Porta alla Giustizia, where the eastern wall met the north bank of the Arno (plate 2). This corner had been rapidly reinforced before the siege by a bastion which covered any attempt to come downstream (flat-bottomed boats could have got across the fish-weir at this point) into the city (plate 3), and by an earthwork³ which was later rationalized into the Baluardo di Mongibello on the lines of a design by Antonio da Sangallo (plate 4). The bastion was designed by Michelangelo, and according to Giannotti,⁴ it was one of his most important works for the siege, the others being the encircling of S. Miniato and the bastion near Porta S. Giorgio. Its incorporation into the Baluardo di Mongibello made up a complex important enough to be called 'Citadella Vecchia' on de Marchi's mid-century plan (plates 5 and 6); 'vecchia' in contrast to the Fortezza da Basso.

When work began at the Porta alla Giustizia after the siege the *provveditori* (and from 1532 the *Capitani di Parte Guelfa*, into which magistracy they became absorbed) must have looked on it as a civic, rather than a Medicean, enterprise. The Arno had damaged the riverside section of the defences, and the attacks that had been launched on this side of the city during the siege made their consolidation logically part of a programme of repair. During the siege the works had not been extensive. In a list of troops needed to man the city's strong points, the Porta alla Giustizia was allocated two hundred men, while other gates-with-bastions were given more: three hundred for S. Gallo, five hundred for S. Giorgio.⁵ No accounts survive for the first, the 'civic',

¹ E.g. for the western length, where the Fortezza was soon to be built, A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fols. 325v and 340r.

² L. A. Ferrai, *Lorenzino de' Medici e la Società Cortigiana del Cinquecento* (Milan, 1891), p. 452.

³ Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* (Florence, 1838-41), vol. II, p. 198.

⁴ Op. cit., vol. I, p. 258.

⁵ A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, XIV, fol. 33r.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

rebuilding, but by the early summer of 1533 the *capitani* are spending large sums to provide an *enceinte* large enough to store the city's artillery and the confiscated arms of the Florentines, and possibly to turn Michelangelo's bastion into a keep or *mastio*.¹ By December of that year Alessandro's arms were in place, but it could still be argued that it was a work designed to protect the city as a whole. Even when Antonio da Sangallo submitted a plan (probably in 1534) (plate 7) that would have provided it with an ingeniously intricate entrance, which meant that everyone entering the gate would have to twist and turn under constant fire, his bastion, though more complex than most, could not possibly be interpreted as anti-city; it is directed against enemies from outside. Well before this, however, it had been decided, as we shall see, to build another strong point. 'Judging that the fortress at the Porta alla Giustizia was inadequate, [Alessandro] ordered the building of a really strong citadel at the Porta a Faenza.' Thus Scipione Ammirato.² But was the Citadella Vecchia thought inadequate to protect Alessandro, or the city as a whole?

The 'Spanish Peace' which seems in retrospect to have damped down the fires of war in Italy during the 1530s did not appear in this friendly guise to contemporaries. Relations between Charles V and Francis I remained uneasy; Italy might at any moment become once more their battlefield. Savoy, Milan: these remained danger spots. Towed in the wake of papal foreign policies, Florence could not expect to avoid involvement if these led to war; the rebuilding of the city walls after the siege was not merely in the interest of appearance or amenity. The early thirties, moreover, were full of scares of Turkish landings, and these culminated in 1534 with a series of new Italian fortifications, of which the Fortezza da Basso was only one. The corsairs had been striking further and further north. Clement VII, startled by landings at the mouth of the Tiber, called a conference of soldiers and military architects at Rome and began work on the city's walls; Antonio da Sangallo was already re-fortifying Ancona. In May the Pope imposed a tax throughout his states for defences against the Turks;³ and, according to

¹ The accounts are in A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fol. 318r ff. 'A spese della muraglia della porta alla giustizia per tener in conservo le artillerie et munitione della città.' The difference seen in the form of the river bastion between the fresco of Vasari and the Buonsignori engraving may be explained by the item (ibid., fol. 325r) 'per fattura di uno castello con tutti i suo fornimenti', but the development of the Citadella Vecchia — all traces of which disappeared in the middle of the nineteenth century — will probably always remain obscure. I know of no study devoted to it.

² *Opuscoli* (Florence, 1642), p. 154.

³ C. Guasti, *I Manoscritti Torrigiani donati al R. Archivio di Stato di Firenze* (Florence, 1878), pp. 473-4.

Varchi, when Alessandro called on the Florentines to pay an *accatto* for the Fortezza, one of the reasons he gave was the Turkish menace.¹ With the Citadella Vecchia finished, it was not inappropriate to concentrate on the opposite side of the city, with its level ground facing Prato and the main route to the sea.² Moreover, the Fortezza was only one part, if the most sensational, in a defence programme inaugurated after the siege and carried on throughout Cosimo's reign. In 1534 other defences in the *dominio* were strengthened, Pontassieve,³ for instance, and Arezzo, where Luigi Guicciardini, its commissary, was eager to finish the citadel begun early in the century by Giuliano da Sangallo; the Fortezza Vecchia at Leghorn was completed in this year. In 1539 Cosimo ordered a survey of all the forts in the *dominio*.⁴ This was followed by heavy expenditure on the walls of Pistoia in 1544-45,⁵ and in the latter year by the commencement of the bastioned trace that formed a hypotenuse inside the south-west triangle of the old city wall of Florence and was the work of (among others) Baccio Bandinelli and Benvenuto Cellini (plate 8).⁶ Arezzo may be a special case; its record during the siege makes it likely that a citadel there was as much a political as a military necessity, but elsewhere the Medicean fortifications can be interpreted as in the strategic interests of Florence and Tuscany as a whole.

This, I think, is as strong a case as can be put, without disingenuousness, for the building of the Fortezza on military rather than on partisan grounds. It is tempting to see it as a good case; posterity has — at least since the nineteenth century — been so absorbed with republican Florence that the quality of Medici rule and the solid advantages it gave to the city and *dominio* have been examined with comparatively little care, and less sympathy. But if we look more closely at the motives for building the Fortezza we shall find that, while a military objective may have added a gloss to the decision, it was constructed mainly to support an unpopular régime.

There is, indeed, a second issue here: how far can the building of the Fortezza be represented as the precaution taken by a responsible body

¹ Op. cit., vol. III, p. 77.

² As plate 38 shows ('bastion' da farsi) the *Capitani* were still concerned to strengthen this approach to the city in the following century. 'Bastione del Serpe' is the consolidation of the bastion built there in preparation for the siege of 1529.

³ A.S.F., Otto di Pratica, Copialettere, 31, fol. 75v.

⁴ A.S.F., Mediceo del Principato, Carteggio Universale, 624.

⁵ Giambattista Bellucci, *Trattato delle Fortificazioni di Terra*, Bibl. Riccardiana, MS. 2587, fol. 34r ff.

⁶ M. Borgatti, 'Le mura e le torri di Firenze', *Rivista d'Artiglieria e Genio* (1900), vol. iv, pp. 319-20, and his excellent map.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

of *grandi* — as distinct from the personal aims of Alessandro, Clement and Charles — to protect what they saw as the true political interests of Florence? But the analysis of the political temper of Florence after the siege is not yet sufficiently far advanced to permit an answer to this: such an answer would depend on a judgment of how far the pro-Medicean *grandi* were merely using the Medici rather than self-interestedly identifying themselves with the family. All we can do is emphasize that there was nothing in the popular or aristocratic traditions of the city that prepared the way for controlling it by force.

The terms of the Republic's capitulation in 1530 were that while the city's institutions should remain, Alessandro should be received as head (*capo*) of the government. In the interest of reaching an agreement without much delay the terms were vague and turned out to be unsatisfactory to both parties; the guarantees were too weak for the republicans, the definition of their status too unclear for Alessandro and his supporters. Behind the negotiations loomed the authority of Clement and Charles V, and Clement negotiated the betrothal of Charles's daughter Margaret to Alessandro as a means of increasing the Emperor's concern for the new government, but by the end of 1531 Alessandro and the Pope saw their position weakening both within the city and outside it, as an ever-growing band of exiles plotted a violent return.

In the winter of 1531–32 Clement asked for advice from the most prominent citizens whom he considered trustworthy either because they were devoted to the Medici family, or because they saw it as the only hope of lasting peace. During the previous period of Medici control, from 1512 to 1527, the Medici popes, Leo X and Clement himself, had also asked for advice, and what emerges as something quite new is a note of desperation, a reliance on force, that was lacking in the counsel given before 1527.

The idea of a Medicean fortress — suggested possibly by the works proceeding at the Porta alla Giustizia and the growing conviction that Alessandro needed a large personal guard with secure barracks — was discussed during that winter in Rome. The information comes from Nerli, but he was there, and reports that while Filippo Strozzi urged Clement to build a citadel, another spokesman, Iacopo Salviati, countered with the Machiavellian argument that the strongest fortresses that can be built are the benevolence of rulers and the content of subjects.¹ Segni says that Luigi Guicciardini also pleaded for a citadel,

¹ R. von Albertini, *Das Florentinische Staatsbewusstsein im Übergang von der Republik zum Prinzipat* (Bern, 1955), p. 192. This provides by far the best commentary on the political and institutional events of Alessandro's rule, short as the relevant section is.

not so much for Alessandro himself as for the defence of the whole inner group of Medici partisans.¹

That the historians can be trusted at this point is suggested by the written proposals directed to Clement VII or his agent the Archbishop of Capua. Francesco Guicciardini, while not mentioning a fortress, emphasized the degree to which the régime was on the defensive: 'we have a whole people opposed to us, and the young more than the old.'² For Francesco Vettori the situation was such that 'we must think in terms of maintaining our rule by force . . . we are constrained to govern by fear',³ and in the letter to Filippo Strozzi of 2 February 1532 he summed up by saying that besides increasing Medici control over the city's administration, they should 'finish the Fortezza alla Giustizia'.⁴ Luigi Guicciardini, in his written advice, contented himself with suggesting a strengthening of Alessandro's bodyguard,⁵ and it is Vettori who emerges — from the sources that survive — as the most persistent advocate of a citadel. In October, writing to Bartolomeo Lanfredini, he went a step further than his letter of February: 'having made a trifling fortress which cannot be taken without artillery, it would be still better to build another which could be defended by artillery.'⁶

The situation in Florence was meanwhile deteriorating still further. Alessandro gave his enemies fresh fuel for resentment when he confiscated pikes and guns and forbade the carrying of any weapons other than sword and dagger within an eight mile radius of the city,⁷ and still more when he enlarged his guard and made an outsider, Alessandro Vitelli, its commander. The government's growing sense of panic is shown in the at times almost daily toll of finings, bannings and executions on political grounds. By 1535 a charge of un-Medicean activities could be tagged on as a matter of course to an accusation of homosexuality.⁸

¹ Op. cit., vol. II, p. 341.

² *A.S.J.*, vol. I (1842), p. 455.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 438 and 440.

⁴ Ferrai, op. cit., p. 454.

⁵ *A.S.J.*, vol. I (1842), p. 465.

⁶ Printed in von Albertini, op. cit., p. 450. For the *pareri* in general see the important article by Felix Gilbert, 'Alcuni discorsi di uomini politici fiorentini . . .', *A.S.J.*, vol. XCIII, ii (1935), pp. 3-24.

⁷ Giovambattista Adriani, *Istoria de' Suoi Tempi* (Prato, 1822), vol. I, p. 10.

⁸ For condemnations see Settimanni's margins (MS. cit.) *passim*. 'Addì XXIII di Dicembre 1535. Maso di Carlo Strozzi cittadino fiorentino per avere usato il vizio di sodomia con più fanciulli, aver date pugnalate a più persone, e parlato malamente del presente governo di Firenze fu condannato in pena della forca colla confiscazione de' suoi beni.' Fol. 223v.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

In such an atmosphere the idea of a large safe citadel became increasingly reassuring. Luigi Guicciardini mentioned the idea as being in the air in a letter to Francesco on 26 April 1533, implying that unless the régime could be strengthened they would have to submit to more interference from France or Spain,¹ and in May he added that everything depended on Alessandro remaining in control, 'nothing else can preserve the independence (*salute*) of the city, our enemies being more determined and venomous than ever, and only waiting their chance'.²

Against this background, then, we may accept Nerli's account of the genesis of the Fortezza with some confidence: 'In 1533, as it seemed neither to the Pope nor to him [Alessandro] that the fortress which had been modified (*mutata*) at the Porta alla Giustizia would be sufficient or appropriate for what they had in mind, there began a series of discussions between Alessandro Vitelli, captain of the duke's guard, and others skilled in the art of war, together with engineers and architects sent by the Pope, as to where they should build, and they decided on the Porta a Faenza. But matters were delayed until the Pope should return from France, where he went in September.'³

After the event, it was generally agreed that the idea of the Fortezza came from Clement himself. Segni — crediting Clement with a provision of Filippo Stozzi's later rebellion — thought so, so did Vasari;⁴ this was the common opinion in Florence.⁵ Guicciardini stated it without equivocation. When Clement returned from France, he wrote in the *History of Italy*, knowing that he was in danger of dying, he 'urged on the building of a powerful citadel in Florence for the greater security, as he saw it, of his house, for he was not sure how much longer his nephew's good fortune might last'.⁶ But when Marchetto, in Iacopo Pitti's dialogue the *Apologia de' Capucci*, read this passage aloud he was pounced on by Publio, who commented: 'He tries to put all the responsibility on the shoulders of the Pope. The author of the Fortezza was Filippo Strozzi, who suggested it at a conference of various citizens in the presence of the Pope.'⁷ This view was supported by Varchi, and Segni also portrays Strozzi as urging Alessandro to proceed with its construction. It is unlikely that we shall ever know who planted the idea in Clement's mind — Strozzi's claim is only more appealing than

¹ *Op. ined.*, vol. IX, pp. 259 and 262.

² *Ibid.*, p. 270.

³ Filippo de' Nerli, *Commentari . . .* (Augusta, 1728), p. 270.

⁴ Quo., G. Giovannoni, *Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane* (Rome, 1959), vol. I, p. 108.

⁵ Anon., *Diario o cronica di Firenze*, B.N.F., II, I, 313, fol. 152v.

⁶ Ed. C. Panigada (Bari, 1929), vol. V, p. 316.

⁷ *A.S.I.*, vol. IV, 2(1853), p. 376.

Vettori's through the irony of his later imprisonment and death in the Fortezza¹ — but without Clement so radical a break with Florentine convention could never have been embarked upon. That the initiative came from outside Florence, and from Clement himself, possibly in consultation with Charles V, is not unlikely. On Clement's death, Alessandro sent an embassy to the Emperor in Madrid, asking him to continue his protection and to hasten his marriage to Margaret. The princess had already visited Florence in April 1533,² but the marriage was postponed while Alessandro's fate, it seemed, still hung in the balance. In the reply to his request dated 1 March 1535, Charles was still hesitant. 'It is important that the fortress should be so far completed that when the princess arrives in the city she should be able to find safety by taking refuge in it, and be secure in case of any uprising.' Alessandro was urged to hurry on the building as quickly as he could.³ The Fortezza was the concern not only of Alessandro's immediate *entourage* but of his mighty sponsors.

It is therefore appropriate that the first two architects we hear of in connection with planning the Fortezza were already working for Clement. Both Vasari and Condivi say that Alessandro asked, via Alessandro Vitelli, for the services of Michelangelo, but that he refused to leave Rome.⁴ On 10 March 1534 Alessandro wrote to Antonio da Sangallo the younger in the guarded tone which at this troubled time came naturally to him.⁵ 'As I want you to come to Florence in order to take advantage of your advice and service in connection with a certain project of mine, which I will tell you about myself, I would be grateful if you could come here as soon as possible. Having nothing more to say, I conclude.'⁶ On 15 March, when Sangallo could have only just arrived, Luigi Guicciardini wrote from Florence to his brother in Bologna to say that a fortress was definitely going to be built, and that while there was still the question of finding the money, it had appeared that it would not be too expensive at least to get its strongest point (*cassero*) into

¹ And because historians were still, in the sixteenth century, prone to find a refreshing moral in the humbling of the mighty. As von Albertini points out (*op. cit.*, p. 219), 'Sein Palast in Florenz, an dem er weiterbaute, hatte mehr den Charakter eines fürstlichen Sitzes als den eines Privatpalastes.' Having run both with the hare and the hounds, Strozzi was a natural suspect.

² Settimanni, fol. 321r.

³ *Ibid.*, fols. 174v and 176v.

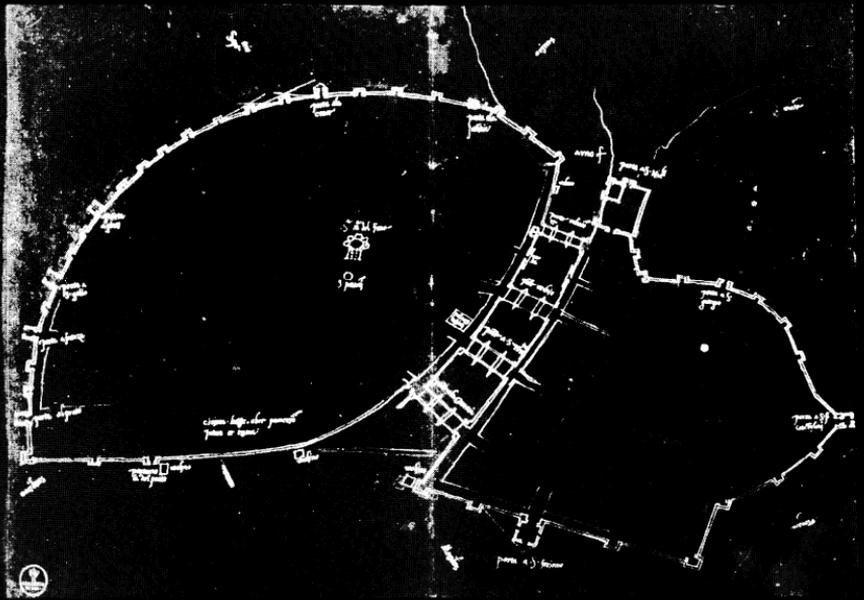
⁴ Paola Barocchi ed., Giorgio Vasari, *La Vita di Michelangelo* (Milan, 1962), vol. III, pp. 1175-6. Both say that Michelangelo was afraid of Alessandro, Condivi puzzlingly adds that he gave the excuse 'che non aveva tal commissione da papa Clemente'.

⁵ As when he changed commanders at Volterra.

⁶ A.S.F., Manoscritti, 65, fols. 16v-17r. Printed in G. Gaye, *Carteggio inedito d'artisti* . . . (Florence, 1840), vol. II, pp. 252-3.

