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**21**

## **Reti Medievali E-Book**

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**Venice and the Veneto during the  
Renaissance: the Legacy of Benjamin Kohl**

edited by  
Michael Knapton, John E. Law, Alison A. Smith

**Firenze University Press  
2014**

Venice and the Veneto during the Renaissance: the Legacy of Benjamin Kohl / edited by Michael Knapton, John E. Law, Alison A. Smith. – Firenze : Firenze University Press, 2014. (Reti Medievali E-Book ; 21)

Accesso alla versione elettronica / Access to the electronic version:

<http://www.ebook.retimedievali.it>

<http://digital.casalini.it/9788866556633>

ISBN 978-88-6655-663-3 (online)

This book is published with financial support from the Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Università degli Studi di Udine, Italy, and from Wagner College, New York, USA.

In the electronic version of the book all the illustrations appear in the text of the relevant essays, in color or in black and white according to the author's choice. In the printed version they all appear in the text in black and white, and those supplied in color also appear all together in color at the end of the volume.

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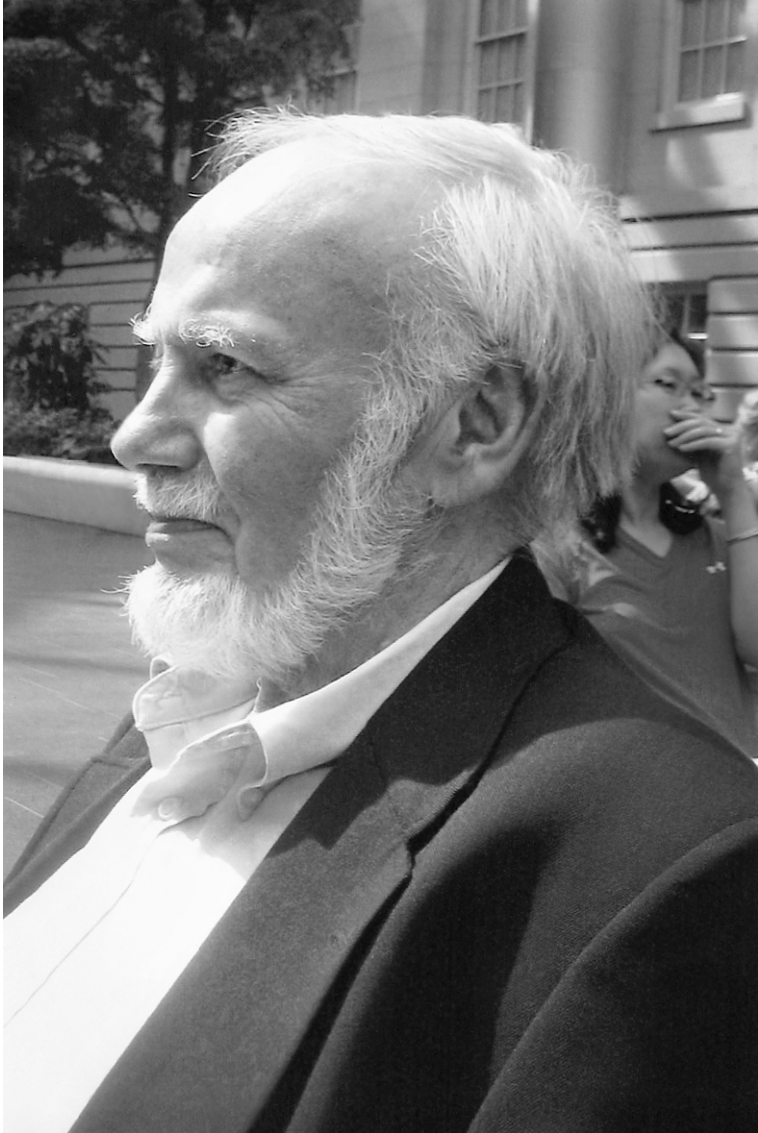
Firenze University Press

Borgo Albizi, 28

50122 Firenze, Italy

[www.fupress.com](http://www.fupress.com)

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Benjamin Gibbs Kohl, 1938-2010.  
Photograph by Erik Midelfort; edited by Christopher Smith.



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# Introduction

by Michael Knapton, John E. Law, Alison A. Smith

This book pays tribute to Benjamin Kohl as a scholar, collaborator, teacher, mentor and friend. It specifically commemorates his commitment and contribution to scholarship by offering readers a collection of historical essays which reflect both his wide range of research interests in medieval and Renaissance Italy, and the international esteem and affection in which he was held. In publishing essays it resembles other commemorative volumes, as it does by including a profile of the historian remembered – in our case, words from both the head and the heart by Reinhold Mueller, Kohl’s lifelong colleague and friend – and also a list of his publications. But this collection differs from many others in two ways.

First, by including unpublished material written by the historian commemorated, who was working hard at various projects and went on doing so for as long as he could, until just before he died. Posthumous publication entails limitations and risks, especially since living authors are inclined to modify their writings, sometimes in much more than formal details, through to the phase of proof-reading. But Benjamin Kohl’s family, friends and colleagues have encouraged us editors to publish four of his pieces, with due care in facing those limitations and risks, and they indeed form an important part of the book. The substantial essay on “Competing Saints” was virtually readied for publication by the author himself; the sources edited in “The Serrata of the Greater Council” have been brought forward from Kohl’s draft with great understanding by Mueller. “The Changing Function of the Collegio” and “Renaissance Padua as *Kunstwerk*” are shorter texts prepared as conference papers, to which editing has added polish and a few titles in the footnotes; they are included here for their capacity to stimulate scholarly debate and further research. The second difference between this and many other collections is the extent to which the single essays converge in terms of place, period and subject. Our choice of a tighter focus was primarily motivated by the desire to bracket scholarly interests cultivated by Benjamin Kohl himself, and the three sections of the book do indeed reflect those interests, as the list of his publications and the profile by Reinhold Mueller both confirm. Although we have not included a section on humanist culture, its practitioners and their writings, a subject to which Kohl devoted a significant part of his research, humanism does in fact feature in the essays, especially among

Monique O’Connell’s Chancery secretaries and the authors reviewed by John Richards in examining Altichiero’s posthumous reputation. Each single author is far better fitted than us to explain her or his work, but the short presentation that follows aims primarily to suggest the overall cohesion we have sought for.

The first and largest section is entitled “Government and Society in Venice”, and the two opening pieces are by Kohl himself, reflecting the fact that he had made a solid start on a monograph on the governance of late medieval Venice. The essay “The Serrata of the Greater Council of Venice, 1282-1323: the documents”, seeks to remedy significant flaws of omission and approximation in historians’ knowledge of the legislative sources documenting the Serrata. The Serrata notoriously influenced the short- and long-term development of Venice’s institutions of government and its ruling élite to a massive extent, and the sophistication of much previous scholarship about it is somewhat at odds with that margin of imprecision in handling the sources. This critical edition of the laws operating the Serrata constitutes an indispensable support for future, more fully informed debate.

Kohl’s “The Changing Function of the Collegio in the Governance of Trecento Venice” targets a weak point in previous research on the post-Serrata development of the Venetian Republic’s central institutions. The Collegio evolved, largely during the fourteenth century, from its original configuration as an informal group of advisors flanking the Doge, to a more numerous, formally constituted body with broad and better defined responsibilities which made it the key institution in the executive sphere of government for the rest of the Republic’s lifespan. This paper adds to sketchy previous knowledge in tracing the development of membership of the Collegio, and its role in the administration of justice and public order, and legislative policy.

Claudia Salmini’s “Il Segretario alle voci: un primo contributo sulle origini dell’incarico e la formazione dell’archivio”, addresses issues which are currently drawing increasing scholarly attention: the way in which archives took shape, and how that reflects the purposes and manner of their creation and use in the systems of government of past societies – a richer, more nuanced approach than that required by their ordering or re-ordering for consultation by historians, and one in which archivists and historians need to work together. But scholarly access and consultation of these registers of office-holders are also part of Salmini’s mandate, and her essay indeed marries research on their genesis with discussion of the creation of prosopographical data-bases concerning public offices held by members of the Venetian patriciate. She has in fact been an active member of two key database projects: the more recent “The Rulers of Venice 1332-1524”, spearheaded by Benjamin Kohl, and the pioneering “Segretario alle voci”, whose creation in Venice’s Archivio di Stato began as early as 1980.

Members of the ducal chancellery and their careers feature strongly in Salmini’s analysis, and the major supporting role played for the patrician regime by these functionaries has an even higher profile in Monique O’Connell’s “Legitimizing Venetian Expansion: Patricians and Secretaries in

the Fifteenth Century”. Humanist training was a salient characteristic of a small group of Venetians, both patrician and non-patrician, who used the skills thus acquired in defence of Venice’s reputation during the fifteenth-century phase of territorial expansion. Focusing more specifically on Lorenzo de Monacis, Nicolò Sagundino and Antonio Vinciguerra, the essay reconstructs their careers and their connections within the patriciate, so bracketing the whole century and analyzing the parallel evolution of the Republic’s dominions and the rhetoric of its self-justification.

Dennis Romano’s “The Limits of Kinship: Family Politics, Vendetta, and the State in Fifteenth-Century Venice”, addresses the relationship between politics and family ties within the patriciate, highlighting how the latter could damage rather than strengthen the cohesion of the Venetian ruling class. Politically sensitive criminal trials towards the mid-Quattrocento, especially those concerning doge Francesco Foscari and his son Jacopo, engendered fear of possible vindictive action by those who had been put on trial or their kinsmen. They were therefore disqualified by the Council of Ten from roles in future judicial proceedings concerning both those who had conducted the trials and an increasingly broadly defined group of their relatives. Such judicial vengeance was a real risk, as documented by the Foscari-Loredan rivalry, but the Ten then realized that it was courting a much worse danger, of strengthening factional divisions, and in 1458 they set severe limits to this sort of restriction of patricians’ exercise of their rights.

Like Foscari, Andrea Gritti was a controversial doge, but unlike Foscari he died in office, and the political and ceremonial implications of a doge’s death are examined in Tracy E. Cooper’s “On the Death of Great Men: A Note on Doge Andrea Gritti”. The essay focuses on the management of the interregnum between doges, investigating the connection between the continuity in the life of the state and the rehabilitation of the physical body of the defunct doge, which represented a key element of the ceremonial. Cooper’s analysis draws important information from an unpublished contemporary account of Gritti’s funeral, included here as an appendix to the essay, which also identifies his immediate place of burial as the church of San Francesco della Vigna.

Stanley Chojnacki’s “Willing Patronesses: Choosing, Loosing, and Binding in Venetian Noblewomen’s Wills”, is also connected with the implications of death but focused on a less public sphere, in which women could exercise choice in social and political patronage (understood in terms of exchanges between members of social networks). It examines a broad sample of patrician women’s wills from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century, categorizing their choice of benefactions, legatees and executors according to such criteria as piety, family loyalty and personal disposition. It pays special attention to reciprocity between wives and husbands, particularly in relation to their children’s prospects in adult life; the sources examined also extend to the womens’ husbands’ wills and to the records of sponsors in the Barbarella registrations for the sortition of young patricians given early access to the Great Council. The hierarchies of choice which emerge map women testators’

loyalties and also register their evolution over time, especially in connection with the passage from natal to marital family.

The implications of Venetian territorial expansion and their discussion by humanists, already at the base of O'Connell's essay, return with attention to a rather special humanist in Humfrey Butters' "Politics, War and Diplomacy in late fifteenth-century Italy: Machiavellian thoughts and Venetian examples". The essay takes statements in Machiavelli's "The Prince" and "Discourses" as theory, against which to set practical aspects of Venetian foreign policy in later fifteenth-century Italy. By the way it liquidates Machiavelli's candidature as an ideal founder of the Realist school of International Relations. It dwells on such core concepts of his thought as the nexus between foreign affairs, war and political life, the difference between power and force, and the importance of reputation, as well as his comparison between ancient Rome and Venice. It also offers discussion of Roberto di Sanseverino's career as positive proof of Machiavelli's conviction about the unreliability of condottieri.

Andrea Mozzato's "Oppio, triaca e altre spezie officinali a Venezia nella seconda metà del Quattrocento" stands partly aside from the other essays, but acts as a timely reminder that despite all the research done on Venice's part in the international trade in spices – a hallmark of the scholarship of Frederic Lane (Benjamin Kohl's mentor) and other historians of his generation – the considerable use of those spices in Venice itself has attracted much less investigation. Mozzato examines dealing in medicinal substances by the Aretine apothecary Agostino Altucci via close scrutiny of account books documenting his activity in Venice from 1465 to 1475. He pays special attention to two products which were in fact closely linked – theriac, the panacea for whose production Venice was famous, and opium, one of its ingredients – and also seeks to determine theriac's toxic effects on patients treated.

The second section is entitled "Government and Society in the Terraferma", and it too starts with an essay by Benjamin Kohl: "Renaissance Padua as *Kunstwerk*: Policy and Custom in the Governance of a Renaissance City". Here Kohl distinguishes contrasting emphases in historiography of the mainland empire: general Venetian heavy-handedness and high tax demands, on the one hand; and, on the other, a lighter touch in dealing with a plurality of jurisdictions via retention of local custom and leadership where compatible with central government's priorities. He argues that Venice's policy choices remained largely in line with custom, using the old urban communal structures and accepting the signorial élites as the class charged with local government, and he offers a positive verdict of fifteenth-century Padua's experience of this overall arrangement.

Michael Knapton's "Land and Economic Policy in Later Fifteenth-Century Padua" argues rather differently from Kohl's conclusions about Padua, emphasizing the greater weakness of the city's institutions and élite as compared with elsewhere in the Venetian Terraferma state. The essay briefly surveys economic relations in general and then analyzes the profile of various issues connected with land in the Paduan civic council's activity, highlighting

hitherto rather underestimated features of relations between Padua and Venice, especially those concerning the latter's assertion of rights over land. It also attempts to measure the degree of the council's autonomy in policy-making and its perception of its role in relation to Venetian authority, identifying a significant degree of Venetian initiative and intervention, and also of irritation among the Paduan council élite over these issues.

Civic councils in the mainland are also targeted by Gian Maria Varanini's "Il consiglio maggiore del comune di Verona nel 1367", which concentrates on the signorial phase preceding Venetian Terraferma expansion, and examines very rare examples of surviving Veronese documentation concerning 1367 and 1369. His analysis focuses firstly on the functions of the commune of Verona's *maius consilium* under the Della Scala regime, with comparative reference to the overall experience of the Veneto cities' councils under signorial government. It then offers a detailed prosopographical examination of council membership as documented by these Veronese sources, identifying the signs of a process of transition from the dominant profile of established aristocratic families towards the creation of a more composite patriciate, where the significant presence of men linked to the guilds and manufacturing demonstrates the extent of social dynamism during the Scala period.

Alison A. Smith's "Expansion, Instability, and Mobility in the Urban Élite of Renaissance Verona: The Example of the Verità Family" offers an in-depth investigation over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of a leading family which emerged from just that process of transition. Her demographic and economic survey of all the Verità households aims to map the changing nature of local élites in Terraferma cities: families maintained or improved their economic and social position by adapting to changing circumstances via a considerable variety of strategic solutions – though the incidence of rapid and spectacular increases in wealth in some households and branches of the Verità was offset, in others, by instability and decline. Allegiance to the patriline had both ideal and practical valency, but maintaining the economic independence of individual branches and households was the fundamental principle of estate organization, just as the social geography of the family was mostly characterized by residential independence.

The third section, entitled "Society, Religion and Art", presents a cross-disciplinary blend of scholarly interests present in much of Benjamin Kohl's later research (a blend in which art history becomes an important tool for social history). It starts with Trevor Dean's "Storm, suicide and miracle: Venice 1342", centred on a hitherto unpublished version of a story set in the Venetian lagoon, in which Sts Mark, George and Nicholas quell a storm. The text analyzed is rich in layers of meaning: not only is it unique as chronicled history in the context of environmental historiography, but its elaboration of an account of a storm into a major piece of hagio-history poses a series of questions about the when and why of that development. Possible answers are provided by consideration of the evolving character of Venetian chronicle-writing, and also of the overlaps between the apparently separate categories of history, hagiography and exemplary literature.

Saints are conjugated with civic ritual from the communal through to the early Venetian period in Benjamin Kohl's "Competing Saints in Late Medieval Padua", which investigates elements of permanence and change in the city's devotional life. It presents a systematic analysis of the patronage of saints' days in Padua, drawing heavily on three different redactions of the city's statutes but also on the iconographical data offered by the massed representation of saints painted during the 1370s in the cathedral baptistery by Giusto de' Menabuoi. It identifies both universal and local saints revered in the dedications of the city's churches and chapels and in the Paduan calendar, pointing up their significance in the yearly cycle, simultaneously civic and ecclesiastical, of festivals, processions, holidays and fairs.

Carrara family patronage, especially that of Fina Buzzacarini, wife of Francesco I, was fundamental in the pictorial transformation of the Paduan cathedral baptistery just mentioned, and a focus of Benjamin Kohl's research. The Carrara family's sense of dynastic identity and its ambitions for Padua are the general subject of Meredith J. Gill's "The Carrara Among the Angels in Trecento Padua". Her specific focus is the decorative scheme completed in the 1350s by the Paduan painter Guariento di Arpo for the palatine chapel of the Reggia, seat of the Carrara ruling dynasty. As well as two tiers of subjects in fresco drawn from Scripture, he executed over thirty panel paintings representing a celestial vision – the Virgin and Child, the four evangelists, hierarchies of angels – with extraordinary use of colours. Gill relates the paintings to various preceding models, and also to Guariento's own previous and subsequent production, especially the Paradise painted for Venice's ducal palace, and seeks to elucidate their biblical and theological *ratio*.

Individual devotion and commemoration after death are the focus of Robin Simon's essay about a Paduan extraordinarily famous for his patronage of the arts (and also for enmity with the Carraresi): "The monument I have had constructed'. Evidence for the first tomb monument of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel, Padua". Scrovegni's heirs realized a wall monument to him in the Arena Chapel about fifteen years after his death in 1337, but the overall original scheme remains obscure. Simon suggests that the marble Madonna and Child with flanking angels by Giovanni Pisano, currently on the high altar of the chapel, and a standing statue of Enrico (by a different sculptor, now in the Museo Civico), were intended as key elements of a tomb monument. His hypothesis is supported by inferences from Carrara tomb monuments, iconographical characteristics of the Pisano group, and the very history of the building and decoration of the chapel, whose apse seems to have been the intended site of the original monument.

Florence and Padua were the main focal points of Bonifacio Lupi's distinguished career as condottiere and diplomat, though his closeness to the Carraresi was soured in the late 1380s, complicating life for his wife too. Louise Bourdua's "'Stand by your man': Caterina Lupi, wife of Bonifacio. Artistic patronage beyond the deathbed in late medieval Padua", reconstructs Caterina di Staggia's patronage, both artistic and social, from the 1370s to her will (made



in Venice in 1403-1405, and published as an appendix to the essay). She points up Caterina's role in the refurbishment and decoration of the chapel of St. James in the Santo, conventionally but erroneously considered as solely her husband's creation. Analysis of her gifts in life as in death suggests that despite self-imposed exile to Venice, Caterina remained true to her adopted city of Padua; it also shows her acting on her dead husband's behalf, to honour his memory and provide for his soul.

John Richards' "Altichiero in the Fifteenth Century: the Instability of Fame" closes this Paduan sequence of art historical essays, contrasting Altichiero's reputation when alive with his later fall into obscurity. He was the leading north Italian painter of the later Trecento, active in Padua in the 1370s and early 1380s for patrons close to Petrarch and his circle. In the 1568 version of Vasari's *Vite*, however, he only features in little more than an appendix to the life of Carpaccio, and his work has regained knowledge and esteem only in the last fifty or so years. But Vasari is not specially to blame: the essay detects and seeks to explain the ignorance and neglect of his work already evident in such fifteenth-century humanist authors as Michele Savonarola, Flavio Biondo and Marino Sanudo.

Finally, John E. Law's "The tombs of the Scaligers at Verona – a nineteenth-century English account", uses these monuments as the starting point for an investigation of attention to Verona's lordly rulers in the medieval history of the Veneto by English observers of the Victorian and Edwardian era (a historiographical approach which also drew Benjamin Kohl's interest). The essay's main focus is not on well-known and influential historians such as Julia Cartwright and Cecilia Ady, but on the Cheney brothers, Edward Cheney in particular: prominent members of the British community in Rome and Venice in the nineteenth century, who as scholarly enthusiasts and major art connoisseurs played a hitherto unrecognized, significant part in raising interest in the cultural history of Italy.

Among the issues raised by this rapid survey of the essays, one in particular merits a little more comment: Benjamin Kohl's insistent attention to historians' access to unpublished sources. As Reinhold Mueller notes in his profile of Kohl, this took the form of more than usual generosity in passing archival references and preliminary transcriptions to colleagues – which might mean really weighty gifts, as in his hand-over of a complete first transcript of the 1362 Paduan statutory codex so as to favour their publication (now near completion in an edition by Ornella Pittarello, supported by Gherardo Ortalli). But it also meant systematic action to make Venetian archival resources more accessible, including for an anglophone readership: a mission which in some ways likens him to the nineteenth-century scholar Rawdon Brown.

He was behind the project entitled "The Rulers of Venice 1332-1524", mentioned in both Mueller's profile and in Salmini's essay, and its significance was captured in a paper given by Monique O'Connell to the 2011 meeting of the Renaissance Society of America. On that occasion she appropriately stressed

Kohl's role as a "tech innovator", willing to adapt to new ways of doing history, while at the same time always keeping the sources at the center of what the project was about; and she correctly identified him as one of the first scholars of the Renaissance to see the possibilities of electronic publishing. These insights blossomed and gave fruit because of Kohl's capacity for teamwork, all the more indispensable for a scholar of the pre-"tech" generation grappling with computing, internet and the like.

They also did so because of funding, which came thanks to his advocacy from foundations sensitive to the worth of such projects; latterly these included the Hedgelawn Foundation, founded by Kohl himself and managed with much efficacy and no brashness. But public recognition of such activity is appropriate, especially when a multiplier effect may be hoped for, and these aims lay behind the event organized by Venice's Archivio di Stato on 10 June 2011: "Mecenatismo e ricerca storica. Giornata di studio in memoria di Benjamin G. Kohl" – a self-explanatory title. As to the multiplier effect, 2013 saw the launch of the project entitled "Digital Humanities Venice" by the University of Venice and the Swiss *École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne*, in partnership with the Archivio di Stato and several of the city's libraries: a massive digitalization program of archival material should lead to the creation of an interactive database.

We editors are pleased to acknowledge many debts of gratitude, with few adjectives but wholly genuine feeling (and we apologize deeply if faulty memory makes us omit someone). To the contributors to this volume; to other scholars who provided assistance, like Rachele Scuro; to those who advised us over Benjamin Kohl's posthumous essays, and helped prepare them for publication – Anne Derbes, Meredith Gill, Reinhold Mueller and Monique O'Connell. The last two have been supportive in so many ways, but teamwork among contributors as Kohl practised it has been extensive, to the book's certain benefit.

Gratitude to "Reti Medievali": for welcoming this book among their publications; for accepting a good deal of formal criteria in the texts more typical of American and British than of Italian usage; for the massive and patient support provided by Paola Guglielmotti and even more so by Gian Maria Varanini, in editing and in many other ways. To Anna Zangarini, for preparing the indices and offering expert advice. To Udine University's Dipartimento di Scienze Umane and to Wagner College, New York, for funding.

Lastly, we are very grateful to the Kohl family, especially Judy Kohl, who, with Ben, offered boundless generosity, hospitality and support to their many friends and colleagues.



### *Abstract*

The genesis of this essay collection is explained. There is a brief analysis of the contents of the twenty essays it contains. Four of them are by Benjamin G. Kohl himself. The others, by authors from the USA, Britain and Italy, deal with issues of Venetian and Veneto history – political, social, artistic – close to the interests of the historian commemorated by the volume.

Si dà conto della genesi di questa miscellanea di studi e si espone brevemente il contenuto dei 20 saggi che la costituiscono: quattro di essi sono dovuti a Benjamin G. Kohl, e gli altri sono dedicati da studiosi inglesi, americani e italiani a tematiche di storia politica, sociale e artistica del Veneto e di Venezia, vicine alla sensibilità dello studioso americano scomparso.



## In memoriam: Benjamin G. Kohl (1938-2010)\*

by Reinhold C. Mueller

Benjamin Gibbs Kohl died in Betterton on Maryland's Eastern Shore on June 10, 2010, of pancreatic cancer just two months after delivering his last paper, on Renaissance Padua under Venetian governance, at the annual conference of the RSA in Venice; his session was held at the University of Warwick Center in remembrance of Michael Mallett, himself an historian *inter alia* of Venice's Terraferma state.

Ben Kohl was born on October 26, 1938, on the Warwick Road near Middletown, Delaware. He received a B.A. from Bowdoin College in 1960, an M.A. from the University of Delaware in 1962, and a Ph.D. in medieval and Renaissance history from the Johns Hopkins University in 1968, where he was Frederic C. Lane's third-last student. He did the basic research for his dissertation on Padua during the fourteenth century while on a Fulbright fellowship in 1964-65. In 1966 Ben landed the best job on the market, at Vassar College, where he quickly fit in, moving through the ranks from Instructor to Full Professor to Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities (in 1993), to Emeritus Professor in 2001, when he retired early to dedicate himself full-time to research. He was chair of the History Department for seven years. Among his most important honors, after the Fulbright, was the Rome Prize and fellowship in post-classical studies at the American Academy in Rome (1970-71) and a long-term Andrew W. Mellon Emeritus Fellowship in the Humanities received after retirement.

After finishing a thesis devoted primarily to political history, Ben struck out on a quite un-Frederic Lane-ian line of research, thanks to his encounter with Giovanni Conversini da Ravenna, humanist and courtier at the Carrara court. He edited and translated the little-known tracts by this humanist, and his critical editions and translations into English made an important contribution to our knowledge of the work of humanists on the "periphery" away from Florence, where intellectual historians of the Renaissance had been concentrating their attention. In each of these initiatives, Ben worked in collaboration with expert Latinists. His first book, co-edited with Ron Witt

\* Ex *Renaissance News and Notes* (Renaissance Society of America), XXII.2 (2010): 4-5. Reproduced by kind permission of the author and the RSA.

and published in 1978 (still in print), was a collection of humanist tracts on government and society. Ben's attendance at the Columbia University Renaissance Seminar, founded and presided over by Paul Oskar Kristeller, played an important part in the development of his interests in this field. He presented two papers to the seminar, the first on Conversini at Padua (in 1976), the second entitled "At the Birth of the Humanities: The Concept of the *Studia Humanitatis* in the Early Renaissance" (in 1985), a daring trial run into a subject at the very core of Kristeller's own interests and publications. He later turned the paper into the important article "The Changing Concept of the *Studia Humanitatis* in the Early Renaissance," published in *Renaissance Studies*, 6 (1992), pp. 185-209, Ben's best article in that field. Significantly, nine of the fourteen articles in his *Variorum* volume are on the topic of humanism<sup>1</sup>.

Ben was an ideal historical sportsman. While hardly pugnacious, Ben harbored a little-known love for boxing, and he and a colleague were curators of an exhibition at Vassar in 1996 on the art of boxing and boxing in art<sup>2</sup>. He was a model team player and had a penchant for collaborative projects. His C.V. is peppered with publications in which he appeared as co-author, co-editor, co-guest editor, co-curator; of seventeen book-length productions, including special issues, a CD and a database, thirteen are co-productions! The same is true for three of his many articles. As a natural team player, Ben was ever ready to help people out: that spirit got him into witches and devils, far from his own interests, and into the compilation in 1996 of the *Centennial Directory* of the American Academy in Rome (he simply loved lists). Ben enjoyed spending time gathering facts that could be useful to the profession. He published twenty-two biographical articles, of which twelve were written for the important *DBI* (*Dizionario biografico degli italiani*), and recently wrote thirty-nine entries for Brill's *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*; he collected and published on CD many hundreds of deliberations of the Venetian Senate for the fourteenth century, documents edited over the previous two centuries in myriad books and articles, often not easily available to scholars; the most important undertaking of this kind is his magnificent *The Rulers of Venice, 1332-1524*, a database of many thousands of names of Venetian officeholders, compiled together with M. O'Connell and A. Mozzato, ownership of which was passed to the RSA, on whose home-page, since 2008, it can be found<sup>3</sup>. In general, Ben was out to promote research, especially among younger

<sup>1</sup> Kohl, 2001. Article XIV, on marriage alliances of the Carrara dynasty, was published here for the first time.

<sup>2</sup> Bergon and Kohl. Boxing supposedly is still being taught in the Vassar gymnasium as a result of their initiative.

<sup>3</sup> *Rulers of Venice, 1332-1524*. *Rulers*, as it has become known, generously financed by the Delmas Foundation, is meant to be carried on through the Cinquecento with the database prepared decades ago by dott. Claudia Salmi of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, whom Ben brought into the project precisely with its extension in mind, given dott. Salmi's expertise regarding the

historians. If he heard that someone was interested in a subject he had touched upon in the course of his researches, he generously offered that person what he had: a notarial document, a testament, a deliberation – always with the warning that the transcription was hurried, a working draft, by no means a critical edition. He helped many people, including the undersigned, by retrieving information from *Rulers* before the database went on-line.

In the 1990s Ben returned to the study of the Paduan notaries of the fourteenth century, in preparation for writing his *Padua under the Carrara, 1318-1405*, published in 1998, a work of “traditional” history, as he meant it to be. At the same time, this new spurt of research on the subject of his dissertation of thirty years earlier sparked his interest in related themes, such as the women of the Paduan court, the courtiers themselves and the many competing patron saints of Padua, as they were represented in legends and works of art.

Retirement made it possible for Ben to conclude his work on Padua and humanism with the above-mentioned *Variorum* volume and to turn his attention to Venetian history, with his eye on a monograph to be entitled *The Governance of Late Medieval Venice*. In conference papers and in articles he began to give shape to what he was looking for: an in-depth understanding of the day-to-day mechanics of government and their practical results in individual cases. That involved counting and making lists; the database *Rulers* was a cornerstone of the project. His article on Marco Corner (ca. 1286-1368), whose first wife was Giovanna, daughter of Enrico Scrovegni (well, it *was* difficult to close out work on Padua!), is a model of how – with today’s tools – one can reconstruct a career, in this case of a career politician, Venice’s “first professional statesman and administrator”, who was elected doge some two years before his death<sup>4</sup>. It meant revisiting the Serrata, for which project Ben prepared critical editions of the relevant laws, 1282-1323; it meant counting the number of meetings of the Great Council by year and showing how few of them (an average of only 14%) in those years were actually held on Sundays, as has always been assumed<sup>5</sup>; it meant reading the model volumes of the deliberations of the Venetian Senate in critical editions (the *serie misti*) for more than just their high quality and varied content but, again, for understanding the mechanics of

archive of the Segretario alle voci, the contemporary listing of officeholders. Crucial for the understanding of the database, its philosophy and utility, is the little-known and seemingly unreviewed E-book accompanying the database, containing articles by all those involved in the project.

<sup>4</sup> Kohl, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> From his notes it turns out that the highest number of meeting-days per year, 106-108, were convened in the years 1283-84-85, at the beginning of the process of constitutional reform, the lowest number in the crucial years of the Serrata, 1297-98-99 (respectively 46, 30, and 47 meetings), and again the fourth-highest number, 100, in the final, momentous year, 1323, full of heated discussions in both the Great Council and the Senate on social status, when important resolutions also regarding immigration and citizenship were passed.

government, including the number of days per year in which the Senate was convened<sup>6</sup>. Ben was ever more convinced that without basic knowledge of the nitty-gritty of political organization, involving prosopography, counting, and careful looks at the calendar, year by year, the historian is forced to rely on inherited, un-tried assumptions about governance. His last paper, presented at the RSA four days before his last departure from Venice, entitled “Renaissance Padua as *Kunstwerk*: Policy and Custom in the Governance of a Renaissance City”, combined nearly all of his interests: Padua, Venice, and the art of governance. Time ran out much too soon and Ben’s monograph remained, regrettably, more in his head than on paper or in the computer. One can only hope that younger historians will carry on his work and adopt his historical methodology and his conviction that only by sifting through the nitty-gritty, intelligently, can one make possible a credible reconstruction of Venice’s mode of governance, shedding new light on an old subject.

One last crucial topic remains. After retirement Ben encountered good fortune and his first desire – naturally, for him – was to share it, largely through the creation of a philanthropic institution, the Hedgelawn Foundation, based at his study, a beautiful old frame house with a wood-burning stove in Worton, Maryland. The aim of the Foundation was and is to support arts and education on Maryland’s Eastern Shore, on the one hand, and Venetian studies on the other. Ben loved the Eastern Shore and its history; he proudly showed guests where George Washington had passed during the Revolutionary War and the last article he saw through the press was an account, with Latin text and translation, of the first commencement address, in 1783, held at Washington College, a nearby liberal arts college of which Ben was a benefactor<sup>7</sup>. And Ben loved Venice and its history. His foundation made possible the publication by the Comitato per la pubblicazione delle fonti relative alla storia di Venezia of a register of the *Grazie* of the Great Council which was practically disintegrating<sup>8</sup>, and with a smaller donation he made possible the digitalization of 28,000 pages of much-consulted archival material at the Archivio di Stato in Venice, especially deliberations of the major deliberative organs of the state. They were then put on-line by the Archivio, on whose website they can be consulted anywhere in the world, *gratis*. That was a final project in which Ben firmly believed: to show by example, in accord with the Director and staff of the Archivio, that private donations could do important things to further research; he hoped his initial donation, recognized on the website of the Archivio<sup>9</sup>, would serve as seed-money and that others would follow suit. That would be a splendid way to remember Ben Kohl.

<sup>6</sup> See his long review-article: Kohl, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Kohl, 2010.

<sup>8</sup> *Cassiere della Bolla ducale*.

<sup>9</sup> For all the material digitalized and available, see < [www.archiviodistatodivenezia.it](http://www.archiviodistatodivenezia.it) >, under Progetto Divenire.

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## **Government and Society in Venice**





# The Serrata of the Greater Council of Venice, 1282-1323: the documents\*

by Benjamin G. Kohl  
edited by Reinhold C. Mueller

## 1. *Editor's note*

This contribution was intended to be the documentary appendix to Ben Kohl's planned article on the closing of Venice's Great Council, a theme on which he had invested a great deal of thought and planning. The study was meant to be also the first chapter of his proposed book, *The Governance of Late Medieval Venice*, of which, in the summer of 2008, he sent me the following table of contents:

*The Governance of Late Medieval Venice*  
by B.G. Kohl

Chapter 1. The Formation of an Aristocratic Polity: The Meaning of the Serrata

Part I. *The Governance of the City and Dogado*

Chapter 2. The Ducal Palace: The Doge and Councils, Justice and Security

Chapter 3. The Rialto: The Regulation of Taxes, Finance and Commerce

Chapter 4. The Dogado

Part II. *Venice's Stato da Mar in the Trecento*

Chapter 5. The Adriatic Dominions

Chapter 6. Ionia, Crete and the Romania

Part III. *Changes in the Quattrocento State*

Chapter 7. The Creation of the Terraferma State

Chapter 8. Changes in the Stato da Mar

Chapter 9. Staffing the Government of Venice at Home

Conclusion

Following the publication in 1998 of his book *Padua under the Carrara*, Ben devoted himself full-time to Venice and to the daily nitty-gritty of

\* I would like to thank heartily Dieter Girgensohn and Bianca Lanfranchi Strina for their careful reading of this text and for their suggestions for improvement.

governance, beginning with his funding and leading the compilation of the large and important databank *Rulers of Venice*<sup>1</sup>. The book would have been the culmination of his study of the tools of government and of the men who used them.

In 2009 and 2010 Ben sent me various files and various versions of the documents he meant to publish as *pièces justificatives* of his first chapter. One file arrived with the filename “Serrata, essay, text”; in fact, it was another file of documents, with the addition of one of 1282. It begins optimistically as follows: “In all of Venetian historiography there is no more vexed issue than the meaning and development of the so-called Closing, or *Serrata*, of the *Maggior Consiglio*”. But then continues, more down-to-earth, with the note: “This file is mainly translations of docs. at present, March 2010”, immediately prior, that is, to Ben’s last visit to Venice and shortly before his death. We talked about his point of view several times, but not enough that I would be able to reproduce it here. He was convinced of two things: firstly, that the long constitutional reform known as the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio*, 1282-1323, contained all the elements necessary for the restriction of the definition of membership, along with the contemporaneous enlargement of membership à la Frederic C. Lane, making unnecessary the discovery of subsequent *serrate*, no matter what fine tuning was considered necessary decades and centuries later; secondly, that the only way to approach the issue was via critical editions of *all* the extant documents, with complete translations that would help himself in writing the chapter as well as English-speaking students in understanding the historical process. While the first point is historiographical, the second is practical: historians, even specialists of the *Serrata*, have indeed discussed it on the basis of surprisingly partial and sometimes quite poor and hasty transcriptions, often made from copies rather than from original entries in the official registers of the competent organs of state and never critically edited. It is my desire, as editor, to contribute to this volume in Ben Kohl’s memory with critical transcriptions of the documents he selected, plus summaries and translations based largely on his, on a topic on which he felt so strongly. Naturally, I have added one or the other document, adjusted translations, but especially I sought out the original manuscript versions in order to offer the correct reading of each text. What follows, then, is Ben contributing to the next phase of the historical debate on the *Serrata*. May it be a help and a stimulus to young scholars to take up the subject of governance, where Ben left off.

I do not mean to enter into the historiographical debate. Some practical points that derive directly from the documents, however, are worth making here separately, so as to avoid burdening with commentary the *regesti* or summaries that precede each law. The first regards record-keeping. The reader will discover below repeated mention of record-keeping by the staffs of the

<sup>1</sup> Mueller, 2010a. *Rulers of Venice* can now be consulted in a revised, more user-friendly, form. See also Kohl, 2008.

Council of Forty (the *Quarantia*, rendered in the transcriptions simply as *XL*) and of the Avogaria di Comun concerning persons at various stages during the procedures involved in approval of their candidacy for membership in the *Maggior Consiglio*. Some of the documents edited mention specifically *quaterni* and *libri* (see, below, documents 22 of 1315, 26 of 1319 and 28 of the crucial year 1323); in brief, records of the members of the Council, eligible and confirmed, were kept and updated; there is no need to await later years or centuries in order to find mention of record books of members, even though they have not survived. One or the other of these was obviously consulted by the compiler of the “*Proles nobilium Venetorum*” and of the “*Regimina*”, perhaps around 1358, at the conclusion of the *Venetiarum historia*, a chronicle which ends in that year<sup>2</sup>.

The second point concerns the criteria for evaluation of persons seeking to prove their eligibility for membership in the *Maggior Consiglio*. The first criterion, that of the law of 1297, was simple enough to prove, namely that the candidate himself had been a member of the Council during the previous four years, after which he needed twelve votes of the Forty for approval. Another was the matter of legitimate birth. Victor Crescenzi discusses the question in depth, taking off from the inclusion of the formulation of Justinian’s *Codex* in the Venetian statutes of 1242, with the criteria of a free mother and a legitimate matrimony, and he points out that legitimate birth was a *sine qua non* for membership in the Greater Council beginning at least from 1277<sup>3</sup>. It goes without saying that reaffirmation of criteria and principles would be considered necessary years and even centuries after the conclusion in 1323 of the reform known as the *Serrata*, with the final formulation of the hereditary principle, but the bases for inclusion and exclusion had already been clearly laid out<sup>4</sup>.

It might be suggested, thirdly, that in those *anni movimentati*, when status and rank as well as civic and political rights were being decided at Venice, the concept of inherited civic status, that of original citizenship, deriving from the *origo* of one’s father and grandfather, explained by jurists such as Iacopo d’Arena, perhaps educated at Padua (d. ca. 1296), could easily have been borrowed by the reformers to help them define above all the top level of citizenship, that with political rights. At the same time, in 1305 the other category of citizens, those immigrants who had to await a legislative act in

<sup>2</sup> Cessi and Bennato, 255-322.

<sup>3</sup> Crescenzi, 340-45; also Rösch, 2001, 76-77, 86n45.

<sup>4</sup> The scholar most skeptical, from the very beginning of his researches, of the efficacy of the constitutional reforms, 1282-1323, known as the *Serrata*, and of the self-consciousness of the reformers, is Stanley Chojnacki. See Chojnacki, 1973, a provocative early article but with problems of dating and use of sources, especially late copies of the *estimo* of 1379 (on the use of that document, see Mueller, 1997, 488-90), a study criticised by Ruggiero, 56-58. He continued his “search” and discovered later *serrate*; on the third, see Chojnacki, 2001, which provides the bibliography, including his own (see esp. notes 8 and 46).

order to attain a given kind of citizenship privilege, were finally satisfied with a basic law valid thereafter, however often it was amended, for centuries. Birth and the paternal line would then in the course of the succeeding decades become vital also for the definition of the status of original citizenship of persons in the second rank<sup>5</sup>.

Fourthly, a monetary point might not be out of place here: beginning in 1317 a fine of 300 *lire* was to be exacted from persons applying for membership in the Greater Council without having the right to sit on that council. Was that much or little, enough to inhibit someone from trying, to make him or his family think twice about proceeding with the application? Three hundred *lire di piccoli* in those years of the constitutional reform were the equivalent of some 90 to 94 gold ducats, quite a lot of money for most people, although the gold value of the fine would decrease steadily in the course of the century, as a result of continual devaluation of the silver coinage on which the *lira di piccoli* was based.

Lastly, a word about lists of names. If the *Serrata* is considered a process of constitutional reform lasting a generation, as appears to be the case on the strength of the documents here edited, the matter of time-spans reveals itself as more crucial than ever. In a nutshell, lists of members of the Maggior Consiglio should not terminate in 1297 (G. Rösch), nor embrace the whole Trecento (S. Chojnacki). Membership should be studied with 1323 as the watershed. I discussed this conviction often with Ben and brought to his attention a list that no participant in the debate about the *Serrata*, to my knowledge, has exploited, namely that published by G. Monticolo for the officials of the Giustizia, later called the Giustizia vecchia. A rapid perusal of the list going from 1261 to 1330 reveals names of officials – generally one of three – from small, lesser known families, perhaps genealogically weak and destined to extinction, till 1317; after 1323 only one such surname appears, the others being just the names one would expect to find<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. *Critical criteria*

Each document will be presented in critical transcription, with the archival reference, the critical date in italics, and references to previously published versions of the same, whatever their degree of trustworthiness. Where possible I have tried to find in the copies of the deliberations of the Greater Council made by the Avogaria di Comun, in the digitalizations funded by Ben Kohl's Hedgelawn Foundation, copies of excellent quality currently consultable on-line in the reading room of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia; this was rendered difficult by the fact that the deliberations recorded in the early registers are

<sup>5</sup> Kirshner, 700-01 (my thanks to the author for his suggestions). Mueller, 2010b, 22-23, 42-49.

<sup>6</sup> Monticolo, LXII-LXXX.

divided under subject headings, rather than appearing in simple chronological order, as they mostly are in the registers of the Maggior Consiglio itself. I have kept the labels chosen by Ben – Greater, not Great Council, Council of the Pregadi, not Senate – although I might have decided differently myself. I have not added reference to cancellations of the provisions, most of which are dated between 1349 and 1375. I have kept Ben’s wide use of capital letters for titles of deliberative organs and magistracies. As is the usage in the series *Senato misti*, I have rendered all Latin forms of *comune* with a single *m*. The summaries preceding each text and the sources of the text are given in italics. The reference to “Divenire frame” followed by a number is to the digitalized photograph of the relative folio in the Progetto Divenire of the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, available on-line; the number, referring to the specific register, permits the researcher to identify readily the manuscript source of the transcription; the same was done with the registers kept in the Avogaria di Comun, digitalized thanks to the Hedgelawn Foundation, where I noted the image number of the register available on-line in the reading room. Note, finally, that the numbering of the registers is that provided by the Progetto Divenire, which diverges from that provided by the older inventories; in order to avoid ambiguity, the register’s original name (e.g. *Liber Presbiter*) has been indicated as well.

The translations by Ben and myself are of course extremely delicate and will be open to criticism and rectification. So be it. Ben tried to keep to as literal a translation as possible, even of verb tense, while preserving coherence. I have avoided Ben’s use of the term *statute*, which in Latin and Italian usage has another meaning and could lead to ambiguities, preferring *law*, *deliberation*, and the like. Other terms, such as *rulebook* for *capitolare*, I have kept as both well-chosen and characteristically ‘Ben-ian’. The knottiest problem is how to render *eligere*, *electio*, *electores*. In many of the documents a literal translation is impossible, as Lane and Crescenzi, among others, underscored; Lane distinguished between *nomination* and *election*<sup>7</sup>, whereas Crescenzi, who studied carefully the role of the *electores* and the complex system set in place well before 1297 “to control the paths to admission to the Council”, preferred *designare*, *scegliere*, *selezionare*, *identificare*, while he renders *aprobare*, *approbatio*, the task of the Council of Forty, as *scrutinize*, *scrutiny*, where Lane wrote of *approval* or *testing*. We have made an effort to exploit such suggestions as called for<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> Lane, 1971, 249.

<sup>8</sup> Crescenzi, 1996, quotations from pp. 300, 304, 314, 319, 321, 320-24, where the author has studied the problem in depth.

### 3. *The documents*

Document 1: 26 September 1282 – 1 October 1282

*Selection of a board of four nominators, two resident on one side of the grand canal, two on the opposite side. Initially eight persons were chosen by lot, then their number was reduced to four, perhaps by putting pairs to the vote of the assembly. The final four were to nominate the one hundred ordinary members of the Greater Council and the members of the Pregadi before they left the Ducal Palace. The boards were to serve for that election only. This reflects the traditional pre-Serrata procedure<sup>9</sup>.*

*Deliberazioni*, 3:9, n° 39.

Die vigesimo sexto septembris [1282]

Capta fuit pars quod fiant quattuor electores dupli per rodulos in Maiori Consilio, silicet duo de ultra canale et duo de citra, et illi qui erunt electi debeant esse sub pena ordinata, qui debeant facere centum de Maiori Consilio et de Consilio Rogatorum, antequam descendant de pallatio, et postea, facta predicta ellectione, non sint amplius electores quantum pro ista vice. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

26 September 1282

The law was enacted that, from a slate of eight, four nominators be created, two from this side of the canal, two from the further side, and those who will be selected, under pain of fine if they refuse, must nominate one hundred members of the Greater Council and the members of the Council of Pregadi, before they leave the Ducal Palace. And thereafter, having made the aforesaid nominations, they are no longer nominators, but only for this time. And if there is a law to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.

*Ed.'s note.* This deliberation was in ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, *Deliberazioni*, reg. 5, Liber Luna, where Roberto Cessi was able to read and transcribe it in the 1920s and 1930s; probably in the course of rebinding the register at some point, the first gathering, fols. 1-16, was lost; the register as it now stands begins on fol. 17r (fol. 1r in pencil), in the year 1283. Consequently, I was not able to check the transcription. I tried to find the nearly contemporary copy in ASVe, Avogaria di comun, reg. 18, *Deliberazioni del Maggior consiglio, Liber Bifrons*, but was unable to; the register is arranged by topic, not chronologically, and the extensive collection with the relevant heading *Rubrica consiliorum ad electores, electiones et electos pertinentium*, fols. 17r and following, does not contain the text.

It is to be noted, furthermore, that part of this deliberation was cancelled by mistake, the part that ruled that the sixty members of the Rogati (later called the Senate) were to be *ex officio* members of the Greater Council for their annual term of office. Here are the lines recuperated a week later:

<sup>9</sup> While the first mention of a board of nominators dates from 1207 (Crescenzi, 1996, 295-97), and the nature of the board or boards of electors was debated and modified already in the 1270s (*ibid.*, 303-05), this law, with which Ben Kohl wanted to begin, continues somewhat of a controversy about their composition and selection.

Die primo octubris [1282]

Capta fuit pars quod illi qui sunt hoc anno electi de Consilio Rogatorum sint hoc anno de Maiori Consilio, cum inveniatur cancellatum consilium per quod Rogati erant de Maiori Consilio (*Deliberazioni*, 3:9, n° 41).

The provision was repeated in the following year, 1283 (see Doc. 2, below).

From that point on, the naming of a board of four nominators became practically a fixture in the procedures followed by the Greater Council in the days immediately preceding Michaelmas (29 September), the day of the elections, or the day the procedure began. In 1284, renewal involved a one-liner (*Deliberazioni*, 3:84, n° 142, 24 September). In 1285, on 15 September, a small revision (“per alium modum quam nunc fiant”) was attempted, namely to elect six, of which only two would remain, but the proposal failed in the face of another proposal “de stare firmi”. Much was afoot in 1286, so further renewals and revisions will be discussed below.

### Document 2: 26 September 1283

*Election, according to the procedure in Doc. 1, of a board of four nominators, two from each side of the Grand Canal, who were to select the one hundred ordinary members of the Greater Council and the members of the Pregadi before they left the Ducal Palace. As in the previous year, the members of the Pregadi elected for one year were to be contemporaneously members of the Greater Council for that year. The board was to serve for that election only.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, *Deliberazioni*, reg. 5, Liber Luna, fol. 10r, 26r original numbering; Divenire frame 19; *Deliberazioni*, 3:51, n° 173.

[MCCLXXXIII, XII inditione, die XXVI septembris]

Item quod eligantur IIII electores duppli, silicet II de citra canale et duo de ultra canale, etiam possint accipi de omni loco, et aprobentur secundum consuetudinem et illi qui erunt electi debeant esse sub pena librarum L; et statim quando erunt aprobati ducantur in palacium, qui debeant, antequam descendant de palacio, eligere C de Maiori Consilio et illos de Consilio Rogatorum qui debeant esse a sancto Michaele usque ad aliud sanctum Michaelem, et postea sint extra officium. Et illi qui erunt electi de Consilio Rogatorum debeant etiam esse de Consilio Maiori pro isto anno. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

26 September 1283

The law was enacted that, from a slate of eight, four nominators be selected, two from this side of the canal, two from the further side, who can be taken from any office in which they now are and approved in the usual manner, and those who will be selected are under pain of fine of £ 50; and as soon as they will be approved, they will be conducted to [a chamber in] the Palace and they must, before leaving the Palace, nominate one hundred members of the Greater Council and those members of the Council of Pregadi who will be in office from this Michaelmas to next Michaelmas [29 September 1283 – 29 September 1284], after which their office is terminated. And those who are elected to the Council of the Pregadi are also to be in the Greater Council for this year. And if there is a law to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.



Benjamin G. Kohl

Document 3: 24 September 1286

*Creation of a board of four electors as the normal way of nominating the 100 regular members of the Greater Council, that is, those who were not already members ex officio, and the members of the Pregadi.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Zaneta, fol. 16v, 86v (80v in pencil); Divenire frame 162; *Deliberazioni*, 3:156, n° 117.

Die XXIII septembris [1286]

Capta fuit pars quod eligantur IIII electores duppli per rodulum, duo de citra et duo de ultra canale, et approbentur ad unum ad unum, qui debeant eligere, antequam de palatio descendant, C de Maiori Consilio et Consilium Rogatorum, et postea sint extra electoriam.

24 September 1286

The law was enacted that, from a slate of eight, four nominators be elected, two from this side of the canal, two from the further side, and let them be voted on one by one. Before they leave the Ducal Palace, these men must nominate one hundred members of the Greater Council, and the members of the Council of Pregadi, and afterwards they are outside the electoral process.

Document 4: 3 October 1286

*On 3 October 1286 two acts were passed back to back. The first seems to have been practically an enabling act for the second; it said, in fact, that anyone who is or will be a member of the Consiglio dei Rogati and the Greater Council could vote on bills concerning recent nominations to the two councils, regardless of kinship bonds or other liabilities. The second was a deliberation regarding precisely the elections to the Pregadi and Greater Council, saying each nominee was to be approved, one by one, by a majority of the Council of Forty.*

*Ed.'s note.* I have decided to edit also the first of the two, contained in one of Ben's files, since upon re-reading it might very well mirror a situation in which a party interested in restricting membership was unable at the moment to get a majority and wanted the support of those most recently nominated. Whether the measure actually passed is in doubt. Frederic Lane, as cited immediately below, held – against Cracco's interpretation – that this law was actually abrogated by laws passed immediately following those passed on the 3rd, namely on 5 and 17 October, "to stand by customary procedure" and notes that approval one by one is not mentioned in the laws of 1287, 1293, 1294, and 1296. Rösch, 2001, 73, suggests it did not pass in the first place.

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Zaneta, fol. 17, 87r (81r in pencil); Divenire frame 163; *Deliberazioni*, 3:156, n° 119; Rösch, 1989, 172n20. Cfr. Crescenzi, 1996, 324; Cracco, 332; Lane, 1971, 271n73.

Die III octubris [1286]

Cum debeant poni partes in hoc Consilio super electionibus factis nuper de



illis tam de Consilio Rogatorum et de Maiori Consilio, captum fuit quod omnes illi qui sunt et erunt ad consilia que fient super hoc facto possint capere partem in consiliis que fient de ipsis et non teneantur exire de ipsis consiliis pro parentella vel pro alio.

3 October 1286

Since bills must be proposed in this Council concerning nominations made recently for both the Council of Pregadi and the Greater Council, it was enacted that all those who are or will be in these councils, when they made rules concerning this matter, can vote on bills in the councils, which they usually do, and they are not obliged to leave these councils due to kinship or for any other [reason].

Die III octubris [1286]

Item quod omnes illi qui sunt electi, tam de Consilio Rogatorum quam de Maiori Consilio, debeant ire circum in Consilio de XL ad unum ad unum, et illi qui habebunt maiorem partem dicti Consilii sint firmi et alii, qui non haberent maiorem partem consilii, debeant esse cassi. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

3 October 1286

Furthermore, that all those who are nominated both for the Council of Pregadi and the Greater Council are to be confirmed in the Council of Forty, one by one, and those who have a majority of the votes in that Council are confirmed, and the others, who do not have a majority in the Council, are to be rejected. And if there is a law to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.

Document 5: 5 October 1286

*A bill proposed by the Heads of the Forty that membership in the Greater Council should be based on hereditary right was rejected, while one in favor of continuation of the usual method of annual election, with no mention of heredity, proposed by Doge Giovanni Dandolo, passed.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Zaneta, fol. 17r, 87r (81r in pencil); Divenire frame 163; *Deliberazioni*, 3:156-57, n° 120; Romanin, 2:342-43; Maranini, 1:335n; Rösch, 1989, 172-73; Crescenzi, 1996, 323.

Die V octubris [1286]

Cum per Capita de XL poneretur pars una talis quod aliquis vel aliqui non possint esse de aliquo consilio si ipse vel pater aut progenitores sui a patre supra, unde traxerint originem ex parte patris, non fuerit vel fuerint de consiliis Veneciarum, salvo si aliquis qui non esset de conditione predicta eligeretur de aliquo consilio, non possit esse nisi primo captum fuerit per maiorem partem domini Ducis et Consiliariorum et maiorem partem Maioris Consilii, et alia pars erat domini Ducis de stare firmi ad morem consuetum, capta fuit pars de stare firmi. Et fuerunt X non sinceri, XLVIII de parte de XL, et LXXXII de stare firmi.

Benjamin G. Kohl

5 October 1286

A bill has been proposed by the Heads of the Forty that no one can be a member of any council, unless he himself or his father or his father's ancestors, whence he has derived his origins on his father's side, have been members of the councils of Venice. But if there is anyone who does not meet that condition, he cannot be elected to any council, unless he shall first be approved by the majority of the Doge and his Councilors, and the majority of the Greater Council. And the other bill proposed by the Lord Doge was to keep to the usual custom, and the bill to stand firm was passed. And there were ten abstentions, 48 votes for the Forty's bill, and 82 votes to stand firm.

Document 6: 17 October 1286

*Proposal of another method for approving members of the Greater Council: nomination by three electors, and approval by the Ducal Council, the Pregadi and the Forty, which failed, instead of the usual method of annual election which Doge Giovanni Dandolo backed, namely, to 'stare firmi,' which passed.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Zaneta, fol. 17v, 87v (81v pencil); Divenire frame 164; *Deliberazioni*, 3:157, n° 123. Cfr. Maranini, 1:338n and Cracco, 333-35.

Die XVII octubris [1286]

Cum poneretur pars super eligendis illis de Maiori Consilio que inferius continetur et pars alia de stare firmi, capta fuit pars de stare firmum. Pars autem que ponebatur erat hec: "Quod eligantur tres electores dupli per rodulum in Maiori Consilio et illi qui eligentur modo sint usque ad kallendas aprilis, et qui eligentur per eos de Maiori Consilio debeant approbari ad unum ad unum cum domino Duce et consiliariis in Consilio Rogatorum et XL per maiorem partem eorum qui ad hoc fuerint congregati; et post kallendas aprilis eligantur alii tres eodem modo et forma, qui sint usque ad festum sancti Michaelis; et quando dicti electores fecerint electionem de Maiori Consilio, et cetera".

17 October 1286

When a bill was proposed concerning those to be elected to the Greater Council, which is quoted below, and another bill was to stand firm, the bill to stand firm was adopted. The bill that was proposed, however, was this: "That there be named, from a slate of six, three nominators from the list of eligibles in the Greater Council, and those who are elected are to serve until the first of April [1287], and those who are nominated by them for membership in the Greater Council are to be voted on, one by one, by the Doge and his Council, by the Pregadi, and by the Forty, with a majority in each, which will have been assembled for this purpose. And after the first of April, let there be nominated three other nominators, by the same method, who are to serve until the feast of St. Michael [29 September 1287], and when the said nominators make nominations to the Greater Council, etc."

*Ed's note.* Ben left a hole between 1289 and 1296, on the eve of the law of the *Serrata* in 1297 regarding the board of four nominators, but upon closer inspection a few more or less slight revisions were occasionally attempted in the meantime on the occasion of renewals. On 27 September 1287 the usual proposal was set forth, with minor differences: first, that the board could make decisions "per omnes vel maiorem partem", probably reflecting rising levels of disagreement regarding inclusion and exclusion, even at this early date; second, that the four

would themselves be part of both the Greater Council and the Rogati, and, third, that failure to proceed with the nominations upon convocation would subject each member to a fine of 40 soldi di grossi (that is, 20 ducats, only recently minted). (See *Deliberazioni*, 3:184, n° 121, from Liber Zaneta). Renewal seems to have been taken for granted in 1288, except for the significant amendment that from that time onward nominations for the Rogati were to be approved by the Forty (ibid., 3:221, n° 144, 3 October). In 1289 the only mention of the board is the convocation of its members to the Ducal Palace (ibid., 3:245, n° 103, 22 September). From 1290-1292 no innovation was made, or none was recorded. In 1293, while past usage had always held that nominators could be elected from any office, it was now specified that they could be chosen also from among the ducal Councilors; when then in fact only three persons accepted the election, it was stated that three could decide the nominations as though the board had been complete (ibid., 3:349-50, nos. 111-12, 27 September). The text approved on Michaelmas in 1294 was practically the same as that passed in 1293 (ibid., 3:365, n° 56). On 2 October 1295 some tension stemming from the prolonged process seems to be revealed by the order given to the board that it was to turn over the names of those nominated to the Doge in a sealed envelope and to keep their decisions secret, under pain of fine; this was then repealed three weeks later, as the procedure seems to have dragged on longer than usual (ibid., 3:388, n° 82). 1296 produced no novelty, due perhaps to the on-going war with Genoa and to some kind of expectation of reform in early 1297.

#### Document 7: 3 November 1289

*Attempt made on the day after the death of doge Giovanni Dandolo to augment the number of persons present at the Greater Council by ordering persons active in many named offices to appear, along with those already members ex officio, precisely at the time of the formulation of amendments to the election capitulation or promissio and the election of the new Doge. The bill was voted down.*

*Ed's note.* One of Kohl's files included this document, which does not directly relate to the manner of electing members of the Greater Council, but Ben was right in seeing in it a reflection of discontent with the "governance" of the state under doge Giovanni Dandolo on the very day after his death.

ASVe, Maggiore Consiglio, *Deliberazioni*, reg. 5, Liber Zaneta, fol. 65r, (129r in pencil); Divenire frame 259; *Deliberazioni*, 3:248-49, n° 122.

#### Die III novembris [1289]

Item quod omnibus diebus et horis quibus fient Magna Consilia occasione correctionis capitularis seu electionis domini Ducis debeant venire ad ipsa Consilia Procuratores Sancti Marci et Procuratores Sancti Marci super commissariis, Patroni arsane, omnes officiales qui sunt de Consilio Maiori et Vicedomini et illi de Tarnaria et Vicedomini fontici, Salinarii maris et illi qui sunt super Frumento, Iusticiarii novi et veteres et illi qui sunt super Datio vini et illi qui sunt super Drappis ad aurum et illi qui sunt super Rivoalto et Extimatores auri et illi qui consueverunt clamari ad facta Romanie debeant venire et esse ad dicta Consilia et capere partem sicut alii de Maiori Consilio. Et si consilia vel capitularia sunt contra, sint revocata quantum in hoc.  
*nel margine sinistro:* Non fuit capta.

3 November 1289

[It is proposed] that on all days and times on which meetings of the Greater Council are held for the correction of the *promissio* or for the election of a [new] Doge, to these council meetings ought to come the Procurators of San Marco, both [those who administer the church] and those who administer legacies, the patrons of the Arsenal, all officials who are *ex officio* members of the Greater Council, the Visdomini, including those of Ternaria, and the Visdomini of the Fondaco [dei Tedeschi], Salineri del mare, the officials of the Grain office, the new and old Giustizieri, the officials of the wine tax, those over cloth-of-gold, those over the Rialto, the Assayers of gold, those summoned [to meetings] on matters in Romania, and all these ought to attend the said meetings of the Council; and they should vote, just as other members of the Greater Council. And if a law on the books contradicts this, let it be revoked in this respect.

] The bill was not passed.

Document 8: 6 March 1296

*A new attempt by the three Heads of the Quarantia to introduce a new but unspecified method for selecting members of the Maggior Consiglio is rejected, and the decision is made to stand by the traditional procedure ("stand firm").*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Pilosus, fol. 59r, (203r in pencil); Divenire frame 409; *Deliberazioni*, 3:396, n° 6.

Die VI marcii [1296]

Cum per Capita de XL poneretur pars una super electione fienda de Maiori Consilio et alia de stare firmi, capta fuit pars de stare firmi.

6 March 1296

When a bill was presented by the Heads of the Forty regarding the [procedure to be followed in the] pending election of the Greater Council, another bill was presented to stay with existing procedure, it was passed to stand firm.

*Ed.'s note.* Seeing this entry again after so many years I cannot refrain from adding a personal note here. In 1968, when Frederic Lane was also in the Archivio, doing the research for his article *The Enlargement of the Great Council of Venice*, he called me over at various times to look at his register and see just how haphazardly this one-liner, and others like it, of crucial importance for the constitutional history of Venice, were registered. Was this one the result of a heated debate, or had it been an attempt, made in the midst of handling the most diverse business of the day, as in this case, to pass a reform on the sly? Whatever, the upshot was formulated in three words: *de stare firmi*. A first memorable lesson *in loco* for a graduate student; a second was to learn that the version of this deliberation published by Maranini (1: 345n) was actually a fabrication, conceivably produced from memory (cfr. Lane, 1972, 271-72, n76).

Document 9: 28 February 1297

*Law on eligibility to sit in the Greater Council, determined by membership during the previous four years, after which was required the approval of at least twelve members of the Quarantia; others who were not members in those years, could be nominated by three electors. Considered the law of the Serrata, in the longer term a closing out, initially also a closing in. Actually the law inaugurated a process of reform. Reconfirmed on 11 September 1298.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Pilosus, fol. 67v, (211v in pencil); Divenire frame 426; *Deliberazioni*, 3:417-18, n° 104, 418n; Romanin, 2:343-44; Maranini, 1:346-47n; Rösch, 1989, 173-74. Cfr. Crescenzi, 1996, 327-29; Lane, 1971, 272, n81.

Die ultimo februarii [1296]

Capta fuit pars quod electio Maioris Consilii, que fiet amodo usque ad sanctum Michaellem et inde ad unum annum, fiat hoc modo, quod omnes illi qui fuerunt de Maiori Consilio a quatuor annis infra ponantur in XL ad unum ad unum et quicumque habuerit XII ballotas et abinde supra sit de Maiori Consilio usque ad festum sancti Michaelis et a festo sancti Michaelis usque ad unum annum, approbando eos ad unum ad unum in dicto festo sancti Michaelis per modum istum. Et si aliquis perderet Consilium pro exire extra terram, quando redibit possit requirere Capita de XL quod ponant partem inter XL utrum videatur quod debeat esse de Maiori Consilio vel non. Et Capita de XL teneantur ponere ipsam partem et, si habebit XII ballotas et inde supra, sit de Maiori Consilio. Et insuper eligantur tres electores qui possint eligere de aliis qui non fuissent de Maiori Consilio, sicut per dominum Ducem et suum Consilium erit eis impositum, ita quod illi quos ipsi elegerint ponantur inter XL ad unum ad unum et quicumque habebit XII ballotas et abinde supra sit de Maiori Consilio. Et predicti tres electores sint de Maiori Consilio usque ad festum sancti Michaelis. Et alii tres, qui eligentur in festo sancti Michaelis, debeant esse per unum annum et sint de Maiori Consilio. Et hec non possint revocari nisi per quinque Consiliarios et XXV de XL et duas partes Maioris Consilii.

Et in capite anni per quindecim dies ante ponatur ad Maius Consilium utrum videatur quod hec pars debeat amplius durare vel non, et sicut captum erit in Maiori Consilio sic debeat esse firmum. Et iniungatur in capitulari Consiliariorum quod ipsam partem debeant ponere ad Maius Consilium, ut predictum est, sub pena librarum decem pro quolibet et Advocatores Communis teneantur excutere dictam penam. Et non intelligantur per hoc quod debeant esse de Maiori Consilio illi qui sunt prohibiti per consilia ordinata. Et iniungatur Capitibus de XL quod, quando debuerint probari aliquem de Maiori Consilio, debeant id notificare inter XL per tres dies ante; et quod non facient approbationem aliquam de Maiori Consilio nisi fuerint congregati XXX de XL vel inde supra. Et hoc addatur in capitulari. Et si consilium vel capitulare est contra, sit revocatum. Pars de XL.

*Added at the bottom of the page:* Die XI septembris MCCLXXXVIII. Capta fuit pars quod consilium continens de Consilio Maiori fiendo sit deinceps sicut est modo.

28 February 1297

The law was passed that the election [of members of] the Greater Council, which is done usually up to Michaelmas [29 September] and thence for one year, should be done in this way: all those who have served [in the Greater Council] during the past four years should be proposed one by one to the Forty, and whoever shall have twelve or more votes shall be a member of the Greater Council until the Michaelmas [29 September] and thence for one year, approving them one by one at Michaelmas in that way. And if anyone shall lose [his place on] the [Greater] Council to travel outside Venice, when he returns, he can require the Heads of the Forty to propose a bill within the Forty to determine whether he ought to be a member of the Greater Council, or not. And the Heads of the Forty are required to hold this vote and if he shall have twelve or more votes, he is a member of the Greater Council.

And, in addition, let there be chosen three nominators, who can nominate any others, who have not been members of the Greater Council, whenever they will be called upon to do so by the Lord Doge and his Councilors, so that those whom the three will nominate will be proposed in the Forty, one by one, and whoever shall have twelve or more votes is a member of the Greater Council. And the aforesaid three nominators shall be members of the Greater Council until Michaelmas [29 September]. And the next three, who are chosen on Michaelmas are elected for one year and are members of the Greater Council. And this cannot be revoked except by [vote of] five of the [six ducal] Councilors, twenty-five of the Forty, and two-thirds of the Greater Council.

And fifteen days before the beginning of the new year [i.e. 1 March 1298], it should be proposed before the Greater Council whether this law should be renewed or not, and if it is passed in the Greater Council, it remains in force. And let it be added to the rulebook of the [ducal] Councilors that this same law must be placed before the Greater Council, as has already been stated, under penalty of ten *lire* for each offender, and the Avogadori di Comun are held to exact the said penalty. And it is not to be understood by this [law] that those who are prohibited from membership in the Greater Council by established law can now be members of the Greater Council. And it is ordered to the Heads of the Forty that if they themselves will wish to elect anyone to the Greater Council they should notify the other members of the Forty three days before the vote [is to be taken], and they cannot approve anyone for membership in the Greater Council unless at least thirty members are in attendance at the Forty. And this is to be added in the [Forty's] rulebook. And if a law or rule is contrary, let it be revoked. The law [came] from the Forty.

*Added at the bottom of the page:* 11 September 1298. A law was enacted that the statute governing the membership in the Greater Council is to be thereafter continued, as is proper.

Document 10: 17 October 1297

*Those approved by the Forty for membership on the Greater Council before or after the usual election of Michaelmas, 29 September, are understood to be members of the Greater Council just the same, a provision which ended the necessity of annual elections on a fixed date.*

ASV, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Pilosus, fol. 72r, (216r in pencil); Divenire frame 435; *Deliberazioni*, 3:430, n° 52.

Die XVII octubris [1297]

Capta fuit pars quod illi qui non fuerint approbati in die sancti Michaelis per

XL de isto Maiori Consilio, sed fuerunt per dictos XL approbati vel ante vel post ipsum festum, sint de Maiori Consilio, sicut si fuissent approbati in dicta die sancti Michaelis.

17 October 1297

The law was enacted that those who were not approved by the Forty to be members of the Greater Council on Michaelmas but were approved by the Forty before or after that feast are [members] the Greater Council, just as if they had been elected on Michaelmas.

Document 11: 15 December 1298

*No one may be elected to the Forty, unless he, or his father or grandfather or beyond had been a member of the Greater Council.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 5, Liber Pilosus, fol. 78v, (222v in pencil); Divenire frame 448; *Deliberazioni*, 3:446, n° 43; Rösch, 1989, 176. Cfr. Crescenzi, 1996, 325-27.

Die XV decembris [1298]

Capta fuit pars quod nullus de cetero possit eligi ad Consilium de XL qui per se vel per patrem aut avum et abinde supra non fuerit de Magno Consilio. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum.

15 December 1298

A law was enacted that henceforth no one can be elected to the Council of Forty who was not himself and through his father or grandfather, and above, been a member of the Great Council. And if there exists a law in contradiction to this, it is revoked.

Document 12: 22 March 1300

*New men to be considered for election to the Greater Council only with prior approval of a majority of the Forty, with a minimum of twenty members in attendance.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 8, Liber Magnus, fol. 6r (also in pencil); Divenire frame 11; also in Avogaria di Comun, reg. 20, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Magnus, fol. 3v, with the rubric “Quod non detur homo novus de Consilio”; Rösch, 1989, 176; Merores, 77.

Die XXII martii [1300]

Capta fuit pars quod iniungatur in capitulari consiliariorum quod de cetero non debeant dare aliquem hominem novum ad faciendum ipsum eligi de Maiori Consilio nisi primo captum fuerit per maiorem partem de XL, existentibus XL congregatis de viginti sursum. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

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22 March 1300

A law was enacted that it be recorded in the rulebook of the [ducal] Councilors that henceforth they must not propose any new man to be elected to the Greater Council unless that he shall have been approved by a majority vote of the Forty, with a minimum of twenty members assembled. And if there exists a law in contradiction to this, it is herewith revoked.

Document 13: 15 October 1300

*A law dated 15 October 1300, in two versions, stated that approval given by the Forty to members of the Greater Council after the usual Michaelmas election was as valid as that made before Michaelmas. The effect was to permit “rolling” election to the Greater Council.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 8, Liber Magnus, fol. 11r (same in pencil); Divenire frame 21; Avogaria di Comun, reg. 20, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Magnus, fol. 15r (17r pencil), with the rubric “Proba illorum de Maiori Consilio sit firma”.

Note that the first formulation is found in both registers; the second, of the same date and very similar in formulation, certainly of the same intent, is found only in the Avogaria register, complete with its rubric.

Die XV octubris [1300].

Capta fuit pars quod proba facta de illis de Maiori Consilio inter XL sit firma, sicut si facta fuisset ad terminum statutum per consilium ante sanctum Michaellem.

15 October 1300

A law was enacted to the effect that the vote taken in the Forty concerning approval of members of the Greater Council was valid, just as though that vote had been taken prior to Michaelmas, as established by current law.

Quod illi qui sunt approbati de Maiori Consilio sint firmi, et cetera.

Eodem millesimo [1300], die XV octubris.

Capta fuit pars quod illi qui approbati sunt de Maiori Consilio et illi qui approbabuntur pro isto anno sint firmi, sicut probati essent in festo sancti Michaelis. Et si consilium est contra et cetera.

A law was enacted to the effect that those who were approved as members of the Greater Council and those who will be approved for this year are valid [members] just as if they had been approved on Michaelmas.

Document 14: 20 September 1302

*Election to the Greater Council can now take place at other times than only on Michaelmas.*



ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 8, Liber Magnus, fol. 34v (35v in pencil); Divenire frame 70. Also in Avogaria di Comun, reg. 20, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Magnus, fol. 17r, complete with the rubric “Quod illi de Maiori Consilio possint approbari ante et post festum sancti Michaelis”.

Millesimo trecentesimo secundo, indictione prima, die XX [septembris].  
Vadit pars [...]. Item quod, sicut illi de Maiori Consilio debent approbari in festo sancti Michaelis, ita de cetero possint approbari ante et post festum dictum sancti Michaelis, sicut videbitur capitibus vel maiori parti qui erunt per tempora, et sint ita firmi, sicut essent si essent aprobat in ipso festo. Et si consilium vel capitulare est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc. Et fuit captum per V consiliarios et XXV de XL.

20 September 1302

A law was enacted that just as those who are of the Greater Council are to be confirmed on Michaelmas, henceforth they can be confirmed both before and after the said feast of St. Michael, at the discrecion of the Heads <of the Forty> or the majority <of them>, who will be in office at the time, and their <election> is valid, just as though it had taken place on the feast day itself. And if there is any law or rulebook to the contrary, it is herewith revoked, and the proposal was approved by 5 Councilors and 25 members of the Forty.

Document 15: 28 December 1307

*No one may be considered for election to the Greater Council for the first time (de novo), without prior approval of five ducal Councilors and twenty-five members of the Council of Forty.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 8, Liber Capricornus, fol. 60r (165r pencil); Divenire frame 329.

Die eodem [XXVIII decembris 1307]

Quod, sicut usque nunc illi qui dabantur ad eligendum de novo de Maiori Consilio dabantur per IIII Consiliarios et maiorem partem de XL, congregatis XX de XL vel inde supra, ita de cetero aliquis non possit dari ad eligendum de novo de Maiori Consilio, nisi prius captum fuerit per V Consiliarios, XXV de XL. Et si consilium vel capitulare est contra, sit revocatum.

28 December 1307

[It was passed] that, as up to now those who have been nominated to be elected to the Greater Council for the first time were to be nominated by four ducal Councilors and by a majority of the Forty, with at least twenty or more members of the Forty in attendance, so henceforth no one can be nominated for election to the Greater Council for the first time unless he shall have been already approved by five Councilors [and] twenty-five of the Forty. And if a previous law or rule is to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.

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Document 16: 7 September 1308

*No one nominated for any office that entitles him to membership ex officio in the Greater Council is automatically member of the Greater Council unless he is already eligible to be a member of the same.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Reg. 10, Liber Presbiter, fol. 1v (the same in pencil); Divenire frame 4; Besta, 220 (taken from ASVe, Avogaria di Comun, Capitolare, fol. 67r).

VII septembris [1308]

Captum fuit quod, si aliquis fuerit electus ad aliquod officium per quod esset de Maiori Consilio, non sit propter hoc de Maiori Consilio nisi esset talis qui eligi possit de Maiori Consilio. Et hec <pars> non possit revocari nisi per quinque Consiliarios, tria capita de XL, XXX de XL et duas partes Maioris Consilii. Et si consilium et cetera.

7 September 1308

It was decided that if anyone be elected to any office for which he is [member *ex officio*] of the Greater Council, that person is not *ipso facto* a member of the Greater Council unless he is one who is eligible to [be a member of] the Greater Council. And this law cannot be overturned except by five Councilors, the three Heads of the Forty, thirty of the Forty, and two-thirds of the Greater Council. And if any law, etc.

Document 17: 22 March 1310

*Henceforth no one may be considered for election to the Greater Council for the first time (de novo) without prior approval of five ducal Councilors, thirty members of the Forty and a simple majority of the Greater Council, a restrictive amendment to the deliberation of 28 December 1307 (above, doc. 15).*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 10, Liber Presbiter, fol. 15v; Divenire frame 32.

Die XXII [marcii 1310]

Sicut sit quoddam consilium continens inter cetera quod aliquis non possit dari ad eligendum de novo de Maiori Consilio nisi prius captum fuerit per V Consiliarios, XXV de XL, capta fuit pars quod addatur dicto consilio quod ubi dicitur per XXV de XL, dicatur per XXX de XL et per maiorem partem Maioris Consilii. Et hoc non intelligatur de illis de quibus consultum est hucusque. Et hec pars non possit revocari nisi per V consiliarios, tria Capita de XL, XXX de XL et tres partes Maioris Consilii.

22 March 1310

Since there is a law which reads, among other things, that no one may be nominated for the first time as member of the Greater Council unless previously approved by five Councilors [and] 25 members of the Forty, it was herewith decided to amend that law as follows: where it says “25 of

the Forty” it should read “30 of the Forty and a majority of the Greater Council”. Persons previously approved are not understood under this provision. The present provision may not be revoked except by five Councilors, the three Heads of the Forty, thirty of the Forty, and three-quarters of the Greater Council.

Document 18: 17 June 1310

*Law following the Tiepolo-Querini conspiracy which provides for different kinds of penalties for nobles and non-nobles. It foresaw exile for nobles, who are or can be members of the Greater Council (to be sent ad confinem if they agreed, or be exiled and considered rebels if not), and non-nobles who cannot be members, whose crime was to be judged by the Doge with “mercy”.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 10, Liber Presbiter, fol. 20v; Divenire frame 42; *Consiglio dei Dieci*, 1:243-24; the essential part in Ruggiero, 195n11.

Contra Baiamontem proditorem et sequaces eius

Die XVII iunii [1310]

[...] Primo quod ipse Baiamons et predicti sui sequaces et participes debeant de presenti exire Venecias et districtum et ipse Baiamons debeat ire et stare per quatuor annos completos ad confines et ad mandata domini ducis in partibus Slavonie ultra Iadram, exceptis terris et locis nostris et terris nostrorum inimicorum. Reliqui vero nobiles, qui erant de Maiori <Consilio> vel esse poterant, debeant ire et stare ad confines [...]. Ceteri vero, qui non erant de Maiori <Consilio> nec esse poterant, si venerint ad mercedem domini ducis, dominus dux faciet eis misericordiam, sicut conveniet, ad largum modum. [...]

Against the traitor Baiamonte and his followers

17 June 1310

[...] First, that Baiamonte [Tiepolo] himself and his followers and adherents must at present leave Venice and the Dogado, and that Baiamonte himself must go and remain “ad confines” for four whole years beyond our borders and, on orders from the Lord Doge, in the regions of Slavonia, beyond Zara, but not in our own lands and territories nor in those of our enemies. Other nobles, members of the Greater Council or who could be such, should be exiled “ad confines” [...]. Indeed, others, who were not nor could not be members of the Greater Council, if they will have come before the Lord Doge, let the Lord Doge bestow mercy on them broadly, as it would be proper to grant.

*Ed.'s note.* Ben Kohl introduced this law that came out of the Tiepolo-Querini conspiracy in 1310, even though not strictly a law concerning the *Serrata*, because it so neatly distinguished between noble adherents of the conspiracy, to be sent into exile, and non-noble conspirators who were to be treated with “mercy”. The *Serrata* reform was not yet complete, but the law defined the former as men who actually were members of the Greater Council or who potentially could still be approved for membership, whereas the latter were people who were not members nor could they be.

In the years around that date, it is worth looking at the situation across the Adriatic in Istria and in the Stato da Mar, which reflected and even anticipated Venice’s reform *in fieri*, namely, the closing of its major deliberative organ. Angelo Ventura noted that the statutes approved in 1307

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in Pirano, which had become part of the Venetian state in 1283, already defined membership in the local Great Council as hereditary, but, interestingly enough, on the part either of the father or of the mother: no one could become a member “si hinc retro avus tam ex parte patris quam ex parte matris vel pater eius non extiterit de consilio” (Ventura, 117). In another case it is the situation in Venice that is reflected in an accord with the most important city-colony in Dalmatia. In 1313 it was stated in the *Pacta* negotiated with Zara that the Zaratini could elect as rector or *comes* a Venetian nobleman, one who already sat on the Greater Council, but that he would have to be approved by the Doge and the commune, who would designate him to the post: “Iadratini elligere debeant unum comitem de nobilibus Venetiarum de civitate Rivoalti, qui sit de Maiori Consilio Venetiarum, quem dominus dux et comune Venetiarum confirmare et dare teneantur in comitem ipsis Jadratinis”. Such formulations, which imposed the parallel condition – nobility and membership in the Greater Council – were still a novelty. (Mueller, 1992, 54-55; see also the contemporary redaction of a list of Venetian *comites* of Zara, 1313-1345, in Cessi and Bennato, 279.)

Document 19: 29 September 1311

*No one may be elected to the Pregadi unless he already is or was a member of the Greater Council.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Reg. 10, Liber Presbiter, fol. 55r (56r pencil); Divenire frame 111.

Die penultime septembris [1311]

Quod de cetero non possit eligi aliquis de Consilio Rogatorum nisi sit vel fuerit de Maiori Consilio.

29 September 1311.

That no one may henceforth be elected to the Council of the Rogati unless he is or has been [a member] of the Greater Council.

Document 20: 30 November 1311.

*Reform of the procedures for election to the Greater Council formulated with the aim of prohibiting contact, oral or written, with outsiders. Included, almost as an afterthought, was the requirement that candidates be at least eighteen years of age.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 10, Liber Presbiter, fol. 61r (also in pencil); Divenire frame 121.

Die ultimo [novembris, 1311]

Cum de consuetudine observetur quod, facta electione electorum qui debent eligere de Maiori Consilio, non statim, sed per alicuius temporis spacium dominus dux et sui Consiliarii mandant ipsis electoribus quod faciant electionem, pro qua temporis dillactione possent accidere, et iam advenerunt

multa inconueniencia, ut satis manifestum est, capta fuit pars quod ad hoc ut talia inconueniencia evite<n>tur, quod addatur in capitulari consiliariorum presentium et futurorum quod, antequam fiat electio electorum qui debent eligere de Maiori Consilio, ipsi Consilarii debeant determinare quot ipsi electores debeant eligere de Maiori Consilio et faciant dici in preposta, antequam fiat electio. Et facta electione electorum, statim habeantur qui fuerint electi secundum consuetudinem electorum qui debent eligere de Rogatis. Qui electores congregati ponantur in una camera palatii, de qua non exeant nisi primo fecerint electionem eis commissam, nec possit aliquis alicui illorum electorum loqui nec ab aliquo recipere aliquod scriptum sub pena librarum X tam illi qui alicui illorum loqueretur vel scriptum daret quam alicui electorum qui loqueretur alicui vel scriptum reciperet donec electio sua fuerit completa et data in manibus domini Ducis, quam penam Advocatores Communis excutere teneantur et habeant talem partem qualem habent de aliis penis, et accusator, si per eius accusationem veritas habeatur, habeat medium pene et tenebitur de credentia. Et assignata electione in manibus domini Ducis, sit expiratum eorum officium. Et possint accipi de omni loco, non perdendo propterea sua officia. Et non possit per dictos electores eligi aliquis qui sit minor decem et octo annorum. Et hic ordo observetur quociens domino et consiliariis videbitur fieri facere de Maiori Consilio. Et si consilium et cetera.

30 November 1311.

Since it has been observed in the past that, following selection of the nominators who are to nominate [members] to the Greater Council, the Lord Doge and his Councilors did not order them immediately to make the nominations but allowed a space of some time to pass, which results in great inconveniences as is very manifest, it has thus been determined regarding this matter, in order that such inconveniences be eliminated, that it be added to the rulebook of the Councilors, present and future, that before the selection of the electors who are to make nomination to the Greater Council, the ducal Councilors must determine how many men the electors are to nominate to the Greater Council, and let this be announced before the election is held. And when the election of the electors is held, they should be elected according to the procedure of electors who choose those nominated for the Pregadi, according to which the nominators are assembled and placed in a chamber of the [Ducal] Palace which they cannot leave until they have completed the nominations assigned to them. Nor can anyone speak with any of those electors nor can they receive a written note from anyone under pain of fine of ten *lire*, which is also applied to any of the electors who would speak with anyone or would receive a written note, until the nominations are completed and the list given into the hands of the Lord Doge. And the Avogadori di Comun are bound to impose this penalty and they are to receive the same portion as they would receive from other fines. And if the truth is had by an accusation, the accuser should receive one half of the fine, and it will be kept secret. When the results of the nominations are consigned into the hands of the Lord Doge, their [the nominators'] duties are completed. And the electors can be chosen from any position without their losing their current office as a result. And no one under eighteen years of age can be nominated to the [Greater] Council by the said electors. And this rule shall be observed as long as the Lord Doge and his Councilors deem this to be the [proper] method for electing members of the Greater Council. And if any law, etc.

*Ed.'s note:* That fixing the age limit was truly important was indicated in the Chancery by a sign on the parchment folio preceding the frase "Et non possit per dictos electores eligi aliquis qui sit minor decem et octo annorum".

Benjamin G. Kohl

Document 21: 29 June 1315

*The requirement for first-time election (de novo) to the Greater Council of prior approval by five of the ducal Councilors, thirty of the Forty, and a simple majority of the Greater Council is amended to read two-thirds of the Greater Council. This is a further restriction to the law already amended on 22 March 1310 (see above, doc. 17).*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 12, Liber Clericus civicus, fol. 7v (55v pencil); Divenire frame 110.

[*rubric at the beginning of the register:*] De Consilio Maiori nemo eligi possit nisi prius captum erit per V Consiliarios et XXX de Quadraginta et per duas partes Maioris Consilii eiusdem.

[Die penultima iunii, 1315]

Item cum sit quoddam consilium continens quod aliquis non possit dari eligendus de novo de Maiori Consilio nisi captum fuerit prius per V consiliarios et XXX de Quadraginta et per maiorem partem Maioris Consilii, capta fuit pars quod addatur ipsi parti hoc modo quod ubi dicitur per maiorem partem Maioris Consilii, dicatur per duas partes Maioris Consilii. Et quod non possit hoc revocari nisi per modum contentum in dicto consilio.

*Rubric:* No one may be elected to the Greater Council except with prior approval of five of the Councilors, thirty of Forty, and two-thirds of the Greater Council itself.

29 June 1315

Item since there is a certain law stating that no one can be granted the right of election for the first time (*de novo*) to the Greater Council without the prior approval of five of the Councilors, thirty of the Forty, and the majority of Greater Council, a law has been enacted concerning this statute as follows: where it now reads “by majority of the Greater Council”, it will now read “by two-thirds of the Greater Council”. And this cannot be revoked except by the procedure contained in the said law.

Document 22: 19 July 1315

*Rule that the names of those who swore, with collaboration of father, brother and other kin, that they were eighteen and eligible to be elected to the Greater Council, are to be inscribed in a book kept by the Forty, which will be made available to those charged with making nominations to the Greater Council. (For the ruling of 30 November 1311 regarding minimum age, see above, doc. 20.)*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 12, Liber Clericus civicus, fol. 10r (58r in pencil); Divenire frame 115; Meroces, 78; Rösch, 1989, 178; Crescenzi, 1996, 333n.

Die XVIII iulii [1315]

Item cum electores qui fiunt et eliguntur ad eligendum de Maiori Consilio,

incontinenti quando sunt electi, detinentur et ponuntur in camera, ne aliquis possit eis loqui, et illi qui approbati sunt postea remanent ad eligendum, non possunt tam subito habere in memoria illos quos debent eligere, de quo Comune nostrum defectum patitur, eo quod multociens propter oblivionem aliorum meliores remanent et non eliguntur, capta fuit pars quod de cetero omnes illi qui possunt eligi de Maiori Consilio debeant venire ad presbiteros de XL et facere se scribi, afidantes quod sint annorum XVIII iuxta formam consilii capti in millesimo III<sup>C</sup>XI, mense novembris, infra quod possint eligi, et hoc etiam possit adimpleri per patres, fratres et consanguineos et alios suos propinquos. Et isti sic scripti legantur in presentia ipsorum electorum et nichilominus dimittatur sibi quaternus in quo fuerint scripti, antequam incipiant suas electiones facere, ad hoc ut ipsi electores sint previsi de illis qui possunt eligi et possint meliores facere electiones. Et si consilium vel capitulare est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

19 July 1315

Item since the nominators, selected to nominate those who are to be members of the Greater Council, immediately, as soon as they are chosen, are to be detained and sent to a chamber, so that no one is able to speak with them, and let those who have been approved remain afterwards to be elected, but the nominators cannot so quickly recall those whom they ought to chose, as a result of which our commune suffers harm, because many times due to the forgetfulness of others, the best candidates are left out and not chosen, thus a law was enacted that henceforth all who are eligible for election to the Greater Council ought to come before the priest [-notaries] of the Forty and have themselves inscribed, swearing that they are eighteen years of age, as contained in the law passed in 1311 in November, by which they can be elected [to the Greater Council] and have this affirmed by fathers, brothers, blood relatives and other kin. And the names of those thus inscribed are to be read in the presence of the same said nominators, and in any case the register in which the names will have been inscribed is to be handed to them before they will begin to make their nominations, whereby the said electors will be provided with the names of those who can be elected, so that they can hold better elections. And if a previous law or rule is to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.

Document 23: 8 January 1317 (1316 *more veneto*)

*Those who have fraudulently had themselves approved for membership in the Greater Council are to be removed subject to a penalty of 300 lire, after investigation by the Avogadori di Comun.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, Reg. 12, Liber Clericus civicus, fol. 73v (121v in pencil); Divenire frame 242; Merores, 78; Rösch, 1989, 179; Crescenzi, 1996, 333.

Die VIII ianuarii [1316, *more veneto*]

Cum nobilis vir ser Thomas Dandulo existens Caput de XL posuerit partem in XL et in Maiori Consilio quod omnes illi qui possunt eligi de Maiori Consilio debeant venire ad presbiteros de XL et facere se scribi et plures veniant ad faciendum se scribi qui non possunt eligi, capta fuit pars quod, si de cetero aliquis faciet se scribi qui non possit eligi de Maiori Consilio, cadat in penam librarum CCC, et si quis fecisset se scribi actenus seu si quis factus esset olim

per aliquod tempus de Maiori Consilio qui eligi non potuisset, exceptis illis qui per gratiam potuerunt eligi, debeat infra unum mensem postquam hec pars capta fuerit fecisse se cancellari sub pena predicta librarum CCC. Et qui accusabunt aliquem, si per eius accusationem veritas habebitur, habeant quartum dicte pene et teneantur de credentia. Et iniungatur in capitulari Advocatorum Communis quod teneantur predicta inquirere diligenter et placitare contrafacientes, sicut placitant alias offensas Communis, et excutere penas a contrafacientibus et habeant talem partem qualem habent de aliis rebus quas placitant. De quibus penis nec de parte ipsarum non possit fieri gratia nec remissio seu ulla provisio nisi per V Consiliarios, XXX de XL et duas partes Maioris Consilii. Et si consilium et cetera.

8 January 1317

When Tommaso Dandolo was a Head of the Forty, he proposed a bill in the Forty and in the Greater Council that all who can be elected to the Greater Council should come before the priest-notaries of the Forty and have themselves enrolled, [but] many came to have themselves enrolled who cannot be elected, so a law was herewith enacted that henceforth, if anyone would have himself enrolled who cannot be a member of the Greater Council, he should be fined 300 *lire*; and if anyone had had himself enrolled thus far, or anyone was [actually] enrolled in the Greater Council in the past who cannot be elected to the Greater Council, except those who could be elected by special exception (*per gratiam*), they must, within one month after the enactment this law, have themselves stricken from the list of enrolled under the aforesaid penalty of 300 *lire*. And those who will accuse someone, if by their accusation the truth will be had, will have a quarter of the said fine and it will be kept secret. And it is ordered in the rulebook of the Avogadori di Comun that they are bound to investigate the aforesaid and bring suit against wrongdoers, just as they bring suit in other offenses against the Commune, and to exact the fines from the wrongdoers and have the same cut [of the fines] as they have in other cases that they plead. And no pardon or remission or other provision concerning these penalties, in whole or in part, can be granted except by vote of five Councilors, thirty of the Forty, and two-thirds of the Greater Council. And if a law, etc.

Document 24: 29 September 1319

*No one may serve as nominator for election to the Council of the Pregadi (or Senate) except those who are members of the Greater Council.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 15, Liber Fronesis, fol. 25v (also in pencil); Divenire frame 52; Avogaria di Comun, reg. 21, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Neptunus, fol. 99v (86v in pencil); the Avogaria version ends with the words “qui sit in Consilio”. Kohl digitalization image 176, with the following rubric, which is a mere copy of the first lines of the deliberation: “Quod isti electores qui nunc eligentur statim cum electi fuerint ponantur in camera et si aliquis eligetur qui non esset ad consilium”. The edition in Merores, 79, contains the erroneous interpolation of a non-existent reference to the Rogati: “Quod isti electores rogatorum qui nunc eligentur...”.

Die penultimo septembris [1319]

Quod isti electores qui nunc eligentur statim cum electi fuerint ponantur in camera, et si aliquis eligetur qui non esset ad Consilium, statim dicatur



electoribus quod eligant unum alium qui sit in Consilio. Et non exeant electores nisi facta electione de omnibus quatuor, et postquam sic electi fuerint et positi in camera secundum usum, approbentur, sicut est solitum. Et si consilium est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc.

29 September 1319

That the same electors who are now to be elected, as soon as they will have been elected are to be placed in a chamber, and if anyone is elected who is not a member of the [Greater] Council, the electors are to be informed immediately so that they can elect another who is a member of the Council; and the electors may not leave until all four have been chosen and have been accomodated in the chamber according to standing practice and approved in the usual manner. And if there is any law that contradicts this, it is herewith revoked.

Document 25: 25 November 1319

*In order to give “teeth” to the law of 8 January 1316 (above, doc. 23) which instituted the fine of 300 lire for persons making application for membership in the Greater Council without having the prerequisites, the Avogadori di Comun are charged with examining all those who register to that end with the Forty. The Avogadori have one month to examine persons registered up to that point; from the present law onward, the notary of the Forty has two days to report to the Avogadori persons having registered with the Forty, after which the Avogadori have 15 days (misread as “40” by Merores, 79) to examine the case or cases.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 15, Liber Fronesis, fol. 27v (also in pencil); Divenire frame 56; Avogaria di Comun, Reg. 21, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Neptunus, fol. 104v (91v in pencil); Kohl digitalization image 183, with this rubric: “Quod Advocatores Communis teneantur examinare omnes illos qui se scribi fecerunt ad Quarantiam pro esse de Maiori Consilio”.

Die XXV novembris [MCCCXVIII]

Cum sit unum consilium quod illi qui facerent se scribi ad Quarantiam pro esse de Maiori Consilio, si inveniatur quod esse non possint, incurrant penam librarum III<sup>C</sup>, quam Advocatores debeant exigere, et in ipso consilio non dicatur quod aliqui examinent eos et propterea non timeatur pena, postquam non inquiritur, capta fuit pars quod committatur Advocatoribus Communis quod, infra unum mensem postquam hec pars capta fuerit debeant videre et sibi legi facere omnes illos qui hucusque se scribi fecerunt ad Quarantiam pro possendo esse de Maiori Consilio. Et si eis vel maiori parti eorum videbitur dubium de aliquo ibi scripto, teneantur per sacramentum diligenter inquirere et examinare infra dictum mensem veritatem, si ille de quo dubitaverint poterit esse de Maiori Consilio vel non. Et sicut invenerint ita faciant secundum quod ad suum officium viderint pertinere secundum ordines terre. Et de cetero omnes illos qui facient se scribi debeat et teneatur notarius de XL dare in scriptis Advocatoribus Communis ipso die quo scripti erunt vel altera. Et Advocatores faciant examinationem et inquisitionem infra XV dies postquam

sibi datus fuerit in scriptis per modum superius annotatum. Et si consilium vel capitulare et cetera.

25 November 1319

Since there is a law regarding those having themselves inscribed with the Forty in order to be members of the Greater Council, if it is found that [some] cannot be members of the Great Council, they incur a penalty of 300 *lire* which the Avogadori di Comun must exact, and in the same law it is not stated that there be anyone who ought to examine them, on account of which [the wrongdoer] does not fear the penalty because there is no inquiry, a law was therefore enacted that committed the Avogadori di Comun, within one month after this law was passed, to view and read for themselves the names of all those who to that point had had themselves enrolled with the Forty in order to be members of the Greater Council. And if it seems to them or a majority of them that there exists any doubt concerning a person inscribed there, they are bound – within one month – under oath to inquire diligently and examine the truth, if he concerning whom they had doubts can be of the Greater Council or not. And whatever will be discovered, they should act according to what they will view as pertaining to their office according to the laws of Venice. And henceforth all those who have themselves inscribed by the notaries of the Forty ought and are required to give their names in writing to the Avogadori di Comun, on that same day or the next. And the Avogadori di Comun are obliged to make inquiry and examinations within fifteen days after they will have been given the list of names, as outlined in the above procedure. And if a law or rule, etc.

Document 26: 25 November 1319

*The creation of the Barbarella and other ways of entering the Greater Council, prior to the age of 25, on 4th December, the feast of St. Barbara, via a procedure of the chance pairing of a golden ball with a ballot bearing the name of an eligible person. Provision is also made for the losers: over the following two years losers who reached the age of 25 were automatically to be members of the Greater Council.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 15, Liber Fronesis, fol. 28r (98r in pencil); Divenire frames 56-57; Avogaria di Comun, reg. 21, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Neptunus, fol. 104v-05r (91v-92r in pencil); Kohl digitalization images 183-84, rubric on fol. 91v: “Modus eligendus de Maiori Consilio secundum partem captam ut superius continetur”; Besta, 221 (from ASVe, Avogaria di Comun, Capitolare, fol. 81r); Merore, 79-80; Crescenzi, 1996, 335. Cfr. Romanin 2:348-49.

Die XXV novembris [1319]

Quia modus qui est de eligendis electoribus qui eligunt de Maiori Consilio non videtur bene conveniens nec honestus propter subiectiones multas et ineptas quas homines faciunt, ut sint electi, nec sepe fiat factum ita convenienter ut deberet, capta fuit pars, ut hoc factum melius et honestius fiat, ponantur in uno capello tot ballote quot erunt illi qui scripti fuerint ad Quarantiam quod possunt elligi de Maiori Consilio, inter quas ballotas sint tot ballote deaurate quot erunt illi qui dabuntur eligi de Maiori Consilio. Et vocetur unus puer XII annorum vel inde infra qui accipiat ballotas de capello ad unam ad unam pro omnibus qui scripti erunt in libro Quarantie, incipiendo a primo et sic sequendo per ordinem, legendo nomen cuiuslibet quando accipietur pro

ipso ballota. Et quicumque habuerit ballotam deauratam habeatur pro electo et illi qui sic electi erunt approbabitur inter XL secundum usum illorum qui eliguntur per electores. Et ista electio fieri debeat, ita quod sit facta infra quartum diem intrante mense decembris. Et hic ordo servari debeat de cetero singulis annis et tantum plus quod omni anno ab isto inantea prohibeantur texere inter scriptos pro quo debeat accipi primo ballota et pro quo secundo et sic de aliis, quia de istis qui modo scripti sunt non potest esse fraus. Et quia aliqui possent etiam nimis induciare per hanc viam de Maiori Consilio, qui non possent habere ballotam deauratam, volumus quod nichilominus a duobus annis in antea, capta ista parte, quotiens aliquis habuerit XXV annos completos, probando hoc sufficienter coram domino duce, Consiliariis et Capitibus de XL, ita quod eis vel maiori parti eorum videatur sufficienter probatum, habeatur pro electo et sit de Maiori Consilio, facta prius probatione de eo inter XL, sicut solitum est fieri de aliis qui eliguntur. Verum in hoc quantum de favore XXV annorum non intelligatur de illis quibus concessum esset de gratia vel concederetur quod possent eligi de Maiori Consilio. Et non possit hec pars revocari nisi per V Consiliarios, XXV de XL et duas partes Maioris Consilii. Et si consilium vel capitulare et cetera. Et revocatum est consilium dicens quod fiant electores.

Et fuerunt inter XL de parte: I de non, III non sinceri, XXV de sic; et in Maiori Consilio: LX non sinceri, de non LXXXIII, de sic V<sup>c</sup>VI.

25 November 1319

Since the method of electing the nominators who choose members of the Greater Council does not seem very proper nor honorable because of the many and inappropriate false representations men made so that they can be elected, nor is it always done as properly as it should be, a law has been enacted so that this procedure will be better and more honest: let there be placed in an urn as many ballots as those whose names have been registered by the Forty that they can be nominated to the Greater Council, and among these ballots let there be as many golden balls as there will be those who are to be admitted to the Greater Council. And let there be selected a boy of twelve years of age or less who will draw the ballots with the names one by one for all those who will have been registered in the book of the Forty, beginning with the first and following thus in order, reading the name of each whose ballot has been drawn, and whoever will have [drawn] the golden ballot is designated as chosen and those who are thus chosen will be approved in the [Council of] Forty, according to the procedure that is observed for those who are chosen by the nominators, and the election is to be carried out in time, so that it is accomplished by the fourth day of December. And this procedure is to be observed henceforth every year, and moreover every year from now on dice should be cast among those registered [in the book of the Forty] to determine for whom the first ballot ought to be drawn, for whom the second, and so on for the others so that there can be no fraud among those registered. And because there are some who cannot be inducted in this manner into the Greater Council, who will not be able to draw the golden ballot, we wish that nevertheless for two years after passage of this law, any of those who will have completed twenty-five years of age, proving this sufficiently before the Lord Doge, his Councilors, and the Heads of the Forty, in such manner that it will seem sufficiently proved to them or a majority of them, this man will be considered as elected and a member of the Greater Council, having first been approved by the Forty, just as it is customary to have done for others who are elected. Indeed this procedure favoring those who reach the age of twenty-five is not to be understood to apply to those who are conceded election *de gratia* nor is it to be conceded that these can be elected to the Greater Council. And this law cannot be revoked except by [vote of] five Councilors, twenty-five of the Forty, and two-thirds of the Greater Council. And if there is a law or rule to the contrary, etc. And the [clause of

the] law regarding the election of nominators is herewith revoked.

It was voted in the Forty: one nay, three not certain, 25 yeas, and in the Greater Council: 60 not certain, 83 nays, and 506 yeas.

*Ed.'s note.* On the basis of later practice, inscription of candidates in the registers of the Avogaria involved youths of age 18, or in any case men younger than the canonical age of 25, whose age had been proved by their fathers or, in their absence, by other close relatives. Very likely the fathers were already members of the Greater Council, and to that extent the hereditary principle made explicit in 1323 with the words “de suis” was already taken for granted in the context of the Barbarella. Cfr. Crescenzi, 1996, 416.

#### Document 27: 14 February 1320

*Election of those to be elected for the first time (de novo) to the Greater Council to be held at the same session as election to rectors of the Twelve Regimes, that is, of most of the important overseas posts.*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 15, Liber Fronesis, fol. 31v (also in pencil); Divenire frame 64; Avogaria di Comun, reg. 21, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Liber Neptunus, fol. 112r (99r in pencil); Kohl digitalization image 196.

Die XIII februarii [1319].

Quia dignum et congruum est quod gratia fienda alicui quod possit de novo elligi de Maiori Consilio ponatur et fiat in Maiori Consilio quod sit bene congregatum, cum talis et tanta gratia non sit ponenda cum parvo numero, eo quod melius discerni poterit in maiori numero si facienda erit vel non, capta fuit pars quod de cetero omnis talis gratia, postquam completa erit in XL, debeat poni in primo Maiori Consilio in quo fiet aliqua electio de XII regiminibus et sic ulterius servetur, si opus fuerit, in aliis maioribus consiliis que proxime fient de XII regiminibus, si non caperetur in primo, ita quod non possit poni ullo modo nisi in consilio XII electionum, et dicatur in aliquo consilio tribus diebus ante de dicta gratia, sicut est consuetum fieri de dictis regiminibus. Et non preiudicat ipsis graciis dicta de causa terminus quatuor mensium, cum forte sic cito non posset occurrere consilium dictarum electionum. Et si consilium et cetera.

14 February 1320

Because it is worthy and proper that permissions (*gratie*) be granted to anyone who can be elected for the first time (*de novo*) to the Greater Council, proposed and enacted in the Greater Council that it be properly assembled since such important permissions should not be proposed with a small number present, since it is much better that a large number of voters should decide whether the permission ought to be granted or not, a law has been enacted that henceforth all such permissions after they will have been approved in the Forty, must be proposed at the first [meeting of the] Greater Council in which there is to be an election to [one of] the Twelve Regimes, and let it be further observed, if that be necessary, in case the permission is not granted in the first meeting, that it be repropoed in successive [meetings of the] Greater Council when it will hold elections to the Twelve Regimes. Thus, it cannot be proposed in any manner except at a meeting of the Council held for the election of the Twelve [Regimes]. The item should be announced three

days before that meeting held for said permission, just as it is customary to do for the said Twelve Regimes. The vote for said permissions cannot be held before a term of four months, since the law regarding such elections states strongly that they cannot take place any sooner. And if any law, etc.

Document 28: 27 September 1323

*Law that makes explicit the hereditary principle that those elected to the Greater Council have to have ancestors (“pro suis”) who were members of the Greater Council and have reached 25 years of age. (Note that even here there is no explicit formulation equating the status of “nobilis vir”, a label nowhere mentioned in these laws, with membership in the Greater Council, although in practice that was the case).*

ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 15, Fronesis, fol. 118r-v (119r-v in pencil); Divenire frames 239-40; Avogaria di Comun, reg. 21, Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio, Neptunus, fol. 226r (213r in pencil), Kohl digitalization image 428; Merores, 80; Rösch, 1989, 179n; Crescenzi, 1996, 336-37. Cfr. Lane, 1973, 113-14.

Die XXVII septembris [1323]

Cum pars capta de illis qui completis XXV annis possunt esse de Maiori Consilio contineat inter cetera quod ipsi debeant probare sufficienter de etate predicta coram domino duce, Consiliariis et Capitibus de XL et nichil dicat ipsa pars quod ostendant si pro patre vel avo possint esse de Consilio, quod portat defectum, nec est minus necessarium et utile istud scire quam annos, sed multo plus, capta fuit pars quod, sicut dicta examinacio annorum fit coram domino duce, Consiliariis et Capitibus de XL, ita coram eis fieri debeat examinacio et probacio si illi qui petunt possunt esse pro suis de Consilio secundum ordines terre. Que tamen probacio non recipiatur nisi scripti fuerint prius ante ipsam examinacionem in libro Quarantie secundum formam consilii de illis qui se debent facere scribi quantum ad penam librarum CCC et sint presentes dicte examinacioni duo ad minus ex Advocatoribus Comunis, ut, si videbitur eis aliqua obscuritas, quod ipsi possint et teneantur facere suum officium secundum formam sui capitularis et consilii antedicti, addendo quod probacio que fieri debeat, per illos qui dicent posse esse de Consilio fiat per quaternos comunis, et alia probacio nec per breviarum nec per aliam scripturam vel alio modo non recipiatur, intelligendo quando quaterni invenirentur de tempore quod requireretur ad probacionem, et si quaterni de ipso tempore non invenirentur, tunc, si petentes ostendunt ultra ipsum tempus talem probacionem, que videatur domino, Consiliariis et Capitibus sufficiens et plena, expediantur secundum formam huius partis, salvo et reservato semper officio Advocatorum Comunis, ut dictum est supra, dummodo talis probacio non fiat per breviarum vel alias scripturas alibi introductas, que in hoc facto non valeant nec sibi prosint aliquid. Et si accideret quod aliquis minor XXV annis haberet ballotam auream, non fiat de eo approbacio inter XL nisi prius fecerit et ostenderit, quomodo possit esse de Consilio per modum dictum

superius de illis de XXV annis et cum condicionibus antedictis. Et si consilium vel capitulare est contra, sit revocatum quantum in hoc. Et hec addantur in capitulari Consiliariorum, Capitum de XL et Avocatorum Comunis.