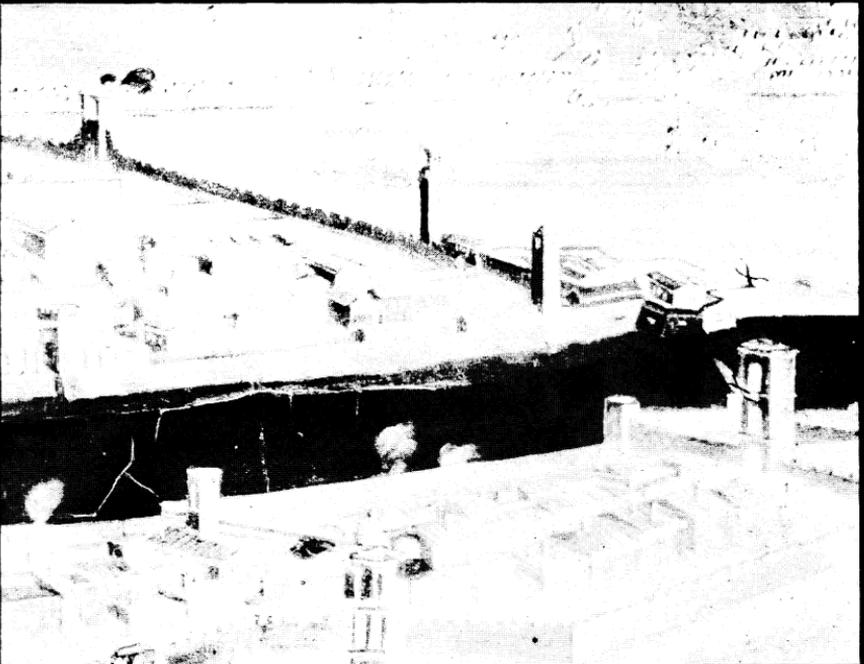


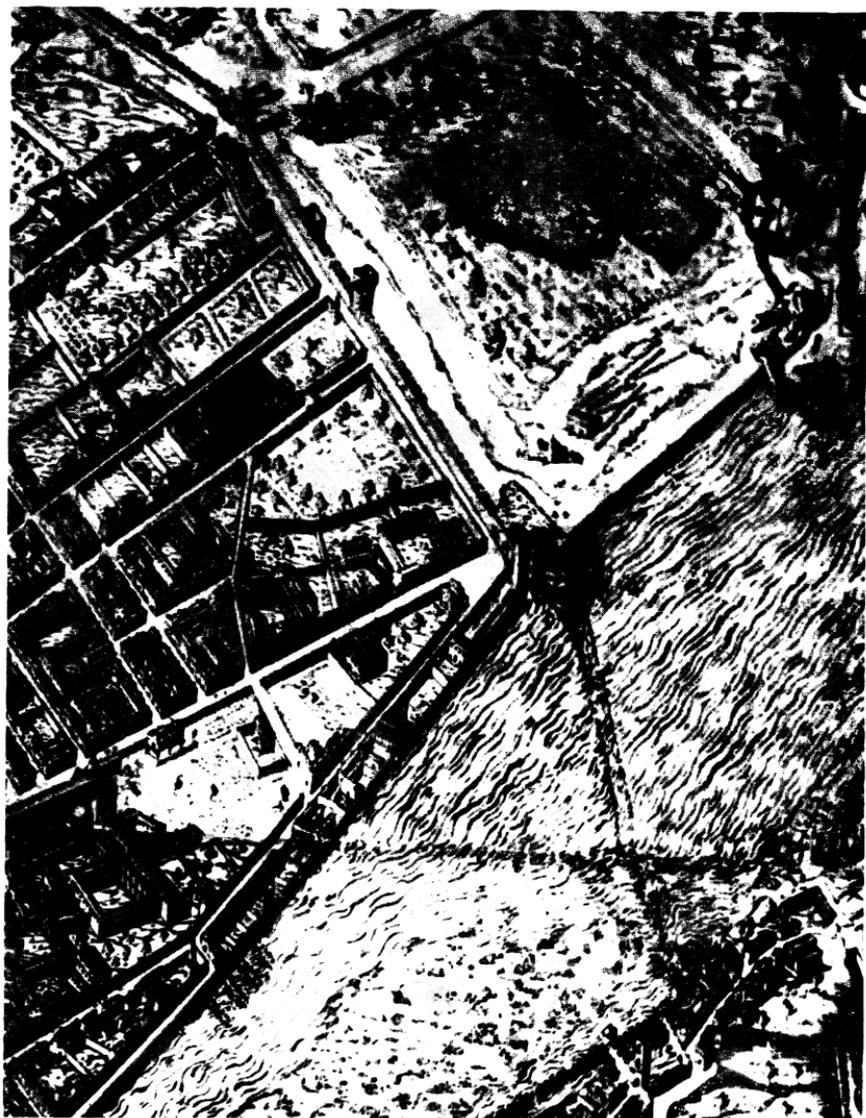
1. Vasari, Alessandro de' Medici
(Photo: Alinari)



2. Baldassare Peruzzi, The Walls of Florence (c. 1520). Uffizi, 360 A.

3. Vasari, The Siege of Florence. Detail from the fresco in the Palazzo Vecchio, Florence





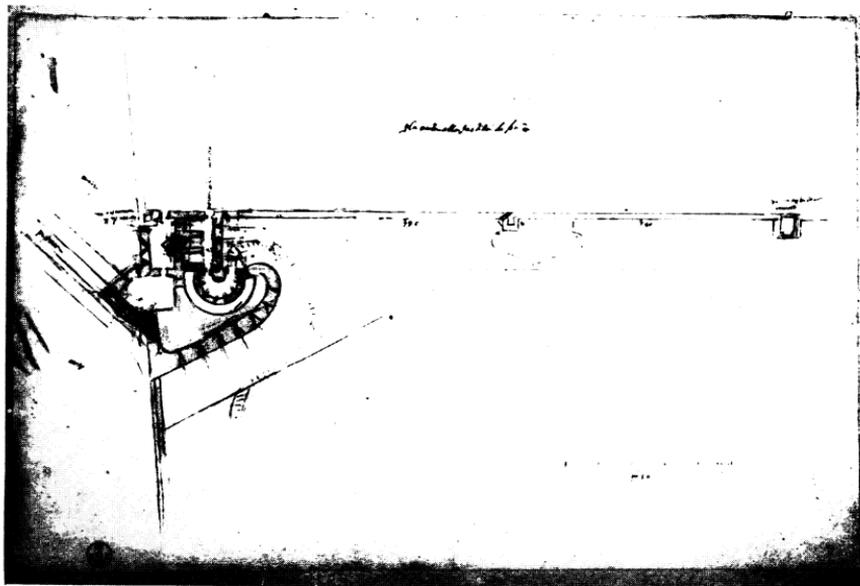
4. Citadella Vecchia. Detail from no. 8



5. Francesco de Marchi, The Walls of Florence. From *Trattato d'Architettura Militare*, B.N.F., 11,1,280, fol. 2r

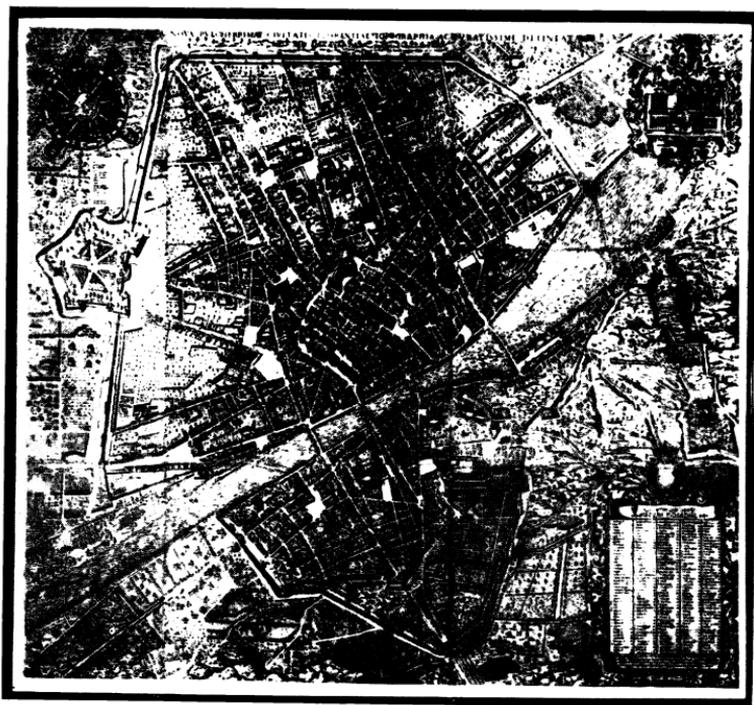
6. Detail from no. 5





7. Antonio da Sangallo the younger, project for improving the Citadella Vecchia at Porta alla Giustizia. Uffizi, 761 A.

8. Stefano Buonsignori, Plan of Florence (1584)

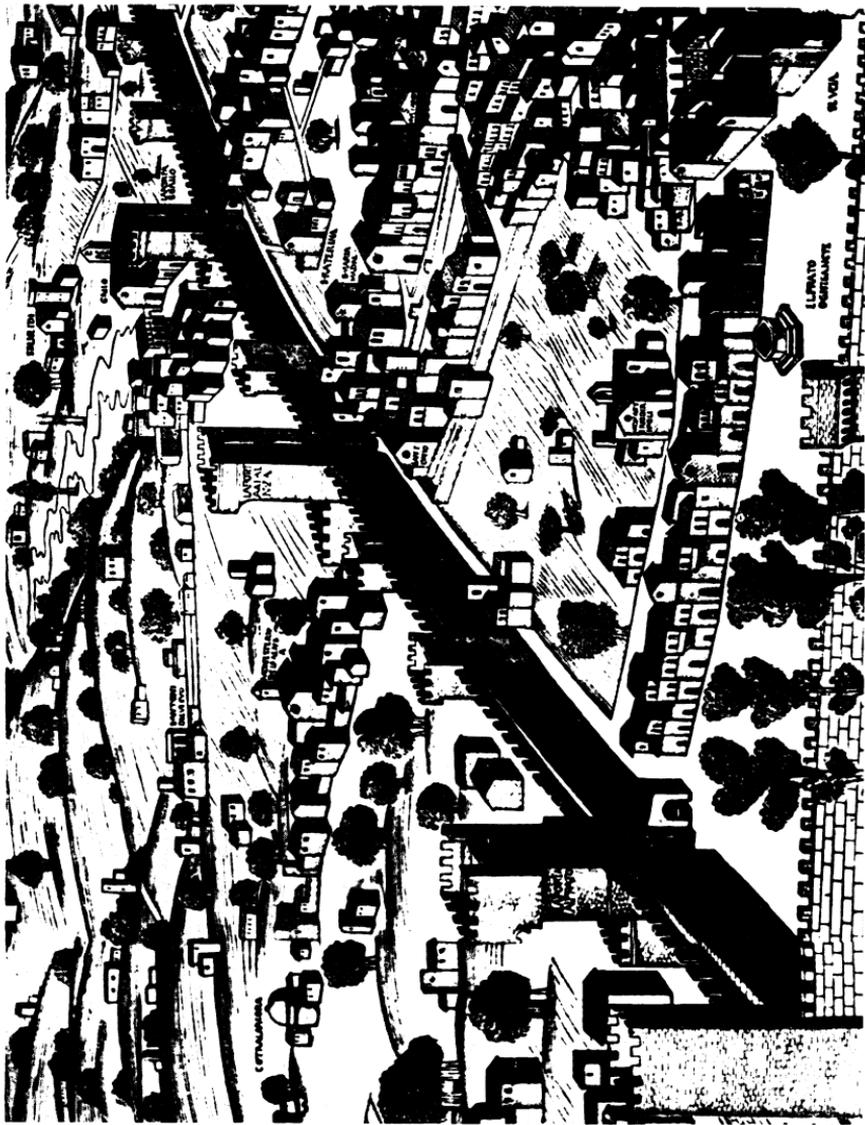




10. Fortezza da Basso, dome of central hall



9. Antonio da Sangallo, distance rose, Florence.
Uffizi, 773 A.



11. Detail from the 'Berlin'
woodcut view of Florence
(c. 1470)



12. Fortezza da Basso. Detail from no. 8

13. (*opposite, above*) Astrological diagram for the foundation time of the 'Arx Florentina'. A.S.F., Carte Stroziane, Ser. 1, 129, fol. 196r

14. (*opposite, below*) Antonio da Sangallo. Sketches for a fortress at Porta S. Gallo. Uffizi, 758 A.

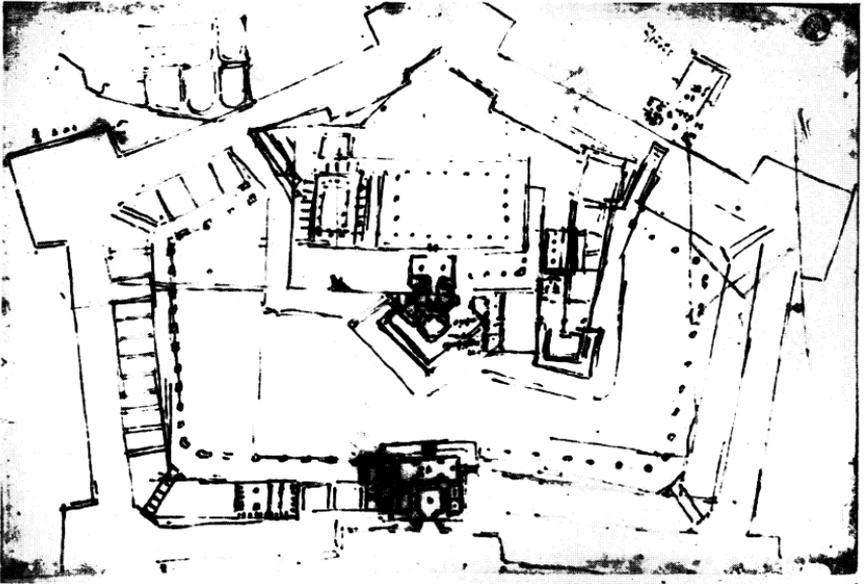
TAV. 6



17. Fortezza da Basso. Section showing *mastio* and Porta a Faenza

18. Fortezza da Basso. *Mastio* from rampart

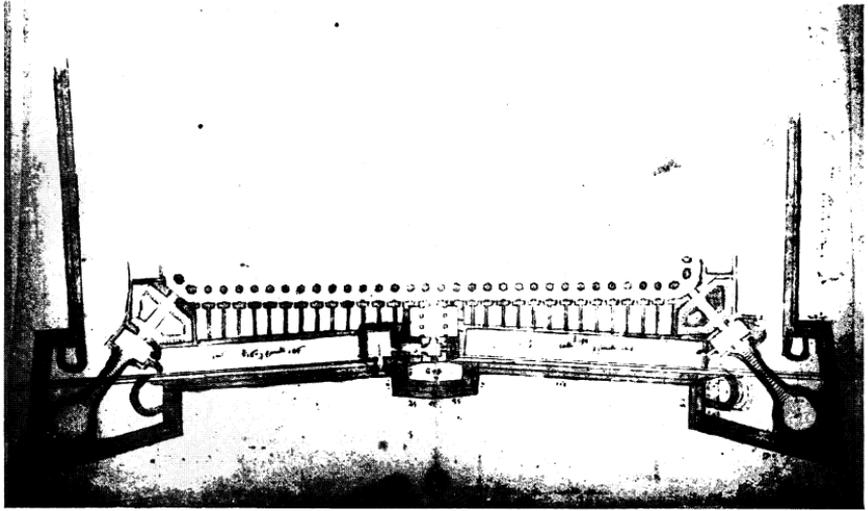




19. Antonio da Sangallo, preliminary drawing for Fortezza, Uffizi, 760 A.

20. Bastiano da Sangallo, Fortezza, plan. Uffizi, 315 A. The back is endorsed to Antonio, and this plan was probably sent to him in Rome from Florence



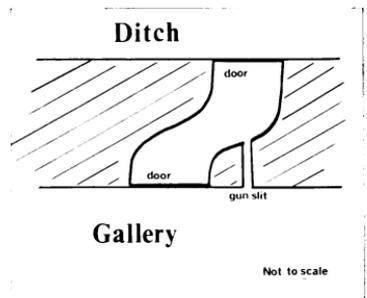


21. Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, plan of city front. Uffizi, 756 A.



22. Antonio da Sangallo, Fortezza, section through stables, rampart and wall. Uffizi, 1282 A.

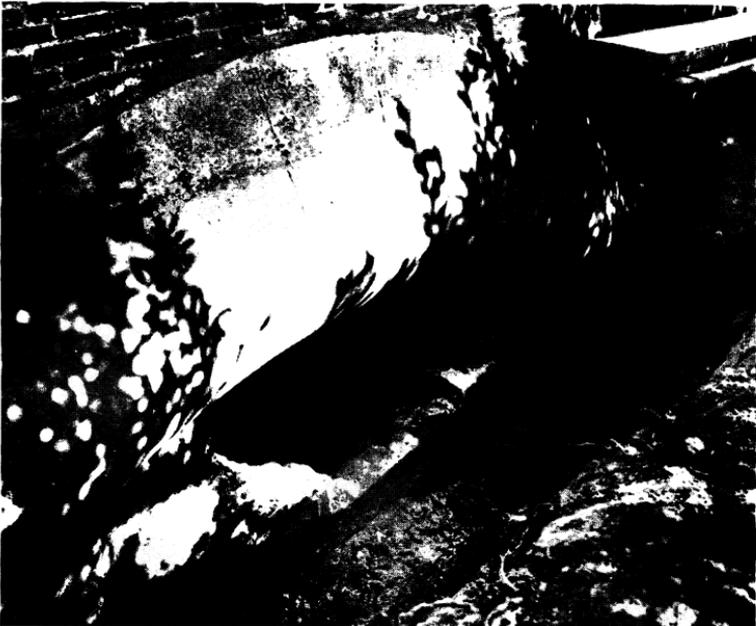
23. Plan of sally port access

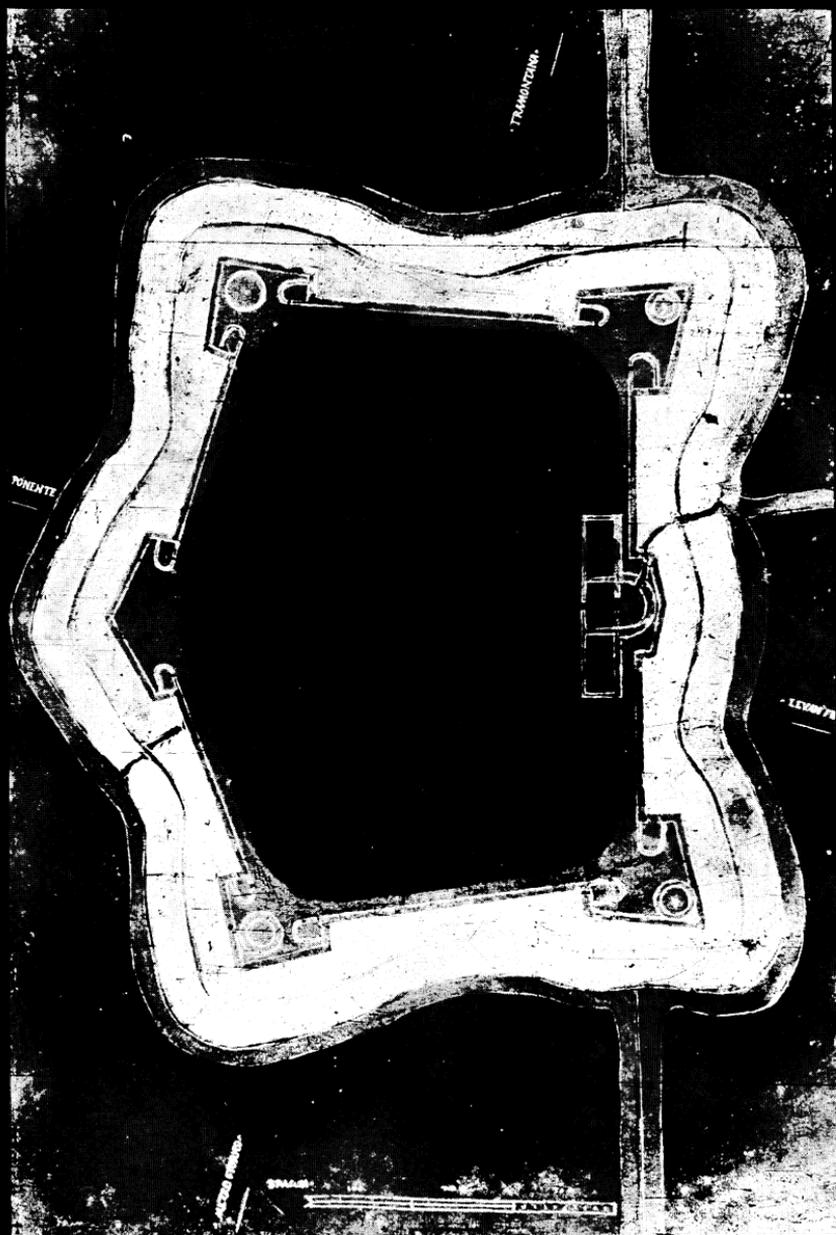




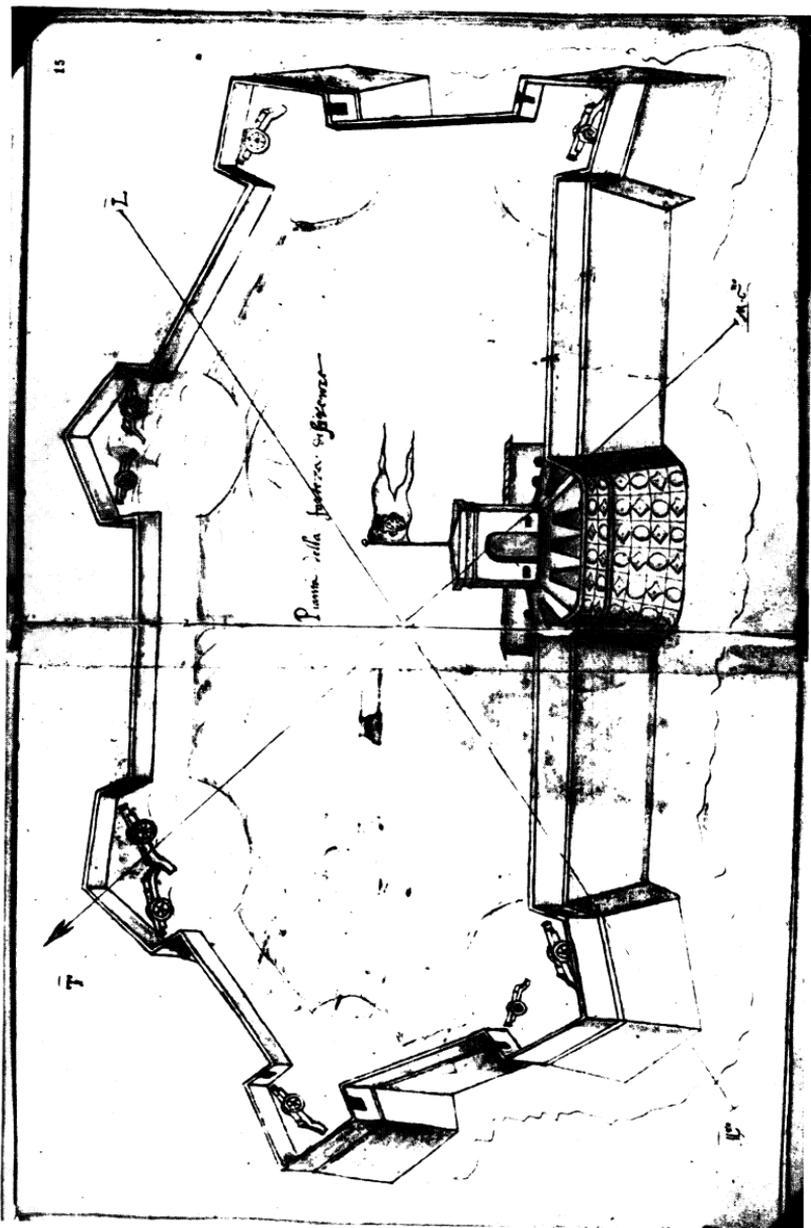
26. Pediment (at ground level) of original entrance to *mastio*