*Ed.'s note:* The Avogaria copy regarding passage of the bill reads: “capta fuit pars inter XL et non in Maiori Consilio quod, sicut...”; surprisingly the scribe failed to update the entry. The date of the entry was added later in another, contemporary, hand: “Captum die 27 septembris”, after cancellation of the wrong date, actually that of document no. 26: “in 1319 mensis novembris, die 25”. Perhaps there was some confusion in the Chancery in making the copies of these important laws.

27 September 1323

Since the law stating that those who have completed twenty-five years of age can be members of the Greater Council specifies, among other things, that these persons have to prove their age sufficiently before the Lord Doge, the [ducal] Councilors and the Heads of the Forty, but says nothing about demonstrating their right to be members through the [previous] membership in the Greater Council of their father or grandfather, which is a failing since it is not less necessary and useful to know that fact than the age, but much more, it was herewith enacted that, just as the proof of age be made before the Lord Doge, the Councilors and the Heads of the Forty, so also before those same officials there must be an examination and presentation of evidence (*probacio*) that those seeking admission are entitled to membership on account of their forebears, members of the Council, according to the laws of Venice. But that approval may not be granted unless the candidates were already registered in the book of the Forty before the said inquiry, according to the law in force concerning those who must be registered, subject to a fine of 300 *lire*. And at the said inquiry, there should be present at least two of the Avogadori di Comun so that if it will seem to them that there is any obscurity [in the case], they can and must do their duty, according of the form of their capitulary and the aforesaid law. Furthermore, any proof to be presented by those who claim to be entitled to membership in the Greater Council must be based on the record books of the Commune and other proof, and not by notarial acts (*brevaria*) nor by any other such document or means, which are unacceptable. It is understood that when the registers for the period considered are not to be found, then if the petitioners show such proof from another period that will seem sufficient and complete to the Lord [Doge], the Councilors and the Heads [of the Forty], then let them be admitted according to the form of the present law, always recognizing the prerogatives of the Avogadori di Comun, as stated above, provided that such an inquiry is not based on notarial acts (*brevaria*) or other documents introduced from other places, which in this matter are invalid. Nor can this law benefit anyone, if it were to happen that someone under twenty-five years of age would receive the golden ballot, he may not be approved by the Forty, unless he first show and demonstrate how he can be of the Greater Council, according to the abovesaid procedure for those of twenty-five years of age, and with the aforesaid conditions. And if there is a law or rule to the contrary, it is herewith revoked.

And this law is to be added to the rulebooks of the [ducal] Councilors, the Heads of the Forty, and the Avogadori di Comun.

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*Abstract*

This study, admittedly *sui generis*, provides for the first time a complete corpus of the laws that constituted the gradual constitutional reform, the so-called *Serrata* or closing of the Greater Council, that lasted over a generation, 1282-1323. It was originally meant by Ben Kohl to be the appendix to the first chapter of his planned book on the governance of Venice. It consists of critical editions of the Latin documents plus a translation in English of each. Each document is introduced by a brief summary in English; a commentary accompanies the text of the laws where necessary. In the past, historians seeking to come to grips with this momentous reform in Venetian history have done so without a complete corpus and with inaccurate transcriptions. Scholars and students alike will hopefully now be able to debate the issues involved on a surer footing.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; institutions; Serrata of the Great Council; sources

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# The Changing Function of the Collegio in the Governance of Trecento Venice\*

by Benjamin G. Kohl  
edited by Monique O'Connell

## 1. Introduction

Among the most famous institutions of Renaissance Venice, along with the Doge, Great Council, Senate and Council of Ten, is the Full College (*Pien Collegio*), often called the cabinet or steering committee of the Venetian state. This version of the Collegio, which received its definition in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, was a committee of twenty-six members, growing out of the Ducal Council, formed in the twelfth century. Thus, the core of the later Collegio was the Doge and his six ducal councilors, who with the three Heads of the Forty, came to form the Signoria, which, among other duties, was the presiding body over the Great Council, the Consiglio dei Pregadi, or Senate, and the Quarantia (or Forty). To help formulate policy and prepare legislation, various boards of Savi (not wise men, but elected experts, or even consultants) were added. The first of them was a special committee of Five Savi agli Ordini, who were concerned with commerce, the navy and overseas colonies. To these were added in 1380 the six Savi del Consiglio, so called because they were elected from the Consiglio dei Pregadi (or Senate), also known as Savi Grandi; they prepared the agenda and bills for consideration in the Senate and the Maggior Consiglio. After the conquest of the Italian mainland in the early fifteenth century, these Savi Grandi were joined by the Savi di Terraferma, a committee of five concerned with war and administration of the mainland empire. All three groups of Savi, together with the Signoria became a council

\* This article was originally presented in December 2009 at the conference in honor of Michael Mallett entitled "A Tale of Two Cities. Venice and Florence in the Renaissance" and held at the University of Warwick center in Venice. It was conceptualized as part of a larger study on the functioning of the medieval Venetian state, a project which was sadly left unfinished. Monique O'Connell has edited it, inserting section titles and making minor adjustments to language. The major editorial intervention lies in the addition of notes; in the absence of an accompanying bibliography, the references have been reconstructed from the author's computer files. Every effort has been made to reflect Kohl's intentions in this regard, but there are doubtless omissions that remain.

of ministers, which governed Venice, preparing legislation for passage in the Senate, and the Great Council, and overseeing administration in Venice and throughout its empire.

This is the textbook definition of the Collegio, in fact largely taken from the classic account in Frederic Lane's *Venice, A Maritime Republic* and older glossaries of Venetian institutions<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of this paper is to understand how the Full College evolved from its beginnings as a small group of nobles appointed to supervise the Doge and help him govern Venice at the end of the twelfth century into one of the central organs of fourteenth century Venetian governance.

## 2. Ducal councilors and the Minor Council

Most historians assign the birth of the Minor Council to 1178, the same year in which Orio Mastropietro became doge, following the assassination of his predecessor. At this time, the Doge's advisors, the Savi of the major and minor councils (*sapientes minoris consilii*, *sapientes maioris consilii*) had become clearly differentiated from one another. By the time the ducal councilors were defined by statute in the early thirteenth century, their number was six. One ducal councilor was elected from each of the six *sestieri* of Venice, following the usual requirement of geographic distribution of offices, for a term of one year. Following the principle of *contumacia*, or enforced vacation from office, the councilors had to relinquish their posts for the same amount of time that they had been in office. This practice had two results. In the first place it rendered difficult any dangerous alliance with the doge. Secondly, it denied the power interests of particular groups, which might have elected the same men to the same high office repeatedly and thus compromised the sovereignty of the Great Council. Only members of the aristocratic commune were eligible to participate, with the *de iure* requirement of a minimum age of twenty-five, though that age was in practice too low given the weighty nature of the functions entrusted to the councilors<sup>2</sup>.

The main duties of a member of the Minor Council were to supervise and control the Doge's activities, while making sure the other councilors acted in the best interests of Venice. The first goal was ensured by excluding all the Doge's kin and in-laws from membership, and both goals by the requirement that each member had to come from a different family. Of course this demanding office did not appeal to every Venetian noble. The aversion was particularly great among those successful merchants who realized that they would have to suspend their commercial activities if elected. As a result, refusals to accept office were frequent, so much so that very grave sanctions

<sup>1</sup> Lane, 254-55.

<sup>2</sup> Cessi, 2:37.

were imposed on those who did refuse, as we read in this law: “anyone who is elected ducal councilor cannot refuse the dignity, and if he does refuse, he cannot be elected to any other office, or be a member of the Great Council or the Senate”<sup>3</sup>.

Like members of all Venetian councils during the thirteenth century but unlike the Doge, the ducal councilors served without salary, following the general principle that membership in the various assemblies should not carry with it any monetary reward. Membership in the Minor Council was also incompatible with service in another public office for the first six months of service. But during the second six months, the councilor could accept another public office, while continuing his service on the Minor Council. Thus, he received a partial reward for his prior service and prepared himself for another post after the expiration of his year in office.

Ducal councilors had to observe the usual judicial rules enacted to guarantee the equal and impartial operation of all organs of the Venetian government. A councilor had to absent himself from the chamber when discussion of matters affecting his family were held. On those occasions his place was taken by a substitute, selected according to detailed rules, from one of the higher magistracies: the State’s Attorneys (*Avogadori di Comun*), the State Commissioners (*Provveditori di Comun*), and *Sopraconsoli* (with competence over bankruptcies and other mercantile matters), and most frequently of all, one of the Three Heads of the Forty. It often happened that some councilor, who was involved directly or indirectly in an issue under consideration, relinquished his seat to one of the Heads of the Forty. Thus, these Heads came to have such an intimate continual contact with the business of the Minor Council that they ended up belonging to it as, you might say, added members. I can find no specific law that enacted such a reform; we have only a document of 13 March 1231 in which for the first time this formula was used: “with the consent of the councilors and the Heads of the Forty”<sup>4</sup>.

The many duties imposed on the councilors are given to us by the oath that they pronounced for the first time in 1227, which appeared as a kind of appendix to Giacomo Tiepolo’s ducal *Promissione*<sup>5</sup>. Like all magistrates of the Venetian Republic the councilors had to exercise their office – according to the oath of 1227 – with absolute impartiality, without favor toward or prejudice against anyone, without asking for or receiving gifts, either directly or indirectly, and without attempting to obtain illicit funds. They had to carry out every task with complete diligence, and they could not leave the sessions, which were called by the bell of San Marco, except in absolute necessity. Moreover, with that oath, they assumed other special obligations, mainly the duty of oversight and control of the chief executive. The councilors were required to

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Maranini, 1:243.

<sup>4</sup> “Consentientibus consiliariis et capitibus Quarantie”, cited in Maranini, 1:251.

<sup>5</sup> Roberti, 2:24-31.

advise and supervise the Doge, always with equity and impartiality (the preventive checks), and they were also required to remind him of his duties and eventually make him carry out these duties on those occasions when he might be neglecting or opposing the execution of the decisions of the councils (the repressive check)<sup>6</sup>. In these matters, the Great Council enacted legislation that removed any conflict between the Doge and his councilors, as stated in *Liber Fractus*: “If there is any disagreement between the Lord Doge and the councilors let it be settled in the way that the councilors shall decide”<sup>7</sup>. Thus, in the event of a conflict, the will of the councilors was always to prevail, so it became clear the Doge could rely only on his own powers of persuasion as a member of that Council of which he was always the formal head.

The Signoria’s function as the presiding body was very important to the working of Venice’s several constitutional assemblies. In fact, by the middle of the Trecento, the Doge was the presiding officer and the Signoria the presiding body of all five of Venice’s legislative councils. This was most obvious in the Great Council, where the Doge and the Signoria had great authority in presenting legislation and maintaining public order in its sessions. Although the slates for offices were usually prepared by an ad hoc nominating committee, the many requests for pardons, licenses, permits, and favors were first vetted in the Signoria before they were passed on though the Great Council for enactment or rejection. By the early Trecento, the Great Council typically met about eighty times per annum to fulfill its various obligations, with as many as twenty sessions held on Sundays and other feast days, when all Venetian aristocrats would be free from the duties of trade and other government posts (see Table One). To the councilors, often aided by the Heads of the Forty, belonged the right of initiating legislation; a member of one of the assemblies could propose a bill only if he had obtained prior approval from the Signoria. In every instance, the Signoria prepared a preliminary first draft of new legislation, which the Senate – or the Forty if it treated financial matters – reworked. The legislation was then submitted for final approval to the Great Council, which always had the Signoria as its presiding body. In other words, one might say that before the Great Council deliberated on an issue in full session, it preferred to have every proposal studied by its presiding body, the Signoria, or by another assembly created by it, the Senate or the Forty.

In the aftermath of the Tiepolo conspiracy in 1310, the Council of Ten was permanently established. The Council of Ten always met with the Doge and Ducal Council, making it, in effect, the Council of Seventeen. Though the Ten was led officially by its three Heads, who rotated in and out of the post on a monthly basis, the Doge and the Ducal Council were in fact the presiding body of the Council of Ten as well.

<sup>6</sup> Roberti, 2:29.

<sup>7</sup> Cited in Maranini, 1:252-53.

Year	Meetings	Sundays/Feasts (% of Total)	Source
1281	58	9 (15)	Cessi 2, 442-45
1282	79	6 (7)	Cessi 2, 445-47; 3, 3-15
1283	108	17 (16)	Cessi 3, 15-58
1284	107	20 (19)	Cessi 3, 58-91
1285	106	15 (14)	Cessi 3, 91-131
1286	84	9 (11)	Cessi 3, 131-62
1287	89	9 (10)	Cessi 3, 162-95, 227
1288	91	9 (10)	Cessi 3, 195-226
1289	77	12 (16)	Cessi 3, 226-54
1290	77	12 (16)	Cessi 3, 254-76, 281-88
1291	76	7 (9)	Cessi 3, 288-310
1292	67	4 (6)	Cessi 3, 311-29
1293	64	10 (16)	Cessi 3, 329-53
1294	49	7 (14)	Cessi 3, 353-69
1295	58	9 (16)	Cessi 3, 369-94
1296	55	4 (7)	Cessi 3, 395-415
1297	56	9 (20)	Cessi 3, 415-33
1298	30	2 (7)	Cessi 3, 433-47
1299	47	3 (6)	Cessi 3, 447-59; Magnus, fols. 1v-4v
1300	68	8 (12)	Magnus, fols. 4v-12v
1301	54	4 (7)	Magnus, fols. 12v-20v
1302	79	9 (11)	Magnus, fols. 20v-40r
1303	81	8 (10)	Magnus, fols. 40r-58v
1304	83	8 (10)	Magnus, fols. 58v-75v
1305	88	8 (9)	Magnus, fols. 75v-105v
1306	79	5 (6)	Magnus, fols. 105v-34v
1307	83	8 (10)	Magnus, fols. 134v-65r
1308	83	10 (12)	Magnus, fols. 165-93v; Presbiter, fols. 2r-4v
1309	65	7 (10)	Presbiter, fols. 5r-14v
1310	76	9 (12)	Presbiter, fols. 14v-34v
1311	80	15 (19)	Presbiter, fols. 34v-62v
1312	85	10 (12)	Presbiter, fols. 62v-86v
1313	79	14 (18)	Presbiter, fols. 86r-111v
1314	80	13 (16)	Presbiter, fols. 112r-38r
1315	72	13 (18)	Presbiter, fols. 138r-44v; CC, fols. 49v-75r
1316	89	19 (21)	CC, fols. 75r-120v
1317	96	18 (19)	CC, fols. 120v-80r
1318	83	23 (28)	CC, fols. 180v-204v; AC 21, fols. 25r-57r
1319	83	23 (28)	AC 21, fols. 57r-95v
1320	92	27 (29)	AC 21, fols. 95v-128r
1321	88	25 (28)	AC 21, fols. 128v-55r
1322	82	15 (18)	AC 21, fols. 155r-89r
1323	100	19 (19)	AC 21, fols. 189r-217r
....	....	....	[AC 22]
1335	57	17 (30)	AC 23, fols. 1r-8v
1336	49	11 (22)	AC 23, fols. 8v-16r
1337	55	24 (44)	AC 23, fols. 16r-24r
1338	46	30 (65)	AC 23, fols. 24r-33v
1339	50	17 (34)	AC 23, fols. 33v-54v
1340	56	19 (34)	AC 23, fols. 55r-64v
1341	62	28 (45)	AC 23, fols. 64r-80v

Table 1. Meetings of The Great Council, Venice, 1281-1341, by year

Table One<sup>8</sup> gives the number of Great Council meetings by year, the number of meetings held on feast days and holidays, and the percentage of Sunday or holiday meetings out of the total meetings. The normal percentage of Sunday meetings was 14%.

### 3. *The administration of justice and public order*

The judicial duties of the Signoria itself continually grew in importance; soon Wednesday morning of every week was set aside for this function. The Senate as well enjoyed important judicial functions, and when it met with the Forty, these judicial functions came to be more important than policy-making ones. Meeting under the presidency of the Doge, the Signoria was charged with the resolution of administrative and judicial areas of competence. If two public officials were not able to agree about the limits of their jurisdictions, they were obliged to place the question before the Signoria, and to abide by its judgment. This requirement was usually stated in the capitulary of the magistracy, but if it were lacking there, custom and established usage were followed, as established in a law of 1260: “if the capitulary does not provide an sure answer on the issue”, it should be settled, “following custom and usage”. Partially as a result of this legislation, conflicts over jurisdiction that arose between the numerous courts of Venice were referred to the Signoria for their resolution. Even if there were no real conflict but the parties were in doubt as to which tribunal ought to have jurisdiction in a certain case, the matter was referred to the Signoria to assign it to the proper court. As we read in *Liber Bifrons*, “When there is doubt as to which court law suits may pertain, or if the judges of any court would say without reason that the suit ought not to be heard or determined by them, then the Lord Doge and his councilors ought to assign a court to the litigants”<sup>10</sup>.

Every Friday had to be dedicated to the work of control and oversight of the police forces which were directly under the Signoria’s control, instead of under the direct authority of the Great Council. As described in the volume of Great Council deliberations organized by subject under the auspices of Doge Giovanni Dandolo in 1283, there were five or six different police forces, each with the power to try and punish as well as simply arrest miscreants. The tasks

<sup>8</sup> The numbers are compiled from: Cessi, vols. 2-3; Archivio di Stato di Venezia (=ASVe), Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, regs. Magnus, Presbiter, Clericus-Civicus (CC); ASVe, Avogaria di Comun (AC), Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, regs. 21 and 23 – no tally was entered for reg. 22, accounting for the gap from 1324 to 1334.

<sup>9</sup> “Si capitularia non dent securitatem de questione... secundum morem et consuetudinem”, cited in Maranini, 1:260-61.

<sup>10</sup> “Quod dominus dux and consiliarii dent curiam litigantibus, cum dubitatur ad quam curiam pertineant questiones, aut si iudices alicuius curiae dixerint sine causa quod questio non debeat ab eis audiri nec determinari”, cited in Maranini, 1:261.



of public order which had originally been assigned to the Capi di Contrate, had been largely absorbed by two groups, the Five of Peace (*Cinque della Pace*) and the Night Watch (*Signori di Notte*) by the end of the thirteenth century. Housed near the Rialto, the Five of Peace were charged with maintaining basic public order: enforcing curfews, arresting individuals for carrying concealed or prohibited weapons, and stopping *rixe* (street fights) among the people that resulted in only minor injuries such as bruises, and injuries that did not leave a scar. To the Five of Peace was soon added the Night Watch, who by about 1250 were, as the name suggests, charged with maintaining public order in Venice after dark. Headquartered at the ducal palace, organized into patrols under one noble per *sestiere*, they were responsible for suppressing violent crime, such as theft, robbery, violent attacks on person and property, and murder. Their mandate was very wide, including regulation of gambling, sanitation, extortion, and broadly “all other similar malfeasance” (“omnibus aliis maleficiis similibus”). After making arrests, they were permitted to apply torture to obtain a confession, but only in the presence of at least two ducal councilors and State’s Attorneys.

A third law enforcement agency was the Market Police (*Corte di Giustizia*), founded in 1173, as Marino Sanudo put it, “to fix the just price on things to eat”<sup>11</sup>. To the magistracy’s original function of regulating the retail trade in food were soon added market regulation in general: to control commercial fraud, supervise weights and measures, and the craft guilds. As these duties grew, in 1261, the New Justices (*Giustizieri Nuovi*) were added to oversee the wine trade, the operation of taverns, the activities of butchers and bakers, and the sales at take-away food establishments (*furatole*). The two magistracies enjoyed overlapping and sometime conflicting civil and criminal jurisdictions; as a result, appeals from the Old and New Justices (*Giustizieri Vecchi* and *Nuovi*) to the Collegio became more frequent in the Trecento.

Another force were the Captains of Customs Posts (*Capitani delle Poste*), a committee of five nobles elected annually and headquartered at the Rialto, who were aided by several guards (*custodes*) in their task of collecting customs revenues and endeavoring to suppress smuggling. Each customs agent was seconded to a customs house in the settlements on the edge of the Dogado such as Grado, Torcello, and Fusina, where he worked with the local podestà to maintain order. There he and his guards inspected and sealed commodities entering or leaving Venice, levied duties, and, aided by a fleet of patrol boats, arrested smugglers<sup>12</sup>. The problem of smuggling was also handled by three Lords of Contraband (*Signori di Contrabanni*), an office which was established in 1281. These officials were charged with overseeing the conduct of outlying customs posts, about eight in Istria, manned by four to ten guards each with patrol boats, to combat smuggling. But their major duties were as a law court

<sup>11</sup> Shaw, 22.

<sup>12</sup> Cessi, 2:262-66.

which held court in the ducal palace every Monday, Wednesday and Friday morning to interrogate and punish those accused of smuggling.

By the 1320s, Venice's most famous police force were the Heads of the Sestieri (*Capi di Sestieri*), created as an arm of the Council of Ten, which had been formed following the Tiepolo conspiracy (1310) to arrest, try and convict traitors and prevent future conspiracies. The Heads of the Sestieri replaced the Five of Peace as the main keepers of public order in daytime Venice, and soon vied with the Night Watch over the right to control crime and violence in Venice. The conflicts of jurisdictions, duties and authority between the several police forces – to repeat: the Five of Peace, the Night Watch, the New and Old Justices, the Captains of Customs Posts, the Lords of Contraband, the Heads of the Sestieri, each with their own police officers – made an increasing numbers of appeals to the Collegio inevitable. Thus, the role of the Collegio as the supreme court or appellant court in Venice, often aided by the State's Attorneys, became crucial in the course of the fourteenth century, as a study of its minute book, the *Notatorio*, going back to 1327, shows. Although the Minor Council could not modify the capitularies of these police without the consent of the other councils, it could vote on their correct application, and often decided on the nature of jurisdictions and penalties for crimes on a case-by-case basis. Thus one of the chief functions of the Collegio was acting as judges of prime importance.

#### 4. *Formulating Legislative Policy and the Savi agli Ordini*

As the presiding body over the Senate, the Forty, the Ten and the Great Council, in the course of the fourteenth century the Collegio took on an even more important legislative function: they wrote the bills that became the laws of Venice. By the 1330s the Savi agli Ordini were the most important regular element of the Doge's Collegio, elected to prepare legislation on commerce, mercantile policy and the manning and sailing of the galley fleets for consideration and approval in the Senate. The Savi agli Ordini were almost always elected in the month of November, charged first with creating policies and procedures for the squadron that patrolled the Gulf, the fleet that sailed to Romania, and eventually for later convoys of armed and unarmed vessels, their merchants and merchandise, and destinations. The election held on 13 November 1335 chose five Savi to formulate commercial policy for the merchant galleys and to provide for the defense of the Adriatic and respond to the Turkish raids in the eastern Mediterranean<sup>13</sup>. The mandate for the Savi agli Ordini was clear: they were to consult with the current captain of the fleet of the Union, Marino Morosini, and prepare legislation on the galleys armed to patrol the Adriatic and against the Turkish threat within eight days, and for the merchant galleys within fifteen. Indeed, this schedule was nearly met. On

<sup>13</sup> Leduc, 4:141-42, nos. 365-66.



Sunday 19 November the Senate met and voted to send a solemn embassy to Pope Benedict XII about a crusade against the Turks. On Wednesday 22 November, the Savi elected Bellello Civran, Pietro Correr, Pangrazio Giustinian, Marino Falier, and Marino Morosini of Santa Maria Formosa and put forth several conflicting *partes* on the composition of the Gulf squadron and the Union fleet. In the end, proposals were voted for outfitting the Union fleet of six galleys and the Gulf squadron of two, each under the orders of its galley commander (*sopracomito*), who would appoint his own captain (*comito*) and sailing master (*nauclerus*)<sup>14</sup>. On 28 November 1335, the Savi agli Ordini made proposals for a fleet of eight merchant galleys to be sent to Flanders, with detailed provisions for routes, merchandise, crew and armaments. Thereafter, the terms of the Savi were extended month by month, until 20 February 1336, when they made detailed proposals for passage in the Senate on the number, routes, provisions and merchandise of the Romania merchant galleys that were to sail that spring<sup>15</sup>. Since the term of this group was not extended beyond the end of February, the Savi agli Ordini were in effect disbanded until a new committee of five Savi was elected in the Senate on 31 November 1336.

Within a few years, however, the Savi agli Ordini, elected each November and charged with preparing legislation on commerce and merchant fleets became, in effect, permanent, meeting intermittently with the Collegio through the year to propose legislation to the Senate on Venice's commerce and fleets. For example, the Savi elected on 23 November 1340 were to make proposals to the Senate, first on the galleys armed to patrol the Adriatic and the eastern Mediterranean for a meeting of the Senate held within eight days and then on 25 November on the officers, crews, armaments and length of service of the merchant fleet (until 1 March 1341)<sup>16</sup>. But the Savi agli Ordini did not simply leave office in December, as the original remit required. Their term of office was periodically extended throughout 1341, so that they ended up serving for an entire year. In fact their proposals were critical in defining, at the end of March 1341, the organization of the fleets of merchant galleys sent to Constantinople and the Black Sea, and two other fleets bound for Cyprus and Romania at the same time<sup>17</sup>. On 19 November 1341 was elected a new board of Savi agli Ordini, composed of five new members, substituting the doge's son, Nicolò Gradenigo, for his brother Pietro<sup>18</sup>. Though elected to serve only until 15 December, these five Savi also had their terms renewed for the next twelve months, as had become the custom. My reading of the Senate deliberations suggests that the Savi agli Ordini had already become a regular element of the Collegio by 21 November 1332, when the first records of election become available. Their term

<sup>14</sup> Leduc, 4:148-51, nos. 376-83.

<sup>15</sup> Leduc, 4:193-99, nos. 494-505.

<sup>16</sup> Leduc, 6:163, n° 329.

<sup>17</sup> Leduc, 6:265-71, nos. 482-83.

<sup>18</sup> Girardi, 7:61, n° 135.

of office became, in effect, annual, since the short terms were routinely extended as shown by the frequent enactments of “*Quod elongetur terminus sapientum ordinum...*”. Throughout the Trecento five Savi agli Ordini were elected annually every November to oversee the outfitting of the Gulf squadron and the number and destinations of the merchant galleys sent out both spring and autumn.

But the Savi agli Ordini were not the only experts elected to augment the Collegio in investigating issues and preparing new laws. There were literally hundreds of such boards formed in the fourteenth century, to handle all manner of problems. Often experts on colonial matters back in Venice were selected to answer diplomatic correspondence, draft laws, and compose commissions for new overseas rectors, based on their own prior experience. As Venice fought wars against the Scaligeri lords of Verona to liberate Padua and annex Treviso in the late 1330s, nobles who had served as *podestà* or field commanders in the Terraferma were appointed to the Collegio to draft legislation for the new realities in Venice’s growing mainland state. A decade later, experts in taxes, public administration and inheritance were made Savi to prepare legislation for passage in the Senate and Great Council to help Venice cope with the disruptions caused by the Black Death. During the Chioggia War a larger committee of twenty-five Savi was formed to formulate war policy and oversee the disposition of fleets, men and materiel. But in about 1380, a smaller group of six *Sapientes*, real senior statesmen, was elected from the body of Senate to prepare law for prompt passage in that body. Thus were born the Savi Grandi, who were a major component of the Collegio until the fall of the Republic. A study of the last Trecento register of the Senate’s secret deliberations suggests that groups of Savi expert in mainland affairs were called upon to draft laws affecting Venice’s relations with Padua, Verona and Vicenza, and its governance of Treviso; these were the origins of the third group of experts, the Savi di Terraferma, who were to complete the Full College in the next century.

## 5. Case Studies and Conclusions

In conclusion, some examples that demonstrate the Collegio functioned in detail. In 1352, the state’s attorney Filippo Orio brought a case of conflict of jurisdiction between magistracies that could not be resolved by reference to existing capitularies, citing the law of August 1260 that established the Collegio, or the Ducal Council, as the arbiter of competence between magistracies. The specific conflict in this case was between the *Sopraconsoli* and the Judges of the Procurators (*Giudici del procurator*) over the competence to judge Ser Pietro Lando. The vote was to annul all the court orders so far produced, and allow each magistracy to present its case to the Doge and Council<sup>19</sup>. In 1376, the Collegio voted to purchase and remove part

<sup>19</sup> ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 1, fols. 30v-31r, 8 August 1352: “Posita fuit pars quod omnes sententie, terminationes, cride, precepta, pene, processus et alii quilibet actus facti per utramque

of the house of Ugolino di Enrico Scrovegni, in San Maurizio. The house, purchased cheaply for fifteen lire di grossi, was acquired to allow the creation of a road connecting the church of Santa Maria del Giglio with the parish of San Maurizio; this would require two new bridges, and the resulting road was to be the property of the commune of Venice<sup>20</sup>.

In general, the *Notatorio* of the Collegio was a running notebook for lesser decisions, and it demonstrates that the Collegio considered and ruled on a wide variety of matters: construction of forts, small tax cases, rulings on commodities like oil and salt to be taxed, exemptions on import duties and wine taxes, notary expenses, and some appeals from judges and magistracies to the Doge and Council.

manum ipsorum officialium in factis dicti ser Petri Lando a denuntiatione prima facta supraconsulibus per plebanum iudicum procuratorum citra, revocentur, annullentur et cassentur, redeuntibus partibus in statu quo erant ante. Et quia res est in questione, ad quod officium pertineant ista facta, utraque manus officialium veniant ad dominum et consiliarios, cum capitularibus et allegationibus suis et terminabitur sicut videbitur esse iustum. 5, non o, non sinceri 2”.

<sup>20</sup> ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 1, fol. 78v, 15 January 1376: “MCCCLXXV, die quinto decimo Januarii... Eodem die. Determinatum et ordinatum fuit quod ob reverentiam beati Viti, et pro honore totius terre, debeat fieri una via per subtus porticum [sancte *canc. by line*] Ecclesie Sancte Marie Jubanico, eundo ad contractam Sancti Mauricii, que via fiat per partem unius domus empte a nobili viro Hugolino de Scrovegnis, milite qui ob reverentiam domini de ipsa complacuit libenter dominio. Et ex nunc comune nostrum debeat solvere pro pretio dicte domus libras XV grossorum, et nichil aliud. Et contracta Sancti Mauricii solvat omnes alias expensas, tam in faciendo duos bonos pontes, cum perthehatis et aliis opportunis, quam de salizatis et aliis taliter quod placeant dominio. Et dicta via, nunc empta, remaneat et sit perpetuo comunis Venetiarum”.

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### *Abstract*

The Collegio was a central instrument of government in Renaissance Venice, but its development from an informal group of ducal advisors in the twelfth century to a formal institution in the fourteenth century is little understood. This paper traces the evolution of the Collegio's membership, role in the administration of justice and public order, and legislative policy. It concludes with case studies demonstrating the detailed functions of the Collegio.

### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; institutions.

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# **Il Segretario alle voci: un primo contributo sulle origini dell'incarico e la formazione dell'archivio\***

di Claudia Salmini

## *1. Le origini e la natura dell'incarico del Segretario alle voci*

Il Segretario alle voci, notaio della Cancelleria ducale designato a vita, era incaricato di curare tutti gli adempimenti relativi all'elezione delle cariche patrizie: doveva "stridare", cioè annunciare ad alta voce le cariche da eleggersi. Queste venivano attribuite nel corso delle riunioni dei principali organi consiliari: prevalentemente nel Maggior Consiglio, ma anche in Senato. Egli teneva il registro delle elezioni da farsi, con la scadenza delle cariche e la data del loro rinnovo; assicurava il controllo delle condizioni e dei requisiti richiesti per legge (età, parentela, contumacia, accettazione, ecc.) e conservava la documentazione ufficiale relativa. Complessivamente si trattava di garantire, sul finire del XV secolo, la corretta elezione all'incirca di un migliaio di persone ogni anno per coprire le centinaia di cariche esistenti: dalle nomine individuali agli uffici composti da più membri, agli organi collegiali e consiliari<sup>1</sup>.

Resta ancora indefinito il momento in cui l'incarico di Segretario alle voci si formalizza e la funzione viene esercitata in seno alla Cancelleria. Si può osservare come, per lo meno fino ai primi decenni del Trecento emerga anche in altri comuni italiani – per esempio a Firenze, Lucca, Genova o Arezzo – un'immagine altrettanto sfocata per quanto riguarda la normativa in materia di procedura elettorale<sup>2</sup>.

A Venezia il sistema elettorale, privo di un'organica e sicura normativa procedurale fino ai primi decenni del secolo XIV, ebbe diverse forme di

\* Questo testo ripropone, in forma riveduta e aggiornata, quello tradotto in inglese da Benjamin Kohl e pubblicato come Salmini, 2009.

<sup>1</sup> 293 tra consigli, uffici e reggimenti distribuiti dal Maggior Consiglio, per un totale di circa 831 incarichi, divisi tra *intus* (550) e *foris* (281): Zannini, 1997, 418 ss.; anche Finlay, 87. L'esame di Archivio di Stato di Venezia (d'ora in poi ASVe), Segretario alle voci (d'ora in poi SAV), Elezioni in Maggior Consiglio (d'ora in poi MC), reg. 1, conferma il dato. Sono 148 gli uffici e le magistrature distribuite dal Senato nei primi decenni del Cinquecento: ASVe, SAV, Senato, reg. A.

<sup>2</sup> In generale, Lazzarini; inoltre, le singole voci in *Guida*; per Lucca, Bongi, 198-204.

regolamentazione, per poi delinearci con misure successive soprattutto tra XIV e XV secolo. A partire dal terzo decennio del Cinquecento i meccanismi delle procedure, definiti in modo più dettagliato, saranno destinati a mantenersi stabili, quantomeno nella forma, fino alla caduta della Repubblica nel 1797. Tra XVII e XVIII secolo si registreranno soltanto lievi aggiustamenti, richiesti dal contesto politico più generale e dall'evoluzione demografica del patriziato<sup>3</sup>.

L'attività elettorale del Maggior Consiglio è attestata almeno a partire dal 1264, periodo in cui quell'organismo era ancora eletto a sua volta, con durata annuale, ma tracce di fonti ora perdute anticipano ancora, al 1261, l'annotazione ufficiale su registro delle nomine distribuite nella seconda metà di quel secolo<sup>4</sup>. Nel 1277 si fa cenno all'esistenza di un "officium electoriae"<sup>5</sup>, e le *parti* o deliberazioni relative agli incarichi, così come le deliberazioni che concernono la materia elettorale, venivano trascritte in un *Libro delle proposte de Gran consiglio*, esistente ancora nel Cinquecento ma successivamente perduto. Le elezioni avvenivano anticamente con procedure diverse, *per rodolum*, avvertite già come superate nel 1288<sup>6</sup>.

La seconda metà del Duecento sembra essere una fase di trasformazioni continue: l'intensa produzione legislativa è la spia del processo di specificazione e definizione di meccanismi elettorali ancora fluttuanti. Tra il 1253 e il 1299 si contano più di cinquanta *parti*, raccolte dal *Compilatore delle leggi* quattro secoli dopo sotto il titolo "De vocibus et earum proclamatione", e specificamente "De sortitione aureorum votorum, scrutiniis et suffragiis ferendis". Già in quel periodo sono attestati termini tipici del panorama elettorale veneziano: *voces*, *texerae*, *manus*, di cui si farà cenno più avanti. Rispetto alle leggi prodotte in quel periodo, è significativa la selezione drastica operata nella prima metà del Settecento per l'altra importante raccolta ufficiale della legislazione allora considerata vigente, il *Repertorio generale delle leggi*: delle cinquanta deliberazioni del Duecento non vi è più alcuna traccia, e la lista si apre con la legge del Maggior Consiglio del 1305, 29 luglio<sup>7</sup>.

Le difficoltà di ricostruire un quadro chiaro e completo della legislazione veneziana nel campo elettorale sono dovute in gran parte, ma non soltanto, alla moltiplicazione delle norme, al loro accumularsi intrecciandosi l'una sull'altra nel corso degli anni, dei decenni e dei secoli, senza che sia chiaro quali siano state sostituite da altre, quali siano cadute in disuso e quali restino vigenti anche a distanza di tempo. A differenza di quanto risulta per quasi tutti gli uffici della Repubblica, manca per il Segretario alle voci una fonte come potrebbe essere un capitolare, vale a dire un codice che contenga la raccolta

<sup>3</sup> Cenni in proposito si trovano in opere di taglio più generale come E. Besta, Maranini, 1927; Maranini, 1931; Finlay; Queller. Sulle trasformazioni complessive connesse alla serrata del Maggior Consiglio, Chojnacki e bibliografia citata.

<sup>4</sup> Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (d'ora in poi BNM), Mss. it., cl. VII, 551 (7281) cc. 101v-02r.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, c. 157r.

<sup>6</sup> ASVe, Compilazione leggi, Serie II, fasc. 17, parte del Maggior Consiglio 1281, febbraio 28 m.v.

<sup>7</sup> ASVe, MC, Indice e repertorio generale delle leggi, vol. III, alla voce *Segretario alle voci*.

ufficiale delle leggi in vigore, approvato formalmente ad una certa data, letto pubblicamente in determinate occasioni. (La serie dei *Decreti* esistente nel fondo archivistico del *Segretario alle voci* non presenta, del resto, le caratteristiche tipiche di una vera e propria raccolta normativa, quanto piuttosto di decisioni prese in relazione a singoli individui o a specifiche situazioni, e dunque non è una fonte assimilabile alla natura di un capitolare).

È un'assenza significativa sulla quale conviene soffermarsi brevemente: essa non dipende – credo – dalla scomparsa di materiale documentario, come avvenne in molti altri casi sul finire della Repubblica; né del resto le fonti hanno mai fornito alcuna traccia in proposito. E l'ipotesi che non si producano raccolte normative di tale genere all'interno di uffici subordinati alla Cancelleria è contraddetta dal capitolare esistente nel fondo del *Cassier della bolla ducale*, che presenta altre significative affinità con l'ufficio in esame. L'attività svolta dal Segretario alle voci, così strettamente legata all'attività elettorale del Maggior Consiglio e poi del Senato, e all'esercizio del controllo formale e di merito da parte di tutti gli organi competenti, fa sì che la funzione di capitolare venga svolta invece dai capitolari dei massimi organismi consiliari veneziani: il *Libro d'oro (vecchio) del Maggior Consiglio* e il cosiddetto *Capitolare del Senato*, entrambi redatti nella prima metà del Cinquecento sotto la spinta riformatrice e razionalizzatrice del doge Andrea Gritti. Né va trascurata l'importanza dei capitolari dei Consiglieri di Venezia in materia elettorale, e la presenza di specifiche prescrizioni nelle *promissioni* dogali, oltre a innumerevoli altre fonti<sup>8</sup>. Una scorsa alle grandi compilazioni sei e soprattutto settecentesche – la *Compilazione delle leggi* e il *Repertorio generale delle leggi* – costituisce del resto una prova all'inverso, per l'ampiezza, la varietà e l'intreccio di relazioni reciproche delle norme registrate nell'arco di oltre cinque secoli.

Alla complessità delle fonti si collega l'insufficienza della storiografia. Sui meccanismi elettorali veneziani non esistono veri e propri studi specifici o monografie – a differenza di quanto si riscontra in altre città italiane, in primo luogo Firenze. E l'assenza di analisi approfondite e di una ricostruzione meticolosa rende progetti di schedatura come le basi dati *The Rulers of Venice* e *Segretario alle voci*, mezzi particolarmente preziosi per verificare ipotesi storiografiche e per ricostruire strategie di potere nel patriziato veneziano seguendo un percorso inverso.

Il sistema veneziano prevedeva un complesso procedimento per garantire la regolare e sistematica copertura dei ruoli previsti per le diverse magistrature della repubblica: le cariche interne, esercitate nella città (*de intus*), quelle della terraferma e dei domini da mar (*de extra*) e quelle di carattere diplomatico nei paesi stranieri (*de foris*). Il Maggior Consiglio copriva oltre l'80% di questa funzione distributiva, alla quale riservava una quota rilevante del tempo

<sup>8</sup> Oltre alle sezioni pertinenti dell'ampia voce su Venezia in *Guida*, IV, cfr. le indicazioni pertinenti in Da Mosto.



previsto per le proprie affollate riunioni. A Venezia, l'elezione a un incarico pubblico prevedeva procedure complesse, non sempre ricostruibili facilmente e con precisione nei particolari. Numerosi i requisiti e i fattori, riguardanti variamente i candidati, gli eletti, i loro garanti, gli stessi elettori, i tempi e le modalità di elezione, di cui si doveva tenere conto perché l'elezione fosse insieme regolare sul piano formale, e coerente sul piano delle scelte politiche, come si evince da un elenco riassuntivo:

- 1) il criterio dell'età minima, richiesto non solo per entrare a far parte del Maggior Consiglio e dunque per votare, ma anche per essere eletti – soglia, quest'ultima, che variava a seconda dell'importanza e del tipo di incarico;
- 2) l'individuazione certa del candidato e poi dell'eletto, specificando oltre al cognome e al nome anche il nome del padre ed eventualmente dell'avo, per impedire equivoci in caso di omonimia – situazione tutt'altro che straordinaria nel contesto veneziano;
- 3) l'individuazione certa – con analoghe specificazioni – del garante (*plezo*), che doveva sostenere finanziariamente i rischi connessi all'incarico, e le eventuali incompatibilità;
- 4) l'impiego delle modalità elettorali tipiche di quella carica specifica (due o quattro *mani*, per scrutinio del Senato, per tessere, ballotte, ecc.);
- 5) la corretta specificazione della durata della carica, espressa in mesi;
- 6) il rispetto da parte del candidato del periodo di *contumacia*, il lasso di tempo che in determinati casi era previsto per poter essere rieletto a quel medesimo incarico (il periodo variava a seconda della durata e delicatezza degli uffici);
- 7) il controllo che il numero di candidati appartenenti alla medesima famiglia, intesa nel significato estensivo del medesimo casato, non superasse le due unità, limite massimo fissato a seconda della modalità elettorale;
- 8) l'assenza del conflitto d'interessi del candidato, contemplata dalle norme sia per quanto riguardava le proprietà o le attività commerciali, sia per i legami paralleli che membri della medesima famiglia potevano avere con la Santa Sede;
- 9) la verifica che il candidato non avesse intrapreso la carriera ecclesiastica;
- 10) il rispetto delle norme per impedire la costituzione di cordate nella gestione di territori soggetti a Venezia: si prescriveva l'esclusione dalla votazione dei patrizi già nominati a cariche nella stessa zona in caso di elezioni ad altri uffici connessi (per esempio, i Consiglieri di Cipro non potevano partecipare alle elezioni del Luogotenente dell'isola);
- 11) la verifica della compatibilità/incompatibilità tra diverse cariche: era talvolta ammesso che uno stesso individuo svolgesse contemporaneamente funzioni differenti, ma si escludeva l'accumulo di più incarichi per determinate magistrature, considerate più delicate e impegnative;
- 12) l'elezione opportunamente anticipata di nuovi titolari delle cariche prima della scadenza naturale, per garantire un avvicendamento ordinato e funzionale e una sostituzione tempestiva;
- 13) la predisposizione di nuove elezioni nei numerosi casi di conclusione del mandato prima dei termini regolari: per rifiuto (che poteva avvenire subito dopo l'elezione, ma anche a distanza di alcuni mesi), per elezione ad altra carica, per motivi di salute, per l'età avanzata, o in caso di morte, e anche per ragioni di incompatibilità emerse in tempi successivi all'elezione (parentela, interessi, o altri motivi);
- 14) la verifica del rispetto da parte degli eletti dei tempi prescritti per raggiungere le sedi lontane, e la registrazione delle eventuali dilazioni concesse;
- 15) il rispetto del diritto di "riserva del luogo", vale a dire il diritto del candidato eletto a mantenere valida l'elezione avvenuta, ottenendo una dilazione di tempo per l'entrata effettiva, e della data di "luogo restituito", al momento dell'ingresso vero e proprio;
- 16) il rispetto di norme antichissime, mai cadute in prescrizione e ancora efficaci, in



base alle quali – per esempio – i Consiglieri di Venezia erano classificati tra i *regimina*, non tra gli uffici interni della città;

17) infine – criterio di coerenza politica, non formale – il rispetto del diverso peso delle cariche: in relazione all'età e all'esperienza personale dei candidati, ma anche per l'importanza politica, sulla base dei rapporti di forza interni al patriziato e delle conseguenti distinzioni delle nomine in relazione al censo dei candidati, al loro ruolo, alla loro tradizione familiare di potere.

Un ulteriore aspetto legato all'incarico, importante anche per gli studi di storia dell'arte e della miniatura in particolare, ma fino ad ora – credo – poco studiato, riguarda le commissioni, vale a dire l'insieme di prescrizioni in cui il Senato precisava i compiti affidati al rappresentante dello Stato appena eletto, che venivano copiate e rilegate anche su singoli codici perché ciascun patrizio incaricato di responsabilità *de extra, de foris* e – in certi casi – *de intus*, potesse portare con sé il testo ufficiale delle disposizioni specifiche legate a quell'incarico. A partire dal 1606 viene incaricato espressamente il Segretario alle voci di far copiare il testo conservato nella Cancelleria secreta da “quelli di detta cancelleria che si contenteranno di farle”, e di controllare la perfetta corrispondenza tra i due esemplari. Per questo servizio di organizzazione e di controllo il Segretario alle voci avrebbe ricavato due lire per ciascuna commissione, direttamente dal personale incaricato della stesura della copia<sup>9</sup>. Questa cifra, moltiplicata per il numero di commissioni licenziate dal Senato, da un lato faceva aumentare in modo consistente il già pesante carico di lavoro del Segretario alle voci, ma dall'altro costituiva un'entrata economica di notevole entità, che di fatto poteva diventare superiore allo stipendio annuale, raddoppiandolo. Escludendo dal computo i Consigli e qualche altro ufficio (ma andrebbe sicuramente approfondito con uno studio specifico quali fossero effettivamente gli incarichi privi di specifica commissione), e tenendo conto che molti incarichi proseguivano oltre i dodici mesi, si può azzardare un totale ipotetico di oltre trecento commissioni annue, per una cifra che poteva superare i cento ducati all'anno. Oltre ad affidare l'incarico ad altri, il Segretario alle voci provvedeva non di rado personalmente ad eseguire la copia, come avvenne già per tutto il secolo XVI: segno che, anche prima dell'attribuzione organizzativa ufficiale, preesistevano di fatto quell'attività e un analogo coinvolgimento del Segretario.

Manoscritti di pregio studiati per queste loro caratteristiche, le commissioni si conservano in archivi e biblioteche di tutto il mondo, acquistate o donate per le legature raffinate, o per le pagine miniate talvolta da veri e propri artisti. In molti esemplari, il nome o il monogramma del copista appartiene, in molti casi, al Segretario alle voci in carica in quegli anni. È destinata a sfumare la tradizionale convinzione che si tratti di opere di carattere privato, redatte a spese dei singoli interessati per ragioni di prestigio e di rappresentanza. Questi documenti sono stati finora studiati prevalentemente per il loro valore estetico, ma vanno analizzati piuttosto come testi di natura

<sup>9</sup> ASVe, Consiglio dei dieci (d'ora in poi CX), Parti comuni, reg. 56, cc. 94r-98v.

ufficiale e pubblica, prodotti nella Cancelleria, come è ormai certo avvenisse nel caso dei Procuratori di San Marco, dalle cui casse provenivano i pagamenti al miniatore<sup>10</sup>. E il caso dei Procuratori non poteva essere un'eccezione<sup>11</sup>. Un'analisi ad ampio spettro sulla specifica natura istituzionale delle commissioni è ancora da condurre<sup>12</sup>.

Nel tenere conto di tutti questi fattori, l'ufficio del Segretario alle voci comportava già di per sé un carico di lavoro di proporzioni gigantesche. Non si riesce oggi a concepire quanto e in che modo egli riuscisse in quei secoli a tenere sotto controllo la fitta rete di condizioni e relazioni incrociate, connesse al corretto svolgimento dell'incarico; la sua gestione delle elezioni probabilmente veniva affrontata col supporto di elenchi sintetici in forma di promemoria (in minima parte presenti nelle pagine finali di molti registri), contenenti informazioni essenziali collegate sistematicamente a ciascun ufficio (durata, numero dei componenti, modalità elettorali, ecc.).

È probabile che il notaio incaricato di una funzione tanto delicata, complessa e gravosa – che per alcuni secoli resterà, incredibilmente, da solo – dovesse presentare requisiti personali di particolare qualità, fra cui resistenza fisica, memoria, equilibrio. Doveva gridare – *stridare* – determinate elezioni ad altissima voce per farsi sentire da tutti i presenti nell'enorme sala del Maggior Consiglio, funzione evidentemente saliente, tanto da determinare il nome stesso dell'incarico di Segretario alle voci, sinonimo di elezioni. Talvolta questa attività comportava una sorta di 'malattia professionale' che impediva di leggere con voce stentorea in Consiglio o proclamare le elezioni, perché senza voce, o a causa della *voxe raucha*, come annotava a più riprese Marin Sanudo nei *Diarii*<sup>13</sup>. Faceva uso spasmodico della scrittura: talvolta accadeva anche a lui, come ad altri notai della Cancelleria veneziana, di perdere l'uso della mano destra come altra tipica patologia professionale dovuta allo scrivere di continuo, per giorni, mesi e anni, quantità così cospicue di pagine. È più che probabile, poi, che ciascun Segretario alle voci cercasse soluzioni e accorgimenti particolari di mnemotecnica, che nessuna fonte scritta ci può restituire, ma senza i quali difficilmente avrebbe potuto rispondere agli obblighi del vero e proprio groviglio di leggi che a vario titolo regolavano la tortuosa materia elettorale. Particolare solidità di carattere doveva dimostrare per sostenere le responsabilità enormi affidate. Ma soprattutto doveva godere della fiducia assoluta del Cancellier grande, e della stima generale, perché l'affidabilità morale e professionale del

<sup>10</sup> Chambers.

<sup>11</sup> In quel caso la carica a vita, di enorme rilievo, probabilmente escludeva incarichi a *regimina*, e fuori sede comprendeva solo incarichi diplomatici temporanei, ma non vere e proprie ambasciate. Da notare che fra Sei e Settecento membri della famiglia Querini Stampalia si servirono ripetutamente dell'elezione a Procuratore di San Marco, carica di norma incompatibile con rettorati e ambascerie, per "evitare sgraditi e onerosi incarichi fuori Venezia": Derosas, 44.

<sup>12</sup> Per un aggiornamento sulle problematiche legate alla natura di questi documenti e sulla bibliografia si rinvia ai saggi di Lucchi e Szépe e al ricco apparato di illustrazioni che li correda.

<sup>13</sup> Fra le varie testimonianze riportate in Sanuto, si cita qui quella *ibid.*, 44, col. 80, relativa al 1527, febbraio 13 *more veneto*.

Segretario alle voci era la migliore garanzia di correttezza nella distribuzione delle cariche patrizie.

Quella fiducia, non necessariamente esplicita, emerge tuttavia chiaramente se posta in relazione con la fitta e straordinaria fioritura di norme tese a colpire i brogli, ossia i continui tentativi da parte di membri del patriziato di aggirare le norme elettorali per concordare candidature e convogliare la scelta su proposte specifiche. La durata stessa dell'incarico – eccezionalmente a vita, come il Cancellier grande, a differenza degli altri ruoli di Cancelleria – sottolinea proprio l'esigenza di rendere indipendente questo notaio da condizionamenti esterni, e nello stesso tempo riconosce il livello di specializzazione particolarmente marcato che la funzione richiedeva. Lo stipendio ufficiale, attestato tra 1525 e 1530 intorno agli 89 ducati annui e di lì a poco aumentato a 100<sup>14</sup>, pur non essendo basso, apparentemente non è tra i più rilevanti, se paragonato al peso dell'incarico. Ma l'insieme delle entrate accessorie concesse a vita, e quelle dovute alla distribuzione delle copie delle commissioni, rendono la somma totale estremamente importante.

## 2. *L'incarico fra metà Quattrocento e primo Cinquecento*

Verso la metà del Quattrocento avviene lentamente il processo di progressiva specializzazione delle funzioni per cui la registrazione delle elezioni patrizie viene affidata ad un notaio specifico. Questi ancora nel 1437 viene definito in modo generico “el cancellier over quel noder serà in tal façenda”<sup>15</sup>. Il tema ricorrente, nella legislazione di quel periodo, è la difficoltà di garantire la regolare successione di rappresentanti veneziani ai reggimenti, rischiando l'indebolimento della struttura periferica di governo proprio mentre si veniva ampliando e rafforzando il dominio veneziano da terra e da mar. Come si spiega nel preambolo della legge, molti “procura cum suo amiçi e parenti che non se faça” l'elezione, il che comporta, come conseguenza, che i rettori in carica, pur essendo scaduti i termini del mandato, “non se può partir se 'l so cambio non va”. La maggiore incidenza dei rifiuti in questi anni – così come accadrà poi, durante le guerre d'Italia – si può fra l'altro collegare col peso del prelievo fiscale sui salari e *utilità* derivanti dalle cariche: prelievo ordinario dal 1434, le cui percentuali di tassazione lievitarono durante periodi critici della spesa militare e della finanza pubblica<sup>16</sup>.

Meno di vent'anni dopo – nel 1455 – si ripropone il medesimo problema, e il Maggior Consiglio dispone un consistente anticipo di tre mesi per

<sup>14</sup> ASVe, CX, Parti comuni, filza 12, 1531, 21 gennaio; reg. 6, c. 124v. La cifra si riferisce a quanto riceveva precedentemente il Segretario alle voci. Il Consiglio dei dieci stabilisce che il salario, da quel momento in poi, sia aumentato a 100 ducati all'anno.

<sup>15</sup> ASVe, MC, Deliberazioni, Ursa, reg. 22, c. 120r, parte 1437, 14 settembre.

<sup>16</sup> Notizie parziali in F. Besta, CLXVII-VIII.

provvedere all'elezione dei successori per le cariche più vicine, di quattro mesi per le cariche dal Quarnaro a tutto il *Colfo* (cioè il Mar Adriatico) e di cinque mesi per i *regimina* più lontani dal *Colfo in là*<sup>17</sup>. Il fenomeno è di portata tale che le pene previste sono particolarmente severe, non soltanto per quanti rifiutano la carica o dilazionano la partenza, ma anche per gli organi che rilasciano eventuali provvedimenti di grazia e per i segretari incaricati di registrare le nomine. Per garantire l'efficacia di tali misure, il Maggiore Consiglio entra nel merito dell'organizzazione materiale e determina che il Collegio elegga "uno nodaro della Cancellaria el qual sia deputado a tegnir i conti del compir dei Rezimenti". E perché tale mansione possa svolgersi in modo efficace, stabilisce che "non abbia alcuna altra angaria, né non sia sottoposto ad alcuno"<sup>18</sup>. Il 20 luglio 1455, il Collegio individua il primo segretario esclusivamente deputato alle elezioni: *Ludovicus de Rosa*, o Alvisè Ruosa, la cui opera in relazione specifica con le elezioni era finora rimasta nell'ombra<sup>19</sup>.

Ancora nel 1490, il ricorrente rifiuto a ricoprire cariche interne ed esterne alla città è divenuto ormai intollerabile, e fonte di grande confusione. La pratica di ricorrere a *preghiere*, rifiuti, dilazioni pur di evitare la partenza ha assunto proporzioni decisamente preoccupanti. Le pene vengono perciò quintuplicate, ma anche queste drastiche misure non risolvono il problema<sup>20</sup>. Il tema si

<sup>17</sup> ASVe, MC, Deliberazioni, Regina, reg. 23, cc. 1v-2r; Libro d'oro novissimo, VIII, cc. 1v-3v: parte 1455, 13 luglio.

<sup>18</sup> "Et che el zorno che se farà Gran Conseio el dicto nodar debbia apresentar in cheba una poliza di Rezimenti che compie (...) habiando el dicto nodar ad inquirir et cercar quelli che non saranno andadi ai tempi debiti ai suoi Rezimenti". In caso di inadempienza, la pena prevista per quel notaio era altissima: la cacciata dalla Cancellaria, e il pagamento di cento ducati d'oro. Per gli eletti che si sottraessero al loro compito, la pena consisteva nell'esclusione da tutti gli uffici per cinque anni e nel pagamento di duecento ducati.

<sup>19</sup> ASVe, Miscellanea codici, I serie, Storia veneta, 15: Tassini, *Cittadini*, vol. XII, cc. 1809-10. Alvisè Ruosa forse apparteneva alla famiglia cittadina proveniente da Chioggia; poteva essere il figlio di Gerardo, Cancellier grande di Chioggia e Guardian grande della Scuola della Carità. Di tale personaggio non è stata rintracciata alcuna testimonianza nelle fonti. Più probabilmente si trattava di Alvisè Ruosa di Lazzaro, ammesso nel 1452 alla Cancellaria secreta: Neff, 1985, 527-28. In queste pagine tuttavia non vi è menzione di un incarico a tener conto delle elezioni. Testimoniano l'esistenza di un Alvisè Ruosa di Lazzaro due fonti, segnalatemi entrambe da Elisabetta Barile con la consueta partecipe e attenta cortesia: ASVe, Giudici di petizion, Sentenze a giustizia, reg. 112 c. 138v, 1450, 30 luglio, causa mossa da Alvisè Ruosa notaio della curia maggiore; ASVe, Cancellaria inferiore, Misc. Notai diversi, b. 32, registro del sestiere di Castello, c. 24v, 1456, 5 marzo: Alvisè Ruosa fu Lazzaro del confinio di Santa Maria Nova, notaio della curia maggiore e il fratello Pietro dividono la fraterna compagnia.

<sup>20</sup> ASVe, MC, Deliberazioni, Stella, reg. 24 c. 111v; riportata anche in Libro d'oro novissimo, vol. 9, c. 146v. "El nodaro della cancellaria nostra deputado a veder e tuor in nota quando i magistrati et rezimenti compiono el tempo suo, sia tenuto et obligato in pena de ducati cinquecento e de privation dell'offizio, de presentat in cheba alla Signoria nostra ogni Maçor Consiglio avanti che el se delibere de far electione, tutti quelli offitii et rezimenti che prima compino li tempi soi". Anche due anni dopo, il 30 giugno 1492, il Consiglio dei dieci ripropone un corretto svolgimento delle elezioni, così come interverrà nuovamente nel gennaio del 1516: il 15 per prescrivere che siano due i notai che possano entrare nelle elezioni; il giorno dopo, il 16, per stabilire che soltanto il

ripropone ancora, in termini del tutto analoghi intorno al 1516, poi di nuovo nel 1530, e nel luglio dell'anno successivo si precisano ancora le modalità per esercitare un controllo più efficace<sup>21</sup>. Contro questa "pessima corruptella" si prescrive al Segretario alle voci di "tenir uno libro separato, sopra il qual el faci scriver a cadauno di sua mano al tempo debito et statuito per le leze la refudason over accettazione di quel offitio al qual sarà stà eletto"<sup>22</sup>. Come a dire: scrivete di mano vostra che accettate l'incarico, nel nome del Signore, della Vergine Maria o di Gesù Cristo, e vediamo se avrete ancora il coraggio di sottrarvi a questo sacro giuramento solenne.

Questi primi decenni del Cinquecento sono anni di trasformazione decisiva per Venezia: nel suo profilo politico tra gli stati italiani, europei e mediterranei; nel suo destino economico; nell'evoluzione degli spazi urbani, ma anche negli assetti istituzionali e politici e quindi nel campo delle leggi e degli ordinamenti su cui si reggono quegli assetti. Sono gli anni corrispondenti al dogado di Lorenzo Loredan (1501-1521), Antonio Grimani (1521-1523), Andrea Gritti (1523-1538), quando la Cancelleria ducale è retta da Giovanni Pietro Stella (1516-1523) e poi Andrea Franceschi (1529-1552)<sup>23</sup>.

Gli stessi Libri d'oro delle nascite e dei matrimoni, tenuti dall'Avogaria di comun a partire rispettivamente dal 1506 e dal 1526, fan parte del profondo tentativo di riordino e rinnovamento dell'intero sistema, e sono strettamente collegati (per quanto concerne la legittimità di entrare nel Maggior Consiglio, e per l'età da provare) al complesso meccanismo delle elezioni, che penetra così profondamente nel tessuto dello stato veneziano. Si assiste a misure prese per definire meglio meccanismi e procedure in svariati settori: tra i tanti, la nascita nel 1517 dei Censori, incaricati di reprimere e punire i brogli elettorali. Magistratura osteggiata a tal punto da indurre a sospenderne l'elezione quattro anni dopo, ma ripristinata e resa stabile dal 1524. In quello stesso periodo il doge Andrea Gritti aveva tentato, senza riuscirvi, di innovare le modalità di elezione del Cancellier grande, dopo la morte di Stella nel 1523. E l'elenco delle misure prese in quei decenni potrebbe allungarsi ancora<sup>24</sup>.

Ed è proprio nel terzo decennio del Cinquecento, tra 1522 e 1525, che l'incarico di Segretario alle voci assume un aspetto più definito e preciso, rispetto alla situazione ancora fluida evidente tra la seconda metà del Quattrocento e i primi anni del Cinquecento. Da una immagine sfocata si passa a un'immagine più nitida, dalla quale emergono nomi, relazioni personali, aneddoti, personalità, carriere.

Segretario alle voci sia deputato a conservare e gestire le ballotte di tela, tanto dorate che argentate: ASVe, Libro d'oro novissimo, vol. 10, cc. 121r, 122.

<sup>21</sup> ASVe, CX, Parti comuni, filza 12; 1531, 12 gennaio e reg. 6, cc. 119v-20v.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Sulla Cancelleria nei decenni fra tardo Quattrocento e primo Cinquecento: Marini; Neff 1981; Neff 1985; Trebbi 1980; Trebbi 1986; Zannini 1993.

<sup>24</sup> Su questi anni si veda Finlay, specialmente cap. IV.

A questo processo partecipano fedeli segretari della Repubblica, che vantano *curricula* di grande valore. Tra i primi, Piero Bressan: in armata contro i turchi con il Capitano general da mar Antonio Grimani (il futuro doge); segretario nelle ambascerie in Germania, in Spagna, a Ferrara; in guerra terrestre, all'assedio di Padova, Verona, Brescia, segretario di Andrea Gritti, quando questi venne fatto prigioniero dai Francesi. Dopo l'assedio di Pavia, mandato a Milano portando il trattato di pace "scritta in zyfra de mia mano", correndo il pericolo – nei tre viaggi consecutivi tra Venezia e Milano – di essere fatto prigioniero. Altri assedi: Cremona, Verona, e poi per mare, rischiando la morte. Bressan è l'autore di alcune tra le fatiche di maggior rilievo compiute dal personale di Cancelleria, uno degli interpreti più sensibili e raffinati dell'impresa di rinnovamento di quel periodo. A lui si dovranno poi il riordino e la redazione dello splendido indice dei *Pacta*, "un tempo coperti di altissime tenebre e sepolti da durevole abbandono, dopo molti secoli ora per la prima volta portati alla luce", e di molte altre imprese di riordinamento e di copia<sup>25</sup>. Bressan aveva ricoperto l'incarico di Segretario alle voci nel 1522, un'esperienza breve, lasciata per occuparsi dei delicatissimi registri segreti, ma ricordata a distanza di anni:

Non tacerò *preterea* li travagli et fatiche prestate per me nell'ufficio delle voci di Gran Consiglio, che allora in gran disordine si attrovavano et l'opera et prova io feci, et testimonio è locuplete tutta la nobiltà che vide et experimentò la fede mia<sup>26</sup>;

esperienza riconosciuta dal Cancellier grande come "intolerabilis labor"<sup>27</sup>.

Il ricambio è velocissimo, in quegli anni: Lunardo Sanson, subentrato il 25 novembre 1522, viene sostituito cinque mesi dopo da Pietro Grasolario, già da tempo coinvolto in quella mansione, forse per le precarie condizioni di salute di Sanson<sup>28</sup>. Già nel luglio del 1522 Grasolario era stato incaricato di redigere

<sup>25</sup> "Elenchus / sive index eorum quae .IX. / hisce Pactorum / continentur libris / quae quidem olim / altissimis obsita tenebris / sitque diuturno sepulta / longis post seculis / nunc primum / in lucem edita sunt / in usum / Reipublicae Senatusque Veneti / Andreae Gritti / principis sapientissimi / autoritate et auspiciis / Andreae Franciscii / magni cancellarii ope et Petri Brixiani / a Secretis / opera / anno salutis / .MDXXXVIII."

<sup>26</sup> ASVe, CX, Parti comuni, filza 13: supplica di Piero Bressan, concessa il 1531, 14 luglio. Molte informazioni biografiche sono indicate nella supplica.

<sup>27</sup> ASVe, Cancellier grande, reg. 1, c. 19: "Magni cancellarii Stella circa Notarios ad voces et regimina deputatos terminatio".

<sup>28</sup> Fu nominato il 25 aprile del 1523. A Grasolario, morto tra il 1 e il 5 gennaio 1531, farà seguito poi Angelo Sanson, fratello di Lunardo, incaricato il 5 gennaio dello stesso anno: ASVe, Cancellier grande, reg. 1, "Ordines et regulae notariorum Curiae Maioris secretariorumque Collegii et Senatus decreto Decemvirorum sanciti", c. 21v; vedi anche Sanuto 55, col. 256: 1530 31 gen. *more veneto*; BNM, Mss. It. cl. VII, 1667 (= 8459), "Tabelle nominative e cronologiche dei segretari della Cancelleria Ducale", c. 5r. Nel 1531 il Consiglio dei dieci delibera all'unanimità l'allontanamento di Lunardo dalla Cancelleria in termini oggettivamente impietosi, per essere in condizioni fisiche tali da provocare "nausea de chi lo vedeno", in quanto "privo de uno ochio et in parte del naso

uno libro con li nomi et cognomi et tituli de cadauno che sono fino hora deputadi in li officii nostri, et *similiter* quelli hanno spectative, sì per deposito come per altra via, adziò se possi veder, che venendo a vacar in alcuno de' li officii predicti persona alcuna, si possi far electione iuxta l'ordine predicto<sup>29</sup>.

Il *curriculum* di Grasolario è simile a quello di Bressan, anche se non dimostra gli stessi livelli di responsabilità: dal 1499 al 1512 egli aveva partecipato attivamente alle campagne di guerra, alternandosi tra i Provveditori generali Cristoforo Moro e Andrea Gritti, futuro doge. Guerre, battaglie, pericoli, avventure, mesi di vita trascorsi fianco a fianco: come non immaginare che si creasse tra questi veneziani di rango formalmente diverso, nobili e cittadini, un forte legame personale, fatto di conoscenza, di fiducia, di affiatamento?<sup>30</sup> Come non ipotizzare che la spinta al rinnovamento, quella *renovatio* su cui abbiamo letto splendide pagine, non abbia avuto come perno operativo individui come questi?<sup>31</sup>

Non è facile ricostruire anche altri versanti, più privati e personali, di questo ambiente, in primo luogo l'interesse o la partecipazione a circoli umanistici. Poco tempo doveva rimanere per seguire altre attività, a Grasolario come a tanti membri della Cancelleria veneziana: come è noto, il carico di lavoro del personale subalterno negli uffici della Serenissima era tale da rendere assai difficile dedicarsi agli studi e alla scrittura letteraria<sup>32</sup>. Ma la vicinanza di un poeta come Palladio Sorano, morto in casa di Grasolario, sembra indizio sicuro di interessi culturali e letterari, di una frequentazione al di fuori dell'attività burocratica. Sorano, uno dei discepoli più amati dall'umanista Pomponio Leto, "doctissimo in humanità et in far versi latini", fu sepolto da poeta, "vestito però da batudo de scuola con una zoia de laurano in capo et libri da capo a piedi"<sup>33</sup>.

Il nuovo incarico pone Grasolario in stretta relazione con il Cancellier grande, di fronte al Maggior Consiglio. Qui viene perfino contestato mentre legge a voce alta *in renga*, perché non riesce a farsi sentire da lontano. Più

cum deforme aspeto ... cum offensione del animo de ognuno": ASVe, CX, Parti comuni, filza 13, 1531, luglio 14.

<sup>29</sup> Allora prestava servizio come notaio alla Quarantia criminal: Sanuto, 33, col. 397.

<sup>30</sup> In alcuni casi contemporaneamente con altre figure, come Giovanni Pietro Stella o Andrea Franceschi, entrambi destinati a diventare Cancellier grande. Entrato nel 1500 come "straordinario" di Cancelleria, era diventato ordinario nel 1524: BNM, Mss. It. cl. VII, 1667 (= 8459), "Tabelle nominative e cronologiche dei segretari della Cancelleria Ducale", c. 4v. Su Grasolario ho da tempo in corso una ricerca che conto di concludere in futuro.

<sup>31</sup> Sulla *renovatio*: Tafuri 1984; Tafuri 1985.

<sup>32</sup> Gilbert.

<sup>33</sup> Sanuto, 48, col. 71 (1528, 12 giugno); su Domizio Palladio Sorano, si veda Martini. Si citano distici elogiativi dedicati a Gaspare Biondo, figlio di Flavio, molto caro a Pomponio, e al Sabellico: Cosenza, III, n° 2555; *L'umanesimo*. Né va trascurato il legame tra Piero Grasolario e il fratello Jacopo, o Giacomo, pievano della parrocchia di Sant'Aponal, cancelliere inferiore del doge Gritti e umanista allievo di Giorgio Merula: Cosenza, V, n. 851; Degli Agostini, II, 589-94 ("fu dal Principe Gritti destinato in suo Cancelliere").



volte, come più sopra si è già accennato, Marin Sanudo registra questi episodi nei suoi *Diarii*, e pone in risalto che a *stridare* fosse un notaio dalla voce rauca<sup>34</sup>. Segretario spesso ostacolato, come accade nel settembre del 1525, quando presenta una supplica in cui si offre di mettere mano anche al sistema di registrazione elettorale del Senato. La sua entrata in Pregadi è contrastata, e nella prima votazione in Consiglio dei dieci non ottiene la maggioranza richiesta. La settimana dopo, è lo stesso doge Gritti a richiedere un nuovo scrutinio, questa volta con esito positivo. Eppure, era stata appena conclusa una riorganizzazione delle elezioni in Maggior Consiglio: “ultimate regulate le electione del excelentissimo Mazor Consiglio, qual va cum quel ordine, et forma che a giornata vede le excelentissime Signorie vostre cum tante mie fatiche”<sup>35</sup>. Forse non a tutti era gradita la prospettiva di vedere in quel ruolo un uomo che godeva della comprovata fiducia del Doge e del Cancellier grande, che garantisse quindi un maggiore controllo, rendendo più difficile attuare i sistemi escogitati dai patrizi per aggirare le leggi in materia elettorale.

Alla sua morte, nei primi giorni del gennaio 1531, il suo lavoro viene ricordato dal Cancellier grande Andrea Franceschi: Grasolario aveva svolto il mandato delle

Annotationum regiminum, officiorum, atque consiliorum omnium, quae in dies creantur et eliguntur tam in Maiori Consilio quam in Senatu, pariterque plegiorum seu fideiussionum, temporum creationis, discessus et termini uniusquisque magistratus tam hic Venetiis quam foris in universo Veneto illustrissimo Dominio, ut ex suis propriis libris videre est<sup>36</sup>.

Andrea Franceschi consegna al successore, Angelo Sanson, “libros omnes, scripturasque, claves, locum”: è nato ormai un archivio a parte. È avvenuta la svolta, le registrazioni si eseguono in modo uniforme: quel sistema – salvo lievi aggiustamenti – perdurerà sostanzialmente invariato fino al 1797.

### 3. *L'archivio*

Il fondo del *Segretario alle voci* oggi conservato nell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia, il cui contenuto è elencato in appendice al presente studio, comprende anzitutto la documentazione direttamente prodotta dall'ufficio omonimo a partire dalla definizione più precisa dell'incarico, intorno al 1525, fino alla caduta della

<sup>34</sup> Sanuto, 44, col. 80; 1528, 13 febbraio. Sanudo sottolinea le decisioni – a suo parere “contra la leze” – prese dalla Signoria quel giorno.

<sup>35</sup> ASVe, CX, Parti comuni, filza 2, n. 36; supplica accolta dal Consiglio il 1525, 20 settembre; Sanuto, 39, col. 452 (1525, 20 settembre); col. 470 (25 settembre); col. 478 (27 settembre). Nel novembre del 1529, Grasolario vinceva al lotto una forte somma: 3000 ducati; Sanuto, 52, col. 242.

<sup>36</sup> ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, reg. 21, c. 120r. Il testo è annotato il 5 gennaio per mano dello stesso Andrea Franceschi.



Repubblica. A questo nucleo principale è stata aggiunta – in epoca non definita, forse già *ab antiquo* – la documentazione relativa alla medesima funzione, svolta all'interno della Cancelleria nei secoli XIV-XV e nei primi due decenni del XVI secolo. Perdute del tutto le fonti relative ai primi secoli (XII e XIII), sono lacunose quelle tre e quattrocentesche: è il caso dei registri *Universi* o *Misti* e dei *Libri propostarum Maioris Consilii*, che per la loro natura andrebbero attribuiti all'archivio del Maggior Consiglio, e che dal 1401 venivano conservati nella Cancelleria secreta.

L'attività elettorale prevedeva per sua stessa natura l'incrocio continuo di dati provenienti da organi diversi: il Magistrato alla Sanità (per le fedì di morte, che dovevano essere tempestivamente comunicate al Segretario alle voci), l'Avogaria di Comun (per comprovare la legittimità e l'età), la Serenissima Signoria. Per questo motivo, in tempi diversi, sono state unite al fondo, per affinità di contenuto, fonti collegate a vario titolo ai compiti del Segretario alle voci, ma non direttamente prodotte da questo notaio.

È il caso di alcuni registri *universi* del secolo XVII, talvolta identici, che per legge dovevano essere redatti in due o tre esemplari da conservarsi in sedi diverse. Analogamente, i registri di *Grazie della Barbarella* erano probabilmente redatti in seno all'Avogaria di Comun e consegnati al Segretario alle voci per consentire il controllo dell'età, mano a mano che i giovani patrizi venivano sorteggiati nel giorno di santa Barbara per entrare in Maggior Consiglio prima di compiere il venticinquesimo anno. Anche in questo caso la serie presenta lacune e sovrapposizioni: alcuni registri sono stati aggregati al fondo per somiglianza, provenienti da altri archivi, probabilmente giudiziari.

Caso a parte è costituito dai tre Nuovi libri d'oro dei patrizi viventi (1625-1796), istituiti dalla Serenissima Signoria per sanare i continui casi di disordine e confusione nel tenere conto dell'organigramma del patriziato veneziano, tema ricorrente dal XIII secolo fino alla caduta della Repubblica. Durante le riunioni del Maggior Consiglio, questi registri dovevano essere per legge collocati ai piedi dei sedili occupati dalla Signoria, per consentirne la consultazione facile al fine di comprovare l'età dei patrizi. Si tratta dunque di fonti ufficiali, affidate al Segretario alle voci per garantirne la corretta conservazione e per meglio consentirgli di svolgere la sua funzione.

L'ordinamento di questo fondo, pur di limitate dimensioni, si è presentato come un compito particolarmente complesso, perché le fonti riguardano la distribuzione delle cariche, o distributiva, considerata dalle origini una funzione di importanza strategica per lo Stato veneziano. A fronte di tale importanza, va ribadito, sta l'assenza di qualsiasi studio o specifica monografia sul tema delle elezioni nella Serenissima: vuoto che ha causato spesso incertezze, ripensamenti, perplessità anche nella redazione dell'inventario dell'archivio del Segretario alle voci.

#### 4. *Le fonti schedate nel progetto The Rulers of Venice*

La base dati *The Rulers of Venice 1332-1524*, contenente più di 60.000 records, fu pubblicata in una prima versione nel 2009 in collaborazione con la Renaissance Society of America, per iniziativa di Benjamin Kohl. La costruzione della base dati ampliò progressivamente la portata di una sua ricerca iniziale, condotta su registri trecenteschi del fondo archivistico *Segretario alle voci*. L'ampliamento comportò la schedatura di cariche assegnate dal Maggior Consiglio, dal Senato e dal Consiglio dei Dieci, ed estese il periodo coperto fino a saldarsi con quello trattato dal progetto di schedatura informatizzata avviata nel 1980 dall'Archivio di Stato (oggetto del paragrafo 5, qui sotto). Con l'evoluzione della tecnologia e l'apporto di suggerimenti offerti dai fruitori, la Renaissance Society ha travasato il materiale in una base dati MySQL *open-source*, migliorandone la fruibilità soprattutto sotto il profilo delle ricerche ma senza cambiare i dati resi disponibili: ciò sotto la responsabilità di Monique O'Connell, subentrata nella cura scientifica dopo la morte di Kohl nel 2010<sup>37</sup>.

I dodici registri sfruttati per *The Rulers of Venice* (i primi dodici dell'elenco riportato in appendice) sembrano essere gli esemplari superstiti di alcune serie oggi in gran parte perdute, o mutile. Dalla prima e più antica di queste serie, lacunosa anch'essa e costituita dai primi tre registri e, a distanza di cinquant'anni, da un quarto, trae origine la denominazione *libri universi*. Il termine va ricondotto al carattere onnicomprensivo delle registrazioni, che riguardavano le nomine pubbliche a *officiales* (eletti a capo degli uffici di San Marco e Rialto), *iudices* alle diverse corti, *rectores* (i rettori, rappresentanti che risiedevano nelle diverse sedi del governo veneziano al di fuori di Venezia). Solo in seguito, dopo molteplici tentativi compiuti in varie direzioni, verrà accolta – inizialmente in parallelo, per sostituirsi poi al sistema preesistente – una diversa organizzazione delle registrazioni, che terrà separate le nomine deliberate in seno al Maggior Consiglio da quelle decise in Senato o nel Consiglio dei dieci. La denominazione *universi* è attestata dalle cronache e dagli inventari antichi della Cancelleria ducale e fu utilizzata fino a tutto il XIX secolo, ma nel corso del Novecento è stata abbandonata e sostituita con il termine *misti*, frutto di un evidente calco ripreso dalle omonime serie esistenti nei fondi del Senato e del Consiglio dei dieci.

Diverse fonti confermano l'esistenza di un primo *liber universus* successivamente perduto, che riportava gli elenchi delle elezioni del Maggior Consiglio dal 1264 al 1295: in primo luogo il cinquecentesco codice marciano intitolato *Storia documentata del governo di Venezia dalle origini al 1296*, redatto probabilmente da un membro della Cancelleria o da un magistrato della Repubblica, che raccoglie documenti e memorie della storia veneziana

<sup>37</sup> La base dati è ora consultabile presso il sito <http://rulersofvenice.org/main.html>. Continuano a corredarla i saggi redatti per la prima edizione: Kohl, 2009a; Mozzato; Salmini, 2009; O'Connell; Kohl, 2009b.

fino alla fine del secolo XIII<sup>38</sup>. Il registro scomparve probabilmente agli inizi del XIX secolo, come sembrano provare gli inventari redatti in anni diversi da Jacopo Chiodo all'epoca che precede e accompagna la concentrazione degli archivi nella sede dei Frari. In una di queste stesure il volume duecentesco viene indicato come ancora esistente, per poi sparire in una versione successiva; non vi è certezza che la perdita risalga effettivamente agli anni della Restaurazione, e non al tumultuoso decennio precedente, poiché non è chiaro se Chiodo si servisse inizialmente di elenchi e inventari precedenti o se operasse sempre e direttamente sulla documentazione con riscontri puntuali. Il termine *universus* è attestato ancora nella tradizione della Cancelleria nella prima metà del Seicento, come appare nel foglio di mano del notaio ducale Marc'Antonio Padavin, inserito nell'antico registro n° 2.

Nel corso del Quattrocento, con l'ampliarsi del territorio dello Stato veneziano e l'espansione conseguente delle competenze e degli incarichi istituzionali, si attesta la presenza di registri destinati a tener nota dei soli *regimina*. La deliberazione del Maggior Consiglio in data 14 settembre 1437 sembra essere all'origine di un sistema nuovo per tener conto dell'elezione dei *rectores*, attestato dalla nascita di un registro apposito. Dal 1491 si assiste a un altro tentativo di riorganizzazione, destinato a durare trent'anni: nascono in parallelo tre registri distinti per annotare le elezioni a *consilia*, *officia* e *regimina*<sup>39</sup>. Oltre a questi tentativi, frutto di un'attività cancelleresca che nel tempo diviene sempre più complessa e imponente, si riscontra la presenza di esemplari diversi – talvolta concomitanti – che seguono la data di entrata nella carica anziché quella di elezione.

Vanno attribuite all'operazione di sommario riordino e rietichettatura risalente forse alla metà del Novecento l'intitolazione *misti* cui si è già fatto cenno, ma anche la fusione dei registri *universi*, attraverso una numerazione progressiva, con la serie dei *libri electionum et partium* o *propositae* del Maggior Consiglio. Tale accorpamento, dovuto alla somiglianza nell'aspetto esteriore e presumibilmente anche per la contiguità di funzione svolta da tali registri in seno alla Cancelleria, non è stato accolto nell'ordinamento del fondo e nella redazione dell'inventario.

L'analisi delle segnature precedenti, talvolta discontinue, talvolta duplicate, sembra suggerire l'ipotesi che i registri pervenuti non siano il frutto compiuto di registrazioni tenute da un unico ufficio della Cancelleria, ma che in epoche successive siano stati aggiunti esemplari diversi redatti in quell'ambito, ma per altre finalità, e di non sicura appartenenza archivistica.

<sup>38</sup> BNM, Mss. it., cl. VII, 551 (7281), cc. 101v-02r. Cessi, 3:XVI, nota 2: "Il compilatore del codice marciano It. VII 551, che ha messo insieme documenti e memorie della storia veneziana fino alla fine del secolo XIII [...] ha utilizzato anche il 'liber universus', ora smarrito, il quale [...] conservava le liste delle elezioni del Maggior Consiglio dal 1264 al 1295".

<sup>39</sup> Rispettivamente in ASVE, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 22, Ursa, c. 120r, e reg. Stella, c. 111, parte riportata anche in Maggior Consiglio, Libro Novissimo, 9, c. 146v.

## 5. *Il progetto di schedatura informatizzata del Segretario alle voci (secolo XVI)*

La banca dati del *Segretario alle voci*, promossa dall'Ufficio Centrale Beni Archivistici e realizzata dall'Archivio di Stato di Venezia a partire dal marzo 1980, riguarda fonti analoghe a quelle trattate nel progetto *The Rulers of Venice*. Sono i registri prodotti proprio a seguito dei tentativi di miglioramento e razionalizzazione del sistema di registrazione delle elezioni, compiuti intorno agli anni 1526-1531, e che da allora manterranno, per circa 270 anni, una fisionomia pressoché inalterata. La schedatura si è limitata al secolo XVI, e quindi ai primi sei registri superstiti della serie *Elezioni in Maggior Consiglio* (1-5 e 7) e ai primi sette della serie *Elezioni in Pregadi* [Senato], per un complesso di oltre 40.000 records<sup>40</sup>. La struttura dei dati nelle fonti trattate dai due progetti coincide in larga misura, ma è lievemente diversa. Per le specifiche caratteristiche e per i dettagli della metodologia seguita (che pure hanno avuto riflessi positivi nel contribuire ad impostare, a distanza di tanti anni, il progetto *The Rulers of Venice*) si rinvia ad alcuni precedenti contributi<sup>41</sup>.

Va ricordato soltanto che il lavoro, a quel tempo, non avveniva con personal computer (mezzo allora inesistente), ma su unità di registrazione molto semplici (3742 IBM). La gestione dei dati era garantita dal centro di calcolo dell'IBM Italia a Roma, secondo modalità complicate che avvenivano con scambio di materiali (dischetti, tabulati) via posta. I dati venivano ordinati

<sup>40</sup> Il progetto SAV (Segretario alle voci) fu elaborato dal Gruppo di studio per l'informatica degli Archivi di Stato italiani, creato in seno al Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali, Ufficio Centrale Beni Archivistici, nella seconda metà degli anni '70 ed ebbe inizio nel marzo 1980. Per i registri, si veda l'elenco qui riportato in Appendice.

<sup>41</sup> Crescenzi; Salmini, Zolli; Salmini, 1986; Schiavon, 1986; Salmini, 1992; Salmini, 1993; Salmini, 1994. Le informazioni principali riguardanti gli uffici si trovano annotate in forma schematica, generalmente nella parte superiore della carta, e riportano: la denominazione dell'ufficio; le modalità di elezione; la durata, generalmente espressa in mesi; eventuali requisiti per l'eleggibilità; riferimenti a deliberazioni riguardanti l'ufficio; raramente anche il testo *in extenso*; il numero dei componenti; ulteriori specificazioni. Per ogni carica, gli eletti sono registrati in ordine di data di elezione; le informazioni si presentano in colonne, indicate ciascuna con una propria specifica dizione, seguendo uno schema ripetitivo e costante. Le informazioni principali riguardanti gli eletti sono: data di elezione ("remansit [electus]"); nome personale, cognome e patronimico dell'eletto; data di *expeditio*, vale a dire del termine concesso per raggiungere la sede dell'ufficio; data prevista per l'ingresso nella carica ("intravit"); data prevista per la regolare scadenza del mandato ("complevit"); data entro la quale il segretario deve predisporre il rinnovo della carica ("tempus electionis"): è questo l'unico elemento che fin dall'inizio si stabilì di non rilevare. Spesso vengono indicate nella colonna dedicata alla *expeditio* indicazioni diverse, che riguardano l'eletto sia nella sua carriera politica che nelle sue vicende personali: la specificazione del *munus*; l'elezione ad altro ufficio (spesso indicato in modo sintetico, o con sigle); il rifiuto della nomina ("refutavit"), talvolta accompagnate dal motivo o dalla data; l'indicazione di quale eletto venisse mano a mano sostituito ("in loco de"); la riserva del luogo o la restituzione del luogo, nei casi di sospensione temporanea dell'entrata in carica, il che talvolta comportava una temporanea sostituzione; il richiamo a specifici provvedimenti legislativi (relativi all'individuo o all'ufficio); la notizia di vicende personali (morte, malattia, o altro ancora).

secondo la sequenza esistente nei nastri originali, e solo successivamente venivano integralmente caricati sul sistema STAIRS gestito da un potente – per l’epoca – elaboratore dell’IBM, vale a dire un software di information retrieval che consentiva la ricerca parola per parola. Tale ricerca fu però sempre ostacolata dall’assenza di collegamento via modem dell’Archivio di Stato di Venezia con il centro di calcolo. Inoltre, essendo i dati materialmente registrati in due banche dati STAIRS distinte (Maggior Consiglio e Senato), non era allora possibile seguire simultaneamente la carriera di un individuo attraverso le decisioni dei due massimi organi della Repubblica, anche se la struttura dei dati era stata concepita proprio per assicurare l’integrazione tra fonti diverse all’interno del più ampio progetto *Patriziato veneziano*.

Dal 1987, per i suoi altissimi costi, non venne più rinnovato il contratto di servizio con l’IBM per la gestione e la manutenzione delle banche dati. All’inizio degli anni ’90, fu possibile recuperare il lavoro grazie alla collaborazione della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa, superando difficoltà notevoli di carattere tecnico. In primo luogo si è trattato di trovare fisicamente una macchina – tra quelle in disuso ma ancora funzionanti – in grado di svolgere e leggere i dati contenuti in nastri con quel tipo di traccia e densità. La seconda difficoltà, di ordine strettamente archivistico, dipendeva dall’impossibilità di distinguere dal contenuto dei nastri quale fosse la copia completa e aggiornata, tra i diversi esemplari relativi al *Segretario alle voci* indicati dalle scritte a penna sull’involucro esterno, ma al loro interno apparentemente identici.

Ci si è scontrati, in questo caso, con un fenomeno preoccupante, ben noto e denunciato a più riprese dalla stampa scientifica internazionale e scoperto da numerose amministrazioni pubbliche statunitensi: la totale inadeguatezza dei sistemi di archiviazione dei nastri magnetici, privi di quelle etichette interne (che oggi vengono classificate come indispensabili metadati) che normalmente informano sul nome di un file, sulla data della sua memorizzazione, e sulle sue dimensioni. Questo aspetto deprecabile del sistema di archiviazione e conservazione degli archivi magnetici IBM (o meglio, dei dati appartenenti agli enti che avevano stipulato tra anni ’70 e ’80 contratti di servizio con l’IBM) è stato affrontato e paradossalmente risolto soltanto grazie ai quaderni manoscritti in cui il personale dell’Archivio di Stato di Venezia addetto alla registrazione dei dati teneva conto in modo ordinato dei *records* e delle date degli aggiornamenti inviati volta per volta a Roma. Stabilita grazie a questa possibilità di riscontro quale fosse la copia completa, si è ottenuto il trasferimento del data set sequenziale dalla versione originaria alla versione per mainframe del CDS/ISIS, e da questa a una prima versione per personal computer<sup>42</sup>.

Ho potuto mettere a punto una seconda versione dell’applicativo SAV di CDS/ISIS per *personal computer*, meno ricalcata sul sistema originario e più rispondente alle potenzialità di ISIS. Una volta ottenuto il passaggio dal

<sup>42</sup> Un riassunto di questa esperienza di salvataggio dei dati è analizzato come caso di studio in Salmìni, 2005.

vecchio al nuovo *software*, è iniziata la correzione dei dati. Permangono alcune inesattezze (minuscole incongrue nei nomi composti e nei testi delle note, oppure apparenti doppie elezioni in un medesimo *record*), che tuttavia non incidono in modo determinante sul valore dell'informazione. Già da alcuni anni è a disposizione nella sala di studio dei Frari un primo repertorio per una parte degli eletti, curato da chi scrive, che consente di seguire il *cursus honorum* di quei singoli rappresentanti del patriziato, in attesa del completamento del lavoro con la messa in rete della banca dati. Quest'ultima fase, ancora da attuare, rappresenterebbe la prima realizzazione del progetto ministeriale *Patriziato veneziano*, dovendosi collegare insieme i dati, provenienti dalle due diverse serie dell'Avogaria di Comun, relativi ai singoli esponenti sempre della classe aristocratica veneziana, registrati in occasione della loro nascita e dei loro matrimoni.

Anche questo dato di fatto – comune per tanti aspetti a molti uffici pubblici – dell'assenza pressoché totale di strutture tecniche che gestiscano normalmente la programmazione e la manutenzione dei dati, richiederebbe una adeguata e seria riflessione, e non solo per la fatica spesa per raggiungere qualsiasi risultato, ma soprattutto per le implicazioni gravi circa la sicurezza, conservazione e durata nel tempo del lavoro affidato alla memoria magnetica. Tale noncuranza risulta particolarmente preoccupante in un settore – quello archivistico – cui in linea teorica spetterebbe il compito di dare indicazioni precise sui sistemi di gestione dei documenti in ambiente digitale a tutti gli uffici della pubblica amministrazione<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> Per i problemi che derivano dalla costruzione di un sistema informativo adeguato, e per le difficoltà oggettive che si frappongono tra la fonte rilevata in modo testuale e il recupero automatico dell'informazione non più testuale, ma in forma indicizzata, rinvio specificamente a Salmini, 1994. Le difficoltà incontrate a normalizzare nomi personali e casati del patriziato veneziano, uno dei ceti più noti e studiati, ricchi di repertori biografici, sembrano particolarmente significative.

## Appendice

### Elenco delle serie dell'archivio del Segretario alle voci<sup>44</sup>

#### 1. Registri "Universi" o Misti

Elezioni a uffici consigli e reggimenti (1349-1459)	regg. 1-4
Elezioni a reggimenti. Registrazione per data di entrata in carica (1437-1490)	reg. 5
Elezioni a uffici e reggimenti. Registrazione per data di entrata in carica (1465-1502)	reg. 6
Elezioni a uffici. Registrazione per data di entrata in carica (1491-1524)	reg. 7
Elezioni a reggimenti (1491-1524)	reg. 8
Elezioni a consigli (1492-1521)	reg. 9
Elezioni a uffici (1521-1556)	regg. 10-11
Elezioni a consigli (1550-1573)	reg. 12
Registri "Universi" Serie moderna (1637-1708)	regg. 1-8
Libri delle proposte. Serie antica (1418-1493)	regg. 1-4
Libri delle proposte. Serie moderna (1549-1797)	regg. 1-16
Elezioni in Maggior Consiglio. Registri (1524-1797)	regg. 1-33
Elezioni in Maggior Consiglio. Filze (1670-1797)	filze. 1-19
Libri degli scrutini e delle elezioni del Senato (1503-1558)	regg. 1-2
Elezioni in Senato. Registri (1531-1797)	regg. 1-26
Elezioni in Senato. Filze (1685-1797)	filze. 1-21
Accettazioni (1540-1797)	regg. 1-14

#### 2. Elezioni a consigli

Elezioni al Senato e alla "Zonta" del Senato (1582-1796)	regg. 1-2
Elezioni al Senato, alla "Zonta" del Senato, alla Quarantia civil nuova e ad altri uffici (1618-1629)	reg. 1
Elezioni alla Quarantia civil nuova (1542-1797)	regg. 1-2
Elezioni al Consiglio dei Dieci (1569-1597) [la serie prosegue in <i>Consiglio dei dieci, Miscellanea codici</i> , regg. 60-68 (1597-1797)]	regg. 1-2
Elezioni al Collegio dei XX Savi del corpo dei Quaranta (1585-1678)	reg. 1

#### 3. Lettere di "consegna" (1775-1797)

regg. 1-18

#### 4. Decreti (1260-1797)

filze 1-10

#### 5. Fedi (1709-1791)

filze 1-4

#### 6. Grazie della barbarella

Registri della <i>barbarella</i> (1509-1797)	regg. 1-4
Registri di grazie della <i>barbarella</i> provenienti da altri archivi (1534-1654)	regg. 8-10
Registro dei "plezi" per la grazia della <i>barbarella</i> (1552-1796)	reg. 11
Registro delle ballottazioni in Collegio per essere ammessi alla grazia del giorno di Santa Barbara (1741-1797)	reg. 1

<sup>44</sup> Nell'ordinamento tradizionale, che qui si è scelto di rispettare, la numerazione delle unità ricomincia da uno in ogni serie.

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7. *Nuovi libri d'oro dei patrizi viventi (1625-1796)* regg. 5-7

8. *Registri diversi*

Giuramenti dei rettori di osservanza delle leggi suntuarie (1609-1637) reg. 1

Giuramenti dei Procuratori di San Marco (1612-1795) reg. 1

Note di patrizi defunti (1688-1768) filza 1

Cacciati (1789) reg. 1



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#### Abstract

L'immagine del Segretario alle voci è ancora sfumata nel panorama degli studi sull'ordinamento della Repubblica di Venezia in epoca rinascimentale. Questo contributo illustra i primi risultati di uno studio ancora in corso, per dare qualche cenno sul contesto storico e archivistico delle fonti utilizzate nella realizzazione di due importanti banche dati prosopografiche relative alle cariche pubbliche ricoperte dai membri del patriziato: la più recente The Rulers of Venice 1332-1524,

promossa da Benjamin Kohl, e quella pionieristica denominata Segretario alle voci, realizzata all'interno dell'Archivio di Stato di Venezia a partire dal 1980 e riferita al Cinquecento.

The Segretario alle voci is still an ill-defined figure in the general horizon of research on the constitution of the Venetian Republic during the Renaissance. This essay contains the first fruits of research still in progress. It offers information on the historical and archival context of the sources used to create two important prosopographical databases concerning public office held by members of the patriciate: the more recent "Rulers of Venice 1332-1524", launched by Benjamin Kohl, and the pioneering project entitled "Segretario alle voci", concerned with the sixteenth century and carried out within the Venetian State Archive from 1980 onwards.

*Parole chiave*

Medioevo; Età moderna; Trecento; Settecento; Venezia; storia politica; istituzioni; archivi

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; Modern Times; 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; institutions; archives

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# **Legitimizing Venetian Expansion: Patricians and Secretaries in the Fifteenth Century**

by Monique O'Connell

## *1. Introduction*

There has been a great deal of scholarly attention paid to the political commitments of Florentine humanists and the intersection between practical politics and the development of ideologies, but in recent years Venetian humanists have not received the same level of attention. As Margaret King, Vittore Branca, and Franco Gaeta have convincingly shown, Venetian patrician humanists used their intellectual skills to protect and defend the interests of the Venetian ruling class<sup>1</sup>. Élite Venetians used the humanist intellectual practices imported from Florence in the fifteenth century to defend their aristocratic political and social order in classical terms, praising the virtues of the patriciate as well as the excellence of Venetian institutions. King also established that there was considerable overlap between political engagement and humanist learning among patrician humanists, pointing out that forty-five percent of lay patrician humanists had political careers of exceptional importance<sup>2</sup>. These Venetian patrician humanists and politicians served in Venetian councils, as governors in Venice's expanding Terraferma and maritime states, and as ambassadors on behalf of Venice. King's observations hold true when one narrows the focus from the praise of Venice in general to the particular work of promoting and defending Venice's expansionist foreign policy on land and sea in the fifteenth century. Across the course of a century, a core group of Venetian patricians combined their political activity and humanist learning to support policies that championed and justified Venetian territorial expansion. The central members of this core group: Francesco Barbaro (1394-1454), Paolo Morosini (1406-1484), Bernardo Giustinian (1408-1489), and Bernardo Bembo (1433-1519) are all well-known to scholars for their many orations, letters, treatises, and histories that not only glorified the Venetian past but provided justifications, both implicit and explicit, for Venetian expansion in the present<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> King, Branca, Gaeta.

<sup>2</sup> King, 282.

<sup>3</sup> In addition to King's profiles of these patrician humanists, see Casini, 2005, 366-373.

But Venetian patricians were not the only group that actively participated in the acquisition and intellectual defense of Venice's growing empire. While scholars have pointed to the central role non-patrician secretaries played in the running of the Venetian government, they have not generally acknowledged the important role these secretaries played in advancing Venetian interests abroad and particularly their role in legitimating Venice's expanding territorial state. During the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, secretaries both assisted patrician ambassadors and represented the Venetian republic themselves. Several of these secretaries also produced influential and important writings about Venice and its domains. Lorenzo De Monacis (c. 1351-1428), Nicolò Sagundino (c. 1402-1464), and Antonio Vinciguerra (c. 1446-1502) all had successful careers in the Ducal Chancellery and collaborated with the Venetian patricians of the core group in order to produce a narrative of Venetian expansion that flattered the Republic while furthering the interests of patricians who favored expansion.

## *2. Patricians, Secretaries, and an expanding state*

Venetian government structures were put to the test in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, when a combination of circumstances led to the Republic's territorial expansion in both mainland and maritime realms. In the forty years between 1380 and 1420, Venice more than doubled its territory and population, taking cities on the Italian mainland, re-acquiring territories lost to Hungary in 1358 along the Dalmatian coastline, and taking cities in the Peloponnese and some Ionian islands as well<sup>4</sup>. After this first rush of growth, the Venetian state continued to expand when the opportunity presented itself or when the logic of self-defense or economic interest made it desirable. On the Italian side of the Adriatic, Venice reached south to Ravenna in 1441 and to Cervia in 1463 and west to Crema in 1449; in the east, Venice added Egina in 1451, Malvasia in 1464, Cyprus in 1473, Veglia in 1480, and Zante in 1482. By the late fifteenth century, Venetian territory stretched from the Lombard plain to the Peloponnese and beyond, to the islands of Crete and Cyprus. This territorial expansion, which was accomplished through conquest, purchase, inheritance, and diplomacy, created a need for new ideological justifications. Michael Knapton, John Law, James Grubb, and Alfredo Viggiano have investigated the arguments Venice presented in the mainland context, showing how Venice relied on a combination of judicial opinions, diplomatic work, and humanist orations to present its rule on the mainland as legitimate, just, and orderly<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 1:3-34.

<sup>5</sup> Knapton, 144-147; Grubb, 1988; Law; Viggiano, 3-50. There is comparatively little recent work on Venetian justifications of their maritime conquests.

The growing territorial state not only required justifications, it also required administrators and governmental structures<sup>6</sup>. Venetian government ran along two parallel tracks: the activities of patrician councils were supported by the work of secretaries and notaries in the ducal chancellery. Scholars of the chancellery Andrea Zannini, Giuseppe Trebbi, Marco Pozza, Matteo Casini, and Mary Neff have outlined the many responsibilities these functionaries performed: registering, organizing and archiving governmental documents, including laws and election results; following and assisting in the work of the principal Venetian councils and magistracies; and representing Venice abroad as part of a patrician ambassador's entourage or, more rarely, alone<sup>7</sup>. The Venetian chancellery stood out from its counterparts in Florence and Milan for the relatively low number of secretaries with humanist training<sup>8</sup>. Venice's earliest humanist circle surrounding doge Andrea Dandolo had a number of prominent secretaries, including Raffaino Caresini (1319-1390), Benintendi de' Ravagnani (1317-1365), and Paolo de Bernardo (d. 1393), but by the fifteenth century, as King has argued, Venetian patricians dominated Venice's humanist culture<sup>9</sup>.

Loyalty to Venice was as important a criteria for advancement as a secretary as was humanist learning. Marco Aurelio (c. 1430-c.1478) spent several years as the Venetian representative in Corfu and then Rome before becoming secretary to the Council of Ten in 1477<sup>10</sup>. Aurelio appeared as the main character in the brief treatise "On the Duties of Scribes," by Marcantonio Sabellico (1436-1506); in this work, Aurelio outlined the requirements for a secretarial career, pointing to the importance of loyalty and stating that "Daily we see the learned men of our order going forth with dignity on important legations to great princes and powerful kings — [an achievement] not to be expected from an ignorant man, who would lack both the learning and prudence [required]"<sup>11</sup>. Fifteenth-century secretarial humanists moved between positions in the Venetian chancellery and service outside the city, making it essential that the Venetian government could depend on their dedication as well as their diplomatic skills. Febo Capella (c. 1420-1482), who eventually became Grand Chancellor, began as a notary in Cattaro; his progress through positions in the Venetian chancellery was punctuated by numerous diplomatic missions undertaken both as a secretary and as a sole representative<sup>12</sup>. Capella's diplomatic work brought him into close contact with important Venetian patricians: he served with Francesco Barbaro on an

<sup>6</sup> Viggiano; Varanini, Zannini, 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Zannini, 1993 and 1996; Casini, 1991; Trebbi, Pozza, Neff.

<sup>8</sup> King, 90; see Trebbi for a sustained comparison with Florence.

<sup>9</sup> King, 291, includes only eight secretaries in her core group. For the fourteenth century secretaries, see the profiles by Kohl, 2013a and 2013b.

<sup>10</sup> King, 315-16; Neff, 359-60.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in King, 76-77.

<sup>12</sup> King, 77, 348-49; Neff, 399-400.

embassy to the Visconti of Milan in 1444, with Francesco Contarini (1421-1460) to Siena in 1455, and with Lodovico Foscarini (1409-1478) at the Council of Mantua in 1459.

Febo Capella's overlapping work with circles of Venetian patricians was not unusual, and there is some evidence of interdependence between patricians and secretaries as each group climbed their respective career ladders. Francesco Barbaro, for instance, wrote numerous letters to Capella on political matters, asking him about events and soliciting his opinion, and Lodovico Foscarini did the same with Marco Aurelio<sup>13</sup>. While there is evidence that Venetian patricians asked for advice and favors from secretaries, relying in particular on their access to the doge and experience of inner councils, it is also clear that secretarial careers, particularly at the higher levels of the chancellery, were dependent on patrician patronage and favor<sup>14</sup>. The connections between patricians and elite secretaries in the fifteenth century were remarkable because in several cases they were not based on shared Venetian ancestry. In the first part of the fifteenth century, several immigrants, or sons of recent immigrants, rose to prominent positions in the chancellery, among them Marco Aurelio and Nicolò Sagundino, both of whom came from families with origins on Negroponte (Euboea)<sup>15</sup>. Over the course of the fifteenth century, offices in the chancellery began to be reserved for *cittadini originarii*, or original citizens: a law in 1419 ruled that secretaries and notaries who accompanied Venetian representatives outside of Venice had to be citizens, either by birth or by privilege<sup>16</sup>. In 1478 and 1484, laws limiting positions in the Ducal Chancellery to original citizens went into effect, as part of what James Grubb, Matteo Casini, and Anna Bellavitis have shown was a gradual effort to define membership in this group of élite citizens<sup>17</sup>. By the mid sixteenth century, this *serrata* (closing) of the citizen class was well underway, but in the early and mid fifteenth century, prominent secretaries came from a variety of backgrounds, unified only by their loyalty and service to the Venetian state.

In their diplomatic work as well as in Venetian councils, secretaries were perfectly positioned to understand Venice's growing need to justify its expanding territorial claims and to provide responses to Venice's increasingly strident foreign critics. In the fifteenth century, a shared commitment to humanist ideals as well as professional and personal connections drew a small group of elite secretaries and politically active patricians together as they worked to provide such a defense. Lorenzo de Monacis, Nicolò Sagundino, and Antonio Vinciguerra each had significant connections with multiple Venetian patricians who were themselves active in Venetian expansion and each produced important writings that promoted Venetian interests. Venetian

<sup>13</sup> King, 78-79; for Barbaro's letters to Capella, see Barbaro, 2: n. 241, 243, 332, 339.

<sup>14</sup> Neff.

<sup>15</sup> King, 290-6.

<sup>16</sup> Zannini, 1993, 39.

<sup>17</sup> Neff, 12-16; Grubb, 2000; Bellavitis, 65-88, Casini, 1992.



secretaries such as Ravagnani and Caresini had, of course, authored influential histories of Venice before the fifteenth century, so De Monacis, Sagundino, and Vinciguerra were not innovators in this sense. But all three of these men were profoundly influenced by the humanist movement, which shaped the tone and type of texts they offered in Venice's defense. Furthermore, their careers together span the fifteenth century and mark three distinct stages in the development of Venice's empire and the accompanying narratives of justification: a phase of constructing both structures of administration and explanations of expansion (De Monacis), a period at mid-century when plans for an anti-Turkish crusade dominated Venetian and Italian political thinking (Sagundino), and a renewed moment of aggressive territorial expansion in the later fifteenth century (Vinciguerra).

### 3. *De Monacis and the Construction of Venice's Empire*

Lorenzo de Monacis, a notary and secretary in the Venetian chancery, brought together the new humanist learning making its way to Venice and a direct personal experience of Venetian practices of expansion and imperial rule<sup>18</sup>. De Monacis's career involved him in the Republic's diplomacy of territorial expansion; in 1386-87 he traveled to Hungary as part of an embassy to intervene in the succession crisis there, accompanying Pantaleone Barbo (d. 1398), a senior politician and experienced diplomat<sup>19</sup>. De Monacis was able to report back to Venice that the negotiations had gone smoothly; he also composed a poem defending the Hungarian queens Mary and Elizabeth from charges that they had treacherously killed Charles II of Naples<sup>20</sup>. In November 1388 De Monacis was elected Grand Chancellor of Crete, one of the most important notarial positions in Venice's maritime state; between his election and investiture in the office he oversaw the treaty by which Maria d'Enghien, the heiress of Argos and Nauplion, sold these cities to Venice for 500 ducats<sup>21</sup>. He returned to Hungary twice more on diplomatic missions, in 1389 and 1390; on the first of these trips he and Barbo were robbed of all their possessions, and the *Maggior Consiglio* gave him sixty gold ducats in compensation for the loss<sup>22</sup>. De Monacis had just taken up his post on Crete when he was sent to France on a diplomatic mission in 1395 to resolve a commercial dispute, where he was joined by another experienced patrician diplomat, Giovanni Alberto<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> On De Monacis, see Ravegnani, Poppi, 1967, and Poppi 1972-73.