27. Top of early entrance, city front, right of *mastio*

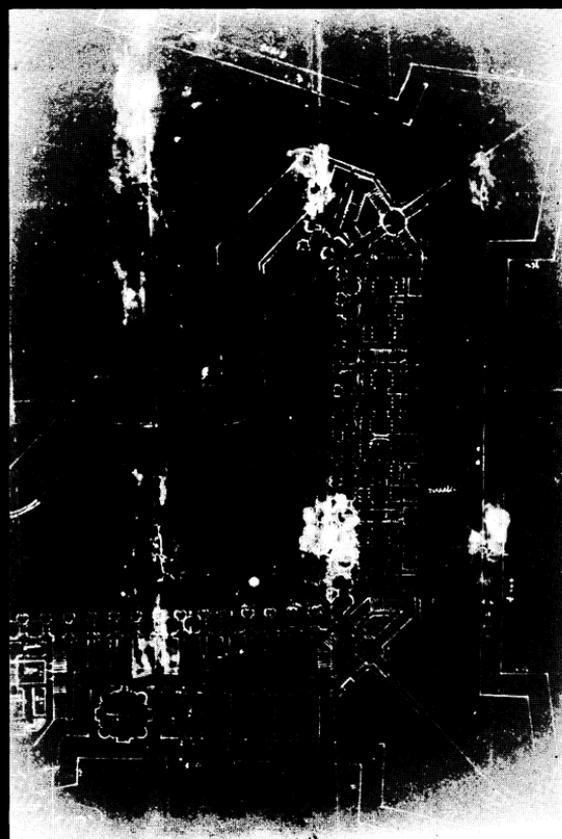
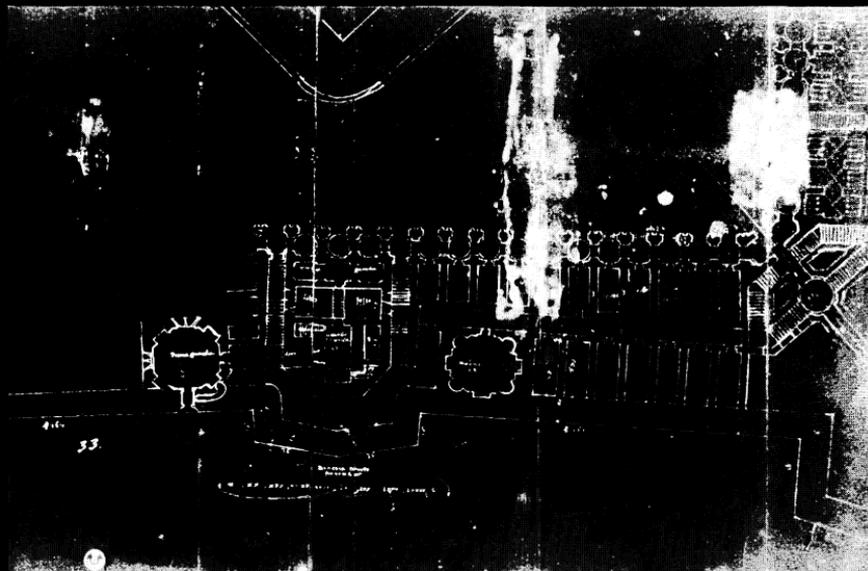




28. De Marchi, Fortezza da Basso. MS. cit., fol. 3r

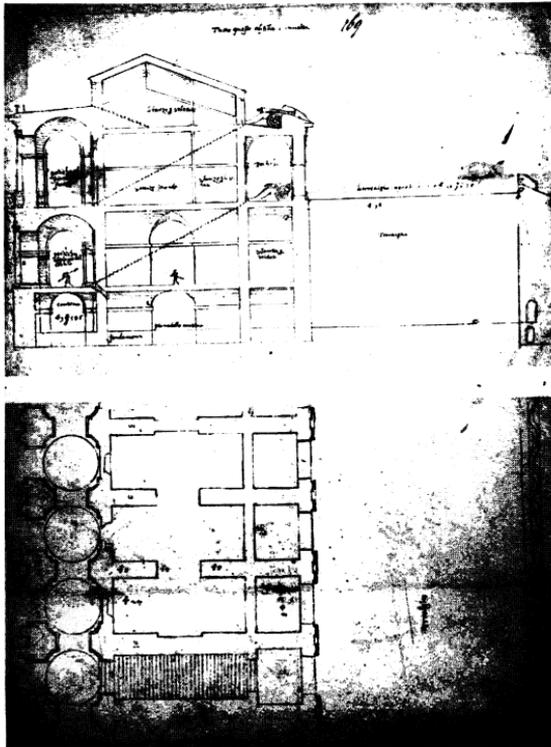
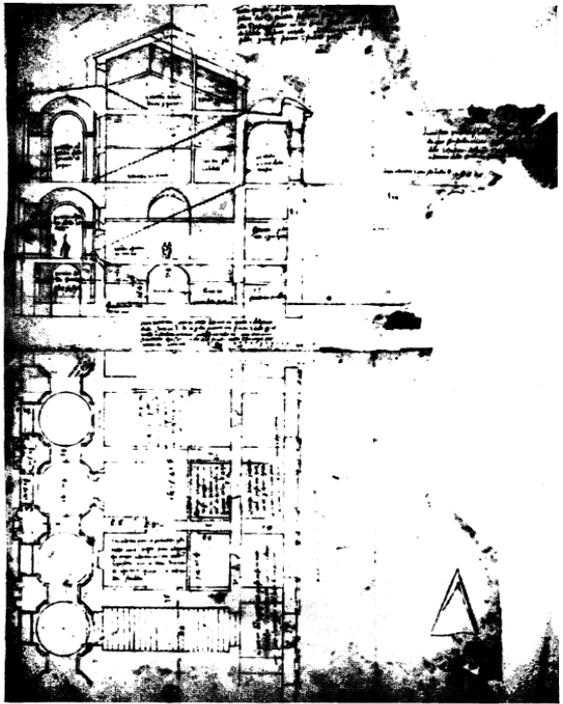


29. Fortezza da Basso. B.N.F., MS. XIX, 62, fols. 14v-15r

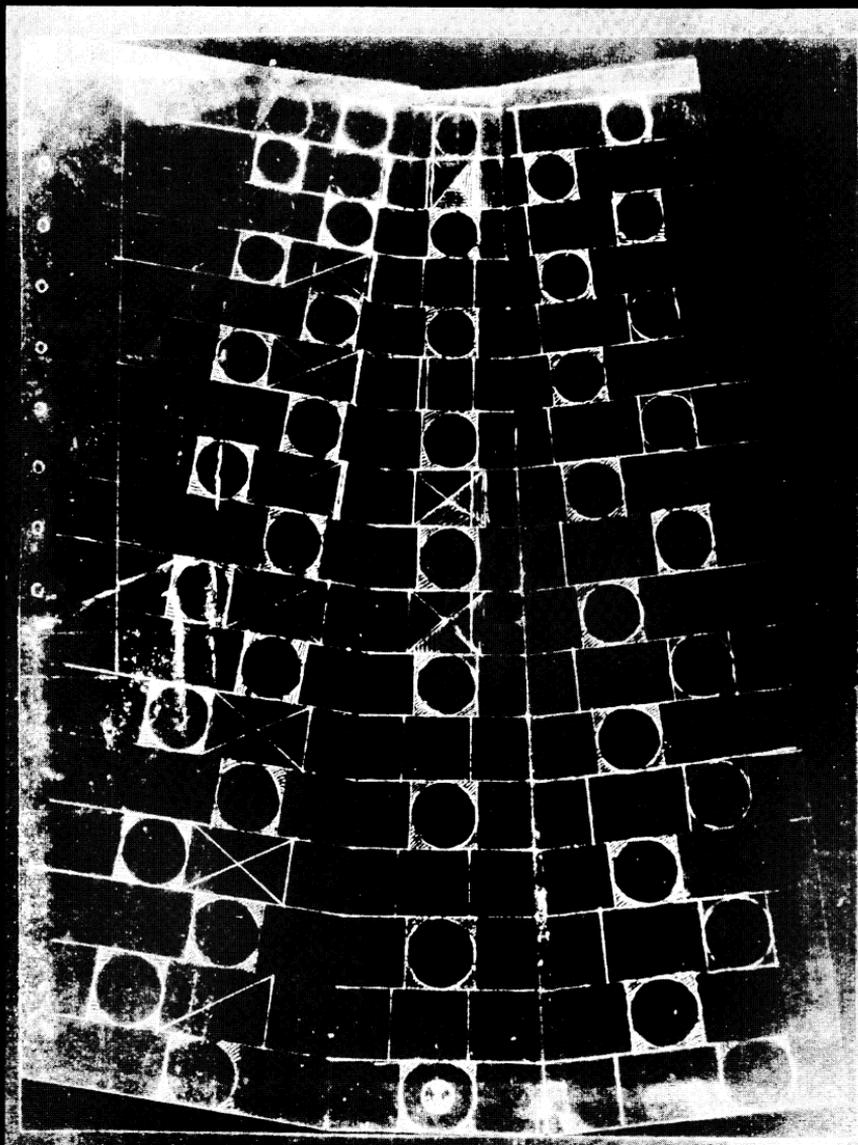


30 and 31. Bastiano da Sangallo, details from
no. 20

32. Antonio da Sangallo,
Fortezza, section. Uffizi,
931 A.



33. Bastiano da Sangallo,
copy of no. 32. Uffizi,
1659 A.

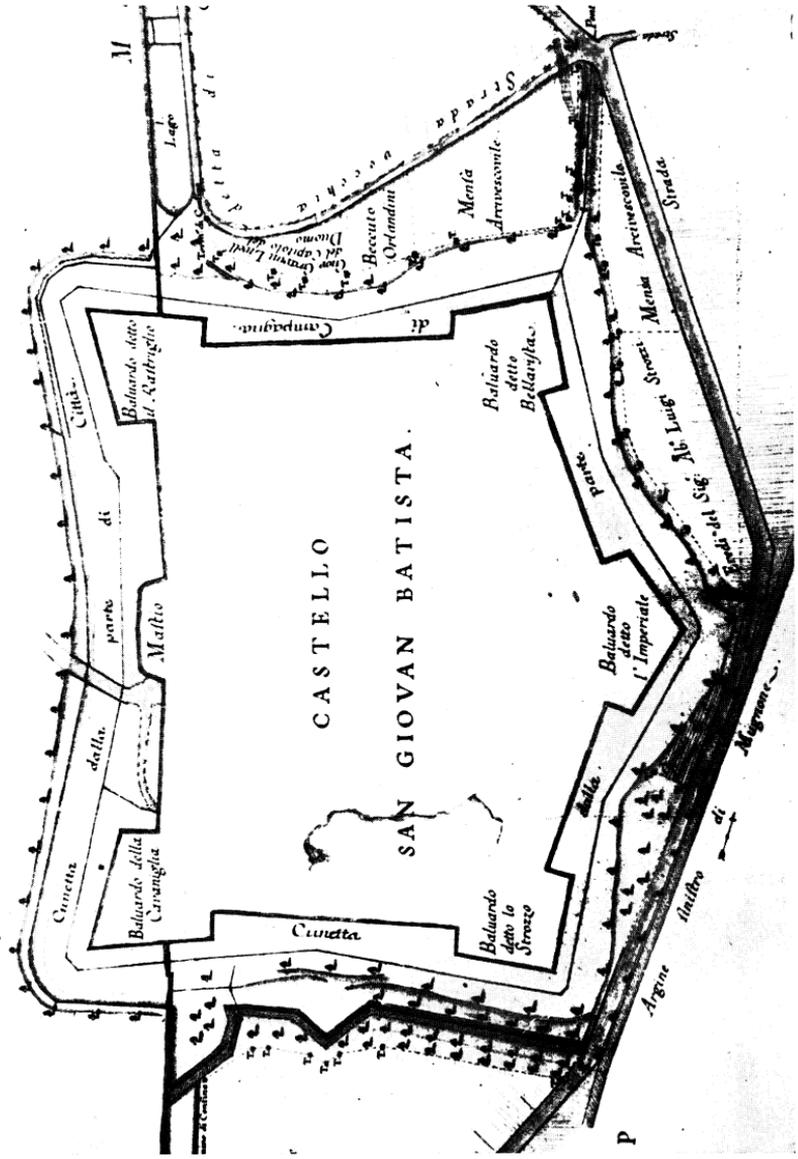


34. Antonio da Sangallo, design for stonework of *mastio*

35. (*opposite, above*) Fortezza, *mastio*. Uffizi, 762

36. (*opposite, below*) *Mastio* excavated to show stonework below modern earth level





37. Fortezza da Basso, A.S.F., R. R. Possessioni, Pianta, 536



39. Baldo de Paludi's inscription in the Fortezza

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

a sufficient state of readiness to receive a garrison. He went on to say that Porta a Pinti, on the north-east side of the city, had been decided on as its site, on the grounds that less destruction of private and ecclesiastical buildings would be involved than if the Porta San Gallo were chosen.¹ And on 30 March he repeated: the fortress is to be built, and at Porta a Pinti.²

Almost certainly it was at this time that Sangallo undertook the series of compass surveys³ (plate 9) which led to the Fortezza's being sited neither at Porta a Pinti nor at Porta San Gallo but at Porta a Faenza. By 16 May the matter had been settled. On that day Vitelli wrote to Luigi Guicciardini, who was by now at Arezzo and concerned about his own citadel: 'I thought I would let you know that the fortress here will soon be begun. Its form and site is now decided.'⁴ Why Porta a Faenza was decided on is not revealed, but this north-west front was clearly vulnerable to any enemy advancing across the plain either along the Arno or down the valley from Pistoia and Prato; a large bastion with earthen outworks had been built between Porta a Faenza and Porta San Gallo in preparation for the siege,⁵ and, as we have seen, the gates on that side had been strengthened after it. Equally important, perhaps, was the fact that Porta a Faenza is nearest of all the city's gates to Palazzo Medici where Alessandro and his nervous court resided. Vitelli wrote to Luigi again on 1 June to say that he was sending 'the plan of the Fortezza of Florence' by the bearer and apologizing for the delay. In a few days he hoped to bring Antonio da Sangallo with him, so that they could all discuss the fortress at Arezzo.⁶

As soon as the site had been chosen, a formidable organization —

¹ *Op. ined.*, vol. IX, pp. 290-1.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 293-4.

³ Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni, Arch. 771-4. Tribolo had used a compass during the siege (see below, p. 528), as did Vasari for the view of which plate 3 is a detail. See G. Boffito and A. Mori, *Piante e Vedute di Firenze* (Florence, 1926), p. 31.

⁴ As this letter — or, rather, postscript to a letter — has not before been printed, I quote it in full: 'Post scripta, Mi e parso dar aviso che presto se dara principio alla fortezza di qui della quale e hormaj determinato la forma et sito suo. Et cosi ancora si deve far presto de cotesta di costi. Et iterum alla s.v. mi Racom do Idem S. ^{10r} Alex^o Vitello.' A.S.F., Carte Stroz., Ser. I, LXI, fol. 16r.

⁵ Benedetto Varchi, *Storia fiorentina* (Florence, 1838-41), vol. II, p. 198.

⁶ Again, I quote the relevant part in full: 'Per il Cap^o Biago presente exhibitore mando alla s.v. il disegno della fortezza de firenze quale non si e mandato piu tosto expectando questa occasione di venire al paese e non fo il debito mio in venir a farli Reverentia per non si dare molestia al presente. Per che alla tornata mia che sara fra pochi di faro il viaggio per costi, et menero m^o Ant. da San Gallo quale se ne va per la sua donna ch'e in Ancona et tornera per la volta di Castella [Vitelli's home]. Et alhora parlarimo a lungho della fortezza di costi, che la ex^{1a} del s. Duca nostro patrone vole che la si faccia ad ogni modo. Et me ne ha parlato di novo, in voler che la se disegni et dia principio et pero del tutto ne ci conferiremo con v.s. quando saremo li abocca . . . Da Pöte Romito il 1^o di Giug^o, nel xxxiiij.' A.S.F., Carte Stroz., Ser. I, LXI, fol. 25r.

of which, such are the archival lacunae for this period, we can know little — sprang into being. Progress went forward at a spectacular rate; Vasari's comment that the Fortezza 'was erected and completed with such expedition that no edifice of the kind, either in ancient or modern times, was ever brought to conclusion in so short a period',¹ was no hyperbole. The extensive ground clearing was done so swiftly that the foundation stone was laid on 15 July 1534, and on 5 December 1535 the first garrison was installed. And as the dome of the central hall (plate 10) shows, or an inspection of the galleries in the thickness of the walls, the work, though unfinished, was not skimped.

We know something about the architects involved. On 29 May 1534, the *Capitani* elected Antonio da Sangallo 'caput magistrorum fortilitii illustrissimi ducis' with a salary of twenty-five florins a month.² Antonio was the most expert and experienced of contemporary military engineers. In 1515 he had prepared a plan for Civitavecchia, in 1519 he worked on the fortifications of Montefiascone, in 1526 he had, at the Pope's bidding, inspected the fortified places of the Romagna, he began the citadel of Ancona in 1529, having in the meantime given advice on the defences of Parma, Piacenza and Florence itself.³ In 1534 he was again working at Ancona (also for twenty-five florins a month) for the Pope.⁴

His chief assistant was Giovanni Alessio, better known as Nanni Unghero. Unghero had worked as a *capomaestro* for the *Capitani* since 1531.⁵ He was apparently in charge of the works that transformed the Porta alla Giustizia into the Citadella Vecchia with a salary of £42 a month in 1532,⁶ which was increased in October of the following year, 'viso quantum dictus Iohannes exercuit et exercet officium suum benediligenter et cum amore', to £54.⁷ On 1 May 1534 he was appointed *capomaestro* with full responsibility for the new fortress at almost double his previous salary.⁸ In 1535, when the foundations were completed,

¹ Tr. Mrs J. Foster (London, 1851), vol. IV, p. 13.