<sup>19</sup> Borsari.

<sup>20</sup> De Monacis's *Relazione* is given in Italian in Romanin, 3:312-314 and in Latin in Ljubić, 4:237-238. For the poem, see Poppi, 1967, 169-172.

<sup>21</sup> Poppi, 1967, 171.

<sup>22</sup> Poppi, 1967, 172.

<sup>23</sup> Poppi, 1967, 175; for Alberto's ambassadorial career, see Kohl et al, nos. 59809, 71593, 71601, 71623, 71632, 71655.

He then returned to Crete, where he worked with the Venetian patricians sent out as short term administrators, including Zaccaria Trevisan (c. 1370-1414), Egidio Morosini (d. 1417), and the future doge Tommaso Mocenigo (1343-1423), all of whom played central roles in Venice's politics of expansion in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century<sup>24</sup>. On Crete De Monacis was also in contact with a wide circle of learned clergymen and Greek and Latin scholars there and he maintained contact with humanist circles in Italy, as a 1415 letter from Venice's most famous humanist and politician, Francesco Barbaro, demonstrates<sup>25</sup>.

De Monacis was thus immersed in both the burgeoning humanist movement and in the practical side of empire building, through personal experience and through association. Between 1421 and 1428, he composed a laudatory history of Venice, *De gestis, moribus et nobilitate civitatis Venetiarum*, narrating Venetian history from its founding to 1354 and cloaking what were already Venetian ideas in classical garb<sup>26</sup>. He commented more directly on contemporary events in two orations, the first produced for doge Tommaso Mocenigo on the millennial anniversary of Venice's founding in 421 and the second dedicated to Doge Francesco Foscari as he embarked on a war with the Visconti of Milan in 1425<sup>27</sup>. In both *De gestis* and the orations, De Monacis pursued a parallel between Venice and Rome, arguing that while Rome had been corrupted by power and luxury, Venice had remained free since its beginning and was charged with the divine mission of defending liberty. In his 1425 oration to Foscari, he characterized the war against Visconti as waged "not for the expansion of domain, not for a greed for glory, but for the health of Italy and our patria"<sup>28</sup>.

In De Monacis's treatment of Adriatic history, Venice's struggle against tyranny in general was transformed into a specific responsibility to defend the freedom of the seas against pirates for the good of all. In his 1421 *Oration*, he said that in the early years of the city's existence, Venice liberally and generously offered its help to its neighbors, Istria and Dalmatia, in combating the pirates that infested the waters of the Adriatic "for the sake of the communities which surrounded the sea"<sup>29</sup>. De Monacis' claims about Venice's role as a defender against pirates were articulated in terms of Venetian history, but the rationale could be used to justify their present acquisitions as well as

<sup>24</sup> Poppi, 1967, 176-77; on Trevisan, see King, 436-37 and Girgensohn, 2: 983-97; on Mocenigo see Girgensohn, 2: 880-92.

<sup>25</sup> Pertusi, 1965, 163-71; Panagiotakes; Barbaro, 2: n. 1.

<sup>26</sup> De Monacis's work, entitled "De gestis, moribus et nobilitate civitatis Venetiarum," is also known as *Chronicon de rebus Veneti*, the title given it by its eighteenth-century editor, Flaminio Corner. For his source material see Poppi, 1967, 161-6; Pertusi, 1965, 173-205; more generally, see Gaeta, 16-25; Pertusi, 1970, 277-89.

<sup>27</sup> The first oration is edited in Poppi, 1972-73; the second partially in Pertusi, 1970, 285-6.

<sup>28</sup> Pertusi, 1970, 286.

<sup>29</sup> Poppi, 1972-73, 493-4.

their past glories. He also specifically rejected self-serving motivations for Venetian expansion, asking in his oration to Foscari: “What cause impelled our Republic to accept Thessalonica, freely offered by the powerless Greeks, if not the general benefit of the Christian sea against the Turkish incursions and to defend the domain against [their] cruelties?”<sup>30</sup>. In this case, the city is cast not only as a defender of liberty in general, but as a defender of the Christian realm against the Turks, making the Adriatic a Christian sea, and Venetian expansion in Greece part of a larger Crusade for the good of all Christendom. De Monacis concluded his Oration by declaring that the Winged Lion of St. Mark now struck terror in the hearts of bad men, while good men saw it as a sign of public safety and liberty, praising the divine labor that had brought Venetian empire to the Adriatic Sea<sup>31</sup>.

De Monacis’s history and his orations articulated all of the elements that would be repeated over and over again in Venice’s self-defense: protecting liberty on behalf of grateful neighbors, who freely submitted themselves to Venetian power in return for order and safety. Throughout his career, De Monacis produced a variety of texts that defended Venice’s reputation and interests: diplomatic reports, poetry, a humanist history, and Latin orations. His work provided Venice with much needed ideological legitimacy during the first phase of their rapid expansion onto the Italian mainland and into Dalmatia. His history of Venice was particularly influential; Marcantonio Sabellico (1436-1506) would draw on it heavily in his history of Venice, published in 1487<sup>32</sup>.

#### 4. *Nicolò Sagundino and the Politics of Crusade*

While De Monacis was born in Venice and served in the maritime state, Nicolò Sagundino was a subject of that maritime state who immigrated to Venice. Sagundino was born in Negroponte and was working in Venetian Thessalonica when the city was captured by the Ottomans in 1430<sup>33</sup>. He and his family were held prisoner for a year before they were freed, when he returned to Negroponte and entered Venetian service in the chancellery there, travelling to Italy as an official interpreter to the council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-39). He was appointed apostolic secretary by Pope Eugenius IV, but after Eugenius’s 1447 death he returned to Negroponte, likely serving in the Venetian chancellery there. When the news of Constantinople’s conquest by the Ottomans reached Venice in late June 1453, the Senate sent word to Negroponte that Sagundino, “a loyal and learned person, experienced in the

<sup>30</sup> Pertusi, 1970, 286.

<sup>31</sup> Poppi, 1972-3, 494.

<sup>32</sup> Gaeta, 65-75; for Sabellico’s sources, see Bersi.

<sup>33</sup> Mastrodemetres, 243-48; King, 81-90 and 427-30; Meserve, 106; Philippides, 6-16.

Turkish court,” should join the Republic’s ambassador Bartolomeo Marcello on his mission to make peace with Mehmed II (1432-1481)<sup>34</sup>. The two traveled to Constantinople in October 1454; a Venetian-Ottoman peace treaty was signed in April 1454, and Sagundino was back in Venice by the winter of that same year.

Almost immediately upon his return from Constantinople, the Venetian Senate sent Sagundino on a sort of lecture tour—he visited Pope Nicolas V (1397-1455) and then King Alfonso of Naples (1396-1458), delivering a public oration that was then expanded and circulated in Italy<sup>35</sup>. Sagundino’s oration included a detailed description of the Ottoman sultan, Mehmed II, as well as an analysis of Turkish military strength and an account of the death of Constantine IX Palaiologos (1404-1453), the last Byzantine emperor. According to Sagundino, Mehmed II was a formidable foe – intelligent, driven, and commander of a strong, well organized realm and military system. Sagundino portrayed Mehmed as inspired by classical culture, saying that “he has particularly chosen to emulate Alexander of Macedon and Gaius Caesar, whose deeds he has arranged to be translated into his own language.... He is determined to challenge their fame and he seems to be ardently inspired by their glory and praises”<sup>36</sup>. But Sagundino also emphasized that Mehmed was “inflamed against Christians” and determined to win the reputation of an Alexander or a Caesar through conquering Italy: “Everything is being prepared [by Mehmed] to assault Italy, ... to this end he directs and aspires all of his thoughts, to this he bends all of his decisions”<sup>37</sup>. Sagundino’s oration thus worked on two levels, as both a warning of a coming danger and as a call to coordinated Christian action against the Ottoman threat.

The Venetian Senate clearly found Sagundino an effective advocate, as it sent him on a second mission to Naples and Rome in 1455, where he remained until 1458. Sagundino’s mere presence was a sort of living testimony of the need to protect Venetian Greece from Ottoman power. At the court of Naples, Sagundino came into contact with Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (1405-1464, pope from 1458), then cardinal of Siena and soon to become Pope Pius II<sup>38</sup>. Piccolomini asked Sagundino to compose a history and description of the Ottoman empire, *De Origine et de gestis Turcorum liber* (1456), which became a popular text and circulated widely in manuscript and in an edition printed in Poland in the 1470s<sup>39</sup>. This was the first western history of the Ottomans, but as Margaret Meserve has observed, the history was “curiously uninformed by

<sup>34</sup> Pertusi, 1976, 2: 28.

<sup>35</sup> Pertusi, 1976, 2: 126-141, includes the Latin oration and an Italian translation, see Philippides, 9-14, for circulation and a partial English translation.

<sup>36</sup> Translated in Philippides, 11.

<sup>37</sup> Pertusi, 2: 132.

<sup>38</sup> Meserve, 106; Philippides, 15-17.

<sup>39</sup> The work is available in Latin and an English translation in Philippides, 55-87; see Meserve, 106n177, for circulation.

his direct knowledge of contemporary Ottoman society,” instead recycling ethnographic descriptions from classical literature<sup>40</sup>. Sagundino’s history was part of a new wave of literary and political interest in the Ottomans; while there had been isolated voices warning of danger to the West before the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453, that city’s fall unleashed a wave of humanist interest in crusading. James Hankins has identified 400 literary compositions by at least fifty different humanists produced in the period between 1453 and 1481<sup>41</sup>. Further scholarship by Meserve and Nancy Bisaha has shown the ambiguities and inconsistencies in the humanists’ views on the Ottomans: while Bisaha outlines the ways that humanists developed ideas of a ‘civilized’ West versus a ‘barbarous’ East; Meserve distinguishes humanists’ histories of Ottomans from writings on other Muslim states — Mamluks, Timurids, and ‘Saracen’ Arabs, who appear as ‘good’ Islamic empires in contrast with the barbarous, cruel, and illegitimate Ottomans<sup>42</sup>.

There were several Venetian patrician humanists who shared Sagundino’s interests in the Ottomans and who contributed to this body of work, notably Lauro Querini (1420-1479), Paolo Morosini, Lodovico Foscarini, and Bernardo Giustinian. Sagundino was tied to other members of the Venetian patriciate through more direct patronage relationships, as his letters demonstrate<sup>43</sup>. Sagundino had tutored Fantino Coppo in philosophy when he served as Venetian governor on Negroponte, and wrote to Coppo from Naples when his mission dragged on, asking to be recalled. Sagundino was also a frequent correspondent of Domenico Morosini (1417-1509), a member of the innermost political circles in Venice. Sagundino turned to these patrons for help when he was struck by tragedy after his return to Venice. Having been named chancellor of Crete in 1458, Sagundino and his large family finally began their voyage to his post in 1460; the ship was still in Venetian waters when it sank. Sagundino lost his pregnant wife, two sons, a daughter, and all of his possessions, including his library. Sagundino’s patrons, including Morosini and Zaccaria Trevisan the Younger, arranged for him to give up the Cretan chancellorship and remain in Venice with his surviving family. Sagundino was again named ducal chancellor and went on several other missions, to Modon, Constantinople again, and Trebizond before his 1464 death.

Sagundino’s work on behalf of Venice came at a difficult transition for the Republic. After the rapid expansion of the early fifteenth century, Venice had fought long and expensive wars on the Italian mainland with the Visconti of Milan; at the same time, their traditional rivals in the eastern Mediterranean, the Genoese, had been replaced with the Ottomans, who were much more dangerous and whose power was rapidly growing. While De Monacis had cast Venice as the defender of Christianity against the Turkish threat in the 1420s, by

<sup>40</sup> Meserve, 75.

<sup>41</sup> Hankins, 117.

<sup>42</sup> Bisaha, Meserve.

mid-century it was rapidly becoming clear that Venice could not defend against Ottoman power alone. Sagundino's diplomatic work, his humanist orations, and his history of the Ottomans were calculated to frighten other Italian powers into joining Venice in opposing Ottoman expansion. Venice was reluctant to break off lucrative trading relationships in Constantinople without secure Western allies; Pius II spent much of his papacy working for an anti-Ottoman crusade, but the effort fell apart when he died at Ancona in 1464, where the fleet was gathering. Venice fought a long and bruising war against the Ottomans from 1463-1479; the final peace treaty to that conflict was negotiated by another secretary from Venice's Greek possessions, Giovanni Dario (1414-1494)<sup>44</sup>. Like Sagundino, Dario became known as an expert in Ottoman affairs and represented Venetian interests in Ottoman Constantinople numerous times in the 1470s and 1480s.

### 5. *Antonio Vinciguerra and Renewed Venetian Expansion*

Like Sagundino and Dario, Antonio Vinciguerra became a secretary renowned for his diplomatic skill. Vinciguerra was a ducal notary and from 1499 secretary to the Council of Ten; known for his satirical poetry, he also represented Venice on a number of important diplomatic missions<sup>45</sup>. His diplomatic work connected him to several important Venetian patricians who advocated for Venetian expansion: Vinciguerra accompanied Bernardo Bembo to Castile in 1468-69 and to Florence in 1475-76; he accompanied the future doge Andrea Vendramin (1393-1478) and Ludovico Foscarini to Rome in 1470-71, and he was a correspondent of Paolo Morosini. Vinciguerra was directly involved in Venetian expansion himself on his missions to the Adriatic island of Veglia in 1480-81 and in 1488-89. By the late fifteenth century, Veglia (Krk) was one of the only territories on the eastern Adriatic coast not directly subject to Venetian rule, and after the Ottoman conquest of most of Albania in 1479, Venice wanted to consolidate its hold over territories in the northern Adriatic. Venice saw its opportunity when word spread that the rule of the count of Veglia Giovanni Frangipane (Ivan Frankopan, d. 1486) was causing severe discontent among the island's inhabitants<sup>46</sup>. The news of turmoil on the island had also reached Matthias Corvinus, King of Hungary, who dispatched troops to Segna, on the coast near Veglia. Count Frangipane sent his wife and children to Venice to request help; Venice sent part of its fleet, commanded by Giacomo Venier, Simon Guoro and Domenico Malipiero, famous for the diaries attributed to him<sup>47</sup>. Vinciguerra was sent to Segna, to try and convince the

<sup>43</sup> Mastrodemetres, 129-168; King, 429.

<sup>44</sup> Neff, 416-418.

<sup>45</sup> Beffa; King, 79-81 and 443-44.

<sup>46</sup> In addition to Vinciguerra's account, discussed below, the acquisition of Veglia is narrated in Navagero, col. 1163-1164; and Romanin, 4: 445-446.

<sup>47</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, or ASVe, Senato Mar, reg. 11, f. 57v, 22 January 1480.



Hungarian captain Maier Blas to stop his invasion, but by the time he arrived the Hungarians were already besieging castles on Veglia. Once he had arrived, Vinciguerra discovered that the inhabitants of the island hated Frangipane so much that they were helping the Hungarian invasion; Vinciguerra convinced Frangipane to step down and go to Venice, and soon thereafter the Hungarian enterprise collapsed and Maier Blas and his troops withdrew. After the Venetian fleet sailed, Vinciguerra was left as the sole Venetian representative on the island, and he served as the island's governor from 1480-1481, an almost unprecedented instance of a non-patrician holding a top office in territorial government.

Vinciguerra's actions on Veglia are related in great detail in his *Relazione*, an account of what happened on the island as well as a document designed to prove the legitimacy of Venetian rule on Veglia<sup>48</sup>. In his account of these events, Vinciguerra included a resignation speech from Frangipane, in which he told the gathered crowd: "My brothers, I am a son and servant of the illustrious Signoria of Venice, and our illustrious ancestors had this state from [them]; knowing that my forces are not enough to defend against the danger of this [Hungarian] army.... and in the presence of you all I renounce this domain to the illustrious Signoria in the person of the *provveditore*, dictating that you are all now subjects and vassals of San Marco"<sup>49</sup>. It is clear that Frangipane did accept Venetian help and leave the island for Venice, but if he did renounce his future rights over the island in such unambiguous terms, once in Venice he changed his mind. Frangipane rejected the Venetian offer of a 1000 ducat annual pension and a 4000 ducat dowry for his daughter and fled to the Hungarian court, where he launched a series of accusations that Venice had stolen his territory.

In this contested context, Vinciguerra's *Relazione* proved an essential document legitimizing Venetian rights over the island. In addition to his narration of events during the hostilities, he also included a brief history of the island, citing physical and documentary evidence to show that the island had been a tributary of Venice since at least the thirteenth century and that the current count's jurisdiction derived from Venetian privileges granted to his ancestors, and a long catalogue of the count's tyrannical and oppressive acts towards his subjects. After Frangipane's 1486 death, Vinciguerra further strengthened Venice's claim to legitimate possession of the island by producing the count's will, which left Veglia to Venice if the count died without male heirs<sup>50</sup>. Vinciguerra claimed to have found the will in the chancellery of Veglia in 1481, but explained the five year delay in handing over the document by citing safety concerns, saying that he wanted to wait until after Frangipane's death to reveal it. Vinciguerra defended Venetian interests on Veglia both

<sup>48</sup> Ljubić, 1876, I: 29-101.

<sup>49</sup> Ljubić, 1876, I:56.

<sup>50</sup> Ljubić, 1876, I: 98-101.

through his actions and through his writings, presenting in his *Relazione* three arguments for legitimate Venetian rule: ancient jurisdiction and rights, defense of the inhabitants against tyrannical rule, and legal inheritance from the last count.

Vinciguerra went on to hold several key positions during the war of Ferrara (1482-84) and he defended Venetian interests abroad in a different way during his mission to Bologna in 1495-99. By 1498, Venice's aggressive territorial aggrandizement in Ferrara and its inaction in the face of the 1494 French invasion had won it many enemies in Italy. In 1498, the Florentines were particularly angry over the Venetians' support for Pisa's revolt against Florentine rule. The Florentines expressed their anger diplomatically but also in popular culture. In July of 1498, Vinciguerra sent three linked sonnets home from Bologna; the poems were read aloud in the Senate and recorded by the diarist Marino Sanudo (1466-1536)<sup>51</sup>. The first poem, composed in Florence, mocked Venetian ambitions in Pisa and in Puglia. Vinciguerra had used his poetic talents to write a second poem, using the same structure and rhyme words to defend the justice of the Venetian cause.

Throughout his career, and particularly in the matter of Veglia, Vinciguerra showed himself to be absolutely trustworthy and loyal to Venice. The importance of this loyalty to non-patrician careers can be seen by the contrasting experience of Francesco Negri (1452-1523), the Venetian-born son of a recent Dalmatian immigrant, Giorgio Cernoevich<sup>52</sup>. Negri received a doctorate in law from Padua in 1476 and then became a priest; he received a minor benefice at San Giovanni Decollato and was hoping to be named bishop of Veglia when his Venetian career was derailed by suspicions of disloyalty. According to Negri's own autobiography, his paternal grandmother was a Frangipane, a relationship which would have made him a second cousin to the deposed count of Veglia Giovanni Frangipane<sup>53</sup>. After Frangipane fled Venice, Negri tried to pass a gift and poem intended for Frangipane to the emperor's representative in Venice; this sparked suspicions in Venice that Negri was aiming for the bishopric in Veglia so that he could help his cousin regain lordship of the island<sup>54</sup>. Negri was briefly imprisoned in 1483 and left Venice after his release, spending the subsequent phases of his career searching for suitable employment in Padua, Rome, and elsewhere. Among his many writings was a detailed and extensive account praising the Venetian aristocracy, *De moderanda venetorum aristocratia*<sup>55</sup>. The work was written after Negri's time in prison and was dedicated first to doge Agostino Barbarigo (1419-1501), whom Negri credited with his release from prison, and then to

<sup>51</sup> Sanudo, I: 1020, discussed in Richardson, 122.

<sup>52</sup> Mercati, 2: 24-109; King, 413-15.

<sup>53</sup> Mercati, 2, 29-31.

<sup>54</sup> Mercati, 2, 49-51.

<sup>55</sup> Mercati, 2: 24 and Appendix, 40-53, reconstructs the complicated manuscript tradition of this work.



doge Leonardo Loredan (1436-1521). Despite the work's fulsome praise of Venice and its patriciate, Negri could not overcome the stain of disloyalty and never gained another position or patron in Venice.

## 6. Conclusion

The three Venetian secretaries highlighted here – Lorenzo de Monacis, Nicolò Sagundino, and Antonio Vinciguerra – are not representative of a larger group. There were certainly elements in the life and work of each man that had parallels in the experience of other secretaries. Both Sagundino and De Monacis held important positions in *stato da mar* chancelleries, as did Filippo da Rimini in Corfu and Febo Capella in Cattaro. All three served as independent diplomatic representatives of Venice, not simply as assistants to Venetian patrician ambassadors, as did Marco Aurelio and Giovanni Dario. But when seen in comparison with the larger secretarial order, all of these men stand out as unusual in the level of professional success they achieved as well as the trust placed in their skill and loyalty by the Venetian state. The elite secretaries, including Capella, Aurelio, and Dario, all shared humanist training and interests with Venetian patricians, and their success can be attributed to a combination of intellectual community and patrician patronage as well as to proven loyalty to the Venetian state. As Negri's example demonstrated, that loyalty was an essential component to professional advancement; neither humanist learning nor patrician patronage could overcome suspicion of divided loyalties.

A larger and much more difficult to answer question is that of these humanist secretaries' motivations in defending the Venetian patrician state that employed them but into which they could never be fully integrated. On the one hand, their work on behalf of Venetian interests might be seen as simply professionalism or as an attempt to improve career prospects. The three men's diplomatic work in particular could be seen in this light; like most diplomats, they were given assignments with particular parameters, and for all three men the successful completion of those missions led to career advancement. On the other hand, their more literary works, and in particular De Monacis's history of Venice, are harder to understand in a purely professional framework. De Monacis was not commissioned to write the work, nor was it widely circulated before his death, making it more likely to be a genuine expression of his intellectual commitment to Venetian interests and goals. In all three cases, the secretaries shared humanist and social connections with Venetian patricians who advocated or were active in Venice's expanding empire, making their efforts part of a larger community who worked on Venice's behalf. The writings can also be seen as tangible proof of that essential component of a secretarial career, loyalty to the Venetian state.

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#### Abstract

This essay examines the intersection of patrician humanist careers with the humanist trained secretaries who staffed the Venetian chancery in the fifteenth century. There was a small group of both patrician and non-patrician humanist authors who used their diplomatic and rhetorical skills to defend Venice's increasingly aggressive policies of territorial expansion. Three secretaries in particular — Lorenzo de Monacis, Nicolò Sagundino, and Antonio Vinciguerra — made significant contributions to the justification and defense of Venetian foreign policy. Each of them had multiple connections with Venetian patricians who supported these policies, and taken together their careers span the fifteenth century and mark three distinct stages in the development of Venice's empire and the accompanying narratives of justification. Their career trajectories also demonstrate the importance of demonstrable loyalty to Venice and its interests for high-level secretarial careers.

#### Keywords

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; institutions; culture; Terraferma; Venetian empire; patricians; secretaries

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# The Limits of Kinship: Family Politics, Vendetta, and the State in Fifteenth-Century Venice\*

by Dennis Romano

1. Compared to most city-states in late medieval and Renaissance Italy, Venice largely escaped the rivalries and factional conflicts that plagued civic life<sup>1</sup>. Venice's relative success in dousing the flames of factional conflict was the result of many factors, but the principal source of Venice's political achievement lay in a series of laws passed between 1297 and 1323 which have collectively come to be known as the *Serrata* (Closing) of the Great Council. By identifying the constituent members of the ruling élite and guaranteeing them and their descendants perpetual inclusion in the Great Council, the *Serrata* effectively stifled the impulse toward factionalism by enlarging the ruling class and making political enfranchisement a hereditary right. It safeguarded members from exile, the most commonly used weapon in factional conflict. Rather than becoming a tool of factionalism, kinship became a protection against it<sup>2</sup>. Over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the identification of patrician family and state interests continued to develop, especially as the state became the guarantor of the legitimacy of patrician births and marriages<sup>3</sup>.

Rituals such as the registration of noble births and marriages with the *avogadori di comun* (state attorneys) and enrollment in the lottery for early entry into the Great Council held on Saint Barbara's day reinforced kinship identity<sup>4</sup>. The requirement that members of patrilineages exit the Great Council Hall whenever one of their members was up for election also strengthened the sense that they shared a common fate<sup>5</sup>. Since the key to political success

\* I am especially grateful to Stanley Chojnacki for many helpful comments and suggestions on an earlier version of this essay which was presented to the Seminar on Late Medieval and Early Modern Italy at the Institute for Historical Research, London. I wish to thank Trevor Dean and Kate Lowe for the invitation to present it there.

<sup>1</sup> For testimony by Rolandino of Padua, Petrarch, and San Bernardino to Venice's tranquility, see Bouwsma, 65; Petrarca, 234; Origo, 155.

<sup>2</sup> For the *Serrata*, see Lane, 1971; Merore; Roesch; Chojnacki, 1974; Ruggiero, 1979; and O'Connell.

<sup>3</sup> Chojnacki, 1994; Chojnacki, 2000a.

<sup>4</sup> Chojnacki, 2000b, 53-75, 206-43.

<sup>5</sup> Finlay, 86-87.

depended on the ability to garner votes in elections, patricians had to build coalitions; and the most effective way to do this was through marriage. Consequently, the selection of marriage partners became a high stakes game involving a complicated calculation of social prestige, economic resources, and political influence. The net effect of all these alliances was to bind the nobles together in great interlocking webs of family relations, and the constant scurrying about for votes and pursuit of favors contributed to a sense of class cohesion and loyalty to the state<sup>6</sup>.

The consensus first formulated in the *Serrata* was further solidified during the War of Chioggia (1379-81). In the darkest days of this conflict, when the Genoese fleet entered the protected waters of the lagoon, the Venetians pulled together and defeated the enemy. In recognition of their contributions to the war effort, thirty non-noble families were granted entry into the Great Council<sup>7</sup>. But this was the last large-scale admission of new blood into the patriciate until the seventeenth century. In fact, in 1403 the *Pien Collegio* (the Ducal Council and the Senate's steering committee) rejected a proposal that would have guaranteed a constant replenishment of new members (and wealth) into the patriciate when it defeated a measure that would have granted a *popolano* (non-noble) family membership in the Great Council every time a noble family became extinct. Rejection of this plan transformed the patriciate, as Frederic Lane observed, into a "closed caste"<sup>8</sup>.

The following year Venice made a foreign policy decision that fundamentally altered the nature of the Venetian state and whose repercussions would be felt until the end of the Republic. In 1404, Venice undertook the conquest of neighboring territories on the Italian mainland, reversing a policy of economic exploitation but political detachment that had lasted for centuries. Over the next two years it seized Padua, Vicenza, and Verona and their surrounding countryside. Between 1425 and 1427 the Venetians expanded their territory further when they dissolved their long-standing alliance with Milan and wrested control of Brescia and Bergamo and their neighboring lands. To the east in these same years, they solidified their control over Friuli. In a little more than two decades then, the Venetians had transformed their republic from a relatively isolated city-state with far-flung colonies in the eastern Mediterranean into a territorial state with a serious stake in all aspects of Italian peninsular affairs<sup>9</sup>.

The consequences of this transformation were enormous. For the next thirty years, Venice found itself engaged in nearly constant warfare. Since the Venetians relied on mercenary troops, they were forced to raise vast sums of money, leading in 1454 to the collapse of the *Monte* or state-funded debt<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Finlay, 81-96; Romano, 1987, 120-31; Zannini, 1996, 420.

<sup>7</sup> On the War of Chioggia, see Lane, 1973, 189-96.

<sup>8</sup> Lane, 1971, 241-42; Davis, 18-19.

<sup>9</sup> There is a large literature on the conquest of the Terraferma and its consequences. For a general introduction, see Lane, 1973, 225-34; Mallett, 181-244; Cozzi and Knapton, 3-47.

<sup>10</sup> Mueller, 453-87.

The mercenary captains who led the troops also posed problems since several of them had territorial ambitions of their own<sup>11</sup>. Administration of the newly conquered Terraferma lands created other difficulties, not the least of which was a scramble for jobs by poorer patricians. Finally, the recently conquered lands added new social strains since members of the patriciate could now expand their networks of friends and clients well beyond the previously limited confines of the Great Council to include foreign princes and the élites of the conquered territories<sup>12</sup>. Against this backdrop the consensus of the fourteenth century started to break down, and for the first time the possibility that the patriciate would descend into factionalism and pursue vendetta became real.

2. The obligation to seek revenge was a widely held conviction in Renaissance Italy, one deeply embedded in codes of honor<sup>13</sup>. Consequently we might expect it to have been a special concern of members of the Venetian nobility. But, as Guido Ruggiero observes, following the settlement reached in the *Serrata*, “violence *within* the nobility lost most of its function [emphasis mine];” it was not a favored weapon in the patricians’ “struggle for position”<sup>14</sup>. Instead, Venetian nobles fought their battles in the council halls by means of the ballot box, using their alliances to garner enough votes to reward their friends and punish their enemies. But in the middle years of the fifteenth century, these struggles took a turn as fear of a new form of reprisal, what can be termed judicial vendetta, became a concern.

An early example of this phenomenon dates from 1433 when a group of young nobles banded together illegally to vote for one another in elections for lesser administrative posts. The plot threatened the fairness of elections, the very foundation of Venice’s consensual patrician regime. As Donald Queller noted, “fear of factions” stood behind all Venetian attempts to end electoral corruption. The thirty-eight noblemen involved in the plot got various punishments including banishment and deprivation of offices<sup>15</sup>. The Ten also ruled that those who had investigated and tried the conspirators could protect themselves against possible retaliation by carrying arms. This included not only the regular members of the Ten but also the supernumerary members (the *zonta* or addition) added to give the council’s decisions in the case added

<sup>11</sup> Mallett and Hale, 1-210.

<sup>12</sup> Zannini, 459-63; Cozzi and Knapton, 205-30; and Viggiano, 529-75.

<sup>13</sup> Much of the anthropological literature on which historians have drawn argues that vendetta, which was closely associated with the protection of honor, served to reinforce the identity of the group pursuing the vendetta. See, for example, Black-Michaud. As far as anthropologists’ debate over the distinction between vendetta and feud is concerned, I concur with Thomas Kuehn and Edward Muir that the distinction has little heuristic value for historical studies. See Kuehn, 1991, 320, n. 23; Muir, xxiii-xxiv. For a contrasting view, see Dean, 15-16.

<sup>14</sup> Ruggiero, 1980, 150-51.

<sup>15</sup> For a convenient summary of the plots, see Queller, 79-89. See also Romano, 2007, 109-12.



weight and authority. But then the Ten went further by ruling that at no time in the future could any of the participants in the plot serve as judges or witnesses in cases involving members of the Ten, the *zonta*, or their sons. The government through the Ten was acknowledging that its own institutions might be used by some of its members to seek vengeance against others and subvert justice. Moreover, it recognized that like other forms of vendetta, this one might extend across generations, to the sons of those who had prosecuted and heard the case<sup>16</sup>.

No modern legal term precisely captures the principles involved here, although several approximate it<sup>17</sup>. One is disqualification. In this sense, the 1433 conspirators were disqualified from ever serving as judges of their own prosecutors since it was assumed that they would not be impartial. Recuse is another; in essence the Ten recused or challenged the competency of the conspirators as prejudiced. Conflict of interest also comes to mind; the conspirators were disqualified since they had a clear conflict of interest in any future cases. As far back as the thirteenth century, the Venetian government had demonstrated concern over these issues, most obviously in the requirement that relations exit the Great Council whenever a kinsman was up for election<sup>18</sup>. But now the Ten perceived a more acute threat, namely that the conspirators would actively and willfully use the law and future judicial proceedings to seek revenge against those who had prosecuted them, that the governmental apparatus itself would become the means of waging vendetta.

Fortunately for the stability of the Venetian state, the conspirators of 1433 were a loosely knit group of minor nobles who had little in common except their youth and political insignificance. Furthermore their disqualification – to adopt the term which comes closest to what transpired – ended with them. It did not extend to other family members. But what would happen if this principle were linked more explicitly to kinship and applied to more important figures, ones with real power and extensive family connections? If this occurred, it could easily foster party or factional loyalties. This is precisely what happened beginning in 1445 when the son of doge Francesco Foscari (1373-1457) was placed on trial.

3. Francesco Foscari was elected doge in 1423. It was under his leadership and guidance that Venice made its territorial expansion into Lombardy. Foscari's chief competitor in the election was Pietro Loredan, a distinguished naval

<sup>16</sup> Archivio di Stato, Venezia (hereafter ASVe), Consiglio dei Dieci, Deliberazioni Misti (hereafter DM), reg. 11, fol. 68r (28 January 1432 *m.v.*). The law noted that similar protections had been provided in the past. However, with the crises of the fifteenth century, the desire for protection took on new urgency.

<sup>17</sup> I wish to thank Wendy Scott of the Syracuse University Law Library for help in thinking about the appropriate legal terminology.

<sup>18</sup> For some examples from the thirteenth-century deliberations of the Great Council, see Cessi, 2:26 (act xxix), 27, (act xxxi), 41 (lxxxvii), 49 (xxiii), 84 (xxiii), 251 (v).



commander and war hero. It has long (and erroneously) been held that the election of Foscari represented the victory of a group of hawks who were intent on mainland conquest over a group of doves who wished to continue Venice's traditional policy of overseas trade and disengagement from Terraferma affairs, and that this conflict mirrored the contrasting economic interests of the two sides, with Foscari and his allies heavily invested in the mainland and his opponents committed to maritime trading ventures<sup>19</sup>. What is true is that Foscari and Pietro Loredan were rivals, but the source of the rivalry appears to have been largely personal and had to do with their differing backgrounds and interests. Loredan presented himself as a swashbuckling naval commander and cultivated his family's tradition of maritime service. Foscari, by contrast, was an expert in Terraferma affairs and the administration of charitable trusts; he adopted the image of a pious administrator<sup>20</sup>.

The Doge's fortunes took a dramatic turn for the worse when in 1445 his only surviving son Jacopo was accused of accepting bribes from foreign princes. Several months earlier, the rivalry between the Foscari and Loredan had been rekindled when Francesco Loredan a nephew of Pietro (who had died in 1438) and Matteo Vitturi, a Foscari ally, had engaged in dueling prosecutions of one another<sup>21</sup>. A compromise was eventually worked out, but not before Vitturi admitted that he had pursued the case against Loredan out of a desire for vendetta<sup>22</sup>.

Francesco Loredan was again one of the heads of the Ten when in February 1445 it began to investigate Jacopo Foscari. As in the 1433 election plot, the members of the Ten added a *zonta* to their proceedings. On 18 February they ordered Jacopo's arrest and interrogation, even authorizing the use of torture. In spite of assurances from the Doge, members of the Ten feared retribution for their action. Accordingly, they approved a measure put forward by Loredan and his colleague Giovanni Memo (but not by the third head, Ermolao Donato) prohibiting Foscari as well as his and Jacopo's relatives, whom they defined as those who had to excuse themselves from voting in the Great Council when a kinsman was up for election, from ever sitting in judgment in any case involving any of the members of the Ten and the *zonta* or their sons. The actual wording was more fulsome; Foscari and his relatives were neither, "to support nor oppose, nor testify, nor denounce, nor speechify, nor talk, nor dispute, nor

<sup>19</sup> For a full discussion of this supposed division, see Romano, 2007, 28-34.

<sup>20</sup> For the Loredan's maritime activities, see Stockly, 305-08; for the contrast between Loredan and Foscari, see Romano, 2007, 26-27. Increasingly, historians are viewing the polarity *amicus/inimicus* and hatred as central to politics. See Zorzi, 139; Crouzet-Pavan, 121-62. See also Miglio.

<sup>21</sup> Vitturi's father Bulgaro was one of the leading proponents of Foscari's election as doge. See Romano, 1998, 47-48. For the prosecution of Vitturi, see ASVe, DM, reg. 12, fols. 164r, 186r (acts dated 29 September 1444).

<sup>22</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 12, fol. 185v (5 October 1444). For the compromise solution, see ASVe, DM, reg. 12, fol. 164v (7 October 1444).

make a motion, nor exhort, nor vote, nor in any way impede anything pertaining to or regarding those who were in this council or their sons". The Ten approved this measure, as they noted, so that they could speak their consciences, "for the honor and good of the state of the Venetians" and so that they "might not fear at any time vendetta (*vindictam*) from anyone for administering justice". The Ten's secretaries then recorded the names of all thirty men protected by this decision, including their own<sup>23</sup>.

In passing this measure, the Ten delineated what had heretofore been merely a vaguely defined group. It identified the core of the Foscari party – namely the Foscari kinsmen – defined as those who had to exit the Great Council whenever one of them was up for election. Judicial vendetta was now linked explicitly to kinship. What the Ten also did (and what the secretaries did quite literally) was create a list of those who, as a consequence of Jacopo's prosecution, were now seen in some way at least, as an oppositional group to the Foscari – a group that was vulnerable to use of the law to wage vendetta. It is unlikely that many members of this group, with the exception of Loredan, felt any particular animosity toward the doge; but by their own action, they had now set themselves up as his potential opponents. Furthermore, the extension of the legal protection to their sons guaranteed that these groupings would continue into the next generation. The seeds of factional identification had been sown; it remained to be seen whether or not they would take root<sup>24</sup>.

In fact, they lay dormant for some time. Jacopo defied the Ten's order that he go into exile to Nauplion in Greece. His banishment eventually was changed to nearby Treviso, and in 1447 his father got it rescinded altogether<sup>25</sup>. Then in November 1450 the city was shaken again when Ermolao Donato, who had been one of the heads of the Ten during Jacopo's first trial, was murdered while returning home from the Ducal Palace. Donato was married to the late Pietro Loredan's daughter Marina. The Ten's investigation led nowhere until a witness came forward accusing Jacopo and his servants of the murder. The Ten arrested and tortured Jacopo but were unable to extract a confession from him. Eventually, it convicted and sentenced him to permanent exile on Crete. It seems likely that the sentence, which was relatively lenient given the gravity of the crime, represented a compromise solution to a thorny problem which threatened the regime's unity at a critical time in foreign relations<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> The original phrases read, "nec favere, nec disfavere, nec testificari, nec denunciare, nec arrearare, nec loqui, nec disputare, nec ponere partem, nec hortari, nec ponere ballotam, nec denique in aliqua re ad ipsos qui fuerint in isto consilio aut filios suos spectante vel pertinente se aequaliter impedire", and "pro honore et bono statu Venetiarum, et non timeat ullo tempore pro administrata iusticia vindictam ab aliquo". ASVe, DM, reg. 12, fols. 173r-v (19 February 1444 *m.v.*); printed in Berlan, 70-71.

<sup>24</sup> Romano, 2007, 192-93.

<sup>25</sup> Romano, 2007, 194-201, 207-09. For the relevant documents, see Berlan, 72-90.

<sup>26</sup> Romano, 2007, 216-24. The records of Jacopo's second trial are found in Berlan, 92-115.

As in the preceding case, the Ten and *zonta* awarded themselves protection against legal retaliation by the Foscari and their relatives. But they went further for they now extended the protection to an even larger circle of their own kinsmen. Whereas before it encompassed only the members of the Ten and *zonta* and their sons, it now included their brothers and grandsons as well. Once again, the scribes dutifully listed the names of the thirty-five men covered by the provision<sup>27</sup>. Like the ripples created by a stone tossed into a pond, so the Ten's protection was being extended to ever-widening circles of kinsmen as more and more members of the patriciate got caught up in the vortex of possible vendetta and factionalism. Kinship, which following the *Serrata* had become essential to political enfranchisement, was rapidly becoming the criterion by which some members of the patriciate were excluded from exercising certain of their political rights.

4. Matters came to a head a few years later beginning with yet another trial of Jacopo Foscari, who was once again accused of contact with foreign powers. Among those leading the investigation was Jacopo Loredan son of the late Pietro, now serving as one of the heads of the Ten. And yet again, the members of the council voted themselves, their sons, grandsons, and brothers, protection against "vendetta" on the part of the Foscari and their relations<sup>28</sup>. Jacopo was retrieved from Crete and examined. Following their investigation, the members of the Ten were deeply divided over how to deal with him. The most lenient proposal called for him to resume his exile; the harshest, proposed by Jacopo Loredan, recommended that he be beheaded between the twin columns in the Piazzetta. In the end, the Ten voted that Jacopo should return to Crete, spend a year in jail, and then resume the previous terms of his exile<sup>29</sup>. But now the concerns about vendetta, reified by the Ten's laws offering protection to themselves and the members of the *zonta*, had become entangled in the rivalry between the Foscari and the Loredan. Members of the patriciate whether they wished to or not were enveloped in a conflict in which many had no inherent interest, but which threatened the unity of the regime.

Following his condemnation, Jacopo was returned to Crete. Then in early 1457 news reached Venice that he had died. The impact of Jacopo's death coupled with the Doge's advanced age was profound; by all accounts, Foscari ceased to perform his duties. Even one of his partisans conceded that Foscari engaged himself little "in the governance of the Republic"<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 14, fol. 29v (28 January 1450mv); and Berlan, 102-03.

<sup>28</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 96v (8 June 1456); Berlan, 117-19.

<sup>29</sup> For a full account of this trial, see Romano, 2007, 277-85. The documents are printed in Berlan, 116-31.

<sup>30</sup> It reads, "pocho al governo di questa republica". Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana (hereafter BNM), Ms. It. Cl. VII, 794 (8503), *Cronaca di Giorgio Dolfin* (hereafter Dolfin), fol. 448r.

In the midst of all this, the discovery of two new cases of electoral fraud further rocked the city. The first involved nobleman Donato Corner who tried to rig an election for the post of podestà (governor) of Ravenna so that his father would win. The other case involved, like the 1433 one, a complicated scheme by a group of nobles whose ringleader was Bartolomeo Pisani. His plan was to make others beholden to him by engineering their election to various posts. In response to the two cases, the Ten meted out various punishments; they also passed measures designed to ensure the integrity of future elections. And as in the 1433 election case and the various trials of Jacopo Foscari, the Ten again put in place rules designed to protect themselves, their sons, grandsons, and brothers from judicial retaliation by the relatives of the ringleaders. This time, however, rather than simply stating that the prohibition included those who normally had to exit the Great Council whenever a relative was up for election, the Ten specified whom they meant to disqualify. The prohibition encompassed the “fathers, brothers, and sons, sons-in-law, and brothers-in-law of all of the aforesaid condemned (men) and of their sons”. Furthermore, participation in voting for elections to various councils was no longer exempted<sup>31</sup>. This decision caught the attention of the chronicler Giorgio Dolfin who noted that the bills were passed, “in order that the members of the Ten and *zonta* might not suffer any injury to their honor by the relatives of the condemned”<sup>32</sup>.

At the back of the register of the Ten’s deliberations for these years are partial lists of the men disqualified to judge the various members of the Ten on account of these cases of electoral fraud as well as those disqualified because of their kinship with Jacopo and the doge. For example, those excluded by reason of kinship with Donato Corner included Corner himself, his sons Andrea, Domenico, and Ludovico, his brother Pietro and his brothers-in-law Bartolomeo Zorzi, Domenico Morosini, as well as Ludovico, Hieronimo, and Paolo Dolfin. In Jacopo’s case, the list included not only Jacopo and the doge but also the doge’s brother Marco as well as their cousins Filippo, Urbano, Ludovico, and Giovanni Foscari. Various other men related to the Foscari through marriage were also inscribed. These included not only Andrea Donato and Marco Ruzzini, specifically described as Jacopo’s brothers-in-law, but also Andrea and Francesco Venier, Nicolo Mudazzo, and Pietro Bernardo – all related by marriage to the doge and Jacopo. It included as well Jacopo’s father-in-law Leonardo Contarini along with his sons and sons-in-law<sup>33</sup>. These two examples perfectly illustrate the ripple effect that these legal sanctions entailed. In the Corner case, for instance, not only did the penalty include other Corner, but also members of some of Venice’s largest and most distinguished noble

<sup>31</sup> Summaries of these cases are found in Queller, 89-90, 98-100 (with some inaccuracies), and Romano, 2007, 272-75. The acts forbidding judicial retaliation and the lists of men protected by it are found in ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fols. 128r-v, 131v, 133r (acts dated 3, 20, and 30 June 1457).

<sup>32</sup> Dolfin, fol. 447v.

<sup>33</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fols. 202v-203r (undated). See also Romano, 2007, 318.

families such as the Morosini. Moreover men from families who were related by marriage to the Zorzi, Morosini, and Dolfin families but not to the Corner now felt the sting since their in-laws had been singled out and legally excluded from full participation in the governance of the state. This devalued the currency of these marital alliances and threatened dishonor since members of these families had been officially inscribed in the public records as potential subverters of justice in pursuit of vengeance.

The Ten's decision created another problem as well. Given the large number of men involved in the electoral fraud cases and the breadth of the circles of kinsmen surrounding them, the government faced potential paralysis. The number of men declared ineligible by reason of consanguinity was large enough that the Ten realized that the government might have difficulty reaching the necessary quorums to conduct elections, the lifeblood of Venice's republican regime. Suddenly the problem of relying on kinship as the criterion for ineligibility became clear, especially for a ruling class as closed and inbred as Venice's. And so, the Ten modified the prohibition, declaring that if a quorum could not be reached on account of the exclusions, then the deficiencies should be made up by selecting additional members by lottery, first from the ranks of the three state attorneys, then from the three heads of the Ten, and finally, if necessary, from the three *auditori vecchi*, officials charged with the appeal of civil cases<sup>34</sup>.

In the midst of this turmoil, Foscari continued to neglect his responsibilities. Finally, in mid-October 1457 the Ten became concerned enough that it took up the matter, but only after first excluding from its meetings men related to the doge and adding a twenty-five member *zonta*. At the time, Jacopo Loredan was again serving as one of the heads of the council. Suffice it to say that on 22 October the Ten voted to remove Foscari from the dogeship on account of his incapacity<sup>35</sup>. Foscari resisted, arguing that only the body that had elected him, namely the Great Council, could remove him<sup>36</sup>. In the debate that followed within the Ten over this constitutional question, it was Loredan who argued that it fell within the Ten's competency while the other two heads wished to refer it to the Great Council. Loredan's position narrowly prevailed on a fourth ballot<sup>37</sup>. Having made their decision to depose the doge, the Ten then unanimously passed three measures designed to protect themselves and their reputations. First, they forbade members from lobbying to be elected the next doge. Second, they imposed a strict gag order on their proceedings. Third, they voted to protect themselves, their sons, brothers, and

<sup>34</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 132r (21 June 1457). Romano, 2007, 275.

<sup>35</sup> I treat the deposition fully in Romano, 2007, 292-310.

<sup>36</sup> Dolfin, fol. 448v.

<sup>37</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 140r (22 October 1457); Berlan, 188. This is an instance where Berlan's edited version is misleading since it does not indicate that Girolamo Donato and Girolamo Barbarigo proposed that the matter be referred to the Great Council, whereas Loredan proposed that it be considered by the Ten. See Romano, 2007, 299, 303-04.

grandsons from legal reprisal by the doge or his relatives, whom they once again defined as those who had to excuse themselves from elections on account of propinquity<sup>38</sup>.

The deposition of doge Foscari was one of the most momentous events in the history of the Venetian Republic<sup>39</sup>. Its immediate effects were twofold. First and not surprisingly, it sharply divided members of the patriciate into pro- and anti-Foscari camps. The bad feelings were exacerbated when Foscari died just a week after being forced from office. The second effect of the deposition was to create a backlash against the Ten, especially among rank and file members of the Great Council who believed that it had overstepped its bounds.

As their deliberations of 26 November 1457 indicate, members of the Ten feared retaliation. And two legal questions had arisen as a consequence of their earlier decisions. The first concerned whether the prohibition on Foscari's relatives using the courts to seek vengeance excluded them from collecting debts that they were owed by members of the Ten and its *zonta*; the second whether they could fulfill their responsibility as executors of estates if those estates had claims against members of the Ten and the *zonta*. In both instances the Ten put commercial and economic interests first, by voting that the Foscari relatives could seek payment for what was owed them and could fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities. But the *Signoria*, the government's highest executive body, overruled the Ten on a technicality, determining that both measures had failed to pass since they had not gotten the unanimous vote required by the original legislation of 22 October<sup>40</sup>.

Nevertheless retribution of a sort came the following autumn through a series of reforms within the Council of Ten itself. A year to the day after Foscari's deposition, the heads of the Ten proposed that a *zonta* of twenty noblemen be convened to consider a range of questions regarding the power of the heads of the Ten, the Ten's growing jurisdiction, especially in matters that were customarily the competence of the Great Council, as well as concerning the penalties meted out by the Ten. It took three rounds of voting for this enabling legislation to pass. Pressure from the Foscari partisans combined with discontent among both the poorer nobles and the *popolo* seems to have forced the Ten to act<sup>41</sup>.

Two days later, on 25 October 1458, the Ten and its *zonta* passed three measures addressing these concerns. The first contained a prologue observing that recently the Council of Ten had concerned itself with matters regarding the ducal *promissione* or oath of office (they were referring to the constitutional question regarding who had the power to depose the doge) and that it might do

<sup>38</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 140v (acts dated 22 October 1457); Berlan, 189-91; Romano, 2007, 299-300.

<sup>39</sup> For ways in which Foscari's story has resonated through the centuries, see Romano, 2007, 332-68.

<sup>40</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fols. 141v-142r (acts dated 26 November 1457); Berlan, 192-94; Romano, 2007, 318-19.

<sup>41</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 163r (23 October 1458); Berlan, 194-95.



so again in the future, causing, “great scandal and danger to our State”. The Ten decided that henceforth, “for the peacefulness and evident good of our State”, they should not concern themselves with the ducal *promissione* or its contents. The only exception involved conspiracies, the traditional responsibility of the council<sup>42</sup>.

The second measure noted that over the past twelve or thirteen years the heads of the Ten had expanded their jurisdiction by issuing decisions, commissions, and letters without authorization from the entire council. Observing first that not even the ducal councilors could issue such rulings unless three of them were in agreement on the matter, second that the heads of the Ten had even less authority to do so than did the ducal councilors, and third that the dignity of the *Signoria* was being diminished by petitioners clamoring to have audiences with the heads of the Ten, the Ten and *zonta* voted that henceforth the heads could not issue such papers and rulings without authorization from the council and then only in matters that were under the Ten’s purview<sup>43</sup>. Clearly, noble sentiment backed by popular opinion blamed the Ten and especially its heads for what had happened to Jacopo and his father<sup>44</sup>. It is likely that they blamed Jacopo Loredan in particular. The backdrop to these reforms was the conviction that the Foscari had been the victims of a vendetta by their enemies.

But the third measure is the most significant of the three for it was clearly designed to tamp down those same flames of factional conflict within the patriciate. Observing that it was essential, “by all possible means”, to maintain “our united and peaceful State in its united and peaceful regimen”, and to obviate even the smallest “division or scandal” which could bring “ruin and desolation”, and noting that in the past ten years the Ten had begun to issue penalties that deprived kinsmen of their right to sit as judges in cases, something that it had not done in the previous ninety-five years even for crimes deserving death, the Ten voted thirty-four to two that henceforth they could not issue sentences depriving “offspring or relatives” (*progenies vel propinqui*) of the condemned either of offices or their judicial rights. In approving this measure the Ten noted that it was not proper to deny members of the nobility those privileges which their “noble origins and liberty and the laws of the city of Venice” conveyed, nor was it right for anyone to bear the blame for something that was not his own fault. Two exceptions remained: one involved treason, in which case the Ten could act as it saw fit; the other included cases in which the Ten judged the character of the condemned and “of their sons”, to be of sufficient danger that they could be deprived of these rights. But even in those instances the penalties were to extend only to fathers and sons and no further<sup>45</sup>.

<sup>42</sup> The original phrases read, “cum maximo scandalo et periculo Status nostri” and “pro quieto et evidenti bono Status nostri”. ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 163r (acts dated 25 October 1458); Berlan, 195-96.

<sup>43</sup> ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 163v (26 October 1458); Berlan, 196-98. Berlan’s transcription incorrectly gives the date as 15 October.

<sup>44</sup> Maranini (2:418) also attributes the reforms to growing fear of the power of the Ten.

<sup>45</sup> The original phrases read, “Quum omnibus modis possibilibus quaerendum est conservandi hunc

By this action, the Council of Ten stepped away from a dangerous practice. Starting with the 1433 electoral corruption case, they had tried to protect themselves, the most powerful members of Venetian society against retaliation by prohibiting those against whom they had acted and their kinsmen from exercising some of the traditional prerogatives of noble status. In so doing, they transformed kinship which was the foundation of political participation in Venice into a potential liability since now noblemen could be deprived of some of their rights simply on the basis of being related by blood or marriage to someone convicted of a crime. This had the potential to disrupt political practice as it had developed since the Serrata and undermine Venice's consensual regime since what had heretofore been the key to political success, the assembling of a large and extensive network of relatives and friends who could provide support in elections, now became a potential source of disenfranchisement.

The problems with this tool became clear when the Ten applied it broadly in the 1457 electoral corruption cases. Given the interlocking ties within the nobility, it threatened to immobilize the government as quorums could not be met. It also forced the Ten to balance economic rights against political ones as when they were forced to rule whether or not the Foscari and their relatives could pursue debts owed to them and to estates for which they were the fiduciaries. As befitted one of Europe's most precocious capitalist regimes, they opted to protect economic interests, although their decision was overturned by the *Signoria* on a technicality. An even more serious problem developed, however, when the concept of judicial vendetta was applied in the cases involving Jacopo for it got entangled in the rivalry between the Foscari and the Loredan. The codification of judicial vendetta as a weapon and the inscription of the names both of those likely to pursue vendetta and those likely to suffer from it went a long way toward creating two parties defined by their pro- or anti-Foscari stance<sup>46</sup>. But in the end, the members of the Ten recognized the

nostrum unitum et pacificum Statum in suo unito et quieto regimine, et obviandum omnibus principiis quae aliquam et minimam divisionem aut scandalum possint producere", and "illud donum quod sua originaria nobilitas et libertas, et leges civitatis Venetiarum sibi naturaliter contulerunt". ASVe, DM, reg. 15, fol. 163v (25 October 1457); Berlan, 198-99; Romano, 2007, 319-20. Even with these reforms, the issues raised by the power of the Ten did not go away. Ten years later, in September 1468, the Great Council intervened by reiterating the traditional competencies of the Ten, but otherwise prohibiting the Ten from expanding its jurisdiction, and especially warning the Heads to observe those limits. ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Deliberazioni, reg. 23 (Regina), fols. 82v-83r (18 September 1468). The law is partially transcribed in Maranini, 2:419n1.

<sup>46</sup> There is a powerful tradition in Venetian historiography which sees the struggles between the Senate and Council of Ten in particular against the Great Council and the Council of Forty as indicative of a major economic and social division between the richest and most powerful members of the patriciate (the *primi de la terra*) and the less powerful and poorer members. My own sense is that these contests had more to do with bureaucratic and constitutional jockeying for power and position than with any clearly defined class struggle, especially given that individual patricians often moved during the course of their careers from the lower councils to the higher ones. Furthermore, as this example shows, these contests were often entangled in familial and personal animosities. For classic statements of the division, see Cozzi, 293-345; Finlay, 59-81.



limits of kinship, determining that kinsmen should not be politically responsible, at least not legally so, for the actions of their relations. They returned to first principles and neutralized this potential source of division, opting instead to reaffirm the essential equality of members of the patriciate<sup>47</sup>.

5. In addition to illustrating the particular dynamics of mid-fifteenth-century Venetian politics, this examination of kinship and vendetta illuminates two broader issues. First, it adds to the growing body of historical literature demonstrating that kinship ties were not always an unmitigated benefit. It demonstrates that there could be negative components to kinship relations even in the city-states of Renaissance Italy where family counted for so much. In this way, it encourages historians to be on the lookout for other ways in which historical actors were forced to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of family relations and kinship ties<sup>48</sup>. Second, it cautions us to think carefully about the complex and highly variegated ways in which factions and governmental structures interrelated. In some places, including fifteenth-century Florence, factionalism arose for the most part independently of the state. The key to the success of the Medici family was their bank which allowed them to create an extensive network of kinsmen, friends, and neighbors<sup>49</sup>. Eventually, the Medici faction was able to take control of the Florentine government and turn it to its own purposes. In Venice, by contrast, the state played a crucial role in the development (or the potential development) of factionalism. As we have seen, the Council of Ten in its effort to protect its members against retribution helped reify and institutionalize the notion of vendetta and facilitated the development of factional identities by creating lists of those likely to pursue vendetta and those likely to be victims of it<sup>50</sup>. In the end, however, the conviction that kinship conveyed privileges proved stronger and led the Ten to reverse course and in so doing disarm one potential for factionalism in fifteenth-century Venice.

<sup>47</sup> See Romano, 2009.

<sup>48</sup> The literature on the role of the family in Renaissance Italy is now vast. Much of it recognizes the largely positive role of kinship ties in fostering the political, economic, and social goals of family members. There is a much smaller literature on the downside of kinship ties. See, among others, King, Kuehn, 1981; Kuehn, 1982; Kuehn 1991; Kuehn, 1992; Gamberini, 2001. For Venice, see some very brief remarks on “the political liabilities stemming from their [patricians’] clan identification” in Finlay, 85; see also Maranini, 2:114.

<sup>49</sup> Molho.

<sup>50</sup> There is a debate regarding the precise relationship between factions and the state, especially as it pertained to laws governing vendetta and feud. One side argues for a progressivist model, according to which what are often described as primitive vendetta-pursuing groups yield to more modern rationalizing bureaucracies of the state. For this view, see, among others, Muir, xxiii, 247-82; Enriques; Maugain, 32, 238; Heers, 119-24; Larner, 109-45; Starn, 96-101. The other side challenges this view as too teleological and sees both vendetta and the law as processes of communal conflict resolution. See Zorzi, esp. 137, 158; Kuehn, 1991, 78-83. See also Raggio; and Gamberini. For more on these debates, see Smal, 1996; Kaminsky, 2002; Carroll, 2003; Smal, 2012.

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#### Abstract

Historians have long recognized the important role that kinship ties and family relations played in Venetian politics, especially their salutary effect in forging a cohesive ruling class. The essay considers the practice – increasingly utilized in the middle decades of the fifteenth century – of disqualifying kinsmen from exercising some of their judicial rights out of concern that they would use those rights

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to seek vengeance against those who they believed had done them wrong. The danger of disqualification became clear when the Council of Ten made use of it in the scandals surrounding doge Francesco Foscari and his son Jacopo. In the end, the Ten pulled back and decided to limit the power to disqualify noblemen from their full prerogatives. This essay thus examines a moment when kinship ties became a liability in Venetian politics as well as the role governmental practices played in fostering rather than suppressing factionalism.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup> Century; Venice; politics; institutions; patricians; kinship; feuds

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# On the Death of Great Men: A Note on Doge Andrea Gritti

by Tracy E. Cooper



Fig. 1. Andrea Spinelli, Bronze Medal of Doge Andrea Gritti, 1455-1538, obverse.  
Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1957.14.1006.a

## 1. Introduction

Nicolò Barbarigo, the early biographer of doge Andrea Gritti (1455-1538), reported on the enjoyment that the bed-ridden Doge took in reading his own eulogy in advance of that final event as it was to be delivered by the most talented orator in Venice, Bernardo Navagero, “il più valente oratore di Venezia”, and how pleased he was to hear his praises celebrated by such an eloquent man: “di udir le sue lodi da quell’uomo eloquentissimo celebrate”<sup>1</sup>. It seems entirely in character that a Doge who was known for his autocratic behavior would display a proactive concern for his posthumous image. Indeed,

<sup>\*</sup> This is part of a larger study of the cultural landscape in the period of doge Andrea Gritti, a subject that loomed large in the 1980s when Tim Wardell and I were fortunate to first meet Ben and Judy Kohl in Venice, a city that we will always identify with their warm and generous presence. I would like to thank Alison Smith and Michael Knapton for their encouragement with this article, and Patricia Fortini Brown, Pallina Pavanini, Reinhold Mueller, and Piero Lucchi for their critical contributions to the study of the document appended here; any errors remain mine.

<sup>1</sup> Barbarigo, 96-97; on the biography, see Cacciavillani. Literature on Gritti in Benzoni, 733-34. Translations and paraphrases are mine unless otherwise indicated.

the literal *imago* of any deceased Doge was an important state matter as ritual practice demonstrated. Edward Muir described the Venetian approach to the problem of the preservation of continuity of state in a republic upon the death of an elected prince, what he termed a “ceremonial dilemma, the most troublesome part of which involved the transfer of symbolic authority from one doge to another”<sup>2</sup>. By the sixteenth century, Venice had long evolved elaborate ceremonial procedures to symbolically traverse this transition, such rituals included preparation and display of the body of the defunct for three days, and if it was not possible to adequately preserve it for this function (or if a private burial was desired) a simulacrum could be substituted<sup>3</sup>. The attached edition of the account (see Appendix) describes the rites for the death of Andrea Gritti from a manuscript preserved in the Biblioteca del Museo Civico Correr di Venezia<sup>4</sup>.

## 2. *Death of a Doge*

The advanced age of many Venetian Doges was often accompanied by aggravated complaints of health, and Andrea Gritti was no exception. He was elected Doge at the age of sixty-eight in 1523 and reigned for fifteen and one-half years, dying at age eighty-three. Gritti suffered from old age and infirmities from his active role in the campaigns of the Italian wars where he spent days in the saddle and nights camped in the field, as noted for example by Francesco Sansovino: “Ora il Principe fatto vecchio, & aggravato dale molestie della guerra”<sup>5</sup>. Also typical of the period, Gritti was a victim of gout, his feet described as being deformed by the severity of the disease, and his ill health had led him to contemplate abdication, although hostilities with the Turks had renewed his determination to remain in office<sup>6</sup>. It was as a war hero that Gritti would be positively remembered, for which he had earned “eternal fame”<sup>7</sup>.

Yet Gritti’s reputation on his death was ambiguous: if on the heels of a successful campaign in 1513 Marin Sanudo would proclaim him as the most prominent man of our country and the most worthy (“il primo homo della nostra patria e il più degno”), enemies at his election, such as Alvise Priuli, referred to him as a tyrant doge, “doxe tyran”<sup>8</sup>. Such ambiguity was frequently

<sup>2</sup> Muir, 262-63.

<sup>3</sup> Few have surpassed Da Mosto, LV; for an influential overview, *ibid.*, L-LVI; Muir, 263-89, on the implications of various dogal funeral procedures and rites.

<sup>4</sup> Hereafter as BMCV, Ms. P.D. 398, no. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Sansovino, 256.

<sup>6</sup> Da Mosto, 242; Benzoni, 732, confirms the type of gout as *podagra*. Hopkins, 187, on its effects.

<sup>7</sup> Sansovino, 256. See Finlay, 988-1031, for analysis of his military and political reputation.

<sup>8</sup> Cited in Benzoni, 731-32. Sanudo, 1969, 16:650, praised on August 23, 1513, after the defense of Padua on his return to Venice; for Alvise Priuli as reported by Sanudo, 1969, 34:158, May 20, 1523, see also translation in Sanudo, 2008, 65 (34:158).

mirrored in reports of the cause of death and/or condition of the body, attaching a moral weight to medical observations. Negative associations could be read into the physical state of two prior Doges, doge Agostino Barbarigo (1485-1501) and doge Leonardo Loredan (1501-1521), for opposing reasons. Barbarigo had been reviled for his cultivation of personal splendor, whereas Loredan was criticized for his dogal frugality<sup>9</sup>. A report of the post-mortem examination of Loredan's body alluded to such attitudes in the connotations of what was found in the process of eviscerating the internal organs preparatory to embalming:

June 23, 1521 An important item should be made known: the day before yesterday in the evening, the doge was cut open so that his intestines could be removed and he could be embalmed. Although he is extremely thin, his intestines were found to be full of fat because he ate only refined foods. Item: they found a black stone in his liver. Similarly, a white stone was found in ser Augustin Barbarigo, the previous doge. Item: they found a stone in his bladder, even though this doge never had kidney stones, or pain from stones<sup>10</sup>.

The frugality associated with Loredan is indicated by his thinness; the attribution of fatty deposits to refined foods constitutes a critique of what otherwise might be considered an ascetic virtue. Moral contrast between the doges Loredan and Barbarigo is reinforced by the polarity in the color of stones found<sup>11</sup>. Rehabilitation of the physical corpse for the tense period of interregnum was a crucial phase in the ceremonial process. It also constituted initial coalescence around what would become the official historical memory of the defunct Doge: recognition of the individual merged with the office for purposes of associating personal *virtù* with the state, while asserting the terminal humanity of the officeholder versus the enduring sovereignty of dogeship.

Reports of Gritti's end were ambivalent as to the exact cause, but centered on his appetite. Gout, of course, carries with it implications of excess. Even his admiring biographer commented on the quantity and quality of his table<sup>12</sup>. On the one hand, Gritti's death was attributed to an excessive quantity of fish eaten for Christmas eve – eel prepared on a spit, according to the research of Andrea Da Mosto, who, however also cites Paolo Giovio as having stated the cause instead to be distress caused by a simple dish of bean soup, an explanation that has been given less credit than the former, more dramatic, reason for his demise<sup>13</sup>. The appended document, however, is more neutral in its account,

<sup>9</sup> Muir, 227, compares the findings of the inquisitors of the Doge for each.

<sup>10</sup> Sanudo, 2008, 58 (30:394).

<sup>11</sup> Compare the earlier report by Sanudo, 1969, 4:113, 20 September 1501, on the death of doge Agostino Barbarigo, "Or el corpo fu aperto, *de more*, e trovato nel figado una piera, ch' è stata caxon di la infermità soa longa".

<sup>12</sup> Barbarigo, 115-16; translation in Hopkins, 194 and 197n64.

<sup>13</sup> Da Mosto, 242. Hopkins, 197n65, terms Giovio's version a "cover-up", but also notes the paucity of official testimony to actual cause of death.



stating that the Doge had eaten fish on Christmas eve, and felt too unwell by the day of St. Stephen (26 December) to attend mass or undertake the customary *andata* to San Giorgio Maggiore, still taking his usual meal, but suffering from a fever the following night and next day when he died on the Feast of the Innocents (28 December)<sup>14</sup>.

### 3. *Preservation of State*

As Muir described, following the death of a Doge, “ducal authority was neither invested in an effigy nor immediately transferred to a successor”; during an interregnum the Signoria was designated to rule through a series of prescribed ritual and legal actions<sup>15</sup>. In this assignment of power Venice differed from states with hereditary rulers, and it affected the attitude toward what the body of the deceased represented: the body functioned as a liminal vessel from which authority of the eternal state had passed yet retained vestigial presence that was due the ritual deference owing to the former holder of the supreme office of the republic. As Sansovino put it, “And because he was conceded the principate in life, so it corresponds to the honor at the time of his death, with no less pomp and grandeur than the past”<sup>16</sup>. Venetian protocol therefore had to contend with what Giovanni Ricci has identified as the “inescapable challenge of biology,” as, by rejecting the use of the effigy in place of the mortal body of the prince, common in England and France as well as hereditary principalities in Italy, the corpse – “a threatening and unstable presence” – presented functional issues avoided by double burials<sup>17</sup>.

Sansovino described the changes in custom that had taken place since earlier times when the Doge was buried the day following his death, so as to provide a more honorable format by extending the period during which the body was displayed: the deceased was dressed in formal robes and placed on a bier in his own room with the ducal *cornio*, sword, and spurs; the next evening the body was moved to the Sala del Piovego and placed on a catafalque with four great torches for three days attended by members of the Signoria elected for that purpose and attired in scarlet rather than mourning<sup>18</sup>. The extension of the vigil over three days allowed for the physical transition of the dogal household, as this was the limit of time allowed to move their possessions from the apartments of the Doge which would be occupied by the interregnum government (as often

<sup>14</sup> Appendix, fol. 2r.

<sup>15</sup> Muir, 274-75. The Signoria was normally composed of the Doge, six ducal councilors, and three heads of the Quarantia Criminal; a vice-Doge was elected in place of the deceased, generally the eldest councillor.

<sup>16</sup> “Et perché il principato gli fu concesso in vita, si corrisponde allo honore che gli si fece vivendo, con non minor pompa e grandezza delle passate, nel tempo della sua morte”. Sansovino, 191r.

<sup>17</sup> Ricci, 63. For comparative purposes, see essays in Chrościcki et al.

<sup>18</sup> Sansovino, 191v. Boholm, 69-85 (death), 87-97 (lying in state), 100-15 (funeral), enumerates standards and variations.



recounted, Loredan's death was not immediately announced so that his heirs could remove their effects)<sup>19</sup>. But this length of vigil probably strained the limits for display of bodies not prepared for long-term preservation but only subject to limited embalming, the "challenge of biology" referred to by Ricci.

In his manuscript on the origins and customs of the government of Venice, Sanudo discusses the funeral rituals of the defunct Doge in relation to the pending election of a new Doge, in "Dell'essequie del Dose". With his customary candor he identifies the practical problem that accompanied these rites in which the corpse was dressed and displayed on the bier, stating that there was a great stench if the guts were not removed, and it was impossible to stand such fetidness, to stay above ground for three days<sup>20</sup>. Even these measures, such as the extraction of the intestines, were often not enough, as the case of Loredan may have demonstrated:

June 24, 1521. The funeral ceremony has been ordered for tomorrow, after nones; a message has been sent to all the senators to come at nones. The body of the doge has begun to stink, and the face has become distorted, to the point that it was fearsome to behold, even though just yesterday he looked as if he were sleeping. And so at five hours after sundown, his sons had him put in a coffin sealed with pitch upon his own catafalque. On top of the coffin were placed the gold cloth, the robe, cushion, sword, spurs paired with the scarlet stockings, and the *cornio* on the cushion<sup>21</sup>.

A problem inherent to ritual is managing factors unique to each situation, albeit such exceptions are often revealing as to priorities. Loredan's death took place in June, so weather could have aggravated the physical decomposition of his body (nor is mention made of excerebration having been performed during embalming). For this situation, dogal accoutrements took the place of the display of the actual body on the bier. Therefore simply the presence of the deceased was sufficient rather than requiring display of likeness, without too much disruption to ritual process. Identity was exhibited through other means, for example, the escutcheon carried in the final funeral procession<sup>22</sup>. Nor was a simulacrum chosen to replace Loredan's body for the period of the vigil, avoiding the implications of a double funeral, one of the body and one of the effigy, as employed in rituals of hereditary monarchies where immediate succession was at stake. The use of a simulacrum in Venetian ritual was only recorded once before the seventeenth century, with the death during plague of doge Giovanni Mocenigo in 1485, but it should be stressed that there is no record of such use in sixteenth-century Venice<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Sanudo, 2008, 55 (30:380, 387).

<sup>20</sup> Sanudo, 2011, 86, "poi il cadiletto con il corpo dentro scoperto – *licet* vi sia gran puzza – et se non li fusse cavate le budelle non sia potria star da tanto fettor, per star sora terra 3 zorni".

<sup>21</sup> Sanudo, 2008, 58 (30:395); "none" has been changed here to nones.

<sup>22</sup> Sansovino, 191v, "Dietro a costoro segue lo Scudo con l'arme del Principe". See Muir, 274, on the shield being reversed during the vigil; *ibid.*, 276, the obverse was carried in the procession.

<sup>23</sup> Most follow da Mosto, LV. Ricci, 65-66, elides the timeframe for this practice. Knezevich, 199,

Gritti's death taking place in late December no doubt facilitated the preservation of his body for the funeral rites. As the account tells us, on the morning following his death, embalming was performed that included the removal of both brain and intestines<sup>24</sup>. It could be expected that other aspects of the embalming process included washing the corpse with water and possibly some form of mild preservative, such as vinegar, might be applied, as documented in other cases. One such description from the later sixteenth-century official record of state ceremonial described this being done for the funeral rites of dogaressa Zilia Dandolo Priuli in 1566: her body was bathed with well water then doused with vinegar and stuffed with soaked sponges<sup>25</sup>.

Recent interdisciplinary scientific investigations into embalming techniques in Renaissance Italy allow some tentative comparisons to be made: generally, the more extensive the procedures, the higher-ranking the individual, with the most "complex" processes applied to the bodies of saints<sup>26</sup>. Preservation through more specialized practices was desired for the purposes of long-term mummification, whereas generally speaking corpses of rulers or aristocrats were prepared so as to improve the state of the corpse during funeral ceremonies, to make them more sweet-smelling while conserving remaining skin, bones and tissues. The procedures associated with rulers generally included craniotomy (for excerebration), evisceration (removal of material from body cavities through incision), rinsing and packing the cavities with various preservative and aromatic herbs and substances. Some laypersons aspired to preservation of the body, but in general lay burial was more immediate and required less (and less costly) attention<sup>27</sup>. A desire for prolonging the material corpse and putting off the big sleep may have been a pervasive sentiment but only rarely acted on outside the theatre of state ritual. One such case of a layperson in Venice in 1515 suggests that knowledge about the potential of embalming was generally shared, but the costs of putting it into practice may have been balked by heirs<sup>28</sup>.

sees its adoption in the seventeenth century as more explicitly separating the defunct Doge from the eternal prince; on which see Muir, 273-75.

<sup>24</sup> Appendix, fol. 2r.

<sup>25</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia, hereafter ASVe, Collegio, Ceremoniali, Registri, Libri Cerimoniale, 1, 35r, "M. D. LXVI a gli XIII Ottobre, Domenica di notte a hore XI. fini la sua vita ch[e] Dio gli perdoni, et poi a gli XV ditto gli fu cavate le sue interiora, et cervella, et posti in uno pitaro, et fu bene lavato il corpo con acqua di pozzo, et di aceto, et poi messogli nel corpo, cioe impita di stoppa, con doi spongie sotto li braccia". Hurlburt, 151, on funerals of dogaressa.

<sup>26</sup> Giuffra et al., 2011b, 1954: methods of study included autopsy and paleopathological examination of extant mummified bodies.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 1951, 1953: the analysis of two layperson mummies records that thoracic organs were removed along with intestinal material although a craniotomy was not performed.

<sup>28</sup> Cecchetti, 277-78, "Pietro Bernardo, testando 1515, ordina che il suo corpo sia dopo la morte lavato nel più squisito aceto, e che tre medici dei più famigerati lo unghano con tanto muschio che costi 40 ducati, compensandoli per quest'ufficio con 3 zecchini belli e ruspi per cadauno".

Contemporary knowledge of embalming as a medical practice was disseminated through such works as the *Practica in Chirurgia. Copiosa in arte chirurgica* by Giovanni da Vigo (1450/1460-1517/1525), first published in Pavia in 1514, of which there were many subsequent editions, including a translation into Italian (Venice, 1540). This treatise would influence later authors such as Ambroise Paré (c. 1510-1590), credited with elevating the practice of surgery as a humanist science<sup>29</sup>. There was also study of embalming as historically practiced by different cultures such as the illustrated 1574 publication in Venice by Thomaso Porcacchi on *Funerali antichi di diversi popoli, et nationi; forma, ordine, et pompa di sepolture, e di essequie di consecrationi antiche et d'altro*<sup>30</sup>. In this dialogue the author makes reference to scholars who had recently lectured on the subject in Venice<sup>31</sup>.

After embalming on 29 December, Gritti was attired in his dogal robes and lay in state in his apartment with the usual ritual until the following day when he was ceremoniously transferred to the Sala del Piovego for the three-day vigil. During this period dogal vestments were renewed each day: on 30 December one of Gritti's attributes was a cap from his Scuola della Misericordia; on 31 December an unusual gesture shows that the covering under the bier was changed to a crimson velvet embroidered in gold with the arms of the Cornaro once belonging to Caterina, Queen of Cyprus, sister of Marco Cornaro<sup>32</sup>. The next day was 1 January and so required some adjustment but mainly followed previous routine, with crowds growing each day. Finally, on the second of the new month an impressive funeral cortege was assembled and processed through the palace and out into the Piazza San Marco, the enormous ceremonial progress terminating at Santi Giovanni e Paolo for last rites and the funeral eulogy of Bernardo Navagero. Muir has described this geographical shift as paralleling a ritual shift of governance of the body: "the political character of the ceremonies gave way to the funerary rites of the Church"<sup>33</sup>.

#### 4. "Et così finite le ceremonie"

In the description of the conclusion of the funeral the account appended below provides some new information about the mortal remains of the Doge, clarifying where Gritti was immediately interred<sup>34</sup>. In the description of the

<sup>29</sup> Giuffra et al., 2011a, 84. On da Vigo, see Muccillo, 160-63. Siraisi, 26, on medical science and humanism. Ruggiero, 183-84, on the status of doctors earlier in Venice.

<sup>30</sup> Lastraioli, 357-88.

<sup>31</sup> Porcacchi, 107-08.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix, fols. 3r-v. Note that Gritti once had considered San Salvador as a potential burial site, aware of the Cornaro sepulchral presence there. Sanudo, 1969, 49:333, 7 January 1529; Morrogh, 208-09 and 229n11.

<sup>33</sup> Muir, 275.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix, fol. 7r.

initial embalming process the brain and intestines had been put into a jar (*pitaro*) and sent to be buried in a sepulcher, the location of which was not specified. Now, once the funeral ceremonies that had illuminated the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo with the splendor of a multitude of expensive candles and torches were concluded, most dignitaries departed in their boats. The bier with the defunct Doge was taken to the chapel of San Domenico for the final disposition of the body. Here the dogal accoutrements and grand vestments were replaced, prayers were said over the body as it was laid into a casket already prepared with the cap of the Scuola della Misericordia that had formed part of Gritti's vigil in the palace to be laid under his head, and the casket was sealed. The account then states that it was transported to the church of San Francesco della Vigna, just across from the family palace, where he (Gritti) had ordered *la capella grande della chiesa et la sua sepultura*, and so the ceremonies were completed. Prior to the discovery of this account, the immediate disposition of the Doge's body was in question<sup>35</sup>. The status of this account requires further study in order to tie down the chronology, for confirmation that the vault ordered by the Doge and conceded by the Franciscans in front of the high altar in an agreement of 1536 was ready to receive his body by the time of his death in the newly built church of San Francesco della Vigna<sup>36</sup>. The Gritti tomb monuments on the walls to either side belong to a later phase, but may have been anticipated by a more humble unmarked burial in the pavement in front of the altar as requested by the Doge in his last wishes (fig. 2)<sup>37</sup>.

Gritti's death and burial represent a singularly Venetian manifestation of a dilemma faced by great men in the Renaissance, between public and private magnificence. Expectations often clashed, between upholding the honor and dignity due the civic persona versus perception of personal aggrandizement<sup>38</sup>. Accusations of the latter were present already at the time of Gritti's election, when he had a silver medal struck, with his profile portrait on the obverse, and himself kneeling before St. Mark on the reverse, resulting in a ban by the heads of the Council of Ten on future portraits and suspension of the coining<sup>39</sup>. His funeral procession and disposition of his body would have satisfied both public and private requirements. As a servant of the republic he received appropriate recognition with ritual participation of all estates – from patricians to Arsenale workers, lay *scuole* to clerics – so Venetian grandeur and wealth was paraded before citizens and dignitaries of foreign states alike. The city was traversed by

<sup>35</sup> Da Mosto, 242, believed Gritti probably to have been given interim burial at Santi Giovanni e Paolo following the funeral, noting the separate burial of the urn without naming a location. Boholm, 113, citing limited evidence for rites, postulated the symbolism of a double burial of the "moist flesh corpse" and "embalmed corpse or effigy".

<sup>36</sup> Morrogh, 227-28, Appendix, 25 July 1536, concordance of two versions: BMCV, Ms. P.D./C 2581/4(b) and ASVe, San Francesco della Vigna, b. 4, fols. 236-43.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 211. Tiepolo et al., 23 no. 32, ASVe, Notarile, Testamenti, Antonio Marsilio, b. 1208, 365.

<sup>38</sup> Cooper, 89; Hopkins, 194 and 197n64, from Barbarigo, 115-16.

<sup>39</sup> Sanudo, 2008, 66-67 (35:269), 9 December 1523.

the body on its bier, from its public core to a major religious center, then its final transition was made to the private, spiritual man in a family sepulchral context. There is a level of humility and self-effacement in the anonymity of Gritti's uninscribed tomb slab, rarely visible to the visitor as it is usually covered by the luxurious rug surrounding the altar, but compensated for by the symbolic charge of the location, as anticipated by the Doge in his will<sup>40</sup>. As the following account of Gritti's esequies ends, "And so finish the ceremonies, to which I have nothing to add, the death of this prince being of universal grief for the fortunate memories that he left, such that one can say of his regime of fifteen years, seven months, and eight days, it is not possible to desire more goodness, wisdom, and discernment"<sup>41</sup>.



Fig. 2. View of left side of chancel with monument to Andrea Gritti, San Francesco della Vigna, Venice. Monument attributed to Andrea Palladio, designed ca. 1569-ca. 1575.

<sup>40</sup> "Volemo et ordinemo che il corpo nostro, servato il solito modo de le esequie ne li Principi di Venetia, sia sepulto in la giesia de li frati de San Francesco de la Vigna, in una archa da esser facta in el pavimento de quella in la capella granda avanti lo altar grando, la qual da novo è fundata". Tiepolo et al., 23 no. 32. Morrogh, 208, fig. 2, shows the exposed tomb slab, 215; Da Mosto, 245, the tomb was opened in 1749 .

<sup>41</sup> Appendix, fol. 7r.

## Appendix

### Detailed Account of Death and Esequies of Doge Andrea Gritti, 28 December 1538-2 January 1539

*Earlier shelf markings and format: C 181 (upper right corner); IX (at left, one line down); title: "Morte del doge Andrea Gritti" – crossed out. Seven folio sheets folded on long side and sewn, forming a small vacchetta; on laid paper; written in brown ink.*

*Transcribed here are fols. 2v-7v, by the first hand. No indication of author or date, but italic script consistent with mid-sixteenth century hands. All abbreviations extended, with the exception of q. [quondam] and S./S.a [san/santa/santi]. Punctuation and use of capitals adapted to modern usage.*

*On the lower part of fols. 7r-7v and the top part of 8r (with red ink line drawn below last line above and along margin, with marginal note), by another hand or the same hand with different ink, is a text concerning Andrea Gritti's Promissione and the election of the new doge. On the lower part of fols. 8r-8v, by a different hand, text on the correction of the Promissione Ducale, 1545 Dec 1. On fols. 9v-11r, by a different hand, text on the election of Antonio Grimani, 1521 June 28.*

[1r] Morte del doge Andrea Gritti [struck through]

[1v] [blank]

[2r] Mancò di questa vitta el Serenissimo Principe messer Andrea Gritti alli 28 decembrio 1538 il qual era stato al officio in giesia di S. Marco nella sera della vigilia di Nadal, nel giorno alla messa grande, et nel poi disnar alla predicatione et vespero. Nel giorno veramente di S. Stephano per haversi risentito alquanto la notte, del che fo incolpato lo haver mangiato nella Vigilia di Nadal pesce, non fo in chiesa alla messa, né si andò a S. Zorzi secundo l'ordinario, ma ben fece il pasto che è solito farsi in simil giorno. Nelle notte seguente, et in quella innanci il giorno delli Innocenti, hebbe un pocco di febre, per la qual fatto venire a sé il suo confessor la mattina, si confessò et comunicò. Nel dapoï pranso veramente redutti li medici insieme et consultando per la salute sua, morse alle hore XXIII in circa et finite in dogado anni XV, mesi VII, giorni VIII. Nella notte fo svodato tutto il palazzo, et la mattina, che fo a dì XXIX il corpo fu aperto et trati li interiori, et della testa cavato il cervello, et tutto posto in un pitaro, et mandato alla sepulture. Fo vestito con gli habiti ducal, et messo nel feretro in mezo la salla del palazzo sopra una tavola eminente fra duo torci che ardevanno, 1 a' piedi et l'altro a capo.

La Signoria veramente in questa mattina di XXIX venne a star in palazzo: et erano Conseggieri gli infrascritti: messer Nicolo di Prioli q. ser Jacopo q. ser Nicolò; messer Marco Navagier q. ser Antonio q. ser Michiel; messer Nicolò Bernardo q. ser Piero q. ser Piero; messer Nicolò Venier q. ser Hieronimo q. ser Benetto procurator; messer Thomà Mocenigo q. ser Leonardo procurator q. el serenissimo principe; messer Sebastian Foscarini il dottor q. ser Piero q. ser Zaccaria. Li Capi de XXXX erano gli sottoscritti: ser Nicolo da Kanal q. s. Philippo; ser Zuanne Gradenigo q. s.r Zaccaria q. ser Zuanne; ser Francesco Valier de ser Benedetto q. ser Antonio. Et lo anello ducal tratto di detto, al principe morto fo spezzata la bolla di quello.

[2v] Vi è da sapere che nel tempo di tal vaccantia la sottoscritta delle littere che si espediscono è in questa forma: "Datte in Ducali palatio sub sigillo sancti Marci, et insigni Nicolai de Priolis maioris consiliarii, die et cetera, inditione XII, MDXXXVIII". La soprascritta veramente si fa in questo modo: «Consiliarii Rectores Venetiarum, Nobili et sapienti viro et cetera, de suo mandato potestati et cetera, fideli dilecto salutem et dilectionis affectum». Le letere veramente si scrivono in carta bergamina rassada, in forma di breve apostolico, non come si costuma continuamente vivando il Dose, in carta bergamina non rassada, et in forma larga, ma in forma longa dalla banda rassada senza bolla di piombo, ma con bolla di cera in mediata, la qual bolla si copre poi col ciolo della littera lassato in libertà. La mansione si fa: "Nobili et sapienti viro et cetera, potestati" etcetera, come nelli altri tempi. Le indricciate littere veramente che si scrivono alla Signoria nel interregno del dogado hanno questa mansionne: "Excellentissimis D. Consiliariis Rectoribus Venetiarum". Le stampe veramente delle monette di cecha si suoleno romper similmente, ma al



presente non si rupero, anzi si continuò il stampar con quelle sino alla creation del principe per li bisogni continovi, che al presenta ha essa cecha.

A mattina dunque de XXIX commenciorno sonar le campane de S. Marco secundo l'ordinario. Nel dapoi disnar fo chiamato il Consiglio de' pregadi, et dapoi lette le lettere forno electi gli Savii grandi et Savi di terra ferma luogo de quelli fornivano el magistrato per tutto questo mese. Et forno chiamati XXVIII gentilhomini del ordine sotto pregadi, de' Dieci savii, Dieci officii, Cattaveri et altri simili, per dargli lo carico che hebbero nel zorno sequente.

[3r] [A]lli XXX<sup>ta</sup> ditto. Riduti li sopra scritti gentilhomeni in palazzo, et ivi venuto il capitolo dei preti grandio et piccolo della chiesa di S. Marco, fo levato il corpo della sala et condotto nella sala degli Piovegi con questo ordine: precedevanno li preti psalmizando con la croce et candelieri accesi; seguivanno li gentilhomeni vestiti de scarlato, a maniche ducal, et stolle di panno di scarlato, ma innanci era portato il cadelleto con el corpo accompagnato da xii scudieri con uno torzo per uno, grande, vi innanci et sei da poi. Il corpo era vestito di una vesta a ducaline di restagno d'oro, coperto di uno manto di sopra rizzo; in testa havea la schuffia di tela, et il corno d'oro riccamato bianco; sotto il capo havea il cussino di restagno d'oro, solito portarsi nelle maggior solennità; sotto il cussino vi era la cappa della schola della Misericordia. In piedi havea uno paro di calce di scarlato et, sopra di quelle, le scarpe che vivendo havea costumato portar; appresso vi erano li spironi d'oro con le ponte in su, et a' ladi havea il stocco d'oro con el manego a' piedi. Precedeva detto feretro il scudo suo portato da uno servitor, il qual fu attaccato ad una collona, a piedi del corpo. Gionto in sala, fu messo sopra una tavola eminente coperta di una coperta di raso cremesino fra quatro candelieri, sopra de' quali ardevanno quatro torzza grossi, due dal capo, et due da piedi. A torno di questo tavola si divisero li gentilhomini sopra scritti, la mettà per ladi, seguiva poi la Signoria dalli secrettari et Cancelier grandio, capitanei et altri officiali accompagnata. La qual postasi a seder al muro del officio della Avogaria, fu cantato dalli preti con voce bassa una *Miserere* et dal sacerdote detto alcune prece et orationi, [3v] et infine fu incensato il feretro a torno a torno. Lo che fatto, la Signoria si parti et tornò in palazzo, con ordine che gli gentilhomeni soprascritti stessero li fin tanto che da lei gli fosse mandata la licentia di partirsi, la qual gli venne pocco dapoi, et fogli imposto che nel dapoi pranso si riducessero al luogo istesso, et stessero li come a far le viglie altratanto tempo stato nella matina; et così fu fatto.

Alli XXXI da mattina, essendo chiamato una altra mano de gentilhomeni della qualita delli sopranominati, fogli commesso che andassero a far lo istesso officio che havevano fatto li chiamati nel giorno innanci, vestiti come loro, cioè nella matina circa le hore XVIII et dapoi pranso, circa le XXII, ridursi attorno lo apparecchio in sala dei Piovegi et ivi sentati per alquanto spacio, et partirsi poi al comandamento della Signoria. La qual non si può partir de palazzo sino alla creatione del futuro principe, ma di giorno et notte stantiare in quello, et fa tener tutte le porte de corte serrate, eccetto il portello della porte maggiore, per la quale lo adito è ad ogniuno aperto, et per lo quale continuamente vi andò gente innumera, a veder lo apparecchio sopra scritto. In questo giorno fo aggiunto al corpo il bavaro di armelini, fogli mutato il corno, et postogli uno altro riccamatto rosso, et appresso mutata la coperta di raso, et posta sotto il feretro una veluto cremesin riccamatta d'oro, con le arme Cornare sopra li capi di quella, et fo detto esser quella che già fu della Regina de Cypri, sorella della bona memoria del clarissimo messer Zorzi Cornaro cavalier et procurator.

[4r] Il primo di genaro fu ragionato di far le esequie, ma per essere principio di anno fu differito al giorno sequente, et in questo secondo li due altri precedenti fo chiamata una altra muda di gentilhomeni, quali et nella mattina et nel 'poi pranso per uno pezzo andassero al feretro, secondo l'ordine che dalla Signoria gli fu dato. In questi giorni non voglio lassar di dir che infinita et innumera brigata furono a veder questa cerimonia etian nella notte, a hore extraordinarie.

Alli doi di detto mese, la mattina furono al feretro li gentilhomeni, come nelli altri giorni: li dapoi pranso alle XX<sup>ti</sup> hore in circa, essendo sta acconciato dalla testa per mezo l'officio della Avogaria, dove si reducono li Sindici di quarantia, una bancha con spaliere, et in mezo tirrato uno panno di scarlato, et per terra posti tapedi, luogo che era alli piedi del corpo, venero alle viglie li gentilhomeni, che furono chiamati nel primo giorno, con alcuni altri delli giorni intermedi, vestiti di scarlato con gli becchi similmente di scarlato, et si conciorno sentadi divisi dalle bande del feretro. Et stati per uno pezzo sopravvenne il capitolo di S. Marco grande et piccolo con la croce grande, et dopieri di argento, che precedevano accesi, poi sopragionse le Signoria con li



ambasciatori, gli corocciosi<sup>42</sup>, et quasi tutto il Senato con assai delli parenti infine. Et l'ordine era, che dappoi li commandadori vestiti con gli mantelli loro biavi et le berette rosse, gli scudieri circa vinti et il cavalier vestiti con mantelli senza coda, seguivano gli secrettarii, il Cancelier grande vestito di pavonazzo col becco, il ballotin del dose morto col mantello longo et capicio in testa, il vice dose, il legato, poi lo [4v] ambasciator di Francia, lo ambasciator di Ferrara, et alcuni prelati vescovi fra quai era il primocereo vescovo di Corfù Barbadico, et il vescovo di Baffo, et lo ambasciator di Mantoa. Seguivano poi gli Conseglieri, gli Capi di quaranta, gli Procuratori secundo la età loro, gli Avogadori, gli Capi del consiglio dei X<sup>3</sup>, gli Censori, gli cavalieri, gli dottori, et per età infine tutto il Consiglio de' pregadi, et gli altri parenti del Dose. Ma alla dextra camminavano gli corocciosi sopra gli oratori, gli Conseglieri, gli Capi de quaranta, et gli Procurator, et furono numero vinti doi, con mantelli longhi et cappuci overo bechi in capo, fra quali furono gli infra scritti: messer Michiel et messer Polo Malipieri fratelli già del principe morto, messer Polo Contareno fo de messer Zacharia kavalier fu genero del fiol del principe, messer Lorenzo Gritti fo del principe fiol natural, messer Piero Gritti q. messer Homobon, messer Marco Foschari q. messer Zuanne, messer Andrea Vendramin fo de messer Lunardo, et cossi sino al detto numero de XXII delli più congiunti del defontto.

Gionti dunque nella sala de gli Piovegi la Segnoria si messe a seder nel luogo apparecchiato sopra scritto, lassando in mezzo uno da quella parte dove era posto il panno di scarlatto, si che sedevassi con quello ordine, col quale si era venuto. Qui apparato era uno vescovo di una delle nostre città di Dalmatia, con la mitria per far l'officio et il piovan di S. Simion grande dove, incensato il morto, forno decantate le vigilie de' morti, cioè li tre noturni, et nove lettioni. In questo mezzo commenciò passar la processione, la qual veniva fuori della porta piccola [5r] dalla chiesa proxima alla Bolla, per dove passando, et per sotto il portico che va alla riva, ascendeva la scala coperta di piombo, che va al officio delle Aque, et per lo portico delle collonelle del palazzo, per mezzo li Zudegadi, Auditori novi, Cataveri, Signori di notte, la sala dei Piovegi dove era il corpo. Passava per mezzo l'officio delle Biave, et per la via della fabrica rovinata, dove già soleva esser la Bolla et il Pregadi vecchio, veniva alla scala grande del palazzo, passando dinanci il luogo do[ve] si riducono li Capi de' X. Et qui scendeva in corte, et di longo camminava in piazza dove indiriciandosi alla banda delle Procuratie arivava sin a S. Geminiano, et dal ditto voltando veniva, non alla banda delle case nove della Procuratia, ma per mezzo la piazza sino alli stendardi. Dalli quai partendo, passando sotto lo horrologio, per Marzaria, per S. Juliano, per cassellaria, per calle del paradiso, per S. Marina, terminava a S. Iovanni et Paulo, dove era il baldachino grande et eminente in mezzo la chiesa grande, et dalle bande erano accontie telle nere in alto, sopra de' quali erano ordinate candelle di cera, sì che a torno a torno la chiesa si vedevano oltra il gran numero che sopra il baldachino erano state messe.

L'ordine veramente della processione fu: primariamente passò tutti li penelli delle schole et fraterne piccole, caduno di quelli accompagnato da dui dopieri, et poi le insegne delle fraterne del Corpus domini, che erano uno Christo nel calice, parimente con dui dopieri. Seguivano poi le schole grande, et prima la Schola di S. Marco, la Schola di S. Iovanni, quella della Charità et quella di S. Rocco, ciascuna delle quali haveva circa trenta dopieri con torzza accesi et poi il suo penello [5v] con grande numero de' battudi con le sue candelle in mano che ardevanno. Drietto le quatro schole maggiori venivano secundo li gradi et precedentia loro tutti gli fratti delle religioni della terra, continovando le nove congregazioni delli preti della città nel modo solito servarsi nelle altre processione. Queste finite di passar, venne la Schola della Misericordia nella qual era il principe morto: et precedevano trecento batudi con candelle accese in mano, poi cento con li dopieri, sopra de quali vi erano cinquanta torzza bianchi pagati per li heredi dil morto, et sopra li altri cinquanta erano torzza verdi pagati per li fratelli della Schola preditta. Seguivano alli battuti

<sup>42</sup> This term refers to close relatives of the deceased, distinguished by their apparel. Sansovino, 192r: "Et ogniuno de i Signori ha, in caminando, dalla sua destra, uno de i piu stretti parenti del morto, con lo strascico, & col capo incappucciato & coperto, & questi si chiamano dal volgo corocciosi".

trenta frati delli Jesuati con uno torzo per uno in mano, poi vinti marinari con vinti torza similmente in mano, driedo de' quali veniva il feretro con el corpo portato da marinari. Questo gionto alla scala per descender in corte fo tolto sotto una umbrella verde dorata che li veniva drieto, portato da quelli della scola, overo simelmente da marinari. Seguivano poi li gentilhomeni vestiti di scarlato circa trenta, et altri vinti marinari con altri trenta frati di S. Sebastiano con torce in mano, et altri cento battudi con dopieri et torzza sopra accesi come gli precedenti, sichè li battudi della Schola predetta della Misericordia, tutti erano cinquecento, et fo detto che a cadauno gli fu dato di elemosina soldi dodeci. Veniva poi la Signoria con quel ordine con il quale la era andata alla salla dei Piovegi, con gli corrociosi, gli ambasciatori et tutto el Pregadi. La qual Signoria, gionta al principio della scala si fermò et qui lassò passar quasi tutta la compagnia, [6r] poi andò in palazzo, di dove non si puo partir, sinò la creatione del futuro principe. Precedevano dunque il legato, li corrociosi, gli ambasciatori, et poi seguiva il resto, come è detto di sopra. Ma quando il feretro gionse alla porta della corte, le campane doppie comincionno sonar, et quelle continovorno sino che l' andò per piazza et arrivò in chiesa di S. Zuane et Paulo per la via detta della processione. Allì stendardi veramente quelli che portavano la umbrella, si fermorono, et quelli che portavano il feretro si spinsero innanci verso la porta grande della chiesa di S. Marco. Per mezo la quale fermati, et posto giù il feretro, la alciorno da terra nove volte una drieto l'altra, le qual fornite tornorno sotto la umbrella et continovorno la processione.

Gionti in chiesa di S. Zuane et Paulo, trovorno tutta la luminaria accesa del baldachino, et del restante della chiesa, et sotto quello fo messo detto feretro circondato dalli marinari, et frati delli Jesuati et di S. Sebastiano, li gentilhomeni purpurati, con gli corrociosi, ambasciatori, et il resto della compagnia inviati alla volta del choro. Quella parte maggior che poté, sedette nelle sedie di quello percioché la gente si frequente haveva occupato li luogi, che pochi delli prenominati si potero luogar. Infra li quali si accompagnò messer Iovanni Pisani il procurator, genero che fo de messer Francesco Gritti, che fu figliolo del principe morto, il qual per esser impeditto dalla gota non potendo caminar, si haveva condotto in chiesa per esser presente alla oration. Assetati dunque meglio si poté, messer Bernardo Navagerio fo de messer Zuanalvise uscite [6v] in uno pulpito adornato di nero appresso la porta di choro la qual era sta serata, et qui sotto una tenda spiegà per tener la voce unita in questo luogo hebbe una oratione per spatio di una hora e meza, in laude delle operationi et gesti del principe morto, con tanta gratia et attentione, che maggiore non si poteva desiderare. Questa oratione fogli imposta da sua Serenità, gia più di anni doi, et vista da lei fo approvata, eccetto che li parse che eccedeva li meriti soi per le laude che in quella si contenevan, onde più volte lo pregò che in quella volesse usar modestia, ressecandone parte di essa.

La qual perorata a lume di torzza per esser l' hora tarda, et finita, li corrociosi, li ambasciatori, et li altri si partirono. Il vescovo veramente, de qual è detto di sopra, apparato vene al feretro sotto il baldachino, nelli quatro cantoni dil qual ardevano quatro torzza grandi oltra le luminarie sopra dette, et qui incensato il corpo et fatte alcune prece solite descese drieto il feretro. Il qual condotto et accompagnato alla capella di S. Dominico sotto l'horologio in choro da tutti li torci del baldachino, fo menato in ditta capella et il vescovo predetto lo seguì con quatro dopieri et croce della chiesa di S. Marco. Dove, serrate le porte della capella, per il cavalier del principe, li fu tratto la spada dal ladi del corpo, li spironi, [7r] il manto d'oro, il corno, et in luogo di quello postone uno altro vechio di raso chremesino con uno friso d'oro, fogli tratto simelmente una veste doro a dogaline della qual era vestito sotto il manto, et tratteli anchora le scarpe, il corpo resto in zipone de raso chremesino, et calce de scarlato. Et per il vescovo dette anchora alcune prece, fu poi messe in una cassa di tavola impegolata, che era sta ivi apparecchiata, la stamegna et la capa della schola sua, che li era stata nel feretro sotto el capo. Fu etian posto ditto corpo in la ditta cassa, la qual reficatta, fo condotta poi alla chiesa di San Francesco, dove di ordine suo era sta fatto la capella grande della chiesa et la sua sepultura. Et così finite le ceremonie, alle quai non voglio restar di aggiungere, la morte di questo principe esser stà di universal dolore per la felice recordatione che ha lassato di sé, talmente che pò dir che al regimento suo de anni quindese, mese sette et zorni otto, non si può desiderar cosa alcuna di bontà, di sapientia et cognition.

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*Abstract*

The funeral rituals accompanying the death of doge Andrea Gritti (1455-1538) epitomize the period of interregnum in the Venetian context. The presentation of dogal authority was symbolically associated with the continuity of the republic and carefully managed throughout the transition to a newly elected prince. And like the survival of the body of state the rehabilitation of the physical body of the defunct Doge was a crucial phase in the ceremonial process. This essay considers a previously unpublished contemporary account of the esequies of doge Gritti, in the light of what it reveals about his immediate physical burial, now confirmed as being at San Francesco della Vigna.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; Early Modern Times; 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; ceremonial; funerals; Andrea Gritti; sources

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# Willing Patronesses: Choosing, Loosing, and Binding in Venetian Noblewomen's Wills

by Stanley Chojnacki

Among the other bequests in the 1484 will of Andriana Michiel, wife of the Venetian noble Francesco Priuli, was a contribution of 2,000 ducats toward the dowry of Andriana's daughter, Eugenia. If, however, Eugenia chose not to marry but instead to become a nun, the bequest was to be halved and the remaining 1,000 ducats allocated as follows: 550 to finance the building of a chapel to the Virgin at the convent of Santa Maria degli Angeli on Murano, where Andriana wished to be buried, and the remaining 450 to endow daily mass in perpetuity in that chapel for Andriana's soul<sup>1</sup>. In making those provisions Andriana resembles Fina Buzzacarini, the wife of the fourteenth-century lord of Padua, Francesco da Carrara, as revealed in Ben Kohl's study of her will<sup>2</sup>. Kohl portrayed Fina under three heads, as wife, as mother, and as patron. But in his subtle analysis these separate categories converged as dimensions of a single attribute, that of benefactress, of the many people, including her daughters, whom she benefited as well as of the fresco cycles that she commissioned for the baptistery of the church of Il Santo in Padua. Like Andriana Michiel, Fina da Carrara used her will and her wealth to impose her identity lastingly as a patron – of family members and other persons, of institutions, and of a visible monument to her piety.

The two women used their wills as vehicles for the two most familiar kinds of patronage, maecenatism, or the encouragement of artistic production, and clientelism, a relationship involving the performance of reciprocal but differential functions between more and less powerful interests<sup>3</sup>. Renaissance maecenatism by women has come under increasing scholarly scrutiny, prominently and early in the collection that hosted Kohl's article<sup>4</sup>. Other Venetian patrician women besides Andriana Michiel used their wills to

<sup>1</sup> Archivio di Stato, Venice (ASVe), Archivio Notarile, Testamenti, busta (all hereafter abbreviated NT) 68, notary Girolamo Bonicardi, no. 11, 23 April 1484.

<sup>2</sup> Kohl, 2001, 19-35.

<sup>3</sup> These are anglicizations of the Italian *mecenatismo* and *clientelismo*, which distinguish more clearly than in English between the two forms of patronage. See Ianziti, 300.

<sup>4</sup> See also King; Hurlburt; and McIver 2012, notably the essays of Dennis and Frank; Frank.

authorize artistic production. Holly Hurlburt has recounted dogaressa Agnese da Mosto Venier's authorization of a tomb for herself in the church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo, near that of her late husband, Doge Antonio Venier, which as one of his executors she may have a hand in commissioning<sup>5</sup>. The lavish commissions to Tullio Lombardo by Agnesina Badoer Giustinian for family tombs at San Francesco della Vigna and for her villa at Roncade have been much studied<sup>6</sup>. In addition to these prominent women patrons, Orsa Surian Loredan commissioned an altar painting in the convent church of Sant' Andrea della Zirada, where she wanted to be buried. Vittoria Vitturi Zeno bequeathed ten ducats for a marble tablet to be installed over her chosen burial place, her natal family's tomb in the monastery of the Servi<sup>7</sup>. More ambitious, Chiara Barbaro Zane was elaborate and precise:

"Item: I wish to be buried under the portico of San Stae, where my husband is buried. I also want built in that church an altar in honor of Our Lady. In the space for the altarpiece I want my icon with relics, to be flanked by two wings. On one, I want depicted four figures, namely San Giovanni Battista, Santa Chiara, San Bartolomeo, and Sant' Alvise. On the other wing I want a representation of the Visitation of Our Lady, different from another altarpiece of Our Lady in the same church. My altar is to be called the altar of the Visitation. Item: I want it to have an altarcloth, a chalice, and at the foot of the altar a cloth or an altarpiece that blends with the altarpiece above. And for all of this I allocate 100 ducats"<sup>8</sup>.

To this bequest she added three ducats for an altar lamp ("cesendolo"), which was to burn continuously, and a sufficient amount to be invested in a state fund to yield three ducats annually for a priest "de bona conditione e fama" to celebrate daily mass for her and her husband's souls.

Chiara Zane knew exactly how she wanted her commission executed, making her exceptional among the small number of women who authorized the construction or embellishment of tombs and altars; most left the details to their executors<sup>9</sup>. The few male testators who commissioned tombs did as well, though the evidence of men building original tombs is as rare as it is for

<sup>5</sup> Hurlburt also discusses the tombs of other *dogaressa*: 132-40.

<sup>6</sup> King, 48-63; Lewis, 355-68; McIver, 2012, 63.

<sup>7</sup> NT 68, Bonicardi, no. 308, 5 April 1486 (Orsa); NT 852 Francesco Rizoto, no. 349, 31 July 1427 (Vittoria). For the *lapide* bequest of the dogaressa Agnesina Venier, see Hurlburt.

<sup>8</sup> "Item voio esser sepolida soto el portego dela gliexia de San Stadi dove è sepolto el corpo de mio marido, in la qual giexia voio sia fato uno altare a reverentia de nostra dona. Et in luogo de la palla voio chel sia posto la mia anchona dale relige azonzandoli do ladi. In un ladi voio chel sia quatro figure zioè San Zan Batista, Santa Clara, San Bortholamio e Santo Alvixe. In laltro ladi sia la representation de la visitacion de nostra dona a differentia de uno altro altare che [=che è] in la giexia dela nostra dona. E sia clamado laltare dela visitacion. Item voio chel dito altare habia uno paramento e uno calexe e uno pano davanti over una palla dal pe' del altar conveniente ala palla de sora. Et per queste cosse sia spexo ducati cento". ASVe, Procuratori di San Marco, Commissarie [hereafter PSMC] de Ultra, b. 315, "Chiara Zane", unnumbered parchment, 29 September 1440.

<sup>9</sup> Hurlburt, 143-44, suggests that dogaressa Agnese Venier's tomb, which she specifically requested for herself, was turned by her son, as her executor, into instead a celebration of her family, thus circumscribing the *dogaressa* within the traditional female role.



women<sup>10</sup>. Most men wanted to be buried in existing family tombs (which of course had been built by men of previous generations). In a group of forty-two men who specified their preferred burial sites, twenty-five, or three-fifths, requested interment with members of their lineage, as did Paolo Priuli, who stated his preference for “our tomb of Ca’ Priuli,” and Piero Morosini, who specified “the tomb of my grandfather, Francesco Morosini ‘the Stout’”<sup>11</sup>. Another six referred to “my tomb [*monumento meo, archa mea*],” which may also have denoted family tombs built by male ancestors, although at least two of the testators left instructions and allocated funds for the construction of new tombs<sup>12</sup>. Women’s burial preferences were oriented less to family and lineage, more toward communities of women. In a group of 111 women who chose burial sites, sixty-eight elected interment in a female convent – at 61.3 percent almost the same proportion of men who wanted burial with their patrilineage<sup>13</sup>.

Choosing a burial site, as Chiara and other women already mentioned did, is a form of patronage to be treated elsewhere, though we have already noted above that Orsa Loredan wanted her commission of an altar painting executed in the convent where, like three-fifths of the women, she requested entombment among the nuns. However, maecenatism, cultural patronage such as Andriana Michiel’s, Orsa Loredan’s, and Chiara Zane’s, is not the main subject of this essay but rather the presence in women’s wills of the other main kind of patronage, clientelism, patronage as a form of social and political relations. It has long attracted the interest of scholars, from historians of ancient Rome to anthropologists of Mediterranean regions to interpreters of modern Italian politics<sup>14</sup>. Two themes appear regularly in this body of writing. One is the hierarchical nature of the patron-client relationship: a stronger, more authoritative or influential person providing some benefit to a dependent, either on a particular occasion or in an enduring relationship of recurring benefactions in exchange for the client’s loyalty and support. Richard Graham gives a succinct definition of this function as normally rendered: “Clientelism involves asymmetric but mutually beneficial relationships of power and exchange, a nonuniversalistic *quid pro quo* between individuals or groups of unequal standing”<sup>15</sup>. Graham’s definition also includes the second

<sup>10</sup> For examples of tomb commissions by men, see Goffen, esp. 37-68.

<sup>11</sup> Paolo: “larcha nostra da cha de Prioli”, NT 1254, Pietro Zane, 215, 27 January 1466/67. Piero: “larcha fo de mio avo miser Franzescho Moresini dito lo graso”, NT 567 Bartolomeo fu Benvenuto, unnumbered, 1 June 1397.

<sup>12</sup> Bartolomeo q. Piero Bragadin, San Severo, NT 1238, Tomeo Tomei, 2nd numbering, no. 91, (date and month left blank) 1474; Donato q. Prodocimo Arimondo, NT 66 Busenello, no. 126, 8 September 1499.

<sup>13</sup> I discuss gender differences in the choice of burial sites more fully in Chojnacki forthcoming.

<sup>14</sup> See, respectively, Syme, Campbell and Putnam.

<sup>15</sup> Graham continues: “Those in control – patrons, subpatrons, and brokers – provide selective access to goods and opportunities and place themselves or their supporters in positions from which they can divert resources and services in their favor. Their partners – clients – are expected

prominent theme in clientage studies, reciprocity between patron and client. The asymmetry in a clientelist relationship refers not only and not always to the superior status or power of the patron but to the different forms of the exchange, with the client, in return for material or other benefits, giving the patron political support, dutiful functions, or loyalty that enhances the patron's prestige.

This hierarchically inflected transaction has been well studied in the case of Renaissance Florence<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, some commentators argue that it could also exist as a pattern of favor-exchange among equals or near equals. For Ronald Weissman, "The frequent blurring of patronage and friendship in ancient Rome and Renaissance Florence should warn us against overemphasizing the socially hierarchical features of patronage to the exclusion of other aspects of the relationship"<sup>17</sup>. Dale Kent emphasizes the critical role of friendship in Florentine society: "Economic and business transactions – loans, partnerships, and credit – depended, like friendship, on trust (*fede*, *fiducia*), and trust depended on the existence of personal ties between the parties". The result, according to Kent, was that "the most significant patronage relations frequently existed between social equals"<sup>18</sup>. In this register, favors and gifts between equals could be configured as a potlatch, with both persons in the sequence of exchanges taking turns as patron<sup>19</sup>. Closer to home, in a series of studies on Venice, Dennis Romano also found that "clientelist" patronage consolidated relations between equals as well as ties across class lines such as those between masters (and mistresses) and servants<sup>20</sup>.

This latter form of patronage, members of social networks exchanging conferrals of responsibility and authority, is the focus of this essay, with particular emphasis on reciprocal delegations in the wills of wives and husbands. Central to such mutuality is the evolution of relationships between spouses within the orbits of the social networks of each. Analyzing the necessity of constantly renewing network associations, also with a focus on Florence, Paul McLean emphasizes what he calls "the interactionally constructed identities" of the parties in a patron-client relationship. McLean elaborates: "We become more fully the persons we are through interaction, our personhood being constructed out of a number of different identities we adopt, singly or in combination, in different interactional settings"<sup>21</sup>. Looking at reciprocal gestures of friendship as a way of imprinting identities on one

to return their benefactors' help, politically and otherwise, by working for them at election times or boosting their patron's prestige and reputation". As quoted in Roniger, 353-54.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Kent, 1987, and Weissman.

<sup>17</sup> Weissman, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Kent, 2009, 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> For an interpretation of Venetian patrician marriage and dowry practices as potlatch, see Sperling, 18-24.

<sup>20</sup> Romano, 1984, 1989, 1993.

<sup>21</sup> McLean, xi, 1-2.

another echoes observations made some years ago by Thomas Kuehn, also with reference to Florence. Discussing female gift-giving there, Kuehn argued that personhood “arises within a complex of social relationships, and the more relationships acquired the more complete personhood becomes”<sup>22</sup>. One of the ways in which clientelism and interactionally constructed identities overlap is in their continuous reiteration over time, with actions of patronage and clientage alternating between the parties, renewing and strengthening existing relationships. Again to cite McLean, “Networks, are, ironically, more about flux than stasis. . . . Relationships with others to whom one is connected must be repeatedly managed, deepened, or contained as circumstances change. Positions must be improved or the persons in them languish”<sup>23</sup>. Ben Kohl’s account of Fina da Carrara’s will offers a good example. The lavish frescoing of the baptistry of Il Santo that she commissioned included portraits of herself and her three daughters, providing a visual record of her patronage that would endure into the future. At the same time, her will also included generous dowry portions to her ladies-in-waiting, rewarding their past loyalty to her and similarly recasting her continued identity as their beneficent patron after her death<sup>24</sup>.

By their very nature, Fina da Carrara’s and Andriana Michiel’s bequests, like all such benefactions in wills, document existing relationships and promote their continuation, shaping their future psychological contours by eliciting from beneficiaries reciprocity in the form of gratitude and the performance of certain functions designated by the testator. Bequests could also add new dimensions to relationships. Both Fina and Andriana extended their benevolence to their husbands’ bastards: Fina bequeathed 200 lire to Margherita, Francesco da Carrara’s daughter by his mistress, and Andriana left 200 ducats for the marriage or monacation of Lucrezia, “the natural daughter of my husband, Francesco”. These bequests may have been bids for the grateful loyalty of the illegitimate girls while at the same time leveling subtle reproofs to the girls’ errant fathers. That suggestion is reinforced by the women’s provisions for their husbands. Neither Fina nor Andriana made a direct bequest to her husband; Andriana only stipulated that her Francesco was to get Lucrezia’s 200-ducat legacy if the girl died before choosing her vocation<sup>25</sup>. Yet in a further sign of distrust, Andriana also mandated that her executors remove her property from her husband’s possession immediately (“subito”) after her death<sup>26</sup>. The two women’s wills are also different in that Fina appointed her husband, Francesco

<sup>22</sup> Kuehn.

<sup>23</sup> McLean, 226.

<sup>24</sup> Kohl, 2001, 23-24.

<sup>25</sup> He was also to get half of her residual estate, after all charitable and family bequests were disbursed, but only if her daughter Eugenia, who was to receive the *residuum* in addition to her dowry bequest, died young. The other half was to go to Andriana’s married sister.

<sup>26</sup> “Hoc tamen declarato et volo quod subito post mortem meam omnia et quecumque bona mea extrahantur de manibus ipsius domini Francisci viri mei”. NT 68, Bonicardi, no. 11, 23 April 1484.

da Carrara, as executor of her will. By contrast, and consistent with her instruction to extract her property from her husband, Andriana Michiel left him out of the administration of her estate, instead naming as executors her brother, a cardinal of the church; her sister, prioress of the convent where Andriana wanted her burial and endowed a chapel; a married sister and the latter's husband; and a cousin from her natal Priuli lineage.

In this paper I concentrate on the kind of clientelist patronage just mentioned in reference to Andriana's will, namely, her choice of executors, with some additional discussion of women's family orientation as it affected their participation in the vocations of their children. Material benefactions are another, and perhaps even more obvious, form of testamentary patronage, and some of these will find their way into the discussion. But they entail reciprocity to a lesser degree than the designation of executors ("commissari"). Moreover, where married women are concerned, the bulk of benefactions went to their children, so they display less than does the appointment of *commissari* the central concern of this paper: the social orientation of patrician wives and how it compares with that of their husbands.

Andriana Michiel's choice of executors displays the range of patronage possibilities available to married Venetian women who, as freely as men, were able to choose their beneficiaries, unlike their Florentine counterparts whose dowry property from 1415 was statutorily destined for their husbands and children<sup>27</sup>. With more reason to write wills, therefore, they had more occasion to select executors to carry out their intentions. The appointment of executors, who as a group constituted a *commissaria*, was, like Fina da Carrara's bequest to her ladies-in-waiting, the reformulation of a testator's relationship with them, a means by which the relationship was, recalling McLean's words, "managed, deepened, or contained as circumstances change". Testators chose a group of executors whose past acquaintance encouraged trust, and discharging the duties of an executor by its nature entailed a changed relationship with the testator. More particularly, the appointment of executors was an act of patronage, in the obvious sense that most testators left bequests to their *commissari*, but also in two other ways. For one, it assigned them the management of property. Venetian testators usually targeted their bequests specifically, but they also often gave their *commissari* discretion in administering estates, particularly in carrying out their charitable and pious bequests. For example, like many other Venetians, Andriana Michiel financed the marriages of "three poor maidens of good standing and reputation," allocating sixty ducats to beneficiaries to be selected by her executors<sup>28</sup>. *Commissari* were also empowered to administer

<sup>27</sup> On the restrictions limiting Florentine married women's rights to dispose of their wealth, see now Chabot, 2011, 43-60. Chabot's discussion surveys testamentary rights of women elsewhere in Italy and in France.

<sup>28</sup> "Tribus pauperibus novitiis bone conditionis et fame". Another example: "Item dimitto quod dari debeant ducati quinquaginta auri ex bonis meis pro subsidio maritandi quinque ex nostris

other kinds of charitable bequests: Maria Venier, wife of Piero Sanudo, wanted five ducats to be distributed to the poor of her home parish of San Felice “per i mie commessarie”<sup>29</sup>.

Thus executors administered the property bequeathed in wills, exercising the latitude granted them in dispensing and investing it, especially in cases like Andriana Michiel's and that of Maria Venier Sanudo, just mentioned. Like Andriana, Maria declined to appoint her husband as an executor, instead naming only her father, mother, and three brothers. Their examples were not rare. In a group of 205 married women's wills, thirty-six of the testatrices, 17.6 percent, left their husbands out of their *commissaria*. In such situations of apparent distrust, a married woman chose executors who could be relied on to protect her estate against a rapacious or dilatory widower. That meant, first of all, retrieving her dowry, which her husband enjoyed the use of during marriage but which remained her property, to be dispensed as she chose in her will or when widowed<sup>30</sup>. Thus Bernardo Bembo, one of the executors of his sister, a deceased widow, was authorized by the Giudici del Proprio to retrieve her dowry from the estate of her late husband, Bernardo Grimani; Vinciguerra Giustinian, an executor of his sister, late wife of Marco Querini, received similar authorization<sup>31</sup>. These two cases alert us to the role of natal kinsmen in safeguarding the interests of married women, and signal the women's complex familial orientation.

In the event of non-compliance by a surviving husband or the administrators of a deceased husband's estate, it fell to the woman's *commissari* to pursue the claim in court. Wives were aware of that prospect. Cristina Priuli urged her husband to transfer her property to her estate within two months of her death on pain of forfeiting her 150-ducat bequest to him<sup>32</sup>. Maria Valaresso's bequest to her husband was to let him keep her dowry. But if he challenged (“molestare”) any of the other provisions of her will, her sister Cristina, as her sole executor, was to force him to yield that property up<sup>33</sup>. Maria Sanudo urged her *commissari* “to be vigilant and solicitous in obtaining my residuary estate and investing it immediately [*in presenti di*]” in shares of the state's funded debt (*prestiti*), letting income accrue to the principal for any children she might have; if there were no children the residuum was to go to her father, “from whom I received that

dominabus nobilibus pauperibus pro anima mea, vz ducati decem pro qualibet earum”. Will of Suordamor Contarini Morosini, 23 December 1482. NT 68 Bonicardi, no. 289.

<sup>29</sup> NT 1186, Domenico di Groppi, no. 100 in protocollo, no. 122 in loose sheets.

<sup>30</sup> On the husband's possession of the dowry, while the wife retained proprietorship of it, see now Bellavitis, 58-59. On the procedure and practice of dowry restitution, see Chojnacki, 2000b.

<sup>31</sup> ASVe, Giudici del Proprio, De Giudicato, reg. 2, fols. 38v, 78v.

<sup>32</sup> “[V]oglio che mio marido dia sti danari fuora fra mexi do, e non fazendo voio sia privado de quello i laso qui de soto”. NT 986, Francesco Rogeri, no. 8, 13 January 1442/3. In Genoa, according to Epstein, legacies were normally paid out within one year of the testator's death, 221-22.

<sup>33</sup> “Christina possit et debeat predictum virum meam astringere de tota illa quantitate quam michi tenetur et obligatur predictus vir meus”. NT 985, Francesco Rogeri no. 3, 6 March 1441.

property”<sup>34</sup>. Andriana Michiel, Maria Valaresso, Maria Sanudo, and the thirty-three other married women who left their husbands out of the administration of their estates were exercising a kind of negative patronage, denying them their trust and the authority to manage the wives’ property, and identifying natal kin as more likely to carry out the testatrix’s instructions with discretion and fidelity, another indication of enduring ties between married women and their families of origin.

Whether or not husbands were among them, the executors appointed by married women shared in the credit for the distribution of bequests, especially when they were assigned to choose the recipients. Providing this credit, and the moral and social prestige that flowed from it, was the other kind of patronage that testators bestowed on their *commissari*. Bianca Lando in 1452 instructed that if she died childless, half of her residuary estate was to go to her husband, the other half to be distributed to the parishes of San Canciano and Santa Margherita “per mie comessarii per anima mia”<sup>35</sup>. Orsa Contarini in 1419 made several pious bequests: fifteen soldi each to watchers who were to keep a vigil over her body for a day and a night before its interment in the convent of Corpus Domini; four ducats to each of twelve unmarried girls for their dowries; five ducats each to ten poor prisoners, presumably for lamp oil; payment for masses of St. Gregory and an additional one thousand masses; and expenses for pilgrims to Compostela, Assisi, and Rome to pray for her soul: “and all these bequests are to be carried out at the discretion of my executors,” who were her husband, his mother, one of Orsa’s married sisters, and an aunt<sup>36</sup>. In selecting the recipients of such bequests, executors participated in the patronage of the testator, managing the property from which the bequests were to be paid and disbursing them. Indeed, whether authorizing them to choose beneficiaries or directing them to convey bequests to specific recipients, a testator’s choice of executors reflected trust in their capacity and willingness to preserve the testator’s identity beyond the grave by realizing her or his ultimate intentions.

Nowhere did this transaction associate testator with executors more intimately than in assignments to decide the vocations of daughters. Many male testators entrusted that responsibility to their wives, as Filippo Priuli did in 1485: “my daughters should be married or monacated when it seems appropriate to Cristina, their mother and my executor”<sup>37</sup>. Similarly, Piero

<sup>34</sup> “Item voio che i mie comessarii siano vigilanti he soliziti de aver el mio rexidio he de quello conprar in presenti di [prestiti] che el debia conservar pro sora cavedal”; “voio che quel mio rexidio sora dito vegna in mio padre dal qual ho rexevuto i diti beni”.

<sup>35</sup> NT 1156, Benedetto dalle Croci, no. 512, 11 September 1452.

<sup>36</sup> “[L]aso che a tutti questi sia satisfado secondo la discrecion di mie comessarii”. NT 1254, Pietro Zane, no. 25, 6 October 1419. Orsa’s arithmetic was faulty: she specified four ducats for each girl’s dowry, but allocated a total of 50 ducats for the bequest.

<sup>37</sup> “Filie mee maritari aut monacari debeant quando videbitur ipsi Christine earum matri commissarie mee”. NT 68, Girolamo Bonicardi, no. 72, 22 December 1485.



Morosini, instructing that his daughter was not to marry before age fourteen, added, "Item, I will that my aforesaid daughter is not to marry without the consent [*senza volentade*] of my aforesaid wife, Valvina," who was one of his executors<sup>38</sup>. Such commissions reflected a high degree of trust and understanding between wife and husband; it also gave the delegated widows the means of forging or strengthening ties to other families by negotiating marriage alliances. Testating wives had no need to authorize their husbands to arrange daughters' marriages, which of course was normally the men's prerogative as heads of their families. Despite customary paternal authority, however, some mothers assigned that responsibility to the executors they selected, leveraging the influence they gained from their contributions to their daughters' dowries<sup>39</sup>. Isabetta da Lezze, who counterbalanced her husband's presence among her executors by also including her two brothers, "besech[ed]" the three to marry her daughter, whom Isabetta had made her residuary heir, before her eighteenth birthday<sup>40</sup>. Maria Soranzo also made her daughter her residuary heir, but she instructed that if she gave birth to a boy, the residuum was to be divided between him and the girl, "and I want my daughter Prudenza to have, over and above her share of the residuum, enough extra as my *commissari* deem necessary for her marriage – though not more than 200 ducats extra"<sup>41</sup>. Those *commissari* were her husband, her mother, and her three brothers. Similarly protective of her sons, Orsa Balbi bequeathed her residuum to her children, but advised her executors – her husband, her mother, two aunts and two uncles – that "if I have daughters, they should have for their marriages whatever share seems right to my *commissari* – as long as my sons do not suffer"<sup>42</sup>. Like the mothers commissioned by husbands to arrange their daughters' marriages, executors given that assignment by married women could enhance their own social positions by brokering alliances between families.

Because executors had the responsibility of managing property and children, married testatresses took thoughtful care in choosing them. In doing so most seem to have been influenced, like Cristina Priuli mentioned earlier, by the need to retrieve their dowry property from their husbands' control in order to finance their bequests. We noted that thirty-six of the 205 married testatresses left their husbands out of the management of their estates. But even those who did appoint them for the most part bracketed that choice with others, chiefly their natal kin. Twenty of the women named their husbands as their sole

<sup>38</sup> NT 567, Bartolomeo fu Benvenuto, unnumbered, 1 June 1397.

<sup>39</sup> On mothers' contributions to their daughters' dowries, see Queller and Madden; Bellavitis, 197-98.

<sup>40</sup> "Obsecrans meos commissarios ut eam maritare vellint antequam perveniat ad etatem annorum decemocto". NT 1238, Tomei, part II, no. 220, 4 May 1465.

<sup>41</sup> "Volo quod dicta Prudentia filia mea habeat et habere debeat ultra suam partem dicti mei residui pro suo maritare illud plus quod videbitur dictis meis commissariis. Ita tamen quod id plus non ecedat ducatos ducentos". NT 558, Gambaro no. 54, 10 January 1437/38.

<sup>42</sup> "Et se havesse fie, voio che al suo maridar le habino la sua parte, secondo che parerà ali mie commessarii, tutavia che li mascoli non remagnino desfati". NT 68, Bonicardi, no. 329, 26 October 1489.



executors, clearly a sign of trust and regard, and another sixteen appointed their husbands together with their adult children. In three and possibly four of these last cases, however, the adult children were married daughters, as was true of Isabetta Pisani's *commissari*: her husband and her two sons, but also her two married daughters and their husbands<sup>43</sup>. Another Isabetta, married to Nicolò da Canal, left her residuary estate to her daughter Andriana "pro eius maritare," and only if the girl instead chose the convent would Isabetta's son, Alessandro, inherit the residuum, minus 200 ducats for Andriana's convent dowry. To ensure that these daughter-favoring provisions were carried out, Isabetta appointed as *commissari* her husband and also Andriana herself and her other daughter, Franceschina, and the latter's husband<sup>44</sup>.

Married daughters and sons-in-law could neutralize or even outvote husbands, if necessary. Despite the power of paternal authority, the bequest choices of a woman whose substantial dowry property could significantly enrich her daughters' dowries, as enforced by executors, exerted considerable influence on daughters' vocations. Maria Zane bequeathed 600 ducats to each of her three daughters. More precisely directive was Franceschina Contarini, who showed her awareness of dubious activities in some convents by giving her daughter 500 ducats whether she married or entered an observant convent, but nothing if she chose a non-observant one. And Caterina Querini willed her married daughter, Lucia, the 2,000 ducats she had promised in Lucia's marriage contract<sup>45</sup>. Each of these bequests was made at a time when the average patrician dowry was 1,230 ducats and the maximum allowed by law 1,600 ducats<sup>46</sup>. To further enforce heavily subsidized preferences such as these, moreover, 119 (70.4 percent) of the 169 women who included their husbands among their executors divided responsibility for children and estate between their husbands and members of their own families of origin; and 95 of these 119 (80 percent) included more than one natal family member in their *commissaria*. This weight of numbers served as a deterrent to potential efforts by husbands to deviate from their wives' intentions. Viewing it more positively, it also promoted the involvement of a woman's natal family in her children's futures, if not outright collaboration between them and her husband, providing the children oversight and support from two families and kin groups. Examples of such planning are Lucia Trevisan, who appointed both her husband and his father and offset, or complemented, them by also naming her mother and her four brothers; and Cateruzza Venier, who chose her father and mother as well as her husband and his mother<sup>47</sup>.

<sup>43</sup> NT 1238, Tomei, part II, no. 258, 20 October 1467.

<sup>44</sup> NT 1186, Groppi, no. 33, 9 January 1481/82.

<sup>45</sup> NT 68, Bonicardi, no. 210, 16 May 1479 (Maria); NT 986, Rogeri, no 18, 20 June 1447 (Franceschina); NT 131, Pietro Bon, no. 160, 28 July 1504 (Caterina).

<sup>46</sup> For the dowry average see Chojnacki, 2000b, 97; for the legal maximum see Idem, "Marriage Regulation" in *ibid.*, 54.

<sup>47</sup> NT 558, Gambaro, no. 141, 25 October 1446 (Lucia); NT 859, Ravagnan, no. 311, 17 November

Naming their natal kin as executors alongside their husbands is the most telling demonstration of the patronage aspect of married women's *commissari* choices. It affirmed the women's loyalty to both families, reinforcing the ties of trust and affection that endured between married daughters and their families as well as those forged between spouses. That only small minorities of testatresses either left their husbands out of their *commissarie* (17.6 percent) or, in contrast, appointed them as their sole executors (9.6 percent) underscores the predominance of the collaborative ideal espoused by the more than two-thirds of women who safeguarded their wills and enhanced the prospects of their children by blending natal and marital kin, chiefly their husbands, in their *commissarie*. The careful thought they gave to these choices shines forth in the designations of principal, or determining, executors. Maria Zane, for instance, devised a balanced group including her husband, his mother, two of her sisters and the husband of one of them, and the wife of one of her brothers; but she made clear that in any disagreement that might arise among them regarding her estate her husband had the deciding vote<sup>48</sup>. Contrarywise, Chiara Arimondo appointed a *commissaria* consisting of her husband, her brother, her father and her father's sister; and whatever her father and her aunt decided would constitute the majority decision<sup>49</sup>. Lucia Contarini also weighted her *commissaria* in favor of her natal family, appointing her husband but also her mother, her late father's sister, and the latter's husband; but she ensured balance and perhaps encouraged comity by designating her mother and husband as together constituting the "maior pars"<sup>50</sup>. Lucia was unusual in that joint designation, but she was hardly alone in balancing patronage of both husbands and natal families in choosing dominant executors; six other wives made their husbands the automatic majority and eight others besides Lucia designated a natal kinsman, usually a parent.

Married patrician women's choices of executors show their multiform loyalty and self-identification as they patronized members of their array of relationships in matters with heavy material and psychological stakes. In nearly every case the relationships were with family – natal, marital, or both; only thirteen of the 205 married women in the sample named priests, officials, or nobles of unknown relationship, if any, to the testatress, and always together with at least one relative. The testimony provided by wills of the patronage activities of married women extends beyond the executors they chose, however. Shifting the focus to their husbands' wills sheds additional light on women's roles as mediators between their marital and natal families, as patronesses of the social cohesion that helped the patrician regime in the Quattrocento

1406 (Cateruzza). On mothers promoting support of their sons by their brothers, see Chojnacki, 2000c.

<sup>48</sup> "Maiorem partem volo esse et intelligi debere ipsum dominum Hieronimum maritum meum solum". NT 68, Bonicardi, no. 210, 16 May 1479.

<sup>49</sup> NT 41, Bonamico, no. 54, 7 October 1490.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., no. 113, 7 January 1493/94.

weather internal stresses as well as the hostility and resentment of other Italian states and the menace of Ottoman expansion in the East<sup>51</sup>.

Just as testating women authorized their executors, who in most cases included their husbands, to participate in their testamentary patronage, husbands responded in kind. Indeed, men appointed their spouses to their *commissarie* just as frequently as did women. Out of a sample of seventy-seven male testators with living wives, nearly four out of five, sixty-one or 79.2 percent, did so, as compared with the 82.4 percent of wives who appointed their husbands. Sometimes this reciprocity was perfectly symmetrical. Dictating his will on 2 December 1445, Valerio Zen named his wife, Vittoria, as his sole executor; nineteen days later Vittoria dictated her will to the same notary, in it naming Valerio as her sole executor<sup>52</sup>. Valerio and Vittoria appear not to have had children, but husbands with children also made their wives their only executors. Marco Loredan in 1441 appointed his wife alone and urged her to love their children “chome padre,” and Moisè Venier not only wanted his wife, pregnant with their third son, to be his sole executor even if she remarried (“vedoando o no”) but also authorized her to choose the *commissari* who would administer his estate after her death<sup>53</sup>.

Such men’s exclusive reliance on their wives as executors deserves comment. All three of the husbands just named had natal relatives, Valerio and Moisè brothers and Marco unspecified kinsmen, but they all bypassed the lineage loyalty that supposedly nourished the structural sinews of the hereditary ruling class. Marco and Moisè gave reasons for neglecting their agnatic kin and investing their wives with responsibility for their property beyond the grave: Moisè stated that he was in litigation with his three brothers over financial matters and was silent about his paternal uncles. Marco said that none of his relatives would be surprised (“non parà da nuovo ad algun di mie”) that he left them out of his *commissaria*, because all knew of his obligation to his wife for her devoted care during his illness; his gesture of gratitude and explanation of it show how appointing executors, whether by husbands or wives, was an empowering act of patronage. Valerio Zeno made no mention at all of natal kin, though in her will his wife made a dowry bequest to a daughter of her husband’s brother, but Valerio added to his will a long, emphatic, and somewhat defensive insistence that no challenge be admitted to his designation of her as his universal heir<sup>54</sup>. He evidently was worried that his natal kin might try to wrest his estate from her.

<sup>51</sup> For a searching account of fifteenth-century patrician politics, see Romano, 2007. For anti-Venetian sentiment in Italy, see Rubinstein.

<sup>52</sup> Valerio: NT 558/a, Antonio Gambaro, no. 124; Vittoria: *ibid.*, no. 123. Vittoria had written an earlier will in 1427 in which also she appointed Valerio to be her sole commissario, NT 852, Francesco Rizoto, no. 349.

<sup>53</sup> Marco: NT 1157, Croci, prot. 2, fol. 33v, 24 June 1441; Moisè: PSMC Misti, busta 3A, Moisè Venier, parchment 26 July 1448.

<sup>54</sup> “quia intentio mea est et volo quod non obstantibus neque impredientibus aliquibus condicionibus neque oppositionibus que quo jure modo et forma opponi et fieri possint contra

In all, eleven of the seventy-seven husbands made their wives chief patrons of the husbands' estate. Four named them as their sole executor, and another seven designated them as the deciding member of a group of executors. An example of the latter provision is the will of Donato Arimondo who, after appointing a *commissaria* consisting of his wife, his married sister, and two male cousins, added "I want the dispensing [of my bequests] always to be done under the direction of madona Bianca, and indeed she is to be considered the majority"<sup>55</sup>. Another is the will of Marino Pisani, who wanted decisions regarding his estate to be made by a majority of his *commissaria*, which included his wife, his brother, his father-in-law, and all his sons and daughters when they reached age fifteen, but "nothing is to be done without the consent of my wife, Cateruzza"<sup>56</sup>. After enumerating his bequests, Giovanni da Mula requested that "all this be carried out as quickly as possible by my *commissari*, or by the majority of them, and I want that majority to be my darling [*amabele*] consort, Lucia", who was joined in Giovanni's *commissaria* by two of their sons and all their other children when they reached age fourteen<sup>57</sup>. These appointments attest to husbands' confidence that their wives either could be trusted to execute the men's intentions or, acting as co-patrons, would on their own choose suitable recipients of their husbands' largesse.

The eleven men who gave their wives exclusive or majority control over their estates, 14 percent of the seventy-seven man sample, must be set alongside husbands who authorized their wives' discretion in carrying out particular family responsibilities. A frequent assignment with vital social and economic stake was to decide daughters' vocations: Filippo Priuli ordered that his five daughters "should marry or enter convents [*maritari aut monacari*] when it seemed right to Cristina, who is my executor and their mother;" Filippo's other executors were those five daughters, which effectively gave Cristina sole management of his estate as well as their daughters' futures<sup>58</sup>. On the chance that his wife might give birth to a daughter, Piero Morosini made the girl his residuary heir with instructions that she wasn't to marry before age fourteen, and "the said daughter is not to marry without the consent of her mother"<sup>59</sup>. Another Morosini, Fantin, was even more explicit, having a

hanc presentem meam ordinationem et voluntatem, dicta Victoria semper et in omni statu et termino, et tam viduando quam non viduando et in quocumque alio statu et termino esse possit et declarari, semper habeat et habere debeat totum illud quod sibi dimitto".

<sup>55</sup> "Ma nela dispensazion volo se fazi senper [sic] con la volontà de madona Bianca e che perfino la in vera la se intenda lei eser per la plui parti". NT 66, Priamo Busenello, no. 126, 8 September 1499.

<sup>56</sup> "E chel non se posa far alguna chosa zenza la voluntade de mia muier Chataruzia". NT 859, Egidio Ravagnan, no. 236, 24 March 1404.

<sup>57</sup> "Le qual tute chose voio sia andade a sequicion plu presto se puol per i mie chomesari, over per la maor parte, la qual maor parte voio sia la mia amabele consorte Lucia". NT 1157, Croci, Prot II, fol. 56v, 15 September 1451.

<sup>58</sup> NT 68, Girolamo Bonicardi, no. 72, 22 December 1485.

<sup>59</sup> "Item voio la dita fia no se podesse maridar senza voluntade de la dita soa mare, madona Valvina". NT 567, Bartolomeo fu Benvenuto, unnumbered wills, 1 June 1397

*procura* notarized which gave his wife, Franceschina, “full authority and power to marry our daughter, Eufemia, to whoever seems to you most suitable and to promise him whatever dowry and trousseau seem to you appropriate”<sup>60</sup>. Fantin was authorizing Franceschina to make decisions that would not only place Eufemia in marriage but also create or reinforce alliances between two families. Such delegations by husbands to wives were discharged in practice. Among 101 patrician marriage contracts from the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, mothers took an active part in more than half, fifty-seven, either as contractors, or by contributing to the bride’s dowry, or by backing up with their own property the groom’s capacity to repay it at the end of the marriage<sup>61</sup>.

Some husbands formally assigned their prospective widows the status of “*donna et domina* [vernacular *donna e madonna*] in domo sua,” which gave them the statutory right to material support at the expense of the husband’s estate as well as authority over the household<sup>62</sup>. Giulio Contarini made it clear that giving his wife, Agnesina, that designation was part of a bargain putting the prospective widow in charge of the children’s upbringing. After bequeathing her and their children equal shares of his residuary estate, he specified that Agnesina’s share was conditioned on her leaving her dowry in his estate rather than reclaiming it, as was her right. But whether she reclaimed it or not, she was still to be “*donna e madonna* with authority over her sons and daughters as long as she lives,” with his estate paying her living expenses<sup>63</sup>. Paolo Morosini made the same bargain, with an additional sanction. He too wanted his wife to “stay with my sons” with their expenses borne by his estate, and he instructed the sons “to treat their mother as *donna e madonna*”. To put steel into his order he added, “and if they don’t, I want them deprived of my bequest to them”<sup>64</sup>. Similarly determined, Giovanni da Mula, whose appointment of his wife as his majority executor was noted above, left her *donna e madonna* with lifetime usufruct of all his goods, including their five sons’ inheritance, “and I do this so that my sons have reason to treat her well”.

<sup>60</sup> “ut amodo in antea pro me meoque nomine plenam virtutem et potestatem habeatis maritandi Eufemiam filiam nostram, cui tibi melius videbitur et apparebit et eidem per dotem et nomine dotis quicquid tibi videbitur promittere ac coredos [sic],” ASVe, Cancelleria Inferiore, Notai, busta 36, Giovanni Campion, protocollo II, fol. 2v, n.d. September 1364.

<sup>61</sup> Data from ASVe, various registers of Giudici del Proprio and Avogadori di Comun. These sources will be described in detail in another study. On dowry-restitution procedures, see Bellavitis, 55-72; Chojnacki, 2000b.

<sup>62</sup> “& sit domina in domo”. *Volumen Statutorum*, lib. 4, cap. 15, 66v. In Florence, about one-third of testating fathers designated that status for their wives: Chabot, 1999, 138.

<sup>63</sup> “che la sia dona e madona al governo de suo fiuoli e fie domentre la viverà. E se la volesse pagar dela sua dota volio la sia privata de quanto lasso, zoè de la parte i tocherà de questa heredità secondo la lasso emgual con suo fiuoli e fie. Ma volio che labia vito e vestito domentre la viverà, stando al governo de suo fiuoli e fie”. NT 1129, Paolo Benedetto, no. 7, 28 July 1463.

<sup>64</sup> “Voio che mie fioli trata so mare per dona e madona e si no farà cusi voio li sia privadi de tuto quello laso”. Cancelleria Inferiore, Notai, b. 57, Benedetto dalle Croci, parchment no. 20, 8 February 1382/83.

To this economic leverage he added a moral injunction: "in order to have my blessing they must be obedient to their mother and not stray from her advice and orders"<sup>65</sup>.

Other husbands delegated to their wives substantive authority without the formal *donna e madonna* designation. The experience of marital partnership had instilled in these men confidence in the women's commitment to their children and the family's fortunes and their ability to administer both, taking over the husband's patronage responsibilities as head of the family. Leonardo Priuli wanted his widow to be considered a father ("ut patre amisso") to their children<sup>66</sup>. Some husbands were forthright about their wives' management skills. In addition to giving his wife, Isabella, majority authority among his executors, who also included a married sister and her husband, a widowed sister, three maternal uncles, and two other nobles, Piero da Molin appointed "my wife to be guardian [*gubernatrix*] of my children, both male and female, and to keep them with her; and no one, whether on the basis of kinship or any other claim, is to take them out of my wife's hands and guardianship"<sup>67</sup>. For good measure he ordered that his daughter Cornelia was to be married "depending on the quantity and quality of my estate, at the discretion and prudence of my wife, in whom I have complete confidence"<sup>68</sup>. Francesco Valier ordered that his two daughters "remain under the authority of and be obedient to the wise and respectable madona Isabella, their mother and my beloved wife". He made Isabella and the daughters his residuary heirs, on condition that Isabella not reclaim her dowry but leave it in Francesco's estate "for her benefit and that of my daughters. And regarding her remarrying or remaining a widow I add nothing, since I know her to be wise and prudent in all her dealings and am certain that she will choose what is best for herself and her honor and for the little girls"<sup>69</sup>.

These and other men entrusted their wives with all or part of the responsibilities associated with family headship. Noteworthy in themselves,

<sup>65</sup> "e questo faço azò che mie fioli habia chason de portarse ben desa [de essa] . . . E per la mia benedicion i sia hobediente a sua mare, e non se parte de i consei e chomandamenti de quela". NT 1157, Croci, Prot II, fol. 56v, 15 September 1451.

<sup>66</sup> "ut patre amisso et matris et patris loco". NT 1239, Tomei, no. 413, 15 March 1477.

<sup>67</sup> "ipsa uxor mea sit gubernatrix filiorum meorum tam masculi quam femine et penes se eos retineat, et nullus possit tam ratione parentele quam aliter extrahere eos de manibus et gubernatione dicte uxoris mee". NT 1228, Cristoforo Rizzo, no. 328, 1 June 1494.

<sup>68</sup> "[V]olo maritari debere Corneliã filiam meam secundum qualitatem et quantitatem dicti mei residui ad discretionem et prudentiam uxoris mee, de qua plenum confido". Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> "Item voglio che da poi la morte mia mie fie Marieta e Archanzoleta rimagna in governo e hobedientia dela savia e honesta madona Ixabella sua madre e mia dileta consorte . . . Con questa condicion che la dita madona Ixabella non se possi trar dela dita mia comessaria la sua dota che me fo promesso duchati mille ma che la rimagna in la dita mia comessaria a suo beneficio e de le dite mie fie ut dictum est. Non dirò altro del suo maridar e vedoar, cognosandola savia e prudentissima in tute sue opere, siando certo lei elezerà el meglio per lei el plui so honor e per le fiolete". NT 1186, Domenico Groppi, no. 48, 2 November 1492.



such departures from the overarching principle of male authority also put widows, and sometimes wives, in the position of forging or reinforcing social and economic relationships. An example is Cateruzza Vitturi, whose nomination in 1448 by her husband, Moisè Venier, as his sole executor was mentioned earlier, as was Moisè's comment in the will that he was involved in a lawsuit against his brothers<sup>70</sup>. In the 1460s Cateruzza registered her and Moisè's sons for the Barbarella, or Balla d'Oro, the annual lottery for eighteen-year-old nobles that entitled winners to take their hereditary place in the Great Council at the early age of twenty. Recognizing that the young men's fortunes depended on family support, in 1463 she recruited her own Vitturi brother to stand surety that her son Girolamo was eighteen and legitimately born; three years later, when she registered her youngest son, Moisè Jr, she persuaded her sons' paternal uncles to stand surety<sup>71</sup>. These uncles were the estranged brothers that fifteen years earlier her husband had identified in his will as adversaries in a lawsuit. Cateruzza thus effected a reconciliation between her brothers-in-law and her sons, who would benefit from good relations with uncles from their Venier lineage at the same time that their mother cultivated their ties to her family of birth<sup>72</sup>.

Assigning executor authority over children and property was a decision by husbands that gave wives opportunities for exercising economic and social patronage themselves. But another aspect of husbands' wills fostered the wives' patronage role as brokers of collaboration between their families of birth and of marriage. Above, we noted a few cases of men who bypassed their natal families and lineages, instead favoring their wives in their *commissaria* choices. That may seem anomalous, since membership in the lineage and mutual support with family members were keys to prospering in the hereditary patriciate. That was the reason that Cateruzza Vitturi reknit ties between her sons and their father's estranged brothers, who might be their nephews' patrons in their economic and political adulthoods. It also explains why a solid majority of the seventy-seven married male testators, 59.7 percent, included natal kin among their executors. And yet, it cannot be ignored that the other 40.3 percent left their agnates out of their *commissarie*, forgoing lineage support for children and property. Moreover, in the context of patrilineal identity and interest even more noteworthy are the thirty-four of the seventy-seven husbands, 44.2 percent, who chose affines; nineteen of these thirty-four were wives' kin, the others were spouses of the men's siblings or children. Many of these men coupled their in-laws with their wives and/or natal kinsmen, electing to recruit a bilateral or even multilateral range of support for their

<sup>70</sup> Above, note 53.

<sup>71</sup> ASVe, Avogadori di Comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 164, fol. 326rv. On the Barbarella, or Balla d'Oro, see Chojnacki, 2000c.

<sup>72</sup> Besides Cateruzza's brother, also standing surety at Girolamo's registration was her cousin, a son of her father's sister. For other examples of mothers recruiting natal and affinal kin for their sons' registrations, see Chojnacki, 2000c, 215-218.



intentions for their children and estates. The fact remains, though, that two-fifths, thirty-one, of the seventy-seven husbands in the sample named no agnate executors. Nine of these appointed their wives alongside affines, usually the wives' kin, and seventeen chose the wives alone or with their children. (The *commissari* in the remaining five wills included wives together with officials or with apparently unrelated persons.) In any case, the sovereign fact is that sixty-one of the husbands in the sample, four out of five, entrusted their interests wholly, primarily, or at least partially to wives who themselves, as we have seen, relied heavily – indeed, considerably more heavily than did their husbands – on executors from their natal families.

In parsing these catholic choices of married men ostensibly anchored in their lineages it is good to bear in mind that a marriage between patrician families was designed to expand the contracting parties' range of social, political, and economic resources. A man's productive relations with his wife's father or brothers could work to the benefit of his natal family, and likewise to hers. Soon after his wedding Moisè Venier joined his wife's father and brother in a grain importing business, while at the same time managing the economic affairs of his own father, brothers, and other natal kinsmen<sup>73</sup>. In his will of 1427, Bulgaro Vitturi worried that his two sons might be trying to cheat each other (“*usurpare bona alterius*”); to bring about a reconciliation between the two brothers he commissioned his wife's brother<sup>74</sup>. A business dispute litigated before the civil court of Petizion involved a partnership between Giovanni Gradenigo, his mother's brother, Marco Morosini, and his own brother-in-law, Francesco Barbaro<sup>75</sup>. A frequent role of in-laws was participating in the Barbarella registrations of their young affines. The registrations in 1449 of a couple of young Morosini men, both named Alvisè, illustrate the durability of such cross-marriage collaboration. At the registration of Alvisè di Nicolò Morosini, the young man's sponsor was his father's brother Jacopo, and the guarantors of his eligibility were a brother of Uncle Jacopo's first wife and a brother of his current wife. One month later, an even more tortuous connection, linking three different marriages, operated at the registration of the other Alvisè, son of a different Jacopo Morosini, now deceased: one of the guarantors was the son-in-law of Alvisè's mother, married to her daughter by her second husband, whereas Alvisè was the son of her first, the late Jacopo Morosini<sup>76</sup>.

The presence at these Barbarella registrations of in-laws, often collaborating with the young registrants' lineage mates, once more focuses

<sup>73</sup> ASVe, Procuratori di San Marco, Commissarie miste, b. 3A, Moisè Venier, red leather account book.

<sup>74</sup> NT 1157, Benedetto dalle Croci, protocollo, fol. 67v.

<sup>75</sup> Procuratori di San Marco, commissarie miste, b. 78a, Carte Morosini, parchment 29 September 1427. Morosini had already received a business commission (*procura*) from another of his sister's kin 21 years earlier. Cancelleria Inferiore, notai, b. 170, protocollo 2, 10 December 1406.

<sup>76</sup> Avogadori di Comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 163, fol. 309r, 10 October and 6 November 1449. For further discussion of this practice, with additional examples, see Chojnacki, 2000c, esp. 215-24.

attention on perhaps the most vital aspect of married women's patronage, promoting interfamilial relations. Earlier we observed men authorizing their wives, once widowed, to see to the vocations of their daughters. The counterpart of that is on display in mothers' Barbarella activity: with no evident encouragement in husbands' wills, they fostered collaboration between their families of birth and of marriage in the introduction of their sons into patrician adulthood. A law of 1414, which gave the Barbarella its definitive structure, identified fathers as the preferred sponsors of the young candidates<sup>77</sup>. This was the surest way to determine the candidates' legitimate patrician status, but fathers deceased or away from Venice had to be replaced and, not surprisingly, in their absence brothers and other lineage kin were the most frequent replacements. Yet nearly two-fifths of these father-substitutes were the candidates' mothers, and the guarantors they recruited display their interfamilial mediation<sup>78</sup>. In 755 Quattrocento registrations sponsored by either the candidate's mother or his father, nearly two-thirds, 65 percent, of the guarantors belonged to neither parent's natal lineage. Though a majority of these seemingly unrelated guarantors were probably connected by marriage to members of one or the other parent's lineage, their selection was no doubt a tactic calculated to advertise widespread familiarity with the young man's patrician credentials among nobles outside the family<sup>79</sup>.

When they did look to their lineage connections for guarantors, however, sponsoring fathers as well as sponsoring mothers called on both maternal and paternal kin, with fathers recruiting their own kinsmen 70 percent of the time, their wives' kin the other 30 percent; mothers favored their natal kinsmen slightly more frequently, 36 percent to 64 percent for their husbands' kin<sup>80</sup>. But the slight difference is less significant than the consensus of mothers and fathers in selecting Barbarella guarantors as it was in appointing testamentary executors. The dominant principle for both parents was, as in the example of Cateruzza Vitturi noted earlier, solidifying their sons' place in the patrilineage, which in the end was the matrix of membership in the ruling class with all its associations and benefits, while also cultivating the young men's ties to uncles and other kinsmen on their mother's side. Examples abound. In 1468, Agnesina Vitturi, widow of Nicolò Loredan, sponsored her son Andrea's Barbarella registration with, as guarantors, her own brother Domenico and her late husband's brother, Andrea's "patruus," Marco Loredan. Agnesina cast

<sup>77</sup> There were minor changes to the institution later in the Quattrocento, but in essentials the law of 1414 was definitive. See Chojnacki, 2000c.

<sup>78</sup> Of identifiable sponsors in 418 registrations with fathers absent, just over half, 52.1 percent, belonged to the candidate's patrilineage. Mothers accounted for 37.8 percent and maternal kin another 10 percent. *Ibid.*, table 14, p. 211.

<sup>79</sup> The 755 registrations are for sixteen patrician clans: Avogadori di Comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 162, 163, and 164. See Chojnacki, 2000a, 208 and 321, notes 10, 12; also 216, table 15.

<sup>80</sup> The exact figures: fathers engaged 143 (69.2%) of their own kinsmen, 108 (30.8%) wives' kin; mothers recruited 75 (63.6%) husbands' kinsmen and 43 (36.4%) of their own kin.

her kinship net still wider when three years later she registered another son, Giambattista: one of the guarantors was Giambattista's cousin, Girolamo Venier, the son of Agnesina's widowed sister, Cateruzza, who as we saw above had sponsored this Girolamo's own registration eight years earlier<sup>81</sup>. Other widows followed the same pattern as the Vitturi sisters. Registering her son Piero, Elena Tron, widow of Benedetto Morosini, recruited as guarantors Piero's brother and her own natal kinsman Andrea Tron. Elisabetta Loredan, wife of the absent Marco Mudazzo, registered her son Marino with, as guarantors, her husband's brother Nicolò Mudazzo and her own brother, Alvise Loredan. Likewise Chiara Zusto, widow of Jacopo da Mula, recruited Jacopo's brother Alvise da Mula together with Alvise Zusto as guarantors when she registered her son Francesco<sup>82</sup>.

Both in choosing testamentary executors and in assembling guarantors for their sons' Barbarella registrations, married patrician women used the patronage possibilities of their dowry wealth and their husbands' reliance on them to further the stake they shared with their husbands in the adult prospects of their children, male and female. Like their husbands they nourished their relations with their families and lineages of birth, but their children's interests encouraged their cultivation of productive relationships with their spouses' families as well. The outcome of this bilateral loyalty and its benefits was a new family orientation, a new family structure, the conjugal family, with offsetting, complementary ties to the families that after all had contracted the marriage, but with a primary focus on the fortunes of the new family, of which patrician wives were willing patronesses.

<sup>81</sup> Avogadori di Comun, Balla d'Oro, reg. 164, fols. 203v (Andrea), 204r (Giambattista).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, fols. 217r (Piero Morosini), 273r (Marino Mudazzo), 274v (Francesco da Mula).

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## Choosing, Loosing, and Binding in Venetian Noblewomen's Wills

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### Abstract

This essay is inspired by Ben Kohl's 2001 article on Fina Buzzaccarini da Carrara as wife, mother, and art patron in fourteenth-century Padua. Ben examined Fina's collaboration with her husband, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, her bequests to her children and other persons, and her expenditures for the construction of a tomb for herself and her husband in Padua's Baptistery. He showed the many ways in which a woman of substance, in this case the wife of the lord of Padua, could use her wealth to give expression to her loyalty to family, church, and city. Shifting the focus from signorial Padua to republican Venice, this essay will survey the benefactions of a sample of patrician women from the late fourteenth to the early sixteenth century. While all such bequests can be gathered under the umbrella of patronage, the different kinds of benefactions and the different categories of legatees were expressions of different motivations: piety, family loyalty, personal disposition. As with Fina da Carrara, drawing up a testament confronted women, as it did men, with the need to sort out their hierarchies of affection, loyalty, responsibility, and encouragement. They thus provide a measure of shifting loyalties as women moved from natal to marital family; in the cases of women who wrote wills at different stages of their married and widowed lives, they also display the evolution of the women's social and religious preferences over time. The argument is that, as Ben Kohl showed, patronage was protean and selective. In the case of Venetian patrician women writing their wills, it also reflected the effects of time, changing social environments, and personal choice.

### Keywords

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; patricians; kinship; female wills; society; patronage

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# Politics, War and Diplomacy in late fifteenth-century Italy: Machiavellian thoughts and Venetian examples

by Humfrey Butters

In the course of the last century political, military and diplomatic history gradually lost their age-old supremacy, as other forms of history, social, economic and cultural, came to play an increasingly prominent role. Paradoxically, in the same period, Political Science and International Relations, conceived of as subjects belonging to the social sciences, grew and prospered. In the discipline of International Relations two of the foremost schools, the Realists and the Behaviouralists, were wedded to positivism, the view that the social sciences should adopt the same methodology as the natural sciences<sup>1</sup>. There are two reasons why these not particularly novel reflections on twentieth-century intellectual developments are relevant to a historical essay on Italian political life in the late fifteenth century. The first is that one of the fundamental early texts of the Realist school was written not by a social scientist, but by a historian with strong Marxist and positivist leanings. The work was *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919-1939* and its author was E. H. Carr. The second is that Carr took Machiavelli, whose works are full of reflections upon fifteenth and early sixteenth-century Italian history, to be the model exponent, *avant la lettre*, of Realism.

Carr cast Machiavelli in this star role because of three principles that, according to him, underlay the latter's works: that the task of the political or social theorist is to lay bare the sequences of cause and effect of which history is composed; that practice is prior to and produces theory; and that morality is the fruit of power<sup>2</sup>. It is not difficult to see Marxist inspiration in Carr's interpretation of Machiavelli, for Marx certainly shared Machiavelli's contempt for certain sorts of idealistic or utopian thinking, while being, like Machiavelli, quite willing to indulge in his own variety of it. There are, however, several reasons for doubting that Machiavelli deserves a place in the Realist pantheon, and one very good one is that it is impossible to combine Machiavelli's

<sup>1</sup> Hollis and Smith, 28-32.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.



conception of the importance of *Fortuna* with a positivist belief in universal causal laws, as Montesquieu, a keen student of Machiavelli's *oeuvre*, was perfectly aware<sup>3</sup>. Whatever one thinks about Machiavelli's views on Fortune, it is fairly clear that the social sciences have failed so far to produce the causal laws that would enable them to explain and predict the phenomena that constitute their respective subject matters<sup>4</sup>.

Another reason for doubting whether Machiavelli can be accounted an early member of the Realist school is that while Realists tend to make a sharp distinction between domestic politics and the conduct of relations between states, he did not. In *The Prince* he stressed how important it was for a prince both to win a good reputation at home, by keeping his subjects satisfied and by avoiding their hatred or contempt, and to have the formidable military resources and reliable allies that would secure him from foreign threats. A ruler's domestic reputation for strong and effective government would make it less likely that foreign powers would attack him; while a successful foreign policy would help to discourage his domestic opponents from engaging in rebellion or other sorts of disobedience<sup>5</sup>. Machiavelli's perception of the intermeshing of politics, war and diplomacy is also to be seen in his account of Rome's career of conquest in the *Discourses*. Machiavelli is rightly notorious for his insistence upon the role of force in government, but it would be a grave error to suppose that he thought that power and force were identical, or that Rome's enormous territorial acquisitions were to be attributed solely to the use of her formidable military apparatus. He also considered that the perceptions or estimates of Rome's military potential of those facing Roman expansion or, to put it another way, Rome's reputation, were of great significance. Rome, according to him, was fortunate in that its foes did not unite to oppose her, because when one state was attacked others were too scared to come to its assistance. In the case of states geographically distant from Rome, such as Carthage, Machiavelli saw the former as the beneficiary of their miscalculations: the Carthaginians, for example, whenever Rome was engaging one of her opponents, judged that she would be defeated; and when that judgment turned out to be wrong, they supposed that they would be still be able to deal with the threat Rome posed by military or peaceful means. Another crucial factor in Rome's victories was her ability to secure the assistance of allies, or *compagni*; and in some cases these allies were dissident elements *within* the state that Rome was attacking, fifth columns ready to assist her in countries such as Greece, Spain or Gaul<sup>6</sup>. The significance that Machiavelli attached to reputation comes out clearly in *The Prince*, where despite the stress that he lays there upon robust military arrangements, he argues that the rulers of Western Europe could not rule by force alone, for in

<sup>3</sup> Butters, 2006, 91.

<sup>4</sup> The best account of this failure and of the reasons for it is to be found in Macintyre, 84-102.

<sup>5</sup> Machiavelli, 75-76 (*Il Principe*, chap. 19).

<sup>6</sup> Butters, 2000, 131.

their dominions the people were stronger than the army. It was for that reason that a canny ruler was well advised, according to Machiavelli, to take seriously both what his subjects wanted him to do and their estimates of how likely it was that he would be able to provide it<sup>7</sup>.

In the forty years leading up to the French invasion of 1494 the relations between the principal Italian powers provide numerous examples to support Machiavelli's view that political life on the one hand, war and diplomacy on the other were hopelessly embrangled. It is true that a powerful historiographical tradition, deriving ultimately from Burckhardt's vision of the Renaissance State, has argued that in this period Venice, Milan, the Papacy, the kingdom of Naples and Florence, whose governments exercised tight control over the territories subject to them, were engaged in a rather orderly competition in which no one power dominated the rest, so that it is legitimate to speak of the operation of a balance of power<sup>8</sup>. The principal problem with this opinion is that while it is perfectly true that in the late Middle Ages Italian political geography was simplified by the emergence of the five powers in question, which almost without exception acquired resources that they had not had before, such as standing armies<sup>9</sup> and resident ambassadors<sup>10</sup>, it is not clear that their internal organization corresponded very closely to that depicted by Burckhardt or his later followers. The cities that became subject to Florence and Venice, for example, in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, retained many of their previous statutes, institutions and leading families. Feudal jurisdiction, moreover, can be found almost everywhere, in the kingdom of Naples, the duchy of Milan, the Papal State and the Venetian Terraferma state<sup>11</sup>. This is why one of the principal tasks of Italian governments in this period was to manage their aristocracies, using patronage, force, or the threat of force, as occasion demanded, and by no means all of them showed themselves capable of this. One of the reasons why success could prove elusive was that the resources upon which the domestic opponents of a government could draw were not confined within the frontiers of the territories subject to it. In Genoa governments were often overthrown or threatened by an alliance between a hostile faction and a foreign power such as France or Milan; while in Naples the Aragonese monarchy faced two serious baronial rebellions, between 1458 and 1462 and from 1485 to 1486, the former backed by the house of Anjou, the latter by the Papacy<sup>12</sup>. Governments, therefore, did not

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 133. For an excellent analysis of the relationship between power and force, see Luttwak, 195-200.

<sup>8</sup> Mattingly, 90.

<sup>9</sup> Mallett, 1974, 107-45.

<sup>10</sup> Mattingly, 66-76.

<sup>11</sup> The most powerful assault ever mounted upon the conception of the Renaissance State is to be found in Jones, 71-96. See also Law, 397-413. For a historiographical account, see Butters, 2005, 121-50.

<sup>12</sup> Butters, 1988, 16.

necessarily have a monopoly of foreign policy; but they could certainly seek to forestall such crises, or overcome them when they arose, with the aid of their own external allies, and the classic case of this is the relationship with Milan that for several decades buttressed the Medici regime in Florence.

This is not the only respect, moreover, in which domestic politics and foreign affairs could be difficult to disentangle: the Barons' War of 1485-1486 provides two further ones. Firstly, its status was ambiguous, since although it could be regarded as a war between two of the major powers of Italy, and so as an episode in Neapolitan or Papal foreign policy, the Papacy had a long-standing claim to be the feudal overlord of the king of Naples and, therefore, to have the right to intervene in the conflict between Ferrante and the rebel barons. Secondly, some of the leading actors in the drama had lands both in the Papal State and in the *Regno*, such as the Orsini and the Colonna families<sup>13</sup>.

Another reason for doubting the idea that there was a balance of power in operation in this period is provided by the outcome of the Ferrara war (1482-1484), in the latter stages of which Venice confronted the other four major powers and still contrived to come out with a significant gain, the Polesine of Rovigo<sup>14</sup>. What is certainly true is that, thanks to Venice's extraordinary territorial expansion in the first half of the fifteenth century, the Peace of Lodi (1454) and the alliance between Milan and Florence were both motivated in large part by the desire to limit Venetian ambitions<sup>15</sup>. It is not surprising that it became a commonplace in the second half of the century to accuse Venice of seeking the *imperio d'Italia*<sup>16</sup>; and although it is not certain how many of those who levelled this charge actually believed it, Venetians themselves were quite happy to compare themselves to the Romans<sup>17</sup>.

Machiavelli did not share this latter view, but he did have a sufficiently high opinion of Venice's importance to think that it was worthwhile to compare Venice *with* Rome, even though his purpose in making such a comparison was to draw attention to the differences between them. His principal reason for having a lower opinion of Venice than of Rome was that he found Venetian military institutions decidedly inferior to Roman ones, thanks to Venice's reliance upon *condottieri*, whose deployment Machiavelli took to be an infallible sign of corruption. He attributed Venetian territorial expansion to cunning and cash rather than military prowess<sup>18</sup>, taking his distaste for Venetian military arrangements to the point of maintaining that Venice was stronger before she acquired her mainland territories<sup>19</sup>. The disintegration of Venice's Terraferma state after the battle of Agnadello in 1509 was obviously

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>14</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 70.

<sup>15</sup> Chambers, 59.

<sup>16</sup> Rubinstein, 197.

<sup>17</sup> Chambers, 12.

<sup>18</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 302.

<sup>19</sup> Machiavelli, 336 (*Discorsi*, II, chap. 19).

in his mind, and the fact that she was able in the following years to recover most of what she had lost did not alter his judgment<sup>20</sup>. What he did concede was that Venice had survived for a longer period as a republic than Rome had, and for that reason he argued that a republic that wanted to expand should follow the Roman model, but a republic that was content merely to survive would be better advised to follow the Venetian one<sup>21</sup>. He failed to grasp the significance of the development of standing armies in Italy, so that the fact that Venice had one failed to impress him<sup>22</sup>.

Venice had other profoundly significant resources. The wealth that she derived from her crucial role in the spice trade gave her a great advantage, and so did her fleet and her geographical location. In the late fifteenth century the annual income of the Venetian government in normal years (admittedly a rather artificial notion) of 1,150,000 ducats was almost certainly superior to that of her main Italian rivals<sup>23</sup>; though it is worth pointing out that Machiavelli would not have been impressed by this latter fact, because he was very keen to deny that money was essential to the successful waging of war<sup>24</sup>. The subject of the relationship of resources to foreign policy is, however, not a simple one. The choices governments made were obviously dependent on the resources available to them; but these did not constitute a fixed and predictable quantity, for the human and material resources available for one political or military undertaking would not necessarily be available for another. This was particularly true of those represented by a government's foreign friends and allies, of whose great value Machiavelli was quite aware<sup>25</sup>.

Nor was there a simple relationship between a government's domestic resources, military and financial, and the outcome of the conflicts in which it engaged. The war of Ferrara (1482-1484) presents a particularly good example of this. Although it is true that the income of the Venetian state was probably superior to that of any one of the five powers that it confronted in the closing stages of the war, Ferrara, Milan, Naples, Florence and the Papacy, it was certainly not superior to their combined incomes, though naturally much depended in times of war on the sources of credit on which each could draw. The number of troops at its disposal, however, around 20,000, was probably not even superior to that which Milan alone could deploy, and it was, without a shadow of a doubt, inferior to that of the armed forces of the five put together. But as we have seen, the result of the war was not what these considerations might have led one to expect, for Venice emerged from the war with a substantial gain<sup>26</sup>. Timing, tactics and strategy, the quality of the troops and of

<sup>20</sup> The best treatment of Machiavelli's views about Venice is to be found in Cervelli.

<sup>21</sup> Machiavelli, 138-41 (*Discorsi*, I, chap. 5).

<sup>22</sup> Vide supra, 105.

<sup>23</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 302.

<sup>24</sup> Machiavelli, 302-05 (*Discorsi*, II, chap. 10)

<sup>25</sup> Vide supra, 104.

<sup>26</sup> Vide supra, 106.

their commanders all played a crucial role, but so did that elusive factor, *reputazione*, to which Machiavelli paid so much attention. His discussion of it in *The Prince* and the *Discourses*, was notably original, but the perception that statesmen needed to take account of it was hardly a new one: king Ferrante of Naples, for example, a cunning but hardly a very deep thinker, told the Florentine and Milanese ambassadors on one occasion that the survival of regimes was as much a matter of their reputation as of their military resources<sup>27</sup>.

It would not be particularly daring to conclude that this was a view common to all the leading players in the game of Italian politics in the late fifteenth century; and if it was, it amounted to an admission by them that their task, to defend the interests of the states that they governed, was an extremely complex one. One quality it required was the ability to predict who was likely to emerge as a winner in a particular contest, however winning was defined at each stage of the unceasing military and diplomatic struggle that constituted Italian political life; and the part played by *reputazione* in that struggle made the business of prediction very difficult, so difficult indeed that there is a certain analogy, not to be pressed too far, between the rivalries of Italy's states and Keynes's famous description of the economy, which he compared to a contest to forecast the result of a beauty competition, in which each contestant has to choose not the most beautiful candidate, but the one most likely to win the votes of the other contestants. As Keynes puts it: "It is not a case of choosing those which, to the best of one's judgement, really are the prettiest, nor even those which average opinion genuinely thinks the prettiest. We have reached the third degree where we devote our intelligences to anticipating what average opinion expects average opinion to be"<sup>28</sup>. This does not mean, of course, that Italian political life was so opaque that one calculation was just as good as any other. Only a very stupid Italian statesman would have spent much time trying to work out whether Poggibonsi's resources were superior or inferior to those of Venice; but, equally, only a very stupid one would have illuded himself that he *knew exactly* what, at any given moment, Venice's resources actually were, for, in a world in which duplicity and the management of impressions played such a leading role, and in which unpredictable events were commonplace, this was a form of knowledge that not even Venetian statesmen possessed. These features of political and diplomatic life are not, of course, confined to late fifteenth-century Italy. When Harold Macmillan was asked what preoccupied him most when he was Prime Minister, he replied: "Events, dear boy, events." Both Niccolò Machiavelli and Francesco Guicciardini would have had considerable sympathy for this point of view.

One key element in Venice's military arrangements illustrates particularly well the point that resources were dependent upon policies: the city's heavy reliance on the services of *condottieri*. It is true that her experience of the use of mercenaries

<sup>27</sup> Butters, 2000, 133.

<sup>28</sup> Hollis, 102.

was far happier than Florence's<sup>29</sup>, and in most respects bore little relationship to Machiavelli's atrabilious verdicts upon it. This was because Venice made every effort to induce her *condottieri* to identify their interests with hers, with grants of estates, pensions and even honorary citizenship<sup>30</sup>. But frequently one of the city's *condottieri* showed that he had political and military aims that diverged quite markedly from those of his employer, and in those circumstances Machiavelli's critique of the *condottieri* system had more purchase. A good example of this phenomenon was Roberto di Sanseverino, Venice's principal *condottiere* for most of the 1480's. During the Ferrara war he was involved in clandestine dealings with the Ghibelline faction in Milan, and while this could be seen as an entirely reasonable discharge of his duties by a sedulous servant of a major power, since a standard tactic in the Italian wars of the age – one already deployed by the Romans, as Machiavelli pointed out<sup>31</sup> – was the subversion of one's enemies from within by the establishment of fifth columns, it is not clear that in this case Sanseverino's political activities were solely concerned to benefit his employer. He had for long been involved in Milanese political life, indeed, he had been born into it, because his mother Elisa was the sister of Francesco Sforza, duke of Milan<sup>32</sup>.

Since his father Leonetto was the illegitimate son of Bertrando di Sanseverino, count of Caiazzo<sup>33</sup>, Roberto also belonged to one of the leading families of the *Regno*, and thus furnishes a further example of how complicated the political interests of Italian nobles could be. In 1477 duchess Bona made him one of the members of a new formed section of the *Consiglio segreto* that had a permanent residence in the *Castello*<sup>34</sup>; but this did not prevent him from harbouring his own considerable ambitions, which according to one report extended to the conquest of Parma, Piacenza, Pavia and even Milan itself<sup>35</sup>. In May 1477 he was found guilty of conspiring against the Duchess's regime, together with several members of the Sforza family, including Ludovico, and declared a rebel<sup>36</sup>. His estates in the duchy were confiscated. Two years later the support that he and Ludovico enjoyed within the Milanese state brought about their return to favour<sup>37</sup> and the eventual removal from power of the Duchess. His alliance with Ludovico was not, however, destined to enjoy a long life. By January 1482 he had become convinced that Ludovico was aiming to exclude him from his role in government, and he feared, moreover, that if he set foot in Milan, he would be arrested<sup>38</sup>. Sanseverino's solution to his predicament was to

<sup>29</sup> Mallett, 1979, 149-64.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>31</sup> *Vide supra*, 104.

<sup>32</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 1977a, 45n1.

<sup>33</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 1977b, 281.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 330n5: Zaccaria Saggi to Ludovico Gonzaga, 1 June 1477.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 359, 367.

<sup>37</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 1981, 189n1.

<sup>38</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 1990, 209n3.



seek employment with Venice, where on 29 March 1482 more than four hundred nobles turned out to welcome him<sup>39</sup>.

After the end of the Ferrara war in the summer of 1484 Ludovico sought to re-establish good relations with Sanseverino, partly in order to draw closer to Venice, but this made the Ghibelline faction in Milan very nervous, for some of them had engaged in clandestine dealings with the *condottiere* during the war. Led by Filippo degli Eustachii, the castellan of Milan, they made Ludovico abandon his attempt to court Sanseverino, who was declared a rebel once again in July 1485 for conspiring against him<sup>40</sup>. In the Barons' War Venice maintained a neutral posture, but it did allow Sanseverino to join his troops to those of the Pope and the rebel barons. His justification for taking this step was that his sole source of income at that point was his *condotta* with Venice, which was inadequate to his needs. He claimed that he had taken legal advice before signing his *condotta* with the Pope. The Venetian government informed Milan that it had protested at the *condottiere's* decision, but seeing that it would be impossible to make him change his mind, it had decided to let him go<sup>41</sup>.

What was Venice doing in granting Sanseverino the permission that he sought? Bernardo Rucellai, Florentine ambassador in Milan, considered that the Venetian government *wanted* the *condottiere* to join the Pope, even if it had not been able to convince the Senate to give him leave to do so. On the other hand it is not obvious that the Venetian government could have stopped him. On 22 December 1485 Giovanni Lanfredini, Florentine ambassador in Naples, in a summary of the forces deployed on both sides of the conflict, calculated that Sanseverino had six hundred men-at-arms with him<sup>42</sup>. The Venetian government would have run the risk of a more serious loss of face if it had persisted in its refusal to give him permission to go and he had simply ignored this.

In the decade between the end of the Ferrara war and the French invasion of 1494 there is a striking, indeed an ironic contrast between Venetian foreign policy and the views of those Italian rivals of hers who saw, or claimed to see, the city as bent on the domination of Italy, or of those Venetians given to remarking upon the similarities between Venice and ancient Rome. The only conflict in which she was involved was the short-lived war of Rovereto of 1487 with the count of Tyrol, in which a key issue was the extensive acquisition and exploitation by Venetian patricians of mines located in areas adjoining Venice's frontiers with the bishoprics of Bressanone and Trento and the lands of the Count<sup>43</sup>. The defence of her Terraferma dominions and of those that constituted the *Stato da mar* was just as important to Venice as it had always

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 309n4.

<sup>40</sup> Butters, 1988, 15-16.

<sup>41</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 2002, 5.

<sup>42</sup> Lanfredini, 2002, 452.

<sup>43</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 71.



been, but no threats to these significant enough to elicit from Venice a massive and sustained response emerged in these years; nor was the government tempted to engage in any aggressive ventures in order to increase the amount of territory under its control. There were sound financial reasons for such a stance. The Ferrara war was reputed to have cost more than two million ducats<sup>44</sup>, and in order to be able to engage in it the government had been forced to transform existing public credit arrangements by the establishment of the *Monte Nuovo* in 1482. The *Monte Vecchio*, it was thought, would not have been able to confront the challenge, since already by the 1470's its payments of interest were twenty years in arrears<sup>45</sup>.

The Ferrara war was the most extensive military enterprise undertaken by Venice on the Italian mainland between 1454 and 1494, and the one that provides the best evidence for those observers, contemporaries or modern historians, who ascribed to the city the goal of dominating Italy. But while it is plausible to suppose that the Venetians hoped to overwhelm Ferrara's defences before the forces of Ercole d'Este's allies could arrive on the scene, it is far from clear that Venice intended to absorb the city and all its territories into her Terraferma state, even though the Papacy had made this formally possible by bestowing the vicariate of Ferrara on her in April 1482. There is much to be said for Mallett's verdict that Venetian war aims were probably far more modest: the full observance by the Ferrarese of the *patti* that had for long regulated commercial relations between the two cities, greatly to the advantage of Venice, and the recovery of the Polesine of Rovigo<sup>46</sup>. It is significant, moreover, that many leading Venetian statesmen were for long reluctant to contemplate war with Ferrara. As late as November 1481 the Doge and a majority of the Collegio were still insisting that the construction of three forts intended to prevent incursions across the frontier should be delayed, in order to allow further negotiations to take place; and towards the end of that month seventy senators voted against a proposal to send Ercole d'Este an ultimatum<sup>47</sup>. It could be argued that Venice's ability to emerge from this major conflict having achieved most of its war aims, even though it had had to confront four of the major powers in Italy and one of medium rank, showed that the Roman dreams dreamt by some Venetians were not mere flights of fantasy; but while Venice's success was undoubtedly due in part to its ability to deploy formidable military and financial resources, the outcome of the war owed much to the divisions among her opponents and to the fact that their other commitments prevented them from dedicating themselves single-mindedly to the defeat of Venice<sup>48</sup>. If, moreover, the favourable result Venice

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 302.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 324.

<sup>46</sup> Mallett, 1993, 63.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

obtained had emboldened some Venetians to entertain further expansionist ambitions, there is little sign of it in the decade that followed the end of the war.

One reason why Venetian foreign policy in Italy tended to be more cautious in the second half of the century than it had been in the first, was that the city's governors were more preoccupied than before with the Ottoman menace, as a consequence of the capture of Constantinople in 1453 and the conquest of the Morea, completed in 1460. In 1463, after a vigorous debate in the Senate, which showed that even in these circumstances there was a strong peace party in Venice, she went to war with the Ottomans, a conflict that lasted until 1479, and resulted in the loss of Negroponte, a disaster which, according to the chronicler Domenico Malipiero, terrified the Venetian ruling élite<sup>49</sup>. When in the middle of this undertaking Venice provided assistance to her *condottiere* Bartolomeo Colleoni in his failed attempt to topple the Medici regime in Florence (1466-1468), she was forced to face the fact that it was very difficult for her to conduct a successful war on two fronts<sup>50</sup>.

Even if Venice's foreign policy in the decade before the start of the Italian wars was relatively lacking in bold initiatives, the importance attributed to the city by the other major powers continued to be considerable. In the early part of 1486, for example, Pope Innocent VIII made a serious effort to convince the Venetian government to ally with the rebel barons against the king of Naples, but although the government made him an offer, it was one that it must have known he would have to refuse: the Pope would receive thirty *squadre* and 2-3,000 foot, and in return he would concede to Venice a string of Romagna towns including Cesena and Savignano. Unsurprisingly Innocent declined the offer, declaring that he had no intention of diminishing the Papal States<sup>51</sup>. This disappointment did not, however, discourage the Pope, in the year following the end of the Barons' War, from contracting an alliance with Venice<sup>52</sup>.

Ludovico Sforza was another ruler extremely anxious to be on good terms with Venice after the Ferrara war, in part because he had experienced her ability to exploit divisions within the political élite of the Milanese state. One of Venice's strengths in its dealings with other Italian states was that it was less vulnerable to this sort of exploitation, since although it was hardly free of factional conflicts, these were not so grave as to produce the sorts of violent upheavals that were a regular feature of political life in Genoa and the Papal States, and an occasional one in the *Regno*, Florence or the duchy of Milan. In August 1486, however, a major clash over the dogeship broke out between the *Longhi* and *Curti* families, becoming so serious that elections to the Senate and the Council of Ten became a battleground between the two parties<sup>53</sup>. Marin Sanudo commented that the whole city was divided by the conflict, which came

<sup>49</sup> Cozzi and Knapton, 58.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>51</sup> Butters, 1988, 22.

<sup>52</sup> Lorenzo de' Medici, 2003, 87n12.

<sup>53</sup> Finlay, 145-47.

to the ears of Ludovico Sforza. He took the matter so seriously that he delivered the following warning to the Venetian ambassador, Marcantonio Morosini: “Hora vedo ben quel Stado in desolation et im partialità esser venuto, fareti far novi pensieri d’ i fati vostri a i Signori de Italia.” Morosini’s dispatch, in which he reported Sforza’s words, was read in the Council of Ten, and it was decided that the Doge should deliver a speech to the Great Council, exhorting them to abandon their dissensions for the sake of civic concord<sup>54</sup>. Ludovico must have taken some pleasure in being able to lecture the Venetians about the loss of reputation that a state infected with serious domestic dissensions was likely to incur, but the danger to which he adverted was real enough.

Ludovico’s determination to cultivate the Venetians after the Ferrara war put a considerable strain on his relationship with a longstanding ally of Milan’s, Florence. In a letter to his master of 20 November 1486 the Ferrarese ambassador wrote that Lorenzo de’ Medici had complained bitterly about Milan’s behaviour, commenting, according to the ambassador: “Et che hora mai il non sapea più che dire se non che ’l cognosea la maiore difficoltà essere in governarse cum li amici che diffenderse da li inimici”<sup>55</sup>. But Lorenzo himself was perfectly aware of the advantages, temporary or otherwise, of appearing to be associated with Venice. It was for this reason that in 1487 he had constantly encouraged the Pope, with whom he was seeking to build a solid relationship, to reinforce his alliance with that city<sup>56</sup>. He also used his political influence in the same year to secure the dispatch of a Florentine ambassador to Venice, an initiative intended to punish Ludovico Sforza for his failure to back Florence in its struggle with Genoa over Sarzana<sup>57</sup>, and for his excessively deferential attitude towards Venice<sup>58</sup>. These examples provide telling illustrations of the fact that in the second half of the fifteenth century Venice did not need to embark upon dramatic or aggressive adventures on the Italian mainland in order to persuade the other major states of the peninsula that she was a power to be feared and, when necessary, cultivated.

<sup>54</sup> Sanudo, 536.

<sup>55</sup> Lorenzo de’ Medici, 2003, 25-26n14: Aldobrandino Guidoni to Ercole d’Este, 20 November 1486.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 359n10.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 257n1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 383n10.

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*Abstract*

The essay discusses theoretical and practical aspects of politics, war and diplomacy in late fifteenth-century Italy, using Machiavelli's works as an example of theory, Venetian foreign policy as an example of practice. The attempt to present Machiavelli as a founding father of the Realist school of International Relations is considered and dismissed. Major features of Machiavelli's thought are treated: his vision of the intimate connections between foreign affairs, war and political life; his distinguishing power from force; and his grasp of the importance of reputation. The value of these as a guide to the politics of Italy between 1454 and 1494 is assessed, with particular reference to Venice, and to the merits and defects of Machiavelli's famous comparison between ancient Rome and Venice. The career of Roberto di Sanseverino is examined to show that one premise upon which that comparison was based, that condottieri were unreliable, was sometimes well founded.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; politics; war; diplomacy; Nicolò Machiavelli

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# Oppio, triaca e altre spezie officinali a Venezia nella seconda metà del Quattrocento\*

di Andrea Mozzato

## 1. Introduzione

Nonostante il commercio di spezie orientali, che come noto fecero la fortuna economica di Venezia, abbia attirato per oltre un secolo gli interessi degli studiosi, i lavori non divulgativi sui *simplicia*, sostanze elementari vegetali e in misura minore animale e minerale usate per scopi terapeutici, e sui *composita*, i farmaci complessi, non risultano numerosi, almeno per il periodo medievale<sup>1</sup>. Anche in quelli più recenti, il pepe, peraltro spezia culinaria, continua a

\* Questo articolo è il risultato della mia collaborazione col gruppo di ricerca *Transcultural Studies. Trading Diasporas* della Ruprecht-Karls-Universität di Heidelberg diretto da Georg Christ, che ringrazio vivamente. Sono inoltre grato a Claudio Bismara, Alessandro Dal Maschio, Christian e Sarah Fuchs, Elisabeth Huwer, Michael Knapton, Nicole Krone, Maria Nadotti, Giorgio Pelidis, Ali Salem e, infine, a Sigrid Geisler, Georg Homayer e Jan Holthues, medici e psichiatri che mi hanno fornito preziosi suggerimenti.

Si citeranno in forma abbreviata le fonti aretine. Arezzo, Archivio della Fraternita dei Laici: mastro n. 3470 (Venezia, 1466-1473) = L3470; mastro n. 3471 (Venezia e Arezzo, 1473-1488) = L3471; mastro n. 3472 (Arezzo, 1477-1478) = L3472; vacchetta n. 3473 (Venezia, 1466-1478) = L3473; giornale n. 3474 (Venezia e Arezzo, 1473-1479) = L3473; memoriale n. 3475 (Arezzo, 1477-1479) = L3475. Nella cartulazione, “d” = dare e “a” = avere. Altre abbreviazioni usate fra testo e note: cent. = *centener*; ducato/i = duc.; libbra/e = lb. Per confrontare i dati, ho espresso i valori monetari, tenendo conto del cambio, in ducati di conto e le varie misure di peso in libbra fina veneziana secondo le seguenti equivalenze:

a) Venezia: 1 duc. = 10 lire di grossi = lire 6, soldi 4 di piccoli; 1 lira di grossi = 10 duc.; 1 soldo di grossi = 0,5 duc.; 1 grosso = 0,0417 duc.; 1 lira di piccoli = 0,161 duc.; 1 soldo di piccoli = 0,008 duc.; 1 piccolo = 0,00067 duc.; 1 libbra = 12 oncie; 1 *exagio* = 1/6 oncia; 1 *quarta* = 1/4 oncia (Cantalupo, 24; Benezet, 310-312; Dotson, 205; Pegolotti, 36: “Perle minute vi si vendono a peso di libbre, d’oncie, di saggio, e di carati”); 1 *centener* = 100 lb. o rotoli o pezzi; 1 *mier* = 1.000 lb., rotoli o pezzi.

b) Arezzo (in dieci anni il cambio è fisso a lire 5, soldi 10 per duc. (per esempio L3470: 13d): lira = 0,182 duc.; soldi 0,009 duc.; fiorino largo = 1 duc.

c) Valencia (18-20 soldi = 1 duc. dal 1473 al 1475; cfr. per esempio L3471: 18a): 1 lira = 1 duc.; 1 soldo = 0,05 duc.

d) Damasco: 50-52 dirham = 1 duc.; 1 *rotolo* = 6 lb.; l'oncia del rotolo = 1/2 libbra (L3470: 6, 21, 55, 74).

<sup>1</sup> A parte i classici lavori di Heyd, Lane e Ashtor, nei quali si dà molta attenzione alle spezie ma poco ai medicinali, rinvio agli studi di Dian, Marangoni, Meneghini, Schwarz (*Per una storia*), Stefanutti



polarizzare l'attenzione, mentre altre droghe più importanti per la storia della medicina rimangono trascurate<sup>2</sup>. Le ombre, poi, aumentano se si passa dal macro al micro, se cioè lo storico smette di guardare dentro le stive delle galere ed entra nei magazzini delle spezierie realtine per capire cosa, quanto e a che prezzo di fatto circolava sul mercato. A questo riguardo, la documentazione contabile di uno speciale qui analizzata getta qualche luce.

Agostino Altucci era un aretino attivo a Rialto dal 1465 al 1475 alla spezieria «grande» della Croce a San Salvador<sup>3</sup>. Integratosi pienamente nella rete mercantile della Serenissima, come altri speciali commerció anche in merci non direttamente connesse con la sua professione facendo affari in tutto il Mediterraneo. Dal 1465 al 1473 importò per esempio dalla Siria 18.000 lb. di cotone e di filati per un valore di 900 duc., comprò tra il 1464 e il 1468 quasi 3.000 lb. di vetrerie per 105 duc. rivendendone 1.700 con incasso di 330 duc., senza contare le 170.000 corde di paternostri di più sorti (delle 365.000 acquistate a Murano) per 600 e vendute a 630 duc.<sup>4</sup>. Sulla storia dell'Altucci e su parte del suo commercio (in specifico occhiali, profumi, pigmenti o vetrerie) ho già scritto altrove<sup>5</sup>. In queste pagine mi concentrerò sulle spezie officinali più ricorrenti, sul medicamento più noto dell'epoca, la triaca, e su un suo importante ingrediente: l'oppio.

## 2. Le spezie: i simplicia

### 2.1. Lo zucchero

Nei secoli centrali del Medioevo lo zucchero era utilizzato come medicinale: a Bagdad lo si raccomandava per le malattie di petto mentre in Europa, secondo il trecentesco *Tacuinum sanitatis*, lo si prevedeva anche per curare reni e vescica; in seguito divenne però ingrediente base per altre medicine<sup>6</sup>. La seguente lista di medicine vendute nella farmacia aretina all'insegna di San Michele, sempre condotta dall'Altucci (1477), dà un'idea della frequenza del suo utilizzo:

aque e zuchero rosso, chonfezion chordial fata a posta di zuchero fino e fragomenti de gemis, scyropo di zuchero, datelo con zuchero (rosso), datelo di chassie fato con zuchero,

e, per l'età moderna, a Laughran, Palmer, Vanzan Marchini, De Vivo. Sui *simplicia e composita* cfr. Benezet, 680; Dressendörfer, 1985, 73-86. Per Verona, Bismara, 44-49.

<sup>2</sup> Per esempio Tucci, 95-111, oppure Palmer, 100-17.

<sup>3</sup> Cfr. Mozzato, 2009, 117-48.

<sup>4</sup> *Taverixi*, di corallo, intrecciati, *de dechoro*, damaschini, biavi, gialli, *de fontego*, corti, a ruota di carro.

<sup>5</sup> Rimangono qui escluse le sostanze coloranti usate in farmacia, come per esempio, il verderame o lo *spodio* (cfr. Henderson, 286, 321), già trattate in un altro studio, cfr. Mozzato, 2012.

<sup>6</sup> Vela I Aulesa, 39, 376; Heyd, 1274; *Tacuinum*, 130. Nel 1466 Agostino preparò 2,5 lb. che vendette a 0,72 duc./lb: L3470, 19d.

solutivi con zucchero (rosso), letovaro con polvere di zucchero, datelo solutivo con tifere persiche con zucchero, *die* draganti con zucchero, *die* marinate con zucchero, *die* marinata e zucchero roxado, eletuario maistral con tre pestini fato con zucchero fino, gilebe di zucchero fino chordial et con perle, pillole reformate con tifere persiche e agregative e zucchero rosso<sup>7</sup>.

Dall'inizio del Trecento crebbe la disponibilità di zucchero proveniente dalla Siria, Cipro ed Egitto in forma di polvere e di pani. I medici dell'ospedale dei marinai di Venezia somministravano il tipo chiamato *caffetino* di Alessandria<sup>8</sup>. Quando in seguito gli zuccherifici mediorientali entrarono in crisi, altri punti di approvvigionamento, come la Sicilia, Rodi, Creta e soprattutto Valencia, Malaga e Saragozza, crebbero d'importanza e lo zucchero divenne lentamente un bene di largo consumo sostituendo il miele come dolcificante. In medicina, quello rosato e raffinato fu l'unico zucchero venduto legalmente dagli speciali detti *da grosso*, quelli cioè non abilitati allo spaccio di farmaci<sup>9</sup>.

Agostino trattò dapprima zucchero orientale. Nel 1463 importò da Damasco 175 lb. di *candi* depurato e cristallizzato, e utilizzato, secondo il medico senese Pietro Andrea Mattioli (morto nel 1577), contro «l'aridità della lingua e l'asprezze del petto». Era tanto più pregiato quanto più bianco e grosso. Il prezzo era di 13,3 duc./cent.: una parte di quello stock (23,2 duc. totali) fu rivenduto fino al 1475 a speciali aretini in quantità che andavano da una a due libbre per volta al prezzo di 25-30 duc./cent.<sup>10</sup>. Da Tripoli nel 1472 Agostino importò 355 lb. di zucchero *tabarzetto* a 13 duc./cent., o meglio canne di bambù (*tabuxi over maze*) dalle quali si estraeva un succo latteo che dava una polvere bianchissima di alta qualità<sup>11</sup>.

Qual era il fabbisogno di zucchero per le spezierie di media-grossa dimensione come quella della Croce? Ad Agostino fu sufficiente importare in dieci anni una sola partita di *candi* e di *tabarzetto*, che poi rivendette in minime quantità, così come lo zucchero tripolino venduto tra il 1467 e il 1469 a 15,5-20 duc./cent. (260 lb. complessive)<sup>12</sup>. I rifornimenti più ingenti e di valore inferiore venivano effettuati in Spagna ed in minima parte in Sicilia. A Valencia l'Altucci contattò diversi fornitori, come il moro Obeto operante alla *moreria*, l'ebreo Atam Golli, ma anche altri speciali catalani presso i quali vendeva in contropartita merce orientale<sup>13</sup>. Fra il 1468 e il 1473 importò con le

<sup>7</sup> L3472: 1r-65r; L3475: 1r-33r. Per i termini tecnici si consultino *ad vocem*: Battaglia; Mattioli; Pegolotti.

<sup>8</sup> Fischel, 52-55; Ashtor, 1983, 24.

<sup>9</sup> Heyd, 1263-72; Galloway, 181; Eloire, 60-63; Ashtor, 1992, 226-80; M 209: 31v.; Marangoni, 161, 173.

<sup>10</sup> Mattioli, 303; Pegolotti, 363; L3470: 6d, 10d, 11d, 22d; L3474: 26r. Agostino non trattò più in zucchero *candi*; nell'inventario della Croce del 1474 compare ancora quell'unica partita rivenduta a speciali di Rialto come Zanobi di Tomasi; L3471: 36d. Tutti i prezzi sono al netto dei costi di transazione (noli, imballaggi e dazi).

<sup>11</sup> Dressendörfer, 1978, 315; Garcia de Orta, 46; L3470: 133d, 149d-a, 150d.

<sup>12</sup> L3470: 22d, 36d, 52d.

<sup>13</sup> L3474: 8r. Meyerson, 157.

galere di Aigues-Mortes un totale di 25.000 lb. per un investimento di oltre 2.000 duc. di cui è possibile individuare una rivendita a Rialto di circa 19.500 lb. per oltre 2.000 duc., con un 22% di guadagno presunto (tab. 1)<sup>14</sup>.

Data	provenienza	lb.	duc./cent.	duc.
1468 (4/11)	Saragozza	2.050	4,10	85,08
1468 (4/11)	Messina e Palermo	2.000	4,28	85,60
1469 (23/12)	Saragozza	555	5,16	28,64
1470 (1/5)	“	514	5,16	26,52
1470 (29/6)	“	380	5	19
1471 (8/2)	Valencia	2.592	9,07	235
1472 (21/1)	“	2.910	9,50	276,45
1472 (24/1)	Saragozza	1.107	5	55,35
1472 (22/2)	“	1.553	5	77,65
1473 (25/3)	“	9.927	10,88	1080
1473 (25/3)	“	1.353	5	67,65

Tab. 1. Importazioni di zucchero

Gli acquirenti sono per la maggior parte speciali all'ingrosso e raramente compaiono piccoli clienti. Sembra pertanto che Agostino agisse più da grossista che da dettagliante, come suggerito anche dalla quantità di ogni vendita, in media 160 lb. con punte di 1.260 ai fratelli Alvise e Lorenzo Bianco<sup>15</sup>. È possibile tuttavia intravedere il commercio al minuto dello zucchero, ma anche di altri articoli, se mettiamo assieme le poste nel conto «cassa di contanti» dove Agostino registrava, forse raggruppandoli (e non sempre sistematicamente), i ricavi del banco. Tali conti coprono quattro anni (1470-1474) e restituiscono 307 duc. riferiti alle 3.370 lb. vendute<sup>16</sup>. Se si cerca lo zucchero spagnolo fra le poste in dare del conto «bottega della Croce» e quelle in avere dei conti «zucchero» collegati alla *merze mexa in botega* – valorizzazioni della merce di magazzino da vendere al dettaglio – arriviamo a poco meno di 4.700 lb. per un valore di 320 duc. tra il 1469 e il 1474<sup>17</sup>. Nell'uno e nell'altro caso queste presunte vendite al dettaglio coprirebbero dal 9 al 19% appena di tutto lo zucchero importato, cosa che riconfermerebbe l'attività di grossista, ma anche l'uso ancora limitato come dolcificante.

I frammenti irregolari di zucchero, o gli scarti non raffinati costavano appena 4 duc./cent.: nel 1471 Agostino rifornì Cristoforo Rosa speciale in Salò con 100 lb. di *rottami* di Saragozza acquistati alla spezieria del Tartaro in Merceria<sup>18</sup>. Dello stesso valore era lo zucchero damaschino d'imitazione orientale<sup>19</sup>. Agostino

<sup>14</sup> L3470: 40d, 44d, 73d, 87d, 102d, 132a, 143a, 153d, 156d, 164d; L3471: 10d, 39d; L3474: 2r, 3r, 3v, 4r, 20r.

<sup>15</sup> L3470: 1d, 44a. Cfr. Mozzato 2009, 122.

<sup>16</sup> L3470: 122d, 129a, 130d, 149d, 156a, 160d, 165d; L3471: 16d.

<sup>17</sup> L3470: 44a, 87a, 93d-a, 102d-a, 103a, 122d, 129a, 135d, 156a, 164a; L3471: 10a, 12d-a.

<sup>18</sup> L3470: 127a, 131d; L3471: 6a, 39d.

<sup>19</sup> Pegolotti, 363; Marangoni, 173. Questo almeno nel primo Cinquecento, quando le contraffazioni e le imitazioni presero piede nel territorio veneto in molti settori industriali.

rivendette alla Croce quasi l'intera partita di 2.050 lb. importata nel novembre 1468<sup>20</sup>. La qualità ed il prezzo salgono con lo zucchero *albo in pulvere* ad uso esclusivamente medico in quanto già il capitolare degli speciali del 1268 ne imponeva l'utilizzo negli sciroppi<sup>21</sup>. Il prezzo di otto vendite a speciali aretini fra il 1465 e il 1469 oscilla tra i 5,5 e 9,1 duc./cent., per un totale di 865 lb., in media 108 a transazione<sup>22</sup>. Sullo stesso livello si poneva lo zucchero siciliano, rivenduto alla Croce a 6,5 duc./cent. nel 1471 e, se esportato ad Arezzo, addirittura a 37 duc. (1474)<sup>23</sup>. Di valore più alto era lo zucchero *refato*, che veniva cotto, schiumato, purgato e colato nuovamente in forme coniche<sup>24</sup>. Agostino comprava pani di circa 3 lb., come nel 1471 e 1475, dal collega Luca di Benedetto della spezieria del Tartaro a 14-20 duc./cent.<sup>25</sup>. Ancora una volta, se esportato nella città toscana, il prezzo finale oscillava fra 29 duc./cent. (1475) e 31 duc./cent. (1465)<sup>26</sup>. In un solo caso risulta che Agostino comprasse zucchero spagnolo di due *cotte*, quello cioè fatto bollire una seconda volta per ottenere un prodotto più raffinato: nel 1471, 121 lb. per 12 duc./cent.<sup>27</sup>. In cima, come evidenzia il nome, si poneva lo zucchero *fino*, venduto a Venezia a questi prezzi (duc./cent): 22,60 nel 1465, 14,50 nel 1468, 23,12 nel 1469, 18-20 nel 1470 e 20-21 nel 1471<sup>28</sup>.

## 2.2. Le resine

*Scamonea*. Era una resina biancastra fuoriuscita dalla radice di una pianta erbacea della Siria settentrionale e dell'Asia minore, ampiamente utilizzata come purgante sempre in combinazione con altre sostanze. Veniva resa spugnosa e compatta (*schamonia in pasta*) e venduta in piccoli pani rotondi o *fugazine* contenute in buste<sup>29</sup>. Polverizzata, era ingrediente del *diagridium*, un medicamento a base di mele cotte, o di diverse *pillole reformate*, oppure venduta come *polvere solutiva (mazinata o pesta)*<sup>30</sup>. Le qualità più scadenti, anche a giudicare dal prezzo, erano la *mezzana* e quella chiamata *de safeto* o *sefedena*, mentre quella che «geta sugo chomo late» era la *fine* e quindi la migliore<sup>31</sup>. Dal 1463 al 1475 Agostino ne importò da Damasco, Beirut e Tripoli 633 lb. per un investimento di 795 duc. al prezzo medio di 100 duc./cent. (tab. 2)<sup>32</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> L3470: 44a-d, 51d, 56d.

<sup>21</sup> Monticolo, 1:159.

<sup>22</sup> L3470: 11d, 12d, 13d, 14d, 22d, 52d.

<sup>23</sup> L3470: 131d; L3474: 15r.

<sup>24</sup> Cfr. Marangoni, 175; Pegolotti, 362.

<sup>25</sup> L3470: 103a, 119d, 119a; L3471: 39d, 39a; L3474: 21r.

<sup>26</sup> L3470: 12d; L3471, cc. 39d-a, 40d; L3474: 21r, 23v.

<sup>27</sup> L3470: 135d.

<sup>28</sup> L3470: 19d, 45d, 56,1a, 92a, 102d, 103d-a, 119d-a.

<sup>29</sup> *Tarifa*, 73; Heyd, 228-29; Pegolotti, 375; Borlandi, 163-64. *Nuovo receptario*, 15.

<sup>30</sup> Guy De Chauliac, 350. Il *diegradi* è ampiamente citato nel ricettario di San Michele (1477; L3472: 2, 4, 7, 14, ecc.) e mai nei mastri veneziani.

<sup>31</sup> *Tarifa*, 73.

<sup>32</sup> L3470: 3d, 6d, 7d, 31d, 38d, 39d, 59d, 85d, 107d, 109d, 160d, 166d; L3471: 8d; L3474: 20r.

Data	descrizione	lb.	duc./cent.	duc.
1463 (19/1)	<i>fine</i>	1,98	66	1,32
1463 (31/10)		80,82	83	67,08
1466 (29/10)		82,98	78	64,72
1467 (28/7)		8,42	19	1,60
1468 (2/5)		43,25	29	55,88
1468 (18/5)	<i>fine</i>	82,75	125	103,44
1469 (7/8)	<i>de safeto</i>	7,25	75	5,44
1470 (1/12)	<i>mezzana</i>	13,42	83	11,17
1470 (7/2)		4,17	150	81,25
1470 (1/3)		8,75	100	8,75
1470 (6/3)		1,25	100	1,25
1472 (18/1)	<i>fine</i>	3	33	1
1472 (18/1)	<i>fine</i>	111	158	175,71
1473 (23/3)		9	117	10,50
1473 (25/3)	<i>fine</i>	100	167	166,70
1475 (20/6)	<i>fine</i>	5	158	39,58

Tab. 2. Importazioni di scamonea

Le rivendite ammontarono fra il 1464 e il 1473 a 560 lb. per un incasso di 925 duc. al prezzo medio di 1,74 duc./lb. ed un guadagno del 24%. Eccettuata qualche libbra esportata ad Arezzo, quasi la metà fu inviata alle spezierie valenciane<sup>33</sup>; la cinquantina di libbre rimanente fu piazzata a Rialto nelle botteghe del Sesamo e dell'Angelo<sup>34</sup>. Anche in questo caso, i piccoli acquirenti della Croce s'intravedono appena: sotto il conto «bottega» Agostino contabilizzò 25 lb. (27 duc.) fra il 1469 e 1470 per *più persone e diversi prexi*<sup>35</sup>.

*Canfora*. Quella cinese e indiana era largamente consumata come cosmetico, come profumo e soprattutto come farmaco contro le infezioni, gli spasmi, le infiammazioni, l'emorragia nasale e le malattie veneree (gonorrea o scolo) e per questo, secondo Mattioli, usata anche per inibire l'impulso sessuale. Da sola, in polvere, era usata durante le pestilenze contro le putrefazioni, e assieme a molti altri ingredienti era assunta in pastiglie (*trocisci*) o nei colliri, come si legge in questa ricetta veneziana del 1419 pubblicata di recente:

Rezeta bona per ochi. ½ onza de tuzia choreta, ¼ onza de ganfora, 3 onze d'aqua roxà senza mischa<r>lo, 3 onze di [vino] blanco sotel; se l'è malvasia tuon<e> [prendine] de meno. E fa' ben pestar le dite chose e triar la ganfora chon la tuzia aziò se incorpori. Posa [metti] l'aqua roxa, el vino e mesieda bon a insieme. E quando tu vay a leto, o che tu te benime [?], tende in chadauno ochio 3 over 4 gozole, stagando chon el chapo baso chon el volto in suyo aziò ti vada per dentro toto l'ochio. Ma prima che tu te ne mete, abi a mente a mesiedar l'anpoleta, vol eser de ve<t>ro. Presto saray guarito<sup>36</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Beluga, Francesco Colomer, il castigliano Pietro Amoroso.

<sup>34</sup> L3470: 9a, 14d, 22d, 26d, 31a, 33d, 34d, 39a, 40d, 43a, 45d, 56a, 59a, 85a, 100d, 102d, 107a, 110d, 131d, 160a; L3471: 8a, 14a, 19d, 21a; L3474: 7r-v, 8r.

<sup>35</sup> L3470: 39a, 102d, 107a.

<sup>36</sup> Christ, 105. Dopo aver elencato gli ingredienti da usare (tuzia, canfora, acque rosate, vino bianco,

Dal 1471 al 1473 Agostino importò da Damasco 181 lb. di canfora grezza per 208 duc. a un prezzo oscillante tra 1 e 1,67 duc./lb.<sup>37</sup>. Rossa all'origine, doveva essere raffinata e schiarita tramite sublimazione: il prezzo aumentava proporzionalmente al suo biancore<sup>38</sup>. Per tale operazione Agostino si servì nel 1473 di due *refachanfore* (addetti alla raffinazione della canfora), Bartolomeo di San Geremia e Antonio della Piazza, che per ogni libbra gli chiedevano 0,167 duc.<sup>39</sup>. Fino al 1474 rivendette la canfora per intero a Venezia e a Valencia, con una lieve differenza di prezzo tra le due piazze: 1,44 duc./lb. in Spagna e 1,35 a Rialto. In totale incassò 276 duc. con un guadagno di circa il 35,5%, al netto della *fatura*<sup>40</sup>.

*Storace*. Era ricavato dalla corteccia di liquidambra ed era di colore verde grigio, ma tendeva col tempo ad annerirsi. Si trovava in forma liquida e solida (*storace kalamita* circolante in canne o calami). Contenendo un antisettico per le vie respiratorie, costituiva un rimedio contro i dolori pettorali, le malattie della pelle e, se bruciato, i miasmi pestilenziali<sup>41</sup>. L'Altucci acquistò, parte in Siria e parte a Venezia, 1.813 lb. di storace solido per 383 duc. (tab. 3)<sup>42</sup>.

Data	lb.	duc./cent.	duc.
1471 (11/5)	295	25	73,75
1472 (12/1)	210	20,8	43,75
1472 (18/1)	246	20,8	51,25
1472 (30/1)	187	20,8	38,67
1472 (4/1)	129	22,9	29,13
1472 (12/2)	210	20,8	43,75
1472 (18/2)	246	20,8	51,25
1472 (30/6)	55	16,7	9,17
1473 (12/4)	235	18,7	43,6

Tab. 3. Acquisti di storace

La quasi totalità – 1.760 lb. con un realizzo di 452 duc. ed un guadagno del 21% – fu venduta agli speciali di Valencia<sup>43</sup>. Anche per questa spezia, il commercio al minuto sembra ridotto al minimo avendo Agostino messo in

o, in alternativa, malvasia), l'autore dice di aggiungere vino e acque rosate alle spezie pestate e tritate assieme e avverte di agitare l'ampolla di vetro contenente il collirio prima di applicare 3 o 4 gocce per occhio stando distesi a letto, con la testa rivolta verso l'alto. Riguardo ai termini tecnici si veda la nota 7.

<sup>37</sup> L3470: 117a, 136d; L3471: 11d.

<sup>38</sup> Mattioli, 102-103; Brunello, 35; Benezet, 103; *Nuovo receptario*, 91; Pegolotti, 375; *Tariffa*, 73; Borlandi, 161; L3471: 21a, 23d.

<sup>39</sup> L3471: 11d, 16d-a, 28a; L3474: 6r.

<sup>40</sup> L3470: 84d, 118d, 135d, 136a; L3471: 11a, 14d.

<sup>41</sup> Benezet, 479, 515, 528; Pegolotti, 431.

<sup>42</sup> L3470, 22d, 115d, 140d, 146d, 163a, L3471, 6d.

<sup>43</sup> L3470: 118d, 135d, 140a; L3471: 14d-a, 17d, 18d, 19d, 21a.

bottega nel 1471 solo due libbre, che probabilmente trasformò in storace liquido da vendere al banco a 0,187 duc./lb. nel 1474-1475<sup>44</sup>.

*Silobalsamo, opoponago*. Queste due resine sono le ultime citate con più frequenza dalla fonte e sono liquori ottenuti rispettivamente dai rami e dalla radice dell'opobalsamo. Con cerotti ed impacchi detergevano ferite e lenivano irritazioni agli occhi, mentre ingerite provocavano l'urina, favorivano il flusso mestruale e combattevano la tosse, l'asma e le sciatiche<sup>45</sup>. L'*opoponago* non sembra attirasse tanto l'attenzione di Agostino, dato che comprò un'unica partita di 17 lb. nel 1472 a 0,375 duc./lb. riesportata subito a Valencia<sup>46</sup>. Analogamente troviamo solo una vendita di 25 lb. a 0,167 duc./lb. del frutto della pianta, il *charpo balsamo*, da cui si estraeva l'oleoresina<sup>47</sup>. Più conveniente gli sembrò trattare in *silobalsamo*, la cui importazione complessiva fra il 1470 e il 1474 riguardava poco più di 100 lb. per 40 duc., vendute poi a 47 duc.<sup>48</sup>. In questo caso, con un prezzo medio di vendita a 0,53 duc./lb., il guadagno sembra essere assai basso, se non fosse che nel 1473 Agostino vendette a Valencia quattro once (un terzo di libbra) di *silobalsamo* fino – evidentemente da lui prodotto, non trovandosi traccia di una raffinazione di altri artigiani come per la canfora – per ben 32 duc. (96 duc./lb): il guadagno toccherebbe quasi il 100% dell'investimento dell'intero *silobalsamo*<sup>49</sup>.

### 2.3. Chiodi di garofano

Largamente utilizzati come condimento, profumo (l'*olio de garofali* costava 16 duc./lb. nel 1467), anestetico e purgante, i chiodi di garofano sono ampiamente presenti nei mastri dell'Altucci<sup>50</sup>. Troviamo importazioni da Damasco dal 1466 al 1472 per 4.200 lb. e 915 duc. (tab. 4)<sup>51</sup>.

Agostino non importava tutte le spezie direttamente dalla Siria: alcune, come questa, erano comprate a Rialto da altri veneziani al prezzo medio di 22 duc./cent. Per tale merce non è possibile avere un dato sicuro sulle vendite, superando esse, non di poco, i rifornimenti che ammontano dal 1466 al 1474 a 4.310 lb.<sup>52</sup>. Anche limitandoci ai soli conti merce «chiodi di garofano» in dare (acquisti) contiamo 2.725 lb. contro 3.015 lb. in avere (vendite). A questo proposito bisogna anticipare che Agostino, per il marcato pragmatismo tipico degli speciali di media statura economica, arrotondava gli importi, ometteva

<sup>44</sup> L3470: 135d; L3474: 14r, 15r, 23r.

<sup>45</sup> Mattioli, 56, 57.

<sup>46</sup> L3470: 139a, 141d-a.

<sup>47</sup> L3470: 74d.

<sup>48</sup> L3470: 88a, 89a; L3471: 12d-a, 14d, 24a, 27d-a; L3474: 7r, 8v.

<sup>49</sup> L3471: 14d.

<sup>50</sup> L3470: 34a; cfr. De Silva, 259-268; Benezet, 657; Ashtor, 1983, 165, 282; Henderson, 312.

<sup>51</sup> L3470: 15a, 69a, 102a, 114d, 120d, 122d, 124d, 135a, 136d, 138a.

<sup>52</sup> L3470: 8d, 14d, 15d-a, 16d, 28d, 35a, 36d, 118d, 121d, 124a, 125d, 126d, 128d, 136a; L3471: 36d.



Data	lb.	duc./cent.	duc.
1466 (23/10)	378	25	94,54
1469 (14/12)	153,33	2,90	35,11
1471 (31/1)	384,416	“”	88,03
1471 (31/1)	375,416	“”	85,94
1471 (18/3)	100,83	“”	23,09
1471 (23/3)	214	“”	49
1471 (11/5)	410,583	20,80	85,40
1471 (10/6)	100,83	21,90	22,08
1471 (28/8)	320,75	20,80	66,72
1471 (28/8)	271,25	“”	56,50
1472 (13/3)	597,50	“”	124,28
1472 (24/3)	640,50	“”	133,22
1472 (8/4)	258,75	“”	53,92

Tab. 4. Importazioni di chiodi di garofano

alcune poste e a volte faceva saltare la corrispondenza fra di esse<sup>53</sup>. Nel 1465 e nel 1467 vendette 45 lb. di cappelletti con fusti (la parte terminale dello stelo dove sbocciava il fiore)<sup>54</sup> a clienti aretini al prezzo medio di 23 duc./cent., senza però registrare precedentemente una loro importazione<sup>55</sup>.