² A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fol. 209v.

³ See Giovannoni, op. cit, 74 ff.

⁴ James S. Ackerman, 'Architectural practice in the Italian Renaissance', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (Oct., 1954), p. 5.

⁵ A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fol. 108v.

⁶ Ibid., fol. 329r.

⁷ Ibid., fol. 186v.

⁸ 'Item deliberaverunt quod salarium Iohannis Alexii vocato Nanni Unghere, caput magistri dicte Partis et etiam habens administrationem fortilitii noviter incepti per illustrissimum dominum Ducham, sit et esse debeat pro uno anno incepto die primo mensis Maii proxime preteriti et finiendo per totum mensem Aprilis proxime futurum 1535, ad rationem florenorum centum sexaginta de libris 7 pro quolibet floreno, non obstante quod alias fuerit sibi factum salarium, quia voluerunt quod

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

and the actual construction work was going forward, Antonio's nephew Bastiano (Aristotile) da Sangallo was in Florence,¹ interpreting Antonio's drawings² and keeping him in touch with the way in which they were being executed. The *condottiere*-architect Pierfrancesco da Viterbo, who had previously worked with Antonio on the fortifications at Parma and Piacenza for Clement, was consulted at an early stage, but he died in 1534 and there is no clear evidence that he influenced the design of the Fortezza.³

The administration of the building operations was handled by the *Capitani di Parte Guelfa* through their *provveditore*, Bertoldo de Gherardo Corsini. Corsini had been the most active of the officials responsible for strengthening the walls before the siege and had worked with Sangallo when he was then called in to advise the Florentine government.⁴ Afterwards he changed sides with alacrity, and from a *popolano* became for a while an assiduous courtier of the Medici.⁵ In 1533 he was 'provveditore sopra le muraglie et fortificatione'.⁶ From May 1534, as *provveditore* of the new fortress, he received a salary of £35 per month.⁷ Under him was appointed a treasurer and officials responsible for building materials and for food (*pro distribuendo panem et vinum*) and lodging for the labourers.⁸ The Medici family was, understandably, closely involved. Alessandro took a continuous interest in the works, Giulio was treasurer, and Ottaviano was mentioned in connection with the construction work in 1535.⁹ While not formally part of the team responsible for the design and building of the Fortezza, Alessandro Vitelli, as confidant of Alessandro and captain of the guard, was

salarium alias sibi factum computetur in isto pro dicto anno. Nec pro dicto anno vel aliud petere vel habere possit nisi dictos florenos centum sexaginta ut supra.' *Ibid.*, fol. 220r.

¹ He is mentioned in connection with a lawsuit on 26 April 1535, A.S.F., *Capitani di Parte*, 140 rosso, fol. 8r [unnumbered].

² Some of the Fortezza drawings in the Uffizi show traces of both hands. Plates 20, 30, 31, 33 are catalogued by the Uffizi as by Sangallo *detto* il Gobbo, i.e. Giovanni Battista, Antonio's brother. But his name is nowhere associated with the Fortezza in the documents, whereas Bastiano is mentioned twice in connection with its construction (Bottari, *op. cit.*, pp. 330, 337). The first of these references calls him by his nickname Aristotile, which obviates a copyist's confusion with Giovanni Battista. And see the previous note for evidence of Bastiano's presence in Florence.

³ Ed. Milanese, vol. V, p. 458. The Florentines had asked for his services while they were preparing for the siege; Gaye, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 177; Settimanni, MS. cit., fol. 83r. Varchi (*op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 76) says that 'fece il disegno di questa muraglia' in connection with the foundation ceremony.

⁴ Varchi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 108.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, 97-8.

⁶ A.S.F., *Capitani di Parte*, 14 rosso, fol. 340r.

⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 234r (for title) and fol. 292v (for salary).

⁸ Listed *ibid.*, fols. 207v-208r.

⁹ Bottari, vol. III, p. 331.

J. R. HALE

concerned with the initial planning and continued to keep an eye on the eventual quarters for his troops. He had fought against the Florentines during the siege and had on one occasion been rumoured to have been killed;¹ he had a personal interest in having a safe refuge if the events of 1527 should recur.

The labour force was recruited from the *dominio*, each commune — even those for whom it meant a three days journey — sending three or four hundred men who were allocated an area of land to level or excavate before they were allowed to return home. There were no wages, each man receiving three loaves and a flask of wine a day. The numbers involved were as many as three thousand at a time, and the *Capitani* reinforced them by commuting fines to forced labour on the foundations. It was noticed with horror that work was not allowed to slacken on Sundays or on religious holidays. The citizens were rigorously excluded from the site: the penalty for peeping was ten florins, or, more appropriately, forced labour.² The speed with which work on the Fortezza went forward becomes more credible if we eke out our information with the description given by Bellucci of his completion of the fortification started by Nanni Unghero at Prato. He started work there in February 1545 and in spite of heavy rains completed the earthen bastions and ramparts in three months. He employed up to two thousand men at a time, and is full of praise for the abundance of transport and the strength of the oxen even at that 'weak' time of year, and for the supply of timber for use in strengthening foundations, reinforcing banks and for scaffolding.³ About the organization of stone-cutting and masonry for the Fortezza we know almost nothing.

Unfortunately, information about its cost and the financing is equally obscure. On 7 July 1533, a forced loan (*accatto*) was raised to pay for grain purchases, for public works on the Arno and because 'it is still necessary to repair many of our fortifications'.⁴ The sum raised was 35,000 ducats, to be repaid, with interest of 12 per cent p.a., using the income from the salt tax as guarantee. Settimanni recorded the opinion that this loan, though ostensibly for fortifications, was really to provide an adequately magnificent trousseau for Catherine de' Medici, about

¹ A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, LXV, no. 124.

² The best accounts are in Settimanni, MS. cit., fol. 83r, Ughi, op. cit., pp. 172-3, and Segni, ed. cit., p. 176. These accounts (apart from the numbers involved) are borne out by A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fols. 210r-214r.

³ MS. cit., fols. 32v-33v. On fols. 34r-38v he breaks down the costs, but as most of these are wages for earth-shifting and none were paid for the pre-masonry work at the Fortezza, they cannot be used to provide an analogy.

⁴ A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 10 rosso, fols. 89v-90r.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

to be married to Francis I's son Henry.¹ Certainly Alessandro was short of money next year; on 27 June Luigi Guicciardini observed to his brother Niccolò that the Duke would have to disband some of his troops in order to find money for the Fortezza.² On 29 July came the news of a further *accatto*, specifically for the defence of the city, news that was greeted with gloom, not so much because the interest rate had dropped to eight per cent as because the chances of being repaid for either appeared nil, and 'the money was not going to protect, or be of any advantage to the city, but to confirm it in the servitude to which it had been recently condemned'.³

Somehow, from Florence — and possibly from Rome? — the money was forthcoming and the enormous task was taken in hand. The earth-shifting began in mid-May⁴ and, as we have seen, was sufficiently far advanced for the foundation stone to be laid on 15 July. Work started on the outer curtains and bastions, in order to leave the city wall intact as long as possible.

First it was necessary to clear buildings from the site outside the walls. The convent of S. Giovanni Evangelista, called the Monastero di Faenza from the city from which the founding nuns came (hence Porta a Faenza) was destroyed, and the nuns transferred to the Badia of S. Salvi.⁵ A comparison between plate 11 and plate 12 shows how much property had to come down when work began in June on clearing the inner side, and a special *provisione* was passed exempting any householder who was affected from paying taxes to the city; it said nothing about compensation.⁶

Then began the digging of the broad ditch that was to surround the Fortezza, which was to be 50 *braccia* wide, together with the trench on its inner side, 6 *braccia* wide, which was to contain the foundations of the walls; these were to contain in their thickness not only a gallery giving on to a series of musketry batteries and sally-ports opening into the ditch but, at a subterranean level, a lower passage to serve as a listening gallery (countermine) and also, possibly, as a drainage sump. Drainage, throughout work on the foundations, was a major problem. The water table varied from 5½ *braccia* below the surface towards Porta

¹ MS. cit., fol. 90r.

² A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, CXXXV, fol. 144v.

³ Settimanni, MS. cit., fol. 137v, and Varchi, op. cit., vol. III, p. 98, in almost identical words.

⁴ 17 May, according to the anonymous diarist, B.N.F. Conv. Soppr., c.7. 2614, fol. 60v.

⁵ G. Lami, *Lezioni di antichità toscane* . . . (Florence, 1766), vol. I, p. xxxiii.

⁶ Exemptions were for those properties 'decimate et nella gravezza della Città'. A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 10 rossi, fol. 93v.

a Prato (by the river) to 7 *braccia* towards Porta San Gallo, and it was only by the use of pumps and a diversionary ditch leading to still lower ground that the footings of the walls could be kept dry. Only excavation can reveal the drainage system that was inserted, but, whatever it was, it was cited as a model later in the century.¹ Another problem was the extremely varied nature of the ground, here stiff clay or gravel, there sand and soft silt which needed binding with timber. Just outside the walls the excavators uncovered a Roman cemetery: coins, glass, copper mirrors, lamps and marble inscriptions, one of which was to be later displayed in the Fortezza.²

By 6 July, most of the ditch outside the walls was completed, and the spoil thrown outwards to form a *glacis* and inwards to provide the earth core of the bastions. Meanwhile, lime (for mortar), bricks and shaped stones had been prepared so that Vitelli, in his progress report of this date on the 'Castello Alexandrino' was able to say that 'all is shaping splendidly (*gagliardamente*), so that when the foundations are finished we expect to be able to build the outer bastions up to the first gunports [when, by the standards of the time, they would be defensible] very shortly'. A beginning, too, had been made on the trace of the inner bastions, the south-western one encroaching on 'the garden of the Bartolini', and that of S. Antonio, the south-eastern, reaching into 'a field belonging to the Hospital of S. Bonifatio'. On that date 1200 men were working outside and 300 inside the city wall.³ The work was not without danger; six men were killed and fourteen crippled when the embankment for one of the bastions collapsed.⁴

Absit omen, and the greatest pains were taken to ensure that the foundation ceremony should be as powerfully beneficent as possible. On 12 July Angelo Marzi, Bishop of Assisi and one of Duke Alessandro's most trusted advisers,⁵ wrote in tones of great urgency to Francesco Guicciardini in Bologna. It had been decided that the foundation stone was to be laid in that month, but should it be on the 15th or the 19th? The astrologers of Florence were at a deadlock — was the Carmelite Giuliano da Prato right in choosing the 15th, or were his rivals? Would

¹ By Francesco de Marchi, *Trattato d'Architettura Militare*, B.N.F., II, I, 277, fol. 151v.

² A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, CCCLXI, fol. 38v.

³ All the details, unless otherwise noted, in this and the previous paragraph are taken from Vitelli's report, A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, XCV, fol. 22 ff., printed (with a few errors, notably 'conducere' for 'canonier') by L. Dami in his pioneer work, 'La costruzione della Fortezza da Basso,' *Arte e Storia*, vol. VI (1915), pp. 165-6.

⁴ Anon., *Diario* . . . , B.N.F., Conv. Soppr., 2614, fol. 60v.

⁵ According to Ammirato (*Opuscoli*, Florence (1542), p. 154) 'suo Luogotenente nell'udienza di piati et differenze de sudditi'.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

Guicciardini show Giuliano's diagram (plate 13) to the astrologers of Bologna and express back their opinion?¹

Foundation stones were not laid lightly in the Renaissance. The last great building in Florence, Palazzo Strozzi, had begun to rise on 6 August 1489, at an hour determined by astrologers,² and only a fortnight before receiving Marzi's letter Guicciardini had been advising Luigi to observe this tradition before commencing the citadel of Arezzo.³ Presumably the Bolognese astrologers supported the Provincial of the Carmelites, for the stone was laid on Wednesday morning, 15 July.

The ceremony was well attended, the citizens being for the first time allowed to see the site of their new citadel at close quarters. A moveable altar had been constructed and was placed beside the ditch where the point of one of the outside bastions was to rise.⁴ To this moved a procession headed by Alessandro with Vitelli and 'the whole nobility of Florence', together with Marzi and his train and the city magistrates, followed by a large contingent of the guard. Mass was said by the bishop and then the altar was lowered into the ditch. It was thirteen hours after the previous sunset, and while hymns were sung and prayers chanted, the Carmelite astrologer and the famous astrological clockmaker Lorenzo dalla Golpaia watched 'the various instruments for telling the time' they held in their hands for the fortunate moment to arrive. Their instruments cannot have been properly synchronized, for there was apparently some disagreement between them; the moment when the signal was given was variously reported as twenty-five, thirty, forty-four and forty-eight minutes past the hour, and Giuliano is said afterwards to have prophesied that the citadel would fall in ruins at the end of ninety-three years, at which the clockmaker 'deservedly laughed'. However, the sign was given and Marzi at once laid the first stone at the point of the bastion. It was a marble slab one and a quarter *braccia* by one half and bore this inscription: ANGELUS MARTIUS EPS ASSISINATENSIS HUNC PRIMUM LAPIDEM PER EUM BENEDICTUM AD ARCIS FLORENTIE MEDICEE ALEXANDER IN FUNDAMENTO PONIT ANNO A SALUTE CHRISTIANA MDXXXIII IULII DIE XV HORA XIII.½. At the same time Ales-

¹ Op. cit., vol. X, pp. 258-9. On 21 July he sent Giuliano's diagram to Luigi, remarking that the Bolognese astrologers thought it to be altogether the wrong month. *Op. ined.*, vol. X, p. 300.

² Guido Pampaloni, *Palazzo Strozzi* (Rome, 1963), p. 87.

³ Op. cit., vol. X, pp. 295-6.

⁴ 'Dove e l'arme di S. M. Cesarea', Settimanni, MS. cit., fol. 132v, but as the escutcheons have perished, we can only say that this was probably the central bastion on the north-west front, as its name 'Imperiale' (plate 37) implies.

sandro laid another of the same size, inscribed as follows: ALEXANDER MEDICES PRIMUS DUX FLORENTINAM ARCEM A FUNDAMENTIS ERIGENS PRIMUM APONIT LAPIDEM. QUEM ANGELUS MARTIUS EPS ASSISINATENSIS INVOCATO DIVINO NUMINE BENEDIXIT DEDICAVITQUE ANNO A SALUTE CHRISTIANA MDXXXIII. CLEMENTE VII. PONT. MAXIMO ET CAROLO QUINTO IMPERATORE AUGUSTO.¹ After the slabs had been ceremonially tapped with a new mallet, guns and arquebuses were shot off and Alessandro threw three gold medals into the foundation, one with Clement's head, one with Marzi's and one bearing his own — again, in conformity with custom: medals had been placed in the foundations of Palazzo Strozzi, as they were to be at the Belvedere fortress.²

In spite of the speed with which the Fortezza was founded, its ground plan was the result of much preliminary thought. The first sketch that survives in Sangallo's hand represents the stage when the Fortezza was to be sited at Porta S. Gallo (plate 14). The bottom half of the sheet contains the preliminary doodling with ideal geometrical shapes that was common among military engineers at the time, but the regular pentagons at the top seem to take their cue from the angle at which the city walls met the gate, which is shown in the right-hand upper corner. The symmetrical pentagonal form was less suited to a fortress built in the middle of a long straight stretch of wall, and when the Porta a Faenza site was decided on, Sangallo settled for a rectangle with one side extended to form an irregular pentagon. From the first drawings associated with the new site (plates 15 and 16) we can see that while this basic shape remained, two drastic changes intervened before the work of clearing the ground began. He saw the fortress as straddling the wall in such a way as to be half in, half out of the city, and — taking the inscription 'parte della Città' to put the top half of the drawing inside the wall — as pointing menacingly inwards, though there was also a massive ravelin protecting the straight outer front from assault from the open country, and with (in plate 16) a second ravelin astride the wall to provide additional cover from an attack coming up from the river, either inside the wall or outside it.

It was probably at this stage that Alessandro's sense of urgency grew

¹ See Settignano's corrected version, MS. cit., fol. 134r. M. Rastrelli, *Storia di Alessandro dei Medici* (Florence, 1781), vol. II, pp. 50-1, conflates his uncorrected with his corrected version.

² This description of the foundation ceremony is taken from: Letter from Giovanfrancesco Camaiani to Luigi Guicciardini, 15 July 1534, A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, LXI, no. 51 (printed in the *Inventario*, p. 317); A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, XCV, fol. 20r (printed, with omission of slab dimensions, in Dami, op. cit., pp. 164-5); Settignano, MS. cit., fol. 132r-133r; B.N.F., II, IV, 339 (notes of A. F. Marmi), fol. 24r; B.N.F., II, I, 131, fol. 152v.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

so great that it was decided to incorporate the recently strengthened Porta a Faenza, which Sangallo apparently thought of leaving to one side (plate 15), into the fortress itself and make it the nucleus of a *mastio* (plates 17 and 18, where Porta a Faenza is the high square-topped tower). This involved turning the entire fortress round, so that its straight front would be aligned with the city wall. A secondary advantage of this scheme is that less destruction of property within the city was entailed, but Sangallo appears to have thought that it weakened the fortress, for in the next surviving drawing (plate 19) he introduces a bastioned fort-within-a-fort which anticipates the possibility of having to retreat there after an attack from the city which might storm the southern front. Traces of such a defence are to be found on a subsequent, more finished drawing (plate 20), and the 'completed' Fortezza was indeed criticized for not having an inner retreat.¹ The city south front was, however, strengthened by building the *mastio* massively forward (compare plates 19 and 21) instead of using Porta a Faenza itself and presenting a withdrawn curtain to the city.

The decision to align on the city wall and build the Fortezza outwards gave time to refine the *mastio* front and the buildings within it while the three outer bastions were built, but one important feature of the design was fixed as soon as the foundation works began. This was the double tier of corridors in the thickness of the walls (plates 17, 22 and 33) which have already been referred to.

The lower, the top of whose vault coincides with the original level of the ditch, occupies what was to be the conventional position for a countermine gallery, though if the wall foundations really slope out as steeply as one of Sangallo's elevations suggests (plate 22) its value as a listening gallery would have been reduced. It seems more likely that its function was to act as a drain and to help ventilate the far more important gallery above it; as this contained musketry galleries and sally points a good circulation of fresh air was needed to clear smoke away and to prevent the soldiers mustering in that confined space from becoming stifled. The galleries communicate through a series of square traps in the floor of the upper one, and this, combined with chimneys rising at intervals from the upper gallery, keeps the air moving. The countermine is at present filled nearly to the top with mud, so its precise function cannot be established.

The upper gallery, however, though blocked in part by falls, can be examined. Large enough to let two men walk abreast without stooping,

¹ See below, pp. 530-1.

it contains, at intervals of some seven metres, musketry galleries scooped towards the outside of the wall in which firing slits are cut. There is also a series of sally ports, closed on the inside by a door and consisting of an S-shaped corridor in the thickness of the wall leading to a second door opening into the ditch and covered by musket slits cut through from the main gallery (plate 23). The filling-in of the ditch makes these invisible from the outside.

This nineteenth-century filling-in also conceals the way in which the Fortezza was entered. The present gates (plate 24, I and I¹) were built when the original ones were buried. There are three early gates of which only one is shown in a contemporary working drawing, that of the *mastio* (plate 25), whose pediment can be seen at ground level immediately to the left of the present main entrance (plate 26). Recent excavation revealed the top of a second gate on the city front (plate 27, G¹ on plate 24). Until this is fully excavated, however, or associated with an inscription, it would be hazardous to attribute it to Sangallo. Two gates so near together would weaken the curtain between them and an entrance in that position is not shown on any sixteenth-century plan. De Marchi and the anonymous draughtsman of the Biblioteca Nazionale¹ (plates 28 and 29) show only the *mastio* entrance on the city front at mid-century, and so does Buonsignori in 1581 (plate 12). Finally, it would have been illogical for Sangallo to have lavished the precautions against effecting an easy entrance into the *mastio* (which has inner flanking fire positions and a succession of massive gates) while offering a head-on entrance in the adjacent curtain.