#### 2.4. Perle

Tralasciando quelle contraffatte<sup>56</sup>, qui sono importanti le perle originali, pescate nell’oceano Indiano e nel Golfo Persico<sup>57</sup>. Come i metalli e le pietre preziose, le perle *da pestar* venivano macinate ed entravano nelle spezierie più per un valore simbolico che per le reali proprietà curative, anche se la loro polvere, ricca di alcali, costituiva in effetti un antiacido ed era aggiunta negli antidoti contro i veleni o nei preparati contro la febbre, come il *diamargaritum frigidum*<sup>58</sup>. Nel 1463 Agostino comprò a Damasco 2,16 lb. a 4 duc./lb. e nel

<sup>53</sup> Spesso non vi è corrispondenza fra i tre conti zucchero, cassa e bottega (poste zucchero); la stessa operazione non viene registrata in dare e in avere dei relativi conti. Riguardo agli arrotondamenti, cfr. in L3471: 14d: «per zibeto onze 5 soldi 5 a ducati 4 onza che val lire II» (= 20 duc.) dove si trascura il sottomultiplo dell’oncia, un simbolo alternativo dell’esagio, ovvero del sesto di oncia, probabilmente il solido (Cantalupo, 24): da una posta di muschio fino del 1473 («onze 7 s<sup>i</sup> 4 1/2 a ducati 12 onza») del valore di 93 duc., si ricava che 4,5 s<sup>i</sup> sono pari a 0,75 once, con rapporto di 6:1 come quello dell’esagio o del soldo. Cfr. anche Vela I Aulesa, 38-39.

<sup>54</sup> Battaglia, 2:719; Borlandi, 162; Pegolotti, 374.

<sup>55</sup> L3470: 10d, 11d, 12d, 13d, 14d, 35a.

<sup>56</sup> Gli speciali esportavano anche oggetti di merceria. Agostino registrò perle *contraffatte* di vetro e di mercurio, trattandosi della stessa merce, assieme ai *verixelli*, appunto semplici perle di vetro colorato (250.000 pezzi ca. negoziati tra il 1468 e il 1470 a 1,2 duc./mier). Hills, 114; L3470: 9a, 21d-a, 29a, 33a, 41a, 47d-a, 58d-a, 62d, 63d, 66d-a, 68d-a, 73d, 84a, 88d, 89d-a, 90d-a, 92a, 97d-a, 98d, 99a, 100d, 104a, 105d, 118d.

<sup>57</sup> Heyd, 1215-1216; Ashtor, 1983, 64.

<sup>58</sup> L3470: 21a, 104a, 105d, 120d, 159d, 160d, 163d; L3471: 8d-a, 10d; L3474: 5r.; Dotson, 105; Benezet, 464, 689.

1473, da Domenico Zorzi, 5,16 lb. a 4,5 duc./lb.<sup>59</sup>. Della prima partita vi è solo l'incasso nel 1472 (per più vendite al banco?) di una libbra a 7 duc., mentre l'altra venne venduta nello stesso anno a Valencia a 5-7 duc./lb.<sup>60</sup>. Secondo questi dati il guadagno sulle perle era del 75%.

## 2.5. *Altri simplicia*

Nei libri contabili sono citati molti altri ingredienti per medicinali, anche se compaiono meno di frequente. Per ragioni di spazio, li riassumiamo nella tabella 5<sup>61</sup>.

Ingrediente	data	acquisti lb. (duc.)	prezzi min.-max. duc./lb. (media)	vendite lb. (duc.)	prezzi min.-max. duc./lb. (media)
aloe patico	1465-75	204 (37)	0,17-0,19 (0,18)	81 (23)	0,17-0,55 (0,4)
antimonio	1465	-	-	1	0,3
armoniagio	1463-75	875 (160)	0,13-0,58 (0,22)	269 (67)	0,13-0,69 (0,34)
arsenico	1465	-	-	6,3 (0,34)	0,55
ben bianco	1467	-	-	1	0,08
ben rosso	1467	-	-	1	0,08
benzoino	1467-75	174 (119)	0,33-1 (0,73)	179 (139)	0,63-1 (0,78)
borace	1474	28 (18)	0,54	22 (10)	0,46
calama aromatico	1467	-	-	1	0,33
cardamomo	1465-71	34 (15)	0,33-0,46 (0,4)	34 (17)	0,5-0,76 (0,59)
cassia in canna	1465-75	782 (126)	0,16-0,19 (0,18)	777 (124)	0,1-1,06 (0,29)
castoreo	1471-75	80 (21)	0,25-0,29 (0,27)	110 (46)	0,25-0,31 (0,28)
costo amaro	1465-71	22 (9)	0,25-0,5 (0,42)	42 (22)	0,25-0,71 (0,49)
delio	1465	-	-	1	0,44
draganti	1465-73	67 (5)	0,07-0,13 (0,1)	6 (2)	0,21-0,83 (0,44)
dronici	1467	-	-	1	0,17
epitimo	1467	-	-	1	0,17
galanga	1465-74	123 (50)	0,23-0,54 (0,42)	154 (71)	0,07-0,54 (0,36)
galbine	1464-73	317 (74)	0,21-0,25 (0,23)	319 (75)	0,2-0,25 (0,23)
genziana	1471-74	5 (1)	0,24	6 (1)	0,23-0,25 (0,24)
gomma elma	1465	1	0,17	6 (3)	0,33
incenso	1465-72	409 (35)	0,08-0,1 (0,09)	486 (43)	0,08-0,13 (0,11)
lapis iudaici	1463-64	168 (6)	0,03	0,33 (0,48)	1,44
litargiro	1465	-	-	7 (0,446)	0,064
manna	1464-72	91 (59)	0,47-1 (0,82)	86 (83)	0,23-2 (0,86)
mirabolani	1470-71	15 (5)	0,29-0,33 (0,31)	-	-
midollo di cervo	1465-73	400 pezzi (3)	0,67	-	-
mirabolani chebuli	1468-73	42 (11)	0,25	32 (5)	0,13-0,33 (0,25)
mirabolani citrini	1467	-	-	1,5 (0,17)	0,11
mirabolani emblici	1470-73	24 (4)	0,17	25 (2,12)	0,08
mirra fine	1465	-	-	1	0,33
pilatiro	1465-67	-	-	3 (0,44)	0,14-0,17 (0,15)
rabarbaro	1463-70	296 (260)	0,36-4 (1,22)	65 (63)	0,67-2 (1,11)
rose damasco	1463	72 (4)	0,05	-	-
sebesteni	1465	-	-	2 (0,1)	0,11
seme santo	1464-75	223 (48)	0,15-0,28 (0,21)	91 (27)	0,27-0,46 (0,39)
spigonardo	1464-73	35 (49)	1,25-1,5 (1,38)	39 (55)	0,07-1,5 (0,52)
squinati	1467	-	-	1	0,13
sumaco	1465	-	-	2 (0,44)	0,22
tamarindi	1467-75	918 (89)	0,03-0,15 (0,1)	891 (103)	0,05-0,17 (0,13)
terra sigillata	1465	1	0,08	1	0,22
turbiti	1464-75	229 (130)	0,18-2,5 (1,29)	41 (90)	0,5-6 (2,97)
tuzia	1465-75	123 (26)	0,21	187 (42)	0,21-0,87 (0,36)
zedoaria amara	1465-70	1.529 (489)	0,33-1,2 (0,47)	376 (154)	0,07-1,52 (0,54)
ziperi	1463	60 (2)	0,04	-	-

Tab. 5. Acquisti e vendite di ingredienti per medicinali

<sup>59</sup> L3470: 6d; L3471: 14d-a; L3474: 5r.

<sup>60</sup> L3471: 14d-a, 21a, 23d; L3474: 5r, 7v, 10v.

<sup>61</sup> L3470: 3d-a, 5d, 6d, 7d, 8d, 9a, 10d, 11d, 12d, 13d, 14d, 15d-a, 16d, 18d, 21d, 21a, 22d, 26d, 28d, 32d, 33a, 36d, 37a, 41d, 43d, 45d, 47d, 53d, 55a, 57d, 58a, 59d-a, 60a, 61d, 62a, 64d, 68a, 70d, 71a, 72d, 73d, 74d, 75d, 77d, 84d-a, 85d-a, 88d-a, 92d-a, 93d, 94d, 98a, 100d, 104a, 106d, 109d, 111a, 113d-a, 115d-a, 116d-a, 118d, 121d, 122d, 127d-a, 134d-a, 135d, 136d-a, 137d-a, 139d-a, 141d, 142d-a, 150d, 163a, 165d, 166d; L3471: 5d, 10a, 11d-a, 13d-a, 14d-a, 19d, 25d, 26d, 28a, 30d-a, 36d, 40d; L3474: 3r,

### 3. I composita

I medicinali composti da più ingredienti erano per la maggior parte venduti al banco e, a differenza dei *simplicia*, non troviamo grandi forniture per altri speciali. Erano perlopiù medicinali di semplice preparazione, come visto sopra, a base di zucchero, come sciroppi o confetti digestivi presi dopo i pasti invernali con tanta carne. Se gli sciroppi avevano una sola sostanza oltre allo zucchero, erano chiamati *semplici* o *trasparenti*; la loro complessità aumentava in rapporto al numero di ingredienti (tab. 6)<sup>62</sup>.

Prodotto	data	quantitativo	duc./lb.
<i>Sciroppi</i>			
violato	1465-1473	66 lb. (73 duc.)	0,17
di cotogne	1469	4 lb. (1,25 duc.)	0,31
di ribes	1465-1468	33 lb. (5 duc.)	0,17
di stichedos	1472	“1 zucca”	0,83
<i>Conserve</i>			
di ribes	1463	12 lb. (14 duc.)	1,14
di rose	1465	6 lb. (1 duc.)	0,17
di viole	1463	31 lb. (10 duc.)	0,32
<i>Confetti</i>			
anici	1467	2 lb. (0,22 duc.)	0,11
di più sorti	1466	229 lb. (37 duc.)	0,08-0,18 (0,12)
senza corpo	1473	43 lb. (18 duc.)	0,17
silobalsamo	1470	45 lb. (14 duc.)	0,31
pignocato	1466-1469	99 lb. (18 duc.)	0,11-0,24 (0,15)
marzapane (dorado, con mandorle)	1465-1470	75 lb. (12 duc.)	0,02-0,81 (0,2 duc.)

Tab. 6. Acquisti di *composita*

A tutto ciò, in termini di quantità vendute e di *semplicità*, fa però eccezione la triaca, esportata in grandi quantità da Agostino, e da altri veneziani, Oltralpe.

#### 3.1 Triaca e oppio

La celeberrima panacea universale, assunta in gocce ma anche in forma di unguento, pillola o pasta, si presentava come *alessifarmaco*, cioè antidoto contro i veleni, e conteneva zucchero, miele, vino, una sessantina di altre sostanze aromatiche mescolate all'immancabile tritato di vipera, il cui veleno si pretendeva, *contraria contrariis*, neutralizzare<sup>63</sup>. Il polifarmaco di

8v, 15v, 18r, 19r, 23r. Per la spiegazione dei termini si vedano i repertori citati a nota 7.

<sup>62</sup> L3470: 2d, 5d, 6d, 8d, 18d-a, 19d, 20d, 23d, 27d, 28d, 29a, 35d, 37a, 38d, 40d, 42d, 45d, 55d-a, 56d-a, 57d, 61d, 62a, 74d, 84a, 87d, 89d, 124d, 144d; L3471: 12a, 13d, 17d, 29a, 30a; L3473: 3; L3474, cc. 4v, 13r, 15v. Eloire, 69; Benezet, 577; Vela I Aulesa, 49.

<sup>63</sup> Stöbl, 9; Mattioli, 909, 954-956; Marangoni, 167.

Andromaco, che mise in versi la ricetta, godette di grande fama, sia perché affondava le radici all'età greca e romana sia perché, nei secoli successivi, continuò ad essere lodato e prescritto dalla maggior parte dei medici. Solo nel primo Ottocento si riprese con più vigore il dibattito scientifico sui «soliti miscugli» o «mostri farmaceutici» già avviato nel XVI secolo. Oggi sappiamo che l'efficacia terapeutica di questo elisir di lunga vita che si pensava di ottenere era nulla: l'unico effetto era quello analgesico di un comune antidolorifico<sup>64</sup>.

Gli storici venezianisti, parlando di triaca, puntano quasi tutta l'attenzione sul pomposo cerimoniale della sua fabbricazione o sullo straordinario successo commerciale, di cui furono causa: a) la forte valenza simbolica delle vipere e di molte spezie misteriose il cui consumo trovava terreno fertile nella medicina popolare, dove magia ed esoterismo prevalevano sul sapere medico colto; b) il sostegno dello stato che, dal Cinquecento, investì più sul prodotto interno da esportare che sui commerci d'intermediazione; c) la presenza di una florida industria libraria di divulgazione scientifica; d) l'accesso immediato alle svariate spezie da utilizzare<sup>65</sup>. Se tutto ciò è innegabile, tuttavia solo pochi studiosi, esperti di farmacologia più attenti al contenuto che al contenitore, hanno sottolineato un fattore determinante che sposterebbe l'accento sulla domanda più che sull'offerta: la famosa panacea conteneva morfina e a volte laudano (una sua tintura) in quantità non irrilevante tanto che essi tenderebbero a sovrapporre commercio e produzione dell'*alessifarmaco* a quelli dell'oppio, con tutti gli aspetti ad esso collegati, in primo luogo la tossicità e la dipendenza<sup>66</sup>.

Secondo la teoria umorale, l'oppio aveva un effetto «freddo al quarto grado» perché rallentava il metabolismo<sup>67</sup>. Era pertanto prescritto contro infiammazioni, spasmi, mal di denti e veniva utilizzato anche nei colliri: proprio nel 1477 il nostro Agostino preparò ai suoi clienti toscani «choliri maistral opiat per la fronte fati a posta con aque rosse e opii»<sup>68</sup>. Anche allora erano ben note le proprietà e i pericoli dell'oppio, che oggi può contenere fino al 20-30% di alcaloidi; la morfina, da sola, può variare dal 3 al 23%. Secondo Serapione di Alessandria († II secolo a.C.) le medicine oppiate «non solum sedant dolorem sed etiam narcoticant» fino al punto del non ritorno (per paralisi respiratoria), e pertanto erano trattate, nella prassi medica e nella letteratura scientifica, con estrema attenzione e diffidenza. L'oppio intimoriva a tal punto da inibire la divulgazione di ricette e dosaggi che, se confrontata con quella degli erbari, risulta appunto assai ridotta<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> Metaxà, 26-27, 354; Palmer, 108.

<sup>65</sup> Questo anche nel recente studio di Henderson. Per Venezia cfr. i lavori di Stöbl, Tucci e Vanzan Marchini.

<sup>66</sup> Benezet, 458; Catellani, 311-335. *Nuovo receptario*, 48-49. Il laudano fu prodotto d'età moderna mentre quello medievale citato dal Pegolotti, 421 e venduto da Agostino era solimato corrosivo: L3470:12d.

<sup>67</sup> Benezet, 591, 680.

<sup>68</sup> L3472: 30d.

<sup>69</sup> Benezet, 462, 663; Mattioli, 676; Henderson, 322. Naso, 2005, 142; Corradini Bozzi, 13; Pezzella, 9-31. Tutte le notizie di carattere farmacologico sono state tratte da Daunderer.

Un manuale di alchimia veneziano tardomedievale, appartenente quindi alla medicina marginale e popolare largamente praticata, tratta l'oppio e il papavero bianco nel «capitolo di quelle cose cha fan molto dormir»<sup>70</sup>. Le capsule secche di papavero *somniferum* – nel 1463 Agostino ne comprò a Damasco 300 lb. (143 kg) a 0,03 duc./lb. per 10 duc. – potevano contenere dal 0,015-0,018% di morfina<sup>71</sup>. L'anonimo alchimista spiega che quelle medicine «per la sua frigidità costringono li nervi e per la sua humidità indoliscono li spiriti et il cervello», con riferimento agli effetti che avevano sulla psiche. Non stupisce pertanto che la triaca venisse prescritta anche come rimedio per la malinconia, la tristezza e l'ansietà o altri disturbi psichici le cui cause si continuavano a cercare nel soprannaturale. Bisogna a tal proposito menzionare la credenza secondo cui si poteva dominare e neutralizzare il male con una graduale assimilazione dell'elemento negativo (il veleno) che implicava anche una pericolosa identificazione col suo produttore. Ciò può non essere immediato nel caso dei serpenti o, come vedremo, degli scorpioni venduti dagli speciali, ma diventa spettacolarmente evidente se pensiamo ad altre pratiche terapeutiche come la tarantella, per cui il tarantolato in stato di *trance*, tramutatosi in ragno, riesce a sudare il suo veleno ballando. Il legame tra la malattia, il maligno, il soprannaturale e l'oppio, che ingerito agiva da catalizzatore e lo spingeva a uno stato di *trance* risulta evidente anche nel caso della triaca<sup>72</sup>. Nella bella e curiosa rappresentazione iconografica di una ricetta di triaca del farmacista di Strasburgo Frederic Ströhl del 1744, l'oppio campeggia al centro del disegno, sotto Esculapio, in posizione preminente ed è rappresentato come un lavoratore dei campi di papavero di pelle nera che dorme, chiaramente sotto narcosi<sup>73</sup>. Gli svariati ingredienti aromatici – quelli della ricetta originale ma anche i succedanei – servivano solo a mascherare la presenza di oppio<sup>74</sup>. Che della triaca esso non fosse uno, ma il componente più importante, l'unico principio attivo che aveva qualche effetto sull'organismo, viene ricordato anche dalle lingue delle regioni dove si coltivava e si coltiva tuttora il papavero. La pozione, che trae il nome dal greco *theriontherion* (animale velenoso, vipera)<sup>75</sup>, è chiamata in arabo *Tirjak* e significa *allessifarmaco*, ma è assai significativo che in persiano l'oppio, e le capsule di papavero, sono detti ancor oggi comunemente *téryak* (*afyun* è termine scientifico); in turco l'aggettivo *tiryaki* indicava un fumatore tossicodipendente, ed infatti a metà Ottocento gli oppiomanici in stato di *trance* venivano definiti da diversi autori francesi *thériakis*<sup>76</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Venezia, Biblioteca Querini Stampalia: Manoscritto di Alchimia e Medicina del XV secolo, cl. V, cod. II (= 1261) [d'ora in poi Q1261]: 47r. Sui codici veneziani di alchimia cfr. anche Schütt.

<sup>71</sup> L3470: 6d; Mattioli, 675; Pezzella, 83; Hufeland, 44: 332; BfR:4.

<sup>72</sup> Stöbl, 7; Bonuzzi, 431; Benezet, 676; *Cordialero*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> Una copia del disegno è esposta al Deutsches Apotheken-Museum di Heidelberg; cfr. anche Wickersheimer, 158.

<sup>74</sup> Benezet, 678; Palmer, 109-10.

<sup>75</sup> *Le ricchezze*, 155; Stöbl, 8, 19.

<sup>76</sup> *Bibliothèque universelle de Genève*: 341, Blondel, 185.

La dipendenza da triaca è difficilmente documentabile, tuttavia ci sono tutti gli elementi per poterla supporre. A questo proposito uno storico e farmacista francese, Jean-Pierre Benezet, ha messo in dubbio che la triaca – o le triache, poiché vi erano molte altre ricette sempre a base di oppio – venisse sempre prodotta pubblicamente nei centri urbani europei sotto l'occhio vigile degli ispettori, e soprattutto che fosse consumata solo dopo un periodo di conservazione<sup>77</sup>. Più la triaca era fresca, più l'oppio aveva effetto. I medici e gli speziali di Montpellier da lui studiati, per esempio, non si facevano intimorire dai divieti e spacciavano sul mercato interno ed esterno triaca quasi di giornata per un chiaro guadagno economico, ma anche per evitare che si deteriorassero le forniture di oppio, nell'attesa della stagionatura della triaca precedente<sup>78</sup>.

È vero che la quantità di morfina contenuta nelle capsule dipende molto dalle condizioni climatiche di crescita della pianta ed è altrettanto vero che, in una produzione artigianale e casalinga di alchimisti, guaritori o medici più o meno dotti, i dosaggi, e quindi gli effetti narcotici, variassero<sup>79</sup>. Tali sperimentazioni potevano essere valutate empiricamente solo in misura della loro efficacia analgesica: in altre parole, fra i molti ingredienti testati, non escluso lo sterco, l'oppio rappresentava l'unica variabile sostanziale. Nella sua *Riformata pharmacopea* Giuseppe Quercetano scriveva ancora a metà Seicento che nella «Teriaca di Esdra, l'ordine de gl'ingredienti è troppo copioso, e lungo, nel quale l'opio [...] entra senza alcuna preparatione»<sup>80</sup>. Nei casi di sovradosaggio, la pozione poteva alterare la percezione della realtà, con tutti i risvolti magici e mistici del caso. Ma anche quando non c'era abuso, sul lungo periodo la frequenza e la costanza di assunzione di triaca oppiata – se pensiamo che essa era ingerita assieme ad altri alimenti per combattere disturbi comuni come la tosse e addirittura per corroborare il fisico e prevenire malattie – facevano aumentare la tolleranza e, creando dipendenza, accrescevano la domanda economica<sup>81</sup>.

Nel medioevo la demarcazione fra medicamento e alimento era meno rigida della nostra. La malattia – secondo l'antica impostazione galenica, i *tacuina sanitatis* nostrani, gli *Handbücher der Heilkunde* d'Oltralpe o i *Taqwim al-Sihha* arabi – era concepita come uno squilibrio del corpo, un'alterazione causata da un eccesso di umori *peccanti*, ovvero dannosi<sup>82</sup>, da individuare ed espellere al momento giusto con adeguate purghe o, più in generale secondo le teorie di al-Kindi († 873) e Averroè († 1198), con diete da seguire secondo le stagioni dell'anno o il calendario astrologico<sup>83</sup>. In caso di

<sup>77</sup> Benezet, 678. *Le ricchezze*, 157.

<sup>78</sup> Benezet, 677-78.

<sup>79</sup> Cfr. Benezet, 683; Berveglieri, 19.

<sup>80</sup> *Le ricchezze*, 157.

<sup>81</sup> Cfr. BFR: 16.

<sup>82</sup> Battaglia, *ad vocem*.

<sup>83</sup> Stöbl, 6; Benezet, 470, 487; Palmero, 165-68; Bonuzzi, 431; Fehlmann, 103-17; Mikkeli, 14-31; Moly-Mariotti, 41-54. Cfr. anche *Tacuinum*; *L'Art de vivre en santé* e *Le Taqwim al-Sihha*.

bisogno, secondo i consigli della medicina popolare riportati nel manuale di alchimia veneziano, si dovevano bere medicine oppiate contro la malinconia due volte al giorno e una alla notte, oltre che ungere tutto il corpo, il tutto per dieci giorni<sup>84</sup>. La stessa fonte menziona nel capitolo delle medicine, senza distinzione assieme ad altri *semplici* di natura “calda” in vari gradi, anche la carne di cervo, di lepore, di capra, di colombo, le mandorle, il formaggio, ecc. E viceversa, i libri di cucina contemplano anche qualche ingrediente o composto medicinale come lo zenzero, le acque di rosa, uve e viole «saracinesche»<sup>85</sup>.

Non stupisce quindi che la produzione di triaca fosse controllata da tre ispettori, non tanto per garantire la bontà del prodotto contro le imitazioni che si discostavano, ancora nel Seicento, dalla ricetta canonica, quanto probabilmente per limitare gli effetti della morfina sulla psiche e scoraggiare il suo utilizzo in sospette pratiche terapeutiche: e forse anche per questo gli speciali non tardarono ad entrare nel mirino dell’Inquisizione<sup>86</sup>. Il capitolare veneziano del 1258, recependo il dettato della medicina empirica di Avicenna, consentiva non a caso la vendita di triaca solo se stagionata almeno sei mesi poiché, si pensava, solo allora avrebbe avuto efficacia come *allessifarmaco*<sup>87</sup>. Ma la norma potrebbe essere interpretata alla luce del processo di degradazione dell’alcolide che mitigava col tempo l’effetto narcotizzante. Le autorità intendevano così tutelare la salute dei singoli e l’ordine pubblico. Quanto consapevole però era il legislatore della pericolosità dell’oppio per la collettività?

Se, come e quanto fosse percepita nel medioevo cristiano la tossicodipendenza, diventata un problema solo nel secolo scorso e di cui sarebbe sbagliato negare l’esistenza per timori di anacronismi, porterebbe il discorso lontano dai conti dell’Altucci<sup>88</sup>. Basta qui ricordare che il consumo di oppio come piaga sociale è attestato dal XV secolo in Persia e la memoria va d’obbligo alla setta degli “assassini” del vecchio della montagna citati da Marco Polo, che per procurarsi la dose commettevano su comando ogni sorta di crimine<sup>89</sup>. Anche se l’oppio ingerito sviluppa in media solo un decimo dell’effetto di quello iniettato o fumato ed il grado di tolleranza alla morfina di un oppiomane è pari a duecento volte la dose terapeutica analgesica – livello, come vedremo, molto al di sopra di quello della triaca di Agostino –, è interessante riportare quanto indicato nel manuale veneziano di alchimia riguardo alle medicine a base di oppio, l’angelica o i semi di peonia che, assieme al vino, avrebbero combattuto la malinconia e la timidezza dei pazienti e addirittura accresciuto le forze.

<sup>84</sup> Q1261, 62r.

<sup>85</sup> Q1261: 29r-42r; *Libro di cucina*, 75; Tucci, 108.

<sup>86</sup> De Vivo, 36.

<sup>87</sup> Monticolo, 1:160; Benezet, 468; Berveglieri, 19. Secondo il *Tacuinum* (91) la triaca rimane inalterata per un decennio.

<sup>88</sup> *Nuovo receptario*, 48-49; Pezzella, 117. Cfr. anche Palmero, 170-77.

<sup>89</sup> *Enciclopedia italiana*, voce *Oppio*; Brunello, 54. Cfr. anche Catellani-Console.



Subito et quasi miracolosamente – scrive l'ignoto autore – quello che serà paciente di tal infirmitade perderà la timiditia ovvero la melincolia et la debilità et recupererà la forteça di fora et di dentro: intanto che disprescerà la morte né non temerà alcuna chossa *supra modum* diventerà audace et forte, imperò che tanto li acrescerà le forze che parerà che may habi patito tal diffetto<sup>90</sup>.

L'autore aggiunge poi che la somministrazione di una noce di pozione ai soldati in battaglia «subito acresce[va] le forze et l'audacia come uno fulgore», parlando inequivocabilmente di stupefacenti<sup>91</sup>. L'effetto era pertanto ben noto<sup>92</sup>. E forse per questo motivo il nuovo capitulare degli speciali veneziani del 1565 imponeva di custodire sotto chiave l'oppio per sottrarlo ai giovani garzoni perché, in quanto veleno, si volevano evitare overdosi letali, ma anche alterazioni illegali di farmaci oppiati con diverso dosaggio. Sarebbe interessante poter contare in questo periodo il numero di medicine «maestrali», quelle cioè fatte secondo la formula personale dello speciale, rispetto a quelle «officiali» che seguivano i formulari.

Le sperimentazioni pericolose da parte di speciali più o meno competenti sono documentate già per il Quattrocento<sup>93</sup>. È noto il caso di Zanino de' Rossi, espulso nel 1420 dalla corporazione per aver spacciato triaca alterata<sup>94</sup>. Anche la farmacia conventuale di San Giovanni e Paolo fu multata per lo stesso motivo<sup>95</sup>. Nella seconda metà del secolo, a preoccupare il Senato erano coloro che personalizzavano troppo le medicine, come garzoni inesperti, ma anche medici forestieri, e non i soliti ciarlatani venditori di *acqua sporca* (da intendere come intrugli speziati ma senza oppio, quindi innocui)<sup>96</sup>. Nel 1549 le autorità parlano espressamente di *spezieri* da medicina che vendevano i loro prodotti a guaritori ambulanti di piazza San Marco con i quali stringevano addirittura società<sup>97</sup>. Due anni prima un tal Properzio, che lavorava alla spezieria del Cagnol, fu condannato per una «pratica manipolatoria»<sup>98</sup>, e non sorprende che nel 1572 Giovanni Antonio Lodetto abbia dato alle stampe un *Dialogo de gl'inganni d'alcuni malvagi speciali*<sup>99</sup>. Se consideriamo anche gli alchimisti, solo per citare qualche caso di nota attività (criminale), troviamo nel 1475 Alvise Rizzo da Vienna, *teutonichus alchimista*, e Fiordalisa di Rialto, condannati l'uno per “sperimenti”, l'altra per aver pestato nel suo mortaio resti umani conditi con un bel po' di spezie e aromi vari<sup>100</sup>.

<sup>90</sup> Q1261: 64v.

<sup>91</sup> Cfr. Catellani, 320.

<sup>92</sup> Sullo stesso punto cfr. *Le ricchezze*, 196.

<sup>93</sup> Laughran, 98, 103-04.

<sup>94</sup> Stöbl, 35-36.

<sup>95</sup> Stöbl, 36.

<sup>96</sup> Mozzato, 2009, 138.

<sup>97</sup> Laughran, 99.

<sup>98</sup> Venezia, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana: Capitulare speciali, cl. IV, cod. 209/I-IV: 24v; Cecchetti, 301-03; Berveglieri, 86-87, 108.

<sup>99</sup> Palmer, 100.

<sup>100</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (d'ora in avanti ASVe), Avogaria di Comun, Raspe, 3653: 108v; 3654: 23r.

La pubblica cerimonia per la preparazione di triaca nelle città europee, del tutto teatrale a Venezia per gli abiti sgargianti dei pestatori e per il loro canto ritmato dai colpi di mortaio, può essere interpretata non tanto come finalizzata a propagandare la bontà e la genuinità del prodotto – con quale metro lo storico di oggi dovrebbe interpretare questa *bontà* se già nel Cinquecento non pochi medici mettevano in dubbio l'efficacia della medicina?<sup>101</sup> – ma soprattutto per chiarire al popolo, abituato a ricorrere a persone prive di riconoscimento legale, chi fosse l'unico monopolista di oppio scoraggiando gli acquisti di triaca prodotta all'infuori di quella manciata di speciali autorizzati<sup>102</sup>. Anche se indiretto, era quello un tentativo di controllare dosaggio e spaccio. Un tale intervento dell'autorità pubblica avveniva anche nei paesi arabi, nelle moschee (non tuttavia, come è stato scritto, perché in quei luoghi era forte il legame con la divinità, bensì perché esse erano centri universitari di farmacia e di medicina)<sup>103</sup>. Le spiegazioni della cerimonia che non tengono conto della pericolosità dell'oppio e si basano solo sull'esigenza economica di pubblicizzare la mitica panacea, prodotta in una città modello, dalla costituzione equilibrata così com'erano bilanciati i molti ingredienti della medicina stessa, risultano incomplete<sup>104</sup>.

Il plurisecolare successo economico della triaca veneziana, con una produzione annuale di 600.000 lb. in epoca moderna<sup>105</sup>, non sarebbe pertanto solo da imputare all'effetto placebo contro il veleno dei serpenti o all'attrazione per l'irrazionale, per il magico ed il simbolico, ma all'effetto dell'oppio, che come materia prima era ben presente nella città lagunare: l'unico «dragone dal corpo di aria» (Marsilio Ficino, morto nel 1499) di cui si aveva veramente terrore era la peste, e la triaca, per la sua proprietà analgesica e narcotica, era l'unica arma<sup>106</sup>. Quest'ancora di salvezza a base di morfina liberava per qualche ora dai malesseri del fisico e dell'animo. È importante sottolineare che, se gli effetti dell'oppio variano da persona a persona e se non è possibile stabilire con certezza la dose di intossicazione, è certo che l'oppio, assunto giornalmente con la triaca e pur con basso dosaggio di morfina, come ricordato sopra, alzava la tolleranza e creava dipendenza. E non si può escludere che gli speciali, ma anche medici ed *empirici* con più livelli di autorevolezza, variassero la dose di oppio in tempo di peste. Fu il caso di Agostino?

### 3.2 *La triaca della Croce*

Come gli altri speciali, anche Agostino commerciò in triaca e in oppio. Anzi, la triaca fu l'unica medicina, almeno a giudicare dai mastri della Croce, ad interessarlo veramente. La prima fornitura gli fu fatta nel 1465 dalla spezieria della Campana di Pietro Bezzi, suo primo socio: 40 lb. per 4,4 duc. al prezzo di 0,11

<sup>101</sup> Palmer, 108.

<sup>102</sup> Naso, 2005, 141-46; Naso, 1982, 126-130; Berveglieri, 15-21; Park, 118.

<sup>103</sup> Stöfl, 13.

<sup>104</sup> Stöfl, 13. Dello stesso mio avviso mi sembra Laughran, 102.

<sup>105</sup> Meneghini, 63.

<sup>106</sup> Henderson, 307; Cosmacini, 16, 26.

duc./lb. assieme a 2 lb. di *mitridato*, simile alla triaca, a 0,125 duc./lb, parte delle quali (10 lb.) egli vendette pochi mesi dopo a Giorgio di Giovanni Arena, speciale di Arezzo, rispettivamente a per 0,182 e 0,273 duc./lb.<sup>107</sup>. Negli anni successivi troviamo solo vendite. Nel 1467 l'Altucci incassò al banco Verruzzi 18 duc. per 98 lb. circa di triaca al prezzo di 0,182 lb./duc. venduta a Nicolò di Antonio da Roma<sup>108</sup>. Nel 1468 vi è un'altra grossa vendita di 193 lb. (21,23 duc.) a 0,11 duc./lb. fatta al Fondaco dei Tedeschi ad Heinrich Gottschalk von Gielz di Colonia, il suo principale fornitore di occhiali tedeschi rivenduti poi in Siria<sup>109</sup>. Nel 1469, 1470, 1471 e 1472 leggiamo ancora rispettivamente di 25, 96, 120, 284 e 33 lb. di triaca spacciata questa volta al banco della Croce per 0,12 duc./lb. a Benedetto Spinelli, Ranieri Olivier e Giovanni di Antonio dall'Oro, gioielliere a San Salvador e fornitore dell'Altucci di oro e pigmenti, e altri clienti non specificati<sup>110</sup>. Nel 1473 egli vendette ad Amedeo da Pietraviva 31 lb. di *teriage e mitridato fino* per per 0,167 duc./lb. ed infine, nel 1473 e 1474, due grosse partite rispettivamente di 273 e 275 lb. a 0,08 duc. per un valore di 21,8 e 30 duc. al tedesco Bolfer Plombo<sup>111</sup>.

Complessivamente, dal 1465 al 1474 Agostino acquistò 42 lb. di triaca (5 duc.) al prezzo medio di 0,12 duc./lb. e vendette circa 1.540 lb. (167 duc.) a 0,14 duc./lb. In questo caso è evidente che Agostino, dal 1467, dopo aver finito le scorte del Bezzi, vendette, quasi sempre all'ingrosso, triaca di propria produzione, per la quale, tuttavia, non creò mai un conto separato come fece per altre merci. Le vendite al dettaglio – solitamente in vasellini, pillole o bossoli di stagno – dovevano rappresentare solo qualche oncia. Se per un confronto analizziamo le vendite dell'altra sua farmacia aretina di San Michele, nell'intero 1477 – dove peraltro non compare, a differenze della Croce, alcuna vendita di oppio puro come previsto dagli statuti della città toscana – notiamo che, in media, le quantità si aggiravano attorno alle 3-4 once e raramente superano la libbra: in totale, nelle sessantotto registrazioni del 1477, Agostino vendette a clienti aretini 180 lb.<sup>112</sup>. Accostando questo dato alle 150 lb. (45 kg) annuali della Croce, la differenza tra le spezierie dei due centri urbani non sembra grande, anche se va detto che nel 1477 Arezzo era afflitta da una forte pestilenza, mentre a Venezia nell'arco di tempo qui considerato gli anni di peste erano solo due: 1464 e 1468<sup>113</sup>. Confrontandolo però con le vendite annuali delle spezierie della Francia meridionale, pari secondo Benezet ad appena 5-10 kg, la produzione di Agostino risulta ben più consistente<sup>114</sup>.

<sup>107</sup> L3470: 15a.

<sup>108</sup> L3470: 36d.

<sup>109</sup> L3470: 42d; Mozzato, 2009, 132-33; Dressedörfer, 78; Pegolotti, 139; *Tariffa Oder Uncostbüchlein*, 12v.

<sup>110</sup> L3470: 64d, 93d, 86d, 113d-a

<sup>111</sup> L3471: 24d.

<sup>112</sup> L3472:1-65; L3475: 1-33; Verani, 3; cfr. anche *Lettere di mercanti*, 27.

<sup>113</sup> Beloch, 4; Del Panta, 118; Pieri, 127.

<sup>114</sup> Benezet, 679. Per un confronto più accurato fra la Croce e San Michele bisognerebbe conoscere il rapporto fra il numero delle spezierie e quello degli abitanti, che a Venezia fu un secolo più tardi di 1 : 2.000. Nel 1565 con una popolazione di circa 190.000 anime vi erano 90 spezierie: Gramigna, 12; Lane, 1973, 25.

Data	lb.	duc./lb.	duc.
1465 (3/11)	6	0,182	1,09
1465 (3/11)	4	0,273	1,09
1467 (18/3)	97,5	0,182	17,70
1468 (23/2)	193	0,11	21,63
1469 (3/10)	25	0,12	3
1470 (2/4)	96	0,12	11,50
1471 (27/8)	120	0,125	15
1472 (13/7)	284	0,12	34,35
1472 (6/9)	33	0,12	4
1473 (13/4)	31	0,167	5,18
1473 (21/10)	273	0,08	21,83
1474 (4/3)	375	0,08	30,04

Tab. 7. Vendite di triaca<sup>115</sup>

Che l'Altucci producesse triaca è suggerito da diversi fattori. Innanzitutto, la Croce apparteneva dal 1437 a quella manciata di spezierie «triacanti», le uniche alle quali dal 1297 era concessa la produzione del farmaco di Andromaco, avendo la Giustizia Vecchia esteso alle farmacie di San Bartolomeo e San Salvador tale facoltà<sup>116</sup>. Più rilevante è la forte prevalenza delle vendite sugli acquisti, difficilmente giustificabile con un'anomalia della fonte per una mancata registrazione in entrata. Infine, ci sono le forniture di molti ingredienti fondamentali per produrla: il balsamo sopra descritto, la carne di serpente, il *castoreo* (un olio estratto da alcune ghiandole vicine agli organi genitali del castoro), lo zafferano, le gomme, il midollo di cervo e il *costo amaro* (una radice legnosa e gialliccia del *Costus arabicus*) immancabile allo speciale medievale che tenesse alla sua reputazione perché ritenuto anch'esso rimedio contro la peste<sup>117</sup>. Ma negli armadi della Croce troviamo in grande quantità oppio tebaico, quello più ricco di morfina e tebaina, prodotto in Egitto con incisioni sulla capsula immatura e trasudazione del meconio: tra il 1467 e il 1475 Agostino spese 121 duc. per 149 lb. ad un prezzo oscillante tra 0,33 e 1,17 duc./lb. mentre ne rivendette a speciali lombardi e spagnoli 98 lb. incassando 73 duc., in media 0,75 duc./lb. (tab. 8)<sup>118</sup>.

Acquisti				Vendite			
Data	lb.	duc./lb.	duc.	Data	lb.	duc./lb.	duc.
1467 (11/6)	10,5	0,33	3,71	1467 (26/8)	7,66	0,67	5,33
1469 (15/7)	8	1	8	1468 (21/1)	8	1	8
1469 (18/11)	35	0,66	23,46	1470 (28/11)	5,25	0,66	3,63
1470 (7/2)	36	1,17	42	1471 (26/5)	17,33	0,66	11,56
1471 (26/3)	22	0,625	13,75	1471 (2/11)	2	0,917	1,83
1471 (12/5)	17,33	0,66	11,56	1472 (17/5)	20	0,625	12,50
1472 (7/8)	20	0,96	18,33	1475 (23/11)	32,5	0,833	27,08
				1475 (28/11)	5,25	0,66	3,50

Tab. 8. Acquisti e vendite di oppio tebaico

<sup>115</sup> L3470: 14d, 36d, 42d, 64a, 86d, 93a, 122a, 144d; L3471: 13d, 24d.

<sup>116</sup> Berveghieri, 41, 102-03.

<sup>117</sup> Heyd, 1168.

<sup>118</sup> L3470: 28d, 32d, 41d, 47d, 70d, 104a, 106d, 109d, 115d, 118d, 127d, 127a, 150d.

Tra acquisti e vendite vi è una differenza di 51 lb., in media 8 lb. all'anno rimaste a disposizione di Agostino per l'utilizzo di sola triaca, ma non di altri prodotti come i consueti impacchi, *sponze*, decotti o sciroppi, di cui non vi è traccia e per i quali avrebbe utilizzato un altro liquido con morfina ottenuto dalla spremitura, macinazione e cottura delle capsule secche. Dalla ricetta classica non possiamo sapere quanto oppio fosse realmente impiegato. La droga però è sempre presente nel secondo dei sei gruppi d'ingredienti previsti della ricetta assieme a carne di vipera, squilla marina e pepe nero; il ricettario fiorentino e altre ricette posteriori indicano per 12 lb. di triaca 3 lb. (25%) di questi ingredienti<sup>119</sup>. Per vendere in un anno i presunti 45 kg di triaca (150 lb.), Agostino avrebbe avuto bisogno, secondo la farmacopea, di 11 kg fra vipere, squilla, pepe e oppio. Egli aveva a disposizione 2,4 kg (8 lb.) di oppio invenduto: ammesso che lo utilizzasse tutto nella triaca volendone trarre un vantaggio economico, che non fosse egli stesso un *tiryiaki* (consumatore dipendente) o che non lo avesse venduto puro illegalmente a piccoli clienti senza lasciar tracce, deduciamo che la sua triaca conteneva il 5,3% di oppio. Secondo Juan Esteva de Sagrera, il dosaggio singolo prescritto di triaca andava fino a 3.000 mg (1 dramma), vale a dire 750 mg. di ingredienti del secondo gruppo della ricetta canonica e pertanto, in proporzione, 160 mg. di oppio della triaca di Agostino<sup>120</sup>. Una dose singola di morfina ingerita, oltre la quale vi è pericolo d'intossicazione per una persona adulta non tollerante con forte intorpidimento, sonnolenza, nausea, vomito, rallentamento della respirazione e dilatazione della pupille e, a seconda del metabolismo, euforia o disforia, va da 160 a 300 mg. La dose terapeutica oggi consentita va da 7 a 45 mg fino ad un massimo giornaliero di 270 mg.<sup>121</sup> Tralasciando peraltro altri alcaloidi presenti nell'oppio tebaico come la codeina, la noscapina, la tebaina e la narcotina, la morfina contenuta in una dose di triaca di Agostino poteva variare da 5 a 37 mg (secondo il rapporto oppio-morfina di 100:3-23)<sup>122</sup>. La percentuale di morfina nella triaca dell'Altucci risulta piuttosto al di sotto della dose di intossicazione e in sorprendente corrispondenza con la farmacopea attuale.

Se Agostino non sembra aver venduto triaca *extra forte* o alterata, del suo prodotto colpisce invece un'altra cosa. Se egli avesse voluto seguire la ricetta e non temere i controlli, avrebbe dovuto aggiungere due ingredienti: la squilla marittima e la carne di vipera, di cui però non vi è alcuna presenza nei libri contabili. Anche se alcuni succedanei erano concessi per l'impossibilità di trovare sul mercato gli ingredienti della ricetta originale, come poté Agostino omettere i due sopra citati ingredienti senza incappare, a pochi metri di

<sup>119</sup> Berveglieri, 115-28; *Nuovo receptario*, 48.

<sup>120</sup> Esteva de Sagrera, 36.

<sup>121</sup> BfR: 13.

<sup>122</sup> *Enciclopedia italiana, ad vocem*.

<sup>123</sup> Palmer, 108; Stöbl, 18.

distanza dalla sede della corporazione degli speciali, in qualche multa?<sup>123</sup> A guardar bene Agostino acquistò altra carne di rettile: nel 1470 comprò una testa di «serpente con le corna» pagata ben 15 duc., e due anni dopo un'altra testa di un animale non specificato comprata per 8 duc., che a giudicare dal prezzo non doveva essere un animale comune<sup>124</sup>. Siamo di fronte al tentativo (illecito?) di sostituire le vipere con altra carne di rettile in minor quantità?<sup>125</sup> In tal senso non mancano casi documentati, anche se molti più tardi. Nel 1634 Frederic Greiff, un farmacista di Tübingen, modificò la triaca di Andromaco per farne una chiamata «celeste» che ebbe grande successo commerciale e la cui ricetta, rimasta a lungo segreta, prevedeva carne di altri serpenti<sup>126</sup>. È probabile che ciò sia avvenuto anche in epoca anteriore.

Per ultimo, ci si potrebbe chiedere se solo i ricchi avevano il lusso di consumare triaca per alleviare i loro dolori. Sembrerebbe di no. Se confrontiamo il prezzo medio di una libbra, 0,15 duc., con quelli di alcuni beni alimentari dello stesso periodo provenienti sempre dalla documentazione della Croce, vediamo che tale libbra sottile – bastate un paio di settimane con un ritmo di consumo giornaliero di dose massima (meno di 20 g.) – era pari a 15 litri di frumento, poco più di due chili di limoni, due oche, due galline, quasi due chili di riso, tre chili di carne di vitello, quattro chili e mezzo di carne di manzo<sup>127</sup>. L'oppio puro costava sette volte quello della triaca. Sono importi ben lontani dai veri beni di lusso, come lo zibetto che poteva raggiungere i 60 duc. la libbra e che la popolazione media non poteva permettersi.

#### 4. Conclusione

La documentazione della bottega della Croce, paragonata a quella della spezieria aretina di San Michele dello stesso Altucci, ricca di *composita*, si caratterizza per l'abbondanza di *simplicia* e la scarsità di medicinali. Sono presenti solo quattro sciroppi fra le 196 formule note. In dieci anni Agostino preparò solo una mezza libbra di confettura «maestrale» (nel 1468, a 0,37 duc.) e vendette, tacendo su importo e quantità, solo una volta olio di scorpioni, un tipico unguento da applicare sui bubboni di peste, immancabile nelle spezierie<sup>128</sup>. E a ben guardare, pure la triaca, l'unico composto di rilievo, si

<sup>124</sup> L3470: 104a, 107d, 160d. Si legge chiaramente «cesta» e non «testa» di serpente con le corna. Nella lista della spesa per il banchetto nuziale di Pietro de Bezzi del 1460, troviamo carne di vitello a 0,024 duc./lb. e di manzo a 0,016 duc./lb.; e, S. Salvador, reg. b, 111, fasc. 1.

<sup>125</sup> Stöbl, 18.

<sup>126</sup> Wickersheimer, 152-159. *Le ricchezze*, 157.

<sup>127</sup> L3470: 15d, 147a; L3474: 14r; ASVe, S. Salvador, b. 111, fasc. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Benezet, 232, 577; Cosmacini, 25.

<sup>129</sup> Agostino non registrò però tutti i movimenti di questa attività, soprattutto le vendite al dettaglio. In alcuni fogli volanti (a c. 93 di L3470) leggiamo: *agarixi chonffetti, datelo de choxie o pillole de turbiti con diegradi* non presenti nei mastri.

lascia scorgere a fatica<sup>129</sup>. È possibile imputare questa debole presenza di *composita* solo alla perdita della documentazione, o piuttosto essa riflette la natura degli affari di Agostino, molto più curvati a Venezia sul commercio internazionale di materie prime, con la grande eccezione della triaca? Il rapporto tra i sessanta *simplicia* dei mastri qui analizzati e l'esiguo numero di composti sarebbe in sintonia con quanto scritto da Werner Dressendörfer che, analizzando alcune liste di prezzi di medicine veneziane acquistate da mercanti tedeschi attorno agli anni veneziani di Agostino, ha contato appena 13 *composita* su 175 voci complessive<sup>130</sup>.

Venezia fu il primo mercato europeo delle spezie. Fra queste va posto l'accento sull'oppio consumato nella panacea di Andromaco. La triaca di Agostino si presenta come un antidolorifico dal prezzo non proibitivo e col dosaggio di morfina in linea con gli analgesici attuali. Tuttavia, dato che altre fonti mettono in luce espressamente gli abusi e gli effetti stupefacenti legati all'oppio e data la fervente sperimentazione anche in campo non controllato dalla medicina dotta, è lecito pensare che la triaca non fosse solo un semplice sciroppo per la tosse, ma un potente antidolorifico che, se usato impropriamente come capita oggi col Vicodin, provocava dipendenza e nei casi estremi la morte. Le autorità cercavano a loro modo, con una cerimonia che rimaneva impressa nelle masse, di controllare produzione e consumo di una medicina così popolare quanto pericolosa: di fatto l'oppio era venduto e consumato in massa in Europa nella triaca e Venezia divenne il principale mercato di spaccio<sup>131</sup>.

<sup>130</sup> Dressendörfer, 1985, 77-80.

<sup>131</sup> Cfr. Stöbl, 42-47.



## Appendice

Acquisti e vendite, uscite ed entrate complessive della ditta di Agostino Altucci, 1465-1475<sup>132</sup>

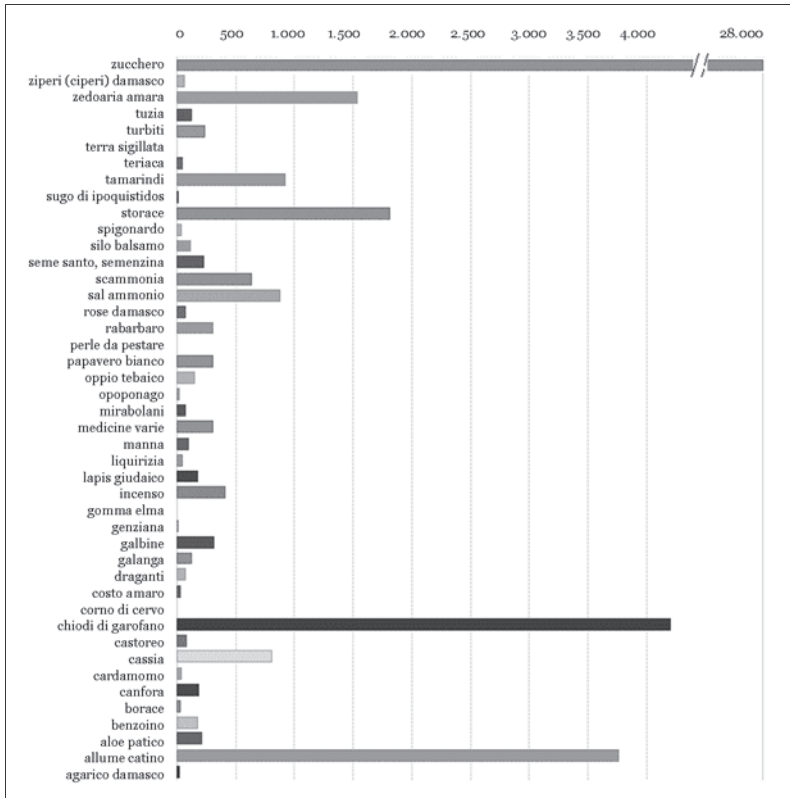


Grafico 1

<sup>132</sup> I grafici, così come tutte le tabelle del testo, sono frutto dell'elaborazione informatica di una bancadati da me costruita con le poste dei libri dell'Altucci e consistente in circa 13.000 records.

Acquisti di merce in libbre (1465-1475)

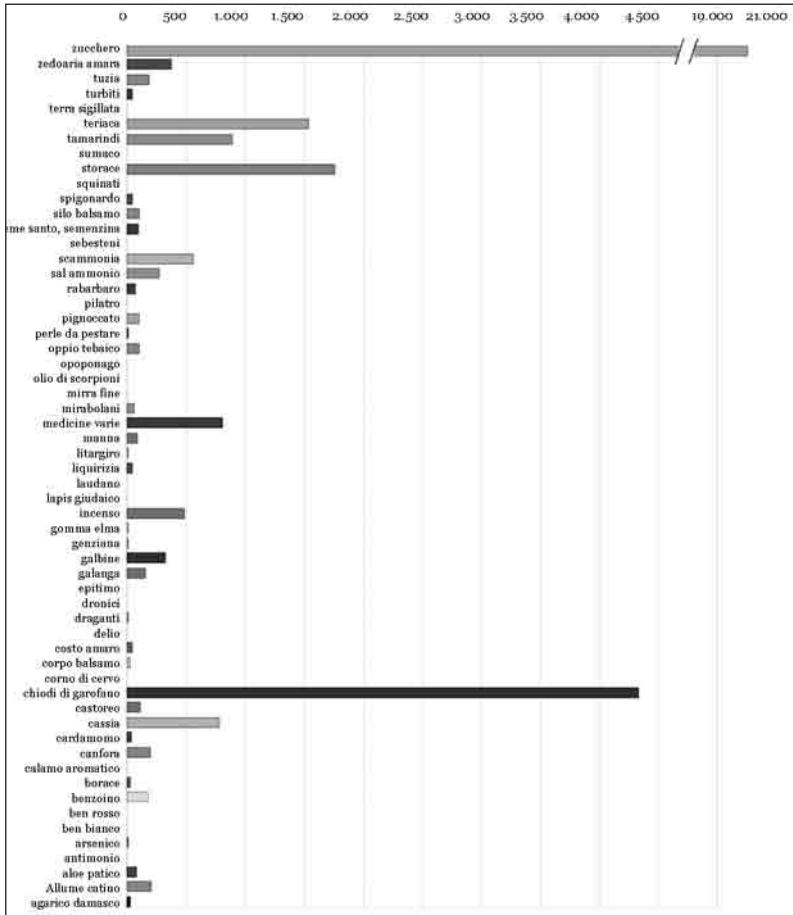


Grafico 2

*Vendita di merce in libbre (1465-1475)*

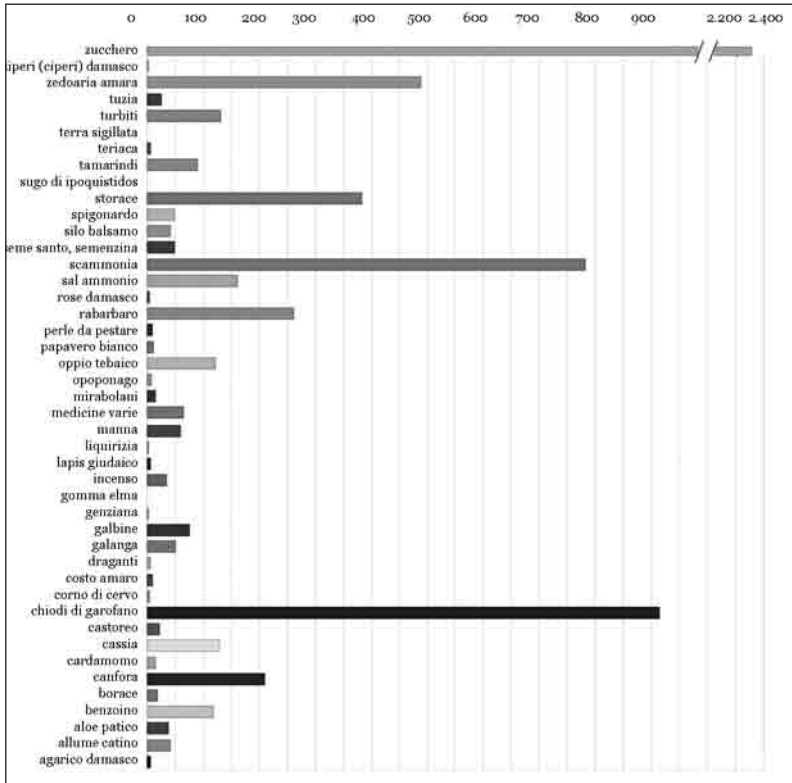


Grafico 3

*Uscite in ducati (1465-1475)*

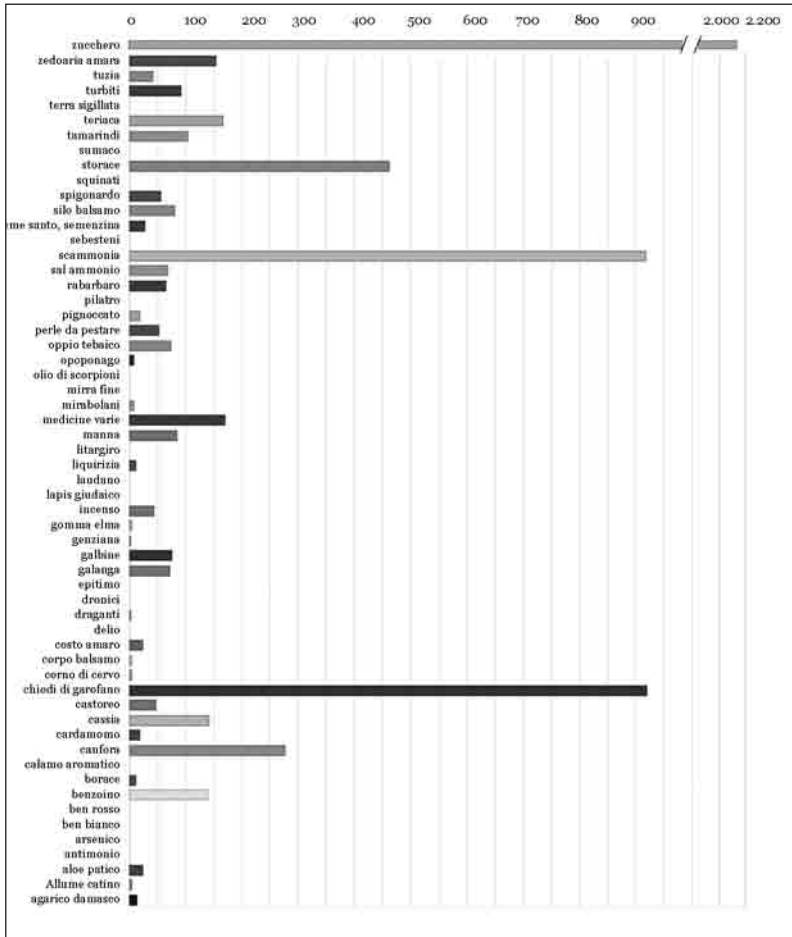


Grafico 4

*Entrate in ducati (1465-1475)*

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*Abstract*

L'articolo ha per oggetto il commercio di sostanze officinali tra Venezia, la Siria e la Spagna di uno speziale toscano, Agostino Altucci, operante nella città lagunare tra il 1465 e il 1475. Fra i molti articoli merceologici trattati dagli speziali medievali, sono qui esposti in specifico quelli che ricorrono con più frequenza e che riflettono meglio gli interessi del mercante, ed indirettamente una loro domanda: lo zucchero, la scamonea, i chiodi di garofano ed alcune gomme resine. Emerge la netta prevalenza del commercio internazionale di sostanze semplici, o materie prime, su quello locale di medicine composte, con la grande eccezione della triaca. La famosa panacea di Andromaco fu un prodotto largamente consumato e quella preparata e venduta da Agostino sembra aver avuto lo stesso effetto di un nostro normale antidolorifico. L'oppio in essa contenuto, unico ingrediente con principio attivo, viene prevalentemente ignorato dagli storici, più attenti agli aspetti culturali, economici, folkloristici ed artistici legati alla medicina. Tuttavia, data la popolarità della triaca, sorgono alcuni interrogativi su una possibile tossicodipendenza, da una parte, ma anche su un presunto spaccio controllato da parte dello stato, dall'altra.

The essay is concerned with trading in medicinal substances between Venice, Syria and Spain by a Tuscan apothecary, Agostino Altucci, operating in Venice from 1465 to 1475. Among the many goods dealt in by medieval apothecaries, the essay highlights specifically those most often documented, central to Altucci's interests and implicitly to demand by purchasers: sugar, scammony, cloves and certain types of resinous gum. There emerges the clear prevalence of international trade in simple substances, or raw materials, over local dealing in medicinal compounds, with the major exception of theriac. Andromacus' famous panacea was a widely used product. As Altucci prepared and sold it, it would appear to have the same effects as an ordinary modern painkiller. The opium it contained, the only medicinally active ingredient, has been mostly ignored by historical research focused primarily on cultural, economic, folklore and art-related features of this medicine. But theriac's popularity raises questions concerning both potential drug addiction and its presumed sale under state supervision.

*Parole chiave*

Medioevo; Quattrocento; Venezia; spezie; commercio; farmacie; oppio

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; spices; trade; apothecaries; opium

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# **Government and Society in the Terraferma**



# **Renaissance Padua as Kunstwerk: Policy and Custom in the Governance of a Renaissance City\***

by Benjamin G. Kohl  
edited by Monique O'Connell

## *1. Introduction*

In a famous speech made in the House of Commons in March 1775 urging reconciliation of Great Britain with its American colonies, Edmund Burke wrote that

an empire is the aggregate of many states, under one common head, whether this head be a monarch, or a presiding Republick. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen... that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice<sup>1</sup>.

Students of early modern states Helmut Koenigsberger and Sir John Elliott have wrestled with the problem of empire, highlighted in Burke's speech, whether the early modern empire was a composite state, a federal state, or as Burke held, an aggregate of many states<sup>2</sup>. Michael Knapton, in a lecture on the Venetian Terraferma state at the conference held to honor the memory of Michael Mallett in December 2009, discussed whether the concept of composite state should apply to Venice and its empire in the early Renaissance. Knapton has also highlighted the heavy taxation and the resentment of Venetian judicial structures in Padua in particular<sup>3</sup>.

\* This article was originally presented in April 2010 at the Renaissance Society of America's annual meeting in Venice, as part of a series of panels organized by John Easton Law and Gabriele Neher in honor of Michael Mallett entitled "Michael Mallett Remembered". This was the last conference that Ben attended, and while he intended the paper as an early version of an article considering the impact of Venetian rule on Padua, his June 2010 death meant that he was not able to complete the article. The present piece was lightly edited by Monique O'Connell, with the main interventions being the formatting of the notes, the addition of section titles and some bibliographic references, and minor adjustments to the language to accommodate the change from an oral to a written format.

<sup>1</sup> Burke, 150, also quoted in Elliott, 2009, 219.

<sup>2</sup> Koenigsberger; Elliott, 1992 and Elliott, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Knapton, 1981 and 1992.

As is well known, conquest, voluntary surrender and purchase were the three basic ways that Venice acquired its overseas and Terraferma dominions in the late Middle Ages<sup>4</sup>. The most famous act of conquest was that part of the Byzantine Empire, referred to in the sources as “one quarter and one half of one quarter”, that Venice conquered and ruled from 1204 onward, including Crete and part of Negroponte as well. Venice’s possessions on the Dalmatian coast, from Capodistria to Zadar and Split, were originally trophies of conquest, which were lost by treaty to King Louis of Hungary in 1358. But these cities were repossessed by Venice, starting with the purchase of Zadar from King Ladislav of Naples in 1409. Venice had acquired Corfu by voluntary surrender in 1386, only a step ahead of a similar effort to acquire the island by the Carrara lord of Padua. These acquisitions were ratified in treaties and pacts with the conquered states and their cities, usually guaranteeing certain local rights of the cities and regions. These pacts created a patchwork of jurisdictions that were the result of piecemeal conquest and the creation of empire by agglutination. In other words, the patchwork was the product of the pacts. In the case of the subject cities there was almost always a local board that negotiated the terms of surrender and forged a treaty or pact, often an act of dedition to define the relationship between Venice and its newly acquired city and territory. The process started with Treviso, conquered in 1338 and reoccupied, by agreement with Giangaleazzo Visconti, in 1388<sup>5</sup>. As James Grubb has shown, Vicenza’s 1404 freely-given act of surrender made this city the “firstborn” of Venice’s mainland empire and a possession on the mainland that in the eyes of the Venetian governor was far different from Padua, which had been conquered and whose hated Carrara lords were executed in the process of completing that conquest<sup>6</sup>. In addition to Padua, Verona and its *contado* were added to the Terraferma state in 1405 and Friuli in 1420.

## 2. *The Golden Bull of 1406 and Paduan Governance*

In establishing its control over Padua, Venice had to provide the basic functions of any medieval government: defense against external enemies and internal order through a court and police system. But in conquering Padua, Venice inherited a mature commune and complex government, as complex and detailed in some ways as in Venice itself, as had been set forth in detail in the Carrara statutes of 1362<sup>7</sup>. Thus, Venice never had the option in Padua to create a new government *ex nihilo*. It always had to adapt and adopt what it

<sup>4</sup> The events discussed in this paragraph are covered in Cozzi, Knapton, and Scarabello, 1:11-21 and 179-232.

<sup>5</sup> Knapton, 1980.

<sup>6</sup> Grubb.

<sup>7</sup> Kohl, 162-66.

found there, as is shown by the Golden Bull that Doge Michele Steno granted on January 1406<sup>8</sup>. The Bull was a response to a long, complex petition from local notables of Padua who argued for as much continuity as possible with the former regime, while remaining mindful that the Carrara state was anathema to Venice's interests and sensibilities. Written and negotiated by the local élite, composed of jurists, law professors, notaries, merchants, several of whom were conspicuous members of the former Carrara élite, the Golden Bull resulted in the retention of as many former Paduan privileges as possible. For example, Venice guaranteed Paduans in possession of their property, except those possessions that had been sold by the Carrara lords in their last frenzied effort to raise funds to the defense of Padua the year before, and assured continuity of the court system and contracts with peasants in the contado. The main distinction in the Golden Bull was that Venice reserved the right to dispose of Carrara property as its governors saw fit. This vast landed wealth, perhaps a quarter of the Padovano, had been managed by the Carrara as *gastalderie* (estate jurisdictions) in major villages<sup>9</sup>. Now this property was confiscated by Venice and sold, village by village, to wealthy Venetian nobles, who early established extensive rural villas in the countryside. But, to be sure, some Paduans were eventually confirmed in the purchases that they had made.

Another key issue covered in the Bull was local governance: oversight of this function was given to the Venetian podestà and especially the captain installed in Padua, and Venetian nobles were made podestà and/or castellans in seven Padovano strongholds and larger towns (sometimes called *quasi-città* by historians): Camposampiero, Castelbaldo, Cittadella, Este, Monselice, Montagnana and Piove di Sacco. Significantly, the smaller towns in the Padovano, such as Arquà, were to be governed by Paduan citizens appointed as vicars by the Venetian podestà in consultation with a citizen council.

The third issue was the nature of taxation and provision for defense.

### 3. *The Dadia delle Lanze and the Defense of Padua*

As Michael Mallett demonstrated, the Terraferma soon became a battleground for Venice<sup>10</sup>. The reacquisition of Dalmatia in 1409 precipitated a reaction from Sigismund of Hungary, who invaded Friuli the next year. Venice hired large numbers of mercenary troops, mainly under the command of Pandolfo Malatesta, to repel the Hungarian invasion. The large expenditures of up to 300,000 ducats, according to some contemporary estimates, were born by Venice alone and weighed heavily in the minds of policy makers.

<sup>8</sup> Archivio di Stato di Padova (ASP), Ducali, v. 2, ff. 1r-6r, now edited in Melchiorre.

<sup>9</sup> Lazzarini.

<sup>10</sup> Mallett and Hale, 127-29; the fiscal aspects of defense are also discussed in Cozzi, Knapton, and Scarabello, 1: 275-86.

Eventually a truce was arranged, and Padua and the other Terraferma cities were secure for a time. When the prospect of the end of the truce loomed large in the autumn of 1417, the Senate met to consider financing a new mercenary army to repel a renewed Hungarian attack.

The tax imposed for this purpose became the famous *dadia delle lanze*<sup>11</sup>. The basic idea behind the *dadia delle lanze* was that the cities of the Terraferma, which benefited from Venice's protection, should bear the costs of their own defense, especially against the king of Hungary who was known for "his appetite and vendetta (*intentio*) against the freedom and well-being of Italy and especially against our dominion and city and territories". In November 1417, three proposals were made in the Venetian Senate to appoint two nobles to set taxes in the cities of Padua, Vicenza and Verona for 100 lances and 100 infantry each to protect the Terraferma state at end of the truce with the king of Hungary in spring 1418. The suggestion that was adopted was jointly proposed by the young procurator of San Marco and future doge, Francesco Foscari, and his colleague and sometime rival, Leonardo Mocenigo. Their bill's preamble set forth, as was often the case in Venetian legislation, the rationale for certain action, providing what might be called a specimen of popular political philosophy. The two Venetian nobles elected were to consult with the Paduan council, so that

Venice can make such usual provision that, with God's help, we will be able honorably and in manly fashion (*viriliter*) to maintain and preserve our honor and state and our cities, places, subjects and faithful and their possessions and goods.

In this case, the subject city of Padua should reasonably expect "to offer a hand and help to our dominion" in the form of paying for 100 lances and 100 foot based on the local *estimo*, with no exceptions, save the friars and nuns of the mendicant orders. The two nobles were then to argue the same case in the other two cities and impose the tax for troops to defend Vicenza and Verona.

The other two proposals (which were not adopted) were harsher and more insistent in demanding that Padua pay for its own defense, especially in time of war. Albano Badoer cited the large payments to Malatesta and Visconti *condottieri* already expended in the wars with the king of Hungary, and suggested ways to make the subject cities pay their share. Antonio Contarini emphasized that Venice's income from customs duties was much diminished due to the wars on the mainland, and moved that the three main cities contribute specific annual sums for their own defense: 12,000 ducats each from Padua and Verona, and 10,000 from Vicenza, for an annual total of 34,000 ducats as long as the threat existed. The Senate ultimately adopted the gentler proposal.

<sup>11</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASVe), Senato Secreta, reg. 6, fols. 175r-176v, 30 October 1417 and 4 November 1417.



From the moment the tax was adopted, Padua, Verona and Vicenza became garrison cities in the mainland empire, which they remained for centuries. But the local notables immediately challenged these new taxes, based on estimates of property and income, which fell largely on the Paduan élite. The next year, the distinguished jurist Prodocimo Conti led a delegation of Paduan lawyers and merchants to protest and seek reduction of the new tax. The assessment and collection of the *dadia delle lanze* remained a point of friction for centuries, reminding us of the difference that Adam Smith developed in his *Wealth of Nations* between conquest and commerce<sup>12</sup>. In Smith's eighteenth century world, the project of commerce was the European nations in the East Indies, while the project of conquest was Spain in the Americas.

In an analogy to Smith, for fifteenth century Venice, the sphere of commerce was its trade in the Levant while the Terraferma state was the object of conquest. Of course, Crete and other eastern colonies provided commodities for consumption as well as trade while the Terraferma state was a source of raw materials, food, and fiber, investment in land, and taxes to support the newly conquered mainland state. Some of the taxes extracted from the Terraferma state were directed to the defense costs of the overseas empire, which most contemporary balance sheets show, did not pay for itself. Venice retained several monopolies in conquered Padua, most obviously conduct of all foreign policy, the administration of justice and control of the defense establishment, its garrison in Padua and other smaller centers, and the right to hire soldiers and their leaders, the best *condottieri* that Venice could find and money could buy. Venice enjoyed a monopoly, too, in the production of arms, most obviously, not only war ships, the light galleys, but many other vessels that were constructed in the Arsenale. Less noticed were arms and armor, arrows and crossbows, and later cannon, for its own navy. These arms were also sold as favors to gather allies overseas, especially to the counts of the Dalmatian coast, who were enticed by the lure of fairly cheap Venetian arms of excellent quality. In short, there developed by the fifteenth century an advanced defense establishment that provided almost all Venice's needs for the defense of its empire, and whose surplus could be used to win allies and influence friends.

#### 4. *The 1420 Statutes and the New Role of the Paduan Élite*

How does Padua fit into Venice's imperial scheme? After the Golden Bull of 1406, the next key document is the reformed statutory code of 1420, which incorporated explicitly, even self-consciously, the Paduan commune as the best frame of government for the newly-conquered city and territory<sup>13</sup>. The eternal commune stretched from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, from

<sup>12</sup> Smith, bk 4, ch. 7, pt. 1.

<sup>13</sup> Padua, Biblioteca Civica, ms. BP 1236, *Codex statutorum reformatorem*, 1420.

the age of Frederick Barbarossa to the era of Napoleon, and it was the basic structure for the organization of justice, police, civil and criminal law, guilds and industry, and the privileges of church and university<sup>14</sup>. This eternal commune, in a sense, survives even in contemporary Padua. It is not by accident that the *municipio* of the city in united Italy was built next to the Palazzo della Ragione, the Town Hall of medieval Padua.

Of course, the government of Venetian Padua, as set forth in the statutes of 1420, not only built upon but made significant changes in the power structure of the city<sup>15</sup>. The board of sixteen Paduan notables that drew up the new code was appointed by the Venetian rectors. The board, composed of four nobles from each of the city's four quarters, included members of Padua's leading families, among them Prodocimo Conti, Enrico Scrovegni, Alessandro Dottori, Galeazzo Dondi dall'Orologio, Pietro Zabarella, Sicco Polenton and Andrea Curtarolo. As the statute's Preamble shows, the board was charged by the Venetian senate to work with the current Venetian podestà, Marco Dandolo, and the captain, Lorenzo Bragadino, to draw up reformed statutes worthy of the great city of Padua. In so doing they were to preserve the best of the older statutes while they eliminated those laws which were evil (*iniqua*), obscure, or contrary to current practice. The result was to be a government that combined the best of tradition, the institutions and structures handed down "from our forebears (*a nostris maioribus*)", with new legislation that would make Padua a happy and fortunate city (*civitas felix et fausta*)<sup>16</sup>.

In fulfilling this goal, Venice guaranteed that its nobles would govern the conquered city. The first book of the reformed statutes defined the structure and office of secular government in Padua. The four chief officials had to be Venetian nobles: podestà, capitano, camerlengo and castellano, who oversaw justice, defense, treasury, and city guard, respectively. And in the countryside, as we have seen, only Venetians could serve as rectors of the seven major towns, the *quasi-città* of the Padovano. The podestà's curia, which administered high justice and exercised police powers, was also composed of foreigners. The three judges included the vicar, who had to be a doctor of laws and handled major cases, the judge of *victualia*, who heard cases on food supply, weights and measures, and market regulations, and the Aquila, the judge on taxes and fiscal matters, aided by two knights who policed trades, markets, and manufacturing. This small staff had to be non-Paduans, who were to reside, eat and sleep in the communal palace, to avoid contact with the natives and the possibility of bribes and gifts that might lead to corruption. In contrast, the judges of the local civil courts were all Paduans, elected on rotating terms from the membership of the College of Judges.

In addition, the statutes provided for two major advisory bodies made up of Paduan citizens. One was the Town Council, composed of forty-eight men,

<sup>14</sup> Pino-Branca.

<sup>15</sup> Ms. BP 1236.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., fols. 3v-4r.

selected by the Venetian podestà, twelve per quarter, who served for a year and advised the Venetian governors on the administration of communal law and agencies. The other was a board of four *savi* appointed for the welfare of the commune (*sapientes deputati ad utilia communis*), held over from a Carrara statute of 1376<sup>17</sup>. These four local notables, selected by the podestà for four month terms by lot from a short list, were charged with the upkeep of communal property and empowered to arrest offenders. Initially they were, in effect, a zoning board to make sure the fabric of the city, its streets, dykes, waterways, and buildings, were maintained. Other new regulations governed the communal chancery, town attorneys, the care of prisoners and paupers, the leadership of the guilds, and the duties of the notaries who served the courts, offices and people of Padua. The rest of the Reform Code followed the structure and statutes of the Carrara Code that it replaced. The high proportion of ancient, that is pre-1420 statutes, sometimes modified and updated, in the later books of the Reformed Code confirms that in judicial procedure, guild structure, university privileges, and ecclesiastical prerogatives, local customs and tradition prevailed. Thus, perhaps ninety percent of the laws that governed Venetian Padua had been enacted long before the Venetian conquest.

Excluded from sharing real power with the Venetian nobility by what Angelo Ventura defined in his memorable phrase as a “diaframma insuperabile”<sup>18</sup>, how did Padua’s élite function under Venetian rule? Their yearning for power and authority was perhaps satisfied by positions of leadership assumed in the university, the confraternities, and the guilds, as well as the council of forty-eight (later one hundred) and the boards of the Paduan commune just mentioned. But an outlet for the talents of local leadership was also found in the major NGOs, non-governmental organizations of Quattrocento Padua, as two recent studies demonstrate. Francesco Bianchi’s study focuses on the development of the city orphanage, the Ca’ di Dio<sup>19</sup>. Established in 1265 as the city’s general hospital for needy adults and hospice of the infirm and orphans, the Ca’ di Dio was transformed in the course of the late Middle Ages into the city’s principal orphanage, as other institutions, notably the hospital of San Francesco Grande, were established to care for Padua’s poor, elderly and infirm. The transformation of the Ca’ di Dio into an orphanage can be viewed within the context of a general movement of welfare reform in north Italian cities of the fifteenth century, where the foundling hospital was a major innovation in response to a new social and cultural situation. The communal statutes that set up the Ca’ di Dio provided that it be governed by a prior and two assistants, elected by a citywide committee of twenty laymen, under the supervision of its own confraternity. Thus, the administration and leadership of the hospital was to be lay, communal and secular from the outset. The Ca’ di Dio’s leadership in the Quattrocento, who

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 18r-v.

<sup>18</sup> Ventura, 43.

<sup>19</sup> Bianchi.

were university professors, jurists, and notaries, was recruited from many of the leading families of Padua. Bianchi's prosopographical analysis confirms the view that non-governmental organizations such as the Ca' di Dio provided an important outlet for leadership roles of local élites in the Terraferma cities under Venetian rule. And the bulk of the employees were external wet nurses, who were often immigrants from Dalmatia, reminding us that Padua, as one of the wealthiest cities in Venice's dominions, drew immigrants from less prosperous regions of the empire.

The second work on the changing role of the Paduan élite is Silvana Collodo's study on the patronage of the Hospital of San Francesco Grande, which documents the careers of a former Carrara functionary and his wife, Baldo Bonafari and Sibilia Cetto, as lay philanthropists in Venetian Padua<sup>20</sup>. As a *referendario* and merchant under Francesco Novello, Bonafari had become a wealthy landowner in many parts of the Padovano, but with the change of regime he essentially 'went into hiding' as a private citizen. The couple's sense of social justice remained strong, and working with the College of Jurists and local mendicants, they transformed a small house into the major hospital for the aged and infirm in Quattrocento Padua. Significantly, this outlet for good works for the local poor was aided and guided by members of the Paduan élite, including Prosdocimo Conti.

Of course, many Paduans continued to seek public office under the Venetian regime. Membership in Padua's *Maggior Consiglio*, first of forty-eight, later of 100, played an advisory role to the *podestà* and his foreign staff, and acted as a platform for negotiation with the Senate and *Collegio* for reforms and redress of grievances. Thus, the commune that gave structure to Venetian Padua provides the key to continuity, the tradition of local government, that gave Padua its distinctive customs and character. Through a number of guilds and confraternities, governed by local notables serving as *gastaldo* and *massaro*, and especially the Confraternity of Sant'Antonio, the feasts and fairs of the communal era were continued and indeed promoted. Moreover, the conciliatory attitude of Venetian churchmen serving as Padua's bishops has recently been documented by Ian Holgate<sup>21</sup>. For instance, the Venetian noble Pietro Donato served as bishop for two decades and promoted the cult of local saints by installing chapels for the early bishops Massimo and Prosdocimo in the *Duomo* and by overseeing the restoration of the Baptistery, which, after all, provided the greatest pictorial record of the local saints, a celebration of Padua's holy men and women. He was also a notable patron of the arts and elaborate liturgical texts for the celebration of Mass in the *Duomo*.

Continued celebration of local saints perhaps hit its peak in the Quattrocento. A notable example was the feast of St. Anthony in June. Here actors representing the city's four patron saints rode in a cart among the

<sup>20</sup> Collodo, ch. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Holgate.

faithful, each in his or her own distinctive garb: Prodocimo as a grave and bearded early bishop, Justina a virginal martyr, with her palm, Daniel as a youthful deacon, and Anthony as the beloved friar, who proceeded from the Town Hall to the Basilica di Sant'Antonio, the two poles of Padua's civic pride and power. But soon a Venetian feast also came to predominate, Corpus Christi, which was celebrated with a procession but also jousting and mock combat between the best knights in Venice's garrison and young Paduan worthies, the flower of the local nobility. Thus, Padua was allowed to keep the best of its heritage. Sally McKee has argued that the key to understanding the social complexity of the Levant is not race or ethnicity, but a concept of parentage and ancestry, and the same insight should be extended to Venice's Terraferma state<sup>22</sup>. Venetian Padua was a work of art in the sense that Venetian authority permitted the continuation of institutions and customs that allowed for Paduans' self-respect, through the celebration of local traditions of sanctity, charity and civic life. That pride of place captured in the term *Patavinitas* flourished in Venetian Padua, even if its local élite no longer ruled. Still, the ongoing struggle between local Padua's privileges and Venice's central authority remained, as Edmund Burke saw, "extremely nice".

<sup>22</sup> McKee.

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### Abstract

One of the thorniest issues in the recent historiography of Venice's mainland empire is the quality and justice of its governance. Michael Knapton has depicted the Terraferma cities — Vicenza, Verona, and especially Padua — as dominated by the Dominante, which governed harshly, and taxed heavily for the benefit of the capital, while others have viewed the mainland state as a patchwork of jurisdictions, with Venice retaining local custom and leadership wherever these served the interests of the central government. This paper argues that Venice's policy was in large measure the affirmation of custom, using the ancient institutions of the commune of the mainland cities as the basis for its rule, and confirming the remnants of the signorial élites as its new aristocratic governing class, which filled the offices of local government, especially the councils and judiciary. Fifteenth-century Padua prospered under this arrangement.

### Keywords

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; Venice; politics; institutions

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# Land and Economic Policy in Later Fifteenth-Century Padua

by Michael Knapton

## 1. *Premise*

The research presented in this essay is concerned with the exercise of power and the conduct of policy-making by the civic institutions and élites of formerly independent urban polities absorbed into the regional states of northern and central Italy during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries – a destiny shared by Padua, which was subject to Venice from 1405 to the fall of the Serenissima. The primary target is in fact the Paduan civic council in the half century or so preceding 1509: a phase when the Venetian mainland dominion, nearly all created anew in the early decades of the fifteenth century, had acquired a relatively settled nature, before Venice's unexpected defeat at Agnadello temporarily but radically altered perspectives<sup>1</sup>. This essay chooses to focus on the economy, and indeed on just one theme concerning economic relations and policy: the various, important issues pertaining to land.

The short second and third sections of the essay contain a very summary profile of the Padovano and the Paduan civic council and élite in the period concerned, and linkage to historical debate on economic policy in the Venetian Terraferma dominion and in Italian regional states in general. The long fourth section addresses matters directly and indirectly concerning land, and relates the city council's deliberations on this theme to the broader framework of power sharing between the different political players in the Venetian regional state, especially Venetian government authority, itself an important policy-maker in this sphere.

<sup>1</sup> Recent surveys of the Terraferma state: Knapton, 2012; Knapton, 2013. For comparison in the Italian and European dimension: Shaw; Berengo. Need for concision has limited bibliographical and archival references, and also potential comparison between Padua and other Terraferma contexts. The *campo (padovano)* used as a unit of surface measure corresponds to 3,862.57 square metres. In the text and notes, sums in ducats and *lire di picccoli* are expressed using the forms D. and L. (the equivalence was D. 1 = L. 6.2). Thanks to Reinhold Mueller, Luciano Pezzolo and Gian Maria Varanini for advice on the essay.



The essay is based on archival sources documenting both the activity of the Paduan council and the more general conduct of government by Paduan and Venetian institutions<sup>2</sup>. The relevant primary research was very largely conducted for a doctoral thesis written in the 1970s, and much of the elaboration of those archival findings has been overlong delayed by other scholarly concerns, though previous publications have tackled fiscal and judicial features of the Venice-Padua relationship<sup>3</sup>. The essay is indebted to the example and advice of many other scholars, including a prestigious quartet of historians of Padua, all now deceased, to whose memory it is dedicated: Sante Bortolami, Kenneth Hyde, Benjamin Kohl and Gérard Rippe<sup>4</sup>.

## *2. The Padovano and the Paduan city council*

With the exception of the Euganean hills, south-west of the city, the Padovano was flat agricultural land, crisscrossed or bordered by numerous major and minor waterways including important rivers like the Adige, Bacchiglione and Brenta – though for agrarian purposes the presence of water was as much a liability as a resource in low-lying eastern and southern areas<sup>5</sup>. The contado included a few sizeable towns, especially those east and south of the Euganean hills (Este, Monselice, Montagnana), but Padua's development in communal and seigneurial times gave it clear economic dominion over the Padovano, together with much more than local importance as a commercial and manufacturing centre; the presence of a prestigious university also contributed to this urban economy.

In the 1390s the city's population of 30-35,000 had recovered its pre-Black Death level, but subsequent crisis lasting through the early Venetian decades is evident from data of 20,000 or less for 1411, 1430 and 1435, after which gradual recovery brought it to around 27,000 by 1509. This increase of at most 50% from the lowpoint of the early fifteenth century contrasts unfavourably with the dynamism of other dominion cities, especially Verona and Brescia, whose urban population rose by about 150% and 200% respectively – to about 35,000, and well over 40,000 – from their numbers at or soon after Venetian annexation. The contado, whose inhabitants had been 130,000 or more in 1397, was affected by fluctuations similar to the city's in trend and timing.

<sup>2</sup> For the council's deliberations, Archivio di Stato di Padova, Archivio Civico Antico (henceforth ASP), Atti del Consiglio, registers IV-IX (also numbered 7-12), covering respectively 1461-69, 1470-76, 1476-85, 1486-91, 1492-1501, 1501-20 but interrupted in December 1506 (henceforth Atti, IV etc.). The main series of Venetian missives to Padua in ASP are Ducali, vols. 2-4, 71-77, here cited respectively as Rubeo, Verde, III and with the letters A-G (henceforth Ducali, A etc.); occasional use is also made of vols. 20, 111 and 121.

<sup>3</sup> Knapton, 1981b (and Knapton, 1998); Knapton, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Socio-political studies by the three non-Italians cover in sequence the centuries preceding the period analyzed here: Rippe; Hyde; Kohl.

Population increase in the mid and later fifteenth century reflects lower plague mortality but also more liveliness especially in the agrarian economy, although urban manufacturing – whose cornerstone in the later fourteenth century had been woollen textiles, thanks too to strong Carrarese support – seems to have been less resilient<sup>6</sup>.

As happened elsewhere in the mainland state, a Golden Bull granted by Venice to newly annexed Padua in January 1406 emphasized the consensual features of a political relationship initially created by military might<sup>7</sup>. Venetian government made use of few noble officials on the spot – a *podestà* (civil governor), a captain, two *camerlenghi* in charge of the Venetian exchequer, and two *castellans* – while delegation of much government activity to local political partners primarily favoured the resumption of decision-making by urban institutions and élites, moreover responsible for most of the coordination of ordinary administrative activity by the city commune's officials. Padua's Golden Bull also guaranteed such key features of continuity in government as the validity of the city's statutes and customs, and support to the university and the wool guild.

Urban control over the *contado* emerged strongly from the Carrarese period, with no significant separate jurisdictions, and now received overall confirmation, though local control over single *contado* districts was divided between Paduan and Venetian officials: the former in the vicariates of Anguillara, Arquà, Conselve, Mirano, Oriago and Teolo, the latter in *podesterie* with partial autonomy from authority in Padua – very limited for Camposampiero, Castelbaldo and Piove di Sacco, a little more substantial for Cittadella, Este, Monselice and Montagnana.

In Padua, as elsewhere, the seigneurial regime had brought the decline of municipal councils' role in public life. The formally constituted *Maggior Consiglio* still referred to in the Paduan statutes of 1362 had waned from ordinary existence in the later Carrarese period, as had also happened gradually to the *Anziani*, formerly the commune's main executive magistracy<sup>8</sup>. Thus the general councils called in Padua at critical junctures for the dynasty and the city – 1372, 1388 – had been improvised revivals. The practice of government had however continued to rely heavily on laws, procedures and offices created in the communal period<sup>9</sup>.

In the very early years of Venetian domination of Padua there is little trace of activity by a city council. However, the revision of the statute book conducted

<sup>5</sup> A general description of the Padovano in the Quattrocento in Favaretto, 1-22.

<sup>6</sup> Collodo, 1990, chapters XI-XIV (on population, esp. 414-15). On population of the Terraferma cities: Ginatempo-Sandri, 75, 81, 250-54.

<sup>7</sup> See the recent edition: Melchiorre.

<sup>8</sup> See the coming edition of the 1362 statutes by Ornella Pittarello; comment in Varanini, 1992, 18-19.

<sup>9</sup> Ventura, 1993, 15-30; in general, Kohl, to be read with Collodo, 2007; see too the essay by Varanini in this volume.

in 1420 not only updated communal law but also underlined the general valency of the commune's jurisdiction and institutions<sup>10</sup>. It also prescribed a council of forty eight members; though increased to sixty in 1425, this was much smaller than its thirteenth- and fourteenth-century predecessors. Its meetings were generally attended by one or both of the city's Venetian governors. The deputies *ad utilia*, together with the deputies *ad ecclesias*, took over the executive role formerly discharged by the Anziani<sup>11</sup>. The 1420 statutes allowed every citizen of Padua residing there and paying taxes to hold municipal office *secundum condicionem suam*, but in practice access to the council was reserved to far fewer Paduans<sup>12</sup>. Tightening control by a small group and growing tension over membership numbers and criteria for election induced Venice in 1446 to increase the ordinary members from sixty to a hundred, limiting to two those from any single *agnatio* among the hundred, and disqualifying serving councillors from re-election the year immediately following.

These were the numbers present and these the rules applying in the later fifteenth century, when more powerful families were commonly represented by four councillors alternating in pairs from year to year, often reinforced by others sitting *ex officio* as deputies etc. The deputies' role as all-purpose executive had expanded piecemeal after 1420, and was then much in evidence, not only in such usual functions as flanking the Venetian governors and organizing the agenda for council meetings but also, for example, in dealings with the representatives the city frequently sent to Venice<sup>13</sup>.

As to the identity of council members, in the fifteenth century each Terraferma city's civic élite had begun but by no means completed its longer term evolution into "a restricted body of families monopolizing high municipal office, possessing great and honourable wealth and... fabulous genealogies", enjoying mostly hereditary succession to seats in councils "formally closed and highly resistant to newcomers". Still permeable, Quattrocento élites can be identified, but not categorized according to "firm principles of demarcation"<sup>14</sup>. In contemporary sources their members are often called *cives* or *cittadini*, primarily meaning those occupying municipal office; by the later fifteenth century, *cives* and *nobiles* were tending to become interchangeable terms in Paduan council records. In fourteenth and fifteenth century Padua there was significant upward social mobility fed mostly from Padua and the Padovano,

<sup>10</sup> On the 1420 statutes, still unpublished, see Varanini, 1992, 24 ff., 39 ff.; Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCIII, 348 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Ventura, 1993, 47-72, is the general source of what follows. On the deputies: Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCIII, 343 ff., and data in ASP, Deputati e Cancelleria (henceforth Deputati), regs. 3-5.

<sup>12</sup> On requirements for citizenship and the rights and duties deriving: Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCIII, 373 ff.

<sup>13</sup> On the deputies' expansion of competence: Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCIII, 344 ff.

<sup>14</sup> Comprehensive discussion in Grubb, ch. 7 (quotations from 156-57); on Padua, Ventura, 1993, especially 70. On civic élites and public life see too the useful *status quaestionis* in Varanini, 2013.

but partly by prestigious immigrants too, with university teaching posts – especially in arts and medicine – fairly often a key factor in new families' emergence. The Carrarese lordship was itself an important factor of both promotion and demotion, while in the fifteenth century the élite of the Carrara years was weakened during the early decades by some members' misplaced support for anti-Venetian plots<sup>15</sup>.

As in other Terraferma cities, political pre-eminence attested by presence in the council coincided with high economic standing, documented by councillors' *estimo* ratings (inclusion of wealth actually possessed in these lists of taxable assets was often incomplete, especially for richer taxpayers); all families with conspicuous patrimony were indeed always present at least to some extent in the council. As to the forms of their wealth, many members of the Paduan élite mingled land and housing, mercantile and financial investment (including banking and tax collection), and also assets deriving from careers in the professions – occasionally ecclesiastical but more frequently secular (as jurists, judges and notaries, doctors of arts and medicine, university teachers)<sup>16</sup>.

In terms of power-sharing between Venetian authority and mainland power-holders, research on the Venetian dominion has established clearly the comparative debilitation of Padua's and Treviso's civic élites in their relationship with the Venetian state. This debilitation partly reflected the relative weakness of both cities for bargaining with the Republic at the moment of their annexation; once they were subject to the Republic, moreover, their proximity to the capital brought more precocious and intense intervention by Venetian government authority, and greater attention from Venetian private interests, especially to landowning and ecclesiastical benefices. But Treviso, annexed as early as 1338, had a much flatter profile of local political life, with no fully regular civic council at all, whereas in the fifteenth century the experience of Paduan municipal institutions was closer to that of other sizeable cities of the mainland state like Vicenza, Verona, Brescia and Bergamo, even though subject to tighter Venetian control – with a correspondingly weaker Paduan profile – in such institutions as the city's Venetian exchequer and its *camera dei lavorieri* (a sort of office of works)<sup>17</sup>.

In the mass of the Paduan council's deliberations and in other relevant documentation, there are common threads linking the handling of different matters of government. One such thread is the dialectic between the city and political agencies of the Padovano, essentially regarding the extent and exercise of the city's jurisdiction over the contado. In the Padovano, as nearly everywhere else in the Terraferma, the *corpo territoriale* representing the

<sup>15</sup> In addition to works already cited, see: Ulvioni, 807-08, on fifteenth-century newcomers; De Sandre, 1968, especially 34 ff., on university careers' importance.

<sup>16</sup> On banking and other non-landed wealth, see especially Demo.

<sup>17</sup> Varanini, 1992, 215; Knapton, 1981b, 21.

contado rural communities, and especially its towns and social élite, was to develop only in the course of the sixteenth century as a formally constituted institution with a cohesive political programme. During the fifteenth century, moreover, Venice tended to maintain the status quo in city-contado relations, which mostly meant robust urban hegemony, including explicit reference to the superiority of Paduan statute law if the Padovano towns' statutes were reformed (thus for example Montagnana's in 1446)<sup>18</sup>. But action especially by the towns with minor Venetian governors kept the civic élite's nerves on edge, not least where proximity to Venice and the existence of Venetian residents and property rights were a further stimulus to erosion of the city's jurisdiction – thus especially Piove di Sacco, in the eastern Padovano<sup>19</sup>.

Another common thread between council deliberations tackling different aspects of government is their testimony of the balance of power between the urban commune and Venetian authority in general: an aspect central to this essay. This issue was especially important in a later fifteenth century phase characterized by gradually stronger Venetian government action, albeit in a partly haphazard fashion, with the effect of stimulating defence of their prerogatives by the mainland civic councils. Such defence, it must be noted, might rely on more assiduous lobbying in Venice, via patronage relations reaching into the nobility that could seem slightly at odds with the very purpose of the operation. An extension or reflection of this issue concerns the posture assumed by the council in its discussions and deliberations: the extent to which it took the initiative, or reacted to Venetian moves; whether it reached decisions in substantial autonomy, sought their approval by Venetian authority, or merely tried to alter decisions already taken elsewhere.

### *3. Economic relations and economic policy*

In scholarship from the 1970s onwards concerning the Italian regional states, the theme of economic relationships and policy within the state was overall a late developer compared to mainline political issues like defence, taxation and justice, but the gap has now been at least partly filled. A preliminary point to emerge from the debate is the risk of anachronism, applied both to the more general question of ruling groups' sense of the state, and more specifically to their choices in matters modern historians define as economic. Those choices were made without fully possessing either the concepts of modern economic analysis or the instruments of modern policy, and indeed often developed as the answer to problems or needs such as revenue, which were primarily perceived in administrative or political terms. It is nonetheless useful for historians to examine those choices in relation to

<sup>18</sup> Varanini, 1995, 350.

<sup>19</sup> On the towns: Favaretto, 4-13.

the economy, but it would for example be mostly unrealistic, especially for the late medieval and Renaissance phase, to evaluate policy by central authority principally in terms of its capacity to harness strengthened sovereignty to the promotion of economic growth via market integration with the reduction of transaction costs, or to practise the optimum allocation of resources via competition and rationalization.

Scott's recent summary of the debate and his stimulating plea for the application of urban network analysis to the Italian regional states' economic policies may shift the parameters of discussion, and it certainly broadens the horizon of comparison, but his provisional findings seem to stretch his theoretical models to the limit. Common features identified by Franceschi and Molà in those states' economic policy during the Renaissance indeed place empirical issues centre stage, and indicate modest and variously focused aims at work: the considerable relevance of taxation, with fifteenth century trends characterized overall by a relatively lower profile of excises on urban consumption and by increasing direct taxation; the importance of economic decisions as a negotiating tool in general dealings between governments and their subjects, with duly targeted indirect tax rates as a favourite instrument of policy – lower rates to promote economic activity, higher as a form of protection against competition; the “tenacious survival of a municipal vision of the management of the economy”, favouring cities' privileged status over the countryside, and that of the capital over other cities (though the use of exploitation as a moralizing category is inappropriate to historical analysis); the gradual trend towards greater overall public control of the economy, especially by higher authority<sup>20</sup>.

In the field of Terraferma studies, economic themes in general have received uneven coverage, with greater overall attention to manufacturing and trade than to finance and agriculture; on the more specific matter of economic policy, there has been greater attention to action by Venetian government than by public bodies within the dominion, while for the fifteenth century Verona stands out as the best recipient of recent, specific analysis<sup>21</sup>. A provisional general picture has however emerged. Most historians examining the evolution of urban economies and city-country relations in early modern northeast Italy have seen the obvious influence exercised by the economy of Venice itself, but no emergence of a substantially integrated economic region with a clear distinction and hierarchy of functions, even in the later stages of Venetian mainland rule. This orientation largely reflects key general characteristics of the Terraferma economy, dating from the pre-conquest era but much longer

<sup>20</sup> Scott (with full further bibliography), especially 243-51; Franceschi and Molà, especially 448-51, 455-57, 463-66 (the quote at 464).

<sup>21</sup> For the Terraferma in general: Lanaro; Knapton, 2010; Pezzolo, 2011; Scott, especially 228-30. For the fifteenth century: Knapton, 2013, 98-99 and passim, and – for Verona – Varanini, 1996b, especially 135-37, 155 ff.

lasting: the presence of large cities together with an overall imprint of economic development high on sophistication but low on regional integration.

In the fifteenth century, indeed, Venetian economic policy towards the mainland dominion may be seen as the partial adaptation of a city-state vision of government to a broader, more complex context, which involved no very drastic changes and left much regulation of production and movement of commodities to local bodies. This strong element of continuity was to a considerable extent due to the imprint already given to economic relationships by the combined effect of Venetian treaties with the Terraferma's previous rulers and *de facto* market forces. That legacy of pre-conquest directives and practices favoured trade flows to and from Venice, placed Venetian-supplied salt in mainland monopolies, facilitated the inflow to Venice of foodstuffs from the more immediate hinterland, and eased Venetian access to inland supplies of timber and other raw materials for ship-building – all of this favouring Venice's shipping, port, market and *dazi* (indirect taxes). There were elements of carry-through from the pre-conquest period in other matters too: full Venetian control over minting for the mainland, established after conquest, was preceded by the downgrading of Terraferma rulers' coinage to a provincial profile in the fourteenth century, when – in a somewhat parallel fashion – the more sophisticated Venetian money market already drew significant mainland investment.

In other ways, though, fifteenth-century Venetian economic policy towards the Terraferma remained *laissez-faire*, and in any case distances, logistics, and political muscle did not allow central authority to exercise serious constraint on the central and western mainland cities' long-distance trade flows and business links. Each mainland city jurisdiction basically maintained rules and tax tariffs which protected local trading circuits and commodity movements, including food supply policy, and promoted local manufacturing, notwithstanding the limited incidence of Venetian protection of some manufacturing based in the capital – especially glass – against mainland production. Action towards market integration may be seen in some features of fifteenth century Venetian directives concerning woollen textile manufacturing, but much of their impact was blunted by mainland subjects' opposition, often strong enough to result in their withdrawal or drastic reduction<sup>22</sup>. These policies favouring single cities' interests also upheld each provincial Venetian exchequer's revenue, largely based on *dazi* taxing local economic activities and circuits.

As before conquest, such economic policy as there was by the state towards the Terraferma tended to parallel and mingle with the support and promotion of Venetians' private interests, so affecting the Trevigiano, the Padovano and later the Polesine – where penetration by those interests had preceded conquest most strongly, and developed apace after it – much more intensely

<sup>22</sup> Mozzato.



and more precociously than the rest of the dominion. Thus especially in the market-driven flows of foodstuffs and in directives over food supply policy, as already stated, but also in matters of landholding and agriculture, and in the regulation of mainland waterways: authority in Venice considered waterways in terms of overall communications and also – increasingly – with a view to protecting the lagoon, while individual Venetians exploited them to drive mills and industrial machinery functional to the capital's economy.

On acquiring the dominion, Venetian government reluctance for closer direct involvement in the provinces' economy was evident in the decision to cover urgent state cash needs of the very early fifteenth century by immediately selling off the large Carrara and Della Scala patrimonies of lands and other rights between the Padovano and the Veronese, rather than retaining and exploiting them directly – though in the Padovano, unlike the Veronese, this significantly strengthened private Venetian economic interests. Such reluctance relates, moreover, to the more generally selective stance in direct Venetian exercise of governmental authority in the Terraferma, compounded by often limited or erroneous knowledge of the Terraferma among the ruling nobility.

Overall, therefore, very much regulation of the economy was left to a multiplicity of local bodies, all of them urban: as well as the city council and communal officials, this mainly meant the guilds, numerous and ranked with their own hierarchy of importance – a pattern to which Padua was no exception<sup>23</sup>. If council deliberations' coverage of economic issues was uneven and selective, this was largely because much communal officials' ordinary application of statutory norms proceeded without any sort of attention by the council, as did the ordinary activity of the guilds in regulating the practice of the city's many trades. Though only marginally considered in this essay, the urban statutes as revised in 1420 offer a broad picture of the city commune's economic concerns<sup>24</sup>. As in other matters of government, moreover, there were fuzzy and partly mobile borders between Venetian and local authority in policy-making, and also some degree of syncopation or even contradiction between single Venetian choices, especially when different government agencies were involved. Nor must we forget the variable incidence of the actual efficacy of any such policy.

Specific to Padua, as well as the various economic effects of proximity to Venice just mentioned, was the absence of a major economic coordinating agency close to the city commune, similar to Verona's *Domus mercatorum*. The Paduan wool industry and its guild were important enough, however, to merit an explicit mention in the *deditio* documents of 1405-06, where Venice

<sup>23</sup> On Paduan guilds in general, Roberti; the transcription of very many self-regulating decisions by the Paduan wool guild in the fifteenth century in Gementi.

<sup>24</sup> Padua, Biblioteca Civica, ms. B.P. 1236. *Volumen statutorum magnifice civitatis Padue reformatorum* [1420].

committed itself to promote the development of the university and to favour the “wool guild and every other good trade practised in the city”<sup>25</sup>.

Paduan requests and Venetian answers on that occasion also covered other important matters relating to the economy: the same regime as before conquest for *dazi* and gabelles including a specified ceiling on the milling *dazio* (though Venice refused to set a ceiling on the selling price of salt, which was subject to government-controlled monopoly); the same treatment as other subjects over direct tax; respect of custom in citizen landowners’ rights to bring their revenues freely from the contado to the city. There were also decisions on more contingent problems, almost all concerning rights over landed property, its cultivation and the rents currently or recently due on it: the very urgent issue of the uncertain ownership of both Carrara family and Paduan communal property recently alienated by Francesco da Carrara; the repayment of loans made to him, and compensation for extortion by him; the return of peasants who during the war had fled the lands entrusted to them, together with the issue of their past debts to citizen landowners and the destiny of the latest season’s crops (grain, wine, olives); a loan of barley seed-corn by Venetian government; and also requests – refused by Venice – for a temporary abatement of the *dazi* on foodstuff brought into Padua and sold there, as too on the import of draught animals for agricultural use. As with other matters, the *deditio* documents’ coverage of economic themes is partial, and some of the specific issues raised were manifestly of only temporary importance.

A reasonably complete analysis of economic relations and policies might develop around five main, partly overlapping themes: the questions concerning land; the Padovano’s network of waterways and roads; trade and manufacturing (especially the wool industry), guilds, and *dazi*; the coverage of basic consumption needs, especially grain, wine, fish and meat, and firewood; credit. This thematic spectrum is somewhat broader than that considered in Varanini’s pioneering study of fifteenth-century Verona, focused primarily on the relationship between Venetian regulation of *dazi* and the local economy, on the coverage of Verona’s and Venice’s food supply needs, on the relationship in Verona between the civic élite and mercantile and manufacturing interests, and on Venetian action to defend manufacturing in the capital<sup>26</sup>.

Every one of the five themes just listed over-reaches the confines of more strictly economic issues, if such a thing indeed exists, and analysis obviously needs to encompass their social and political implications, stretching beyond the policy choices themselves to take account of the role played in their adoption by the various political players, and the very measure of harmony or divergence in policy-making between these players. This necessity for a suitably complex analysis is one of the main reasons why the four other

<sup>25</sup> Here and for what follows: Melchiorre, especially 144-70 (the final version of the *deditio*; the passage quoted – “ars lane et quodlibet aliud bonum misterium civitatis Padue” – *ibid.*, 149).

<sup>26</sup> Varanini, 1996b.

principal themes just mentioned are left aside in this essay, to allow satisfactory examination of the issues connected with land.

#### 4. *Land and economic policy*

As we have just seen, the enormous importance for the Paduan élite of issues connected with land emerges clearly from the 1405-1406 process of *deditio*. The emphasis of the requests is clearly on the continuity and protection of existing rights and practices, and the revision of the urban statutes conducted in 1420 was equally heavily characterized by continuity from the preceding code in matters concerning land: for example, the general norms over the protection and transmission of property, and concerning relations between landowners and tenants; the twenty-year period of peaceful possession necessary to establish prescriptive rights; the seller's relatives' and neighbouring landowners' preemptive right to buy land put on sale; the norms over tithes; the rules for *damna data* (compensation for damage to property and crops) and for the custody of agricultural land and crops by *saltari* (field watchmen); the norms concerning the tax liability of land, according to the status of its owners; mortmain restrictions<sup>27</sup>. Such continuity also incorporated existing balances in the overall relationship between landowners and tenants, and between the city and the contado – in both cases highly favourable to the former. And all this reflected long-term continuity in an absolutely fundamental datum, in no way peculiar to Padua if compared to the rest of Renaissance Italy: the overall social primacy of land. As stated by Leslie Steer, in a sadly neglected doctoral dissertation of fifty years ago on landownership in the late medieval Padovano:

In the fifteenth, as in the thirteenth or tenth centuries, Paduan society was a society of landowners and landholders. Neither the upper nor the lower urban classes were completely divorced from the land...<sup>28</sup>.

The historiography of landowning and agriculture in the Padovano has prestigious ancestry, especially an 1855 survey by Andrea Gloria, but for the fifteenth century no adequate recent survey has built on Steer's research of fifty years ago, though there are both narrower studies and analyses of broader areas or longer periods<sup>29</sup>. Nor, it is important to emphasize, would the archival sources used for this essay permit anything like a systematic or balanced account of such matters as the social distribution of property and other rights

<sup>27</sup> Gloria, 1855, 1:CCL-LIV. More in general on the 1420 code, Varanini, 1992, 24-34, 39-40.

<sup>28</sup> Steer, III; see too Ventura, 1993, 57-64.

<sup>29</sup> As well as Gloria, 1855, especially 2:255-304, and Steer, 201 ff., see Varanini, 1996a (the nearest thing to a recent survey, with further bibliography); also Varanini, 2012, and Collodo, 1999, ch. 5, especially 99-101. More in general: Pezzolo, 2011; Knapton, 2010; Ferrarese; Ventura, 1968.

over land, the degree of their concentration or fragmentation, the size and organization of farming units (including their endowment of buildings), types of tenure and forms of payment, use of land for arable or other purposes, crops grown and their yields, techniques of cultivation, stock-raising or the availability of draught animals. And the same is true for the incidence of investment, improvement, specialization of production, irrigation, reclamation of marginal land, and still more general phenomena like the commercialization of agriculture.