The obvious place for a second entrance was on the other side, for the admission of reinforcements and the launching of massive sallies. De Marchi indicates an entrance there, and the top part of a bricked-up gateway can be clearly seen. Set in a stone facing, which sets it off from the surrounding brick, topped with a massive straight pediment, and with a space for an inscription above the cordon, this is better suited for a ceremonial entrance than the more business-like entrance in the flanks of the *mastio*. And as the real 'master' of the Fortezza was not so much Alessandro as Charles V, it would have been natural to have the triumphal entrance on 'his' side, next to his imperial bastion, rather than in the direction of the city. This entrance is not shown by Buonsignori, possibly because after Cosimo's secure reign such a gate, necessarily vulnerable, was no longer necessary either as a symbol of

¹ Admittedly he is very inaccurate — showing four outer bastions instead of three, but he does have a good general notion of the city front.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

Imperial power or to admit reinforcements to help the Medici overawe the populace. But until the gate is excavated, its date must remain conjectural.

Sangallo's plans for the interior (plates 30 and 31, and 32 and 33¹ which show a section across the righthand side of 31, modifying 22) envisaged elaborate and harmonious accommodation for men and horses, but they were never carried out, and *ad hoc* buildings in the interior (imaginatively rationalized according to the town-planning conventions of his day by Buonsignori) were put up instead. Nothing but the *mastio*, to contain quarters for the Duke himself, was completed in something like the form for which he had hoped. Apart from the stone façade in which the 'Imperial' gate is set, this provides the only decorative relief from the sombre brickwork of the rest of the Fortezza. Great care was taken over its design (plate 34) and even today its appearance is magnificent (plate 35), though lacking the impressiveness it must have had when the ditch was still void (plate 36). 'Vasari cited it as the finest example of rusticated masonry in Florence, and explained how the façade, "out of respect for the Medici emblems, is made with ornaments of diamond points and flattened pellets".'²

This failure to complete the fortress is explained by the events that followed the foundation ceremony. By July 1534 Clement VII's failing health was the subject of much concern in Florence, and the building of the Fortezza was pushed forward still faster — and faster yet on his death on 25 September: with the loss of a Medici pope, a Medici citadel became even more crucial to Alessandro. According to Segni, he clapped another heavy *accatto* on the Florentines, and called once more on the entire labour force of the *dominio*.³ The work was driven on through the rain that winter, complicated somewhat by Antonio's absence in Rome, as we can sense from the letters to him from Giovanni delle Decime, who appears to have been clerk of the works under Nanni Unghero. Bastiano da Sangallo was invaluable as go-between and explicator of Antonio's drawings to Alessandro whose interest grew still greater as the *mastio* progressed, as it did this winter, for as the terms

¹ Among the mass of detailed information in Giovannoni (op. cit.) some small errors relating to the Fortezza have crept in. His fig. 377 is not Uffizi 931A but 1659A; on p. 81, for 791 read 761; on p. 421, 791 is confused with 761; on p. 415, for fig. 373 read 374 and change description to 'pianta di tutta quanta la fortezza' and draughtsman from Antonio to (assuming the argument of note 73) Bastiano.

² *Vasari on Technique*, tr. L. S. MacLehose, ed. G. Baldwin Smith (New York, 1940), 66-7. A detailed estimate of the Fortezza as a fighting machine must wait until the army leaves it, when further excavations can take place, gun embrasures be cleared out and parapets examined.

³ *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 415-16, 176.

J. R. HALE

used in connection with it show —*castello, palazzo del principe* — this part of the Fortezza was to double the function of a strong point with that of an armoured home for the Duke.

In January and February, the only months for which we have reasonably detailed information, the outer bastions with their ramparts neared completion, and work was concentrated instead on the inner ones. When the old city wall was torn down to leave the width of the ditch between it and the south-east bastions, the Fortezza, now to be seen as a growing whole for the first time was as Unghero exclaimed 'a superb thing'. It was, however, the *mastio* that especially preoccupied Alessandro. Unghero wrote to Antonio, with some of an expert's impatience of the layman, that he had had to have a model made as the Duke could not visualize it from the drawings; 'he says, "It is all very well to talk, but I don't follow it"'.¹ In particular Alessandro feared that the *mastio*, being so high, would be vulnerable, and Unghero explained how the lines of fire from the bastions would protect it, and that it would hardly be a conspicuous mark from the bottom of the *glacis* towards the town.¹

At the same time, a fresh course was being dug for the Mugnone, the details of which are by no means clear. Early in the sixteenth century that stream came in from the north to Porta San Gallo and then flowed outside the wall past Porta a Faenza and so into the Arno. In preparation for the siege, however, its course was diverted so that it ran the other way, along the north-eastern and eastern walls, and thence to the Arno.² If Ughi is to be trusted this must have been a temporary measure, for he says that the building of the Fortezza made it necessary to turn it from its old bed along which it was now flowing again, and out past the Fortezza.³ In this case it is difficult to understand why we first hear of this diversion in February 1535⁴ and as an operation that was not yet completed. Perhaps it was deliberately turned back to its old route in February past the Fortezza and away on something like its present course to provide an obstacle to an army coming from Prato, and, a remote possibility, so that the Fortezza ditches could be filled from it if it were thought desirable: there was much debate at the time about the merits of a wet versus a dry ditch. Yet to flood the ditch would have been a desperate measure, for it would have rendered the ditch-

¹ Information in these two paragraphs from letters to Antonio da San Gallo from Giovanni delle Decime and Nanni Unghero printed in Bottari, *op. cit.*, vol. III, pp. 329-37.

² Varchi, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 109.

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 172-3.

⁴ Bottari, *op. cit.*, vol. III, p. 337.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

level musketry gallery and its sally-ports useless. However, the work was done, even if we cannot be clear about its purpose.¹

All this activity continued through the spring and summer. By 5 November Vitelli is writing encouragingly to San Gallo, 'All goes well with the fortress (*roccha*) and procedes as ever with vigour and diligence.' But he added that they needed Antonio on the spot as quickly as possible.² This was for the last spurt before a garrison was able to take over on 5 December.

Once more the stars were consulted. 'On Sunday 5 December 1535 at eighteen hours Bishop Marzi said a solemn Mass at the new fortress of Florence by the gate [Faenza] at the moment fixed by the astrologers, and it was handed over by Duke Alessandro to the captain of the guard.'³ Vasari was present at this ceremony, and he described the pageantry — the bishop's throne, the vestments, the musical instruments and the singing — with a mildly extravagant air of mockery to Pietro Aretino. The moment came for the elevation of the Host, and the officers began to appear, armed so divinely that they looked like the triumph of Scipio in the second Punic War, and they passed four by four to the left and drew up in line with their backs to the east. Last of all came forty pieces of artillery, all new, of beautiful shape, embellished with the ducal arms and wreathed with olive, drawn each by four yoke of oxen; then came carriages piled with cannon balls interspersed with mules laden with powder barrels and other warlike instruments, the appearance of all which might have struck Mars himself with fear. Then guns were fired, officers embraced, and the procession moved inside the Fortezza, where they shortly afterwards appeared on the ramparts, eight hundred of them, and the standards of Charles V and the Medici were for the first time seen displayed there.⁴

While Vitelli remained Alessandro's military right-hand man, the Duke appointed Paolantonio da Parma, 'a young man better known for loyalty than for reliability or judgment,'⁵ as castellan, and at this installation ceremony Paolantonio had to take an oath, administered

¹ The earliest plan which gives the ditch system (plate 37) dates from the eighteenth century. It shows the ditch to be dry, save for a cunette — a narrow channel which combined the function of draining a dry ditch with making mining operations more difficult — running along the middle of it. The left bank of the Mugnone is shown outside the north side of the ditch. According to Fourquevaux (op. cit., p. 530, n.1), the cunette's function here was to drain the countermine. He says it was two paces wide.

² A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, XCV, fol. 24r (printed in Dami, op. cit., p. 166).

³ B.N.F., II, I, 313, fol. 153v.

⁴ Frey, op. cit., pp. 40-2.

⁵ Adriani, op. cit., p. 21.

J. R. HALE

by the Bishop in the presence of the Duke, the clergy of the Cathedral, and the large crowd of notables, in which he swore to guard the Fortezza with all its artillery, munitions, etc. for the Duke, to keep the password secret, and, if Alessandro should die, to hand it over only to the Emperor or his representative.¹ From this oath the status of the Fortezza becomes clear: it is a guarantee that the policy of Charles V, and not the will of the Florentine people, will prevail at any moment of constitutional crisis.

With the garrison installed, Alessandro felt safe in leaving Florence for an absence of two and a half months, during which he conferred with the Emperor in Naples and confirmed that in the event of his death his castellans in Florence, Pisa and Leghorn would take orders only from Charles.² It must have been at about this time that Baldo de Paludi's fervent tribute to the family he had served so long was set up in the Fortezza (plate 39): 'BALDO DE PALUDI SERVO FIDELE DELLA ILLUSTRE CASA DE MEDICI AL TEMPO DEL MAGNIFICO LORENZO DI PIERO DI COSIMO ET DEL MAGNIFICO PIERO DI LORENZO ET DI PP LEONE DI LORENZO ET DEL DUCA GIULIANO DI LORENZO ET DELLO ILLUSTRISSIMO DUCA LORENZO DEL MAGNIFICO PIERO ET DI PP CLEMENTE DEL MAGNIFICO GIULIANO ET DEL REVERERENDISSIMO HIPOLITO DELLO ILLUSTRISSIMO DUCA GIULIANO ET OGGI MDXXXV DELLO ILLUSTRISSIMO ET ECCELLENTISSIMO DUCA ALEXANDRO DELLA BUONA MEMORIA DELLO ILLUSTRISSIMO DUCA LORENZO ET GENERO DELLA CESAREA MAESTA DI CAROLO IMPERATOR INVICTISSIMO DELLA CASA AUSTRIA QUAL DETTO ILLUSTRISSIMO DUCA ALEXANDRO HA FATTO FONDAR ET FORNIRE QUESTO MIRABILE ET DIGNISSIMO CASTELLO ALEXANDRIA DI FIORENZA ET PER SE ET SEMENZA DI SUA ILLUSTRISSIMA ET EGREGIA SIGNORIA ET SUA FIDELISSIMI SERVITORI ET AMICI.'

Charles was sufficiently reassured to allow the marriage between Alessandro and Margaret to be celebrated in Naples, but when on his visit to Florence in May, which was celebrated with much pageantry, he was shown round the Fortezza by the Duke, he expressed unease that a contingent of the guard who were quartered there was commanded, under the authority of the castellan, by a Pisan, and suggested that one of his own officers might be more reliable. To which Alessandro is reputed to have replied that who could the Emperor trust if not his own son-in-law?³

Charles V and his successor took the tag *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes*

¹ Frey, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

² G. Spini, *Cosimo I de' Medici e la indipendenza del Principato Mediceo* (Florence, 1945), p. 44.

³ B.N.F., II, I, 313, fol. 155r, and Settimanni, MS. cit., fol. 317v.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

with great seriousness: hence their nerve-wracked inability to delegate. The Fortezza was now Charles's guardian of the Florentine constitution, its political alignment and his daughter's safety. But — and this was the point of Machiavelli's reference to the Castello Sforzesco and its treacherous castellan — who was to guard the guardian? In this case, Paolantonio da Parma.

The test came in January 1537, when, for the last time, the Fortezza played a prominent rôle in the history of Florence. On the night of the 5th-6th, Alessandro's cousin Lorenzino assassinated him in the bed where he lay waiting for extra-marital entertainment. Cardinal Cybo, Charles V's political lieutenant, after consulting with Marzi and others, decided to keep the news as secret as possible until Vitelli, who was away from the city, could return. He feared a popular uprising. But this was not the only problem. Alessandro left no legitimate children. It was essential — if the exiles were not to gain the initiative and possibly win the armed support of France — to declare the nature of the new government as soon as possible. At the end of two days of constant debate, in which Francesco Guicciardini and Francesco Vettori played a large part, it became clear that rather than declare an interregnum under Cybo's temporary presidency it would be safer to declare at once for Cosimo, the eighteen-year-old son of Giovanni delle Bande Nere, the gallant *condottiere* whose career in arms and tragically early death had already made him something of a folk hero, and who, alone of the Medici, was not associated with any grasping political views. On the 9th, then, Cosimo was declared 'capo e primario della città di Firenze', a hedging title intended to contain two divergent political attitudes: that of the older generation of *ottimati* like Guicciardini, who wished to restore a muted republicanism and increase the independence of Florence from Charles V, and that of the Imperialists, who wanted a straightforward ducal government under Charles's protection and control.

The 'capo' title which was announced on the morning of the 9th was a victory for the more republican-minded party: that evening the advantage was annulled when Vitelli, by a trick, gained possession of the Fortezza declaring that he held it, not against Cosimo, but in pursuance of his oaths of allegiance — taken during the Naples conference — to Charles V. This redressing of the political balance within Florence, and its consequence, Cosimo's lifework of regaining Florentine independence, is not our concern,¹ but from the various

¹ See especially A. Rossi, 'L'elezione di Cosimo I de' Medici', *Atti del R. Istituto Veneto di Lettere, Scienze ed Arti*, 1889-90, pp. 369 ff., and Spini, op. cit. In his edition

accounts of Vitelli's occupation we can learn something of the state of the Fortezza in 1535.

These accounts differ, though they all argue that the Fortezza was far from finished according to San Gallo's designs. Ughi even makes the point that Lorenzino acted when he did because it would be easy to get possession in its uncompleted, and therefore undergarrisoned, state.¹ Whether Vitelli tempted Paolantonio out, or talked his way in and then, relying on a confederate, was able to subvert the garrison, is unclear. But these facts emerge: though the quarters in the *mastio* were adequate to house Cybo and Margaret, who fled there on the 8th with Alessandro's bastards, Giulio and Giulia, its external fabric was still uncompleted. A drawbridge was, however, in place.²

Later that year, Guicciardini, reviewing the city's finances in a memorandum for Cosimo, emphasized the need for economy and recommended that there should, while the present emergency lasted, be no further spending on the Fortezza,³ though designs continued to pass between Unghero and Antonio da Sangallo.⁴ However, if major work on the fabric was stopped, the embellishment of the exterior continued. Unghero said that the sculptor Raffaello da Montlelupo had received 130 soldi for carving the arms of Charles V — supported by two nude and life-sized Victories⁵ — on one of the outer bastions, and those of the Medici, also 'with two figures', on the more southerly of those that faced the city. The sculptor Tribolo was also mentioned by Unghero as in receipt of 130 florins, presumably for the four arms he was commissioned to carve by the *provveditore* Corsini.⁶ One of these was supported by nude Victories, the rest were '*mascheroni* supporting arms', of which the Medici coat on the *mastio* (plate 35) may be a survivor. Tribolo's connection with the Medici citadel is appropriate: in 1529 he constructed an elaborate model of Florence and its defences which was smuggled out to Clement who used it as a campaign map.⁷

(Florence, 1940) of Cosimo's *Lettere*, p. 22 n., Spini emphasizes Vitelli's rôle. 'In tal modo era divenuto quasi l'arbitro delle sorti di Firenze, potendo a suo piacere ceder la fortezza all' imperatore perchè vi mettesse dentro una guarnigione spagnuola, restituirla a Cosimo oppure consegnarla a tradimento ai fuorusciti.' Nardi describes how Charles's support of Cosimo was influenced by Vitelli's action, op. cit. (Florence, 1858), vol. II, pp. 296-7.

¹ *Cronica di Firenze*, in *A.S.I.*, Appendice, vol. VII (1849), p. 189. And Adriani, op. cit., p. 21.

² The fullest account is in Marucelli's *Diario di Firenze*, B.N.F., Magl., XXV, 274 (another version II, IV, 21), fols. 62r-63v.

³ *A.S.F.*, Carte Strozzi., Ser. I, XIV, fol. 231v.

⁴ Bottari, op. cit., p. 334; letter of 29 December 1537.

⁵ Vasari, ed. Milanese, vol. IV, p. 544. Neither has survived.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. VI, p. 66.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-2.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

In 1539 large-scale work was resumed, the *Capitani* being charged to organize labour from the *dominio* on the basis of three periods of work a year for the next three years for all men between the ages of fifteen and fifty, from which exemption could be bought at the price of seven soldi and six denari a time for *contadini*, and fifteen soldi for artisans. Those in the neighbourhood of Arezzo were exempt, for they were expected to work on the citadel which was at last going forward there.¹ Unfortunately no mention of the consequent works has, to my knowledge, survived. The next accounts which we have are for 1545-46² but though these contain tantalizing references to Pontormo and to the woodcarver Tasso, they include payments for work in the Boboli Gardens and the Palazzo della Signoria in a way that makes it difficult to isolate the payments for work done on the Fortezza. From the citadel's present state it seems unlikely that the internal fabric advanced beyond the condition in which it was left on Alessandro's death, that is, with the stables not begun, but with the guard rooms and state apartments in the *mastio* habitable; Cosimo, when eventually he was allowed to buy the Fortezza back from the Emperor in 1543, celebrated by taking up residence there for a short while.³

This was the last meaningful gesture in the context of the Fortezza's purpose; by the time Cosimo obtained possession he no longer needed a citadel, and the Fortezza started its long decline to the mock-military shambles it now is. In 1554, Raymond de Fourquevaux, author of *Instructions sur le fait de la Guerre* and a keen commentator on military affairs, was taken prisoner at the battle of Marciano, during the French attempt to relieve Siena. He was brought back to Florence to await his ransom. He had to wait over a year, and while nominally imprisoned in Monte S. Miniato, he was given considerable freedom to move about the city, and on at least one occasion he made a careful inspection of the Fortezza. He considered it 'one of the finest and strongest strongholds in Italy', but was quick to point out its weak points. *The terreplain* which was to provide gun platforms within the walls was unfinished; the original city wall still connected the *mastio* with the south-western bastion; buildings on the town side had not been cleared back far enough to deprive an invader who penetrated the city of useful cover for his batteries. It was undergarrisoned — one hundred and twenty men (including fifty Spaniards) many of whom were hardly fit to bear

¹ A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 10 rosso, fols. 109r-110r, *provisione* of the 48, 11 October 1539.

² A.S.F., Capitani di Parte, 138 rosso.

³ Segni, *op. cit.*, vol. III, 639-40.

arms. But the Fortezza's weakest point, he told the French King, was the proximity of the new course of the Mugnone. 'On the side open to the country, there is a fair-sized stream called the Mognon, less than fifty paces from the ditch and which used to flow over the site of the citadel; so in an hour it could be turned back into the ditch to fill it and flood the countermines [in fact, the musketry gallery].' This would provide an alternative obstacle for a besieging force, but Fourquevaux's argument is of a different kind; the effect of the stagnant water would be, especially in the hottest months of summer, to spread disease by infecting the air, and this 'would, in a short time, kill the soldiers in the fortress'. Meanwhile the new, and now empty bed of the Mugnone, would provide cover for 'three or four thousand infantry', of the attacking army.¹ As we know from Strozzi's end and from the interrogations of other suspects it had already been used as a prison and place of torture.² Gunpowder was manufactured there,³ and it was also used as the ducal treasury: on this point the annotation on Sangallo's drawing (plate 30) is confirmed by Menicuccio Rossi's reference to 'the new citadel where the treasure is'.⁴ In 1608 an attempt was made to put an end to a period of growing neglect during which the Fortezza had been 'for long without a castellan', by reorganizing its administration,⁵ but in the following century it seems to have become little more than a yard for the supply and repair of the machines, costumes and other equipment needed for entertainments in the Boboli Gardens, funeral processions and the like.⁶ In the eighteenth century it was a house of correction, in the nineteenth a barracks, and in a few years it is planned to become a shop window for the work of those artisans whose sixteenth-century ancestors had helped to build it.

The Fortezza da Basso played a larger part in the political than in the military life of Florence; it was never put to the test of war. As a fortress it was criticized, by implication, by Vitelli himself who in 1542 asked a group of military engineers in Rome for a better solution than had yet been found to the problem of masking curtains from enemy guns while preserving their usefulness as firing platforms. De Marchi, who records this meeting, himself challenges the idea of having a citadel

¹ Raymond de Fourquevaux, *Information au Roy et à Monseigneur le Connestable touchant les affaires de Florence, avec ung discours pour entreprendre contre ledit Florence, Pize et Gennes s'il plaira à Sa Majesté*. 1555, ed. Raoul Brunon (Aix, 1965), pp. 55, 58-9.

² E.g. A.S.F., Carte Strozzi., Ser I, XCV, fols. 191-4.

³ Fourquevaux, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

⁴ *Lode di Firenze*, ed. M. F. Raffaelli (Ferino, 1887), p. 8. The editor's annotations are untrustworthy.

⁵ A.S.F., *Miscellanea Medicea*, 805, fasc. 6.

⁶ A.I., cat. CXLIV, codd. 126-33 and 150-3.

FORTEZZA DA BASSO

almost wholly outside the city wall, rather than having it half in, half out with the wall retained to provide a refuge in case the curtain were breached from either direction.¹ Sangallo later refined the placing of batteries and internal communicating ways in his Bastione Ardeatino (1536 ff.) in Rome,² and the problem of how best to relate a citadel to a town was first solved at Turin in 1564 and at Antwerp in 1567. But the Fortezza was the most advanced citadel of its time, and in an age where both princes and their architects looked on a citadel rather than a palace as the most striking symbol of their authority³—and a glance at the town plans of the second half of the sixteenth century will show how quickly this fashion spread throughout Europe — it was a formative influence. From a Tuscan and a Medicean, we may wish to take Vasari's comment, that 'it is celebrated today throughout the world and held to be untakable' with a grain of salt, but this was also the opinion of the Portuguese Francesco de Hollanda, who proclaimed the Fortezza to be 'the finest fortress in Europe'. The Florentines' yoke provided a model which was to bow many non-Italian shoulders, and it could be plausibly argued that the genius of Antonio da Sangallo was more baleful to the common man of sixteenth century Europe than that of Machiavelli.

APPENDIX: THE NAME OF THE FORTEZZA DA BASSO

What are we to call it? There are three alternatives. One, to associate it with Alessandro de' Medici, for whom it was built; two, to give it its official name of S. Giovanni Battista; three, to retain its popular appellation, da Basso. In 1534, when building began, it was known as 'Fortilitium illustrissimi ducis' (ASF, Capitani di Parte, 14 rosso, fol. 209v), 'novum fortilitium' (ibid., fol. 210r), 'Fortezza de Firenze' (A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, LXI, fol. 25r), and 'castello Alexandrino' (A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. I, XCV, fol. 22r); for both Lapini (*Diario Fiorentino di Agostino Lapini*, ed. G.O. Corazzini, Florence, 1900, p. 98) and Luca Landucci (*Diario Fiorentino*, ed. Iodoco del Badia, Florence, 1883, p. 371) it was the 'nuova cittadella'. The *capitani* were calling it 'novus arx' in 1535 (loc cit., fol. 234r), and it was called 'nuovo castello di Firenze' in the oath administered to Paolantonio da Parma on

¹ MS. cit., fols. 93v-94r and 29r-32r, where he describes the Fortezza beyond doubt without actually naming it.

² M. Borgatti, 'Il bastione ardeatino a Roma', *Rivista d'Artiglieria e Genio* (1890), vol. II, pp. 325-403.

³ Girolamo Maggi is eloquent on this theme. *Degli Ingegneri Militari*, B.N.F., Palat. 464, esp. p. 309.

5 December 1535 (K. Frey, op. cit., p. 45), though on the newly discovered inscription of Baldo de Paludi of the same time (plate 39) it is 'Castello Alexandria di Fiorenza'. Usage remained uncertain during the rest of the sixteenth century. When Filippo Strozzi was imprisoned there in 1538 he wrote as from 'Castello di Firenze' (A.S.F., Carte Strozz., Ser. II, L, *Inventario*), and either this form or 'citadella di Firenze' (e.g. Ughi, op. cit., p. 189) was commonly used. In 1549 it was still 'la nuova citadella' to Menicuccio Rossi (op. cit., p. 8). But it was also commonly called after the Porta a Faenza, which it incorporated. Thus the anonymous author of the *Diario di tutti i casi eseguiti in Firenze . . .* called it 'Citadella della Porta a Faenza' (B.N.F., Conv. Soppr., C. 7. 2614 (s.a. 1537, fol. 67r), after having previously called it 'fortezza nuova' or 'citadella nuova', and for Adriani (Venice, 1587, p. 21) it was 'nuova fortezza di Faenza'. Both the modern formal and informal names appear late in the century. Mariano Borgatti ('Le mura e le torri di Firenze', *Rivista d'Artiglieria e Genio*, vol. IV (1900), p. 50, n.) cites a record of the *Otto di Guardia e Balìa* of 28 September 1573 to the effect that a criminal is to be 'rinserrato in una carcere fortissima della fortezza da Basso della città di Firenze', and this might seem to knock on the head any suggestion that 'da Basso' was used to distinguish this fortress from that of the Belvedere, built on the heights above the Boboli gardens in 1590. Another anonymous chronicler (B.N.F., II, I, 313, fol. 152v) referred retrospectively to the foundation ceremony of 1534 as at the 'citadella e fortezza di Firenze fatta dove era la Porta a Faenza detta di poi la fortezza S. Giovanni', and by the seventeenth century 'Castello di S. Giovanni Battista di Firenze' had become the official title (v., for example, the account books of clerks of the works in A.I., cat. CXLIV, codd. 126-9 and 150-3). There can be little doubt that from the beginning of this usage it was St John the Baptist, the patron saint of Florence, and not the Evangelist, who was referred to (cf. P. Moschella, 'Cenno storico-topografico di un'antica fortezza Fiorentina', *L'Universo*, 1943, p. 9, n. 9. 'Era così [S. Giovanni] chiamata dal convento di San Giovanni Evangelista' which was destroyed to make way for it.' This article is nevertheless the only serious study of the Fortezza since the article by Dami cited on p. 518. The current formula 'Fortezza di S. Giovanni Battista detta da Basso' is cumbersome; some case may be made for using the formula of the only inscription extant in the fortress, 'Castello Alexandria'; but 'Fortezza da Basso', with its respectable ancestry and universal popular acceptance would seem to have the strongest claim of all.

INDEX

- Abbondanza, Ufficio dell'*, or *Ufficio della Grascia*, 287-8, 294, 311
Acciaiuoli, family of, 257, 261
 Agnolo, 460
 Donato, 32 n.
Acciapaccia, Niccolò, Cardinal of Capua, 400
Accoppiatori, 453-4, 456
Accorso (or Accursius), 244, 280 n.
Adimari, family of, 257
Alamanni, family of, 438
Albergati, Niccolò, papal legate, 391
Alberigo da Barbiano, 382
Albert of Trent, 17
Alberti, family of, 93
 Alberto d'Antonio, 440
 Antichi companies, 357, 358, 360-1, 362, 364, 370, 371, 373, 374, 377
 Benedetto di Nerozzo, 312, 327-8, 332, 333, 340, 342, 357, 360
 Lorenzo, 360, 361
 Leon Battista, 278, 360
 Niccolò di Jacopo, 357, 360
 Ricciardo, 360, 361 n.
Albertus Magnus, 281
Albizzi, family of, 218, 394, 396, 400, 438
 Antonio di Luca, 438
 Luca d'Antonio, 438
 Maso, 117
 Rinaldo, 117, 392 n., 475
Albornoz, Cardinal, 25
Aldighieri, Donato, 327
Aldobrandi, Tegghaio, 49, 62
Alessandro de' Medici, Duke of Florence, 495, 497, 502, 503, 504, 507-12, 515, 517, 519-27
Alessio, Giovanni, *see* Unghero, Nanni
Alexander V, Pope, 364-5, 374, 388
Alfonso V, King of Aragon (I, King of Sicily), 389, 390, 391, 395, 398, 399, 401
Alighieri, Dante, *see* Dante
Alliata, Niccolò di Mariano, 418
almugavari, 100
alodiaries (*aloderii*), 197, 207
Altopascio, battle of, 71, 95, 99, 101, 107
Amauri V, Viscount of Narbonne, 82, 87, 88, 90, 91, 96
'Ambrosian Republic, the', 464
Ammirato, Scipione, 507
Angelic Pastor, prophecy of the, 39
Angevins, 22, 82, 87, 101, 382, 385, 388, 389, 390 *et passim*. *See also various*
Anghiari, Baldaccio d', *see* Baldaccio
Anghiari, battle of, 397
Anjou, Dukes of, *see* Charles I, Louis I, Louis II, René
Anonymous compendium of Villani ('the Anonymous'), 55-9, 68
Antonio da Pescia, 378-9
Antonio da Rabatta, 439
Antonio da Rieti (Fra), 35-6
Antonio da Sangallo, *see* Sangallo
Antonio da Settimo, 417
Antonio di Meglio, 37
Antonio di Recco, 345

INDEX

- Apocalypse, 33
Apologia de' Capucci, 511
appoderamento, 201, 204, 205, 228, 231, 232-5, 236
 Aquinas, Thomas, 280 n., 281, 283, 284, 285
 Aragon, Blasco of, *see* Blasco
 Aragon, Kings of, 391, 392. *See also* Alfonso V, James II
 Arezzo, 38, 81, 92, 93, 94, 97, 98, 101, 133, 382, 504, 508
 Argenti, Filippo, 64
 Aristotle, 444, 445, 447, 448, 449, 460, 491, 493
 Armagnac, Count John of, 384
 army, Florentine:
 cavallata, 75, 76, 94-6, 101, 103, 105, 107
 cavalry, 71, 72, 75-7, 78, 96, 97, 98, 104, 105, 106, 107
 command, 74-5
 composition, 71, 72, 74-7, 78, 96, 97, 99-102, 103, 107
 contado and, 74, 77, 78, 79, 94, 96, 97, 104, 105, 107
 infantry, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79, 85, 94, 97-8, 107
 mercenaries, 72-3, 98
 military service due, 71-2, 94, 96, 98-9, 105, 108
 pay, 72, 76, 78
 and *Tallia*, 81-2
Arte dei Ciompi, *see under* guilds
Arte dei Farsettai, *see under* guilds
Arte della Lana, *see under* guilds
Arte di Por Santa Maria, *see under* guilds
Arte dei Tintori, *see under* guilds
 Artois, mercenaries from, 106
 Asto of Spoleto, 92
 Athens, Duke of, *see* Brienne, Walter of
 Attaviani, Mezza di Jacopo, 331, 355
 Attendolo, Michelotto, 397
 Avignon, Florentines in, 357-8

 Badia (Florence), the, 209, 210, 216, 223 n., 230 *et passim*
 manuscripts, 57 n.
 bakers, monopolistic practices and, 294-295
 Baldaccio d'Anghiari, 398
 Baldwin of Supino, 85, 93
Balla, 119-20, 126, 318, 322, 330-8, 340-4, 346-8, 353
 Banchi, Andrea di Francesco, 303 n., 306, 307, 308

 Bande Nere, Giovanni delle, *see under* Medici
 Bandinelli, Baccio, 508
 Baptistery, Florentine, 16, 21 n., 49
 Barbadori, Donato, 328 n.
 Barbaro, Francesco, 374, 468-9, 474
 Barbary, hides from, 424, 426
 Barbiano, Alberigo da, *see* Alberigo
 Bardelli, Piero, 365, 377
 Bardi, family of, 113, 122, 237, 244, 257, 271, 362, 438, 439
 Andrea di Lippaccio, 362, 367, 368, 370
 Bartolomeo, 374, 375, 378
 Benedetto di Lippaccio, 362, 377
 Ilarione di Lippaccio, 362, 370, 371-2, 373, 374, 377
barellino, office of, 118 n.
 Bartolo da Sanserverino, 350
 Bartolomeo da Scorno, 416
 Bartolomeo di Neri (*detto* Maschiano), 416
 Barucci, Matteo d'Andrea, 371, 374, 377
 Basle, 393, 395
 Council of, 393, 399
 Bastiano (Aristotile) da Sangallo, *see* Sangallo
 Battifolle, Charles of, Guy of, *see* Guidi
Bauernlegen, 201, 203
 Bazacape, Pietro de, 79
 Beccanugi, Luigi, 338
 Beccaria, Tesaurus, 54, 55
 Becchi, family of, 114
 Bella, Giano della, 445
 Bellincioni, family, 114. *See also* Donati
 Bellucci, Giambattista, 516
 Bembo, Bernardo, 474-5
 Bembo, Pietro, 491
 Benci, family of, 332 n., 439
 Bene, del, family of, 164
 Jacopo di Francesco, 361, 366-9
 Neri and Bindo, 90
 Benedict XIII, Pope, 365, 389
 Benedictines, 211
 Benevento, battle of, 81
 Benivieni, Girolamo, 18-19
 Bentivoglio, party of, 400
 Annibale, 400
 Giovanni, 387
 Sante, 400
 Berard of Rieti, 87
 Bergolini, family of, 415
 Bernardo, Pietro, 17
 Berti, Bellincion, 50

INDEX

- Bertrand of Forcalquier, 88
 Bibbiena, Stephen of, *see under* Stephen
 Biblioteca Laurenziana, 52
 Biliotti, Aldigerio, 361, 374
 Bilisardi, family of, 114. *See also* Tosa, della
 Bindacci, family of, 114. *See also* Ricasoli
 Biondo, Flavio, 394
 Black Death, 24, 203, 204, 224, 233, 247, 250, 270, 271, 272, 274, 275, 276, 295
 Blasco of Aragon, 105
 Bologna, 72 n., 80, 85, 89, 90, 92, 97, 100, 101, 102, 103, 293-4, 363, 365, 385, 387, 389, 390, 392, 397, 398, 399, 401
 League of, 386
 Bonaguai, family of, 58
 Bonavia of Poppi, 91
 Boniface VIII, Pope, 381
 Roman Jubilee of, 23, 61
 Boniface IX, Pope, 359, 360, 362, 364, 366, 384, 385, 386-7, 388
Book of the Popes, 27 n., 28
 Borgherini, Giovanni, 490, 496, 497
 Borgherini, Pierfrancesco, 496 n.
 Borgo San Sepolcro, 397, 398, 504
 Borgo Santa Fiore, 185
 Boscoli, Francesco di Giachinotto, 366-9
 Botticelli, Sandro, 15, 16, 17
 Bracceschi school of mercenaries, 391
 Bracci, Braccio, 30
 Braccio da Montone, 370, 389, 390, 391, 395, 401
 Bracciolini, Poggio, 135, 373, 374, 392, 402, 448, 449, 471, 472, 475
 Brandini, Ciuto, 295-6, 301
 bread, retailing of, 288. *See also* bakers
 Brescia, mercenaries from, 92
 brickmakers, monopolistic practices and, 290
 Bridget prophecy, *see under* St Bridget
 Brienne, Walter of, Duke of Athens, 149, 302, 334-5, 449-50, 451
 Brucioli, Antonio, *Dialoghi*, 491
 Brunelleschi, Filippo, 431
 Brunetto, *see* Latini, Brunetto
 Bruni, Leonardo, 33 n., 135, 138-9, 314-315, 356, 373, 374, 402, 444, 448, 450-2, 467
 History of the Florentine People, 445
 letter to the Emperor, 444-5, 447, 449
 Laudatio Florentinae urbis, 442, 444-7, 448-9, 453
 On the Florentine Polity, 444-5, 447-8, 453
 Brusaccio da Rovezzano, 32-3
 Buonconti, Banduccio, 416
 Buonconti, Buonacorso, 416
 Buondelmonti, family of, 114, 243-4, 257
 Buondelmonte, 49, 51, 53, 62
 castle, 50, 53, 63-4, 243, 254 n.
 Buonsignori, Stefano, 522, 523
 Buonsollazo, abbey of, 173, 214 n.
 '*buon tempo antico*, *il*', 45-69
 burgenses, 195
 Burgundy, John of, 91
 Busini, family of, 322
 Giovambattista, 504-5
 butchers, 288, 290, 295
 cabbaging, 305, 307-8, 311
 Cacciaguada, 50, 62, 63, 64
 Caetani, Onorato, 382
 Calabria, Dukes of, *see* Charles, Robert
 Calboli, Fulcieri, *see* Fulcieri
 Calderoni, Anselmo di Gioacchino, 37
 Campagna, 92-3, 96, 236
 Camaldoli, estates of, 208, 210, 216, 218, 219-20, 221, 230
 Camaldulensian Order, the, 475
 Campanile, Florentine, 16
 Campaldino, battle of, 87-8, 91, 94, 95, 96-7, 98, 107
 Cancellieri, Schiatta dei, 85
 Canigiani, family of, 436, 439
 Adouardo, 436
 Gherardo, 436
Capitano del Popolo, Statute of the, 289, 290
 Capocci, Fiorello, 57 n.
 Caponsacchi family, 62
 Capponi, family of, 299, 436-7, 439
 Gino, 436
 Neri di Gino, et Co., 437
 Niccolò, 496, 497, 498, 499
 Piero, 481
 Capua, Archbishop of, *see* Nicholas of Schönberg
 Carducci:
 Bartolomeo, 367, 368
 Carlo, 439
 Filippo di Giovanni, 367, 370, 372
 Carlo di Ghieri, 374, 375
 Carmignano, 167 n.
 Caroccio, Berlinghiero, 105
 Carolingian refunding of Florence, legend of, 22-3
 Carota, 332

INDEX

- carroccio*, the, 71, 74, 76, 77, 78
 Casa, Antonio della, 378-9
 Casalecchio, battle of, 387
 Casapieri, family of, 418
 Cascia, Simone Fidati da, *see* Fidati
 Casentino, 75, 91, 218
 Caserta, Count of, *see* Rat, Diego de
 Castelfiorentino, 167 n., 185, 214 n.
 Castellani, Angelo, 335
 Castello Sforzesco (Milan), 502, 527
 Castiglionchio, Lapo da, *see* Lapo
 Castracani, Castruccio, 105, 106, 107, 149
 Castrocaro, 385
 Castruccio, *see* Castracani
 Catalan leather industry, 424
 Catalan mercenaries, 81, 91, 99-101, 102, 107
 Catalan, William the, *see under* William
 Cataldus, St., Bishop of Taranto, prophecy of, 39
Catasto, 122, 124, 125, 128, 131, 133, 134, 247, 258, 272, 273, 274, 275, 299, 452, 454 *et passim*
 Cathedral, Florentine, 16, 23, 40
 Chapter, 210, 212, 216, 220, 230
 Catiline, 46
 cattle market, 288
 Cavalcanti, family of, 113
 Giovanni, 125-6, 439, 452-3, 459
 Guido, 126-7
cavallata fittizia, 96
cavalieri della banda, 104
 Cavriana, peace of, 398
 Celle, Giovanni, dalle, 27-8
 Cellini, Benvenuto, 508
censi, 207, 216, 217
 Centellas, Gilbert of, *see* Gilbert
 Cerretani, Niccolò di Matteo, 440
 Cerretani, Rosso, 439
 Certaldo, Counts of, 114
 Certosa, 218, 221
 Cesena, 384
 Champagne, mercenaries from, 106
 Charlemagne, Emperor, and Florence, 22-3, 39, 40, 41, 43
 Charles I, Duke of Anjou, King of Sicily, 80, 81, 83, 98
 Charles II, King of Naples, 87
 Charles III of Durazzo, King of Naples, 382, 384
 Charles V, Emperor, 495, 497, 503, 504, 507, 509, 510, 512, 522, 526
 Charles VIII, King of France, 18, 39, 41, 404, 418, 441
 Charles, Duke of Calabria, 107, 449-50
cheptel, 199
 Chesta, John de, 89
chiés Mars, 47
Chronica de origine civitatis, 21, 45-6, 52 n., 57 n., 58. *See also* *Libro fiesolano*
 Chrysoloras, Manuel, 373
 Ciaccio, 53
 Ciccialdoni, confraternity of, 26
 Cicero, 444, 448, 449
 Cini, Piero, 350
Cinque Uomini Provveditori delle Fortezze, 505, 506
 Ciompi, Revolt, 30-2, 34-5, 43, 44, 277, 308-12, 314 ff.
 'eight saints', 347, 350-1
 gild, *see under* gilds
 historiography of, 314-19
 leaders, 300-1, 328, 354-5
 See also wool industry
 Cistercians, 199, 211, 218, 219
 Citadella Vecchia, Florence, 506, 507, 508, 514
 Città di Castello, 398
 Clement V, Pope, 59-60
 Clement VII, Pope, 495, 496-7, 507, 509, 511, 512, 523, 528
 cloth, import of, 116
 Cognac, League of, 495
 Colle, 25, 33, 83
coloni, 209, 211, 212, 229
 Comines, on Venice, 466
commendae, 198, 239, 240
commessi, 229
 Compagni, Dino, 47, 49, 96
Compendium of Historie, *see* Riccobaldo
Compilatio Chronologica, *see* Riccobaldo
 conciliar theories, 382
 Condivi, Ascanio, 512
 Condulmer, Gabriel, 390
conestabilia, 84
 confraternities, 111-12, 122, 136
Consiglio Maggiore, *see under* Venice
consorterie, 114
 Constance, Council of, 363, 365, 366, 373-4, 375, 389
 Contarini, Gasparo, 470
conversi, 100, 199, 210, 218, 229, 231
 corn, *see* gabelles
 Corsini, Bertoldo di Gherardo, 515, 528
 Corsini, Ser Andrea, 331
 Corsini, Tommaso, 26
 Cosimo I de' Medici, Duke of Tuscany, 496 n., 497, 501, 508, 522, 527, 529