A very summary account of such matters, sufficient for the purposes of an essay which anyway has different priorities, can be drawn from research done on other sources. The Padovano's mainly alluvial plain soil was mostly used for non-specialized cultivation; the one major exception was the Euganean hills area, where the primacy of vines and olive trees also made protection of cultivation a particularly delicate issue; marshy wetlands were extensive especially towards the south and east – the river Adige and the boundary with the dogado (lagoon and coastal territories near Venice). For Padovano agriculture in general, the first half of the fifteenth century was overall a period of recovery and stabilization after the decades of material destruction, population loss and periodic disruption from the Black Death till the fall of the Carraresi; some previously cultivated land had in fact reverted to pasture, scrub, woodland and marsh. But from about 1450 there was a new phase of expansion and greater dynamism, which included scattered land reclamation especially by larger landowners. This trend seems mainly attributable to population growth, including consequent increase in urban demand both Paduan and Venetian, which indeed put pressure on both cities' provisioning mechanisms. Analysis of choices specific to Venetian landowners in the Padovano of the later fifteenth century does not suggest any special blend of ethics and initiative on their part, or greater capital investment, such as to differentiate them substantially from other landowners. In the overall picture, certainly varied and equally certainly subject to slow evolution, crop priority went to wheat and wine; contracts with tenants were often in the form of five-year leases or of *livelli* (with terms of tenure more favourable to the occupier-cultivator), with a lesser incidence of sharecropping, of salaried labour paid by the landowner in lieu of tenancies, and of *boaria* and *soccida* contracts (leases of livestock as draught animals or for more general purposes). Unsurprisingly, the area nearer the city was more intensively cultivated, and characterized earlier by tenancies with brief duration and the specification of money payments.

As to the social distribution of property and other rights over land, the fifteenth century inherited from Carrara days the distinction between the classic trio of social groups – citydwellers, ecclesiastics and *distrettuali* – with separate tax-listing of their assets in the *estimi*, and also diversity of obligations in terms of taxes, corvées and the like. Venetian ownership constituted a category more or less separate from these in some cases but not in others. The trends evident, especially in the later fifteenth century, are for the further

concentration of rights over land in the hands of citydwellers in general. As to the church, despite marked differences between single owners in the control and management of land, the overall trend was for the recovery and indeed increase of ecclesiastical landowning. Venetians' property, both ecclesiastical and secular, had been significant from well before the Republic annexed the province, and was considerably increased by the sale of the Carrara patrimony immediately following annexation. Venetians' purchases then proceeded apace through the fifteenth century, freed from previous legislative obstacles both Paduan and Venetian, and also from uncertainty about the security of their investment, spreading further away in the later Quattrocento from their initial concentration in the eastern plainland and Euganean hills. As happened with Treviso, the concentration of landed wealth in the hands of citydwellers in Venice too, signified considerable pressure – both material and psychological – on the Paduan élite's principal patrimonial assets and on its sense of security, identity and prestige. The council's concern with a broad range of issues concerning land was therefore a matter of social and political as well as economic valency, with far-reaching implications; it was also, to judge by the archival evidence examined, a matter on which divisions within the élite were rare, and the policy aims pursued generally the object of broad consensus<sup>30</sup>.

The analysis presented here deals with the following issues: forests and commons; property rights confiscated and sold by the Signoria; sheep-shearing, grazing and transhumance; relations between city landowners and the peasantry; the weight and distribution of tax on land, agricultural produce and the rural labour force, including the incidence of privileges and exemptions. As stated above, reasons of space unfortunately prevent consideration of other issues closely connected with these themes, which were often among the Paduan council's concerns: how to supply Padua, and to some extent the Padovano in general, with such products of the land (and of its inland waters) as grain, wine, fish, meat and firewood – matters which had to do with the profitability of the civic élite's revenues from land, and which also inevitably overlapped with the Venetian government's concern to cover the needs of Venice itself<sup>31</sup>.

#### a. *Forests and commons*

In the Padovano and the other eastern Terraferma provinces there was much untilled land in the fifteenth century, subject to a variety of uses but in many cases woodland, and to a great extent made up of commons for a variety of community uses, including grazing. The commons or *comugne*, which

<sup>30</sup> On land management: Steer, 202 ff.; Varanini, 1996a, especially 854-57 (more cautious than Steer on Venetians' approach). On land reclamation: De Sandre Gasparini, especially, 39-72, and Stella, 1980. On Venetians' Padovano property: Varanini, 1996a, 808-09, 812-22, 831 ff.

<sup>31</sup> See Collodo, 1999, 47-67; Faugeron; and the bibliography cited in these studies.

gradually came to be called *beni comunali*, ultimately belonged to the prince, though for most interested parties that right was remote and vaguely conceived. Commons were also subject to a perennial risk of erosion and privatization via alienation or usurpation, mostly but not exclusively by citizen landowners, especially when the demand for arable land increased, as began to happen about mid fifteenth century<sup>32</sup>.

During the later Quattrocento the *comugne* became a major target of Venetian government action to preserve mainland forestry resources, largely through a law made in January 1476 by the Collegio at the Senate's bidding, which was to be the cornerstone of much of the Republic's later forest policy. Its preamble stated that deforestation was a widespread problem in the lower plainland of the Padovano, Trevigiano and Friuli, comparing these areas' past usefulness as a source of timber and firewood for Venice with the current situation of "woods... destroyed and uprooted and reduced to farmland" (thus the Padovano)<sup>33</sup>. As well as specific provisions for protecting hardwood, reinforcing flows of timber towards Venice and lowering firewood prices there, the law contained rules for the preservation of the *comugne* (distinguished from land owned outright by the communities, which was nonetheless to remain woodland): banning any sort of alienation, lease or privatization, and demanding the reversal of any such process; forbidding usage of *comugne* detrimental to their trees, especially burning so as to clear new arable land; and imposing a ten-year cycle of rotation in the cutting of woodland. Not all of these measures were entirely new: ten-yearly rotation of cutting was anyway frequent practice in community woodland, while a Senate law of 1463 had attacked the usurpation of *comugne*. And already in March 1470 the Paduan council had reacted to a ducal letter requesting the despatch to Venice of men well informed about Padovano woodlands, to help the *Provveditori sopra legna e boschi* (a wood supply magistracy) cope with the shortage of firewood and timber in Venice caused by deforestation for conversion to farmland.

Venetian rulings subsequent to 1476 both clarified and developed state policy aims over woodland and commons. A Senate law of 25 September 1488 enhanced the protection of oaks; it demanded their registration, it banned unauthorized cutting, and it obliged villages with *comugne* in the eastern Terraferma, the Dogado and Istria to reserve 10% of their commons to growing oaks, to be set aside as a reserve for purchase and use by the Arsenal<sup>34</sup>. A Council of Ten law of 20 June 1495, valid for the whole mainland and

<sup>32</sup> The history of commons in the Padovano villages of Canfriolo and Grantorto is very well charted from the Carrara age to the early Venetian period (and very beset by conflicts): Bortolami, 1997, 29-37, 40; Bianchini, 66-72.

<sup>33</sup> Barbacetto, 19-21, and Appuhn, 111 ff., also for what follows. The quotation in Barbacetto, 19: "nemora... destructa et eradicata et ad possessiones reducta". See too analysis of the relevant laws in Ferrari. *Atti*, V, fol. 8: 11 March 1470.

<sup>34</sup> Barbacetto, 22-23; documents in Gloria, 2:275 ff., including (295-98) a Senate deliberation of 9 March 1489 easing the procedure and practicality but not the principles of the 1488 law.



fundamental for later Venetian policy, confirmed that *bona comunalia* were not to be sold, alienated or privatized – though in the financial emergency of the post-Agnadello phase of the Italian Wars these principles were to be partly waived by the state itself, anxious to raise money via sales<sup>35</sup>. Equally important for our analysis are the declared causes of the 1495 law: widespread protests had been received from mainland society against action by local Venetian governors, Sindici inquisitori (occasional touring inspectors of the Venetian dominions) and magistracies of the capital – the Rason vecchie, the Rason nuove and the Provveditori sopra camere (the first two auditing offices with a mandate over state property, the last the magistracy supervising Terraferma exchequers). They had conducted investigations into rights over much land, confiscating commons which they claimed had belonged to rebels whose property had passed to the Venetian state – meaning essentially the former Carraresi and Scala lordly dynasties, and therefore especially land in the Padovano and Veronese. For future purposes, the law decreed, thirty years' peaceful possession of commons by a community was to guarantee it from such harassment.

In Padua the council had reacted to these Venetian policy directives with various deliberations from 1476 onwards. In August 1476 it noted that proclamations banning wood-cutting (“prohibentes ligna fieri”) consequent on the new rules had resulted in many accusations for their violation, and such confusion threatened coverage of the city's needs. It asked for authorization for cutting to cover those needs, and – an eloquent admission about the use or abuse of *comugne* in previous decades – it requested removal of the order that woodland had from the rural communes (“nemora capta a communibus villarum”) and reduced to cultivation, be returned to woodland. In October it then told the city's representatives in Venice, anyway instructed to deal with these matters, to argue the impossibility of ten-yearly rotation in cutting, especially as applied to the firewood from the Bassano area serving the city's needs (ten-year old wood was not to be found, it said), though accepting the ten-year rule for timber “ab opera” (hardwood) and indeed demanding a ban on its consumption by kiln owners<sup>36</sup>.

On returning to the matter the following January it was more optimistic about the availability of ten-year old firewood in the Padovano and authorized its cutting, while saving “lignami da opera” (hardwood) as desired by Venice. It moreover took initiatives of its own. It resuscitated a provision in the 1420 city statutes, to be applied immediately and for four years' duration: cultivators (*lavoradori*) were to plant fifty new trees a year (two thirds willow or walnut, and one third poplar) for every twenty *campi* of land possessed, and this was also to apply to citizens with land worked “a boaria”, and for some pastures. Though there were fines for non-compliance, with checking delegated to the

<sup>35</sup> Barbacetto, 45-47 (and 39 ff. for a fuller account of the years 1476-95).

<sup>36</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 56v, 65: 6 August, 22 and 29 October 1476.



villages' chief officials (*degani*), the efficacy of the measure may be very seriously doubted, especially since a significant minority of councillors opposed it (voting was 52-40), and there is no further mention of it or its eventual effects in the sources consulted<sup>37</sup>.

The council's decision of January 1477 on tree-planting was obviously a reaction to the Venetian law of a year before, and may have been intended to justify hostility to the provision in that law for the reversion to woodland of *comugne* previously acquired by families of the council élite. In March 1477 this issue was indeed the object of debate, with specific mention of woods held at *livello* from the Padovano villages by the heirs of Galeazzo Mussato, but also of a great many *cives* ("plurimorum civium") who had bought and cleared woods, and of the consequent clash of interests with villagers; the council decided to send ambassadors to Venice to request the provision's withdrawal. It also instructed them that if the issue of communal or public rights emerged, they should insist on the general principle banning further appeal in lawsuits after a second instance judgement had confirmed the first, and should defend the jurisdiction of the city's podestà and his judges – instructions clearly aiming to pre-empt disturbance of the status quo by Venetian authority. The commission given also specified that reversion to woodland should be opposed for all such land, whether belonging to citizens or to the villages – perhaps an attempt to defuse tension with the villagers, some of them certainly inclined to extend cultivation and appropriate commons, especially with population rising<sup>38</sup>.

The matter was the object of further commissions to the city's representatives in 1479, perhaps again in May 1481, in August 1481, and then in May 1483, when specific reference was made to peasants and villages seeking to deprive citizens of fields and woods purchased long before<sup>39</sup>. Though Venetian-produced documentation survives in a fragmentary fashion, some action seems to have been taken to enforce reversion to woodland: in May 1482 the podestà of Cittadella was told to interact with the Savi del Consiglio<sup>40</sup>. In May 1487 Padua's representatives in Venice were charged with defending the Abriani family in appeal proceedings in Venice, concerning its rights over wetlands bought twenty-six years earlier from the commune of Megliadino, near Montagnana<sup>41</sup>. *En passant*, no particular malice is required to suspect

<sup>37</sup> Atti VI, fols. 79v-80: 2 and 3 January 1477; Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCVII, 89-90. For the tree-planting obligation in the statutes: Gloria, 1855, 1:CCLI.

<sup>38</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 8-9r, 6 and 12 March 1477; *ibid.*, fol. 14, 13 April 1477. The Mussato woodland is probably the wood of Busiago (near Campo San Martino, in the northern Padovano), bought by Galeazzo Mussato from five villages before 1464: Vigato, 1997, 81-82.

<sup>39</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 161v, 167r, 246v-47r, 253v-54r, 359v: 22 May, 15 Sept 1479; 16 May 1481 (a generic reference to the Paduan statute about twenty years' peaceful possession as the basis for prescription); 25 August 1481; 24 May 1483.

<sup>40</sup> Archivio di Stato di Venezia (henceforth ASVe), Avogaria di Comun, busta 3584, 6 May 1482.

<sup>41</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 89v-90r, 15 May 1487.

that the Abriani had acted unscrupulously in acquiring those rights. They were a wealthy family based in the Montagnana area, who in the later fifteenth century established themselves in Padua, and the omissions in their 1472 *estimo* declaration (L. 25,249 worth of property at Megliadino, assessed with neither the city nor the *contado*) were such as to warrant the belated but repeated hostile attention of the council and *deputati* between 1492 and 1509 (a rare honour indeed): action to reassess their wealth; an attempted arbitration; a conviction of the Abriani for frauding the *estimo*, against which they appealed to Venice; doubling of their *estimo* rating; and attempted re-measurement of their lands, which they then were fined for opposing forcibly<sup>42</sup>. (In any case, Paduan citizens certainly had no monopoly on illicit appropriation of commons: in 1497, for example, the podestà of Camposampiero applied the June 1495 Council of Ten law to block alienation of land by a local village to the Venetian noble Francesco Giustinian – who then invoked the Avogadori di Comun to get his money back from the villagers.<sup>43</sup>)

By comparison with this prolonged attrition over the privatization of *comugne* and reforestation, the early stages of Venetian policy for protection of hardwood aroused no such visible hostility in the Paduan council. It showed formal willingness to comply with restrictions on the cutting of oak, though requesting in March 1481 that to save a trip to Venice, permission to cut could be given by the city's governors for timber needed in maintenance work on river banks, bridges, citizens' mills and houses and the like. This seems to have been approved and become general practice, to judge by explanations given in the council's protest in 1501 against renewed insistence on authorization only by the Arsenal magistracy – though in previous years some larger requests had been handled in Venice, as in 1484 when the Arsenal granted 100 oaks from the Feltre area for use on a bridge<sup>44</sup>. But as policy over hardwood was extended by the September 1488 Senate order to protect and plant oaks, so the council became hostile on this issue too.

In March 1488 it had reacted to a general order by the Paduan *rettori* against cutting oaks, requesting that timber suited to Arsenal needs be marked, however leaving the rest free for cutting, and in August again requested that the Arsenal do this, so as to allow citizens to cut what was licit without risking denunciations which led to citations to Venice. In October it reckoned the newly formulated rules for replanting impossible to apply, criticizing the fines

<sup>42</sup> On Abriani riches: ASVe, Senato, Terra, 15, fol. 151v, and Sanudo, VI, 512, 17 December 1506: Alvise Abriani had died, leaving a patrimony of D. 60,000, including a legacy to the Signoria. On Abriani tax evasion and action against it: Atti, VIII, fol. 39v, 23 November 1492; *ibid.*, VIII, fols. 117r, 172r, 271v: 16 March 1495, 17 December 1496, 23 February 1499. ASP, Deputati, 3, fol. 25v, 3 August 1472; *ibid.*, 4, entries dated 14 May to 31 July 1499 and 23 December 1500; *ibid.*, 5, fol. 90r, 12 January 1509.

<sup>43</sup> ASVe, Avogaria di Comun, busta 3584, 9 June 1497.

<sup>44</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 243r, 244v: 26 March and 2 April 1481. Atti IX, fol. 6v, 11 February 1501. Atti, VI, fol. 402r: 10 and 12 June 1484.

prescribed for non-compliance, and estimating that 4,000 *campi* (1,545 hectares) would be lost to other use if the scheme went ahead. It suggested that oaks be planted and protected as the law prescribed on specific sites: the Carpaneda wood (at the northern end of the Euganean hills, near Rovolon), other woodland once belonging to the Signoria, and in the Camposampiero area<sup>45</sup>. The Carpaneda wood – a far smaller area than what became great Arsenal forests like the Montello in the Trevigiano, or the Cansiglio in the Bellunese – was in fact reserved for Arsenal use, under the protection of the Council of Ten, via a series of decisions taken from 1486 onwards<sup>46</sup>. Though it may be doubted whether tree-planting ordered by the Venetian 1488 rules actually happened to any significant extent in these early decades, forestry policy seems to have been added to the repertoire of the council élite's rhetoric of forbearance and/or resentment. In trying to negotiate a reduction of the extraordinary direct tax – the *campatico* – requested by Venice in early 1501 to fund war against the Turks, the council listed burdens already borne by the Padovano, including its acceptance that there were woods “obligadi al arsenado”, adding the tendentious comment that “li contadini taiano e dirupano el più de essi boschi”<sup>47</sup>.

As a postscript to this section, brief mention must be made of two further matters concerning the assertion of public rights over land use, which seem not to have drawn the attention of the Paduan council. The first is the cultivation of hemp destined for ropemaking in the Arsenal, practised on several hundred *campi* on the southwest border of the Padovano, between Montagnana and Cologna Veneta from 1455 onwards (and later on other sites, especially in the Ravennate and Trevigiano). In the Padovano this involved hemp monoculture in a reclaimed marshy area of commons leased to cultivators, and also the obligation for local landowners and farmers to sow hemp on part of their land, following government directives for its cultivation, together with the presence on site of vats and equipment necessary for the first stage of transformation of the raw material. In 1476 the area between Montagnana and Cologna used for growing hemp amounted to about 820 *campi*, 550 of them (196 hectares) in Montagnana and around<sup>48</sup>. The second is the assertion of control by Venetian government over mining rights in the Terraferma, with concessions issued by authority in Venice and the whole matter regulated by general legislation passed in 1488 by the Council of Ten, which also appointed and supervised a

<sup>45</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 156r, 177r, 182v-83r: 19 March, 21 August and 26 October 1488. On the Camposampiero area: below, text and notes 63-64. See Grandis, 93: on the considerable extent of woodland at Rovolon and around in the mid fifteenth century, especially over 1,000 hectares of oak forest; on two sales in the period 1464-1470 for a total of 747 *campi*, and on deforestation in general.

<sup>46</sup> For more detail on these decisions: Knapton, 1981a, especially 238. For the history of the wood: Grandis, 93 ff.

<sup>47</sup> Atti, IX, fol. 6: 11 February 1501.

<sup>48</sup> Celetti: 21-22 and ch. III, especially 189 ff.; for the 1476 datum, *ibid.*, 190.

vicar responsible for mines. The mostly flat Padovano was in fact only very marginally involved in something typical of more hilly or mountainous regions – in 1479 there was a rather generic concession by the Senate mentioning, among other sites, the Teolo and mount Venda area of the Euganean hills<sup>49</sup>.

b. *Property rights confiscated and sold by the Signoria*

The council repeatedly invoked authority in Venice in 1496-97 – obtaining the matter’s delegation by the Council of Ten to the podestà of Padua – when the Venetian noble Bernardo Bembo intervened as Avogadore di Comun over the division of *comugne* woodland near Arsego, where his own family held property once belonging to the Carraresi<sup>50</sup>. This case was rendered particularly sensitive by the suspicion that Bembo made wrongful use of his official status to further private interests, but it aptly illustrates a more general issue. Tensions over the destiny of *comugne* and woodland tended to overlap with those concerning property and other rights connected with land once held by rebels whose patrimony had been confiscated (in their way the Carraresi had exercised princely rights over *comugne*), over which Paduans claimed rights sanctioned at the very least by prescription, or long-term possession without disturbance. Here also there was periodic action by Venetian authorities in investigating such rights, despite an accumulation of contrary declarations and assurances – these too by Venetian authorities – intended to regulate and limit it.

On 11 June 1496 there was indeed an important ruling by the Council of Ten, applying the same principle as in its June 1495 law on *comugne* – thirty years of peaceful possession – as the basis of prescriptive rights to property held by private parties; the Ten then reinforced this law in 1506, at the request of Friulan representatives<sup>51</sup>. The preamble to the 1496 ruling specifies that the decision arose after protest by Terraferma representatives from Padua, Verona, Treviso and Friuli: in other words, the provinces nearest Venice and/or most subject to confiscations by the Signoria of property rights once pertaining especially to the Carraresi, Scaligeri, and – less important overall – to the Dal Verme and Caminesi.

Given the Ten’s specific function in enforcing respect for mainland subjects’ privileges, the 1496 ruling probably gave greater bite to principles that the Senate had recently proclaimed. In February 1489 it had asserted the thirty-year principle for the Bresciano, though it had significantly decided not to extend it to all Venetian dominions; the text of the law referred back to a decision by the Ten in June 1461, whose territorial coverage had been gradually

<sup>49</sup> Braunstein, 559 ff. (591 for the 1479 grant).

<sup>50</sup> Knapton, 1981a, 253-54: council deliberations dated 19 February, 5 April, 4 August 1496, and 7, 18, 26 January 1497; Lazzarini, 281.

<sup>51</sup> ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Parti Miste, 26, fol. 70r : 11 June 1496; *ibid.*, 31, fol. 74r: 19 May 1506.

extended by 1467 from its initial valency for the Padovano to cover the Ravennate, Friuli and Treviso<sup>52</sup>. In December 1490, at the request of Padua's representatives, the Senate had confirmed for Padua the principle already proclaimed for Brescia: the thirty-year term of prescription for peaceful possession of property rights once of the Carraresi or of rebels, or in any way attributable to the Signoria, with a few specified exceptions (especially buyers of rights from the state who overstepped the limits of their purchase)<sup>53</sup>.

In the Padovano, confiscation and sale of rights had indeed been massive in scale: first and foremost the patrimony of the former Carraresi lords, an issue whose importance we have seen in the negotiations between Venice and its new Paduan subjects in 1405-06, but also the estates of some of those who had supported pro-Carraresi rebellions, which continued till 1439<sup>54</sup>. The Padovano was also massively affected by the liquidation of the patrimony of two of Venice's senior *condottieri*, the marquis Bertoldo d'Este and his father Taddeo (cousins of the ducal branch in Ferrara), taken over at Bertoldo's death by the Signoria – which sold it, prompted by the money needs of war against the Ottomans. A series of Senate deliberations from January 1465 to July 1470 document the tortuous process of identification of the considerable Estense property rights in the southern Padovano but also of the many creditors of the estate. Actual sales, with the specific exception of the Vighizzolo wetlands near Este, were conducted between June 1468 and October 1469, and residual competence passed from a specially created temporary magistracy to the *Provveditori sopra Camere*. Authority in Venice was still convinced that other assets remained to be discovered, and ordered anybody possessing them to come forward – though in July 1470, at the request of the Ferrarese ambassador, the Senate choked off any further action on the matter. The rights sold netted the considerable sum of D. 23,005, the vast majority from Venetian noble buyers, and – as we shall see – sales went on intermittently after 1469<sup>55</sup>.

The process of identification and confiscation of the Carrara patrimony had been a source of irritation for the Paduan élite right from the beginning of the Venetian regime, enough to induce a temporary suspension of the process between July and November 1406, and long-term attrition was guaranteed by the exemptions from Paduan taxes accompanying the property sold, and by

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, fols. 66, 234r: 17 June 1461 and 24 May 1466; *ibid.*, 17, fol. 53r: 14 January 1467.

<sup>53</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 10, fol. 136v: 24 February 1489; *ibid.*, 11, fols. 41v-42v: 10 December 1490. For the council's request: Atti, VII, 259, 274r: 7 January and 14 August 1490.

<sup>54</sup> Segarizzi. See for example the sale as late as 1448 of tithe rights confiscated from Lodovico Buzzacarini: ASVe, Senato, Terra, 4, fol. 178r, 1 August 1461.

<sup>55</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 5, fol. 106r, 8 January 1465; *ibid.*, 6, fol. 24r, 65v, 72v: 10 June 1468, 5 August and 8 October 1469; ASVe, Senato, Secreta, 24, fol. 123r: 19 July 1470. For lists of buyers and sums paid, divided between sales before and after 1483: Ducali, 20, 6r-10v, 19 and 26 May 1509 (the *Provveditori sopra Camere* were meeting Paduan demands for payment of the *dadie* due to the city, since Bertoldo d'Este had agreed to pay L. 150 yearly). On Taddeo and Bertoldo d'Este: Rossi.

Venice's deliberate preference for rights in the Padovano passing to Venetian nobles rather than into foreign hands ("manus alienas"), since it was safer, superior and more advantageous for the Signoria ("securius, prestantius et utilius est pro nostro Dominio"): thus the motivation of one of the many *grazie* granted to noble buyers, to ease their terms of payment<sup>56</sup>. Doubts and investigations by Venice of property rights in the Padovano, linked primarily to the confiscated Carrarese patrimony, were the source of Paduan discontent explicitly mentioned in ducal letters of 1427 and 1436, and a further general irritant was caused by the suspension, in the sale of confiscated property, of the statute favouring the preemptive rights of purchase by relatives and possessors of neighbouring holdings. In 1439 and again in 1442, the Senate ruled in favour of a prescriptive term of thirty years' peaceful possession of property, to apply even if a challenge arose from the supposition that it was rebels' property ("ex praesumptione quod fuerint bona rebellium")<sup>57</sup>. But investigation resurfaced sporadically, sometimes for particularly large holdings: in 1462 a secret denunciation against Albertino Papafava – whose family were cousins of the Carraresi – resulted in a court hearing in the Paduan exchequer concerning about 6,000 *campi* between Arquà, Cona and Borgoforte, which were then recognized as legitimate Papafava property<sup>58</sup>.

Paduan discontent focused with particular frequency on the area known as the "serraglio di Arino", situated near Dolo, halfway between Padua and Venice. A natural defensive system in the Carrara period, when it had been wooded wetland, during the fifteenth century it was subject to gradual drainage and clearance, and figures in complaints at the disturbance of Paduan owners' rights by Venetian authority at least from 1436. In 1461 Paduan protests at the recent sale of former Carraresi rights there, which were supposedly justified by a judgement of the Provveditori sopra Camere in 1451, resulted in the already mentioned June 1461 deliberation by the Council of Ten, which invoked previous rulings of 1406 and 1436, annulled the 1451 judgement and reserved for itself future questions concerning the *serraglio*<sup>59</sup>.

During the 1460s the Ten were at least sporadically involved in other single cases concerning various Terraferma areas, including – hard on the heels of the June 1461 pronouncement – the Euganean hill village of Arquà. In December 1461 they approved the Paduan governors' annulment of a gift by the commune of Arquà to the bishop of Padua of no less than 2,000 *campi* of land which, like the Arino area, had been kept as a *serraglio* or marsh, but had now become a mix of grazing, arable land and wetlands. The Ten's decision that the land remain the Signoria's suggests that they considered it part of former Carraresi

<sup>56</sup> Lazzarini, 274 ff. (the quote from 275n4).

<sup>57</sup> Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCVI, 739-42. Senate laws of 28 February 1439 and 3 March 1442: Ferrari, 12.

<sup>58</sup> Ceoldo, 146.

<sup>59</sup> For the 1461 Ten ruling, above note 52. For copies of this and other documents on the *serraglio*: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice (hereafter BNM), ms. It. VII 2397 (10134).



rights – the sales of half a century before had indeed included the former lords' *gastaldia* of Arquà<sup>60</sup>. The Ten's function in these proceedings was primarily to authorize, and therefore to screen and limit, investigations of this kind. We find them approving an inquiry by Padua's governors concerning land in the Merlara area, in November 1461; in December 1465 they authorized the Governatori alle Entrade to value and sell 100-120 *campi* of woods on the Trevigiano-Padovano border, though preserving them as woodland; and in 1466-67 they evaluated possible investigation in a very complex dispute partly concerning former Carrara rights at San Giorgio in Bosco<sup>61</sup>.

Like many of their initiatives concerning the Terraferma in these decades, this development of interest by the Ten was primarily a reaction to the uncoordinated nature of conduct by different government authorities, but any restraint it may have exercised seems largely to have ceased in the mid 1470s<sup>62</sup>. The investigation and sale of mainland property belonging to the Signoria was indeed officially relaunched when the Senate voted a series of measures, starting in October 1474, in its efforts to cover the costs of the long-drawn out Turkish war of 1463-79. Inspectors called "provisores super recuperatione possessionum de extra" (officials in charge of recovering property in the dominion), later given the same powers of arrest as Sindici Inquisitori (the inspectors usually sent to the dominion), were to divide up the Signoria's lands, woods and property in the Terraferma into saleable lots, report back to Venice, and then sell them. Excluded were specified rights in the Padovano – the wetlands at Vighizzolo, the Rovolon woods (mentioned above) – and any other woods providing timber for the navy or firewood. The rights for alienation included the *gastaldia* of San Donà in the Trevigiano, which was to be sold by these officials and the Rason vecchie – it was specified – using the same procedure already followed with woods and lands in the Camposampiero area, though keeping the woods for the Signoria: a specification then changed into instructions to cede these areas via *livello* contracts, with the obligation that they remain woodland<sup>63</sup>.

The Camposampiero property mentioned can be identified in all probability with marshes and woodland at Loreggia and Fratta sold for L. 1,400 to the Paduan governors in 1444 by the Querini, who had previously bought the Carrarese *gastaldia* of Camposampiero and other land at Loreggiola. Instead of being sold off again, these rights had been kept as a source of rental income for the Paduan exchequer, as documented by receipts of the early 1470s. In

<sup>60</sup> ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Parti miste, 16, fols. 79v-80r: 12 and 18 November 1461; the Ten suspected the Paduan vicar of Arquà had been a beneficiary of the operation. Lazzarini, 281.

<sup>61</sup> ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Parti miste, 16, fol. 79v, 224r, 241r: 12 November 1461 and 30 December 1465, 27 August 1466; *ibid.*, 17, fol. 72v: 26 August and 23 September 1467.

<sup>62</sup> On the Ten's function, Knapton, 1981a.

<sup>63</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 7, fols. 54r, 65v, 71v, 73r, 86v, 88v: 6 October 1474; 13 February, 3 April, 9 August, 4 and 22 September 1475. Sale of the Vighizzolo lake was contemplated during the Ferrara war: *ibid.*, 9, fol. 12v, 26 May 1483.



1473, though, the noble Antonio Zorzi – whose family already owned former Carrara land in the area – petitioned for the grant of this land to compensate for material and moral damage sustained in the Turkish capture of Negroponte, and so received 192 *campi* of meadows, subject to flooding but worth L. 450 in annual rent from local peasants, and about 800 *campi* of woodland<sup>64</sup>.

Receipts from the sales ordered by the Senate in October 1474 were modest – in September 1475 takings totalled D. 4,000 of the D. 11,000 due – but the operation had significant consequences in the activity of the Paduan council<sup>65</sup>. It had indeed been anticipated by a resumption of investigations concerning the patrimony of Bertoldo d'Este: in April 1474 a commission to the city's envoys in Venice demanded a stop to citations before authority in the capital, stirred up by malicious denunciations, and in July they were told to present the *Provveditori sopra Camere* with a list of Estense property rights<sup>66</sup>. In February 1475 the Council reacted to investigations of unspecified Paduans' property by the *Provveditori sopra Camere*, voting that its representatives in Venice demand an end to practices forbidden by previous rulings, and the matter figures in three commissions to its representatives in Venice between March and October – the last of these referring specifically to ex-Carrara and ex-Estense property, and demanding that any hearing be before a court in Padua, instead of involving what it described as the yearly expense and trouble of hearings in Venice<sup>67</sup>.

In September 1476 the Senate reacted to the growing financial difficulties caused by war with the Turks: deciding to ignore previous contrary rulings, it accepted a proposal made by the *Provveditori sopra Camere*, recently sent to inspect the Arino *serraglio* by the Signoria. They noted that it had been transformed from marsh to meadows, some of which had been privatized, and some held in place of grazing (“partim occupata fuerunt, partim possidentur in locum pascuorum”), without any gain to the Signoria; so the Senate authorized the measuring and sale of property there, assigning the proceeds to the Arsenal<sup>68</sup>. This initiative may be the main target of an August 1477 Paduan council deliberation referring to the *Provveditori sopra Camere*, and to property once belonging to the Carraresi or rebels supporting them, demanding that the city's representatives in Venice halt their action<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> See Lazzarini, 286. Ducali, B, fol. 154: 24 Nov 1473. Numerous small rents paid for Loreggia and Camposampiero meadows, where the last lease is a one-year renewal in November 1472: Ducali, C, fols. 1-7. The exchequer accounts of 1475-76 include other rents but nothing from this source: Varanini, 1992, 115. The Zorzi had purchased 260 *campi* and a residence nearby, between Guizza and Massanzago, where they were later owners of a villa: Lazzarini, 287.

<sup>65</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 7, fol. 86v: 4 September 1475.

<sup>66</sup> Atti, V, fols. 215r-16r, 224r: 16 April and 16 July 1474. On Estense rights, see too n. 55, above.

<sup>67</sup> Atti, V, fols. 256r, 257, 271v, 273v-74r: 24 February, 8 March, 5 and 14 October 1475

<sup>68</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 7, fol. 130v: 9 September 1476.

<sup>69</sup> Atti, VI, fol. 22r, 16 August 1477.

The Arino *serraglio* surfaces again in the Paduan council deliberations in the second half of 1482 – the timing is perhaps no coincidence, since the major impact on Paduan territory of the War of Ferrara, launched that summer, may have nourished hopes of more benevolent attention in Venice. In August the council complained at the Provveditori sopra Camere's invoking ex-Carrara rights to justify disturbance of citizens' property in *serragli*, especially at Arino; its representatives in Venice were to demand respect for contrary rulings by the Senate and Ten, both for this and future similar instances, and five weeks later there was indeed an injunction by the Capi of the Ten<sup>70</sup>. Similar arguments convinced the Avogadori di Comun to respond positively the following year to a complaint against the Provveditori sopra Camere lodged by two Paduan owners of land there<sup>71</sup>, and the Avogadori were called on by the council in 1486 after the execution of orders by the judicial appeal magistracy of the Auditori Nuovi, for the destruction of ditches and hedges in the *serraglio* so as to allow villagers to graze animals – a sign of probable conflict between ordinary peasants and citizen landowners<sup>72</sup>. In 1487 and 1488 the Capi of the Ten met Paduan requests in demanding that the Rason vecchie not disturb the 210 *campi* of a citizen landowner in and around the *serraglio*, and in 1491 the city governors satisfied similar requests by several Paduans – including the two who had complained in 1483 – in ordering a halt to action by the Provveditori sopra Camere, based on a denunciation of 550 *campi* of ex-Carrara land in the *serraglio*<sup>73</sup>.

Other cases, too, drew the council's attention and protests in these years. In May and June 1481 a generic commission to defend the Paduan statutes' twenty-year term of prescription before authority in Venice was given to the jurist Saliono Buzzacarinini and another envoy, and resulted in a ruling by the Capi of the Ten applying its 1461 thirty-year rule to Buzzacarinini's own property, against the Rason vecchie: certainly not the only instance of blurring between collective and individual interest in council deliberations and requests to Venice<sup>74</sup>. In February 1482 a similar commission ordered defence of the Zacco against Provveditori sopra Camere investigation of supposed Carrara rights, and another in January 1483 entailed protest against the summoning to Venice of longstanding Paduan owners of land in Teolo and neighbouring villages, to demonstrate their rights over land supposedly confiscated from the condottiere Alvise Dal Verme in 1437<sup>75</sup>.

<sup>70</sup> Atti, VI, fol. 315v, 9 August 1482; ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Capi, Notatorio, I, fol. 24r: 13 Sept 1482.

<sup>71</sup> BNM, ms. It. VII 2397 (10134), 16 May 1483.

<sup>72</sup> Atti, VII, fol. 35r, 2 August 1486.

<sup>73</sup> ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Capi, Notatorio, I, fols. 76r, 85v: 18 December 1487, 25 October 1488. BNM, ms. It. VII 2397 (10134), 22 June 1491.

<sup>74</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 246v-47r, 249: 16 May and 14 June 1481; ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Capi, Notatorio, III, fol. 19r, 11 January 1482.

<sup>75</sup> Atti, VI, fols. 304r-05r, 350v: February 1482, 16 January 1483.

Cases different from the Arino lands again drew the council's attention in July 1487, when it protested against the summoning to Venice by the *Rason vecchie* of citizens and monasteries with lands and woods at Rovolon and elsewhere, demanding that even if proceedings were legitimate, they be conducted in Padua. Rovolon was once more the focus in November 1489, when a deliberation denounced the instigation of spiteful individuals ("homines malevoli") behind continuing investigation by the *Provveditori sopra Camere* at Rovolon, specifically directing the city's representatives to appear before the *Capi of the Ten*<sup>76</sup>. In January 1488, moreover, referring to the high incidence of magistracies in Venice citing Paduans over rights to ex Carrara property, the council significantly gave blanket authorization for its representatives in Venice to be commissioned in such cases, invoking the relevant general rulings in their favour, though specifying that the interested parties pay the expenses thus incurred<sup>77</sup>. Another deliberation of March 1488 criticized *Provveditori sopra Camere* investigation of tithe rights possessed by Paduan citizens from Carrara times onwards, and not sold by their magistracy, so meddling in the bishop of Padua's jurisdiction; action by the city's representatives in the capital resulted in a ducal letter ordering the *Provveditori* to desist, and respect the bishop's jurisdiction<sup>78</sup>.

From 1492 to 1494 there were five commissions to Padua's envoys in Venice, starting in March 1492 with action to try and reverse the confiscation of wetlands and grazing long held by the community of Codevigo; in July there was similar action to protect Castelbaldo from disturbance by the *Provveditori sopra Camere* over former Carrara rights, held for eighty years. This extension of the city's assistance to *contado* communities is an interesting novelty, suggesting some nexus with *cives'* private interests. In June 1493 the charge was to try and reverse confiscations and auctions by the same magistracy in the Piove di Sacco area, damaging many parties. In November 1493 it was to protect lands long held by the monks of San Benedetto, and in June 1494 there was again attempted remedial action after the event, concerning lands in the Teolo vicariate already confiscated from many citizens and sold as former rebels' property. A year and a half later, in January 1496 the council deliberated about extensive confiscations in the Piove di Sacco *podesteria* by the *Provveditori sopra Camere* and *Rason vecchie*, which had been followed by a generalized demand that landowners document their rights to property, so causing confusion and expense as well as great discontent and fears<sup>79</sup>.

<sup>76</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 96r, 243v: 28 August 1487, 13 November 1489. On woods round Rovolon: above, n. 45.

<sup>77</sup> Atti, VII, fol. 154r, 29 January 1488.

<sup>78</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 156v-57r: 19 March 1488; Ducali, Verde, fol. 55v, 28 April 1488.

<sup>79</sup> Atti, VIII, fol. 18v, 7 March 1492; fol. 30r, 17 July 1492 (in 1506 the *Provveditori sopra Camere* were trying to bring a case concerning the Castelbaldo area before the court of the *Quarantia*: ASVe, *Maggior Consiglio*, Deda, fol. 39r, 25 April 1506); fol. 60v, 9 June 1493, fol. 68r, 3 November 1493; fol. 94, June 1494; fols. 152v-53r, 7 January 1496 (perhaps concerned with this is a note

It would be useful to relate the volume of Paduan protest to documentation of the activity of the Venetian magistracies concerned, but for those most active – the *Provveditori sopra Camere and Rason vecchie* – there is only fragmentary survival of material relevant to this period in their archives, and virtually nothing attesting their activity during their sporadic mainland tours (in November 1464, for example, a *Provveditore sopra Camere* went to the Terraferma with a mandate including the recovery of the Signoria's property)<sup>80</sup>.

The richer records are those for the *Rason vecchie*, with good documentation of the leasing of minor fortifications considered of no military use (another phenomenon concentrated in the provinces nearer Venice), but with only very occasional mention of the sort of rights this essay is more concerned with. For example, in 1481 they investigated rights over wetlands and grazing in the village of Arzergrande, supposedly ex-Carrara but currently possessed by the Paduan family of the Buzzacarini, who were cited to Venice and later sent documents supporting their case, including a family tree. Another example concerns the lease of a *valle* or canal – the “*valle del Cornio*” – probably near today's Sant'Angelo di Piove di Sacco, where despite the lease of rights by the magistracy in 1475 and 1480, local peasants insisted on fishing freely (as presumably they had always done)<sup>81</sup>. Waterways and activity concerning them also appear after the deviation of the main course of the Brenta in the eastern Padovano, begun in 1488: in January 1501 the Paduan council protested at the recent leasing of fishing rights along the new riverbed by the *Rason vecchie*, mandated by the Senate, and demanded respect for an earlier ruling by virtue of which fishing was to be a common right, as in other river *piscationes* (fisheries)<sup>82</sup>.

As to the *Provveditori sopra Camere*, more concerned with rights over land, the occasional surviving documents of sales in these years are illuminating. Thus, in particular, the sale at Rialto in June 1493 of about 1,500 *campi* of grazing, wood and wetlands at Vo di Bojon, near today's Campolongo Maggiore in the eastern Padovano. The deed safeguarded specified minor property rights of a couple of Paduan elite families, but explicitly excluded any claims based on the rights of *parenti* and *choerenti* (relatives and neighbouring landowners) – a formula common to other sales too<sup>83</sup>.

about Paduan representatives awaiting a confrontation with the *Provveditori sopra Camere* before the Capi of the Ten: ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Capi, Notatorio, II, 124r, 19 May 1496).

<sup>80</sup> The Senate ordered he be given patent letters to mainland governors: ASVe, Senato, Terra, 5, fol. 99v, 22 November 1464.

<sup>81</sup> Most useful are ASVe, Ufficiali alle Rason Vecchie, buste 52, 54. For the cases cited, *ibid.*, 52: fol. 54v, 13 September 1475; fols. 160v, 163r, 10 July and 31 August 1480; fols. 71r, 174v, 5 and 12 January, 22 February 1481.

<sup>82</sup> Atti, VIII, fol. 307v, 14 Jan 1501. For the Senate mandate: ASVe, Senato, Terra, 13, fol. 145r, 4 September 1500 (it hoped to raise more than D. 300 p.a. by leasing the new Brenta's “*porti et peschaxon*”).

<sup>83</sup> ASVe, *Provveditori sopra Camere*, busta B-I, 1: fols. 43v-44v, 10 June 1493.

Obviously, it would be absurd to suppose that the *Provveditori sopra Camere* and *Rason vecchie* acted out of animosity against Paduan landowners; as we saw in the matter of commons, there are also cases of Venetians protesting at these same magistracies' disturbance of their rights in the Padovano with the justification of investigating *ex-Carrara* rights<sup>84</sup>. But the bridle put on their action in the 1490s came late, after decades in which they had been quite as much as spurred on as held back by the councils of state; in 1479, for example, the Senate decreed that the Signoria alone hadn't the power to suspend judgements by the *Provveditori sopra Camere* of property pertaining to the state, reserving such power to the *Provveditori* themselves or the appeal courts<sup>85</sup>. Moreover, the general rulings produced by first the Senate and then the Ten in 1489, 1490 and 1496, mentioned at the beginning of this section, seem to have had only a limited effect. In December 1497 the city's representatives in Venice were commissioned to oppose confiscations in the Piove di Sacco area from Padua's bishopric and citizens; in the spring of 1500 commissions again concerned the Arino *serraglio*, so often cited above, where the *Provveditori sopra Camere* apparently intended to conduct detailed measurements. And in April 1504 the council voted to defend the Brazolo against the *Rason vecchie's* lease to a Venetian noble of rights over waters near Tribano which had been theirs for a century: the passage or ferry of the village of Paluello, jurisdiction of the Brazolo nobles ("passum seu tragetum ville Paludelli iurisdictionis nobilium de Bradiolo")<sup>86</sup>.

For the Paduan élite, therefore, there does seem to be some degree of justification for rooted and lasting animosity. And there certainly were instances of open enmity between some of the Paduan and Venetian parties whose opposing interests were dealt with by these magistracies in the capital. In March 1499 the diarist Marin Sanudo reported a Collegio hearing – a sign of the importance attributed to the incident – in which a leading member of the Paduan élite, the knight Francesco Dotto, complained of the "vilanie" said to him by the eminent Venetian noble and banker Vettor Pisani, owner of very extensive landed rights in the southern Padovano. The dispute concerned court jurisdiction over a *livello* due from Dotto to Pisani. In 1468 the Pisani had purchased grazing and wetlands near Solesino from the inheritance of the marquis Bertoldo d'Este, and then in 1483 had bought the so-called "camerlengaria estense", Padovano lands confiscated from the ducal branch of the Estense dynasty during the war of Ferrara. In 1499 the *Provveditori sopra Camere* wanted to assert competence over the case, but it was based on a contract stipulated in Padua, and the Collegio assigned it to the podestà's court

<sup>84</sup> Thus for example an order by the Capi of the Ten, at the request of the Bragadin: ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Capi, Notatorio, II, 93v: 28 October 1489.

<sup>85</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 8, fol. 60r, 23 August 1479.

<sup>86</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 214v-15r, 295r, 297v: 2 December 1497, 5 March and 19 April 1500. BNM, ms. It. VII 2397 (10134), ducal letter of 19 April 1500. Atti, IX, fol. 139r, 21 April 1504 (source of the quotation).

in Padua, specifying that there was no direct Signoria interest in the Estense inheritance, and so no reason for hearing the issue in Venice: an interesting statement of the criteria in current use in deciding on judicial jurisdiction<sup>87</sup>.

Jurisdiction was indeed one of the problems, even among authorities in the capital. The evidence found confirms the involvement not just of the *Provveditori sopra Camere* and the *Rason*, but other magistracies both financial and judicial: the *Governatori alle Entrade*, who for example sold former *Dal Verme* rights, including the tithes at Boccon in 1471; the temporary magistracy in charge of recovering Signoria property from 1474, which in 1475 won a conflict of competence with the *Provveditori sopra Camere* over the patrimony of Bertoldo d'Este; the *Tre savi sopra Rialto*, who were assigned competence in 1480 over usurpation of land by buyers from the Paduan exchequer who occupied more than their due; the *Sindici Inquisitori/Auditori Nuovi*, who we find bringing cases of unlawful occupation of former rebels' property in the Vicentino and Padovano before the *Quarantia* courts in 1484 (while their successors ten years later were told to investigate *fraudes* concerning *comugne* when touring the *Terraferma*); the three *Savi* in charge of auditing, who were told in 1505 that they were to verify the execution of judgements and confiscations of wrongly occupied Signoria property<sup>88</sup>. Procedures were indeed subject to mishap, so – for example – we find the same *Piove di Sacco* area *Malavolta* land up for sale by the *Rason vecchie* in 1480, and again in 1492, because the initial purchasers had never paid over the D. 1,200 due. And the reference to secret denunciation by ill-intentioned parties in starting proceedings of this kind was not just slanted rhetoric used by the Paduan civic élite: in June 1501 the *podestà* of Cittadella sought approval from the *Capi* of the Ten to act on an indication concerning some 200 *campi* of former Carrara property, explaining that his informant had other revelations ready, if the first went ahead – certainly with the hope of a reward<sup>89</sup>.

A final comment on these issues: action by Venetian authorities over property rights confiscated by the Signoria much resembled their action over commons. In some cases the juridical categories of ex Carrara property and commons evidently mingled, as in the example concerning Bernardo Bembo with which this section starts, but the resemblance was most evident in practical terms, when Paduan possessors of land or other rights risked losing

<sup>87</sup> Sanudo, II, 498-99; Ducali, Verde, fol. 109r (the decision in a ducal letter of 11 March 1499); Atti, VIII, fols. 272v, 273v, 282r: 4 and 16 April, 4 November 1499 (eight months later the council's support was sought, to defend this decision against ongoing Pisani opposition). On the Pisani purchases: Varanini, 1996a, 849; on their action to define and strengthen their many rights, and consequent local conflicts: Vigato, 1997, 73-76.

<sup>88</sup> Ducali, B, fol. 121r, 11 May 1471; ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, 12, 13 November 1475 and 6 August 1480; ASVe, Maggior Consiglio, Stella, fol. 42r, 15 February 1484; ASVe, Senato, Terra, 12, fol. 30v, 31 January 1494; *ibid.*, 15, fol. 79v, 10 June 1505.

<sup>89</sup> ASVe, Collegio, Notatorio, 12, 29 July and 3 August 1480; ASVe, Senato, Terra, 11, fol. 107v, 20 March 1492, ASVe, Consiglio dei Dieci, Lettere rettori ai capi, busta 80, 23 June 1501.



what they considered to be justly theirs, or at the very least had to fight to keep it. Moreover, with or without the sporadic direct involvement of third parties such as village communities, there was a common pattern in the conduct and outcome of action by Venetian magistracies. It almost inevitably forced Paduan possessors or claimants to defend their rights in Venice rather than Padua, with extra cost and disturbance and the fear of a less sympathetic hearing – though at least on some occasions they were able to prove those rights. Very often, moreover, the beneficiaries from their eventual loss of rights were Venetians acquiring those same rights from the authorities involved.

The phenomena discussed in these first two sections link and partly overlap with a further, broad category of the council's concerns, since it repeatedly sought to defend the property rights of Paduan citizen owners when there was a dispute over jurisdiction between courts in Padua and Venice, as an example from 1494 demonstrates. In April, instructions were given to the city's representatives in Venice for various matters, including a specific case of land in the Castelbaldo area held for half a century by the Polcastri, but now assigned to a Venetian by the capital's Giudici del Procurator. As the commission makes clear, there were more general legal principles to uphold, to be spelled out with mention of the daily incidence of Venice's "cives et subditi" dispossessed of long-held land. As already admitted in previous rulings, courts in Venice could not assign property rights in the Padovano unless their current Paduan holder was cited and heard before his rightful judge, that is in Padua, and this norm – the representatives were to say – should apply even in the case of property contracts stipulated between Paduans in Venice, which otherwise blunted claims presented in Padua concerning the seller's property ("presentationes virtute coherentiarum aut aggravationes"). And – the instructions continued – if those buying Padovano property from magistracies in Venice occupy more than their rightful purchase, damaged Paduan parties should be heard before Paduan courts and not in Venice, or at least the podestà should block any citation to Venice. This example must suffice, but as demonstrated in a previous essay, Padovano property rights were significantly affected by the activity of first instance courts in Venice, since they were dealing not only with the sort of situations just specified, but also with an increasing number of Venetians' dowries and wills referring to Padovano property, and such activity was indeed repeatedly the subject of deliberations by the Paduan council<sup>90</sup>.

### *c. Sheep-shearing, grazing and transhumance*

Various aspects of the presence of sheep in the Padovano, both native and "foreign", were the object of policy-making. The wool shorn from them was a

<sup>90</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 90v-91v: 12 and 16 April 1494. See discussion of first instance courts in Venice in Knabton, 1992, 159 ff., especially 161-62.



key source of raw material for urban Padua's main manufacturing activity, but the rules governing its place and conditions of sale were the cause of tensions between city authorities and sheep-owners (*pecudarii*), with the latter fearing the constraints of a purely local market and inclined to look beyond Padua, including to Venice itself. The seasonal transit of transhumant flocks, or their wintering in the Padovano, was part of a complex pattern of stock-raising covering plain and mountain areas under foreign as well as Venetian government, with implications for the shearing and marketing of their wool, the grazing they used (and the revenue to be had by leasing it to them), and also taxes levied on their passage. Transhumant flocks wintering in the Padovano in fact made seasonal use of leased grazing sites (*poste*), which were often the property of Venetians – mostly as a result of the sale of the former Carrara patrimony. Since ownership of the *poste* and the grazing rights (*pensionatico*) associated with them were independent of ownership rights over the land used for grazing, some degree of incompatibility with other agricultural practices – especially arable crops and hay-making – was guaranteed. Nor were the interests of transhumant and local shepherds necessarily reconcilable. The resulting knot of problems was not satisfactorily solved even in the eighteenth-century phase of agrarian reform<sup>91</sup>. Unsurprisingly, therefore, in the later fifteenth century Venetian decisions were as important as the policy-making practised in Padua.

Padovano wool – meaning wool usually shorn only once yearly from animals raised locally, rather than that taken from transhumant flocks wintering there – was considered to be of especially high quality, and the question of wool supply for Paduan producers was the object of four council deliberations in the 1440s and 1450s concerning the trade in both wool and sheep, especially the wool shorn from sheep grazing in the Padovano; the council, left free to decide by Venice, confirmed the existing ban on the export of such wool. This issue remained the object of intermittent tension and renegotiation between the city authorities and the owners of the sheep, with Venetian authority insisting – as it did with other mainland provinces – that as an exception to the export ban, Padovano wool be free to reach the capital. In January 1461 the council deliberated over contraband wool export from the Padovano, requesting approval for enforcement action by the guild in the contado, and in 1465 and again in 1467 (this time at the Paduan council's request) the Senate ordered collaboration in setting wool prices between representatives of the guild and the shepherds, with Padua and Venice as the only two venues authorized for sale<sup>92</sup>.

<sup>91</sup> Panciera; Simonetto; Gloria, 1851.

<sup>92</sup> ASVe, Senato, Terra, 5, fols. 113v, 186v: 21 March 1465, 6 June 1467; Collodo, 1999, 76 ff. (general discussion), 88 ff. (on the fifteenth century, with much use of Gementi); Varanini-Demo, 281-82; Pino-Branca, 1933-38, XCVI, 755-62 for council deliberations of 1443, 1444, 1446, 1459, 1461; Mozzato, 54-55.

In 1488 the council sought to favour Paduan production of high quality cloth by enforcing the shearing of local sheep only once a year, by the end of March; Venetian approval was sought and obtained, but then contested by the shepherds before the Avogadori, so requiring further insistence in Venice by the council<sup>93</sup>. The issue seems to have remained contentious, and returned in a lengthy, wide-ranging council deliberation of 30 April 1497, where – among remedial action for the guild’s general difficulties – shearing obligations were partly relaxed: for local sheep, the March wool was to be sold in Padua by mid-April, and the August wool by mid-September (owners could choose whether to shear once or twice); for shepherds of “foreign” flocks wintering in the Padovano, the obligation was simply to shear and sell the wool in the city before leaving<sup>94</sup>.

As to these “foreign” sheep, in the mid and later fifteenth century Venetian policy favoured mountain flocks wintering especially in the Padovano and Trevigiano; it imposed a transit *dazio* there on sheep which wintered further south in the Ferrarese and Mantovano, and reassured shepherds who did use Paduan and Trevisan *poste* about the prices to be got for spring-shorn wool, allowing them to sell it anywhere in the Terraferma after offering it for a month in Padua or Treviso<sup>95</sup>. In April 1470 the council named delegates to negotiate with the shepherds over the seasonal duration of grazing rights, especially their claim to free winter access to grassland in general through to St. George’s day (23 April). Previous Venetian rulings on the matter had been contradictory, though including a ducal letter dated 4 April 1470 in favour of the term set by the statutes, and again no final answer seems to have emerged as to whether to follow the Paduan statutes, which were more restrictive since they banned grazing after the end of March in meadows where there would be two cuts of hay<sup>96</sup>. (That transhumant flocks stayed in the Padovano till April before returning to the mountains is evident from the seizure in April 1487 of sheep from the Habsburg lands, held near Castelbaldo and perhaps elsewhere during that year’s short war over Rovereto)<sup>97</sup>.

<sup>93</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 177r, 238v: 21 August 1488, 2 September 1489; Ducali, Verde, fol. 58r: 30 August 1488.

<sup>94</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 199v-203r: 30 April 1497.

<sup>95</sup> This explanation in a ducal letter temporarily suspending the *dazio*: Ducali, B, fol. 79v (26 March 1463), referring implicitly to Senate decisions of 1451 and 1454 (*ibid.*, fols. 96v-97r: 14 July 1451, 11 October 1455, 19 December 1461). See too Ducali, 111, fols. 195-99: other rulings of 1443 and later, including a 1480 order to the podestà of Camposampiero not to “tuor regalie de formazo a pegorari”.

<sup>96</sup> Atti, V, 13v: 11 Apr 1470. For repeated indications from Venice between April 1469 and April 1471 (among them the ducal letter of 4 April 1470), also concerned with the transit *dazio* on flocks moving north from the Ferrarese and Mantovano: Ducali, B, fols. 112r-21r. For disputes producing other Venetian rulings: Ducali, B, 83, 93v: 12 May 1463, 24 March 1464, 19 March 1465. As early as 1416 the Paduan exchequer had ruled that grazing rights last until St. George’s day, with the exception of “ortis, brodulis et bladis”: Ducali, 111, fol. 108, 14 October 1416.

<sup>97</sup> Ducali, E, fols. 25r, 26v: 25 April and 17 May 1487; Atti, VII, fols. 90v-91r, 18 May 1487.

With a background of disputes occasionally reaching Venice, the same issue resurfaced in a council deliberation of May 1488. Noting the contrast between the date set by the city statutes (the end of March) and the St. George's day term claimed by both local and foreign shepherds, it sought to save hay yields by proposing that Venice approve the compromise date of 15 April, restricting access to sheep which had wintered in the Padovano – presumably to exclude flocks transiting northwards from other plain areas. Venetian approval was granted, but disputed by the shepherds before the Avogaria di Comun, so requiring a further council deliberation in September 1489<sup>98</sup>. Complaints to the Avogadori in 1494 and 1506 by aggrieved parties on both sides of the argument – the holder of a *posta*, against the community of Galzignano for expelling shepherds from lands supposedly subject to grazing rights too early; *distrettuali*, against shepherds insisting on grazing in hayfields through to St. George's day – prove that the issue remained at least partly unsettled. In 1508, indeed, the Avogadori dismissed another dispute, stating they were fed up with so much wrangling over the ducal letter of 4 April 1470<sup>99</sup>.

#### d. *Relations between landowners, tenants and peasantry*

Among the council deliberations on this theme there are occasional curiosities. In January 1492, meeting the requests of a great many *cives*, especially young men (“*quamplures cives et maxime iuvenes*”), and with a view to their confirmation by Venice, the deputies had a crowded meeting approve the same detailed regulations recently adopted by Vicenza for hunting and bird-snaring within a radius of five miles of the city. Quite apart from the intrinsic interest of the detailing of species, methods and seasons, and the by no means routine choice of imitating another Terraferma city in law-making, these regulations offer a nice contrast: between the recognition of well-off *cives*' right to practise a leisure activity that was also part of their ideal lifestyle, moreover at a convenient distance from the city; and the declared aim, applied to an area whose products were particularly important in covering the city's food needs, of bringing back to their farming duties peasants some of whom had abandoned them in favour of the chase – something most improper for them (“*quod eis minime convenit*”)<sup>100</sup>. That peasants should attend to their duties on the land crops up elsewhere in the council's deliberations: for example in June 1488, when it requested a postponement for the despatch of Paduan peasant labour to river works in the Valcellina in western Friuli.

<sup>98</sup> For a 1482 dispute: Ducali, C, fol. 83v, 6 March 1482. Atti, VII, fols 165r, 238v: 10 May 1488, 2 September 1489.

<sup>99</sup> Ducali, F, fol. 1r, 4 July 1494; ASP, Lettere dei magistrati veneti e dei rappresentanti di Terraferma, 1500-06, I, 25 Feb 1506; Ducali, G, fol. 35r, 27 May 1508. On the 1470 ducal letter, above n. 96.

<sup>100</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 8v-9r, 7 January 1492.

Mobilizing manpower for *corvées* on an interprovincial level was anyway an almost complete novelty, but the objection was framed with reference to seasonal work in the fields, hay-making and harvesting (Venice replied suggesting the work in Friuli be contracted out, implicitly at the Paduan *distrettuali's* expense)<sup>101</sup>.

What council records and other documentation do not offer, though, is mainline policy directives on key issues like forms of land tenure. The matter was partly addressed by the city statutes (and also relevant to matters of tax liability as we shall see below), but its complexity and its slow, empirical evolution have to be reconstructed from the practice recorded by notarial deeds and estate documents. What follows is therefore mainly concerned with other issues relevant to relations between landowners and peasants, for which – as for the matters concerning tax, discussed below – the documentation reveals an important dimension of role-playing and rhetoric: the Paduan council mingled the severity and distance towards the peasantry of landowners whose wealth and status depended on maintaining its subordination, with traits of paternalist benevolence; Venetian authority, though in many ways representing identical or similar interests, made more play of benevolence in at least implicit competition for the sympathy of humble subjects, as has been observed a propos of the measures concerned with the impact on peasants of forced levying for debt<sup>102</sup>.

#### *The binomium dominium directum – dominium utile*

One issue connected with tenures that does emerge in a significant fashion from the documentation is that of long-standing possession of rights of *dominium utile*, in practice the occupier's right to live on land, work it and keep most of the profits so generated. Sometimes specifically referred to by the term *livello* (itself polyvalent), these were situations in which the rights of control and revenue associated with *dominium directum* were extant but diminished, and the owner of those rights often but by no means always ecclesiastical. Gloria's collection of laws and pronouncements concerning Paduan agriculture includes a number of fifteenth-century Venetian rulings favourable to *livellari* and the like. The most important is a general Senate ruling of December 1451, stating that forty years' possession of land with payment of a *pensio*, even without a formal contract of lease or *livello*, was to be considered a *livello*, and if the land were ecclesiastical, the possessor also had the right to investiture with it. The purport of ducal letters containing other rulings for specific cases of both lay and ecclesiastical property, is in line with this principle: thus in December 1438, December 1468, August 1476 and September 1495 – in this last case, not explicitly a *livello* but tantamount to

<sup>101</sup> Atti, VII, fol. 168, 1 June 1488; Ducali, Verde, fol. 56r, 7 June 1488.

<sup>102</sup> See Favaretto, 19-21, referring to Cervelli, especially 383.

one, concerning former woodland at Strà now converted to cultivation, with the decision taken also referring explicitly to respect of the Paduan statutes<sup>103</sup>.

To Gloria's findings other material can be added, in particular a couple of council deliberations of January 1472 and April 1473, instructing Padua's representatives in Venice to oppose the urban monastic house of Santa Margherita (together with San Cipriano of Murano), but also mentioning the city monastery of Santa Giustina and the Padovano abbey of Santa Maria di Praglia. A pious bequest of *dominium utile* over urban housing had been thwarted by the first two religious houses' action to recover full possession, and this needed reversing. But both deliberations emphasized the risk of such behaviour becoming general practice by churches and monasteries with property in the city and contado held at *livello*, demanding general application of the decision in favour of their *livellari* already reached in negotiation between the large Benedictine abbeys of Santa Giustina and Praglia, and the city commune, and indeed requesting its extension to all spiritual brotherhoods, hospitals and pious institutions<sup>104</sup>.

Here, needless to say, there were major matters of principle and equally major concrete interests at stake. Though abbots of Praglia granted much land via *livello* in the late fifteenth century, both Santa Giustina and Praglia were engaged in the long-term, systematic recovery and consolidation of their patrimonial rights, parts of which had certainly filtered into the possession of members of the Paduan civic élite. Landholding of just over 4,000 *campi* declared by Praglia in the 1518 *estimo* had risen to almost double the 2,306 *campi* assessed in 1477, when Santa Giustina's holdings were 3,550 *campi* (and their subsequent growth would top out at almost three times Praglia's acreage)<sup>105</sup>.

Similar issues seem to be at stake in a council deliberation of 1492, opposing summons by the Venetian convent of Santo Spirito of the Paduan holders of long-possessed land in many villages of the southeast Padovano, between Conselve and Anguillara. In this case it invoked the thirty-year prescription rule – otherwise nobody would be sure of his rights, nor would he ever have any power to bequeath his assets (“*nemo esset sui juris, neque quis de suis bonis ullum unquam haberet testandi arbitrium*”)<sup>106</sup>.

### *Private debt-levying*

Debt-levying was a key meeting point between the monetary economy and the possession and transfer of resources in kind, and therefore also between

<sup>103</sup> Gloria, 1855, 2:259-60 (10 December 1438), 266 (23 December 1451), 272-73 (19 December 1468), 280-81 (30 August 1476), 299-300 (30 September 1495).

<sup>104</sup> Atti, V, fols. 114r, 158v: 2 January 1472, 1 April 1473.

<sup>105</sup> Silvano, 2012: 16n15, 19, 25, 27. For *livello* holders of the Praglia monastery's land at Abano (citydwellers 135 *campi*, villagers 70 *campi*): Bortolami, 1983: 185. On church property's contribution to direct taxation: below, text and notes 133-34.

<sup>106</sup> Atti, VIII, fol. 40r, 30 November 1492.

stronger and weaker components of economic relationships. It was characterized by the high frequency of recourse to forced levying via the seizure and sale of pledges and/or the arrest of debtors, which reinforced its function as a perennial focus of social tension. The 1420 Paduan statutes regulated the officials and procedures involved in private debt-levying, including the working of the city's agency for handling debtors' pledges, the *Camera dei pegni*; they perhaps incorporated Venetian directives given the very recent introduction, in 1418, of the *dadia delle lance*, the first regular direct tax due to the Venetian exchequer (the levying of tax debt is partly discussed below). An important component of the tension accompanying the recovery of all debts was the combination of licit and illicit profit opportunities for officials involved, and therefore the incidence of abuse and complaints, as well as greater difficulty in recovering the sums actually owed rather than the expenses due to the officials; issues of this kind, though not relevant to the purposes of this essay, drew considerable attention from both the Paduan council and Venetian authority<sup>107</sup>.

Obviously enough, creditors' action against private debtors very often involved dealings between landowners and tenants. But levying debts of any nature from peasant debtors could weaken or paralyze their work on the land, if it took the form of seizure of the material means necessary for that purpose, or their arrest, while the risk of action by creditors could deter them from bringing produce into the city, so damaging the urban market's availability of basic necessities. Moreover, the frequent incidence of debt-levying in dealings between citydwellers and *contado* inhabitants linked with the more general friction between Padua and rural areas, which also took the form of sporadic jurisdictional disputes between urban authority in Padua and the lesser towns of the *Padovano*. These latter were inclined to dispute various features of the exercise of urban jurisdiction with implications for the *contado* economy, including when lawsuits concerned such matters as rights to property and contracts between landowners and tenants. An important element of this conflict was the proving and collection of debts, in which the *contado* towns' *podestà* – in harmony with the leaders of local society – might oppose debt-collecting by city officials and assert their own competence over claims by citizen creditors against inhabitants of their jurisdictions.

The two *podestà* of Piove di Sacco and Camposampiero, both of them nearer Venice and endowed with more severely limited judicial competence than their colleagues in other *Padovano podesterie*, emerge from the later fifteenth century documentation as the most active in disputes of various kinds with Paduan urban jurisdiction; on the specific issue of debt-levying, clashes are documented with some frequency for Piove di Sacco. A Senate ruling of March 1457 had already regulated debt-levying in the *podesteria* of Piove di Sacco: to avoid the cost for at least some local debtors of recourse by creditors

<sup>107</sup> See in general, also for what follows, Varanini, 1992, 125-61, especially 127, 137 ff.; Pino-Branca, 1933. Eloquent examples of tension over debt-levying at Grantorto in Bortolami, 1997, 43.



to urban levying procedures and judicial citations to Padua, it asserted the competence of Piove di Sacco's court and levying officials for minor debts (up to L. 10) and contracts stipulated locally. The 1457 ruling was confirmed by later ducal letters, with instructions to Paduan officials to desist: in April 1473 (cancelling contrary indications contained in ducal letters of November 1472 and April 1473), and February 1504<sup>108</sup>. But as these confirmations suggest, both Paduan officials and the city council tried at intervals to reverse or ignore the 1457 ruling: thus, for example, council deliberations denouncing the Piove podestà for blocking urban debt-levying officials (April 1487), and for fining Paduan merchants and levying officials (December 1493)<sup>109</sup>.

On a more general plane, rulings about forced levying from peasants – albeit of doubtful efficacy – came from Venetian authority in reaction to requests and complaints voiced by subjects, both Paduans and others. As early as 1415 the Senate had confirmed the indications about forced levying contained in the Paduan statutes, but insisted on penalties in case of wrongful claims by creditors. In a ruling of December 1458, formulated for the whole Terraferma and circulated again in a ducal letter of January 1467, it greatly restricted the possible seizure of draught animals. In August 1475, after complaints by *distrettuali* from Teolo, the ruling was again repeated, and reinforced with a specific ban on the seizure of beds and bedding, horses and oxen, and the equipment necessary for agricultural work<sup>110</sup>.

### *Lending to peasants*

As elsewhere, the extent and variety of recourse to credit by peasants in the Padovano were considerable, with overtones of dependence on their creditors and room for various forms of exploitation of that weakness, whether in exorbitant terms of repayment or in action to dispossess them of such assets as they had. This latter eventuality was a particularly strong one when rights over land were specifically identified as security for the return of the loan. In the experience of the Terraferma state such practice would become extraordinarily widespread in the sixteenth century, with remarkably uniform contracts: the borrower actually sold his land to the creditor and then became its tenant for a rent which was really the interest on the sum loaned, maintaining the option – mostly only theoretical, and of limited duration – of being able to buy the land back. Though in a less massive and systematic fashion, some anticipation of this behaviour may be found in the Padovano during the Quattrocento, since sample research on Venetian nobles' acquisition of property there from mid century shows some of them lending with the borrower's land as security so as to gain possession of it: thus the Contarini

<sup>108</sup> Pinton, 63-64, 65-66: documents of 30 March 1457, 16 April 1473, 11 February 1504.

<sup>109</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 88v-89r, 27 April 1487; *ibid.*, VIII, fol. 70, 11 December 1493.

<sup>110</sup> Gloria, 1855, 2:256-57, 271-72, 274-75.



round Valsanzibio, in the Euganean hills, and the Donà delle Rose at Pontelongo (Piove di Sacco)<sup>111</sup>.

Publicly declared ethics were of course entirely incompatible with anything approaching extortionate practice, which was denounced as impious usury. In May 1478 the Venetian Maggior Consiglio reacted to reports received from governors in both the Terraferma and the sea empire about land bought at artificially low prices and changing hands as a result of debt recovery, also mentioning crooked deals for the supply of such things as grain, wine, oxen, horses and cloth. It therefore declared contracts of this nature illicit for the future and annulled those of the previous fifteen years, promising justice to whoever sought it and banning appeals from the resulting judgements by governors, to protect the poor<sup>112</sup>. This measure applied to the entire Venetian state, but on a smaller scale the Paduan council had deliberated in similar fashion on 20 March 1477 (perhaps contributing indirectly to the emanation of the 1478 Venetian law): it targeted speculative lending to peasants of seed-corn, draught animals and agricultural equipment, including carts, ploughs and utensils for the wine harvest, which were given in return for grain and wine, and asked Venice to ban any such contracts. An answering ducal letter indeed recognized them as extortionate and authorized their cancellation<sup>113</sup>.

More than affecting real behaviour, such norms testify its existence. That it was very common practice to lend grain to peasants emerges from a council deliberation of January 1495, confirmed by Venice the following month. A Venetian ruling of 1468 (part of measures taken to ease grain flow towards the capital) stated that all wheat levied from creditors barring lent seed-corn must go to Venice; it had never been observed for wheat returned by tenants to their landlords or others in the case of loans made merely bushel for bushel (“*ad purum starium pro stario*”). But now, the deliberation reads, there is a minute and precise investigation (“*minuta et exactissima inquisitio*”) in the whole Padovano by staff of the *Provveditori alle Biade*, Venice’s grain supply agency, directed not only at merchants who lend and are repaid thus, but at landowners and anybody else, even for very small loans, with a view to applying the sanctions for non-compliance accompanying the 1468 ruling. To prevent damaging both lenders and peasants (the latter unlikely to find grain to borrow), the deliberation states, the exclusion from the 1468 rules of interest-free loans needs confirmation<sup>114</sup>. It is worth emphasizing that the forms of credit dealt with here – and also those giving rise to the rulings of 1477 and 1478 – seem to concern solely Christian lenders, even though during the later

<sup>111</sup> Corazzoli; Varanini, 1996a, 831, 862-63.

<sup>112</sup> Gloria, 1855, 2:286-88: 2 May 1478. It was preceded by a ducal letter of 19 February 1478 to all Terraferma governors ordering the investigation and repression of usury connected with grain and other commodities: Ducali, 111, fols. 50r-51r (for the 2 May law, *ibid.*, fols. 52r-53v).

<sup>113</sup> Atti, VI, fol. 11r; Ducali, C, fols. 24v-25v: 8 June 1477 (see too Gloria, 1855, 2:283-86).

<sup>114</sup> Atti, VIII, fol. 112: 31 January 1495; Ducali, Verde, fol. 105r: 11 February 1495.

fifteenth century Jewish bankers were operating in the Padovano towns, especially at Piove di Sacco, and certainly serving peasant borrowers to some extent<sup>115</sup>.

A little scepticism about the real availability of loans without interest for peasants, despite the words of the council deliberation of 1495, is supported by what emerged in these very same years from the early experience of Padua's new Christian pawn-lending bank, operative from August 1491. The Conservatori of the Monte in fact reported on the importance of the contribution made by Padovano peasants to its funding, and also on the advantages peasants drew from being able to borrow seedcorn, which they repaid after the harvest in kind or at the current market price – whereas previously usurious contracts had forced them to hand over a third or half their harvest by way of interest on seedcorn borrowed. Peasant borrowers must also have made use of the Monti created very soon after Padua's in the Padovano towns of Piove di Sacco, Camposampiero, Monselice and Montagnana<sup>116</sup>.

#### *Compensation for damna data*

Rural communities routinely appointed field watchmen (*saltari*) to guard against damage to land and crops, though this right might also be exercised by landowners as a sort of minor feudal survival – something documented, for example, for the Venetian noble family of the Bragadin, who had purchased the former Carraresi *gastaldie* of Carrara and Terrarsa, and who we find in July 1477 appointing their own guard to protect their land for a year (“saltarium suum ad custodiendum campaneam suam pro uno anno”)<sup>117</sup>. A key function of the *saltari* was to prevent damage to citizens' property, or at least identify a single guilty party and so prevent claims for compensation against the whole village. The urban statutes regulated procedures for compensation in terms highly favourable to the citizen landowners. They were entitled to choose between urban and contado-based authority in depositing claims against rural communities or single inhabitants, and inclined to opt for the city's Giudice delle vettovaglie. Individuals or communities named by claimants were obliged to pay up with no further ado unless they decided to contest claims and valuations before the city courts, at their own risk. Damage and compensation were a socially contentious issue, since guarding by *saltari* could only limit damage and the burden of reimbursement it entailed; the overall incidence of damage seems to have been high, and while pure negligence certainly accounted for some cases, many were probably connected with either poverty (theft might be the only solution in the face of want) or intentional action undertaken as an expression of rancour.

<sup>115</sup> See Carpi; Jacoby.

<sup>116</sup> Pullan, part III, ch. I, especially 504; Gios, chapter XII; Silvano, 2005, 22 ff.

<sup>117</sup> ASP, Vicarie, VII, 28 July 1477. On damage and guarding: Orlando, 2000, 81-85.

Documents published by Gloria demonstrate the contentiousness: a ducal letter of April 1441 dealt with complaints from Teolo about false claims and self-inflicted or self-procured damage by citizens, and similar problems concerning the contents of their houses in the villages, kept for their occasional use. Another letter of March 1461 was issued at the city council's request to force the podestà of Cittadella to allow *damna data* procedure by the city's officials<sup>118</sup>. Further documentation of the following years and decades enriches this account. In May 1464 the council told Padua's representatives in Venice to block an appeal, improperly presented to the Avogadori di Comun, whereby some villagers of Tribano were challenging their conviction by a Paduan court for deliberate fire damage to the house and property of Francesco Brazolo<sup>119</sup>. As had happened with Cittadella in 1461, moreover, there was further action by Padovano inhabitants subject to the contado's minor Venetian podestà to try and bring all procedures of declaration and compensation before those podestà, or to block the carrying out of orders given by authorities in Padua. The city council reacted by calling for Venetian intervention, which might be verbally conciliatory towards contado claims, but seems always to have backed Paduan statute law<sup>120</sup>.

The council was also aware, however, that citizens' claims might be imprecise and in June 1472 it reacted to complaints by villagers in calling for more rigorous conduct by the citizen vicars of minor Padovano jurisdictions, before whom citizens could claim damages instead of using the city-based judge (and from whom they could expect a much more sympathetic reaction than from the Venetian nobles set over the Padovano's *podesterie*): the vicars were to subject claimants to a more stringent oath, and to evaluate claims more carefully<sup>121</sup>.

Claims for damages could also involve more complex issues, such as the assertion of rights over land or land-based revenues. This was the tactic used by Gerolamo Capodivacca – presumably supported by the council as part of its action against Venetian courts of justice, as well as in defence of Paduans' patrimonial interests – in a dispute concerning Galta di sotto (near Vigonovo, east of Padua). He claimed damages against named parties for their failure to leave him the quota of hay due for tithes with which he had been rightfully invested, and was given council backing in January 1505 against Venice's Giudici del Procurator. Presumably asserting their competence as a result of having assigned rights there in execution of a Venetian's will, they had written

<sup>118</sup> Gloria, 1855, 2:260-62, 270.

<sup>119</sup> Atti, IV, fols. 119v-20r, 29 May 1464.

<sup>120</sup> Protests by the council variously concerning Castelbaldo, Cittadella, Montagnana and Piove di Sacco: Atti, V, fols. 262v-63r, 18 March 1475; *ibid.*, fol. 102, 29 December 1471; *ibid.*, fols. 111r-13r, 11 January 1472; Atti, VI, fols. 57v-58r, 59r-61v, 6 and 16 August 1476; *ibid.*, fols. 65r, 67r-68r, 22 October and 3 November 1476; *ibid.*, fol. 156r, 9 March 1479; Atti, VIII, fol. 3v, 2 January 1492. Venetian answers: Ducali, Verde, fol. 97v, 9 February 1470; *ibid.*, fols. 22v-23r, 31 August 1476.

<sup>121</sup> Atti, V, fols. 122v-23r, 16 June 1472.

to Padua to block Capodivacca's claim for compensation via *damna data*, demanding that he initiate any action before them<sup>122</sup>.

### *Tithes*

Tithes indeed figure among the issues raised in these decades, almost always before Venetian authority and primarily with a view to preventing their extension to produce from land previously not subject to this obligation. Though ecclesiastical authority might be involved in investing with rights or supporting claims, in many cases those collecting or claiming tithes were laymen, as a result of the church's massive loss of control over these revenues, which were often of considerable material value, whatever the partly feudal connotations still accompanying them. From long before Venetian conquest Paduan law had projected secular authorities' and courts' competence over tithes, protecting their lay holders against interference by the bishop, and many tithes had passed into the hands of the Carraresi and their supporters (and then from the former to the mainly Venetian purchasers of the Carrara patrimony). In the fifteenth century Padua's bishops' partly more aggressive stance in defence of church wealth, reversing their previous weakness, made room for conflict, which was rendered more complex by the presence of secular authority in Venice over and above the Paduan civic dimension. The resulting Venetian pronouncements however tended to be more once-off than concerted, since the issues of jurisdiction and sovereignty underlying tithes were not tackled systematically till the late sixteenth century<sup>123</sup>.

The fifteenth-century pronouncements published by Gloria – ducal letters of 1433, 1436, 1444, 1457, 1465 – nonetheless conform to a basic pattern, partly based on Padua's statutes: twenty years of unchallenged possession of title rights as the basis of prescription, which the bishop was obliged to recognize by conceding investiture; the continuing obligation to pay tithes when land changed ownership, but the absence of any obligation to pay on land for which precedent had established this exclusion, even if it were land previously not cultivated; the competence of secular courts for lay defendants against claims by churchmen<sup>124</sup>. Other documentation confirms these basic tenets: thus, for example, ducal letters of 1499 and 1502 defending Paduan owners of 90-100 *campi* bought from the Signoria between 1430 and 1440 at Loreggia and Guizza, in the Camposampiero area, from tithes claimed by virtue of episcopal investiture on property now cultivated but formerly woodland and grazing, with no history of payment<sup>125</sup>.

<sup>122</sup> Atti, IX, fol. 158r, 16 January 1505.

<sup>123</sup> Kohl, 22-24; Ferrarese, 41-47, 75, 92-93.

<sup>124</sup> Ferrarese, 66-71, 93 ff.; Gloria, 1855, 2:257-58, 262-63, 265-66, 267-68, 270-71.

<sup>125</sup> Ducali, F, fols. 52r, 102r: 4 May 1499, 28 January 1502.

e. *The weight and distribution of taxation, privileges and exemptions*

*The general picture*

In comparison with the issues discussed in the previous sections, there is much more of both archival material and existing historiography on taxation and public finance in general, and this partly extends to the weight and distribution of tax on land, agricultural produce and the rural labour force, including the incidence of privileges and exemptions. Consequently the analysis conducted here is both summary and selective<sup>126</sup>.

The first point to establish concerns the overall dependence of taxation on the agrarian economy and the transformation, movement and sale of agricultural produce: hardly surprising, given economic structures and social organization in which the rural, agrarian dimension predominated, despite the relatively high percentage of urban population and city-based economic activity. Analysis of the revenue handled by all Venice's mainland exchequers in the 1470s corroborates such dependence.

As to Padua in particular, this was certainly true of the *dadie* (direct tax), distributed via the *estimi*. These were separate for each of the three main categories of taxpayers: citydwellers, clergy, *distrettuali* – the *fuoghi* assigned to each village by the main contado *estimo* acted as a coefficient determining its share of taxes, which it then subdivided among its inhabitants via its own, internal *estimo*. All the *estimi* were based very largely on real estate, though both urban and rural *estimi* also assessed other assets, including the working potential of adult men – a factor tending to inflate the contado's apparent wealth. But dependence on the agrarian economy characterized the great majority of the *dazi* as well. The officially estimated revenues for Padua's exchequer in 1475 amount to D. 66,678. In relation to this total, the *dadie* accounted for 30.87%. Indirect taxation on the rural areas contributed substantially, via the 9.68% of the *dazio dei carri e boccatico*, mostly a sort of poll tax levied only on the contado, and the 17.20% of the *dazi* distributed between the contado's *podesterie* and vicariates (almost exactly half the total from Piove di Sacco, presumably because of duties on the movement of produce towards Venice). The principal urban *dazi* on consumption and processing of locally produced food – meat, wine, milling, fish – covered 25.16%, whereas the main *dazi* less obviously connected with the land and its produce – those on *mercanzie* and goods transiting through the city gates – contributed 5.25% and 4.96% respectively<sup>127</sup>.

<sup>126</sup> On public finance and the fisc in the Venetian state, Terraferma included: Pezzolo, 2006, especially 67 ff., and Pezzolo, 2003, especially 11-70. On the Padovano in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries: Knapton, 1981b (main source of what follows); Favaretto; Vigato, 1989; Orlando 2001.

<sup>127</sup> For these 1470s data, Varanini, 1992, 93, 115-16.

Though we possess only occasional or fragmentary numerical data for it, there was an ample further dimension of public finance extraneous to the money handled by the Venetian exchequer. Part was money anyway due to the state, but filed in the accounts of magistracies in the capital: about D. 13,000 a year of salt *dazio*, mostly paid by the rural majority of the province's population, and about D. 3,500 a year of *decime* (taxes due to the state) paid by the holders of Padovano ecclesiastical benefices – mostly based, like the wealth assessed in the *estimi*, on land and land-linked assets. The *estimi*, moreover, were the main basis for the assignment of taxes and duties handled by institutions local to the Padovano: to a very limited extent the city, which had a very meagre budget of its own and only occasionally imposed minor *dadie* over and above what was needed to cover those due to the exchequer; but to a far larger extent the rural communities, responsible for a variety of monetary payments (“real”), dues in kind (“mixed”) and labour obligations (“personal”). Using revenues based on both taxes and supplementary resources, which often included income from assets such as woodland that they owned or controlled, they covered much small-scale self-government, a lot of it in connection with rules made by the city; they supported military defence, in peacetime via the lodging and victualling of permanent army units present in the Padovano, and at least sporadic work on fortifications – a support role which greatly increased in wartime, when it might also include militia service. And they executed *corvées* connected with public works – waterways, bridges, roads, etc. – within and occasionally beyond the Padovano, both routine and occasional<sup>128</sup>.

It is worth adding that the city council mostly took *corvées* for granted, as something governed by detailed rules and procedures (the city statutes, gradually updated and filled around by later decisions) and handled by executive authority, especially the city's Venetian captain. But it did show explicit awareness of their impact in the early phases of the deviation of the main course of the river Brenta in the eastern Padovano, begun in 1488 by Venetian order so as to protect the lagoon, amidst the council's doubts and remonstrances. In November 1488 it protested that one third of the excavation for so major a project was an excessive burden for the Padovano, demanding that Venice increase the involvement of other Terraferma subjects, including Friulans, since the previous summer there had been a Padovano contribution to work in the Valcellina. The following March, grumbling at the immense scale of the work and the vast damage it would bring to cultivated land, it requested the contribution of other mainland territories so far excluded, and in July requested that work programmed to start on 1 August be delayed a fortnight to allow the peasants to cope with the harvest<sup>129</sup>.

<sup>128</sup> On all these supplementary burdens: Favaretto, 72-94.

<sup>129</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 187v-88r, 12 November 1488; *ibid.*, VII, fol. 218 2 March 1489, for the involvement of Bassano, Cittadella (part of the Padovano, but then held as a fief by the *condottiere* family of the Sanseverino), and the Polesine; *ibid.*, VII, fols. 230v-31v, 13 July 1489.



We can express an order of magnitude for all these extra burdens on village communities with the help of rare precise data available for the Veronese rural commune of Tregnago. In the peacetime year of 1506, with a general spending pattern similar to that of Padovano villages, an admittedly lighter load of *dadie* due to the Verona exchequer accounted for only about a tenth of Tregnago's total spending<sup>130</sup>.

Limitations to the archival data available, as well as to the dimension of this essay, preclude any attempt to develop the analysis towards – for example – an estimate of tax pressure. But what does need establishing, at least briefly, are the aims and perceptions of those seeking to shape fiscal policy in the later fifteenth century – a plurality of interested parties, with viewpoints that were at best only partly reconcilable<sup>131</sup>.

As to the Venetian government, through to 1494 there were more years of peace in Italy than in the decades preceding 1454, with the War of Ferrara (1482-84) as a costly exception, but it was anyway committed to maintaining a permanent Terraferma army, and also fought a long war against the Turks (1463-79), partly funded – especially during the 1470s – by mainland revenue too. Between 1494 and 1509, thanks to both the Italian Wars and another Turkish war (1498-1503), the stresses and strains greatly increased, both in general cash needs and in Venetian pressure on the mainland exchequers and fisc. With overall spending anyway tending to exceed income, Venice expected that mainland revenues cover ordinary costs of governing and defending the Terraferma. It insisted that they be collected as fully and punctually as possible, seeking to avoid changes to the taxes themselves in recognition of differences between the economy of the capital and the Terraferma but also of the diverse political relationship. Transforming direct tax due to the state from occasional to permanent in the first half of the century had been difficult, especially because – unlike *dazi*, farmed by the exchequers to *dazieri* – the *estimi* for its assignment and responsibility for collection were delegated to Venice's local political partners, predominantly the civic élites. Direct levies remained much the most politically sensitive feature of taxation, given their impact on the land and real estate of which civic élites were the main possessors, but fixed yearly totals had anyway emerged for each province, subdivided among its main categories of taxpayers (citydwellers, *distrettuali*, churchmen).

Peculiar to the Padua exchequer were the implications of its relative wealth and greater proximity to Venice, which meant important assignments on its funding (often including the salary of the general commanding the Venetian army), frequent inspection and interference from the capital, and limited patience there with delayed or incomplete handover of taxes due. This peculiarity was compounded by the fact that direct tax had a higher overall

<sup>130</sup> Knapton, 1981b, 60; Knapton, 1986, 311-23 (the datum for Tregnago at 322). See too data for the Vicentine village of Castelgomberto in the mid fifteenth century: Soldà-Knapton.

<sup>131</sup> What follows is based on Favaretto; Vigato, 1989; Knapton, 1981b.



profile in Padua than elsewhere: loyalty to Venice after the Visconti invasion of the Terraferma in 1437 and renegotiation of political relationships meant that in Brescia and Bergamo the *dadie* (known there as *colta ducale*) had disappeared with that war, while in Verona they had been cut from D. 16,000 to D. 6,000 p.a.<sup>132</sup>. But in Padua, where they represented nearly a third of exchequer revenue, Venetian impatience for *dadie* receipts generated growing uncertainty and tension around delegation to the city of responsibility for their collection, and threatened to spill over into exertion of direct Venetian influence on their share-out between urban, contado and ecclesiastical tax-payers.

The lines of tension threading through the policy aims of the Paduan civic élite over direct tax were multiple, though throughout there were common, interdependent aims. The first, albeit never stated in such crude terms, was to pay as little tax on land and real estate as possible, partly by using its position of relative political strength to unload the burden on taxpayers different from citydwellers: *distrettuali*, churchmen, and also Venetian owners of Padovano assets, at least some of whom figured in both urban and rural *estimi* rather than constituting a separate category of taxpayers. Such reluctance also meant hostility to additional direct taxation, demanded by Venice in the Turkish wars. In 1473-74 the council agreed to an extraordinary subsidy of D. 12,000 a year, of which 8,500 due from the city, then strongly – but unsuccessfully – opposed its extension to 1475-76; in 1499 it agreed to a subsidy of D. 10,000, probably paid by the city alone, and in 1501 it reacted with bitter but vain hostility to what was specifically a tax on landed property, the *campatico*, which as a result of its non-collaboration was assessed and exacted by Venetian officials.

The second aim was to exercise (and defend) as much power as possible over the frequency, rules, conduct and outcome of the *estimi*, especially the urban *estimi* and the contado's *fuoghi*. The third was to protect the council-named exactor's power over collection of *dadie* due to the Venetian exchequer by both citydwellers and *distrettuali*, especially against Venetian interference; such protection tended to extend to the main exactor of the *dazio dei carri e boccatice*, levied on the contado – though not chosen by the council, he was a citizen.

The policy aims of other political players involved are in many ways the mirror opposite of those just stated. The main threat to the civic élite's landed wealth, and to Paduan citizens' landholding in general, was perceived by the civic élite – correctly, we can say with hindsight – as that posed by Venetians' acquisitions of property, though their aggregate value cannot be usefully quantified. All through the fifteenth century, but intensifying in later decades, there was attrition between the Paduan élite and Venetian authority over Venetians' taxable assets in the Padovano. Such property might be variously exempt from Paduan *dadie*, subject to forced loans and then (after 1463) to *decime* in Venice, or subject to Paduan *dadie*, but in practice its owners often eluded taxation by omitting to declare property or under-declaring its worth,

<sup>132</sup> Varanini, 1992, 84-85.

or via straight failure to pay the taxes assigned. Authority in the capital discounted part of the city's *dadie* share for taxable wealth lost because of Venetian purchases through to 1446, and passed measures to combat evasion and elusion by Venetians, but with poor results; these can plausibly be partly attributed to the tacit action of a sort of lobby, so widespread was Padovano landowning among Venetian nobles (and also non-nobles). But the sources also suggest that government in Venice could perceive the Paduan council's often outspoken insistence on these matters as an irritating attempt to divert attention from its own failings. The Paduan civic élite was indeed prone to the same vices it attributed to Venetians owning Padovano land: taxable assets un-declared or under-declared, reluctance or failure to pay, and so on.

Representatives of the Padovano's rural jurisdictions slowly tackled the obstacles posed by long-term urban administrative hegemony and their own lack of a tradition of common action and aims, especially in acquiring responsibility for the sharing of the *dazio dei carri e boccativo*, which they managed to block at a fixed annual total in 1443. Their joint action was an early manifestation of the *corpo territoriale*, formally constituted in about 1520, and it also addressed direct tax sharing, especially the making of the *estimi* and their application to determining the overall shares of exchequer *dadie*. Despite the fall in aggregate *distrettuali* taxable assets registered from mid century, the city council's greater political strength allowed it to block reassignment of shares, so that in the later fifteenth century the tax rate applied to the city's *estimo* was about half that used for the contado's. This imbalance, compounded by the considerable burden of local finance at the village level, significantly increased contado residents' vulnerability in the face of citizens' drive to acquire further land, which was certainly a widespread phenomenon in these decades. In 1488-1489 and 1501-1502 the *distrettuali* got paper undertakings from the city – then approved by Venice – on the issue of taxable assets' transfer between urban and rural *estimi*, when changes of ownership crossed the boundaries between categories of taxpayers, but such mechanisms only became effective much later in the sixteenth century.

As to ecclesiastical landowners (and taxpayers), the council might adopt an attitude of benevolent protection towards some property fiscally classified as ecclesiastical. In August 1475 it voted its approval of a swap of ownership of about five *campi* by the city's Lazaretto – but this rare instance concerns one of Padua's main pious institutions, each of whose wellbeing was supported by council-named advisors assigned to it. (Much more frequent in the documentation are authorizations by the Venetian Senate for the alienation, sale or gift of landed rights by any ecclesiastical body in Venetian territory, by the terms of a 1412 law – including, in February 1489, approval for a *livello* by Padua's Lazaretto of forty-two *campi* outside Porta Codalunga)<sup>133</sup>.

<sup>133</sup> Atti, V, fols. 267v-68r, 28 Aug 1475; ASVe, Senato, Terra, 10, 136r, 20 February 1489; Del Torre, 2010, 39-40: the Senate law of 27 October 1412.

The council obviously supported civic religion in its various manifestations, and individual members made gifts or bequests of property to ecclesiastical beneficiaries, but it certainly wanted church property to pay as high a share of tax as possible. In discussing the issue of *dominium utile* above, we saw the council's fear of action undertaken especially by the big Benedictine monasteries to recover full control over property subject to *livello* rights. Church property in the Padovano in general was indeed on the increase, despite the diverse situations of single ecclesiastical owners. Research demonstrates that its fourteenth-century decline had been less disastrous than once thought: mortmain laws had been evaded, with land given especially to monasteries in the area of influence or control of the Carraresi and their supporters. After 1406, that coterie's indirect takeover of ecclesiastical landed incomes in the Padovano was in a sense replicated by Venetians, especially nobles, who progressively occupied a very considerable proportion of high- and middle-income benefices. Venetian mortmain legislation only became tough at the beginning of the seventeenth century, when sharper concepts of sovereignty allied with awareness of the cumulative increase in church property – whereas a 1472 Senate ruling that any new real estate acquisition by ecclesiastical bodies pay secular taxes was representative of the pragmatic attitude prevalent in the later fifteenth century.

In the fourteenth century Venice had in fact blocked Papal demands for *decimae* on benefices in Venetian lands, whose holders paid forced loans to the state on their landed wealth, then and later. Terraferma expansion vastly increased the ecclesiastical wealth that individual Venetian clerics could hold, and the state in turn tax. Despite difficulties in their initial acceptance by the papacy and some lasting anomalies, the *decime* (state direct tax) introduced in 1463 were extended to all holders of benefices in the state, whether Venetian or not. In the Padovano Venetian holders of local benefices did not contribute to the direct tax – *dadie* – due to the Venetian exchequer, though non-Venetians did, resulting in a heavier overall burden on the latter. Partly for this reason, churchmen emerge from the council deliberations as a more heterogeneous, less cohesive category of taxpayers, much more the target of others' policy-making over tax on their landed assets than an agency visibly active as a political player – though in 1508 their dispute with the city about their respective shares of the *dadie* nearly resulted in a Senate committee throwing open the question of sharing between all the groups of taxpayers<sup>134</sup>.

After the Cambrai crisis, there was indeed considerable change: new *estimi* begun in 1517 for both city and contado, with the major involvement of

<sup>134</sup> On the Carrara period: Kohl 21-27. On the Quattrocento: as well as Varanini, 1996a, see De Sandre Gasparini on Santa Giustina, and Silvano, 2012, on Praglia; Stella, 1958, esp. 62-64, on Benedictine houses and more in general; Steer, especially 236-55 (listing nearly 8,700 *campi* acquired by church ownership in the years 1424-1509); Del Torre, 2010, 27 and 153-74 on church property and state finance. On mortmain legislation: Sperling, 196 and bibliography cited. On 1508: Knapton, 1981b, 55.

Venetian authority and a more concerted though still incomplete reckoning of Venetians' property; the formal institutional emergence of the Padovano's *corpo territoriale*. But in the period through to 1509 none of this could have been imagined<sup>135</sup>.

From the point of view of the overall relationship between land and taxation, especially direct taxation, the preceding paragraphs have indicated how economic issues intersected with the tensions and balances of the exercise of power. A more close-up vision can be obtained by examining the way in which the problems of collecting direct tax – and to some extent assigning shares for payment – interacted with difficulties apparent in the ordinary course of agricultural activity. The themes which best lend themselves are those of peasant poverty, the impact of weather or other “external” damage, and their relationship with direct taxation, including the function of temporary exemptions or forms of tax relief. These were largely different from the tangle of permanent privileges typical of early modern tax systems, which in the Padovano mainly concerned property over which the state had former or current rights, including assets once belonging to the Carraresi, the marquis Bertoldo d'Este, and rebels – though the full list is much longer<sup>136</sup>.

The discussion of course relies on sources reflecting Paduan and Venetian authorities' respective perception or representation of such matters, where divergence between versions is likely, and a general mix of hyperbole, subjectivity and bias may almost be presumed upon. But a word of caution is justified: the data for collection of *dadie* do demonstrate a very significant degree of shortfall and/or arrears, and collection mechanisms were burdened with a major overload of exaction costs even without the episodes of malversation which Venetian investigation at least occasionally identified as the responsibility of individual tax collectors or officials<sup>137</sup>.

### *Peasant poverty, the fisc and agriculture*

Peasant poverty and its effects on agriculture are an established topos of early modern European agricultural history, and – quite apart from disquisitions in the eighteenth-century season of reforms, more theoretical than practical and if anything more concerned with peasant ignorance and education – entered Paduan agrarian historiography with Andrea Gloria's strictures in the mid nineteenth century<sup>138</sup>.

Peasant indebtedness to the fisc is a recurrent theme in the Paduan council's deliberations, albeit without any admission or sign of awareness that the problem might derive at least in part from the imbalance in overall sharing

<sup>135</sup> Favaretto, 149-207.

<sup>136</sup> Vigato, 1989, 51-55

<sup>137</sup> See Varanini, 1992, 125-61; Pino-Branca, 1933; Knapton, 1981b, 36, and 53, on malversation.

<sup>138</sup> Simonetto, especially 175-188; on the fifteenth century, Gloria, 1855, 1:CCLVIII-IX.

of the tax burden between citydwellers and *distrettuali*. A perusal of the council's pronouncements and requests also shows up other traits of inconsistency in its attitude. In March 1475 the city's representatives in Venice were commissioned to obtain a ruling against peasants' arrest – particularly their sons (“*fili* familias”) – for one another's debts, especially their communities', since this enforced collective responsibility threatened to ruin the Padovano. But only the previous May Padua's representatives had been charged to obtain Venetian approval for the levying of *dadie* owed by rural communities not only from their *degani*, often poor, but from any other inhabitants – as was already allowed, the commission pointed out, for the *dazio dei carri e boccatice*. And in March 1477 the council criticized the exaction mechanisms of that very same *dazio*, asserting that debtors arrested for it were dying in gaol, asking Venice to remit old debts or at least grant extended terms of payment so as to prevent peasant emigration<sup>139</sup>.

The council did indeed consider tax pressure, and especially the weight of unpaid arrears, as a perennial link in the chain of difficulties affecting agriculture. That March 1477 deliberation was one of three voted in the same meeting, targeting the issue of peasant poverty, in terms partly critical of action by Venetian authority. Another, already discussed above, attacked usurious lending to peasants of seed-corn and so on. And the third complained at the effect of temporary tax exemptions granted after storm or other damage, which resulted in redistribution of overall burdens that increased others' due (an inevitable consequence of the fixed totals to be met in the yields of direct dues like the *dadie* due to the Venetian exchequer, and also the *dazio dei carri e boccatice*). It therefore requested that supplicants affected by such damage be given longer terms of payment instead. In June it received conciliatory answers from Venice: a lighter hand was to be used in exaction of the *dazio*, with fewer collateral costs, and there would be no more grants of temporary tax exemptions; there was also recognition that the pressure of public and private debt hindered peasants coming to Padua to sell produce, thus simultaneously damaging the city's supply system, its *dazi* receipts and their creditors, and they were given a safe-conduct for their debts one day a month (increased to two between August and October). In August and September, moreover, the city governors ordered exchequer staff to credit the city's *dadie* exactors with sums due from various contado villages then incapable of paying (“*impotenti a pagar al presente*”) – L. 14,750 from 1474 onwards; L. 5,064 for the period 1462-73 – whose terms of payment the governors would decide<sup>140</sup>.

This switch of competence does not appear to have guaranteed more lenient treatment for the villages, to judge by the experience of Boccon. To cover its debts of L. 750 for the *dazio dei carri e boccatice* and *dadie*, and

<sup>139</sup> Atti, V, fol. 257, 8 March 1475; Atti, V, fol. 221, 25 May 1474; Atti VI, fol. 11v, 20 March 1477.

<sup>140</sup> Atti, VI, fol. 11r, 20 March 1477; Ducali, C, fols. 24v-25v, 26v-27r, 28: 8 June, 12 August and 10 September 1477.

accompanying fines, in August 1479 the Paduan exchequer confiscated and sold about sixty *campi* of grazing and wetland (which ended up in the hands of a Venetian noble), so depriving the village of valuable resources. It managed to get them back in 1496 through the appeal courts in Venice, perhaps helped by recent developments in the norms about *comugne*, but such tenacity was probably not typical, especially considering the costs (L. 166 just for the appeal)<sup>141</sup>.

The council's attitude on temporary tax exemptions seems to reflect more than the mere logic of numbers invoked to dissuade Venice from making grants which increased the burden on others. Between the lines there appears some degree of hostility to grants made by Venice as such, concerning the matter of direct taxation in which the city exercised significant delegated powers, especially since it was often *contado* communities which bypassed the city's authority in seeking and obtaining exemptions. Counterproof of this may be found in council deliberations in later decades, as a brief parenthesis can demonstrate. After itself making sporadic grants of temporary exemption in preceding decades, in September 1493 it deliberated to ban them in future, bluntly observing that exemptions given to *cives* after damage from fire, hail, flood and the like upset the poor, who had to pay in their stead, and that all should accept the hand of God with equanimity ("equo animo"). But this concession to the urban *popolo* – perhaps a result of consciousness heightened by the recent launch of the city's Monte di Pietà – did not prove watertight, and we find occasional later instances of grants made despite the ban: for example, the following January Giovanni de Lazara was given a five-year *dadie* exemption after suffering damage by flooding to crops sown and by fire in a storage building<sup>142</sup>. The underlying idea seems to be that *cives* should be able to live off their landed income as befitted their status, and it is worth noting that this premise supported a similar, sporadic incidence of grace and favour grants of the offices to which the council elected, here again despite rules to the contrary formulated by the council itself. In June 1503, for example, after suffering storm damage in his property at Rovolon, Giacomo Papafava was assigned the vicariate of Oriago for one year<sup>143</sup>.

Returning to the general issue of rural tax debt, it remained serious for both the *dadie* and the *dazio dei carri e boccatico* through the 1480s and later – hardly surprisingly given the impact of plagues in 1478 and 1485 and of the nearby War of Ferrara (1482–84). However, attention both assiduous and inconsistent to it by the council may also be explained by the fact that its implications were not only economic – the effects on agriculture and citizen landowners' revenues of peasant poverty and even migration – but also

<sup>141</sup> Ducali, 121: 27 May 1497, with a Quarantia verdict of 4 November 1496.

<sup>142</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 66v, 79: 7 September 1493, 8 January 1494.

<sup>143</sup> Atti, IX, fol. 122r, 19 June 1503.

<sup>144</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 16, 232v–33r: 5 April 1486, 30 July 1489.



inseparable from the general political tension over tax between the civic élite and Venice, which tended to intensify during the later fifteenth century. For example, instructions given to the city's representatives in Venice in April 1486 seem to be targeting indirectly the greater vigour given to forced levying of tax debts by the extraordinary presence in Padua of one of the capital's *Provveditori sopra Camere*, together with the use of levying officials controlled by the city's Venetian authorities rather than by the urban commune. The request for leniency was accompanied by criticism of a phenomenon that was common to all distraint and long had been, the intolerable expenses for officials sent to take pledges ("intollerabilibus expensis officialium euntium ad pignorandum"). And the same specific criticism accompanied a deliberation of July 1489, when the council requested leniency especially for exaction procedures connected with the work begun in 1488 to deviate the course of the river Brenta east of Padua: another Venetian choice many of the civic élite were less than happy with<sup>144</sup>.

Peasant poverty and the functioning or malfunctioning of the fisc also had to do with differences in status and obligations among those living in the contado and working the land, and the manipulation or distortion of rules over liability for tax<sup>145</sup>. A first, obvious situation of this kind was created by *cives rustici*, present in the Padovano as elsewhere, permanently resident in the villages and working the land but claiming the privileged status of citizenship to avoid the extra "gravedines" burdening *distrettuali*; in January 1501 the council went back to a Senate law of 1448 in demanding that they take up residence in Padua, or else lose their status as citizens. A second, more complex situation had to do with villagers' length of residence in their communities. The problem was not posed by routine new arrivals from outside the Padovano, who could obtain a ten-year exemption from many but not all taxes<sup>146</sup>, but arose when incoming peasants, aware of collective responsibility for debts, tried to dodge answering for their new villages' old debts. In 1494 the *deputati* were involved as judges in a dispute at Legnaro, in the jurisdiction of Piove di Sacco, where adversaries of some newcomers claimed that thanks to this advantage they had managed almost to monopolize tenancies over land there, forcing other families to migrate<sup>147</sup>.

A council deliberation of March 1491 had formulated a similar problem in general terms: when a village's land was worked by peasants residing elsewhere, only contributing partly to its overall burden of taxes and dues, it could endanger the village's ability to shoulder that burden, appoint *degani* and *saltari*, provide labour – in other words, to operate as an administrative

<sup>145</sup> On the variety of status and obligations, Favaretto, 52 ff.

<sup>146</sup> See e.g. Atti, IV, fol. 305, 23 January 1469: a grant by the *deputati* to a foreigner now resident in Galzignano, of exemption from all real & personal obligations, though not from specified *dazi* (milling, *carri e boccatico*, salt), nor for any real estate bought during the period of exemption. Other grants in ASP, Deputati, 3-5.

<sup>147</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 87r-88r: 7 March 1494.



unit and cover the needs of citizen landowners. The problem particularly concerned peasants living in the villages immediately surrounding the city, the area defined as inside the *termini* or *campaneae*, where the much more favourable urban fiscal regime applied; the council formulated rules to oblige them to serve as *degano* and *saltaro* if they took tenancies of five or more *campi* in ordinary villages on land where in the last twenty-five years there had been buildings for resident tenants (“casamenti e coverti da lavoratori”), and anyway to make them pay the full range of taxes<sup>148</sup>. Ten years later the council returned to the problem, which had apparently worsened in the meantime. In many villages land was being worked by technical non-residents for whom citizen landowners built dwellings beyond village boundaries, while their contribution to taxes and dues, anyway inadequate, was the object of negotiation and agreement with village administrators in terms which were tantamount to an exemption; the council voted to ask the Signoria to ban such practice – though a significant minority of councillors present disagreed (voting was 75-40)<sup>149</sup>.