INDEX

- Cortona, 133
 Cossa, Baldassare, 362-3, 364-5, 375, 376, 380, 387. *See also* John XXIII, Pope
 Cossa, Michele, 375
 cotter class, 196, 197, 201, 230, 231, and 193-241 *passim*
 Court Merchant, the, 115-16, 122
 courts, 111, 113, 114, 115, 116
 Cremona, 400
 Fra Antonio da, 17
 Crescenzi, Pietro de', 249
Cronica extracta de archivio . . . Ravennae, *see* Riccobaldo
Crucifixion, by Botticelli, 16, 18
 currency, debasement of, 200 n., 265, 284, 305, 311
 customs tolls, 118, 120, 127, 128-9
 Cybo, Cardinal Innocenzo, 527, 528
- Daniel, Book of, 31
 prophecies, 31, 40-1
 Dante, 48-9, 50, 51-5, 57 n., 59-65, 68-9, 84, 216
 Davanzati, Chiaro, 47
 Dati, Gregorio, 123, 126, 406 n., 442
 Dati, Stagio, 328
 Datini, Francesco, 319
 dearths, 171, 271, 295
Decameron, 99
 Decime, Giovanni delle, 523
defensor, office of, 118 n.
 Dei, Benedetto, 473, 475, 477
 Delfino, Pietro, 475
Della Famiglia (by Leon Battista Alberti), 278
Della Repubblica Fiorentina, *see* Giannotti
Della Repubblica de' Veneziani, *see* Giannotti
 Depositary of the Papal Chamber (*Depositarius*), Office of, 364, 366 ff., 378-9
 'devout monk', prophecy of the, 40-1
 Diaceto, Francesco Cattani da, 490
 Dini, Giovanni, 327
divieto legislation, 451
dogana, 292, 293
 Dominici, Giovanni, 402
 Donatello, 376
 Donati, family of, 114
 Antonio, 425
 Corso, 64, 99
 Forese, 64
Dorfsystem, 232
- Dovadola, Count Roger of, 103
 dragon, as symbol, 38
 Duns Scotus, John, 280
 Durfort, Guillaume de, 88
 dyers, 302, 322-3, 325, 330-1. *See also* under *gilds*
- Eboli, Count of, 104, 105
 Edward I, King of England, 60 n.
 emphyteusis, 205
 Empoli, 185
 enclosure, *see appoderamento*
 enfranchisement, peasant, 195-6, 200, 212, 213, 217
 England
 wool from, 297-8, 299, 306, 323
 mercenaries from, 91
 engrossment (*ingrossatio*), 204, 205, 208-9, 217, 231
entrata delle Castelle, 124
 entry fines, 195, 198, 215, 216
 epidemics, 171, 191. *See also* Black Death
 Eppe, Jean d', 82
 Eugenius IV, Pope, 379-80, 381, 390, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402. *See also* Condulmer, Gabriel
- factores*, 234
 Faggiuola, Ugucione della, 93
 Faitinelli, Pietro de', 105, 108
 famines, 165, 174, 182, 186, 191, 271, 272
famuli, 199, 207, 210
 Fantoni, Bernardo, 436
 farming, *see* land, use of, leaseholding
 Farnese, Ranuccio, 82
fattoria, 234
Faustrecht, 197
 Felix V, anti-Pope, 399
 Fermo, 92
 Ferrara, Peace of, 391, 392
 Ferrara, Riccobaldo of, *see* Riccobaldo
 Ferrara-Florence, Council of, 394, 396-7
 Fiamma, Galvano, 66-7
fictioli, 261-5, 270, 274, 275
 Fidati da Cascia, Simone, 26
fideles, 210, 211, 229, 238
 Fiesole, 29, 45, 46, 48, 50, 58, 62, 63, 64, 71, 73
 Fino di Taddeo Tosi, 337 n.
 Fiocchi, Andrea, 402
 fishing, 120, 129, 288
flagellum Dei, 16, 17, 21

INDEX

- Flanders, 290, 293-4, 301-2
 mercenaries from, 91, 107
- Florence, Bishop of, 210, 220, 230, 238, 244
- Florence, Duke of, *see* Alessandro
- florin, 48, 51, 59
- flour, gabelle on, *see* gabelles
- Forcalquier, Bertrand of, *see* Bertrand
- Forlì, 390, 398
- Fortebraccio, 393. *See* Stella, Niccolò della
- Fortezza da Basso, 501 ff.
- Fourquevaux, Raymond de, 529-30
- France
 clergy, 366, 387-8
 mercenaries from, 73, 81, 83, 90, 91, 104-5, 106, 107
- Francesco da Meleto, 17
- Francini, Leoncino, 328
- Francis I, King of France, 495, 507
- Franciscans, 17, 26
- Fрати dal Castagno, the, 26
- Fratricelli, 26-8, 30-1, 32, 44
- Frederick II, Emperor, 65
- Frignano, 79
- Friuli, 106
- Fuccecchio, 185
- Fucci, Vanne, 91
- Fulcieri da Calboli, 103
- gabelles, 143 ff.
 bread, 146 n., 147, 150, 191
 bridges, 185
 collection of, 117, 118, 119-20, 172-80
 contracts, 127, 129, 133, 187
 corn, 146, 152, 162, 164, 176, 192
 definition, 145-6
 eggs, 156, 162
 flour, 146, 149, 150, 164, 165, 191
 hogs, 147, 154, 164
 inn-keepers, 187, 189-90
 livestock, 146, 154, 176, 182-3
 market dues, 147, 149, 191
 oil, 146, 152, 162, 163, 164, 186, 192
 meat, 133, 146, 148, 150, 188
 property, 146
 slaughtering (*macello*), 130 n., 145, 146, 164, 165, 178, 181, 184, 188
 vegetables and fruit, 147
 weights and measures, 147
 wine, 114, 117, 118, 127, 129, 133, 146;
 collection, 174, 175, 180-4, 188;
 casked, 148, 156, 161-2, 164, 174, 176, 181, 184; receipts, 166-70, 171; retail, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151, 156-7, 160, 162, 189, 192; sold at gates, 150, 165
See also gate gabelles, salt
- Gabriele, Trifone, 491
- Gaetani, family of, 418, 439
 Piero di Stefano, 416, 417
- Galletti, Piero di Ser Colo, 417
- Galley system, 415 n., 418, 425, 439
- Galluzzo, 50
- Gambacorti, Pietro, 28
- Gambassi, 167 n., 185
- Ganteaulme, Jacques, 103
- gate gabelle, 141, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151, 152, 160
 collection, 163-6, 170, 171, 173, 176, 183, 185, 188-92
 livestock, 154
 oil, 152, 162, 164
 wheat, 152, 162, 164
 wine, 154, 162, 163, 164
- Geneva, Robert of, Cardinal, 384
- Genoa, 73, 98, 141, 390, 391
- George of Trebizond, 468-70
- Georgics*, *see* Virgil
- Germany, mercenaries from, 73, 78, 81, 83, 84, 91 n., 105, 107
- Gesta Florentinorum*, 46
- Gherardini, family of, 257
- Giacopo di Rangone, 75
- Giannotti, Donato, 490-1, 496, 497, 498, 500
Della Repubblica Fiorentina, 502, 506
Della Repubblica de' Veneziani, 490-5, 497, 499-500
- Gilbert of Centellas, 100
- gilds, 114, 115, 116, 122, 136, 150, 171, 279, 283, 285, 289, 290, 291-2, 330, 453
 Calimala, 290, 291-2
 Ciompi, 308-9, 354
 doublet-makers (*Arte dei Farsettai*), 308-9
 dyers (*Arte dei Tintori*), 308-9
 lesser, 169 n., 188, 291, 309, 310, 330, 453
 silk (*Por Santa Maria*), 291-2, 293, 306, 307, 308
 wool (*Arte della Lana*), 116, 290, 291-3, 299, 301, 302, 304-5, 310-11, 312, 319-21, 322, 330, 336, 340, 353
- Giovanni d'Angelo da Miglio, 17-18
- Girolami, Remigio de', 47, 48
- Gismondi, family of, 418

INDEX

- Giuliano da Prato, 518–19
 Giuliano da Sangallo, *see* Sangallo
 Golpaia, Lorenzo dalla, 519
 Gonfalonier of Justice, 117, 139, 289,
 453, 454, 477, 484
 Goths, destruction of Florence by, 45
 Governole, battle of, 33
 Gozzadini, Gabione, 364
 grain market, 287, 288
 Grasso, Meo del, 328
 Great Council (Florence), 477–83, 485–6,
 498, 499
 Greek Church, 379
 Gregory XI, Pope, 26, 27–8, 357, 359,
 381
 Gregory XII, Pope, 361, 364, 365, 366,
 374, 387, 388
 Guadagni, Vieri, 376
 Gualandi, family of, 418
 Gualterotti, Bartolomeo, 439
 Guerra, Guido, 49, 62
 Guicciardini:
 Francesco, 231 n., 244, 441, 487, 488,
 500, 510, 511, 518–19, 527, 528
 Luigi di Piero di Ghino, 309 n.
 Luigi di Piero di Iacopo, 508, 509–10,
 511, 512, 513, 517
 Niccolò, 498 n., 517
 Guidi, Counts, 93, 112, 210
 Aghinolfo of Romena, 82
 Alessandro of Romena, 82
 Charles of Battifolle, 103, 112 n.
 Guy (Guido) of Battifolle, 103, 112 n.
 Guy (Guido) Salvatico, 103
 Guinigi, family of, 359–60, 364, 392

 Hawkwood, John, 185
 Heimburg, Gregory of, 476
 Henry II, King of France, 517
 Henry VII, Emperor, 101–3, 104
 Hermetic occultism, 19
Historie, see Riccobaldo

 Iberian peninsula, mercenaries from, 91
 Incisa, battle of, 102
 Inghilese of St Rémy, 86–7, 90
ingrossatio, see engrossment
 inn-keepers, 187, 189–90, 291
 Innocent VII, Pope, 361, 364, 366
 Ireland, hides from, 424, 426
 Italian League, 401

 Jacopo di Bartolo, 328
 Jacopo di Corbino, 416, 424

 Jacopone da Todi, prophecy of, 37–8
 James II, King of Aragon, 105
 Joachim of Flora, 22, 27, 28, 31
 Joanna II, Queen of Naples, 382, 389,
 390, 391, 395
 John XXII, Pope, 244
 John XXIII, Pope, 362, 365–6, 369, 375,
 376, 388, 389
 John of Toledo, Master, 22, 31
 Jourdain IV, Lord of l'Isle Jourdain,
 87 n.
 Juvenal, 65, 68–9

laboratores, 263–65, 275
 Ladislav of Durazzo, King of Naples,
 365, 371–2, 383, 384, 386, 387, 388–
 389
 Lancia, Andreas, 49 n.
 land, use of:
 Church, 197, 198, 200, 208, 209, 212–
 213, 215–17, 220–21, 226, 227, 230–
 231, 237–41
 demesne farming, 198–202, 210, 218–
 219
 manor: 'grange' type, 199, 200, 211,
 233–4;
 in Italy, 204 ff.
 peasants and, 195, 196, 210
 reform of, 198, 201, 203, 205, 207–8,
 210–14, 217 ff., 234–6
 transformation of, 194 ff.
 in Tuscany, 206–14.
 mezzadria, 205, 220, 223–7, 230, 234–5,
 263, 265, 273–4, 275
 poderi, 227–35
 poderia, 228–9
 See also under leaseholding, Santa Maria
 Impruneta
 Lando, Michele di, 300, 328, 348, 351,
 352, 354
 Lanfredini, Bartolomeo, 510
 Lanfreducci, Battista di Bondo, 418
 Langenstein, Henry of, 279–80
lanini, 301, 308
 Lapo da Castiglionchio, 338, 342
 Latini, Brunetto, 46–7, 48–9, 57 n., 60,
 62, 84
 Latium, *see* Lazio
Laudatio Florentinae urbis, see Bruni
 Laurentian era, 20, 35 n., 44
 Lavaiano, Gaspare di Ser Benvenuto
 da, 417
 Lavanini, Forese, 328
 Lazio, 73, 204

INDEX

- leaseholding, 199–202, *et seq.*
 commercial, 203, 205, 218, 220–7,
 234–40
 contracts, 199–201, 213; share-
 cropping *ad medietatem*, 199, 206
 customary tenure and, 198, 200, 202,
 214–16, 218, 228, 236–7
 demesne farming, *see* land, use of
 demesne tenancies, 197, 199, 200, 205,
 206–12, 214, 219–20
 grants *afitto*, 205, 223
 tenant farming, 198–203, 218
 métayage (*métairie*, *meytaderia*), 199,
 201, 202, 205, 220, 227
 See also land, use of
- Leghorn, 133–4, 439–40, 441, 504, 508
 Lenzi, family of, 139
 Lorenzo, 429
 Leo X, Pope, 487, 495, 509
 Leoli, Burgundio, 403–4, 441
 Leone, Roberto, 439
 Leonicus, 491, 492
libellarii, 207–8, 210
libellus (*livello*), 205, 206, 238–9, 241
Liber de Regimine Civitatum (Rangone,
 Giacopo di), 75
Libro di Montaperti, *see under* Montaperti
 Liguria, mercenaries from, 73
 Lille, Roger of, 91
 Livorno, *see* Leghorn
 Lodi, Treaty of, 401
 Lombardy, 64, 73, 81, 91, 92, 261–2, 423
 Loschi, Antonio, 450, 467
 Louis I, Duke of Anjou, titular king of
 Sicily, 358 n., 382
 Louis II, Duke of Anjou, titular king of
 Sicily, 365, 388, 389–90
 Luca da Panzano, 347, 349, 355
 Luca del Melano, 328, 354–5
 Luca di Guido, 329, 345
 Lucca, 24 n., 34, 38, 72, 97, 103, 392, 393
 Ludwig, Count Palatine, 375
lupa, as symbol, 16–17 n.
 Lupardo da Vecchiano, 416
- Machiavelli, Girolamo, 108, 139, 314,
 456, 488–9, 494, 497, 502, 527
 Magalotti, Bese, 327
 Maggiolini, family of, 415–16
 Giovanni, 415–16, 419
 Piero, 415–16
Magona dei bestiami, 434
 Malatesta, family of, 400
 Malatestino, 82
 Sigismondo, 400
 Malispini, Giacotto, 52
 Malispini, Ricordano, *Storia Fiorentina*,
 51–9, 68
maltolletae, 207
 Manente of Sarteano, Count, 86, 89,
 93
manentia, 206
 Manfredi, of Faenza, family of, 390
 Mannelli, family of, 438
 Jacopo di Francesco, 438
 Raimondo, 438
 manor, the, *see under* land, use of
 Mantua, 80
 Marca Trevigiana, 64
 Marchi, Francesco de, 506, 522, 530–1
 Margaret, daughter of Emperor Charles
 V, 509, 512, 526, 528
 Marignolli, Guerriante, 327 n., 355
 Mars, 47, 49, 50–1, 53
 Martelli, family of, 435–6, 439
 Antonio, 435–6
 Bartolomeo, 436
 Martello di Niccolò, 436
 Martello d'Ugolino, 436
 Niccolò, 436
 Roberto, 378–9
 Ugolino, 435–6
 Martin V, Pope, 375, 376–9, 380, 381,
 389, 390–1, 392, 395, 399
 Martin of Troppau, 55
 Marzi, Angelo, Bishop of Assisi, 518–19,
 525, 526, 527
marzocco, 16
 Masaccio, 139
 Maschiano, *see* Bartolomeo di Neri
 Masi, family of, 439
masie, 206
masnada, the, 83–4, 107
massaricie, 206
 meat:
 retailing, 288
 See also gabelles
 Medici, family of, 218, 221, 225, 238, 299,
 302, 319, 433–6, 439, 440, 455 ff., 474,
 477, 486, 489, 494, 495–9; banks,
 299, 360, 361, 362–3, 364, 366–74,
 396–7
 Alessandro, *see* Alessandro
 Averardo di Bernardo, 434
 Averardo di Francesco, 362, 368, 369,
 370–1
 Catherine, 516–17
 Cosimo, 35, 37, 44, 125, 126, 358, 373,

INDEX

- 376, 377, 379-80, 383, 394, 395,
398-9, 400, 434, 445, 446, 454, 456,
459, 473-4
Cosimo, Duke of Tuscany, *see under*
Cosimo I
Francesco di Giuliano di Giovenco de',
302 n.
Giovanni delle Bande Nere, 527
Giovanni di Bicci, 299, 319, 361-2,
363, 367-80
Giovenco di Giuliano, 299
Giulia, 528
Giulio, Cardinal, 487, 515, 528
Ipolito, Cardinal, 495, 497, 503
Lorenzino di Pierfrancesco, 496 n.,
497, 504, 527, 528
Lorenzo di Giovanni, 377, 380
Lorenzo di Piero di Cosimo (the
Magnificent), 18, 35 n., 39, 44, 409,
427, 433-5, 440, 461, 462, 474, 475,
496, 497
Lorenzo di Piero di Lorenzo, the
Younger, 486-7, 495
Ottaviano, 503, 515
Piero di Cosimo, 38 n., 456, 473
Piero di Lorenzo, 39, 477
Salvestro, 315, 326-7, 332, 347, 355
Tanai di Vieri, 433
Vieri di Cambio, 309, 361
Meierhüfe, 201
Meleto, Francesco da, *see* Francesco
mercenaries, 72, 73, 77, 79-80, 81, 83-6,
87, 88, 90, 91, 92-3, 94, 100, 106,
107-8
payment, 144, 145, 146
mercenarii, 199
Merlin prophecy, 36
métairie, *see* leaseholding
métayage, *see* leaseholding
meytaderia, *see* leaseholding
mezzadria, *see under* land, use of
Mezzogiorno, the, 236
Michelangelo Buonarroti, 506, 512
Michele di Ser Parente, 331
Michele the Minorite, Fra, 32
Michelotti, Biordo, 386
Michelozzo, 376
Michiele, Marcantonio, 492
Miglio, Giovanni d'Angelo da, *see*
Giovanni
Milan, 25, 35
Dukes of, *see* Sforza, Visconti
expansionism, 32, 34, 43, 390, 391,
393-4, 398, 399
Florentine war with, 33, 37, 150, 151,
178
taxation, 141, 382, 383, 384, 390, 450
and Papacy, 30, 390
mercenaries from, 79, 80, 90
milites, 195, 197
millennarianism in Florence, 18, 19, 20-
21, 27, 28, 31
mills, 120, 129, 146, 149, 183 n., 302
Minerbetti, family of, 438
Mirandola, Giovanni Pico della, 18
Modena, 79, 80
Molina, Luis de, 282
Monaldi, Guidetto, 370
Mone, Giovanni di, 347, 355
monopolies, 141, 282-3, 286, 289, 290,
291, 292, 294-6. *See also* salt
Montagna Fiorentina, 175
Montaperti, battle of, 21, 46, 54, 74, 77,
83, 101
Libro di, 74-5, 76 ff., 83-4
Monte Bonello, Salvestro da, *see* Salvestro
Montebuoni, *see* Buondelmonti
Montecatini, battle of, 101, 103, 104, 105,
107
Monte Comune, 117, 119, 120, 121-3, 124,
126, 127, 129, 131, 132, 133, 134-5,
142, 143, 145, 192, 311, 319-20, 342,
343, 344, 348, 353, 397
Monte delle Doti, 125, 126
Montefeltro, da, family of, 400
Monte Loro, battle of, 399
Montelupo, Raffaello da, 528
Montemagno, Buonaccorso da, 36-7
Montemezzano, Marquis Guiduccio of,
97 n.
Montepulciano, Francesco da, 17
Monterappoli, 185
Montone, Braccio da, *see* Braccio
Montughi, S. Antonio at, 234
Morelli, Giovanni di Paolo, 138
Moriconi, Lando, 360, 364
Morosini, Paolo, 476
Mosca, del, family of, 418
Mugello, the, 174, 175, 218, 237
Mussi, Giovanni de', 66
Mystical Nativity, by Botticelli, 15-16, 18
Naldo of Perugia, 92
Naples, 39, 90, 381, 382, 384, 389, 390,
395
Naples (Sicily), kings of, *see* Alfonso I,
Charles I, II, III, Ladislav, Robert
Napoleone, Umbrian noble, 73 n.