Rather similar in its effects was another practice documented by the sources, whereby landowners named or pretended to name as managers (*gastaldi*) of their farms peasants who received salary and expenses, which placed them in a privileged position regarding taxes and dues on villages’ ordinary inhabitants. It had already been the object of a ducal letter of 1457, concerning Venetians’ property in the Piove di Sacco area, and the council deliberated twice on the subject half a century later. In February 1497 it denounced deceit in these terms by both Venetian and Paduan landowners and their peasants, especially in the Piove di Sacco area, with the consequence of unloading a greater burden on other villagers: Venetian authority should establish their full liability to contribute. In January 1502 the target was Venetian landowners in the nearby Mirano area who made their tenants and workers *gastaldi* or *boari* and got round a ruling by Padua’s podestà by appealing to the Auditori Novi: the norms resulting from 1497 should apply to the whole Padovano, and *gastaldi* be proven such, also swearing an oath about their status<sup>150</sup>.

Solutions for these matters of discrepancy between peasants’ place of residence, status in relation to the working of land, and liability for tax and dues then became part of the agreement negotiated between the city and *distrettuali* in their 1502 agreement over the *estimo*<sup>151</sup>.

<sup>148</sup> These and other provisions, also contemplating e.g. non-Padovano peasants, in Atti, VII, fols. 311v-13r, 12 March 1491; Favaretto, 67. On the twentyfive villages of the *termini/campaneae*, Vigato, 1989, 69n57.

<sup>149</sup> Atti, VIII, fol. 303, 8 January 1501.

<sup>150</sup> Pinton, 159 (14 June 1457); Atti, VIII, fols. 190v, 310v: 28 February 1497, 15 January 1501. On the exemption of *boari*, Favaretto, 51.

<sup>151</sup> Favaretto, 66-67: the agreement also dealt with the issue of temporary tax exemptions.

*Taxation, flooding and bad weather*

The perennially precarious outcome of the agrarian year was a commonplace in early modern agriculture, its effects on peasant families exacerbated by the scant resources that they were able to set aside. Especially in flat areas like the Padovano poor control over watercourses was an important risk factor, and from the 1480s agriculture there was more exposed than in previous decades to the danger of flood damage, firstly as a result of interference with watercourses during the War of Ferrara (1482-84), when Estense action to impede Venetian invasion had included sabotaging embankments on the Padovano's southern boundary. Numerous resulting requests for temporary tax exemption were met by Venetian grants in favour of many *distrettuali* and some citydwellers, and in January 1484 the city council protested at the losses of taxable wealth, which would mean larger shares for other taxpayers, demanding that Venice either annul the portion of tax thus due, revoke such exemptions or anyway solve the problem – so returning to the logic behind its 1477 request for no more temporary tax exemptions, as seen above. Venice's answer, though partly deferred till after the captain of Padua had inspected the area and reported, met the city's request more than halfway by limiting the valency of the exemptions given – some for other causes, including hail damage – to obligations of a personal nature, so excluding taxes based on real property. The council quickly returned to the subject in a March 1484 deliberation whose main intent was to resist Venetian pressure for higher monthly payments of *dadie* by its tax collector to the Venetian exchequer. But its polemical tone is not reason enough to invalidate wholly the picture it painted: apart from the complications caused by tax exemptions, there had been flood and hail damage, major defence expenses met by *distrettuali*, and – in what was also a year of serious grain supply difficulties – we read that peasants were living off the roots of plants (“*radicibus erbarum*”)<sup>152</sup>.

The damage done to the southern Padovano embankments during the war also left a legacy of danger. Documentation produced in 1489 by the captain of Padua and podestà of Este indicated the absence of adequate repair to banks in the Este area after their cutting in 1482, an absence partly attributable to failure to collect the extra, specific taxes from those due to pay them, which had left local land more vulnerable to flooding, as had happened especially in 1486 and 1488<sup>153</sup>.

A new element of risk came from the major work undertaken on watercourses in the period from 1488, primarily but not only to deviate the river Brenta; from that date the council's attention to the Padovano's

<sup>152</sup> Atti, VI, fol. 396r: 13 January 1484; Ducali, Verde, fols. 47v-48r: 29 February 1484; Atti, VI, fols. 398v-99r, 21 March 1484

<sup>153</sup> ASP, Territorio, 405, fol. 49 ff: 21 January and 19 March 1489.

waterways was significantly more frequent, especially as the failings of the new Brenta bed became apparent. The permanent occupation of land for the new course of the river justified a demand by the council, made in October 1491 and repeated in March 1495 (but not met by Venice), that Venetian tax demands cease for property lost by landowners in this fashion and that the city's overall share of tax liability be correspondingly reduced<sup>154</sup>. In January 1495 the council requested remedial action after the new bed had revealed insufficient capacity to absorb waters from drainage ditches, resulting in flooding in the *podesteria* of Piove di Sacco; it deliberated in very similar terms four years later, pointing out that flooding had prevented autumn sowing. In February 1502 it alerted Venice to the need for work on the watercourses there and elsewhere, again emphasizing the flood risks for the Piove area. Yet another deliberation in October 1503 told of floods there the previous year as well as more recently, demanding higher and broader banks for the river's new bed, and delegating the city's representatives to appear before the Collegio – which they did together with a delegation from the Piove area, as the diarist Sanudo reported<sup>155</sup>. On the same occasion they also complained, together with representatives of Este, Monselice and Montagnana, at damage to the southern Padovano by work done on the Rotta Sabadina: deviation of water from the main channel of the Adige on the Padovano side so as lessen flood risks to the south of the river, in the Polesine di Rovigo (here one of the problems was that Paduan owners on the north bank had recently reclaimed land which needed adequate drainage). In December 1504 Sanudo again reported flooding in the Piove area, adding the pithy comment “per la Brenta nuova el piova' si aniega” (the Piove area is drowning because of the new Brenta). A month later Padua's representatives in Venice were told to emphasize that the area risked depopulation and poverty, in support of requests that Venice plan remedial action, also indicating how the costs were to be shared. It returned to the subject in November 1506, offering a complex technical analysis and this time adding the jurisdictions of Conselve and Monselice to that of Piove in describing the area damaged<sup>156</sup>.

The nexus between weather damage to agriculture and taxation takes on a significant profile in the council's agenda in these same years either side of 1500, and this seems to reflect its sensitivity to anything concerning *dadie* precisely when Venetian pressure was threatening the terms and the very continuation of the council's responsibility for their collection – but without necessarily invalidating its description of difficulties. A long commission given to a

<sup>154</sup> Atti, VII, fols. 337v-38r: 21 October 1491; Atti, VIII, fols. 116v-17r, 16 March 1495. On the Brenta deviation, Bortolami, 2003.

<sup>155</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 110v, 282r: 17 January 1495, 4 November 1499; Atti, IX, fols. 56v, 125r: 4 February 1502, 12 October 1503; Sanudo, V, 207-08: 25 October 1503.

<sup>156</sup> Sanudo, VI, 110: 12 December 1504; Atti, IX, fols. 156, 211v: 14 January 1505, 20 November 1506. ASVe, Senato, Terra, 12, fols. 143v-45v: 28 May 1496 debate about the Rotta Sabbadina, mentioning the needs of “padoani per scolar dele loro possessione noviter facte”.

prestigious party of representatives sent to Venice in January 1492 dealt, amongst other things, with how to solve issues pending between landowners and tenants, more precisely over what monetary equivalent was to be used for the latter's payment of rents due in wine after the loss of vines and trees in 1491 (it was to be made clear in Venice that the creditors had not had anybody imprisoned). The same misfortune was to support a request for a discount ("restaurum") – presumably of *dadie* due to Venice – for both citydwellers and *distrettuali*. Two months later the council again referred to the death of vines – on account of which the people are drinking only water: "propter quod populus ex aqua vivit" – in a deliberation stressing both citizens and others' inability to pay debts in general, including *dadie*, and requesting benevolence ("humanitas") by Venice. And in June 1492 the dead vines made a third appearance in a deliberation protesting against Venetian-ordered seizure of property belonging to the current *dadie* collector. Similar logic, finally, lay behind a January 1498 request for clemency over *dadie* debts, which strung together very extensive hail damage in 1495, the bad harvest of 1496, and 1497's drought<sup>157</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

First of all, this essay has sought to demonstrate that in the discussion of economic relationships and economic policy in the fifteenth-century Terraferma state, issues connected directly or indirectly with land deserve greater attention by historians. Such issues certainly had a significant overall profile in the Paduan council's activity in the later fifteenth century, and this was equally true for Venetian authority. Despite confusion over competence, and the fact that in many cases those choices emerged empirically, with some incidence of inconsistency, there is solid evidence to substantiate the importance of the main themes discussed above: especially forests and commons, and land over which the Signoria claimed rights via confiscation; but also grazing and sheep, several important aspects of landowner-tenant-peasant relations, and various features of the incidence of taxation on land and its cultivation.

Secondly, in the overall framework of power sharing Venetian authority occupied considerable space – both on its own initiative and when called into play by others – so posing significant limits to the Paduan council's autonomy in policy- and decision-making. As a result, the council was as often involved in reacting to Venetian choices, and maybe seeking to modify them, as it was in making the first move. And very few of the matters concerning land it discussed, reached any sort of operative decision without at least final approval by Venetian authority. Certainly, there was convergence between the Paduan civic élite and Venetian government in fundamental tenets of policy regarding

<sup>157</sup> Atti, VIII, fols. 12v-16r, 19r, 33r, 246: 11 January, 9 March and 27 June 1492, 29 January 1498.

land: among them, the fact that the interests of cities and citizens counted over the country and countrymen, and those of landowners over tenants and labourers, with obvious consequences in such matters as debt-levying and *damna data* (whatever the rhetoric of consideration towards poorer subjects, used especially by Venetian authority). But there was a gradual accumulation of issues and decisions which simply went beyond the possible protection of Paduan interests offered by the city's jurisdiction and statutes and by the council's faculty of policy-making, most notably in the matter of woodland and commons. If the evidence presented suggests a partial, gradual trend towards greater overall public control of the economy, this was by state (Venetian) rather than by delegated (Paduan) authority. And it anticipates features of policy towards land and the landscape that Venetian historiography has so far mostly tended to associate with the sixteenth century and its very visible development of more cohesive policy by agencies in the capital – including new magistracies like the Beni inculti and the Beni comunali – towards such matters as forestry and firewood, commons, land reclamation and food production, the control and exploitation of watercourses<sup>158</sup>.

Moreover, this tendency towards more action in mainland government by Venetian authority fits trends apparent in a wider range of policy sectors than those affecting the economy. In the half century or so before the Agnadello crisis – despite the lack of any sort of blueprint, and amidst quite a lot of muddling – Venetian authority indeed broadened the sphere and increased the intensity of its intervention in Terraferma matters, albeit with the effect of stimulating defence of their prerogatives by the mainland civic councils<sup>159</sup>.

Thirdly, despite the scarcity of adequate research on other mainland provinces with which to compare Padua's experience, it also seems clear that for important single features analyzed here two other, overlapping hypotheses receive further confirmation. In economic terms, earlier and more intense policy intervention by Venetian authority in the eastern mainland areas nearer Venice is apparent: this was especially the case for woodland and for the Signoria's rights over confiscated land. In political terms, the limits evident in the exercise of power by the council may be considered further proof of the Paduan civic élite's earlier and greater relative weakness in comparison with those of other Terraferma cities, apart from Treviso.

Fourthly, there was significant overlap between Venetian state policy and needs specific to the capital, and also Venetians' private interests, with at least partial implications of conflict with the interests represented – in a broader or narrower sense – by Padua's civic institutions and élite. This was certainly true of policy over woods and woodland, and of most of the practical effects of the attribution of rights connected with land by Venetian authorities, especially those in the capital.

<sup>158</sup> Knapton, 2013, 101-02.

<sup>159</sup> The question is discussed in Varanini, 2010, 58-63.

Fifthly, important Venetian choices were wholly or largely determined by needs which were more contingent than strategic, and more political than economic in their conception, especially where the aim was to increase or protect state income, whether fiscal or from other sources: thus the concern with identifying and selling the Signoria's landed rights, and also many decisions about direct taxation affecting land. This does not detract, however, from the economic consequences of such choices, which in some cases took on a higher and clearer profile over time, acquiring a broader rationale, as was to happen with commons.

Lastly, let us return to the Paduan civic élite's perspective. Though this essay seeks to avoid any sort of teleology based on its behaviour during the 1509 crisis of the Terraferma state, the evidence offered above does help to understand some events of that year. For Padua, rights over land indeed featured massively, with economic and political issues overlapping very heavily. In the city's brief period under imperial rather than Venetian control, the status of Venetians' property in the Padovano was a key issue; more conciliatory, prudent initial choices by the civic élite were overridden mainly by imperial authority bent on confiscating it, and the élite then seems to have aligned with this view. In discussion of where to destine these assets, the Monte di Pietà was an early candidate for half, but the principal proposal was for government use, including funding the university, and some action was taken to list them and to seize that year's crops. Individual Venetian owners took steps to defend their possession of their lands and their receipt of crops and rents, and government representatives supported their rights via negotiation with authority in Padua. Then, once defeated, many of the Paduan élite were punished by confiscation of their property. While free of Venice, the élite had cancelled arrears of the *dadie* due to the exchequer (exaction records were burnt), and abolished the tax itself, so cancelling direct state levies on land – a major policy reversal, however ephemeral. Landowner-peasant relations also featured massively during the period of crisis, though in less simplistic terms than those hallowed by the myth of Venice, with its account of straight peasant hostility to the *cives* and loyalty to Venetian landowners and government<sup>160</sup>.

Evidence offered above also helps explain statements made in 1509, especially the accusations launched in the city's name during the hiatus of Venetian government. Long-term loss of rights or control over land in fact figures largely in Sanudo's account of the words the city's representative spoke before the emperor Maximilian:

Et quella città di Padoa, che se dice esser de' padoani, non hè parte alcuna che sia sua, non le mure, non le case, non chiese, né officii, né beneficii, né preminentie alcune; e cussì fora di la terra, né campo coltivato... niente è che più sia nostro, ma tutto extorto et tiratone da le mane per essi venitiani, parte con uxure, parte per altre vie indirete...<sup>161</sup>.

<sup>160</sup> Bonardi, 27-28, 31, 33-34, 36-41, 44-47, 62 ff.; Varanini, 2011, 133-34, 158-161.

<sup>161</sup> Sanudo, VIII, 468-69: "And the city of Padua is said to belong to the Paduans, but no part of it

It is worth remembering that another Paduan representative had conveyed a similar message, albeit in less harsh terms, in protesting before authority in Venice against the *campatico*, the extraordinary direct tax imposed on landowners in 1501, eight years before the cataclysm which followed Agnadello. On that same occasion representatives of other Terraferma cities also did their rhetorical best in pleading poverty, but the words used by Padua's representative perhaps struck deeper, as well as confirming that these stereotypes were already present in the civic élite's self-representation before 1509. The province's landowning split one third each between churchmen, Venetians and Paduans, the Paduan envoy said, and the majority of ecclesiastical benefices were in Venetian hands, so that – referring to one of the versions of the myth current over the origins of Venice itself – “padoani haver dà principio a questa terra [*Venice*], et è povera al presente”<sup>162</sup>.

The diarist Girolamo Priuli gives a more pondered interpretation than Sanudo's of the Paduan *cives*' behaviour in 1509, dwelling on the extent of voluntary sale of Padovano land to Venetian buyers by Paduans in the decades preceding, and consequent Paduan resentment: an interpretation at least partly supported by research findings about such sales, though this essay has confirmed the economic and political significance of numerous episodes of attribution to Venetians of rights over Padovano land by authority in Venice. The exercise of authority by Venetian government over and above Padua was indeed such that Paduan *cives* could feel partly insecure, or at least insufficiently reassured, in their priority quest to protect and if possible increase their landed assets, and the evidence concerning policy over land examined for the half century before Agnadello demonstrates this element of insecurity, mixed with irritation<sup>163</sup>.

is theirs: neither the walls nor the houses, the churches, the offices, the benefices nor any sort of pre-eminence; so too outside the city, no ploughland... nothing remains as ours, but it has all been extorted and pulled from our grasp by Venetians, partly by usury, partly through other devious methods...”.

<sup>162</sup> Sanudo, III, 1381-82, 4 February 1501: “Paduans founded this city [*Venice*], and are now reduced to poverty.”

<sup>163</sup> On the diarists in 1509: Cervelli, 47-50 (and 54-57 on 1501). See Varanini, 1996a, 831, on Venetians' purchases of land from mid fifteenth century onwards from leading Paduan families.



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#### *Abstract*

This essay examines the political destiny and function in government of the civic institutions and élites of formerly independent urban polities once they had settled into the new political context of the Italian regional states in the fifteenth century. Research conducted from the 1970s onwards has established the greater weakness of Padua's municipal institutions and élite in relation to Venice, as compared to the experience of many other cities of the Terraferma dominion. The essay focuses on the profile of issues connected with land in the Paduan civic council's activity in the later fifteenth century, also seeking to gauge the extent of its autonomy in policy-making and its perception of its role, especially in relation to the action of Venetian authority. The archival material used concerns both the activity of the Paduan council and the more general conduct of government in Venice and Padua.

#### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; Venice; politics; economy; land

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# Il consiglio maggiore del comune di Verona nel 1367\*

di Gian Maria Varanini

## 1. Consigli comunali e regimi signorili nel Trecento: le città venete

Lo sviluppo della monografia di Benjamin Kohl dedicata a *Padua under the Carrara*, scritta negli anni Novanta dopo una più che ventennale gestazione (i primi contatti dello studioso statunitense con Padova risalgono anzi agli anni Sessanta)<sup>1</sup>, ha coinciso temporalmente con una profonda trasformazione degli studi di storia politica e sociale sulle città italiane del tardo medioevo.

Gli studi recenti sulle signorie cittadine hanno infatti fortemente sfumato la contrapposizione, tradizionale nella storiografia italiana, tra regimi comunali per così dire democratici e regimi signorili del Duecento e del Trecento, sottolineando come l'assetto politico di molte città dell'Italia centrosettentrionale sia stato caratterizzato da "esperienze politiche ibride, o intermedie", difficilmente inquadrabili in una definizione secca. Questa rilettura si colloca in modo appropriato in una prospettiva cronologicamente ampia, che abbraccia l'intero arco temporale dalla fine del Duecento agli inizi del Quattrocento, pur riconoscendo la "mutazione signorile" in senso autoritario che l'assetto politico delle città italiane conobbe nei decenni centrali del secolo XIV, e il conseguente, crescente distacco tra governanti e governati. Piuttosto di aggettivare e declinare un "presunto modello signorile" unitario (protosignorie, cripto signorie...) individuato dal "denominatore comune della forma personale di potere", la revisione storiografica che negli ultimi vent'anni si è consolidata articola caso per caso, città per città la scansione tra l'una e l'altra forma di governo, le modalità di effettivo esercizio del potere, le dinamiche sociali ed economiche<sup>2</sup>. La direzione è chiara, ma per quanto un buon numero di ricerche siano state ormai svolte, occorrono ancora, per molte specifiche situazioni, studi che tengano conto della

\* Ringrazio per consigli e indicazioni Edoardo Demo, Tiziana Franco, Michael Knapton, Silvia Musetti, Ermanno Orlando, Fausta Piccoli, Mariacarla Rossi.

<sup>1</sup> Lo ricorda egli stesso *in limine* a Kohl, 1998, XIII.

<sup>2</sup> Riprendo le formulazioni citate nel testo dalla sintesi, molto chiara proprio per la sua destinazione didattica e provvista di una buona e aggiornata bibliografia, di Zorzi, 1-10, anche per le citazioni. Cfr. anche Lazzarini.

dimensione urbana nel suo insieme, e constatino per le città trecentesche – senza schematismi – le modalità concrete che i signori adottano per governare l'economia, per gestire la fiscalità e l'esercito (professionale, e popolare), per creare e per mantenere consenso grazie alla politica urbanistica e al mecenatismo, come ha fatto Kohl per Padova.

In questo quadro, anche se gli aspetti culturali e di costruzione di un'immagine del potere (in precedenza assai trascurati) sono stati nelle ricerche recenti al centro dell'interesse (e giustamente), i rapporti tra i signori e le istituzioni del comune cittadino (che da “città stato” diventa “ente amministrativo”)<sup>3</sup> mantengono un'importanza cruciale, tanto nella prima quanto nella seconda metà del Trecento. Consapevoli dei rischi che poteva comportare in termini di consenso l'abolizione di istituzioni e la modifica di pratiche profondamente radicate, piuttosto che abolire e agire d'imperio i governi signorili preferiscono spesso svuotare dall'interno istituzioni e organismi collegiali, oppure subordinarli a organi di governo più snelli ed efficaci, oppure procedere per addizione affiancando, ai vecchi e tradizionali, nuovi organi di governo sottoposti al proprio diretto controllo. In tal senso va interpretata la trasformazione delle fattorie signorili che dalla primigenia funzione di gestione del patrimonio privato dei signori passano a quella di organi di gestione della finanza statale e anche di coordinamento del sistema fiscale<sup>4</sup>; e nella stessa direzione va il consolidamento e la formalizzazione delle suppliche, che creano percorsi alternativi per l'amministrazione della giustizia<sup>5</sup>.

Orbene, è evidente che in questo quadro così complesso i consigli dei comuni cittadini rivestono un ruolo di grande importanza<sup>6</sup>. Il loro “declassamento da organi di decisione a passivi organi di consenso ossia, in poche parole, lo scollamento tra campo del governante e scenario dei governati”<sup>7</sup> è, nella prospettiva di un'analisi istituzionale, un discrimine importante se non decisivo per segnare il passaggio dal comune alla signoria. “Al suo consiglio non sona campane”, ricorda Niccolò de' Rossi, giurista e poeta trevigiano di orientamenti guelfi, a proposito di Cangrande I della Scala per qualificarlo come “tiranno”, in uno dei suoi sonetti indirizzati a Giovanni XXII, attorno al 1325<sup>8</sup>; e negli stessi anni nel *Defensor pacis* Marsilio da Padova riflette con attenzione sul rapporto tra i consigli maggiori come “sede allargata di partecipazione” e “il modello di consiglio ristretto, in cui l'opinione dei

<sup>3</sup> Secondo una formulazione, sempre valida, proposta oltre trent'anni fa da Pini.

<sup>4</sup> Basti qui un rinvio a Mainoni.

<sup>5</sup> Mi permetto di rinviare a Varanini, 2002, con cenni anche ad altri contesti (Bologna, Ferrara).

<sup>6</sup> La presenza del tema in alcune recenti sintesi di carattere didattico dimostra che esso è storiograficamente consolidato: cfr. Zorzi, 108 ss. (“Il controllo dei consigli”); Tanzini, 2010, 108-110.

<sup>7</sup> Questa affermazione di carattere generale si legge in un contributo, che resta il più significativo *status quaestionis* circa la signoria carrarese di Padova dopo la monografia di Kohl: Collodo, 2005, 20 (la citazione), 29 ss. (qualche ulteriore osservazione sui consigli cittadini).

<sup>8</sup> Brugnolo, 163 (sonetto 282).



cittadini viene elaborata dal ceto dirigente in proposta legislativa”<sup>9</sup>. Sì, perché occorre distinguere tra consiglio e consiglio, perché non è certo una novità, infatti, il fatto che le grandi assemblee, i consigli maggiori dei comuni, già nel Duecento svolgevano una ben modesta funzione sul piano della elaborazione delle decisioni politiche, e tanto nelle città a reggimento comunale quanto nei comuni cittadini soggetti ad una autorità signorile già nel Duecento i consigli minori costituivano un elemento stabile del panorama istituzionale<sup>10</sup>. Nel Trecento questa evoluzione procede; compaiono organismi collegiali ristretti variamente denominati (spesso si usa la denominazione di *deputati ad utilia*). Segna, piuttosto, una rottura l’affermazione, nella seconda metà del secolo, dei *consilia domini*, organismi informali operanti *ad nutum*, che si raccordano alla macchina burocratico-amministrativa del comune cittadino mediante i *mandata* (provvedimenti a validità immediata e piena, “come se fossero stati assunti da tutto il popolo e dai consigli della città”, secondo la formula adottata a Padova nel 1351 nello statuto di investitura di Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara)<sup>11</sup> o le *ambaxate* (questa è la terminologia adottata dai della Scala) promananti dal signore che “vult et mandat”<sup>12</sup>.

L’importanza dell’arengo e del consiglio maggiore del comune, e il loro ruolo di fonte e simbolo della sovranità, resta tuttavia potenzialmente significativa in alcuni ambiti della vita politica delle città. Il primo è ovviamente quello della legittimazione del potere del signore, in occasione del sempre delicatissimo momento dell’avvicendamento tra un *dominus* e l’altro, mediante il conferimento dell’*arbitrium*. Non di rado questo passaggio formale è percepito come insufficiente, e la riunione dell’arengo che conferisce l’*arbitrium* può essere seguita o sostituita – in particolare nei casi nei quali il nuovo *dominus* non è autoctono – dal giuramento personale del singolo *civis*, che viene espressamente richiesto. Ad esempio a Ferrara, in occasione del temporaneo avvicendamento della Chiesa romana agli Estensi, si procede – ma siamo nel 1310 – a un plebiscito, con elencazione nominativa di tutti i 3.500 *cives capofamiglia*<sup>13</sup>. Il secondo ambito nel quale le riunioni dell’arengo e del consiglio maggiore mantengono, anche nelle città soggette a un governo personale, una funzione significativa – simbolicamente significativa, in quanto simulacro e memoria della sovranità popolare – è meno facilmente circoscrivibile, perché nei diversi contesti cittadini si sedimentano pratiche molto diverse. Faccio a questo riguardo l’esempio di Verona nel Trecento. A

<sup>9</sup> Il passo è opportunamente antologizzato da Tanzini, 2010, 108.

<sup>10</sup> Cfr. sul punto, con ampia documentazione, Sbarbaro e ora Tanzini, 2013.

<sup>11</sup> Collodo, 2005, 24.

<sup>12</sup> Il fenomeno riguarda ambedue le signorie venete del Trecento maturo (per limitarsi allo scenario geografico pertinente a questo saggio), ma non mancano scarti significativi tra i due casi: ad esempio, il *consilium domini* di Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara attorno agli anni Ottanta è dotato di una propria sede e di un sigillo proprio, e quindi di un grado notevole di autonomia istituzionale e documentaria: Varanini, 1995, 46-48.

<sup>13</sup> Fontana; Ostoja.

termini di statuto, il consiglio cittadino è convocato annualmente per il conferimento *ad brevia*, mediante sorteggio, degli uffici pubblici<sup>14</sup>; e l'arengo mantiene una funzione di scenario dell'amministrazione della giustizia, perché le sentenze podestarili *latae in arengo* sono inappellabili<sup>15</sup>.

Rispetto ai problemi sin qui evocati, le signorie trecentesche delle città venete costituiscono un buon *test*: perché ovviamente si inseriscono nella tendenza generale, ma come si è accennato presentano sfumature specifiche<sup>16</sup>, e nessuna situazione è identica a un'altra, fermo restando che tanto a Padova quanto a Verona (e pure in Vicenza soggetta nel Trecento agli Scaligeri) "le convocazioni del consiglio maggiore sono ... meno eccezionali di quanto non si ritenga"<sup>17</sup>.

"Padua's Great Council had maintained a shadowy existence, convened in order to nominate a new *podestà* and occasionally elect a board of syndicators at the end of a podesta's term of office", ricorda Kohl<sup>18</sup>. Già dal XIII secolo i seggi consiliari erano trasmissibili agli eredi e cedibili, e dopo il 1319 (quando *dominante* Iacopo da Carrara il consiglio maggiore ratificò l'assoggettamento della città, minacciata da Cangrande I della Scala, al protettorato di Enrico II conte di Gorizia) "non si ha notizia di sedute del consiglio della città per decisioni riguardanti gli indirizzi di politica internazionale e i rapporti col mondo esterno"<sup>19</sup>. Forse ridotto a 100 componenti (per la crisi delle famiglie magnatizie padovane o per esser meglio controllato?) da Ubertino da Carrara (1340 c.), sempre docile alle scelte dei signori, il consiglio padovano mantenne tuttavia la funzione di "organo di legittimazione dei dinasti" e di traduttore in forme statutarie della legislazione signorile<sup>20</sup>. Ma nel 1358 è ancora percepita come attuale la funzione cui è adibita la sala "ubi fiunt consilia generalia", e nel 1369 il "generale consilium" si riunisce per eleggere il podestà<sup>21</sup>.

Certo ha caratteristiche diverse da questa comunque umbratile presenza il consiglio che Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara convocò il 12 aprile 1372, essendovi necessità di eleggere cinque cittadini padovani che conferissero con cinque cittadini veneziani per risolvere quei problemi di confine che di lì a poco avrebbero provocato la guerra, nota appunto come guerra dei confini<sup>22</sup>: tale era stata la mediazione proposta dagli ambasciatori pisani, fiorentini e

<sup>14</sup> Per un esempio trecentesco, cfr. qui sotto, nota 31.

<sup>15</sup> Varanini, 2013a, 106.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. qui sopra, nota 12.

<sup>17</sup> Varanini, 1995, 50.

<sup>18</sup> Kohl, 1998, 245.

<sup>19</sup> Collodo, 2005, 24.

<sup>20</sup> Collodo, 2005, 31 (anche per la citazione). Anche per quanto riguarda il consiglio dei Sessanta, nel 1337 – come ricorda Kohl, 1998, 59 – si ha menzione del fatto che la sede di riunione (in precedenza "Chamber of the Sixty") aveva cambiato funzione ("Camera que consuevit appellari de Sexaginta").

<sup>21</sup> Riprendo da Varanini 1995, 50 (anche per il rinvio alle fonti).

<sup>22</sup> Su questo snodo importante cfr. ora Simonetti, 178-209.

ungheresi tra la repubblica di Venezia e la signoria carrarese. Il titolo apposto nel testo della cronaca di Galeazzo Gatari dice “come messer Francesco convocò il suo Consiglio in Sala maggiore”; e nel testo il cronista spiega innanzitutto che le motivazioni della convocazione sono in parte d’immagine (perché gli ambasciatori esteri “vedessero la nobiltà del suo Consiglio”), in parte legate all’esigenza di ottenere un esplicito assenso a una scelta politicamente delicata: “et anco perché si trattava della giurisdizione del paese, perché ogni uomo dicesse la sua intenzione in questa cosa, e perché a lui pareva molto ponderosa per la sua riputazione”.

“Furono dunque comandati due per Casa a questo Consiglio”, e si tratta di 84 famiglie aristocratiche oltre alla “nobile e prima Casa da Carrara”, la sola che ha nella circostanza più di due rappresentanti. L’esito di questa riunione svolta in una sede ufficiale fu quello scontato della elezione di due procuratori “per adempire per lo Comune ogni sua facenda”, nelle persone di Iacopo Turchetti e del notaio Antonio da Santa Croce; ma Galeazzo Gatari non ha problemi a riconoscere che, di fronte alla proposta del signore, “ogni uomo per istar in pace con la signoria ne fu contento, dicendo che piaceva a tutto il Consiglio per la cagione predetta”<sup>23</sup>. Si tratta dunque di un’assemblea che ha una sostanziale capacità rappresentativa, tanto che il cronista non esita a definirla “Consiglio”; ma è rilevante che si riconosca tranquillamente che la struttura portante è quella delle *domus* aristocratiche<sup>24</sup>. In altri momenti d’emergenza come quelli dell’abdicazione di Francesco il Vecchio (1388) e della guerra con Venezia nel 1404, per avere un formale consenso su scelte politiche, i signori padovani ricorsero a “larghe assemblee”<sup>25</sup>.

Altrettanto significative sono le oscillazioni lessicali – tra la sostanza dei *meliores cives* e la forma del *maius consilium* – che compaiono nella narrazione del cronista vicentino Conforto da Costozza, a proposito di quanto accadde nella città berica il 15 ottobre 1375. In tale circostanza il terzetto delle autorità municipali (podestà, capitano e fattore signorile)<sup>26</sup> impose l’assenso alla designazione di Bartolomeo e Antonio, figli illegittimi del signore, come successori di Cansignorio della Scala, agonizzante (sarebbe scomparso il 19 ottobre)<sup>27</sup>, nella signoria su Vicenza.

<sup>23</sup> Gatari, 51.

<sup>24</sup> Lo rilevò già Collodo, 1990, 320 (cap. IX, “La pratica del potere”; ricerca risalente al 1986). Insieme con Kohl, 1998 (alla quale si aggiunga un altro pressoché contemporaneo contributo: Kohl, 1997), questo saggio – e il parallelo “Signore e mercanti: storia di un’alleanza” (cap. X, pp. 329-403), ricompreso nella medesima raccolta – illustra molto bene un aspetto cruciale della storia del ceto dirigente padovano in età carrarese. Cfr. anche, in diversa prospettiva, Plant.

<sup>25</sup> Collodo, 2005, 31 e nota 27, ove si accomuna anche la riunione del 1372 sotto tale definizione (a mio avviso impropriamente).

<sup>26</sup> Per questo assetto, che anticipa nella città veneta l’organigramma triadico (podestà, capitano, camerlengo) poi confermato dalla dominazione viscontea e veneziana, cfr. Varanini, 1988c, 155-156.

<sup>27</sup> Cfr. per un profilo sintetico, con bibliografia aggiornata, Varanini, 2011a; anche Barbieri.

Die lune XV octobris, summo mane, curialiter detempti fuerunt ultra LXXX ex melioribus civibus Vincentie, de quorum numero fui unus, in palatio comunis in quodam camino, ubi frequenter comedit potestas, ubi territi, ignorantes causam, steterunt usque ad horam terciarum, qua intraverunt ad eos dominus potestas, capitaneus et Gilinus tercius cum litteris Domini, de ipsius Domini gravi egritudine inter cetera specialem memoriam facientes et quod mandabat quod per maius consilium et populum vinctinum ipse et adolescentes filii sui Bartholomeus et Anthonius fratres crearentur in Dominos civitatis et districtus in solidum generales et quod, si contingeret ipsum ex humanis rebus ad meliorem vitam transire, ipsi fratres deberent equaliter dominari. Quare omnes suprascripti cives descripti per nomina iuraverunt sacramento fidelitatem in manibus suprascriptorum trium rectorum pro Dominis antedictis, statimque pulsato consilio eoque coadunato et generali populi multitudine per generalem reformationem creati fuerunt domini memorati in solidum, ut premissum est, in Dominos generales traditumque fuit dominium et vexilum populi per virum nobilem Iohannem Petrum de Protis, ad hec per ipsum consilium specialiter constitutum, ubi etiam omnes singulariter descripti iuraverunt fidelitatem in manibus sepedictorum trium ut supra<sup>28</sup>.

Il cronista, che sottolinea forse non senza compiacimento di scrivere per esperienza diretta (“de quorum fui unus”: anch’egli era tra i maggiorenti), non esita dunque a fare esplicito riferimento a una costrizione, sia pure in guanti di velluto (“curialiter detempti”), a una condizione psicologica di subordinazione e di paura (“territi”), alla informalità, e alla inappropriatezza del luogo (“in quodam camino ubi frequenter comedit potestas”, annota con un certo disappunto). C’è un ordine esplicito (“mandabat”) finalizzato a che Cansignorio stesso e i suoi due giovani figli fossero eletti in solido “domini generales” della città e del distretto da parte dei due organismi costituzionali, il *maius consilium* e l’arengo popolare. In tal modo si assicurava la continuità dinastica, riesumando un vecchio espediente che Alberto I della Scala, il fondatore della signoria scaligera, aveva escogitato sin dalla fine del Duecento, facendo designare il primogenito Bartolomeo I della Scala come “capitaneus penes se”<sup>29</sup>: morto Cansignorio, i due fratelli (formalmente già signori insieme con il padre, anche se solo da pochi giorni), avrebbero continuato a “equaliter dominari”. C’è prima di tutto un giuramento nominativo da parte degli oltre ottanta “meliores”, che li impegna personalmente; ma subito dopo si radunano il consiglio e una “generalis populi multitudo” (assimilabile all’arengo), e si procede all’elezione formale dei nuovi signori a “domini generales” con la consegna del “vexilum populi” da parte del delegato del consiglio, il “vir nobilis” Giampietro Proti. Infine, un giuramento personale di fedeltà viene prestato da parte di tutti i consiglieri, più probabilmente che da parte di tutti i componenti dell’arengo, nelle mani delle già citate magistrature apicali di Vicenza scaligera.

<sup>28</sup> Cfr. Conforto da Costozza, 10; ne segnalò l’interesse Arnaldi, 306. Su questo notaio/cronista cfr. anche Zabbia, 47-49, 77-84.

<sup>29</sup> Zorzi, 74.

## 2. I consigli del comune di Verona nel 1367 e 1369: le circostanze e la documentazione

Una guerra, o una delicatissima (sempre delicatissima) successione dinastica, sono occasioni eccezionali, che giustificano il ricorso da parte del *dominus* per un verso alle forze realmente egemoni nella società urbana (le ottantaquattro casate aristocratiche padovane, gli ottanta *meliores cives* vicentini) e ai consigli maggiori e agli arenghi che costituiscono pur sempre la fonte della sovranità, in un quadro di riferimento che i governi per così dire tirannici (pur legittimati dall'imperatore mediante il titolo vicariale) non abbandonano, e tengono sempre d'occhio. Orbene, in questo contesto non è irrilevante il fatto che lo stesso Cansignorio della Scala convocò almeno due volte nel 1367 (in giugno e in settembre), e una volta nel 1369, il consiglio maggiore del comune di Verona, per problemi che – se non sono di amministrazione del tutto ordinaria – sono certamente di *routine* se paragonate ad un avvicendamento signorile.

Queste convocazioni confermano dunque che parecchie centinaia di persone – costituenti “due partes et ultra dictorum consiliariorum dicti maioris consilii comunis et hominum dicte civitatis Verone”<sup>30</sup>, e appartenenti come vedremo agli strati più vari della società cittadina – frequentavano il palazzo del comune e la sua “sala maioris consilii comunis et hominum civitatis Verone”; e non consideravano un fatto eccezionale il proprio coinvolgimento sia pure passivo in queste sedute, convocate come da prassi “voce preconia et ad sonum campane more solito ad consilium generale ipsorum comunis et hominum pro utilitatibus dicti comunis et hominum peragendis et pertractandis”. (Resta aperta del resto la possibilità che emergano ulteriori testimonianze di altre sedute ordinarie del consiglio maggiore: nei primi anni Trenta ad esempio esso delibera in materia suntuaria<sup>31</sup>, e nel 1348 un illustre aristocratico come Cagnolo Nogarola “designa un procuratore per ricevere la sorte ed eleggere sé o altri nel Maggior Consiglio di Verona”)<sup>32</sup>.

È ancora (e certo non casualmente) la politica estera, e il rapporto con Venezia, a creare l'occasione. Il 23 giugno 1367 infatti il consiglio maggiore del comune di Verona nominò procuratori i giudici Agostino Giolfini e Giovanni Maggi<sup>33</sup>, il notaio Quirico di Sperandio e Filippo di Rolandino Maffei: tutti personaggi di fiducia del signore scaligero, in particolare il Giolfini che aveva presenziato anche alla riunione del consiglio maggiore che nel 1359 concesse

<sup>30</sup> Così nel verbale della riunione del 23 giugno 1367, citato alla nota 35.

<sup>31</sup> Biblioteca Comunale di Verona, ms. 1142, c. 2v: “coram Petro de Aligeriis” vicario di Guido da Correggio, dunque fra il 1331 e il 1335 (Fainelli, 175).

<sup>32</sup> Sandri, 340-341 (la ricerca risale al 1940-41).

<sup>33</sup> Su Giovanni Maggi, che insegnò a Verona l'arte notarile commentando Rolandino Passaggeri, ammiratissimo per questo dai notai veronesi che lo dissero “huius artis lucerna coruschans”, cfr. Varanini, 2009, 31, e Avesani, 10-12.

l'*arbitrium* a Cansignorio e a Paolo Alboino, poi incarcerato nel 1365<sup>34</sup>. Si trattava di protestare di fronte al doge Marco Corner e ai suoi *consiliarii* contro le indebite esazioni e vessazioni cui sono sottoposti i *mercatores* veronesi a Venezia, e nel suo territorio, e per denunciare i patti vigenti (che risalivano alla pace di Venezia del gennaio 1338, alla conclusione della guerra combattuta da Venezia e Firenze contro Mastino II della Scala, come viene esplicitamente ricordato). All'atto, definito *procuratio* o *sindicatus*, presenziano 867 consiglieri elencati nominativamente<sup>35</sup>, come non accade mai lungo tutto il Trecento carrarese a Padova<sup>36</sup> (mentre per Vicenza durante il dominio scaligero abbiamo tre elenchi nominativi, risalenti al 1314, al 1337 e al 1346)<sup>37</sup>. Il 18 settembre dello stesso anno, in una nuova convocazione del consiglio maggiore e ancora alla presenza di Valeriano Lambardi da Cetona, "generalis vicarius et rector civitatis et districtus Verone", Agostino Giolfini espone al comune di Verona quanto accaduto il 6 settembre precedente, a Venezia "super palatio ducalis domini, in thalamo infrascripti domini ducis", alla presenza tra gli altri di Raffaino Caresini cancelliere (e ben noto cronista), dei notai di cancelleria<sup>38</sup>, e di uno scarso gruppetto di veronesi eminenti *habitatores* a Venezia (Antonio di Francesco Bevilacqua, Antonio dall'Aglio, Ludovico del fu Antonio Maffei e altri)<sup>39</sup>. In questa occasione, sono presenti 742 consiglieri<sup>40</sup>. La questione non era tuttavia ancora

<sup>34</sup> "Dominus Augustinus iudex quondam domini Guillelmi iudicis de Falsurgo": Bianchi e Granuzzo, 280 (st. CCLXXXIII del libro I). Agostino Giolfini discendeva da uno "Iolfinus", legato ai primi Scaligeri e ai Castelbarco, che aveva fatto carriera nella chiesa veronese (ottenendo per giunta anche un canonicato a Trento) sin dagli anni Settanta del Duecento, e da tale posizione di potere aveva poi favorito la carriera del proprio figlio illegittimo Guglielmo, a lungo vicario episcopale a Verona nella prima metà del Trecento (cfr. Rossi, 46-50). Agostino morì nel 1376; del suo grandissimo prestigio, delle cariche ricoperte per la città, e del fatto che incontrò nelle sue vesti di ambasciatore della città di Verona sia il papa che l'imperatore – così intendo l'espressione "visere monarcam utrumque" – fa fede l'epitafio, ancor oggi esistente nella Cattedrale di Verona: "Augustinus ego fueram, qui munera quondam / aspera pro patria multa notanda tuli. / Orator merui Monarcam visere utrumque; ars mihi, et officium Iustinianus erat" (Maffei, II, 138).

<sup>35</sup> Archivio di Stato di Verona (d'ora in poi ASVr), *Bevilacqua - Verona Comune*, b. 188, perg. 31 ("Procura comunis Verone in personas Augustini de Iolfinis, domini Iohannis de Madiis amborum iudicum, Quirici notarii quondam domini Sperandei et Philippi domini Rolandi de Mafeis ad comparandum coram excelso et magnifico domino domino duce Venetiarum et cum ipso videndum, examinandum et de novo confirmandum pacta olim facta inter ipsum comune Venetiarum et dictum comune Verone"). Già segnalato (come gli altri sotto citati) da Fainelli, 222-223 (*Appendice*, docc. 5-8), che non menziona Scipione Maffei – sul quale cfr. qui sotto, nota 44 e testo corrispondente –, questo documento (così come quelli citati di seguito) fu da me riesumato e analizzato molto rapidamente in Varanini, 1988a, 109-110. A Fainelli rinvio anche per qualche notizia sui due podestà/*rectores*.

<sup>36</sup> Collodo, 2005, 30.

<sup>37</sup> Varanini, 1988c, 181-185.

<sup>38</sup> Tra i quali quel "Bartholomeus Ursio" (o "Urso") che registra la copia di spettanza veneziana del primo verbale (cfr. nota 43).

<sup>39</sup> Sui rapporti dei Maffei con Venezia, cfr. Mueller, 373.

<sup>40</sup> ASVr, *Bevilacqua - Verona Comune*, b. CLXXXVIII, perg. 32 ("Protestatio aliquorum pactorum facta per comune Verone comuni Veneciarum").

risolta un paio d'anni più tardi, perché il 16 luglio 1369 un consiglio (molto meno affollato: 335 presenti, e infatti non si dice esplicitamente che i presenti superano il numero legale costituito dai 2/3 degli aventi diritto, per quanto in realtà il *quorum* fosse raggiunto) è nuovamente convocato per confermare la procura ad Agostino Giolfini: “de mandato”, questa volta, del *miles* Giovanni Garzoni da Pescia, definito a differenza del predecessore “potestas et rector”<sup>41</sup>.

Non sono prive di importanza alcune peculiarità diplomatiche dei documenti che tramandano questi verbali, lunghi e assai impegnativi dal punto di vista redazionale per i notai. Come dimostrano le annotazioni archivistiche sul *verso*, di mano del notaio veronese del tardo Cinquecento Alessandro Canobbio<sup>42</sup>, tutti furono conservati nell'archivio della famiglia Bevilacqua, al quale pervennero per strade non conosciute, ma comunque fortunate (perché se fossero stati conservati nell'archivio del comune di Verona sarebbero andati distrutti). Del verbale del 23 giugno 1367 abbiamo ambedue gli originali, di mano del notaio Benvenuto del fu Bongiovanni dalle Falci di Santo Stefano; uno dei due naturalmente è la copia di spettanza veneziana, come prova un'annotazione sul margine inferiore, sotto la sottoscrizione<sup>43</sup>. Anche quest'ultimo fece parte sino al Settecento dell'archivio Bevilacqua, ma da esso lo sottrasse Scipione Maffei, che annotò di suo pugno sul verso il nome di un proprio antenato, un commerciante residente allora a Venezia<sup>44</sup>, e non restituì il documento; infatti esso è oggi conservato nel piccolo fondo archivistico della famiglia Maffei presso l'Archivio di Stato di Verona<sup>45</sup>. In ambedue questi atti, così come in quello del 1369, i nomi dei consiglieri sono elencati l'uno di seguito all'altro; nel verbale del settembre 1367, dovuto alla penna molto elegante del

<sup>41</sup> Corsivo mio; ASVr, *Bevilacqua - Verona Comune*, b. CLXXXVIII, perg. 33 (“Sindicatus comunis Verone in personam domini Augustini de Iolfinis ad pacta facienda cum magnifico et excelso duce Venetiarum”). Per lo speculate sindacato conferito ai provveditori di comun veneziani il 25 luglio 1369, cfr. Mozzato, 102-103 (doc. 225-226).

<sup>42</sup> La segnatura archivistica assegnata al documento del 23 giugno 1367 è “C(alto) 12, n(umero) 4, m(azzo) 3”: questa indicazione si riferisce all'originale conservato nell'archivio Maffei cui si fa cenno qua sotto, note 44 e 45, e le altre – identiche – modificano solo il numero progressivo. Sull'importante figura del Canobbio, che innovò profondamente la prassi archivistica locale, cfr. ora Scandola, con ampia bibliografia; resta comunque un punto di riferimento utile Benzoni.

<sup>43</sup> “Millesimo trecentesimo sexagesimo septimo, mense iunio, indictione quinta, die vigesimo octavo, recommendatum fuit istud instrumentum ad Cameram dominorum Provisorum comunis per Bartholomeum Urso notarium Curie maioris”. Bartolomeo Urso era stato inviato a Verona, per i primi atti formali relativi a questa controversia, il 10 maggio 1367, dopo una prima notificazione del malumore veneziano del 1° maggio: Orlando, 2012 (doc. 351 e 374). Segnalo qui gli altri documenti di parte veneziana, le date dei quali si intrecciano con le date dei documenti veronesi: Orlando, 2012, doc. 418 del 2 luglio 1367; doc. 542 del 6 settembre 1367; doc. 586 del 10 settembre 1367, in riferimento ai diversi passi procedurali cui ho accennato qua sopra, testo corrispondente a note 39-41.

<sup>44</sup> “Philippus d(omini) Rolandi de Mapheis”. Il nome è evidenziato anche sul *recto*, con una sottolineatura, anch'essa attribuibile al Maffei.

<sup>45</sup> ASVr, *Archivietti privati, Maffei*, b. 1, perg. 5. Le note tergalì, di varie epoche, non forniscono ulteriori elementi significativi.



notaio Marco del fu Marchesio *de Facino*, cittadino vicentino, la lunghissima lista è invece organizzata su due colonne perfettamente impaginate, disposte su una pergamena di buona qualità e ben preparata. Si va a capo dopo ciascun nominativo, e all'inizio (ma solo all'inizio, come si vedrà) si procede, programmaticamente, per categorie: così i pochi giudici occupano le prime quattro righe di ciascuna colonna, i notai, che sono invece presenti in forze con un centinaio di effettivi, sono elencati nelle righe successive di ambedue le colonne (dalla riga 5 alla 50), e così via. Anche questa cura formale nella *mise en page* non è un fatto irrilevante, tutt'altro.

### 3. *La composizione dei consigli veronesi del 1367*

#### 3.1. *Scipione Maffei e le "membrane de' consigli vecchi"*

Agli inizi del Settecento, l'or ora citato Scipione Maffei colse immediatamente l'importanza di queste "membrane de' consigli vecchi" del 1367 e del 1369<sup>46</sup>. Egli le utilizzò già nello scritto del 1719 *Dell'antica condizione di Verona*, e le riprese poi nella sua opera maggiore, la *Verona illustrata*, che di quel saggio rappresenta in certo modo il compiuto sviluppo<sup>47</sup>. Non gli sfuggirono, prima di tutto, le importantissime specificità di storia istituzionale, sottese a queste ripetute convocazioni: nel verbale del 1367, egli annota, "non v'è menzion veruna di Cansignorio che dominava in quel tempo"; e l'esistenza stessa di questo consiglio dimostra che durante la dominazione scaligera "non cessò però mai frattanto la forma del popolar governo, né in alcune cose l'autorità". Dunque, se ovviamente riconosce che gli Scaligeri passarono dalla legittimazione popolare del proprio potere a quella imperiale ("rinunciarono al gius datogli dal popolo"), il grande erudito veronese manifesta una percezione acuta e precisa di quella sostanziale continuità e vitalità della società urbana, e delle istituzioni municipali che la esprimono. Il comune, secondo lui, vive una vita subalterna politicamente ma autonoma, che dal periodo signorile scaligera sarebbe passata – anche attraverso il decisivo momento di chiarificazione e di consolidamento indotto dal governo visconteo (1387-1404)<sup>48</sup> – all'età veneziana. Inoltre, presenta queste affollate riunioni

<sup>46</sup> Per quanto segue cfr. anche Varanini, 1998.

<sup>47</sup> Maffei, III, 26: "[il Consiglio] fu già popolare, come in tutte l'altre città, e si ragunava sempre in numero di molte centinaia".

<sup>48</sup> Come ho più volte rimarcato, fu questo un quindicennio di enorme importanza per la storia delle istituzioni municipali veronesi. Il governo milanese favorì infatti l'assunzione di un ruolo più incisivo da parte dei deputati *ad utilia* e un maggior risalto dei Cinquanta *adiuncti*, il nucleo del futuro Consiglio dei Cinquanta "repraesentantes totum maius consilium": formulazione, quest'ultima, che appare nella documentazione del 1405, l'anno della conquista/dedizione di Verona a Venezia. Per tutto ciò cfr. Varanini, 1979b, che prende spunto da Law; Varanini, 1992a, 185-196 (cap. VI, "I consigli civici veronesi fra la dominazione viscontea e quella veneziana").

come un ritratto di gruppo del ceto dirigente veronese in un momento molto significativo, ricco di origini, di profondo ricambio sociale e di affermazione di un gran numero di famiglie che manterranno un prestigio notevole nei secoli avvenire. Come si è accennato, egli evidenzia la posizione della propria famiglia, le origini della quali peraltro non sono anteriori al secolo XIII (i Maffei erano ghibellini bolognesi, di parte lambertazza, emigrati a Verona subito dopo il grande bando del 1274): e con dignitoso realistico sarcasmo la contrappone alla pretesa antichità di tante altre casate veronesi: “Povera figura farà per altro qui la nobiltà cittadinesca di questa famiglia, di cui documento non si assegna anteriore al decimoterzo secolo, in confronto di tante e tante, quali si afferma in più libri esser state in signoria sin dal Mille e fin dall’Ottocento: ma converrebbe osservare di quante di esse autentici documenti si mostrino per provare quanto si asserisce, e in ogni caso alla verità non si dee per qualunque passione far torto”<sup>49</sup>.

Si tratta peraltro di un accenno polemico abbastanza raro, perché almeno negli scritti editi il grande erudito veronese non affondò mai la lama della critica storica in una direzione – quella della contestazione delle antiche origini di molte casate patrizie, dello svelamento delle loro “incredibili” genealogie<sup>50</sup> – che lo avrebbe posto in rotta di collisione con il ceto al quale egli pur sempre apparteneva. Al contrario, Maffei si serve in più di una occasione dei dati forniti dalla lista dei consiglieri del giugno 1367 per segnalare l’origine trecentesca di questa o quella casata: indicando così sin da allora una delle possibili utilizzazioni di questa fonte e dei paralleli elenchi del settembre 1367 e del luglio 1369.

### 3.2. *Crepuscolo di un’aristocrazia, genesi di un patriziato*

Un’analisi completa di questi elenchi (prenderò specificamente in considerazione i due del 1367 che sono editi altrove ma contestualmente a questo saggio<sup>51</sup>, ma occasionalmente utilizzerò, segnalando la circostanza, anche dati derivati dalla lista del 1369) costituirebbe un lavoro di lunghissima lena, impossibile a svolgersi in questa sede: tanto più le risultanze acquistano senso nella comparazione a monte con le tre liste redatte durante l’età di Ezzelino III da Romano (1238, 1252 e 1254)<sup>52</sup> e soprattutto con il solo antecedente sinora noto di età scaligera (una lista di consiglieri del 1279 – dunque agli inizi dell’età signorile –, pervenuta nella traduzione in volgare

<sup>49</sup> Varanini, 1998, 70.

<sup>50</sup> Cfr. ovviamente Bizzocchi.

<sup>51</sup> Vedili in [www.rivista.retimedievali.it](http://www.rivista.retimedievali.it), 15 (2014), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Pubblicherò prossimamente la prima di queste liste, ancora inedita; molti anni fa ne fece cenno su mia segnalazione Castagnetti, 1984, 59. Allo stesso autore rinvio per rapide considerazioni sui due elenchi di consiglieri degli anni Cinquanta (durante il periodo più aspro della *tirannide ezzeliniana*), già pubblicati e in parte studiati dal Simeoni, e per i numerosi verbali di sedute del consiglio della prima età comunale (anni 1198, 1201, 1207, 1212, ecc.).

della cronaca scritta da un patrizio cinquecentesco, Girolamo Della Corte ovviamente interessatissimo alle origini borghesi e mercantili delle casate del suo tempo, come un secolo e mezzo dopo lo sarebbe stato il Maffei<sup>53</sup>; e nella comparazione a valle con l'assetto patrizio del primo e del pieno Quattrocento, ben conosciuto<sup>54</sup>. Alcune considerazioni tuttavia possono essere svolte, per illustrare il profilo sociale complessivo di questo ceto dirigente, le dinamiche del quale sembrano seguire logiche proprie, solo parzialmente influenzate – come aveva ben visto Scipione Maffei – dall'azione della corte e dal favore di Cansignorio come ascensore sociale.

Va osservato innanzitutto che tra i due verbali del 1367 quello del settembre è formalmente più organizzato, forse in risposta implicita a una richiesta della parte veneziana (che nelle schermaglie procedurali – sulle quali Agostino Giolfini relaziona al consiglio veronese – aveva eccepito su possibili vizi di forma della delega a costui). Il testo si apre infatti con l'elenco dei dodici *deputati ad utilia*, tra le qualificazioni professionali dei quali spiccano quelle di un notaio, di due giudici, e soprattutto – a dar subito una coloritura per così dire popolare e borghese sulla quale subito ritorneremo – di almeno cinque uomini espressi dalle *artes* e dal mondo dell'economia (un cartaiolo e quattro imprenditori tessili: due *draperii*, un *mercarius* e un *garzator*). Segue in questo testo (mentre nel verbale del 23 giugno è posta in apertura) il breve elenco dei giudici: si tratta di poche unità, ma la circostanza non stupisce perché il collegio era assai esiguo numericamente<sup>55</sup>. Immediatamente dopo v'è la lista ben più cospicua dei notai, che sono rispettivamente novantotto (giugno) e ottantacinque (settembre), secondo una tradizione che li vede presenti in forze nei consigli maggiori del comune di Verona anche nel Duecento (nel 1238, per esempio, sfiorano il 20% del totale dei consiglieri)<sup>56</sup>. I notai presenti nel 1367 sono una percentuale cospicua degli iscritti all'arte: la loro matricola fu riformata proprio in quegli anni (nel 1369) abolendo le liste per contrada di residenza ereditate dalla tradizione duecentesca e prevedendo in loro vece due elenchi globali (rispettivamente di 205 – i soli autorizzati a rogare nel palazzo comunale e nella *Domus mercatorum* – e di 120 notai)<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>53</sup> Si tratta di Della Corte, 537-548, menzionato anche da Castagnetti, 1984, 64-65. Cfr. inoltre Varanini, 1988b, e Varanini, 1991a, 339 ss. (par. 2.2., "Il fuoruscitismo in una sola città e l'affermazione di un nuovo ceto dirigente"), in particolare 342-343 per il consiglio del 1279.

<sup>54</sup> Lanaro, 1991, 35-51; anche Lanaro, 1994.

<sup>55</sup> Per la consistenza, numericamente modesta, del collegio dei giudici di Verona, e per il suo funzionamento nella seconda metà del Trecento, quando esso esprime alcune notevoli personalità – e altre ne accoglie provenienti dall'area emiliana e dunque da Bologna e dall'Emilia, piuttosto che dall'ambiente universitario di Padova, generalmente ostile per motivi politici –, cfr. Varanini, 2009, 25-26 (anche per alcuni cenni ai giudici presenti in questi elenchi). Ivi si rammenta che nella tarda età scaligera è all'ambiente universitario bolognese che si fa preferenzialmente capo, anche per pareri e *consilia*.

<sup>56</sup> Castagnetti, 1984, 59.

<sup>57</sup> Sancassani, 13. Per l'altissimo numero dei notai presenti – ma non tutti professionalmente attivi – alla fine del medioevo in molte città italiane di tradizione comunale (se non in tutte), cfr. ad esempio Ascheri.

Ma dopo i *deputati ad utilia* e gli esperti del diritto, la grande massa dei cittadini veronesi presenti alle sedute del consiglio maggiore è elencata senza una *ratio* riconoscibile. Non si riscontrano infatti criteri selettivi di carattere topografico, visto che i consiglieri provengono indifferentemente (e di certo intenzionalmente) da tutte le *guarte* della città (e anche da almeno una delle contrade suburbane extramurarie, San Michele di Campagna)<sup>58</sup>, e neppure un ordine topografico (dal centro alla periferia, da un quartiere all'altro), se si fa eccezione per qualche grappolo di consiglieri residenti nella stessa contrada, che vengono elencati uno dopo l'altro. Ed è proprio l'assenza negli elenchi del 1367 e 1369 di qualsiasi riferimento a gerarchie sociali esplicite – si tratti di criteri formali ed estrinseci di nobiltà, o di distinzioni legate al rapporto con il signore e con la corte – a costituire un primo elemento di interesse. Vediamo distintamente i due aspetti.

L'assenza di *ordines* e di distinzioni formali (*maiores, mediocres, minores; nobiles* cittadini e rurali, distinti dai *cives*) va ricondotta infatti alle vicende duecentesche della società e delle istituzioni veronesi, e configura una differenza importante nella fisionomia dell'*élite* veronese trecentesca, rispetto ad altre città dell'Emilia (un esempio precoce è quello di Modena, 1306)<sup>59</sup>, della Lombardia (un esempio molto tardo è quello di Brescia)<sup>60</sup>, oltre che naturalmente della Marca, come Treviso e in forma diversa Padova. Nella città del Sile, in particolare, la distinzione tra *nobiles, nobiles rusticani, cives* è ancora netta e formalizzata nelle liste di consiglieri di metà Trecento<sup>61</sup>; le grandi casate di tradizione signorile sono elencate a parte, ben distinte dai *cives* ordinari. A Verona invece era largamente scomparsa, nella seconda metà del Duecento, l'antica aristocrazia di età comunale. Essa era rimasta in sella sino all'età ezzeliniana (1236-1259), alimentando com'è ben noto violente lotte di fazione; ma fu proprio nei decenni centrali del Duecento che si innescò un profondo rivolgimento sociale, alimentato dalla prevalenza del comune di popolo guidato da Mastino I della Scala (1259) e sigillato nel 1269 dal bando definitivo e irrimediabile del nocciolo duro della *pars Comitum* (che neppure Enrico VII riuscì nel 1311 a far rientrare in città)<sup>62</sup>. Le antiche *domus* che

<sup>58</sup> Mentre altre contrade extramurarie come Avesa e Quinzano, che pure ospitano cittadini a termini di statuto *pleno iure*, non risultano rappresentate.

<sup>59</sup> Mi riferisco al manoscritto della *Respublica Mutinensis*, il registro redatto dal regime popolare succeduto al governo estense alla morte di Obizzo II, che contiene sia l'elenco di 1500 nobili sia l'elenco dei quasi 6000 *popolani*: cfr. Braidi, 67-80.

<sup>60</sup> Ove ancora in età malatestiana, agli inizi del Quattrocento, le distinzioni di ceto tra *nobiles* e *cives* sono formalmente vigenti, hanno ripercussioni fiscali, e determinano dunque la redazione di specifici elenchi: cfr. Manaresi.

<sup>61</sup> Varanini, 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Per i decenni tra XII e XIII secolo (ma il secondo tra i due saggi si spinge anche più avanti), è d'obbligo la menzione delle ricerche di A. Castagnetti, in particolare Castagnetti, 1987, e Castagnetti, 1990; per il venticinquennio (1236-1259) della dominazione di Ezzelino III, qualche punto anche sotto il profilo del rinnovamento sociale in Varanini, 1992b, 115-16.

avevano guidato il comune cittadino tra XII e XIII secolo furono così sostituite – non tutte ovviamente, ma l'avvicendamento fu assai incisivo – da un nuovo ceto dirigente, poi cresciuto a partire dalla seconda metà del Duecento insieme con gli Scaligeri.

Dispersi in mezzo alla massa degli artigiani, dei lanaioli, dei commercianti, dei numerosissimi *cives* non qualificati, incontriamo nel 1367 qualche stralunato e sparuto superstite di quelle famiglie gloriose: un Aigerio da Lendinara, un Francesco del fu Leone da Nogarole (residente come da tradizione nella contrada di Santa Cecilia), e dunque gli esponenti di due famiglie capitane ali<sup>63</sup>; e ancora un Alessandro Confalonieri (1369; erede della tradizione familiare dei Benzi-Armenardi). Del resto, per altri esponenti aristocratici dello stesso livello, il disadattamento sociale e culturale risulta nel Trecento scaligero ancora maggiore, visto che in qualche caso essi compaiono nei villaggi del contado, gomito a gomito – loro, di tradizione comitale – con i discendenti dei loro sudditi. È questo il caso dei conti da Palazzo a Isola della Scala (già *Insula Comitum*), ma anche dei Crescenzi ad Albaredo d'Adige, e degli Scopati a Baldaria presso Cologna Veneta<sup>64</sup>.

Non meno significativa, nella stessa direzione, è la constatazione che un certo numero di famiglie veronesi, che nella prima e nella piena età comunale avevano avuto piglio e comportamenti da *milites* (certificati anche dal possesso di torri e casetorri, in alcuni casi), appaiano cento o centovent'anni dopo completamente riassorbiti in una dimensione borghese (mi si passi il termine) e in attività professionali e commerciali. Ciò vale per esempio per Antonio del fu *dominus* Leone *de Petrofisso*, che fa di mestiere lo *scavezator* (rivenditore di panni a taglio), oppure per gli Spongati che fanno nel pieno Trecento i *draperii* e i notai, e per i Passioni – una famiglia dell'aristocrazia rurale originaria di Mezzane, nella fascia collinare –; o ancora per Nicola Aleardi (una casata, questa, appartenente alla piccola aristocrazia urbana d'antica tradizione, radicata nel quartiere del *Castrum*, a sinistra dell'Adige)<sup>65</sup> che esercita il notariato; per Nicola Zerli (discendente da una casata di *milites* rurali proveniente da Cerea proprietaria attorno al 1230 di una torre in città)<sup>66</sup> che fa il *boroçerius* (commerciante di cotone), e infine, con tutta probabilità, per il notaio Bartolomeo Avogari e per l'orefice Francesco Avogari, discendenti dell'illustre famiglia degli Avvocati<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Per queste due *domus* cfr. Castagnetti, 2001, 353 ss. (da Nogarole) e 356-359 (Lendinara); e per le loro vicende duecentesche e trecentesche rispettivamente Varanini, 2008, 25-77 (con rinvio alla bibliografia precedente; Francesco da Nogarole è peraltro ignoto alle genealogie correnti), e Varanini, 1984, 30-36, 43 (per i Lendinara).

<sup>64</sup> Varanini, 2011b, 404-405 (con un cenno anche ai Crescenzi).

<sup>65</sup> Per le famiglie dei *cortesii de Castello*, cfr. un cenno in Varanini, 1986, 12; Castagnetti, 2001, 369-370.

<sup>66</sup> Varanini, 1991b, 73-90.

<sup>67</sup> Castagnetti, 1974.

Quanto al secondo aspetto, fermo restando che in una corte non formalizzata quale era (ancora, in buona sostanza) quella di Cansignorio i ruoli e le posizioni sono fluidi, non stupisce innanzitutto che – come aveva già osservato il Maffei – manchino dagli elenchi dei consiglieri i membri del ristrettissimo *consilium domini* costituito da Cansignorio (che del resto non erano più di cinque o sei, e in parte forestieri)<sup>68</sup>. Invece, un buon numero di funzionari signorili degli anni Sessanta e Settanta già più o meno in carriera (*factores, massarii monete, notai, cancellieri...*) sono presenti nella lista dei consiglieri: ma come cittadini tra i cittadini, dispersi qua e là nella lunga lista senza nessun indizio di eminenza o di distinzione. È questo il caso dei vari Tommaso Pellegrini, Guglielmo Panizza, Tomeo Montagna, Africano dell'Isolo, Montenario *de Campsoribus*, Rolandino Maffei, Quirico di Sperandio, Pellegrino Cavolungi, e – nel settembre – del notaio Pompeo dell'Isolo)<sup>69</sup>.

### 3.2.1. *Gli uomini delle arti e del mondo produttivo*

Quanto si è sin qui accennato già indirizza implicitamente verso una delle caratteristiche più significative di queste liste. Si tratta della robusta presenza di imprenditori e di lavoratori di tutte le specializzazioni del settore tessile<sup>70</sup> – dai *draperii* agli *scavezatores*, dai garzatori ai tintori, giù giù sino agli *scartiçatores*: dunque anche le più umili tappe del processo produttivo –, talvolta menzionati a blocchi di quattro-cinque identificati dalla stessa professione ma tutti di contrade diverse (il che configura evidentemente una rappresentanza in qualche modo professionale). In totale si tratta di ottantotto unità, qualcosa di più del 10% nel consiglio di giugno 1367. Il dettaglio racconta di diciannove *draperii*, diciotto *garçatores*, dieci *scapizatores*, dieci *texarii*, nove *scartezatores*, sei *tinctores*, cinque *petinatores*, quattro *cimatores*, tre *scuratores*, due *batarii*, un *vergezator*, un generico *lanarius*. Se si sommano a costoro tutti gli addetti del settore tessile e dell'abbigliamento (trenta *sartores*, dieci *merçarii*, nove *zuperii*, sette *pezaroli*), si arriva nel consiglio del 23 giugno a un totale di 144 consiglieri professionalmente attivi nel comparto tessile, pari al 16,6% del totale dei consiglieri. È la metà esatta dei consiglieri professionalmente qualificati. La stessa cifra si raggiunge infatti sommando i rappresentanti dei settori del cuoio (quindici *cerdones*, nove *pilliparii*, sei *sellarii*, due *gainarii*, due *guanterii*, un *caliarius*, un *zavaterius*), della metallurgia anche nell'accezione più comprensiva e ampia

<sup>68</sup> Varanini, 2011a, 28.

<sup>69</sup> Rinunciando per limiti di spazio a rinvii puntuali, si cfr. per costoro *Gli Scaligeri 1277-1387, ad Indicem*, e De Marco. Più di qualcuno è attivo nell'amministrazione scaligera di Vicenza: Varanini, 1988c, 198-200 ("Burocrati e patrizi fra Verona e Vicenza").

<sup>70</sup> Per quanto il riscontro sia generico (ma l'indice dei nomi consente di ritrovare un buon numero di individui presenti nei consigli del 1367 e 1369), la grande vitalità di questo mondo è dimostrata dalla ricca produzione normativa (in particolare, le aggiunte degli statuti dei drappieri) attestata per questi anni: si cfr. l'edizione di questi testi in Bertolotti, 317-383 (*passim*).

(diciassette *aurifices*, undici *fabri*, cinque *feraroli*, cinque *merescalchi*), del legname (nove *radaroli*, sette *brentarii*), dell'annona (undici *macellatores*, dieci *pistores*, cinque *formaerii*, tre *molendinarii*); e inoltre le trentacinque indicazioni disperse, in parte segnalate dalla denominazione professionale, in parte da una forma cognominale del tipo *a* più ablativo<sup>71</sup>. Complessivamente, dunque, un terzo circa dei consiglieri è riconducibile a una attività professionale: non pochi, comparativamente ad altre situazioni<sup>72</sup>. Computando i 98 notai, che da soli costituiscono l'11,3% del totale, e i pochi giudici, si arriva non lontano dalla metà dei consiglieri.

I dati sostanziali ora segnalati sono confermati dall'analisi della lista del settembre 1367. Nel quadro di una presenza percentualmente molto inferiore di consiglieri professionalmente qualificati, in particolare, il totale degli addetti al settore tessile in senso lato è di 100 su 742 presenti, pari dunque a un 13,4% non troppo distante dal 16,6% sopra citato; anche se la ripartizione interna (cinquanta e cinquanta) è un po' diversa tra addetti al settore dell'abbigliamento e del commercio (*merçarii*, *çuperii*, sarti, *peçaroli*, setaioli ecc.) e artigiani e imprenditori (solo undici *draperii*, dieci *scaveçatores*, sette *garçatores* e così via).

### 3.2.2. *Il dinamismo della società veronese in età scaligera*

Oltre a dare il tono alle liste del 1367, queste presenze massicce rivelano gli esiti del dinamismo endogeno della società cittadina da cent'anni a questa parte, nel secolo scaligero. Certo, in quell'arco di tempo c'era stato anche un fattore esogeno che aveva avuto un peso notevole nella storia della società veronese. Alberto I della Scala nell'ultimo quarto del Duecento aveva favorito le immigrazioni ghibelline: da Modena, da Vicenza, da Firenze, da Bologna (dove erano arrivati nel 1274, con tanti altri – i Principi, i Carbonesi, gli Albari, una importante dinastia di *magistri dictatores* come i *de Bonandrea*... –, i sopra citati Maffei). Lo stesso aveva fatto poi, soprattutto nel ventennio 1310-1330, Cangrande I; nonché infine (nel primo decennio della sua signoria) Mastino II. Tutto ciò non era passato senza lasciare tracce<sup>73</sup>; ma il peso di questa tradizione appare, durante la signoria di Cansignorio, decisamente calante. Negli ultimi quarant'anni della vicenda scaligera (conclusasi nel 1387), a partire dalla conclusione della guerra veneto-fiorentina contro gli Scaligeri

<sup>71</sup> Si annoverano 3 *magistri artis gramatice*, 2 *frasconerii*, 2 *naute*, 2 *coqui*, e inoltre 1 *carterius*, 1 *calderarius*, 1 *crivelator*, 1 *strobezator*, 1 *scrignator*, 1 *balesterius*, 1 *tabernarius*, 1 *lavezarius*; 3 “a Caligis”, 3 “a Coracis”, 2 “a Seta”, 2 “a Pignolatis”, 1 “a Telis”, 1 “a Taschis”, 1 “a Cortellis”, 1 “a Candellis”, denominazioni queste che preferisco considerare già “cognominalizzate” e non necessariamente legate all'esercizio della professione, come pure potrebbe benissimo essere. Sono da ricordare infine un paio di *viatores* e uno *iuratus quaiite*.

<sup>72</sup> Ad esempio, a Modena ai primi del Trecento la percentuale di individui professionalmente qualificati è inferiore al 10% (Braidi, 68-70); e a livelli anche inferiori si collocano i consigli veronesi del Duecento, sopra citati alle note 52-53.

<sup>73</sup> Varanini, 1988b, 113-124.



nel 1339 (“la crisi decisiva della signoria scaligera”)<sup>74</sup>, la corrente dell’immigrazione politicamente targata si era infatti affievolita, sino ad esaurirsi o quasi; e si era manifestato anzi un riflusso di alcune famiglie autorevoli verso la città d’origine (si pensi ai Principi di Bologna)<sup>75</sup>. Sicché sotto questo profilo le liste del 1367 segnalano piuttosto l’avvenuta integrazione delle famiglie immigrate di seconda o terza generazione, ormai completamente veronesizzate: nella sbrigativa identificazione dei notai, esse compaiono prive del riferimento toponomastico d’origine. Se si prende il caso dei toscano-umbri, rientrano perfettamente nello schema i Del Bene, gli Alberti, Filippo *de Cardino*, Odo *de Corbicus*, tutti fiorentini; i Fracanzani (provenienti da Città di Castello), che esprimono un *mercarius* (Domenico, presente in consiglio) ma anche il giudice Franceschino<sup>76</sup>; i Salerni, pistoiesi di origine (è presente “dominus Iohannes quondam domini Dolceti a Seta de Sancta Secilia”). E da Pistoia ha già rapidamente perso l’indicazione toponomastica di provenienza qualche immigrato recente, come quel “Gracianus quondam domini Iohannis de Sancto Sebastiano”, un *merzarius* attestato a Verona per la prima volta nel 1363 (“Gracianus quondam domini Iohannis Puci qui fuit de Pistoia de Sancto Sebastiano”)<sup>77</sup>, che è inequivocabilmente da identificare nel capostipite dei Pindemonte (destinati a duratura fortuna nell’*élite* veronese). Molti altri toscani cittadini e residenti, come gli Alighieri o gli Uberti o i Malaspina, non sono invece presenti<sup>78</sup>: nella lista del giugno 1367, i soli menzionati come “de Florentia” sono un “Riellus cerdo” e “Nicolaus Albici”.

Nella massa sovente anonima (almeno allo stato attuale delle ricerche) e quasi amorfa dei nominativi che costituiscono la più parte di questo consiglio, è infine operazione delicata ma fruttuosa l’individuazione di capostipiti. Si tratta spesso di imprenditori tessili, i discendenti dei quali costituiranno la spina dorsale del lanificio e del setificio veronese quattrocenteschi, ma che a questa altezza cronologica sono dei puri nomi – in più casi inurbati –, assai spesso privi di una denominazione cognominale e qualche volta persino della qualificazione professionale. Si riesce così a portare a casa un discreto bottino di famiglie che per così dire saranno famose. È il caso di “Iohannes quondam domini Fineti de Sancta Agnete Foris” e di “Henorius scapizator quondam domini Bonaventure de Ferabobus”, i due immigrati da Zevio capostipiti degli Allegri<sup>79</sup>; del “magister Bonucius garçator quondam ser Galvani de Sancto Vitali”, capostipite dei

<sup>74</sup> È l’azzeccato titolo di un saggio vecchio, ma ancora valido: Simeoni (la ricerca risale al 1926).

<sup>75</sup> Anche se “Iohannes de Principibus tuscus de Sancto Thoma” figura nella lista del settembre 1367; così come è citato nel 1369 un “dominus Federicus quondam domini Conradi de Ymola” che è figlio di un importante giudice legato a Mastino II della Scala, Corrado “de Çiçis” di Imola. E altri esempi si potrebbero fare.

<sup>76</sup> Cipolla.

<sup>77</sup> Varanini, 1987, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Cfr. Varanini, 2013b.

<sup>79</sup> Un cenno in Varanini, 1983, 220.

Moscardo (settembre 1367); di “Iohannes quondam domini Bertolini de Gavardo”, dal quale discenderanno i Medici di San Michele alla Porta, agli inizi del Quattrocento ricchissimi commercianti (con un Bertolino *iunior* e suo figlio Bassano)<sup>80</sup>; di “Iacobus quondam domini Turini de Lacixio de Sancto Quirico” che è il capostipite dei Bevilacqua Lazise<sup>81</sup>; e ancora di Zeno Capodiferro e Nicola da Persico da Cremona. I rischi di teleologismo, impliciti nel sottolineare quanto questi consigli del 1367 si collochino “alle origini del patriziato” veronese<sup>82</sup>, sono evidenti, ma sono esorcizzabili appunto attraverso studi approfonditi delle origini duecentesche e proto-trecentesche di molte famiglie che qui compaiono. In parte, queste ricerche sono state svolte<sup>83</sup>, ma moltissime altre restano da fare. Talvolta, un modesto indizio è sufficiente per ricollegare al commercio dei pannilana o alla loro lavorazione anche famiglie o individui presenti nei consigli del 1367 e 1369, il cui profilo sembrerebbe piuttosto di piccola nobiltà rurale inurbata, o di funzionariato cittadino. Bailardino Nichesola, per esempio, discendente da una stirpe che fra Due e Trecento possedeva “innumera bona” nel territorio della *villa* omonima, è nel 1394 socio della *garzaria* all’insegna dell’*Agnus Dei*<sup>84</sup>; Verità del fu Iacopo Verità di Ferraboi nel 1381 risulta proprietario di una “statio scapizarie”<sup>85</sup>.

Un’ipotesi di ricerca di questo genere vale per numerose altre famiglie, variamente riconducibili al commercio (naturalmente anche di altri settori merceologici, diversi dal settore tessile: si pensi al legname) e alle attività produttive, ma anche attente a diversificare avviando qualche rampollo al notariato o agli studi giuridici: Cavolongi, Merchanti, Bellando, Zavarise, Grifalconi, Dusaimi, Rivanelli, Spolverini, Guantieri, Lafranchini, Coimi, Ciserchi, Sparavieri, Faella. Bisogna ben guardarsi, dunque, dall’enfatizzare una linea discriminante salveminiana tra magnati e popolani, basata sulla contrapposizione tra produttori e nobiltà *rentière*.

Altri individui (o casate) presenti in consiglio sembrano invece esibire un profilo più esplicitamente funzionariale, o legato al notariato. Ciò vale per un certo numero di notabili rurali inurbati, talvolta affermatasi fra Duecento e Trecento, come i Da Sacco (individuabili nonostante l’assenza della denominazione cognominale), i da Pastrengo discendenti del prestigioso giudice Guglielmo<sup>86</sup>, i Sagramoso (originari di Pacengo, sul Garda), i da

<sup>80</sup> Demo, 236.

<sup>81</sup> Varanini, 1979a, 153 n313.

<sup>82</sup> È il titolo che adottai molti anni fa, presentando per la prima volta in epoca moderna questi documenti (cfr. qui sopra, nota 37).

<sup>83</sup> Rinuncio, in questa sede, a rinviare in modo analitico alla lunga serie di ricerche che negli ultimi anni – in generale, perseguendo approfondimenti monografici – sono state svolte su famiglie veronesi del Trecento e del primo Quattrocento, da me stesso o da altri; tra le molte, Pellegrini, da Pastrengo, Pindemonte, Della Torre, Turchi, Da Lisca, Trivelli, Montagna, Saibante.

<sup>84</sup> Varanini, 1979a, 155, con rinvio alla precedente bibliografia.

<sup>85</sup> Archivio Capitolare di Verona, b. 44, c. 115r.

<sup>86</sup> Sull’opera del quale si cfr. Bottari.

Campagna (provenienti dal territorio circostante Verona, la *Campanea civitatis*, e residenti infatti nella contrada di Santa Agnese, sulla direttrice di provenienza), i da Villimpenta. E si potrebbe ancora continuare, individuando le famiglie che sembrano puntare più specificamente sul notariato, come i Servidei, i Banda (attestati nel 1369), i Dionisi, il capostipite dei Pompei (Pompeo dell'Isolo di sotto, già notaio *intus* del *rector* Valeriano Lambardi nel 1365<sup>87</sup>, che compare sia nel 1367 che nel 1369, ed è destinato a una buona carriera nel funzionariato scaligero degli anni Settanta e Ottanta); e ancora "Vallarianus notarius quondam magistri Francisci phisici de Rugolino" (1369), giudice comunale addetto ai *dugali* (i canali e le acque in genere), figlio di quel medico Francesco che nel gennaio 1339, esattamente trent'anni avanti, aveva negoziato per conto degli Scaligeri la pace di Venezia alla conclusione della guerra tra Venezia, Firenze e la Verona di Mastino II<sup>88</sup>.

Non appare casuale, infine, anzi!, l'evergetismo tardo-trecentesco (e proto-quattrocentesco) di alcune di queste famiglie o persone, spesso legato agli spazi delle chiese e dei conventi mendicanti: proprio perché non sono particolarmente in evidenza ma sicuramente in ascesa, come i Dusaimi, i Grifalconi, i Merzari, "Daniel peçarolus", i Guantieri, i da Pilcante. La promozione di opere d'arte – per celebrazione della stirpe (è il caso dell'arca Dusaimi e della tomba dei da Pilcante), ma anche per pubblica e religiosa utilità (la costruzione della chiesa carmelitana favorita dai Grifalconi) fa ovviamente parte di una strategia di affermazione sociale. Altre famiglie, come i da Bure e i Montagna, sono committenti d'opere d'arte per le proprie dimore nel contado<sup>89</sup>.

<sup>87</sup> Fainelli, 222.

<sup>88</sup> Piacentino, 112 ss.

<sup>89</sup> Piccoli, 2006-2007, I, 443-445 (tomba Pilcante nella chiesa di Sant'Antonio della Ghiaia); Piccoli, 2010, 123 e 125 (per le famiglie da Bure e Montagna), 163 (per gli interventi dei Grifalconi nella chiesa carmelitana di San Tommaso Cantuariense nell'Isolo); Marini e Campanella, *ad indicem* (tombe Merzari, Salerni, Pellegrini; committenza di "Daniel peçarolus" che paga due colonne della chiesa domenicana); Napione, 112-114 (arca Dussaimi, ancora negli spazi del convento domenicano), e infine per la più tarda (inizi Quattrocento) tomba Guantieri, Varanini, 1989.

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#### *Abstract*

Il saggio mette a fuoco una rara testimonianza (già segnalata nel Settecento da Scipione Maffei) delle funzioni e soprattutto della composizione del consiglio maggiore del comune di Verona in epoca scaligera. Quanto alle funzioni del consiglio, la fonte viene contestualizzata tramite un'analisi più generale del rapporto fra consigli comunali e regimi signorili nel Trecento, con attenzione particolare alle città venete. Quanto alla composizione, la lettura della fonte in chiave prosopografica mostra il crepuscolo di un'aristocrazia e la genesi di un patriziato; particolare importanza rivestono infatti ancora gli uomini delle arti e del mondo produttivo, a prova del dinamismo economico e sociale della società veronese in età scaligera.

The essay is focused on rare documentary evidence – its importance already noted in the eighteenth century by Scipione Maffei – concerning the functions and especially the composition of Verona's consiglio maggiore during the Della Scala period. As to its functions, findings from the source are set in the context of a broader analysis of the relationship between communal councils and seigneurial regimes in the fourteenth century, with special attention to cities in the Veneto. As to its composition, examination of the document in the perspective of prosopography reveals the decline of an aristocracy and the rise of a patriciate. Men of the guilds still stand out markedly, demonstrating the economic and social dynamism of Veronese society in the Della Scala period.

#### *Parole chiave*

Medioevo; Trecento; Verona; istituzioni; prosopografia; Scaligeri

#### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup> century; Verona; institutions; prosopography; Della Scala family

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# Expansion, Instability, and Mobility in the Urban Élite of Renaissance Verona: The Example of the Verità Family

by Alison A. Smith

## 1. Introduction

This essay presents the results of research originally undertaken three decades ago in support of my doctoral dissertation on the history of the Verità family during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, after the Venetian takeover of the powerful and independent city-state of Verona<sup>1</sup>. Based on the rich series of fiscal and census documents – the *estimi* and the *anagrafi* – preserved in the Veronese state archives, I reconstructed the movements of Verità households and their wealth around the city and through the century. Other studies of Veronese noble families during the fifteenth century – a period of extraordinarily dynamic population growth and economic expansion – focus on particular branches of the families, but this one undertakes to trace all household heads with a Verità surname, a surname that gave all these households access to élite status and aristocratic privilege. The results of this survey of the Verità family demonstrate far more geographic mobility, economic instability and downward social mobility than historians of the Veronese élite have commonly assumed for prominent families eligible for membership in the City Council (the clearest indication of membership in the city's nobility)<sup>2</sup>. That the offspring of men and women with the greatest advantages of wealth and status regularly failed to maintain their position in

<sup>1</sup> Smith, 1990. In what follows, the terms *lira/lire* and *soldo/soldi* have been abbreviated as L. and s. There is no satisfactory map of Verona's urban neighbourhoods with accurate indications of their boundaries in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; a nineteenth-century map is reproduced in Lanaro, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> See Grubb, ch. 7 and Lanaro, 1987. Gian Maria Varanini's many detailed studies of Verona's noble families (only some cited below) have provided historians of the city's élite with an essential foundation. Taken together, they show that both commerce and agriculture formed the basis of noble portfolios for most of the period. A similar pattern of geographic mobility and estate division in this period has been found for élite families in nearby Mantua. See Lazzarini, esp. 323.

society demonstrates the permeability of this élite, and complicates our understanding of the process of “aristocratization”<sup>3</sup>.

## 2. *Verità Households*

In the *Verità* family during the fifteenth century, younger sons tended to marry, move out of their father’s household, and establish their own residences, often in a distant neighborhood, or *contrada*<sup>4</sup>. This was a rather delicate and in many cases optimistic maneuver, appropriate to an expansive economy that awarded upward social mobility to men of ability and ambition who invested in trade and manufacturing as well as agricultural properties. The *Verità* family grew from four branches in 1409 (the first year that the *estimo*, or tax survey, was administered by the new Venetian overlords of the city) to sixteen in 1502 and then contracted to nine branches by 1653. This pattern of proliferating households during the fifteenth century has been found for other families in Verona and in other Italian renaissance cities<sup>5</sup>. In Verona, whenever a large estate was divided up among the heirs, this estate division was reported to the fiscal authorities, which then made appropriate adjustments to the tax assessments of the various heirs to the divided estate<sup>6</sup>. According to this record, the *Verità* family appears to have been among the families in renaissance Verona with the largest number of separate branches during this period. Only the Maffei and the Pellegrini families listed more estate divisions than the *Verità* between 1409 and 1536. Some older, established families – like the *Verità* – became so ramified in this period that many estate divisions were inevitable, and the fiscal authorities kept careful track of them so as not to lose track of lucrative sources of tax revenue.

In many cases, an estate division was a signal of increasing prosperity, and brothers would divide their estate in order to establish new branches of their family. All of the families with a high number of estate divisions were among the wealthiest and most prominent in the city, so the practice did not, in itself, weaken a family’s established position within the local aristocracy, although it did promote the geographical mobility of individual households discussed in this paper<sup>7</sup>. On the other hand, as will be seen for the *Verità*, efforts to establish

<sup>3</sup> The literature on the “aristocratization” of Italian élites is vast. The terms of the debate were largely set by Angelo Ventura. See the very useful discussion of Ventura, with an up-to-date bibliography in Knapton.

<sup>4</sup> The term *contrada*, the term used to denote neighborhood for fiscal purposes in Verona, will be used interchangeably with neighborhood in this essay.

<sup>5</sup> For Verona, see especially Lodi (2002) as well as Varanini (1993), and Pellegrini, 23; on Florence see Kent, 26; Bizzocchi, 18-21; on Venice, see Romano, 17.

<sup>6</sup> Archivio di Stato di Verona (henceforth ASVr), *Archivio Comune*, regs. 281, 282. Seven other families list at least nine divisions (Caliari, Cipolla, Lazise, Morando, Pindemonte, Spolverini, and Zaccari), fifty-one families list more than two.

<sup>7</sup> These include prominent families such as the Maffei, Spolverini and Morando.

a new household in a new neighborhood could also expose the family to risk and economic decline. For the purposes of this paper, the “success” of a household or branch of the family is indicated by the maintenance of its wealth, and the transmission of that wealth to the direct male heir. This notion of success conforms to the ideal family and household described in the many contemporary treatises on the subject: the treatise writers recommended strategies that promoted multigenerational stability in a family palace managed by capable wives and populated by healthy children and loyal servants<sup>8</sup>. According to the Verità family evidence, this ideal was actually very difficult to achieve, and many households fell far short of it.

The data for this survey of the proliferation and residential mobility of the Verità family have been gleaned from the Veronese *estimo*. This tax survey was revised twenty-four times between 1409 and 1635, with an average interval of ten years separating each redaction. Many of the neighborhood household surveys (*anagrafi*) made in conjunction with each revision of the *estimo* survive and together record the existence of every individual household that succeeded in establishing itself for fiscal purposes for even a brief period<sup>9</sup>. We can find out which *contrada* (neighborhood) each household head lived in, his (or occasionally her) name and approximate age, as well as changes in the assessed wealth of the household head which corresponded to changes in residence and in the composition and size of the household. This latter information is especially rich for the sixteenth century, when many more of the *anagrafi* survive. It is also possible to determine when, in the life cycle of an individual or a household, major decisions may have been made, such as when to move or to divide property. When tracing family movement in successive volumes of the *estimo*, one can assume that households of some size and wealth did not move very frequently within the same *contrada*, and that only when a change in *contrada* was registered did that indicate an actual physical move. When the family owned a house in the *contrada* the taxpaying household of that name registered there almost certainly lived in the family home<sup>10</sup>. If the detailed information in the *estimo* is then integrated into the genealogical tree, a great deal can be learned about instability and decline within a powerful noble family, insights which rarely emerge from studies of the private archives or public records of the period<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Frigo.

<sup>9</sup> My preliminary survey of the Verità family in the *estimo* benefited greatly from the groundwork done by Cartolari, 269-77. Cartolari's list does not include all members of the family registered in the *estimo*, so by tracing the movements of individual patrines I hope to have tracked down all the Verità households registered in Verona between 1409 and 1635.

<sup>10</sup> On the preparation of the *anagrafi*, see Scarcella, 237-63, Lanaro, 1982 and Herlihy, 92.

<sup>11</sup> The genealogical groundwork for the Verità was done at the end of the sixteenth century by Alessandro Canobbio and continued in the mid-eighteenth century by Carlo Carinelli. My work on their genealogy, available in greater detail in my doctoral thesis, has modified and corrected some of Carinelli's information.

Using the *estimo* evidence to capture stories of decline and instability among Verità households helps to counteract the impression of powerful dynastic continuity conveyed by studies of noble families based largely on their private archives collected by the family itself. Only successful branches created archives that can be studied by modern historians, because family records were only worth keeping if they provided evidence for property and relationships that still had value for their heirs. However, focusing on the continuity of noble families distorts our understanding of the complex choices and ever-changing parameters that brought stability and longevity to a family or led them to instability, decline and disappearance from the historical record. The documentary bias in favor of patrilineal continuity also hides the bilateral kinship ties created by marriage and fostered by siblings, cousins and in-laws which were essential to the success of any household or family. Unfortunately these remain largely hidden in the *estimo* evidence because the full patronymics of the wives and other adult women living in a household were rarely given<sup>12</sup>. Using the *estimo* to reconstruct the story of household formation and dynastic succession also perpetuates the invisibility of one of the main protagonists in each story: the wife. The Verità evidence shows clearly that no one embarked on establishing a new household without a wife, who brought a large dowry, a fertile body and essential managerial skills to the enterprise. When widowed, this woman would occasionally be listed in the *estimo* as the head of the household, but rarely can we discover much more about her.

The increasing financial burden of a household, and certainly the expense of establishing a new one, deeply affected the demographic and residential behavior of urban aristocratic families in Verona. The building and rebuilding of these aristocratic palaces had a transformative effect on the urban fabric as well as the city's population. Paola Lanaro has traced the movement of the textile and other industries, which still employed a large percentage of the city's population, to peripheral *contrade* during this period<sup>13</sup>. The important collection of essays about the building of Renaissance Verona, *Edilizia privata nella Verona rinascimentale*, explores how the ancient center was rebuilt and remodeled according to the tastes of its aristocratic families<sup>14</sup>. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the four branches of the Verità family lived in separate, but neighboring, *contrade* near the old Roman amphitheater and the central thoroughfare of the city. As the number of branches proliferated, most settled in *contrade* that were quite distant from this earlier nucleus, although still in the old Roman center. By 1502, two of the thirteen Verità households registered had moved to the left bank of the Adige, and one hundred years later, the three most successful branches of the family were established in three

<sup>12</sup> On bilateral kinship, see esp. Chojnacki's collected essays.

<sup>13</sup> Lanaro, 1982, 71-79.

<sup>14</sup> The symbolic and ideological significance of this rebuilding in the sixteenth century is noted in Concina, 316-19. See, above all, Lanaro, Marini and Varanini: essays by Lodi, Varanini, Calabi, Mazzi.

new *contrade* quite far apart from each other. Whereas Verità households moved around the city with relative ease in the fifteenth century, the individual branches of the Verità family appear to have become increasingly isolated from one another, both economically and socially, as they formed stronger financial and material commitments to their urban homes and hence a dynastic identity separate from their cousins in other parts of the city. At least for this prominent noble family, therefore, there is little evidence for long-term allegiance to a particular neighborhood or palace in the city during the fifteenth century, unlike several other comparable families (the Pellegrini, Canossa, Bevilacqua, and Giusti, for example), whose principal branches remained attached to their ancestral palaces and neighborhoods throughout the period under consideration

Although Verona's fiscal archives permit us to reconstruct both the urban mobility and the fluctuations in prosperity of these Verità households, we must turn to the family's archives for more detailed information about their economic behavior. Unfortunately the surviving documents for this family illuminate the economic activities of only some of the most successful branches. Nevertheless, this information reveals a range of investment strategies that the Verità shared with other successful families in Verona. The basic principles of patrimonial organization at work as members of the Verità family acquired urban real estate and agricultural property during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were to maintain a diversified portfolio and, in the case of patrimonial divisions, to permit each heir who was a head of household to be financially independent. Their portfolios included a range of investments in trade and manufacturing; and the size and value of the family's urban residences increased significantly in proportion to other property over the course of this period<sup>15</sup>.

During this period wealthy aristocratic families invested in the thriving industrial and commercial sectors of the Veronese economy. The rapid rate with which some Verità patrimonies were both built up and dispersed suggests that they were involved in many high-yield, high-risk investments, rather than focusing their attention on more stable agricultural investments. The surviving archival sources privilege information about the accumulation of land and the management of investments by the descendants of Gabriele Verità, the youngest son and heir of the founder of the Falsorgo branch at the beginning of our period and one of the wealthiest men in Verona according to his tax assessment of L. 15 s. 15 in the *estimo* of 1433<sup>16</sup>. An analysis of Gabriele's estate,

<sup>15</sup> Varanini's many studies of Veronese noble families (1979, 1982, 1993, 1996) examine this behavior in great detail.

<sup>16</sup> The combined *estimo* assessments of Gabriele Verità and his son (and heir to half of his property, according to Gabriele's will) in S. Egidio in 1443 (ASVr, *Archivio Comune*, *Estimi* = CE, reg. 253, fols. 33<sup>r</sup>, 60<sup>r</sup>). ASVr, Ufficio del registro, *Testamenti*, mazzo 31, no. 93. This copy of the will is unpaginated, but due to its length (41 pages) I have assigned page numbers to it for convenience of reference herein. We do not know Gabriele's exact age, but his father died in the early 1370s,

inventoried in his will of 1439, reveals some of the principles of personal financial management adopted by a wealthy, successful household head in the early fifteenth century. He used the inventory in his will to divide his property between his two male heirs so that they each inherited a coherent, independent estate that would protect them from future threats to their economic well-being. Gabriele owned two large urban residences (one in Falsorgo and one purchased for his son, who established his own family in the contrada of S. Egidio). His urban interests included several stalls in the central marketplace that were rented out to the family notary, several wholesale clothing dealers, and a shoemaker<sup>17</sup>. His heirs also divided the duties of and income from the lucrative offices of *massarius* (steward) of the Veronese marketplace<sup>18</sup>.

In addition to these economic interests directly related to Veronese commercial life, Gabriele owned a miscellaneous collection of real estate within the city walls, which generated additional rents. Many of his rural holdings were in and around Bussolengo, where he owned two houses, at either end of the village, each with a large stone vat for olive oil. He also owned over 200 *campi* in various villages near Cerea in the Bassa Veronese. Through his wife, Gabriele inherited land in the village of Lavagno, which was to become the nucleus of the vast estate accumulated there by his descendants<sup>19</sup>. In his will, Gabriele generally confined joint ownership and influence to largely symbolic and highly visibly properties, and otherwise he divided his property into two independent and rational portfolios, each of which could easily stand on its own. Gabriele also made sure that various burdens on the patrimony associated with property and the future restitution of dowries were divided equitably between the two heirs. Each of the two lists of property begins with the urban residence of the heir, followed by the rents and real estate in Verona, which was a significant portion of the estate. Thus, even though they owned extensive agricultural land, the focus of their estate in the middle of the fifteenth century was on their urban property, and each household head, even in a powerful noble family, was expected to operate with a great deal of economic independence.

so in 1439 Gabriele must have been in his mid to late sixties, if not older. His sons, Giacomo and Bartolomeo, were in their teens in 1419 (this is the year of their correspondence with their teacher, Guarino da Verona: Sabbadini, 108-09).

<sup>17</sup> ASVr, *Testamenti*, mazzo 31 no. 93, fol. 32. The stalls were in Piazza Erbe and the nearby Casa dei Mercanti.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, fols 26, 32. The total annual income received from these offices was L. 581 for Michele and L. 341 for Bartolomeo, who received the most important office, the *massarius* of Piazza Erbe itself, as well as many more rents to be collected on urban property.

<sup>19</sup> ASVr, *Malaspina-Verità*, b. 17, perg. 24: the property appears to have been in his wife's family for some time. Gabriele married Abondantia q. Nicolò q. Belando de Belandi in 1384 (*Pergamene Malaspina-Verità*, b. 17, perg. 23); Abondantia wrote her will on 10 May 1445 (see *Pergamene Malaspina-Verità*, b. 18, perg. 39, and copy in *Pergamene Verità, Serie III*, b. 6, perg. 370). Gabriele refers to Clara de Bellando as the mother of his wife in his own will of 1439: *Testamenti*, mazzo 31, no. 93, fol. 14.



At the beginning of the fifteenth century, both of the main branches of the Verità family surveyed below also took advantage of the invaluable economic opportunity offered by the sale of confiscated Della Scala property in the *fattoria scaligera*. For Veronese families with ready cash, this was an invaluable social opportunity as well. In acquiring the land, many families like the Verità acquired the “feudal” rights and privileges associated with it that later became so important for enhancing their claims to aristocratic status<sup>20</sup>. Verità, the founder of the Ferraboi branch in the late fourteenth century, bought a large block of property in Soave from the *fattoria scaligera*, and also acquired the fief of Selva di Progno<sup>21</sup>. The three sons of Bonmartino Verità, the founder of the S. Zeno descent group, also took full advantage of the sale of property in the *fattoria scaligera*. They bought land and *decima* (tithe) rights, spending even more than their wealthy cousin Verità in Ferraboi<sup>22</sup>. Both of the main descent groups of the Verità family appear to have enjoyed a similar level of prestige at the start of the fifteenth century: both were represented in the City Council and both produced household heads who succeeded in rapidly increasing the size of their patrimony (indicated by their tax assessment in the *estimo*)<sup>23</sup>.

### 3. *The Ramification of the Verità Family*

All Verità households were united by descent from a common ancestor and used the same coat of arms, but by the end of the fifteenth century only some of them had concrete property interests or close kinship ties in common. Although the evidence for residential mobility among the Verità is irrefutable, it is not always clear why individuals and households moved from place to place. For some members of the family a stable domestic establishment may not have been very important; for others it may have remained an elusive goal. Those who moved around continued to identify with other members of their patriline (according to their wills and burial practices), with whom they may even have shared property, such as country estates and commercial investments. In their wills, dowry agreements and other private contracts,

<sup>20</sup> Sancassani, 6. The importance of this commercial opportunity for the futures of Veronese families who took advantage of it is discussed by Varanini, 1993, 23-24.

<sup>21</sup> Sancassani, 9, 23, 25. Verità's *estimo* assessment was L. 17, by far the largest of all the Verità households listed in 1409: ASVr, CE reg. 249, fol. 46r. The fief of Selva di Progno cost D. 2,571 s. 20 and had been organized as a *feudo* by the Della Scala and tied up with land and rights controlled by the bishop of Verona. In the middle of the sixteenth century, this branch of the family invoked their “feudal” privileges in the Selva di Progno when attempting to acquire the feudal title of Count. See ASVr, *Malaspina-Verità*, proc. 3216.

<sup>22</sup> Sancassani. The sons of Bonmartino invested as much as D. 5,456, whereas Verità of Ferraboi spent a total of D. 4,142.

<sup>23</sup> Cartolari, 269.

members of the Verità family expressed their personal sense of position within the family in terms of their immediate paternal affiliation, or patriline. The several patrilines that eventually descended from a single man and established themselves in different parts of the city will be referred to here as a descent group<sup>24</sup>. Whereas patriline and descent group refer to vertical genealogical relationships across generations, I use the term household to describe the assortment of relatives living under one roof at any given time and serving as the basic fiscal unit in Verona. It was in the household where important bilateral kinship ties developed, among brothers and sisters, cousins, and their in-laws, creating a system of relationships that both complemented and conflicted with the basic patriarchal organization of property and inheritance. According to a simple typology of households, the conjugal household contained the married couple and their children, the stem household included a third generation (usually the grandchildren), and the joint-family household comprised two related conjugal families (usually the families of two married brothers)<sup>25</sup>. The Verità households in this period included examples of all three – conjugal, stem and joint – in many cases extended by surviving members from older generations, and unmarried, orphaned, or illegitimate kin.

Important changes in the composition of a household were usually caused by the transfer of control over family and property from one generation to the next. Among the Verità this occurred upon the death of the father, when the estate could be divided, but married sons occasionally moved out before their father died, and before inheriting their share of the estate. In most Verità households there was a significant fluctuation in the number of family members resident in a household at any one time, caused largely by periods of child-bearing followed by periods in which most of the children moved away. Pairs of brothers who were both married, and who did not wish to divide their estate, or to leave their ancestral home, occasionally formed joint-family households, but biological, economic and emotional factors discouraged their duration. For example, if a couple did have more than one son, and those two brothers decided to live together after their father's death, they might not both survive long enough to marry and have children of their own. If two sets of first cousins did grow up in the same household, the complexity of the group almost always led to the division of the household and the estate in the next generation.

The number of Verità households in the *estimo* grew from five in 1409 to nineteen in 1502. These households represented four branches of the family in 1409 and sixteen branches in 1502. As the chart in the Appendix shows, the total number of Verità households began to decline by 1595, and by 1636, the twelve

<sup>24</sup> Segalen, 47, on the term “descent group”: “a multi-functional kinship group,... descended from this or that mythical ancestor”, whose members “share a certain number of rights or duties with certain relatives”.

<sup>25</sup> Wheaton, 609, argues that this simple typology developed over one hundred year ago by Le Play, still describes early modern households adequately.

Verità households registered in Verona's *estimo* represented nine separate branches, or patriline, of the family. During the sixteenth century, therefore, there continued to be about the same number of Verità households registered in each *estimo*, and several new ones were formed between every two revisions. Because the number of households remained constant, for every new one formed another household disappeared, usually when their members died, married or left Verona. The disappearance of a household, however, did not necessarily mean the extinction of a branch, because sometimes two households living in one house fused, for fiscal purposes, after the death of an older member. This survey of all Verità households in Verona shows that whereas in the fifteenth century most sons and many daughters married, by the sixteenth century, they began to adopt various strategies to limit the number of sons and daughters who married in order to preserve their patrimonies and to conserve their wealth for the next generation. Limiting marriage in order to preserve the integrity of the family patrimony, however, carried a greater risk of the extinction of a branch's direct male descent, which would compromise the identity of the dynasty<sup>26</sup>. The Verità evidence suggests that the decision to permit a son or daughter to marry continued to be affected by a wide range of factors beyond the family's control, including the fertility of a couple and the specter of premature death. At the level of the individual household, therefore, what might appear in the historical record to be a clearly calculated decision about marriage limitation might well have been a response to a range of other pressures on household formation and dynastic succession that are hidden from us.

#### 4. *Verità households descended from Bonmartino in S. Zeno in Oratorio*

This section of the essay will trace the movements of the highly mobile descendants of Bonmartino in the *contrada* of S. Zeno in Oratorio before discussing the generally more prominent and longer-lived branches established by their cousins descending from Gabriele in the *contrada* of Falsorgo. By the end of the fourteenth century the household heads of the two main descent groups of the family had only a great-grandfather in common. They lived in the centrally-located *contrada* of Falsorgo, and in S. Zeno in Oratorio, a newer *contrada* upriver from the Castelvechio. The descendants of the Falsorgo descent group produced most of the archival material preserved for the Verità family and were generally more successful than their cousins living in S. Zeno<sup>27</sup>. Already at the beginning of the fifteenth century, the division of the family into

<sup>26</sup> In his study of the Milanese patriciate, which adopted similar strategies of marriage limitation and estate preservation, Zanetti calculated that there was a fifty percent extinction rate of direct male lines after only three generations: chap. 3.

<sup>27</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 249, fols. 40r, 46r, 115r, 50v. The combined assessment figure for the three households of the Falsorgo branch in 1409 is L. 31, whereas that of the two first cousins descended from the S. Zeno goldsmith is only L. 10 s. 10.

two descent groups was revealed by their choice of residence, their choice of names, their choice of professions and their choice of tomb. Names such as Zeno, Ognibene, and Bonmartino occurred frequently in the S. Zeno group whereas the group of households living in Falsorgo and neighboring Ferraboi were fond of naming their children Gabriele, Michele and Marco. Both groups used Verità as a given name quite often. Bonmartino's descendants preferred to be buried in the family tomb in S. Anastasia whereas Gabriele's chose their tomb in S. Eufemia<sup>28</sup>. The household head in S. Zeno in Oratorio continued his father's profession of goldsmith, but by 1409 his younger brother had moved to the *contrada* of S. Maria alla Fratta and become a furrier. Verità q. Giacomo of Ferraboi, the eldest and most distinguished member of the Falsorgo group of Verità (he was knighted by the Carrara in 1404), was consistently identified in the documents as a wholesale clothing merchant (*scapizator*). His second wife was the daughter of a goldsmith<sup>29</sup>, and his younger brother Benedetto was a banker (*campesor*)<sup>30</sup>. Hence the Verità, notwithstanding their wealth and high social and political position, regularly identified themselves as merchants in official documents in the early fifteenth century.