INDEX

- Narbonne, *see* Amauri V, Viscount of
- Negri, Francesco, 471-2
- Neoplatonism, 20, 44
- Neopythagorean occultism, 19
- Neretti:
 Francesco di Piero, 437
 Giovanni, 437
 Piero, 437, 439
- Neri:
 Agnolo di Filippo, 392 n.
 Nello di Filippo, 392 n.
- Nerli, family of, 50, 113, 257
 Bernardino, 439
 Filippo, 509, 511
 Tanai, 439
- Nero, Bernardo del, 244, 439
- Neroni, Dietisalvi, 458
- Nesi, Giovanni, 19
- Niccolini, Agnolo, 438-9
- Niccolò di Cristofano Risorboli, 38 n.
- Nicholas IV, Pope, 85, 93
- Nicholas V, Pope, 400-1
- Nicholas of Salerno, Archbishop, 376
- Nicholas of Schönberg, Archbishop of
 Capua, 510
- Niem, Dietrich of, 362, 364
- Nobili, Antonio di Leonardo de', 440
- Nofri di Ser Piero, 327, 332
- nominalism, 279-80
- Nonantola, 72 n.
- Nucci, Miniato, 331
- officiales castrorum*, 118
- Ognissanti, Umiliati of, *see* Umiliati
- operarii*, 199
- Oraculum de Novo Saeculo* (by Giovanni
 Nesi), 19
- Ordelaffi:
 Antonio, 398
 Teobaldo, 390
- Ordinances of Justice (of 1293-95), 289,
 290, 292, 443-4, 451
- Orlandi, Simone, 403-4
- Orosius, 68
- orphans, 117 n.-118 n., 123
- Orsini:
 Gentile, 82, 93
 Paolo, 371
 Rinaldo, 382
- Ostasio da Polenta, 398
- Pauda, Rolandino of, 68 n.
- Paganelli, family of, 438
- Guglielmo, 416
 Piero, 416
- Palagio, Guido dal, 28, 32 n.
- Palmieri, Matteo, 452
- Paludi, Baldo de, 526, 532
- Pandolfini, Domenico, 440
- Panicucci, Agostino di Niccolò di Guido
 de', 407
- Panzano, da, family of, 237
- Panzano, Luca da, *see* Luca
- Paolantonio da Parma, 525-6, 527, 528,
 531-2
- Papale, Il*, 27, 28
- Parma, mercenaries from, 92
- Parma, Paolantonio da, *see* Paolantonio
- Parte Guelfa* (Florence), 22 n., 25, 32,
 111 n., 112, 122, 136, 315, 326, 327,
 432-3, 506, 507, 514, 515, 529
- Passignano, 208 n., 209, 210, 214 n., 216,
 221, 230, 237 n., 268
- Patrizi, Francesco, 470-1
- Pavia, 54, 55, 495
- pawnbrokers, 117 n., 123, 146
- Pazzi, conspiracy, 461
 family of, 114, 299
 Aghinolfo di Cherico, 358
 Alessandro, 487, 490, 497
- pensioners, 113
- Pera, Peter de, 85
- Perugia, 97, 102, 386, 387
 Naldo of, *see* Naldo
 peace of, 399-400
- Peruzzi, family of, 271
- Pescia, Antonio da, *see* Antonio
- petie terre*, 206, 209
- Philip VI, King of France, 105
- Picardy, mercenaries from, 91
- Piccini, Michele, 329
- Piccinino, Niccolò, 397, 398, 399
- Pierfrancesco da Viterbo, 515
- Piero di Ser Grifo, Ser (332), 355
- Pietra, Nello della, 82, 93
- Pieve del Toppo, battle of, 94
- Pipino, Francesco, extracts of Ricco-
 baldo's *Historie*, 66-7
- Pisa:
 Citadel of, 504
 Council of, 358, 360, 364, 365, 384,
 387-8
 connexion with Florentine prophecies,
 34, 38, 40
 Decree of Five Governors, 421
 Five Governors of Pisa, 421
 Seventeen Reformers, 421, 425

INDEX

- industry in, 404, 413-20, 421-3, 423-7, 431, 437
Studio, 409, 441
 taxation in, 133, 141, 404, 408, 411-12, 413-14, 415, 417-18, 419-20, 423
 wars with Florence, 16 n.-17 n., 24 n., 41, 72, 81, 82, 89, 90, 96, 105, 111 n., 117, 121, 122-3, 126, 129, 133, 149, 150
 Pistoia, 25, 97, 99-100, 101, 225-6, 508
 Pitti, Gianozzo, 438
 Pitti, Iacopo, *Apologia de' Capucci*, 511
 Pitti, Luca, 459
 Pius II, Pope, 459
 Pizolpasso, Francesco, 444
 plagues, 165, 166, 170, 171, 174, 271, 272
 See also Black Death
poderi, 222, 227-32, 234-5
 at Impruneta, 254 n., 255, 261, 263, 264, 265, 271, 273, 274
poderia, 227, 228
 Poggibonsi, 167 n., 185
 Poggio, *see* Bracciolini
 Polenta, Ostasio da, *see* Ostasio
Pomerium Ravennatis ecclesiae, *see* Riccobaldo
 Pone, Giovanbattista di Piero di, 434
 Pontassieve, 508
 Pontormo, 185
 Poppi, Bonavia of, *see* Bonavia
populares, 114
 Portelli, family of, 424
 Portinari, Pignello, 361
 Portugal, hides from, 424, 426
 Prato, 25, 107, 133, 167 n., 486
 Prato, Giuliano da, *see* Giuliano
prestanze, 123-4, 127, 129, 132, 134, 140-142, 143, 145, 175, 191, 192, 225, 342-3
 price, the just, doctrine on, 279 ff.
proceres, 197
Prophetia Caroli Imperatoris, 40
 Provence
 corn from, 432
 mercenaries from, 81, 89, 90, 91
 Pseudo-Brunetto, 49 n.
 Pucci, family of, 436
 Dionigi, 436
 Quaratesi, family of, 424, 438, 439
 Giovanni, and Co., 438
 quitrents, 195, 198
 Rabatta, Antonio da, *see* Antonio
 Rapallo, battle of, 438
 Raspante, family of, 415
 Rat (or Ratta), Diego de, 99-103
 Ravenna, 398
Reali di Francia, 57 n.
 Recanati, mercenaries from, 92
 Reggio Emilia, 73, 77, 79, 80, 92, 141
Regimine civitatum, *Liber de*, 75
regulatores, 117-18
remembrement, 201
 René, Duke of Anjou, titular King of Sicily, 395, 398, 399
rentes, 198
 Revelation, Book of, 15-16, 40
 Ricasoli, family of, 114
 Ricci, family of, 274, 321, 360, 361, 370
 Filippo, 361
 Matteo, 361, 369
 Niccold, and Co., 364
 Riccobaldo of Ferrara, 65-9
 Compendium of Historie, 66-7
 Compilatio Chronologica, 66
 Cronica extracta de archivio ecclesiae Ravennae, 66
 Historie, 65-6, 67, 68
 Pomerium Ravennatis ecclesiae, 66, 67
 Ridolfi, family of, 437
 Carlo, 437
 Bernardo d'Inghilese, 437
 Gabriele, 424, 437, 439
 Rieti
 Antonio da (Fra), *see* Antonio
 Berard of, *see* Berard
 Rinieri, Filippo, and Co., 437
 Rinuccini, family of, 221
 Alamanno, *De Libertate*, 461-2
 Cino, 450
 Ristori, family of, 437
 Jacopo, 437
 Robert, Duke of Calabria, later King of Naples, 99, 100, 103, 266
 Rocca Contrada, 400
 Roccasecca, battle of, 365
 Romagna, 64, 77, 79, 81, 93, 95, 100, 101, 390-1, 397, 398, 401
 Romena
 Aghinolfo of, *see under* Guidi
 Alessandro of, *see under* Guidi
 Rondinelli, Remigio, 327 n.
 Rosate, Albericus de, 282
 Rossellino, Bernardo, 139
 Rossermini, family of, 418
 Rossi, family of, 113
 Rossi, Menicuccio, 530
 Rovezzano, Brusaccio da, *see* Brusaccio

INDEX

- Rucellai, family of, 299, 437
 Bernardo, 437, 439, 475, 483-4, 486, 496
 Bernardo, and Co., 437, 439
 Gardens, 483
 Jacopo, 437
 Rustichi, Betto, 431
 Rusticucci, Iacopo, 49, 62
- Sabellico, 471, 476, 492
 Sacchetti, Franco, 28, 109, 110, 274, 459
 St Bridget of Sweden, prophecy of, 35, 40
 St Cataldus, prophecy of, 39
 'St John the Evangelist in the Apocalypse', prophecy of, 40-1
 St Rémy, Inghilese of, *see* Inghilese
 Salerno, Nicholas of, Archbishop, *see* Nicholas
- salt:
 contraband traffic in, 175
 price, 338
 tax, 118, 120, 126, 127, 128-9, 133, 141, 145, 147, 149, 150, 151, 156, 158-61, 162, 171, 174, 182, 191, 192, 341
- Salutati, Coluccio, 448, 450, 467
 Salvatico, Count Guy, *see under* Guidi
 Salvestro da Monte Bonello, 26
 Salviati:
 Andrea, 439
 Averardo, 437
 Giuliano, 437, 439
 Iacopo, 509
- San Bernardino of Siena, 282-3, 285-6
 Sangallo:
 Antonio da, the Younger, 507, 512-13, 514, 520-3, 524, 525, 528, 530, 531
 Bastiano (Aristotile) da, 515, 523
 Giuliano da, 508
- San Gimignano, 103, 227 n., 233 n., 250
 San Marco, Church of (Florence), 39
 San Marco, Dominican friary of (Florence), 278
 San Miniato al Tedesco, 89-90, 91 n., 94, 121, 185
 Sanseverino, Bartolo da, *see* Bartolo
 Santa Maria degli Angeli, convent of, 26
 Santa Maria Impruneta, 242 ff.
 Church of, 245, 248-9, 257, 261, 262, 271-2, 274
 Santa Maria Novella (Florence), 47
- Santa Maria Soprarno (Florence), 244-5
 Santa Maria *supra portam* (Florence), 86
 Sant' Antonino of Florence, 278, 283-5, 286, 300, 301, 303, 304, 305
 Sanzanome, 46
 Sardi, Lorenzo di Giovanni de', 430
 Sardinia, hides from, 426
 Sarteano, Bolganuccio of, 93. *See also under* Manente
 Sarteano, Counts of, 86, 89, 93
 Sasseti, Tommaso di Federigo, 372
 Savonarola, Girolamo, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 39-40, 41, 42, 44, 311, 464, 478-80, 482
 Savoy, 391
 Scali, Giorgio, 327, 332
 Scarampi, Cardinal, 396, 399
 Scarperia, Jacopo d'Angelo da, 402
 Scatizza, 320, 328, 332
 Schism, the Great, 358, 364, 366, 381, 382, 383-4
 Schönberg, Nicholas of, *see* Nicholas
 Scolari, family of, 257
 Scorno, Bartolomeo da, *see* Bartolomeo
 Sea Consuls, 415 n., 418, 420, 427, 428, 429, 430-6
sega, 101, 145 n.
 Segni, Bernardo, 504, 509-10, 511, 523
 seisin, 229
 Senate, Florentine, 484-5, 487
 Seneca, 66, 67, 68-9
 Sercambi, 364
 Settimanni, Francesco, 516
 Settimo, Antonio da, *see* Antonio
 Settimo, Benedictines at, 211
 Settimo, estate of, 173, 209, 211, 216, 218, 219, 221, 230
- Sforza:
 Francesco, Duke of Milan, 379, 388, 391, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401
 Muzio Attendolo, 389-90
 share-cropping, 199, 202, 206, 227, 263, 275
 Sicily, 81
 corn from, 432
 hides from, 426
 Kings of, *see* Naples (Sicily), Kings of
 Siena, 72, 95, 96, 141, 227 n., 236, 294, 392, 393
 army of, 73, 78, 79, 80, 81 n., 83-4, 86, 87, 88-9, 90, 93, 95, 98
 Florentine wars against, 71, 73

INDEX

- Sigismund, Emperor, 365, 388, 391, 393,
444-5
- silk industry, 305-8, 329. *See also* guilds
- Simone di Biagio, 328, 332
- Simone di Francesco, 328
- Simone di Lotto da Sancasciano, 422
- Soderini, family of, 437
- Francesco, 441
- Giovan Vettorino, 437
- Niccolò, 457, 460
- Paolantonio, 488, 498
- Piero, 484, 486
- Tommaso, 429, 437
- 'Some little flowers drawn from the
Apocalypse', 33
- soprusus*, 205, 207
- Spain:
- hides from, 424, 426
- imperialism in Italy, 389-90
- mercenaries from, 80, 81, 91, 104-5
- wool from, 297, 306
- Spini, family of, 360, 361, 365, 370, 371,
374, 376-8
- Antonio di Jacopo and Doffo de',
company of, 361, 362
- Doffo di Neri, 361, 364, 376-7, 378
- Francesco, 431
- Ricordanze* of Doffo, 377, 378
- Spoleto, Asto of, *see* Asto
- Spoleto, mercenaries from, 73
- stamaioli*, 308
- Stefani, Marchionne, 340, 344
- Stella, Niccolò della, 393
- Stephen of Bibbiena, 91
- Strozzi, family of, 221, 299, 439
- Anibaldo, 355
- Battista, 431
- Filippo, 496-7, 506, 509, 510, 511, 530,
532
- Lorenzo, 438, 496-7
- Nanni, 446-7
- Piero, 429
- Strozza di Marcello, 438
- Tommaso, 327-8, 332, 333
- Stufa, della, family of, 438
- Supino, Baldwin of, *see* Baldwin
- Suriano, Antonio, 500
- Susinana, Mainardo da, 93-4
- Tagliacozzo, battle of, 83
- tallage, 198
- tallia*, 81-2, 83, 85, 88, 93, 98, 99, 100,
102, 103, 106
- Tani, Jacopo di Tommaso, 370
- tanning industry, 329
- Taranto, Bishop of, 39
- Tarlatti, family of, 112 n.-113 n.
- Temperani, Manno, 462
- Testa, Jacopo del, 328
- Three Hundred Tales, The*, 110
- Ticci, Andrea, 359
- Todi, Jacopone da, prophecy of, *see*
Jacopone
- Toledo, Master John of, *see* John
- Torre, Bertran de la, 88
- Tosa, della, family of, 114
- Totila, 21, 22, 23, 45, 51, 57
- Totila flagellum Dei*, 21
- Trattato della Seta*, 307
- Traversari, Ambrogio, 402
- Trebizond, George of, *see* George
- Trent, Albert of, *see* Albert
- Trespiano, 50
- Tribolo, Niccolò, 528
- Troppau, Martin of, *see* Martin
- Troyes, Treaty of, 390
- Turco, Bartolomeo, 360, 364
- Turks, 38, 39, 507, 508
- Tuscany, Duke of, *see* Cosimo I
- Ubaldi, Baldus degli, 283
- Ubalдини, family of, 100, 101, 112, 113 n.,
121
- Berardino, 393 n.
- Uberti, family of, 54
- Fazio, 28-9, 30
- Ughi, Giuliano (Fra), on Fortezza da
Basso, 524, 528
- Ugucione, Bernardo, 439
- Umiliati of Ognissanti, 173
- Unghero, Nanni, 514, 516, 523, 524,
528
- Unti*, the, 17
- Uppezinghi, family of, 418
- Urban VI, Pope, 358, 359, 360, 384
- Urbano da Cigoli, 419
- Uzzano, Niccolò da, 375, 376
- Val d'Arno, 174, 185
- Val d'Elsa, 174, 185, 237
- Val di Nievole, 167 n.
- Val di Pesa, 104, 237
- Val di Sieve, 174
- Vallombrosa, 208 n., 209, 210, 214 n.,
216, 220, 228 n., 229-30, 231, 233-4,
237 n., 240 n., 241 n.
- abbot of, 54
- Valori, Bartolomeo, 375, 376, 378

INDEX

- Varchi, Benedetto, 504-5, 508, 511
 Vasari, Giorgio, 502-3, 511, 512, 514, 523, 525, 531
 Vecchiano, Lupardo da, *see* Lupardo
 Vecchio, del, family of, 50
 vendetta, 113
 Venice, 21 n., 141, 149, 386, 388, 391, 393, 395, 396, 397-8, 399, 400, 463 ff., 495-6
 Consiglio Maggiore, 480, 485, 486
 constitution of, 465, 468, 476, 477, 480, 483, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490
 myth of, 466-71, 486
 Peace of, 391
 Pregadi, Council of, 481, 484, 485, 486
 Vergerio, Pier Paolo (the Elder), 468
 Vergerio, Pietro Paolo, *De republica Veneta*, 491
 Verme, Jacopo del, 384
 Vernagalli, Jacopo, 417
 Vettori
 Agnolo di Neri, 440
 Francesco, 506, 510, 511-12, 527
villani, 209, 211
 Villani:
 Filippo, 121
 Filippo di Jacopo, 438
 Giovanni, 22, 23-4, 29, 46, 50-2, 53-62, 63-4, 68, 69, 74, 77-8, 93, 104, 105, 107, 108, 136, 141, 142, 146, 147, 149, 151, 164, 171 n., 243, 271, 295, 473. *See also* Anonymous compendium of Villani
 Virgil, *Georgics* of, 65
 Visconti, family of, 121, 124, 128, 382, 390, 391, 393, 399
 Bernabò, 30
 Filippo Maria, Duke of Milan, 383, 390, 391, 392, 398, 400
 Giangaleazzo, Duke of Milan, 34, 382, 383, 384-5, 386, 387, 450
 'Vision of the Holy Hermit', 38, 41
 Vitelleschi, Cardinal, 395, 396, 397
 Vitelli, Alessandro, 510, 511, 512, 513, 515-16, 518, 519, 525, 527, 528, 530
 Viterbo, Pierfrancesco da, *see* Pierfrancesco
 Volta, Gaspare della, 430-1
 Volterra, 73, 94, 133, 233 n., 504
 Bishop of, 72, 214 n.
 wages, theory of, 283 ff.
 War of the Eight Saints, 28, 30, 35, 110, 121, 123, 190, 239, 240, 312, 315, 317, 323, 325, 328-9, 341, 357, 358, 381, 383, 384, 385
 wheat, *see* gate gabelle
 'White Cardinal', prophecy of the, 22
 William the Catalan, 86, 88-9, 91
 wine, price of, 167-9, 186-7. *See also* gabelles
 wine merchants', guild of, 169 n.
 wool industry, 186, 277, 292, 293-4, 296-302, 312, 313, 319, 322
 and Ciompi Revolt, 323-4, 328-9, 331, 339-40, 341
 personnel in, 290, 291, 292, 296-7, 301-2, 306-7, 308, 309, 310, 319-22, 325
 wages in, 300, 303-5
Wüstungen, 201, 204, 205
 Zeffi, Francesco, 496 n.
 Zeffi, Giovanfrancesco, 496 n., 498 n.
Zusammensiedlung, 201, 204

The Editor wishes to thank Mrs. Penelope Butler for compiling the index.

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