This survey of household formation, division and movement will present the *estimo* evidence in the form of brief narratives. Census data cannot tell us about particular strategic decisions that a family might have made in the face of economic and demographic pressures, but they do allow us to reconstruct a story of change and adaptation. The households descending from the S. Zeno branch of the Verità proliferated more quickly than did those from Falsorgo in the fifteenth century. This was largely because the S. Zeno descent group had more sets of sons, who were, in turn, more likely to divide up their fathers' estates, marry, and move away, than were their counterparts from Falsorgo. It may be that the high level of residential mobility of the descendants of Bonmartino in S. Zeno was a factor that discouraged their eventual establishment at the higher levels of the Veronese élite achieved by some of the descendants of their cousins living in Falsorgo and Ferraboi. As discussed above, the two descent groups appear to have begun the fifteenth century and the advent of Venetian rule with similar access to status and wealth. This pattern of mobility among households descending from Bonmartino seems to have been well established by the beginning of the fifteenth century, as the family had only recently moved to the *contrada* of S. Zeno in Oratorio<sup>31</sup>. After

<sup>28</sup> Grubb's reconstruction of the Verità family in the fifteenth century omits the branch descended from Bonmartino di S. Zeno in Oratorio, leading him to claim that the entire "gens" chose S. Eufemia for burial in the fifteenth century: 104.

<sup>29</sup> BCV, Carinelli, 1951: her name was Dorotea, daughter of Francesco *Avogar* dalle Passioni.

<sup>30</sup> See, for example, ASVr, *Pergamene Verità, Serie III*, b. 1, perg. 34, 55, 68.

<sup>31</sup> The Bonmartino we meet in the *estimo* of 1409 did not move there until after 1373 (ASVr, *Pergamene Verità, serie III*, v. 1, perg. 55), and his father lived in the *contrada* of S. Croce in 1345 (ASVr, *Pergamene Bevilacqua-Verità*, b. 111, perg. 24: Bartolomeo q. Giacomo Verità di Falsorgo bought land in Bussolengo from Verità q. Bonmartino di S. Croce).

Bonmartino's death, the joint-family household maintained by his three sons in S. Zeno split up when Venice imposed a crippling fine on the eldest for illegal activity as *massarius* (steward) of the Salt Office<sup>32</sup>. The descendants of Bonmartino's son Giacomo tended to be prolific, independent, and energetic, and the young men typically divided their estates at each generation and struck out on their own. Some did quite well, according to their tax assessments, but none enjoyed stability or residential continuity. The descendants of Bonmartino's son Paolo, on the other hand, settled for several generations in the *contrada* of Pigna, but biological and economic misfortune eventually brought an end to the only long-lived branch there.

The line descending from Giacomo q. Bonmartino prospered in the fifteenth century as they moved from S. Zeno to S. Michele alla Porta and then, in 1456, to S. Benedetto<sup>33</sup>. This household had six sons, however, and rather than pool their resources, most of them set off on their own<sup>34</sup>. The independence of these brothers from each other and from their patriline is shown by the fact that they did not try to keep their father's house in S. Benedetto in the family after the brother who inherited it died without a direct male heir in the 1530s. Extraordinary residential mobility characterized the life of the eldest brother Leonardo, who moved away from his father's house by 1447, and then lived with his wife and children in a different *contrada* every year the *estimo* revised. When Leonardo died in 1482, his two sons split their father's small estate and eventually left Verona to live in Nogara, where they owned land<sup>35</sup>, choosing to remove themselves from city life and accept a significant fall in status.

Another one of these brothers was very successful, and moved to the *contrada* of S. Eufemia in 1492 with his widowed mother and young family<sup>36</sup>. His three sons, however, divided up their father's estate just as their uncles

<sup>32</sup> ASVr, *Archivio Comune*, reg. 9, fol. 29v; on the division of the brothers' patrimony, CE Reg. 251, fol. 126v. In 1406-1407 Verità q. Bonmartino was *massarius* of salt in Verona. Eventually Verità amassed a debt of over D. 6,000 for salt revenues he owed to the government, and the Venetian Senate, after many ineffective threats, finally forced him to auction property to cover the debt. In 1422, due to self-proclaimed poverty, he promised to pay Venice the balance in wheat and flour by harvest-time (ASVr, *Camera Fiscale*, reg. 3, fols. 38r, 42v, 44v and 45r; *Archivio Comune*, reg. 6, fol. 29v. I thank John Law for these references). Verità's son, Bonmartino, in his will of February 4, 1453, revealed his lowered expectations for his family, dividing his property equally among his two sons and two daughters: ASVr, *Testamenti*, mazzo 45, no. 22. In 1456 the thirty-year-old Verità q. Bonmartino (the great-grandson of the first Verità in the *contrada*) was registered in the *estimo* at L. 1 s. 8 (CE reg. 255, fol. 129r). This patriline disappeared from the Veronese *estimo* by 1456.

<sup>33</sup> In ASVr, CE reg. 252, fol. 55v (1433), Benedetto q. Giacomo q. Bonmartino was registered in S. Michele alla Porta at L. 3 s. 15; by 1456 he moved to S. Benedetto and was registered at L. 8 s. 15 (CE reg. 255, fol. 69v).

<sup>34</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 256, fol. 69v. Each son was assessed at L. 1 s. 10 d. 8 after the estate division.

<sup>35</sup> On the purchase of land in Nogara from the «Fattoria scaligera» by the three sons of Bonmartino de Verità, see Sancassani and Varanini (1979), 149 and n. 301.

<sup>36</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 259, fol. 73v.

had done a generation earlier, and although some stayed in the S. Eufemia house for a while, they never did very well economically, according to their tax assessment<sup>37</sup>. This pattern continued during the sixteenth century, as the many descendants of Giacomo q. Bonmartino continued to divide their patrimony among numerous sons who moved about the city or left it altogether. One of these, Bernardino q. Gabriele, eventually established the S. Paolo branch that continued through the eighteenth century<sup>38</sup>.

The descendants of Paolo Verità, the youngest son of Bonmartino the goldsmith (the founder of the S. Zeno branch), settled in the *contrada* of Pigna in the mid-fifteenth century and prospered there for a while<sup>39</sup>. However, during the sixteenth century the Verità households in Pigna provide two contrasting examples of downward mobility associated with residential stability. The brothers who moved to Pigna with their families in 1465 lived together in a large, joint-family household<sup>40</sup>, but their cooperation did not continue into the next generation, when the two sets of first cousins split apart into two separate households. One household included four brothers in their twenties living with their widowed mother. These young men divided up their property equally among themselves, but continued to live together, each employing a few servants<sup>41</sup>. They continued their cousins' pattern of estate divisions at each generation, although they continued to live together in Pigna, even though they considered their household property separate for fiscal purposes. Only one of these four brothers ever married, and his descendants, whose tax assessments never rose above L. 3, eventually moved to a nearby *contrada* in 1572<sup>42</sup>.

The other set of first cousins included only one son, and the patriline in Pigna descending from this man had difficulty perpetuating itself due to high levels of mortality and infertility. By 1531, Zeno was a young man living alone in his grandfather's house with five servants<sup>43</sup>. He soon married, but he and his wife had no legitimate children, so they legitimated a son and daughter. Between 1518 and 1545, Zeno more than doubled the value of his father's estate<sup>44</sup>. Given his economic success, Zeno probably wished to ensure the permanent establishment of his branch of the family at the higher levels of the Veronese aristocracy, and so legitimated a son rather than bequeath his

<sup>37</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 261, fol. 73. Bernardino testated on 28 September, 1508. *Testamenti*, mazzo 100, no. 167.

<sup>38</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 266, fol. 454v (1558).

<sup>39</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 256, fol. 70v (1456); Paolo probably died soon after he testated on 17 Dec. 1448 (*Testamenti*, mazzo 40, no. 111)

<sup>40</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 256, col. 70v; CE reg. 257, fol. 66v; CE reg. 258, fols. 73v-74r.

<sup>41</sup> ASVr, CE regs. 254-62; *Anagrafi-Comune*, nos. 912, 913, 914, 917, 918.

<sup>42</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 267, fol. 188v.

<sup>43</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 263, fol. 138r; *Anagrafi-Comune*, no. 913. A year later he inherited more property from the estate of his sister.

<sup>44</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 262, fol. 90v (1518) and reg. 264, fol. 191v (1545). It is not clear in the surviving documents who the parents of their legitimated son and daughter were.



patrimony to his impoverished cousins who lived nearby<sup>45</sup>. This behavior indicates the attenuation of ties to more distant kin in favor of preserving the dynastic continuity of the patriline, a pattern observed in many noble families during the sixteenth century.

This narrative tracing the movements of diverging branches of the Verità family will now turn to the foundation of the Verità Poeta, a branch descended from Zeno, the brother of Bonmartino the goldsmith, who decisively broke away from the Verità family in the early fifteenth century. Zeno's son and grandson accumulated a great fortune, and in the absence of more than one direct male heir, their fortune remained intact until the early sixteenth century. Then the familiar story of estate divisions and movement away from the ancestral *contrada* of S. Maria alla Fratta began. This group includes one example of a wealthy household that moved several times before it settled down in one *contrada*, which suggests that as late as the mid-sixteenth century residential mobility was not incompatible with success at the highest levels of the local nobility.

The reasons for the detachment of the Verità Poeta from the S. Zeno nucleus, signaled by a new name as well as by a change in profession, of residence and eventually of financial status, are still obscure. In the *estimo* of 1425, the founder's grandson dropped the qualifier *draperius* (cloth merchant), and registered himself instead as "Bartholomeus de Veritate dictus Poeta" in the *contrada* of S. Maria alla Fratta<sup>46</sup>. Perhaps this man, who made so much money in those years – the household tax assessment, which was L. 1 s. 10 in 1409, grew to L. 20 s. 3 by 1482 – wished to distinguish himself from the others in the Verità family by adopting an additional name that could only lend prestige. The first Verità designated Poeta to join the City Council did so in 1437<sup>47</sup>. The Verità Poeta branch constituted by this move retained the traditional coat of arms used by their Verità relatives, and their level of wealth and social prestige seems to have remained comparable to those of other branches of the Verità family. They had effectively distanced themselves from the rest of the Verità by 1439, however, according to the revised will of Gabriele Verità of Falsorgo. In his previous will, dated 1424, Gabriele had included the S. Maria alla Fratta household with the other members of the Verità family who were to divide his property equally in the absence of a direct male heir<sup>48</sup>. When Gabriele revised the will fifteen years later, he no longer included the Verità Poeta branch in the list<sup>49</sup>. The Verità Poeta residence in S. Maria alla

<sup>45</sup> Zeno's will and codicil were dated 20 and 22 July, 1549: ASVr, *Testamenti*, mazzo 141, nos. 255 and 256.

<sup>46</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 251, fol. 52r. Lenotti, 178, following earlier family histories, suggests that this addition to the surname Verità was due to intermarriage with the Poeta family of Bologna, but I have found no archival evidence to support this claim.

<sup>47</sup> Cartolari, 269.

<sup>48</sup> ASVr, *Testamenti*, mazzo 16, no. 291.

<sup>49</sup> ASVr, *Testamenti*, mazzo 31, no. 93. The blood relationship between Gabriele's and Bartolomeo's



Fratta contained a very large and wealthy household by the end of the fifteenth century. Like many others in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, however, the men in the next two generations chose instead to strike out on their own and to establish new households in quite separate parts of the city. They apparently considered their family patrimony to be large enough to endow several sons with sufficient property to set off on their own, but these men did not establish themselves elsewhere with ease.

The strongest, wealthiest branch of the Verità Poeta descent group in the sixteenth century is a good example of a highly mobile household that maintained its considerable wealth: Gerolamo q. Giovanni Verità Poeta moved away from S. Maria alla Fratta in 1502 and lived with his family in three different *contrade* before settling down in the *contrada* of S. Pietro in Carnario in 1572<sup>50</sup>. This branch had the good fortune to produce a strong succession of direct male heirs; but it died out soon after 1605 when the young heir, Gerolamo, was convicted of murder, and the Venetian authorities confiscated much of his property<sup>51</sup>.

##### 5. *Verità households descended from Giacomo in Falsorgo*

It is now time to shift our focus to the branches of the Verità family that have left by far the largest footprint on the archival record. Several of these exemplify the strong correlation between residential continuity and direct dynastic succession seen in other Veronese families. Charting the residence patterns of several generations of this group of Verità, however, reveals many destabilizing factors, even in aristocratic establishments that maintained both their patrimonial and residential stability. In light of the residential and social mobility in Verità households discussed thus far, this next group leads us to consider the principal factors that granted continuity to a particular domestic establishment. All of the following examples suggest that forces beyond the control of a particular couple or group of siblings tended to discourage the long-term stability of a domestic establishment, even at the highest levels of wealth. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the founders of the Falsorgo and S. Zeno descent groups enjoyed similar wealth and status, and, according to Gabriele's wills discussed above, they felt strong ties to the Verità lineage. A century later, the diverging paths of these two descent groups revealed differing

branches of the family, however, was no more distant than that between Gabriele and two of the four households that he did name in this later will.

<sup>50</sup> Based on the *estimo* registers in the ASVR, they moved from Pigna (CE reg. 260, fol. 101r; reg. 261, fol. 91v), to S. Eufemia (CE reg. 262, fol. 70r; reg. 263, fol. 105r) to S. Quirico (CE reg. 264, fol. 16v; reg. 266, fol. 15v) to S. Pietro in Carnario (CE reg. 267, fol. 53v).

<sup>51</sup> ASVR, *Archivio Campagna*, proc. 1370, 1371, 1373. Homicide and other forms of violence were increasingly common among nobles on the Terraferma in this period. See Povolo and Faggion, among others.

strategic approaches to their domestic arrangements. Not surprisingly, the households that moved about the city most often tended to be the least complex, conjugal units. Very few of Bonmartino's descendants formed joint-family households. Members of the Falsorgo descent group, on the other hand, exhibited greater loyalty to ancestral houses and neighborhoods, leading to the formation of complex joint-family households.

Nonetheless, estate divisions and residential mobility were also characteristic of many households descended from the ancestors in Falsorgo. Four of its most long-lived branches were founded by eldest sons who moved away from the house of their birth, either before or after their father's death. By the mid-sixteenth century, the three wealthiest and most prominent branches of the Verità family lived in the *contrade* of Ferraboi, S. Fermo, and S. Giovanni in Foro, and all three were newly established<sup>52</sup>. The house in Ferraboi commanded the greatest allegiance throughout this period, but there is little evidence that its proximity to the ancestral *contrada* of Falsorgo made any real difference to the high status and wealth of the family by the sixteenth century. The initial success of the S. Egidio branch as well as the success of the branch that it spawned in S. Giovanni in Foro further show that the social geography of the Verità was characterized by residential independence. This independence was further promoted by the patrimonial organization discussed above.

Giacomo Verità, the founder of the Falsorgo branch in the later fourteenth century, presided over the growth of a large, complex, joint family household there that eventually included several of his married sons as well as his oldest grandson's family. One son, Verità, soon moved out and established a new household in Ferraboi, and Giacomo's grandson, Bartolomeo, later moved from Falsorgo to S. Egidio. By the 1430s, therefore, the descendants of Giacomo's large Falsorgo household had split up and formed three branches of the family, in Falsorgo, in Ferraboi, and in S. Egidio, each associated with a large house. During the later fifteenth century the ancestral Falsorgo house was inhabited by Giacomo's great-grandson, Michele, and his conjugal family. After Michele's death in exile<sup>53</sup>, his two sons, Giacomo and Gerolamo, lived alone in the Falsorgo house for nearly three decades, without taking steps to marry and produce an heir. Gerolamo – an internationally famous poet and

<sup>52</sup> These three branches were genealogically distinct, they lived in three different parts of the city, and they each had a villa in a different part of the Veronese territory, catalogued in Viviani. The S. Fermo branch owned "il Boschetto" in Lavagno (the most famous of the villas identified with the Verità family), on the road to Soave (Viviani, 539-41), currently owned by the Fraccaroli family; the S. Giovanni in Foro branch owned the so-called Villa Turco in Arbizzano-Negrar in the Valpolicella (Viviani, 461-62), currently owned by Dante Serego Alighieri; and the Ferraboi branch owned the Villa Verità in Concarnarise in the Bassa Veronese (Viviani, 707), currently owned by Bruno Bresciani (see Bresciani, 40-41).

<sup>53</sup> Soranzo, 419. ASVr, *Archivio Comune*, reg. 13, fol. 189v; Archivio di Stato di Venezia, *Misti Consiglio Dieci*, reg. 24, fol. 142.

political leader of the city – did marry after his older brother died, however, and had a family of his own<sup>54</sup>.

Verità de Verità, who was knighted by the Carrara in 1404, soon moved out of his father's house in Falsorgo to found a new branch of the family next door in the *contrada* of Ferraboi<sup>55</sup>. Unfortunately, however, his son died childless, so his share of the family property passed to his nephew Antonio, who took over the house in the 1430s<sup>56</sup>. Antonio's two grandsons formed a joint-family household in Ferraboi which grew in size and complexity as their tax assessment rose rapidly during the second half of the fifteenth century, to L. 22 in 1518, making them one of the wealthiest households in Verona<sup>57</sup>. The brothers probably continued to live together because only one of them succeeded in producing a male heir, named Francesco. Francesco, in turn, had only one son, named Verità, who married at the young age of seventeen in order to increase the likelihood of producing a male heir himself<sup>58</sup>. Unfortunately this tactic failed, and both Verità and his young wife soon died childless, extinguishing the direct male line of descent after only three generations<sup>59</sup>.

Nearly twenty years elapsed between the extinction of the Ferraboi patriline and the final division of the large Ferraboi estate in 1541 between the many claimants to a share of the patrimony<sup>60</sup>. The principal beneficiary of the settlement in 1541 was Gerolamo, then the head of the Falsorgo branch, and his four legitimate sons, young adults at the time of the settlement, and when Gerolamo died in 1552, the inheritance subsequently divided by his sons included both the ancestral Falsorgo residence and the Ferraboi house originally acquired by their ancestors in the 1430s. The two older sons, Michele and Giacomo, inherited what must have been the smaller home in Falsorgo, because they promptly sold it to buy another house on the other side of town in the fashionable *contrada* of S. Fermo<sup>61</sup>. Their two younger brothers

<sup>54</sup> ASVr, *Anagrafi-Comune*, no. 260. Gerolamo married in 1514, just before he turned forty.

<sup>55</sup> On this man, see Varanini, 1979, 32; and Dalla Corte, vol. II, 337-38, 358-60, 369. Verità continued to use the title until his death, but it was not inherited by his son Marco.

<sup>56</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 252, fol. 38r; according to the *estimo*, Antonio and his family were living with his nephew, Gabriele, and his family in Falsorgo before the Ferraboi house became available for them to move into: CE reg. 249, fol. 40v; reg. 250, fol. 28v; reg. 251, fol. 39.

<sup>57</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 256, fol. 39r; reg. 257, fol. 34r; reg. 258, fol. 37v; reg. 259, fol. 47v; *Anagrafi-Comune*, nos. 312, 313, 314. By 1518, the tax assessment of this patriline was L. 22 s. 1, one of the highest in Verona.

<sup>58</sup> ASVr, *Anagrafi-Comune*, no. 316.

<sup>59</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 263, fol. 64v; See also *Malaspina-Verità*, b. 216, proc. 2314 (estate division).

<sup>60</sup> ASVr, *Malaspina-Verità*, b. 216, proc. 2314. On the procedural difficulties leading to the settlement of the estate, and the final judgment of Venice's Council of Ten, see *Malaspina-Verità*, b. 183, proc. 1919.

<sup>61</sup> On the sale of the Falsorgo house, see ASVr, *Malaspina-Verità*, b. 207, proc. 2219, fols. 2-3, 4-5. The house in S. Fermo (current address: vicolo Leoni, no. 6-8) is discussed briefly in Dal Forno, at "V".

inherited the house in Ferraboi. With Gerolamo's sons in the mid-sixteenth century, therefore, the Falsorgo and Ferraboi patrimonies were fused and redivided, and the smaller, ancestral house in Falsorgo sold. Their allegiance to the neighborhood their patriline had lived in for two hundred years was not strong enough to counteract their desire for larger, more elegant establishments elsewhere.

The final group of Verità households to be discussed in this essay descended from the eldest son of Giacomo Verità (the founder of the Falsorgo branch at the end of the fourteenth century), who moved out of his ancestral home to found a new branch of the family in the *contrada* of S. Egidio. Although this group prospered in the fifteenth century, estate divisions and other difficulties caused its ultimate failure in spite of significant residential continuity<sup>62</sup>. The composition of the household in S. Egidio and that of the branch it spawned in S. Giovanni in Foro are good examples of the expansion and contraction in household size and complexity characteristic of more stable domestic establishments in this period. By 1501 the S. Egidio household had shifted from a large, conjugal family to a classic example of a stem family: the oldest son, Gabriele was living with his elderly father, several unmarried younger brothers, his wife, and five children of his own<sup>63</sup>. When his father died in 1507, Gabriele immediately moved away from S. Egidio to establish his family in the neighboring *contrada* of S. Giovanni in Foro<sup>64</sup>. After Gabriele moved away from S. Egidio, one of Gabriele's brothers, Bartolomeo, who remained behind, married and had three children<sup>65</sup>. This small, conjugal family grew for a while again, as they had children, but when the children reached adulthood, divided up their patrimony and moved away, the only ones who stayed in the S. Egidio home were an elderly widow and her three unmarried sons. After 1572, the S. Egidio residence passed out of the Verità family for good, as the branch itself, victim of patrimonial divisions and economic decline, disappeared from view<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>62</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 252, fol. 656r. Their house in S. Egidio is currently known as the Palazzo Lanfranchini, at via Emilei, 17 (Dal Forno, at "V"). On the exceptional quality of its late fifteenth-century decoration, see Newman, 278-79. Newman and others have attributed this building to the Verità family because of the Verità coat of arms carved into the capitals of two of the late fifteenth-century columns in the courtyard. He suggests that it belonged to the S. Benedetto branch of the family who, in the 1470s, just when Newman dates the decoration, divided their patrimony among their sons and left the *contrada* (CE reg. 256, fols. 67r, 69v, and CE reg. 257, fols. 64r, 65r). The *contrada* of S. Egidio was adjacent to S. Benedetto, and it seems much more likely, therefore, that this house belonged to the son of Bartolomeo, who was rapidly increasing his wealth in the 1460s and 1470s, according to the *estimo*.

<sup>63</sup> ASVr, *Anagrafi-Comune*, no. 199.

<sup>64</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 260, fol. 87r; fol. 65v; fol. 93r.

<sup>65</sup> The families of Bartolomeo and his brother Gabriele may have constituted a joint-family household for a while before the death of their father.

<sup>66</sup> ASVr, CE reg. 267, fol. 157v, and *Anagrafi-Provincia*, no. 229.

The experience of these three generations of the S. Egidio branch of the family shows how difficult it could be, on the one hand, to ensure a direct male line of succession and, on the other, to maintain a patrimony intact in the presence of several sons and daughters. Further, it shows how men were likely to postpone marriage in order to accommodate their own offspring in the family's establishment, and how that contributed to a household's complex and extended generational spread. The death of a father or older brother could thrust the headship of the family and the household on someone unexpectedly. In this case, Bartolomeo became head of the household in S. Egidio after the death of his father and departure of his brother Gabriele between 1501 and 1514. Eventually Bartolomeo's younger brother Bernardino took over the household as its wealth diminished, and Bernardino's widow presided over her three unmarried sons during the final years of the S. Egidio branch.

In contrast to the brothers he left behind in S. Egidio, Gabriele met with success in S. Giovanni in Foro and established a branch of the family that acquired a great deal of cultural and political prestige toward the end of the sixteenth century. This branch, however, had difficulties perpetuating the direct male line, perhaps because of a conscious effort to limit the number of sons who married in each generation. Gabriele moved to S. Giovanni in Foro with his wife and five young children, but died soon thereafter<sup>67</sup>. His two surviving sons lived out their lives together in S. Giovanni in Foro, but only one of them married, and that couple had only one son, Gasparo. Gasparo was married by age fifteen, in order to ensure the birth of an heir, but his young wife died after giving birth to a daughter<sup>68</sup>. Fortunately Gasparo then remarried and had a son, averting a crisis (the same crisis that caused the nearly contemporary extinction of the Ferraboi branch) and set the S. Giovanni in Foro branch of the family on a more secure path. Between 1515 and 1557 the household grew to an extended stem family, a large and wealthy aristocratic household at the apex of Veronese society.

## 6. Conclusion

As we have seen, during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries many Verità moved about the city several times over the course of their lives, for a variety of reasons. Frequent movement was more characteristic of poorer households, widows (with or without young children) and young, recently married men. Poorer households, perhaps searching for a better situation, moved about regularly and often lived in rented space. Widows with young children might move in search of protection from relatives and friends, as

<sup>67</sup> His three sons wrote wills in 1511 after the death of their father: ASVR, *Testamenti*, mazzo 103, 553-55.

<sup>68</sup> ASVr, *Anagrafi-Comune*, nos. 394, 396, 400.

might an elderly widow who chose to leave her dead husband's home. Wealthy, upwardly mobile men with young families often moved a few times before permanently establishing their households in a new *contrada* and achieving the financial success that supported the burdens of aristocratic social and cultural life. Young Verità men who moved away from the house where they were born probably did so because that house could not accommodate them and their families comfortably. The large residences of the most successful branches of the family seem to have commanded the strongest allegiance, and young men in these branches were more likely to accommodate themselves to suit the house than were those men born in houses that were less important to their branch in the long run. By the later sixteenth century, when each of the three wealthy branches of the family consolidated its property and its offspring in a single *contrada*, the tax assessments of the poorer branches were much lower than those of their distant, wealthy relatives, and they had established their households in more humble, artisanal areas of the city. Also by the later sixteenth century there was no residential continuity connecting a particular line of the family to the *contrade* their ancestors had lived in at the beginning of the fifteenth century, and the Verità households listed in the *estimo* were scattered all over the city<sup>69</sup>.

The stories told above suggest that the frequent formation and re-formation of noble households played an important role in Verona's expansive economic and urban development. As they moved around the city, making money and losing it, rebuilding and redecorating their domestic spaces, managing their increasingly complex domestic staffs, these families were forging a new system of élite urban living. Although the data surveyed in this essay privilege the Verità men as household heads, their mothers, wives and sisters were all extremely important protagonists in each family story. The pursuit of a family's status, wealth and political influence increasingly occurred within these domestic spaces, and the women in charge of these spaces were essential to the family's success. Every time a married couple moved and set up a new household in a new neighborhood their decision to do so was based on a complex set of patrimonial, demographic, and emotional factors, and closely tied to their position in a mobile and porous aristocratic élite where bilateral kinship ties created by intermarriage were extremely powerful. In every case the establishment of a new household required the deployment of an increasingly expensive array of home furnishings and domestic servants that were needed to sustain the aristocratic identity of the household. Far from collecting in the dusty corners of noble palaces that rarely changed hands, these domestic furnishings were regularly bought and sold at auction, circulating among the men and women of élite families as the households

<sup>69</sup> Some direct descendants of the fifteenth-century Falsorgo branch returned to the *contrada* of Falsorgo in the early seventeenth century, but not to their ancestral home, which was sold by Michele and Giacomo Verità in the early 1550s, when they moved to S. Fermo.

themselves were formed and reformed<sup>70</sup>. Whether upwardly or downwardly mobile, the men and women who created and managed these households understood that they faced a delicate balancing act as they negotiated status, political alliances and economic opportunities in the dynamic society of Renaissance Verona. The demographic and fiscal records examined in this essay reveal just how fragile many of these households were in the long run.

<sup>70</sup> The buying and selling of luxurious domestic furnishings in Venice and Florence has recently attracted scholarly attention: see Allerston, Calvi and Ajmar-Wollheim. For Verona, see Smith 1998.



**Appendix**

Number of Verità Households in the *estimo*  
and Fluctuations in Their Tax Assessments, 1409-1635

Inclusion in the columns "Up" and "Down" means increases or decreases of more than s. 5 since the previous *estimo*; inclusion in the column "Steady" means variations of s. 5 or less. The column "New" indicates the number of households established since the previous *estimo*. Source: ASVr, CE regs. 249-273.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Households</i>	<i>Up</i>	<i>Down</i>	<i>Steady</i>	<i>New</i>
1409	5				
1418	5	3	0	2	0
1425	7	2	2	1	2
1433	8	3	2	1	2
1443	8	3	4	0	1
1447	7	4	1	2	0
1456	8	4	0	3	1
1465	7	4	0	3	0
1473	9	4	1	1	4
1482	13	2	5	1	5
1492	18	5	6	1	6
1502	19	5	3	6	5
1515	19	6	2	6	5
1518	19	5	1	13	0
1531	17	7	1	3	6
1545	18	6	3	3	7
1558	18	7	5	3	3
1572	20	2	7	7	3
1584	18	4	4	7	3
1595	15	5	5	2	3
1605	17	5	2	5	5
1616	15	3	5	4	3
1627	14	1	6	4	3
1635	12	3	2	6	1

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#### *Abstract*

This essay presents a demographic and economic survey of all Verità households in Verona during the first two centuries of Venetian rule, in order to examine the changing nature of local élites in Terraferma cities, a theme that was of great interest to Benjamin G. Kohl. Veronese noble families that maintained or improved their economic and social position during this period did so by adapting to rapidly changing circumstances, and developing a wide range of strategic solutions to meet these challenges. In the Verità family there were high levels of instability and decline among many households and branches in the family, as well as cases of rapid and spectacular increases in wealth. Allegiance to the patriline was both a powerful ideal and a source of practical support, but household heads used it selectively as they made their way in the world. Maintaining the economic independence of individual branches and households was the fundamental principle of estate organization among members of this family, as will be shown by a detailed discussion of the division of the estate of Gabriele Verità in 1439. The social geography of the family (with some exceptions) was characterized by residential independence throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

#### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century; Verona; society; social mobility; household; prosopography; Verità family

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## **Society, Religion and Art**



# Storm, suicide and miracle: Venice, 1342\*

by Trevor Dean

## 1. *The story*

In the year 1342 on 5 February, a certain school-master gave his body and soul to the devil and hanged himself by the neck. As soon as he was dead, a huge storm rose up, such that it seemed that Venice itself would be submerged. And the water rose so high that the like had never been seen in Venice. And it seems that an old man went to Terra Nova where he found a fisherman who had tied up to a boat at a landing-stage, and this to escape the storm. And the old man asked the boatman to take him to San Giorgio; he replied that this was impossible because of the great storm and that not even the biggest boat in Venice would be able to get there. The old man was able with good words to persuade him, promising also a good reward, and so they went to San Giorgio, where the old man disembarked and went to the church and after a while came out with a young man. Both stepped into the bark and went in the direction of San Niccolò di Lido, even though the fisherman refused to go there out of fear of the great storm. When they arrived at San Niccolò, both men disembarked and went into the church and after a while came out with another man, so that they were now three. And they re-embarked, and they asked to be rowed towards Castelli.

Once beyond Castelli, they saw a ship coming towards them. Approaching the ship, they began to curse and make the sign of the cross; and at once the ship sank. And after it had sunk the weather began to improve and the water to calm. When this took place, they said to the boatman that he should return to San Niccolò, which they did, with the boatman more dead than alive both out of fear of the storm and because he had seen them send the ship to the bottom.

Once they arrived at San Niccolò, the man from there disembarked and went to the church. They left and went on to San Giorgio, where the young man disembarked and went to the church. And the boatman then returned to the spot where he had taken on the old man. Once he had disembarked, the boatman asked him for the generous payment that had been promised, and the old man replied that he did not have any money, but that the boatman should go to the Procurators of St. Mark for them to give him remuneration, and that he should tell them what he had seen, and that the boat that had sunk was full of devils who were coming to submerge the city of Venice, and that this was due to happen on the night of Wednesday at about the 7<sup>th</sup> hour. But that almighty god had not permitted such damage to occur. The boatman replied that the Procurators would not believe him, so the old man said, "Look, I am the body of St. Mark, and those we took on board were St. George and St. Nicholas. And in order that they believe what you tell them, take this ring", taking it from his finger, "and present it

\* All translations are the author's own except where otherwise noted.



to the Procurators, and say that my body is in such-and-such a place in the church, which no one knows but them"<sup>1</sup>. Having said this, he disappeared.

The boatman was totally stupefied and amazed, but once he had come to himself, he presented himself to the Procurators and told them all that had happened. When they made fun of him, he showed them the ring and showed them where the body of St. Mark was, and they saw that he was telling the truth and rewarded him. Then the Procurators went to the Doge and Signoria and reported what had happened, and it was agreed that there should be a *festa* and procession for this apparition, which is still held in Venice to this day<sup>2</sup>.

## 2. Introduction

This is not the only version of the miraculous tale of St. Mark and the boatman. The version usually referred to by historians is that by the sixteenth-century chronicler and diarist Marin Sanudo (1466-1536) in his "Lives of the Venetian Doges"<sup>3</sup>. Earlier re-tellings include those by Giorgio Dolfin (1396-1458), drawing on an earlier chronicle, and omitting reference to suicide and festival<sup>4</sup>, and by the humanist and official historian of Venice, Marcantonio Sabellico (1436-1506), also lacking any reference to suicide<sup>5</sup>. The account quoted above comes from an anonymous, undated chronicle, which narrates Venetian history up to 1427 in a fifteenth-century or sixteenth-century script, and can be assumed to have been written in the early fifteenth century.

This narration is different from Sanudo's at many points. Sanudo's *récit* is constructed using analepsis, deferring all mention of the suicide until near the end; it dramatizes the dialogue between the boatman and the saint; it acknowledges variants and sources; and it makes the Doge rather than the Procurators the first recipient of the news. Sanudo's date for the event also differs: 25 February 1340 *more veneto*, that is 1341. However, the nature and purpose of the story are the same: it is aetiological, to explain the origin of a solemn procession. Its formal differences from Sanudo's re-telling are also signs that this tale was one that had been told and retold in different versions over the decades. The purpose of this paper is not, however, to examine the variants, but to investigate the particular character of this story as a piece of chronicle reportage. The story is unique in Venetian and even Italian late medieval chronicling for its precise location of a saintly apparition into a historical context and its connection of suicide, weather and demons. This paper demonstrates that uniqueness, evaluates the narrative genre of this

<sup>1</sup> St. Mark's relics were brought to Venice in the ninth century, but subsequently misplaced; on their rediscovery in the late tenth century, they were reburied and the location was kept secret among the Doge, his chaplain and the Procurators of St. Mark: Muir, 86; Labalme, 244.

<sup>2</sup> British Library, Add. MS 27431, *Cronaca di Venezia*, fols. 147-48.

<sup>3</sup> Sanuto, 608-09. Molmenti took his account from Sanudo: Molmenti, 25-26.

<sup>4</sup> Dolfin, 2:20-21; Zannoni, 524, 526.

<sup>5</sup> Sabellico, 98-99.

story, explores in a novel way the recounting of suicide, and suggests both how and why devils were added to the memory of a real but unremarkable storm.

### 3. *Historiography*

The existing scholarship on this story tends to view it as a strange appendage to some other, larger corpus: it has been used by historians of the cult and festivals of St. Mark<sup>6</sup>, by a historian of suicide<sup>7</sup>, and by historians of art, in relation to depictions of the miracle by Palma Vecchio (1480-1528) and Paris Bordone (1500-1571) in an early-sixteenth-century cycle of paintings of the deeds of St. Mark in the Scuola Grande di San Marco<sup>8</sup>. Each in their different ways treats this story as eccentric. For the history of the cult of St. Mark, it is an addendum to the main festival days for this saint, who was physically and ideologically central to the Venetian state: St. Mark's martyrdom commemorated on 25 April, the translation of his relics celebrated on 31 January and the rediscovery of those relics (*inventio*) celebrated on 25 June<sup>9</sup>. In his history of suicide, Alexander Murray treats the story of the storm as an oddly late and Italian version of a type of report found more typically earlier and in Germany, with the suicidal despair induced by the devil having its counterpart in disturbed weather<sup>10</sup>. And art historians have stressed how unique this subject is in Venetian painting, with no representation before the sixteenth century, while it has been suggested that the saving of Venice from submersion by devils was an allegory for Venice's survival in the War of the League of Cambrai<sup>11</sup>. By viewing the story instead as a particular cultural artefact, it is possible to arrive at new perceptions of its themes and its significance.

The story has not been much used by historians of the weather or the climate. Though this storm is listed in Camuffo's list of sea surges in Venice, there is no close examination of the event or the text<sup>12</sup>. Alexandre's great catalogue of chronicle references to major weather events in medieval Europe omits it (mainly as too ephemeral), and in any case contains no weather in Venice for the whole of the fourteenth century, hardly using Venetian chronicles at all<sup>13</sup>. But this points to a peculiar feature of fourteenth-century

<sup>6</sup> Tramontin, 57-58; Labalme, 248; Urban, Romanelli, Gandolfi, 23-25. But the episode and its associated festival are not mentioned by Renier Michiel or by Mazzarotto.

<sup>7</sup> Murray, 1:112-13.

<sup>8</sup> Bailo and Biscaro, 174-79; 41-46; Puppi, 95-108; Rylands, 243-44; Fortini Brown, 237-39.

<sup>9</sup> Muir, 76-88. Muir's source is Tramontin, and he implies (*ibid.*, 89) that the miracle story was contemporaneous with the storm.

<sup>10</sup> Lederer, 1089-90. Separately, for suicidal despair and demons' power over weather: Minois, 9, 32-34; Clark, 163, 186.

<sup>11</sup> Rylands, 244.

<sup>12</sup> Camuffo, 9. Also: Camuffo, Secco, Brimblecombe and Martin-Vide, 213, 215.

<sup>13</sup> Alexandre, 425-539. Andrea Dandolo's chronicle is used once, for an event in 1114: *ibid.*, 240.

Venetian chronicles, not to any failing on Alexandre's part: they are unusually spare in their references to the weather, partly because of their biographical structure around the lives and deeds of each successive Doge: election, character, actions in peace and war, death<sup>14</sup>. "The narration of facts is summary, seen from above, with little or nothing of the interior life of the city", and with "no space for miracles"<sup>15</sup>. So it is not surprising that there is little weather in the chronicle by Raffaino de' Caresini, apart from mentions of sea storms during the War of Chioggia<sup>16</sup>. The only weather event in the *Cronaca A Latina* is precisely the storm of 25 February 1342, but narrated very briefly: the water rose so ferociously in Venice, it says, that no living person had seen water so high<sup>17</sup>. Piero Giustinian's "History of Venice", covering the period from the foundation of the city to 1358, reports only two floods from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: this one in 1342, and a previous one in December 1284, both described in similarly formulaic and spare terms<sup>18</sup>. The other major fourteenth-century chronicle, by Enrico Dandolo, is similarly concise in its reporting of this same event, noting the date and time ("nocte"), the scale of the storm ("grandissima") and subsequent flooding ("the water rose one pace above usual") and the damage to merchandise<sup>19</sup>. None of these chronicles suggest that there was anything supernatural in the flooding of 1342: unusual because of its height, but not warranting anything beyond formulaic reportage. Nor were there any detectable ripples in the records of the Venetian Senate<sup>20</sup>.

By the fifteenth century, Venetian chronicle-writing had overcome and jettisoned the dogal structure and the focus on civic glories alone: in Carile's words, narration became more extended and more curious, and the chronicles became diaries, with their attention on the picturesque and their neglect of explanation<sup>21</sup>. Thus in Domenico Malipiero's annals for the second half of the fifteenth century there is a record of the weather similar to that found, but much earlier, in the chronicles of other Italian cities: flooding, wind storms, ice, rain, lightning and drought, with their accompaniment of damage to ships and merchandise, to roofs and *campanili*, and their infliction of human casualties, drowned in wind-storms or burned by lightning<sup>22</sup>. For the event of 1342, the

<sup>14</sup> Carile, 87-88.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>16</sup> *Raphayni de Caresinis*, 42, 44, 54. On this chronicle: Arnaldi and Capo, 291-96.

<sup>17</sup> "Anno Domini 1341 die 25 februaryii in nocte crevit aqua tam vehementer in Venetiis quod aliquis vivens non vidit suo tempore aquam ad unum cubitum tam magnam": *Cronaca "A Latina"*, 154.

<sup>18</sup> "Die xxv februaryii, sub noctis taciturnitate aque II pedibus in Veneciis fuerunt ultra solitum altiores": *Venetiarum historia*, 224 (cf. the 1284 flood, *ibid.*, 192: "sub noctis silentio aque maritime fuerunt in Veneciis multo solito altiores").

<sup>19</sup> "Corando MIII<sup>c</sup>XLI, di XXV de fevrer, de nocte fu grandissima fortuna in Venesia et crescé l'aqua preso un passo plù ch'al modo uxado, unde molte merchadantie se guastone": *Cronica di Venexia*, 120.

<sup>20</sup> *Records of the Venetian Senate*.

<sup>21</sup> Carile, 104-10.

<sup>22</sup> "Annali veneti", 654, 665, 681, 686, 696, 700, 707, 709.

brevity of contemporary reportage had already given way to extended myth-making by the 1390s, it seems: an anonymous chronicle of 1396, transcribed in 1464, contains the miraculous story (without, however, any reference to a suicide, and mis-dating the event by one year)<sup>23</sup>.

#### 4. *Another effect of the War of Chioggia?*

At some point between fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, this note of a storm and flood evolved in two ways: its precise dating was lost<sup>24</sup>, and it had a major civic miracle attached to it. It is tempting to look for some crisis in Venetian public life to explain this accretion. Between 1342 and the early fifteenth century, the largest crisis in Venetian life, apart from the Black Death, was the war between Venice and Genoa known as the War of Chioggia, 1378-1381, which, as Varanini has suggested, had consequences of the largest scope: financially, socially and in terms of Venetians' sense of security<sup>25</sup>. The war had "demonstrated the vulnerability of the lagoon", as Venice was blockaded by Hungarian forces to the north and by combined Paduan and Genoese forces in and around the lagoons<sup>26</sup>. The town of Chioggia fell to the Genoese in August 1379, "a stunning blow"<sup>27</sup>. In this context, demons sailing into the Venetian lagoon could easily stand as proxies for invading Genoese ships. Moreover, a sense of hostile forces irrupting into and degrading the old order perhaps persisted after the war, as Jewish moneylenders were first admitted, then expelled, as citizenship was granted to foreigners, as Venetian private wealth was consumed and as a group of *popolani* was admitted to the patriciate<sup>28</sup>. Could the demonic invasion have resonated with anti-semitic, xenophobic, classist sentiment?

#### 5. *Uniqueness*

The contrast between the spareness of fourteenth-century reports of the storm and the length and detail of fifteenth-century versions conforms to a general evolution in Italian chronicle writing between thirteenth and fifteenth

<sup>23</sup> Bailo and Biscaro, 178. The fourteenth-century chronicles agree that the year was 1341 (m.v., i.e. 1342).

<sup>24</sup> All the later sources, except the one translated and transcribed here, agree on the day and the month, but vary the year. There remains the possibility that the later sources refer to a separate storm, but this seems unlikely: what would the sources have been?

<sup>25</sup> Varanini, 201-02.

<sup>26</sup> For the Paduan involvement: Kohl, 205-18.

<sup>27</sup> Lane, 192.

<sup>28</sup> Mueller, 34-39; Romano, 154-55, who writes of "greater status consciousness" and an "accelerating sense of social exclusivity" among patricians after the war.

centuries, which increasingly gave greater narrative space to severe weather events<sup>29</sup>. But the particular contours of this tale are unique: though religiosity is often associated with the reporting of storms and floods in chronicles, this mostly takes the form either of attributing causation to God's anger, or of praying to God to withhold further punishment. The combination of elements in this tale – demonic intervention triggered by a suicide and repulsed by a saintly apparition – is found nowhere else in Italian medieval chronicles. The two connections, between suicide and storms and between storms and demons, were not generally evident. Suicide is usually treated in a matter-of-fact manner by chroniclers: they give the date, and they state the name, occupation and situation of the person, they sometimes suggest a cause, they specify the means of self-killing, and they mention how or where the body was disposed of. None of them make any connection to storms or demons<sup>30</sup>. Even though it is said, on the basis of an early-fourteenth-century sermon, that hail storms “were regarded” as the work of demons who lived in the “middle air”<sup>31</sup>, it is difficult to find traces of such a belief in reports of actual weather events.

There is one exception, and that too is Venetian. It comes in a chronicle description of a human incident during a great storm dated (perhaps misdated) to August 1410. The chronicle first records the intensity of the storm and the range of damage that it caused: boats sank returning from Mentone and people drowned, chimneys and *campanili* were brought down, damaging houses below. And then, during the storm, “many monstrous forms” were seen in the air, “ugly creatures”, which put all the people in shock and was interpreted as an omen of some great evil. It was said that the wife of one Zuè de Cattaro bavearol, who was possessed (*insperitada*) uttered great cries to stop her husband from going to Mestre, because she said that she could see in the air many demons, naming many spirits, even though at that moment the air was quiet and serene. Her husband was not stopped by her words ... and was drowned with all the others in his boat<sup>32</sup>.

The closest to this that any chronicle from other cities comes is the report in 1498 by a churchman of Orvieto when he saw during a storm a black-red cloud which seemed to contain the face of a man, “ugly and dishevelled”, shouting thunderously<sup>33</sup>. Only Venetian chroniclers see the forms in the air as demons.

<sup>29</sup> Dean, 2011.

<sup>30</sup> Ferrarini, 230, 236, 264; Giovanni di Maestro Pedrino, 2:315; Conforto da Custoza, 23; *Chronicon estense*, 98; “Diario di Ser Tommaso di Silvestro”, 56; Landucci, 56.

<sup>31</sup> Frugoni and Frugoni, 44-45. Delcorno, 1989: 115, reported that this ‘doctrine’ had been traced to the Church Fathers.

<sup>32</sup> “molte forme mostruose in aire ... brutti criadori”, “cosa che messe in spavento tutto il populo e fu interpretato per augurio di qualche gran mal. Fu dito che la moglie d’un Zuè de Cattaro bavearol ch’era insperitada messe gran gridi per impedir el dicto suo marido che non andasse a Mestre perche la diceva veder l’agiere pien di demoni nominando molti spiriti nientedimeno in quel ora l’agiere era tranquillo et seren. Il dicto suo marido non restò però per le sue parole”: British Library, Add. MS 8582, fols. 141v-42.

<sup>33</sup> “Diario di Ser Tommaso di Silvestro”, 125.

Yet even in Venice this perception was not always made. Compare the account of the 1410 Venetian storm to another account of a wind-storm in that city in 1409 (possibly the same event), this one from a nunnery<sup>34</sup>. The description is similar in initial structure: the intensity (“so terrible that old men said they had never seen its like”), and the extent of human and material damage (the boats submerged and people drowned, the corpses found in the canal, the ruined houses, the collapsed *campanili* and chimneys), but then, instead of reporting an “it was said”, the nuns’ chronicle continues a trajectory from the broader picture to the particular, from effects on others to effects on selves: “God willed that we had part of this tribulation”, as the top of their own *campanile* collapsed, along with a chimney, and the wall of their vineyard fell down, such that any lay person could enter the monastery, and this required the nuns to mount guard at night for fear of thieves. The damage is interpreted as god-sent, but is not over-interpreted (sent by god as punishment, or test, or warning); it is not seen as demonic. And the author quickly passes from the light-touch of the divine hand to the very practical, non-spiritual consequences: the exposure of the nuns to the risk of thieving because of the gap in the vineyard wall. There is no suggestion here of a devotional lesson being drawn by either the nuns or the chronicler, as the nuns, perhaps typically, focus on their internal world and on emblems of their vulnerability to men<sup>35</sup>.

## 6. Genre

The tale of the boatman and the three saints seems to belong to some other, non-historical branch of literature, and it is worth exploring its relation to biblical templates, folk tales, saints’ lives and didactic-pastoral *exempla*. First, the element of a nameless traveller who turns out to be holy or divine has analogues in Tobias’ experience on the road to Rages (a story that also included the dispelling of a demon) or the Christian disciples on the road to Emmaus (as well as roots or analogues in classical myth). More broadly, the tale follows some of the basic rules of folk-tale construction. The heroes arrive unrecognised. They set a difficult task, a test of endurance and obedience for the boatman. After their victory over the villain, their identity is revealed. Their human helper is rewarded<sup>36</sup>. Yet the tale is located in a specific historical time, starts with a real historical event, and ends with a real historical consequence. Thirdly, as hagiography, the tale has numerous analogues. The saint who saves the city is a common topos, whether it be St. Nicholas feeding the starving city of Myra through the miracle of the replenished grain cargos<sup>37</sup>, or the Virgin

<sup>34</sup> Riccoboni, 274-75. And see *Life and Death in a Venetian Convent*.

<sup>35</sup> Lowe, 37, 40, partly suggests this. The sacred and contested value of the nunnery wall is addressed by Dean, 2008, 1-9.

<sup>36</sup> Propp, 60-61; Thompson.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 22-23.

Mary defending Siena in battle against the Florentines in 1260<sup>38</sup>, or St. Clare saving the city of Assisi from attack by Frederick II's Saracen troops<sup>39</sup>, or St. Leo saving Rome from Attila, with the persuasive aid of a great, ghostly warrior menacingly visible only to Attila himself<sup>40</sup>. But none of these examples involved saintly apparitions: Leo, Nicholas and Clare were all alive when they performed these acts of rescue, while the Virgin Mary, who did make apparitions, did not do so in Siena in 1260. Nor did any of them involve devils: when Mary intervened to fight off a devil, her aim was to save an individual soul, not a whole city<sup>41</sup>.

So, if not history, the tale of St. Mark and the boatman is not clearly folk tale or hagiography either. Can the tale be considered as part of exemplary literature? In general, the miracle of 1342 conforms to Le Goff's classic definition of an *exemplum*: "un récit bref donné comme véridique et destiné à être inséré dans un discours ... pour convaincre un auditoire par une leçon salutaire." The tale is certainly presented as true, and the pull towards a salutary lesson is evident in the version quoted above, which locates the origin of the demon-ship in the schoolmaster's suicide. Moreover, the tale is set in historical time, and reports a fact from the daily life of anonymous, lower class people ("a certain schoolmaster", "a fisherman"), two of the further characteristics of *exempla* noted by Peter van Moos<sup>42</sup>. And in its treatment of disaster, this tale follows the pattern traced by Jacques Berlioz, in which *exempla* replace natural reasons for disaster with moral and theological ones: the action of the devil and demons, and divine punishment<sup>43</sup>. This can be seen in thirteenth and fourteenth collections of *exempla*, in which witnesses report seeing angry or dancing demons at the sites of disaster; disasters reveal sins; lightning strikes those who mix the sacred and profane (blasphemers, those who dance or have sex in church, those who fornicate at Easter, priests who keep concubines), and demons who force their ways into sacred spaces and hit people as they flee, can be stopped in their tracks and put to flight by the sign of the cross or by a saving formula ("Salve regina")<sup>44</sup>. The visibility and malevolence of demons in the tale of St. Mark conforms to their prominence in *exempla*.

<sup>38</sup> Webb, 251-67.

<sup>39</sup> Bartoli, 214-19.

<sup>40</sup> de Voragine, I, 339; Zannoni, 1236.

<sup>41</sup> Thus the *Madonna del soccorso* in the Cappella Velluti, Florence, attributed to Domenico di Zanobi: *La chiesa e il convento di Santo Spirito*, 248.

<sup>42</sup> van Moos, 76.

<sup>43</sup> Berlioz, 168-69.

<sup>44</sup> *Anecdotes historiques*, 169-70, 269-70, 342, 398-99; *Catalogue of Romances*, 132, 633, 664; *Caesarius Heisterbacensis*, 2:38-9; Klapper, 324. Italian *exempla* of the fifteenth century have not been well studied: fifteen years ago Delcorno called their study "presque inexistante": Delcorno, 1998: 160.



However, this Venetian tale is much longer than most *exempla*, and there is a clear disproportion between the “salutary lesson” and the narrative of the embarking of the three saints. Moreover, St. Mark is not a frequent presence in collections of *exempla*, while St. George appears only as a slayer of the dragon (which also saved a city)<sup>45</sup>. St. Nicholas does appear more frequently, including in stories in which he saved a servant struck by lightning, and in which he saved pilgrims imperilled by the devil’s gift of oil<sup>46</sup>. This latter *exemplum* comes, in fact, from the “Life of St. Nicholas”, and is preserved in *The Golden Legend* (I paraphrase). To stop pagan idolatry, Nicholas had a tree dedicated to Diana cut down. This infuriated the devil. Assuming the form of a nun, he came alongside a ship of people en route to visit Nicholas, and persuaded them to take his gift of oil to Nicholas. Another ship approached with a figure resembling Nicholas who asked them what the nun had said to them. “That was Diana herself”, he said, “and if you want proof, throw that oil over the water.” They did and it burst into flames<sup>47</sup>.

This miracle story bears some similarities to the 1342 miracle in both the behaviour of its actors and the mode of its telling: human action that unleashes demonic destructive anger; the saint who takes a boat to ward off the danger; and the delayed exposure of the peril. So it may be that a story-structure based on a legend of St. Nicholas, the patron of mariners, dispelling a sea-borne demonic menace, was elaborated (the triplication of saints), refocused (the relation of command and obedience between St. Mark and the boatman) and re-framed (the suicidal opening, the festival ending) before being attached to a historical event some four or five decades earlier, in order to respond to a crisis in confidence and security brought about by the War of Chioggia.

## 7. Conclusion

This is an essay in extrapolation and suggestion, which raises questions for the study of Venetian medieval historiography and for the relation between stories of severe weather events and political/social contexts. Two Venetian chronicles, preserved in the British Library, contain highly unusual responses to storms: how characteristic are they of the large, and largely understudied, mass of Venetian fifteenth-century diaries? This remains a question for future research. For medieval observers, it might be argued, severe weather arrived “over-determined”, its meanings already scripted, because of its association with the devil and because of the role of saints in dispelling it, but this essay suggests a different character and mechanism to the chroniclers’ understanding of storms – those that were explicitly linked to saints or devils

<sup>45</sup> Tubach, 175, 182, 247.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 477.

<sup>47</sup> de Voragine, 1:23 (I have abbreviated and paraphrased the translation).

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were rare, and those that were so linked had gendered characteristics (told by men about women, not by women about men) or needed major political crises to transform them into multi-variant retellings, as in the case of the three saints and the ship full of demons.

## Appendix

British Library, Add. MS 27431, Cronaca di Venezia, fols. 147-48

Et nel anno 1342 alli 5 febraro uno certo maestro di scuola se dette al diavolo in anima e corpo et se apiccò per la gola. Morto che fu, subito se levò una grandissima fortuna a<sup>a</sup> tale che pareva che Venetia se havesse a somergere, et le aque crescono tanto che mai in Venetia furono viste le maggiori dove parse uno vechiarelo andasse in Terra nova, ove trovò un certo pescatore che si era andato a ligar ad una nave che vi si faceva in un squero, et ciò per schifar tal fortuna. Et gionto che fu ditto vechiarelo, disse al pescatore che lo gerasse<sup>b</sup> fino a San Zorzi, al che lui rispose che era impossibile per la gran fortuna et che a ciò non vi era bastante la maggior nave di Venetia. Il ditto vechiarelo li sepe con bone parole tanto persuadere prometendoli ancho bon premio che contentò, et così andorno a San Zorzi maggiore, et ditto vechiarelo smontato in terra andò in la giesia. Et stato che fu alquanto uscite fuori con un giovine, et ambi dui montorno in ditta barcha et andorno alla volta di San Nicolò di Lio, anchora che ditto pescator recusasse volerli andar per paura della gran fortuna che era, et gionti a San Nicolò tutti ivi desmontorno in terra et andorno nella giesia, et di poi alquanto uscirono con uno altro a tale che erano tre. Et intrati in barcha fecero vogar alla volta di Castelli, et usciti de Castelli videnò una nave che veniva a velo, et approssimandosi detta nave questi li cominciarono a maledire facendoli il segno della santa croce et ditta nave subito se sommerse. Et summersa che fu il tempo incominciò a bonazare et dar giù le aque. Et fatto ciò dissero al barcharolo che tornasse a San Nicolò de Lio, et così ritornò ditto barcharolo più morto che vivo, si per paura della fortuna come per haver visto che costoro havevano fatto andar quella nave a fondi. Et gionti che furno a San Nicolò quello che venne de li dismontò in terra e andò in giesia, et partiti de li vennero a San Zorzi et così quel altro giovine dismontò in terra et intrò in giesia. Poi detto barcharolo ritornò al loco dove havea levato quel vechiarelo, et smontato che fu de barcha ditto barcharolo li adimandò la promessa che li havea facta cioè di pagarli benissimo. Onde ditto vecchio li rispose che non haveva danari, ma che andasse da procuratori della giesia di San Marco che loro li darian una bona provision, et che li narrasse quanto havea veduto et che la nave che era summersa era piena di diavoli quali venivano a sommergere questa città di Venetia, et che ciò dovea esser il mercore di notte venendo il giovedì circa le 7 hore, ma che l'omnipotente Idio non ha voluto permetter che incorra tanto danno. Il barcharolo rispose rispose che li procuratori non ge lo crederanno, allora il vecchio li disse "sapi che io son il corpo de San Marco et quello levassimo a San Zorzi era San Zorzi, et quello da Lio era San Nicolò, et aciò habiano a dar fede questo che tu li dirai piglia questo anello et presentilo alli procuratori", cavandoselo del dito, "et oltre di ciò dilli che il mio corpo è in tal loco della giesia che niun altro che loro non lo sa", et ditte queste parole disparve. Et detto barcharolo rimase tutto stupefatto et attonito, et in se rehauto andò a presentarsi alli procuratori narrandoli tutto questo era intervenuto. Et loro facendosene beffe di lui, li mostrò l'anello et li palentò dove era il corpo di San Marco, donde vedendo che quanto diceva era la verita lo premiorno et poi andorno ditti procuratori al Dose e alla Signoria et li narrorno tutto il successo, per il che fu terminato che in sì fatto giorno si facesse festa et procession per tale apparition qual fin al di d'hoggi si costuma a fare in Venetia.

<sup>a</sup> thus in the text for e

<sup>b</sup> thus in the text, with the meaning of 'condusse', 'portò'

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*Abstract*

Starting with a previously unpublished version of the apparition of Sts Mark, George and Nicholas to quell a storm in the Venetian lagoon in 1342, this contribution investigates the uniqueness of this story as a piece of chronicled history in the context of environmental historiography. A chief aim is to investigate the development of a simple account of a storm into a major piece of hagiography, and to propose a time and reason for that development. In doing this, the contribution takes account of the evolving character of Venetian chronicle-writing, and the fuzzy borders between history, hagiography and exemplary literature.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup> century; Venice; hagiography; chronicle; sources

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# Competing Saints in late medieval Padua\*

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## 1. *Introduction*

In the autumn following the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950, Armistice Day (as it was then still called) was observed distinctively in the small town where I grew up in Delaware. For the first time the entire student body of the local public school was mobilized to march the half mile up Broad Street to Cochran Square at the town's center. There we found arrayed in splendid uniforms members of the local American Legion post. Men who sold used cars or drove a school bus most days looked strangely impressive in their shining white helmets and sky-blue tunics. The mayor, who stood next to the town's only monument, a granite base topped by a soaring eagle and bearing the names of the four local men who had died in the First World War, spoke of the honoured dead and the need to defend the nation. But most impressive was the rifle salute fired by the Legion's Guard of Honor. We watched, tingling with excitement, as the Legionnaires fired round after round of blanks and heard the reports reverberate over the town's bank and post office. As we marched back to school, eager for lunch, we knew that we had been part of something special, but we never realized that with this observance of Armistice Day over half a century ago we were participating in a new "civic ritual", and one that was never to be repeated in precisely that form.

The purpose of this paper is to call into question, in the study of civic ritual in the later middle ages, the power of the omniscient historical anthropologist,

\* This is the last work that Benjamin Kohl completed. Only weeks before he died he sent it to a friend who was to find a way to publish it. Outside readers consulted by the editors of this volume agreed on its value, and the fact that it well represents his train of thought in his last phase of scholarly activity. John Law has edited the text: inserting section numbers, shortening the notes, making other formal adjustments. He has also lightened it of transcriptions from Padua's so-called Carrara statutes (1362), though maintaining short quotations and references to the text, since a critical edition will very soon be published by Ornella Pittarello, who was the recipient of Kohl's draught transcription of the Paduan manuscript. The names of saints are given in their English version, where known, but the Italian version is used for churches etc. bearing their names: e.g. St. Justina, Santa Giustina; Bl. Anthony the Pilgrim, Beato Antonio Pellegrino. The editors would like to thank Meredith Gill and Anne Derbes for advice and assistance.



whom post-modernist methodology has not – like the omniscient historian – relegated to some quaint substratum of outmoded positivism. I argue here for the importance of the participants as well as the planners of civic rituals and for the need to contextualize the creation and continuation of forms of ritual behaviour in any specific setting. My test case for the evolution of civic rituals is the changing calendar and celebration of feast days in the north Italian city of Padua in the late middle ages, between the early thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Most of all, the aim is to translate into some concrete reality of historical causation what the religious and civic leaders of Padua and their followers intended, hoped and even experienced. By analogy, I hope that the vivid, but fragmentary recollection of a twelve-year-old boy of the observance of Armistice Day 1950 in Middletown, Delaware, can help us understand the multiple contexts of the celebration of the universal figures and the local saints of medieval Christianity in the festivals, holidays, fairs, parishes, altars and art of Padua and its contado.

My approach is avowedly diachronic and contextual. I take seriously Sir Richard Southern's injunction that "the task of the next (generation of medievalists) will be to relate ... various bodies of theoretical knowledge ever more closely with the personalities, circumstances, historical events, and local environments of those who developed them"<sup>1</sup>. Fortunately, late medieval Padua provides superb material for mapping the changing nature of civic ritual and religious life over several centuries. The principal source for these changes are Padua's communal statutes, which, together with local records and chronicles, document the nature of festival and ritual under several regimes, beginning with the first commune that was destroyed by the Ghibelline tyrant Ezzelino da Romano, who ruled Padua from 1236 to 1256. Since the code of communal statutes enacted before Ezzelino's rule has been lost, those laws which survive in the statutory code of the second commune, dating from the late thirteenth century, are usually simply termed: "statutum vetus conditum ante millesimum ducentisimum trigesimum sextum".

No statutes were retained from the two-decade rule of the da Romano vicars, which contemporary chroniclers, such as Rolandino Patavino, and historians have viewed as a brutal and destructive Ghibelline *Sonderweg*, a horrific parenthesis in the political life of Guelph Padua. Thereafter, as provided by communal law, each Podestà was expected to introduce legislation for passage by the Maggior Consiglio during his term of office to reform abuses or define new procedures. Hence, each enactment that defined the ritual calendar or observance of individual feasts in communal Padua can be dated, in theory at least, to a particular year, and its enactment understood in a specific historical context. As we shall see, Padua's ritual year was largely defined in the *podestaria* of the Venetian noble Matteo di Niccolò Querini in 1278, but later modifications were made under the rule of the Carrara dynasty

<sup>1</sup> Southern, lxvi.

from 1318 to 1405, and further changes after the Venetian conquest in 1405<sup>2</sup>. Padua presents an excellent example of the evolution of ritual over time, with different emphases by three different regimes – communal, signorial, and Venetian – and new saints and rituals were introduced to represent new social and political needs.

## 2. Padua's Ritual Calendar

The earliest communal legislation on holidays (dating from before 1236) defined those solemn feast days when no servile labor was permitted and ordinary commerce was suspended.

On Good Friday, on the feasts of the Virgin Mary mother of God, and on all Sundays, and on the feast of the twelve apostles, and on the feast of Blessed Anthony the Confessor in June, no shop is to be open for any trade, nor in which anything is sold, except food and victuals for eating, and this in the city of Padua, under the penalty of twenty soldi for each and every violation. And concerning these matters, the Podestà is required to investigate by oath, except on half-holidays (*ferie*) and during the annual fairs. And that shoemakers and tailors can ply their trades until terce without penalty, provided that the doors of their shops are kept open. Another exception is that grocers can keep five of their shops open on any given day, and even in the time of the fairs<sup>3</sup>.

Thus, with the fifty-two Sundays and nearly twenty other solemn feasts for the Virgin Mary and the Apostles (about seventy per year), the Paduan commune defined those holidays during which shops were to be closed and work suspended for prayer and worship. To these solemn feasts were added a list of court holidays when no legal cases were to be heard, except for the sentencing of thieves and other criminals. The summer court recess of thirty-one days centered on the feast of St. Peter (14 June to 14 July), for the summer grain harvest, and autumn recess of seventeen days centered on Michaelmas (21 September to 7 October) for the grape harvest (the *vendemmia*). Less tied to the harvest seasons was the Christmas court recess of eighteen days from the vigil of St. Thomas to the third day after Epiphany (20 December to 8 January). Two other court vacations were moveable feasts defined by Easter: eighteen days from the Saturday before Palm Sunday to the end of the octave after Easter, and two days before and two days after Pentecost Sunday<sup>4</sup>. During the

<sup>2</sup> *Statuti del commune*, 1873 (hereafter *Stat. com.*, with citations by item number), codex completed in 1276, with additions to 1285. See also the recent Italian translation in *Statuti del comune*, 2000. Although almost all statutes are dated, they were often amended or assigned a different date for inclusion in the different codes without any noting of the fact. For the later codes: Padua, Biblioteca Civica, ms. B.P. 1237, *Statuta communis Padue* [1362] (hereafter *Stat. Car.*); Padua, Biblioteca Civica, ms. B.P. 1236. *Volumen statutorum magnifice civitatis Padue reformatorum* [1420] (hereafter *Stat. Ref.*). On the codices of the Paduan statutes, see Magliani.

<sup>3</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 556, included with minor changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 102v (the version translated here).

<sup>4</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 554-55.

communal period, Paduan courts were to suspend sessions for nearly ninety days during five recesses, in addition to nearly seventy solemn feasts for a total of nearly 160 days per annum. On all other days, Padua's Podestà and his judges of criminal cases and the twelve court justices of civil cases were required to attend court.

A few other statutes surviving from the pre-Ezzelinian period elaborated the "blue laws" that forbade work on Sundays and the solemn feasts, and defined the holding of fairs and markets. For example, no barber was permitted to shave customers on Sunday under a fine of sixty soldi, and no teamster was allowed to bring goods into the city by ox cart on Sundays, and the feasts of the Apostles and the Virgin Mary<sup>5</sup>. During the annual fairs and the markets held in honor of the city's original patron saints, Prosdocimus and Justina, the commune was obliged to appoint judges and notaries to conduct their offices of public order, justice and drawing up contracts of sale in the Prato della Valle, a broad meadow on the site of the Roman *Campus Martius* that functioned as Padua's fair ground<sup>6</sup>. In the walled town of Cittadella in the northern part of the contado, an annual fair was authorized on the feast of St. Luke (October 18), and a market permitted on every Sunday<sup>7</sup>. But, in general, the feasts and fairs honouring Padua's patron saints and a full elaboration of the ritual year were defined in the spate of legislation passed in the two decades after the fall of Ezzelino da Romano.

The key figure in the establishment of civic ritual in the newly-restored Guelph Padua was the thaumaturgic Franciscan friar, St. Anthony of Lisbon. Soon after his death on 20 June 1231, a burial place was established in the church of Santa Maria Mater Domini, and a Franciscan community founded there. The octave of St. Anthony's feast took on major political significance in the middle of the Duecento as the occasion for the perpetual commemoration of the recapture of Padua from the hated Ghibelline tyrant, Ezzelino da Romano, on 20 June 1256. According to local traditions, St. Anthony either interceded to ensure the victory of the crusading army over Ezzelino or appeared in a dream to predict the fall of the tyrant to his disciple and successor, Bl. Luca Belludi<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 562-63; included with changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 103r.

<sup>6</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 565; included with changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 103v.

<sup>7</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 567.

<sup>8</sup> Rolandinus Patavinus, 43-44, 118-19, credits St. Anthony as the special guardian of Padua, but does not mention his intercession in his description of the recapture of the city from Ezzelino on 20 June. His intervention is mentioned in Da Nono's account of around 1330: Da Nono, 145. The legend of St. Anthony prophesying to Beato Luca Belludi the fall of Ezzelino is depicted by Giusto de' Menabuoi (c. 1382) in the Conti chapel in the Santo, with a cityscape of Padua in the background, and the inscription below recording Luca praying to the saint. "Hic dum Beatus Lucas deprecaretur Deum sedula oracione pro conservatione paduane civitatis meruit a beato Antonio sibi aparente revelationem habere quod in proximum [diem] dicta civitas liberanda erat a dominio crudelissimi [Eccelini]": text published in Gamboso, 1988. The revelation of St. Anthony became a standard story by the mid-Quattrocento, as is revealed in Michele Savonarola, 16. Also, Webb, 97-98.

A year after the liberation of the city by a Guelph crusading army made up of exiles led by the Paduan bishop, Giovanni Forzatè, and aided by Venetian and Ferrarese soldiers under the command of Azzo VII d'Este, the current Podestà of Padua, the Venetian noble Marco Querini, introduced a statute that honoured the city's great patron saint with several events: an annual fair, a vesper procession on 19 June, a horse race and a public Mass on 20 June. The festivals and fairs held at the end of June in honor of St. Anthony brought all manner of folk into the city. The commune appointed twenty special police under their own captain to keep peace in the area around the Basilica and Prato della Valle. Special judges were appointed to try and punish any transgressors. Taverners were to keep closed their shops in the vicinity, and certain types of persons, especially gamblers, prostitutes, procurers and, generally, men and women of ill repute, were excluded from the area of the fair from the Piazza del Santo and Prato della Valle to the Pontecorvo city gate. To increase trade at the fair itself a monopoly was granted to merchants who set up booths in the Prato della Valle, since all shops in the center of town had to remain closed, with a number of notaries seconded to the fair to draw up contracts at a cheap rate. Foreign merchants were welcome to come and go at will for eight days before and eight following the feast of St. Anthony, even if under normal circumstance these men would have been subject to reprisals<sup>9</sup>.

To commemorate the capture of the Paduan suburbs from Ezzelino's forces, on the evening of 19 June, the Podestà with his staff of knights and judges and members of the guilds of Padua were to march in solemn procession from the town hall, the Palazzo della Ragione, at the city's center to the Basilica di Sant'Antonio, a kilometre to the south, for the honor of God, the Virgin Mary, and the city's patron saints, Prosdocimus, Justina and Anthony. The next morning, the bishop and all his clergy with the Podestà and his staff, giving the place of honor to the hero of the reconquest, the Marchese d'Este, if he were in town, followed by the knights of the city and their ladies and all guildsmen, were to process to the Basilica with candles, provided at communal expense, there to hear Mass. But before the Mass, the commune was to sponsor a horse race (*palio*) around the Prato della Valle. Racing destriers of high quality valued at least fifty *lire*, according to the appraisal of one of the Podestà's knights or judges, the riders competed for several prizes. The winner was awarded a scarlet cloth of twelve *braccia* (about eight meters). The second prize was a sparrow-hawk that cost no more than three lire, the third a pair of gloves, provided at the expense of the commune of Padua. The new festival of St. Anthony established to memorialize the liberation of Padua from the tyranny of Ezzelino was to be a solemn feast of the highest order, equivalent to "the feast of an Apostle"<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 558; included with changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 102v.

<sup>10</sup> *Stat. Com.* 559, included with minor changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 102v. The *palio* in honour of St. Anthony, with its prizes, has been described several times: Gloria, 1861, 1:22; Gloria, 1884, 1:41; Thompson, 174.

Except for the elaborate celebrations surrounding the feast of St. Anthony every June, the solemn feasts and court holidays established by communal legislation in Duecento Padua reflected the rules recently set forth in canon law. Early in the second quarter of the thirteenth century, following closely the canons in Gratian's *Decretum*, Pope Gregory IX defined those days which were to be dedicated to the honor of God and the saints when no legal proceedings could be conducted, except out of dire necessity, even with the consent of the parties involved. The passage from Title 9, "De feriis", of Book II of the Decretals is worth quoting *in extenso* for it provided much of the legal basis for the definition of religious holidays throughout Europe during the later middle Ages. The text from 1230 reads:

"Although it is proper to settle legal disputes and not postpone them, still judicial procedures ought to be laid to rest during religious holidays, which out of reverence for God have been established, namely: the feasts of Christmas, St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, Holy Innocents, St. Silvester, Circumcision, Epiphany, Palm Sunday and Holy Week, Easter and the week after, Ascension, Pentecost, and two days after, the Nativity of John the Baptist, the feast of the Twelve Apostles, especially of Sts Peter and Paul, and of St. Lawrence, St. Michael the Archangel, St. Martin, All Saints and all Sundays, which with other solemn holidays that individual bishops with their clergy and people may establish in the dioceses are to be solemnly observed"<sup>11</sup>.

As we have seen, a similar list of solemn feasts and court holidays added to the communal statutes of Padua in the thirteenth century defined the days on which shops were closed and no court sessions held<sup>12</sup>. The major new definition of Padua's liturgical calendar, which enumerated saints' days for the first time, was made in the spring of 1278 during the *podestaria* of Matteo di Niccolò Querini, the younger brother of Marco, the Venetian noble who served as the first Podestà of Padua after the fall of Ezzelino's regime. Both were leading members of Venice's "popular" party, some of whose members, including Giovanni Badoer, Tomasino Giustinian, and the future doge Lorenzo Tiepolo, also served as Podestà of Padua during the two decades after Ezzelino's fall. One of Matteo Querini's first acts as Podestà was to push through the Maggior Consiglio legislation that banned three former Podestà, Roberto de' Roberti of Reggio, Bartolomeo da Soppo of Bergamo and Goffredo della Torre of Milan, with their kinsmen to the fourth degree of consanguinity, from any future service in Padua<sup>13</sup>. Perhaps Querini wanted to clear the way for the service of his fellow Venetians as Podestà of Padua, as happened with the election of Marino Valaresso in 1278 and Enrico Orio in 1281. In any case, the statute of 1278 was included in a revised form in the reformed code redacted

<sup>11</sup> Friedberg, 2:272-73.

<sup>12</sup> On the number of feast days in a year, Rogers, 9-10 and Brundage, 83. The latter calculates that no labour was allowed on 120 days a year, including fifty-two Sundays and forty universal feasts, and perhaps thirty local saints' days. Padua's solemn feasts were probably fewer.

<sup>13</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 2.1 and 3.1. For a list of Padua's Podestà in this period, Gloria, 1888, 1:29-47.

with Venice's supervision in 1420, and in later communal printed statutes into the early modern period. It combined the lengthy court holidays with saints' days and other solemn feasts to define the entire liturgical year<sup>14</sup>.

Incorporating, with minor changes, statutes passed before 1236 and in 1267, the statute begins with the Advent season to define court holidays, solemn feasts and major saints' days. "No one shall be called to judgement, nor enter pleas from the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle to Epiphany (21 December to 6 January), nor in the festivals of the blessed Virgin Mary, all Sundays, the feast days of the twelve apostles, of the four evangelists, of St. Agnes (22 January), the Conversion of St. Paul (25 January), St. Blaise (3 February), St. Agatha (5 February), the Chair of St. Peter (22 February)". Next were listed the moveable feasts, associated with Carnival, Easter, and Pentecost, and the saints' days from the spring months when courts sessions were to be suspended. "From the Sunday of Carnival to the First Sunday of Lent, and (the feasts) of St. Juliana (16 February), St. Gregory (12 March), St. Benedict (21 March), and from Palm Sunday to the octave of Easter, the Invention of the True Cross (3 May), Ascension of the Lord, and the day of Pentecost with two following, and Corpus Christi, and St. Barnabas (11 June)".

There followed the definition of the summer court recess, and the saints' days of the summer season: "(No one shall be called to judgement) from St. Barnabas to fifteen days after the feast of St. Peter (11 June to 14 July), (and on the feasts) of St. Margaret (20 July), of St. Mary Magdalene (22 July), of St. Peter in Chains (1 August), of St. Dominic the Confessor (4 August), of St. Lawrence martyr and levite (10 August), of St. Salvator (9 December), of St. Maximus (28 July), of St. Augustine (28 August), of the Beheading of St. John the Baptist (29 August), of St. Giles (1 September), and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (14 September)". Then were observed two court recesses for the *vendemmia* and autumn harvest when the fairs of St. Justina and St. Prosdocius were also held: "from the feast of the Nativity of St. Mary to four days after the feast of St. Justina (8 September to 11 October), and from the feast of All Saints to the feast of St. Martin (1 to 12 November)". There follows a list of the solemn feasts observed, except for St. George, at the end of the church year: "the feast of St. Cecilia and of St. Clement (both 22 November), of St. Catherine (25 November), of St. Nicholas (6 December), of St. George, of St. Ambrose (7 December), of St. Lucy virgin (13 December)".

After this original list of holidays, from 1278, were added other feasts and observances that had become important in Padua in the late Duecento: "the (first) Thursday in May, the octave of St. Anthony (13 to 20 June), Eleven Thousand Virgins (21 October), St. Hermagoras (12 June), the Solemnities of the Dead (2 November), St. Barbara (4 December), St. Anthony of Vienne (17 January), Bl. Anthony the Pilgrim (1 February), St. Leonard (6 November) and

<sup>14</sup> See Table 1, which contains a list of solemn feasts and holidays as defined in the statute of 1278, checked against 1362, the year of the redaction of the code.

St. Dominic (named for a second time)”, as well as the week before the first Sunday in Lent. “These are to be understood to be solemn (feasts) except for the holidays of vintage and harvest (*exceptis feriis vindemiarum et messium*), which are not understood to be solemn”.

DATE	HOLIDAY	SPECIAL EVENT
1 Jan. 1362	Circumcision of Jesus Christ	
2 Jan.	Sunday	
6 Jan.	Epiphany	
9 Jan.	Sunday	
16 Jan.	Sunday	
17 Jan.	St. Anthony Abbot	procession (1354)
21 Jan.	St. Agnes	
22 Jan.	Sunday	
25 Jan.	Conversion of St. Paul	
29 Jan.	Sunday	
1 Feb.	St. Anthony Pilgrim	procession (1269, 1272)
2 Feb.	Purification of the Virgin	procession (1372)
3 Feb.	St. Blaise	
5 Feb.	St. Agatha	
6 Feb.	Sunday	
13 Feb.	Sunday	
16 Feb.	St. Juliana	
20 Feb.	Sunday	
22 Feb.	Chair of St. Peter	
24 Feb.	St. Matthias	
27 Feb.	Sunday before Lent	carnival, court holiday, 27 Feb-6 March (eight day recess)
1 March	Shrove Tuesday	
2 March	Ash Wednesday	
6 March	First Sunday in Lent	
7 March	St. Thomas Aquinas	
12 March	St. Gregory the Great	
13 March	Second Sunday in Lent	
20 March	Third Sunday in Lent	
21 March	St. Benedict	
25 March	The Annunciation	procession (1278, 1298)
27 March	Fourth Sunday in Lent	
3 April	Passion Sunday	
10 April	Palm Sunday	Easter, court holiday, 10-24 April (fourteen day recess)
14 April	Maundy Thursday	
15 April	Good Friday	
17 April	Easter	
23 April	St. George	
24 April	Sunday	
25 April	St. Mark	
29 April	St. Peter Martyr	procession(1323, 1331)
1 May	Sts Philip and James (Sunday)	
3 May	Invention of the Holy Cross	
8 May	Sunday	
15 May	Translation of St. Daniel (Sunday)	procession (1296)
22 May	Sunday	
24 May	St. Salvatore	
26 May	Ascension	
29 May	Sunday	
31 May	St. Canciano	
5 June	Pentecost	
6 June	Monday after Pentecost	
7 June	Tuesday after Pentecost	
11 June	St. Barnabas	harvest, court holiday, 11 June-14 July (thirtyfour day recess)



## Competing Saints in Late Medieval Padua

12 June	Trinity Sunday	
12 June	St. Hermagoras of Aquileia	
13 June	St. Anthony of Padua	fair of St. Anthony, 13-20 June (eight day recess), ante 1236
16 June	Corpus Christi	
19 June	Sunday, Vigil of Liberation	procession, basilica St. Anthony
20 June	Liberation of Padua	(1256), palio and mass (1257)
25 June	Sant'Allo [St. Eligius]	procession, added 1386
26 June	Sunday	
29 July	Sts Peter and Paul	
3 July	Sunday	
10 July	Sunday	
17 July	Sunday	
20 July	St. Margaret of Antioch	
22 July	St. Mary Magdalene	
25 July	St. James the Greater	palio for the election of Giacomo Da Carrara, lord of Padua (1318)
28 July	St. Maximus, bishop of Padua	
31 July	Sunday	
1 Aug.	St. Peter in Chains	
4 Aug.	St. Dominic	
7 Aug.	Sunday	
9 Aug.	St. Fermo of Verona	
10 Aug.	St. Lawrence	
14 Aug.	Sunday	
15 Aug.	Assumption of the Virgin Mary	
19 Aug.	St. Louis of Toulouse	procession, conquest of Monselice (1338)
21 Aug.	Sunday	
24 Aug.	St. Bartholomew	
28 Aug.	Sunday (St. Augustine)	
29 Aug.	Decollation of St. John the Baptist	
1 Sept.	St. Giles	
4 Sept.	Sunday	
8 Sept.	Nativity of the Virgin Mary	vintage, court holiday, 8 Sept.-11 Oct. (34 days)
11 Sept.	Sunday	
14 Sept.	Exaltation of the Holy Cross	
18 Sept.	Sunday	
21 Sept.	St. Matthew	
25 Sept.	Sunday	
2 Oct.	Sunday	
4 Oct.	St. Francis of Assisi	fair of St. Justina, 4-11 Oct. (9 days, ante 1236)
7 Oct.	St. Justina	
9 Oct.	Sunday	
16 Oct.	Sunday	
18 Oct.	St. Luke	
21 Oct.	St. Ursula and 11.000 virgins	
23 Oct.	Sunday	
28 Oct.	Sts Simon and Jude	
30 Oct.	Sunday	
1 Nov.	All Saints	autumn court holiday, 1-12 Nov. (12 days)
2 Nov.	All Souls	
6 Nov.	Sunday (St. Leonard)	fair of St. Prosdocimus, 3-11 Nov (9 days, ante 1236)
7 Nov.	St. Prosdocimus	
11 Nov.	St. Martin	
13 Nov.	Sunday	
20 Nov.	Sunday	
22 Nov.	St. Cecilia	
22 Nov.	St. Clement	
25 Nov.	St. Catherine of Alexandria	
27 Nov.	Sunday	
30 Nov.	St. Andrew	
4 Dec.	Sunday (St. Barbara)	

6 Dec.	St. Nicholas	
7 Dec.	St. Ambrose	
11 Dec.	Sunday	
13 Dec.	St. Lucy	
20 Dec.	Sunday	
21 Dec.	St. Thomas the Apostle	Christmas, court holiday, 21 Dec.1362-7 Jan. 1363 (17 days)
25 Dec.	Christmas (Sunday)	
26 Dec.	St. Stephen	
27 Dec.	St. John the Evangelist	
28 Dec.	Holy Innocents	

Tab. 1. *The Paduan Civic and Liturgical Year in 1362*<sup>15</sup>

On all other days, the courts were to be open, judges and notaries at their benches, and the Podestà was to exercise his office against thieves and criminals. Adapting a statute of 1269 (*Stat. Com.*, 555), holidays (*ferie*) were not to be introduced except by vote of the majority of the Greater Council, “except that the Podestà can introduce holidays for the muster of troops during threat of uprisings, and other instances where clear utility or urgent necessity or piety would be apparent to the Podestà, and except that he can and ought to render summary judgement concerning rents and revenues, payment for labour and salaries, every day, except on solemn festivals”. At its end, the statute was again retouched to add seven more saints – two Franciscans, three Dominicans and two local – who had had churches or altars consecrated in their honor or had become widely recognized in Padua’s liturgical calendar in the early Trecento. “And that the feast of St. Francis (4 october), St. Louis (of Toulouse) (19 August), St. Dominic (mentioned for a third time), St. Peter Martyr (29 April), St. Thomas Aquinas (7 March), St. Fermo (9 August), and St. Canziano (31 May) should be celebrated, as are other feasts included in the aforesaid statute”. The full panoply of Padua’s saints was now defined in the city’s civic calendar. But competition among them had already begun in a world of fairs and festivals, processions and *palii*, to create a distinctive religious, civic and commercial calendar. Here the needs of work, trade and agriculture competed with Padua’s ancient religious traditions, the Guelph character of its several political regimes, and the rivalries of bishop and commune, monks, friars and parish clergy, and ultimately the authority of the Carrara lords and then the Venetian government, to define a new “city of God” and a space for the local ritual experience.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Padua, Bibliotheca Civica, ms. B.P. 1237, *Statuta communis Padue* [1362], fols. 101v-05r, collated with Venice, Bibliotheca Nazionale Marciana, ms. Lat. V, 37 (=2306), *Statuta patavina*, fols. 100r-03v. To be linked to 1362, the year when the code was enacted, are the solemn feast days when shops were closed and work suspended as provided in pre-1236 statutes, *Stat. Com.*, 556, and those added in 1278 (and later), in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 101v. Given in parentheses in the column titled Special Event is the year when a procession or *pallio* was first established by communal statutes, the time of a fair, or the duration of a court recess, when the sessions of communal courts were suspended. Minor modifications to 1386 are included.

By the middle of the thirteenth century, Padua enjoyed the protection of three great patron saints: the first-century disciple of St. Peter and the city's first bishop Prosdocimus, the fourth-century virgin martyr Justina, and the beloved Franciscan friar, the wonder-working Anthony of Padua. By early in the century, communal statutes had ratified earlier bishops' grants to permit the two original patron saints to 'host' the annual fair held in the large meadow in the south of the city, the Prato della Valle. Each saint enjoyed a week-long fair held near its principal feast day: St. Justina for nine days centered on her feast on 7 October, St. Prosdocimus for nine days around his feast of 7 November. In 1257, St. Anthony's fair was added during the octave following his feast on 13 June. The older fairs and markets held in honor of Sts Justina and Prosdocimus had for some time marked two major moments in the agricultural year. St. Justina's feast came at the end of the grape harvest and also served as the day of reckoning for *mezzadria* contracts and other agricultural dues, much as Michaelmas (September 29) did in contemporary England where the growing season was somewhat shorter. St. Prosdocimus' feast in early November coincided with the autumn cattle market and the slaughter of animals, mainly swine, for consumption during the coming winter. In 1275, fairs were also authorized in the towns of the southern Padovano, in the main square of the town of Este on the feast of the Nativity of the Virgin (September 8) and in the Rocca of Monselice on All Saints (1 November), but these fairs did not survive long into the fourteenth century<sup>16</sup>. However, three major fairs, honouring the city's three patron saints, became an integral part of Padua's economy and lasted for centuries into the modern period.

### 3. *Two Bishop Saints: Daniel and Anthony the Pilgrim*

Since the high Middle Ages, various bishops of Padua had worked to provide the city with a fourth patron saint, directly under their control, and serving as a co-titular for the Duomo, along with the Virgin Mary. This new saint, St. Daniel, was introduced *ex nihilo* into the hagiography of medieval Padua in the middle of the eleventh century<sup>17</sup>. The saint's legend, which was written down in the decades following the discovery of his relics in December 1075, encompassed the four genres of medieval hagiography: *vita*, or life, *passio*, or suffering and death, that is, martyrdom, *inventio*, the discovery of the saint's body, and *translatio*, the transporting of the newly-discovered relics to a new tomb, or resting place. The bishop responsible for capitalizing on the

<sup>16</sup> The local fairs listed at the end of *Stat. Com.*, 565 (1275), are omitted from *Stat. Car.* fol. 103v. Thompson, 278-79, mentions these fairs but mistakenly makes the Nativity of the Virgin rather than the Annunciation "the Marian centre of the [Paduan] year".

<sup>17</sup> Standard surveys of the biography and cult are: Daniele, 1964; Corsato; for analysis of the earlier scholarship, Tilatti, 167-221, 292-301, 341-51.

discovery of St. Daniel's relics was Odelrico (1064-1080), usually viewed as an adherent of the imperial party in northern Italy at the time of the Investiture Controversy. He was following the policy of earlier bishops who had mined the burial grounds of the Benedictine monastery of Santa Giustina, which was built on Padua's ancient *Campus Martius* to recover the relics of Padua's holy men and women. In this *locus sanctorum* in 1052, near the tomb of St. Prosdocimus, were discovered the bones of the second bishop of Padua, St. Maximus, of the pious servant of God, St. Felicity, and of St. Julian, an early pilgrim who had brought back to Padua the relics of three of the Holy Innocents massacred on the orders of king Herod. The bishop, acting in cooperation with the Benedictine monks, had these newly-discovered relics transported and reburied in new altars in Santa Giustina.

During the Christmas season of 1076, just as bishop Odelrico was preparing to dedicate his newly-constructed Duomo to the Mother of God, in the center of the city, an even more astounding discovery took place. The two accounts written some years after the event, the shorter *Passio Sancti Danielis*, composed in ca. 1100, and the other, elaborate *Inventio*, probably written under the auspices of bishop Bellino in 1140, differ in detail, but convey the same basic story. Both accounts also include several of the commonplaces of the genre, *inventio*, in early medieval hagiography: a dream to inform the discovery, the symbolism of light, recognition of the saint's relics from an inscription of his tomb, and the importance of a bishop in honouring the new saint<sup>18</sup>.

The story of St. Daniel is this. A blind man in Tuscany has a dream of a young levite (deacon), who promises to restore his sight if he will journey to Padua and pray at the tomb of St. Prosdocimus in the Benedictine house of Santa Giustina. The blind man reaches Padua and while he is praying the young levite appears to him in a dream, and restores his sight. The Tuscan tells the abbot of Santa Giustina of this miracle, who in turn informs bishop Odelrico of the presence of the relics of St. Daniel in the monastery. The bishop searches for his tomb, which is found near the tomb of St. Prosdocimus and confirmed by the inscription: "Hic corpus Danielis martiris ac levitis quietescit". The body, clothed as a high priest (*antistes*) is then carried to the altar of Santa Giustina. The people of Padua flock to receive miraculous cures from the newly-discovered relics, the blind see, the lame walk, and the possessed have their demons cast out. Bishop Odelrico then announces that he intends to translate the relic to his newly constructed cathedral. Some lay people object, saying the body ought to be left where it was found. But with the support of other members of the laity, the monks of Santa Giustina, and the clergy of his chapter and the diocese, bishop Odelrico prevails. A throng transports the body into the city, but stops at a gate when the burden becomes too heavy. When the

<sup>18</sup> For editions and discussions on the sources of St. Daniel, Daniele, 1984-1985; Daniele, 1987-1988.

bishop promises to build an oratory to St. Daniel on that spot, the weight is miraculously reduced, and the body is carried to the Duomo. There the saint's relics are displayed in a place of honor while the consecration of the new cathedral takes place, and then buried in a new tomb in the apse. Both accounts affirm that the translation took place on December 26, 1075, the consecration of the new cathedral on December 29, and the deposition of the body on January 3, which became for a time the anniversary feast of Padua's new saint.

Bishop Odelrico would have understood well the truth of Peter Brown's wry observation: "Relics needed status"<sup>19</sup>. Indeed, in arguing for the translation of St. Daniel's body to the Duomo, Odelrico asserted: "Almighty God does not wish such a worthy patron absent from the home of his Genetrix"<sup>20</sup>. As Andrea Tilatti suggests, Odelrico's appropriation of the body of St. Daniel, along with his reform of the cathedral chapter and the construction of an imposing new edifice were evidence of his adherence to at least some of the tenets of the Gregorian reform movement<sup>21</sup>. From the narrative of the events, starting with his clerical clothing and the signs of his martyrdom at the invention, and confirmed by his subsequent cult, St. Daniel was always to be seen as the bishop's saint. Odelrico's aim was to provide for his cathedral what it had previously lacked, that is a holy relic, in order to make it more worthy of its titular, the Virgin Mary, and thus to bring needed honor and prestige to the bishop, the cathedral clergy, and the secular clergy of the diocese.

To venerate St. Daniel in the Duomo ensured a new recognition for the whole episcopal order, whose cult would elevate the status of the bishop and provide a new liturgical and ceremonial vehicle aiming to bring consensus and social peace. The revelation and translation of this hidden treasure under the guidance of bishop Odelrico was accomplished by striking a compromise with the Benedictines of Santa Giustina, providing them with new fairs and tolls, and the control of the newly-established oratory to St. Daniel near the south walls of Padua. During the next century, the bishops' leadership increased the parishes and property of the diocese, and a monastery dedicated to St. Daniel was built near Abano during Bellino's episcopate. In the bishop's circles at least, Daniel joined Prosdocimus and Justina as one of the patron saints of Padua<sup>22</sup>.

The crisis of Paduan society in the first decades of the thirteenth century brought the imposition of a regional Ghibelline state under the da Romano family, which, in effect, destroyed the first commune. Beginning as vicars for Frederick II, Ezzelino and Alberico da Romano soon came to rule in their own right as leaders of their own faction, who first fined and exiled and later executed the leaders of Guelph Padua. Even discounting the more sensational

<sup>19</sup> Brown, 236.

<sup>20</sup> Daniele, 1984-1985, 108.

<sup>21</sup> For what follows, Tilatti, 195-203.

<sup>22</sup> Bortolami, 1996, 94-106, and Tilatti, 293-95.

anecdotes of native chroniclers such as Rolandino of Padua, the last decade of Ezzelino's rule can best be described as a society gone berserk in its pervasive use of violence, that ended only with vengeful torture, mutilation and burning of Alberico, his wife and children. From these ashes rose the new Paduan commune under the leadership of new feudal families, and a series of bishops – most significantly of all, Giovanni Forzatè – who competed with the commune to impose authority on Padua in the late thirteenth century<sup>23</sup>.

Much of Giovanni Forzatè's episcopate was also marked by internal strife and violent struggles between the bishop and his cathedral clergy, and with the Mendicant orders, especially the Franciscans of Sant'Antonio. Forzatè's death in June 1283 led to a power struggle among the canons of the Duomo to elect the new bishop, with five voting for the noble Percevalle Conti, and the other five for a deacon, Giovanni dall'Abbate. The abbot of Santa Giustina broke the tie in favour of Conti, claiming that his predecessors had always had a voice in the election of the bishop. But the controversy continued, and both parties appealed for a decision from the patriarch of Aquileia, who decided in 1285 in favour of Conti and consecrated him as bishop of Padua. The next year Pope Honorius IV intervened, instructing the bishop of Castello – in Venice – to remove Conti from office, and on 4 March 1287 named to the see of Padua his own candidate, the curialist Bernard Platone of Agde (Languedoc), Auditor General of the *Camera Apostolica* and a canon lawyer. The pope's energetic intervention marked a turning point in the history of Padua's episcopate, with election now securely in papal hands and favouring the appointment of foreign clerics to the post. Bernard Platone worked to hammer out an agreement, in 1290, between the bishop and the commune that was ratified in a pact endorsed by Pope Nicholas IV. In general, the commune of Padua gained the upper hand, including the right to try criminous clergy as laymen, to prevent clerics from bearing arms, frequenting taverns, gambling, and in general to declare those who persisted in a dissolute life as "clerici fictiosi"<sup>24</sup>.

A forceful administrator, Bernard soon made peace with the Franciscan community and worked at improving the morals and behaviour of the Paduan clergy. The prestige of his office grew in the 1290s<sup>25</sup>. But in some circles Bernard became unpopular, perhaps as a zealous collector of papal tithes. In obscure circumstances, bishop Bernard Platone was assassinated near the Duomo in May 1295 (a contemporary list of Paduan bishops annotates his name with "mortuus gladio"). During the *sede vacante*, the function of his office was held by Giovanni dall'Abbate, who was now the archpriest of the cathedral chapter<sup>26</sup>. Late in May 1295, at the initiative of Giovanni dall'Abbate, St. Daniel's remains were translated

<sup>23</sup> On Ezzelino's tyranny, Rippe, 725-71; on the bishop's role, Pamato.

<sup>24</sup> For the agreement: Dondi dall'Orologio, 1815, 40-46, doc. 19. Botteghi remains the fullest account of the conflict, but now see Rigon, 1996, 134-35, 139-40.

<sup>25</sup> On these reforms see Gaffuri.

<sup>26</sup> On the election and brief term of Bernard Platone, see Rigon, 1977, 405-08. Simioni, 343, speculates that his zealous collection of papal revenues was the reason for his murder in May 1295.

to a new tomb prepared near of the High Altar of the Duomo. In May 1296, on the first anniversary of the translation of the relics of St. Daniel, the new bishop Giovanni Savelli granted an indulgence of forty days to penitents who attended Mass in the new chapel of San Daniele during the saint's octave<sup>27</sup>.

The commune and bishop of Padua soon decided to observe St. Daniel's translation in a major way<sup>28</sup>. A communal statute that was probably enacted in 1296 provided that the Podestà with his officials were to go "to the chapel of Blessed Daniel, martyr and levite, ... every year on the third Sunday in May, on the day of the translation of the said saint, for Mass, and at Vespers let there be a procession at the expense of the commune of Padua, and it ought to be done in the same manner and form as is the procession of St. Anthony the Confessor". The leaders (*gastaldiones*) of the guilds with all their brothers were to join the company that was to march to the oratory of San Daniele to the southeast of the Duomo. In May 1298, a statute was passed that the commune's expenditure for wax and candles carried in the procession was to equal that granted for the more famous procession at the feast of St. Anthony<sup>29</sup>. Hence, the bishop of Padua got his revenge, and, with the aid of the commune, attempted to create an observance that was intended to rival the Franciscans' feast for their beloved friar, and, in effect, made St. Daniel martyr and levite, the fourth patron saint of Padua.

The assertion of the cult of the bishop's saint so soon after Bernard's assassination was expected to be violent<sup>30</sup>. Fines were doubled for those found carrying arms and knives in the Duomo, on its *piazza*, and within sixty meters (*unam turnam*) of the church. The procession was to be guarded by the Podestà's knights and police, with the explicit prohibition against any private person hanging his family's coats-of-arms ("facere insignia") from the *campanile* of the Duomo. Anyone who was bold enough to commit murder near the Duomo on the feast of St. Daniel was to be punished by execution, without appeal. Anyone who helped keep public order by arresting and turning over to the Podestà or his jailors any assassin, purse snatcher, street fighter, or murderer was to receive double the usual reward. Finally, the feast of St. Daniel was to bring in additional income. Any alms and oblations contributed on the day of the feast were to be held by the Gastaldi of the confraternity of St. Daniel and two men appointed by the Podestà and the Anziani of the commune, and expended first for the decoration and maintenance of the chapel of St. Daniel in the Duomo, and the second as the Gastaldi would see fit.

The contemporary annals of the Podestà of Padua provide the fullest accounts of his murder: "1295... Hoc anno Çixana assassinus in platea domi de versus pallacium percussit et atrociter vulneravit venerabilem patrem dominum Bernardum Dei gratia episcopum Paduanum, de quo vulnere obiit". Bortolami, 1975, 106.

<sup>27</sup> Dondi dall'Orologio, 1815, 61-62, doc. 29.

<sup>28</sup> The statute for the feast of St. Daniel survives only in the *Stat. Car.*, fol. 104.

<sup>29</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fol. 104r.

<sup>30</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fol. 104r.



Over the next century, the cult of St. Daniel as a patron saint of Padua flourished. The confraternity of St. Daniel, mentioned in the statutes of 1296, met monthly in the Duomo and organized annual processions to mark the two translations of the saint's body – the third of January for the translation of 1076, and the third Sunday in May to commemorate the second translation in 1295<sup>31</sup>. In 1334, bishop Ildebrandino Conti decreed that pilgrims and penitents who visited the chapel and contributed to its upkeep during St. Daniel's octave would receive an indulgence of 40 days<sup>32</sup>. A synod held in 1360 under bishop Pileo da Prata decreed that the parish priests of the diocese had to observe St. Daniel's annual feast under pain of excommunication. But St. Daniel probably never gained full partnership in the tetrarchy of Padua's patron saints. When writing in 1373 to the lord of the city, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, Francesco Petrarca mentions Padua is adorned with the "impressive shrines of the bishop Prosdocimus, the friar Anthony, and the virgin martyr Justina", but does not acknowledge St. Daniel<sup>33</sup>. Under Venetian rule, an act of 1445 provided for the union of the titular church of San Daniele with the smaller San Leonino, under the Benedictines of Santa Giustina, though the octave of St. Daniel remained one of the solemn feasts to be celebrated in the saint's titular church<sup>34</sup>. But in the long run, the establishment of the cult of St. Daniel as a patron saint of Padua was not successful, and by the end of the Cinquecento the veneration of St. Daniel in Padua had ceased altogether<sup>35</sup>.

An even more controversial holy man, who vied to be numbered among the bishop of Padua's saints during the second commune, was the local layman Antonio Manzi, called "il pellegrino", from his famed visits to the major shrines of Christendom, including Rome, Cologne and Santiago de Compostella. This Antonio returned to Padua toward the end of his journeys to stay with his sisters, who were nuns in the small Benedictine house of Santa Maria di Porciglia, where he died as an oblate on 30 January 1267. His tomb in the church of the monastery became an immediate object of veneration due to Bl. Anthony's reputed thaumaturgic powers of healing. Perhaps typical of lay saints of the late Duecento for his pilgrim status and healing power, Bl. Anthony soon attracted the support of the monks of the Benedictine house of Santa Giustina. The miracles of healing wrought by his relics were witnessed by the Benedictine nuns and monks, priests of nearby parishes, and in April 1270 by the bishop of Padua himself.

Local Franciscans, however, led the opposition to the canonization of this new St. Anthony, which, according to later writers, the pope rejected with the comment that "one (saint) Anthony is enough for you people"<sup>36</sup>. But the

<sup>31</sup> De Sandre Gasparini, 59, 270, 286.

<sup>32</sup> Dondi dall'Orologio, 1815, 123-24, doc. 74.

<sup>33</sup> For the three traditional patron saints, Petrarca, 19.

<sup>34</sup> Trolese.

<sup>35</sup> Corsato, 101.

<sup>36</sup> Rigon, 1981 (272-73: the quotation, from Savonarola, 17); Rigon, 2007; also Thompson, 206.

Paduan commune was not to be deterred, and with the support of the bishop established that the Podestà and the commune's board of elders – the Anziani – with their officials and the guildsmen of Padua should march in procession on his feast day, the first of February, to the tomb at Santa Maria di Porciglia, with candles provided at communal expense. Out of respect for the new saint, the shops in the city's central squares were to be closed on the feast day itself and during vigil the evening before<sup>37</sup>. The beatification of Anthony the Pilgrim marks the high point in Padua for local forces; here Bishop Giovanni Forzatè worked with the commune to create local *beati*, without further sanction from the Church<sup>38</sup>.

#### 4. Padua's Guelph Beati

As a result of the bitter struggles with Ezzelino III da Romano, a number of holy men and women came to be venerated in the late thirteenth century as *beati* in Padua, but were never officially canonized by the Church<sup>39</sup>. These included: two Franciscans, Luca Belludi, the *socius* of St. Anthony, and Bl. Elena Enselmini; two Benedictines, Arnaldo da Limena and Beatrice d'Este; two white monks, Giordano Forzatè and Compagno Ongarello, members of a new reforming branch of the Benedictines in Padua; and a parish priest, Crescenzo da Camposampiero. These new *beati* came from several sectors of Paduan society. Beatrice d'Este, Giordano Forzatè and Crescenzo da Camposampiero were members of the great feudal clans of the Trevisan March, while Arnaldo da Limena and Compagno Ongarello were from families of communal notables. Belludi and Enselmini came from families noted for their wealth from money-lending, commercial interests and land. Thus, the new communal saints who came to be venerated in late Duecento Padua came from several strata of local society and represented many interest groups in Padua and its contado<sup>40</sup>. Their cult was fostered by the bishop Giovanni Forzatè, and several of their feasts were recognized and annually celebrated by the cathedral chapter as the *Liber Ordinarius* from the 1260s records<sup>41</sup>.

A contextual, chronological consideration of the careers of each 'blessed' will reveal differences as well as similarities in the nature of their sanctity and their role in the political struggles of the thirteenth century. The Benedictine Giordano Forzatè (1158-1248) emerged as a monastic reformer, the prior of

<sup>37</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 557 (1272), repeated with the year changed to 1269 in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 102.

<sup>38</sup> For a summary of Pellegrino's life and the contemporary texts of his miracles, Vauchez, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Vauchez, 1997, 85-88. Vauchez discusses the distinction that developed in the later thirteenth century between saints, canonized throughout western Christendom on the authority of the pope, and *beati* made so by popular devotion, or the support of the local bishop.

<sup>40</sup> Rigon was perhaps the first scholar to identify these new communal *beati*: Rigon, 1992, 406-07; on the anti-Ezzelino saints in a wider context, Webb, 149-52.

<sup>41</sup> *Il "Liber ordinarius"*, in particular the essays by Antonio Lovato and Andrea Tilatti.

the Paduan house of San Benedetto, who established the new *Ordo monachorum alborum Sancti Benedicti* in Padua<sup>42</sup>. His status as a member of one of the leading feudal families of the Trevisan March, his role as a local peacemaker, and as a reformer of the major local Benedictine houses of Santa Maria in Vanzo and Santa Maria di Porciglia soon earned him the title of “Pater Padue”, according to a contemporary anonymous chronicle<sup>43</sup>. But his close alliance with the local Guelph leaders of the *domus Estensis* and his defense of papal and monastic rights in Padua and its district soon brought him into conflict with Ezzelino da Romano, who had him arrested and imprisoned in 1237.

Released at the instance of Emperor Frederick II, who had earlier been his guest in Padua, Forzatè died in exile in Venice, forbidden to return to his native city. In addition, in Rolandino and the anonymous *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae*, later records – such as the brief obituary written in San Benedetto about 1337 – depict Forzatè as an heroic opponent of the hated Ezzelino, termed “atrox tyrannus”<sup>44</sup>. In 1318, the family intermarried with the ruling Carrara lords, with the wedding of Lieta di Marco Forzatè with Giacomo II (lord of Padua, 1345-1350). In 1337 Alvisè Forzatè welcomed the Carrara as the new rulers of Padua, receiving back the next year as fiefs the tithes the da Romano had earlier taken from the family<sup>45</sup>. It is little wonder that Giordano Forzatè’s cult prospered in a Padua ruled by his Carrara kinsmen.

The career of Bl. Beatrice d’Este (ca.1190-1226) provides another instance of a self-sacrificing noble saint. Hers is the touching tale of the handsome, fun-loving girl of the Este court transformed into a devout nun, devoted to poverty and the service of others under the tutelage of our Benedictine reformer, Giordano Forzatè<sup>46</sup>. Beatrice early delighted in Provençal love poetry and the carefree life of the Este court at Baone in the Padovano. But the early death of her mother in 1202, and violence deaths of her father Azzo in 1212 and brother Aldobrandino in 1215 left the family deeply in debt, making the recovery of her mother’s dowry impossible and, as a result, her own marriage unlikely. Under the influence of two Benedictines, Giordano Forzatè, and Alberto, prior of San Giovanni di Montericco, in 1221 Beatrice secretly entered the nunnery of Santa Margherita in the Euganean hills south of Padua. There she rejected a marriage proposal from the Marchese Guglielmo Malaspina, and two years later founded a reformed Benedictine female community in the nearby abandoned house of San Giovanni Battista at Gemmola. Under the tutelage of another Benedictine, Alberto, prior of Santo Spirito of Verona, Beatrice attracted a number of young noble women, including her niece, Beatrice d’Este,

<sup>42</sup> On Giordano Forzatè’s career: Gaffuri, 267-70; Rigon, 1996, both based largely on Rigon 1992.

<sup>43</sup> *Chronicon Marchiae*, 12.

<sup>44</sup> Rigon, 1992, 409-10.

<sup>45</sup> Kohl, 1998, 55, 191.

<sup>46</sup> Her career is summarized in Paolini, 1993; a fuller account in Rigon, 1984, and Folena.

the widowed queen of Hungary, to her community's life of poverty, service, fasting and prayer<sup>47</sup>. After an early death caused by her many hardships, Beatrice's *vita* was composed by Alberto of Verona, sometime before 1245. Although Beatrice d'Este never suffered at the hands of the tyrant Ezzelino, her family opposed his rule in the Trevisan March. Her younger half-brother Azzo (VI) Novello gained the lordship of Ferrara as a champion of the Guelph cause, and, as we have seen, commanded the army that liberated Padua from Ezzelino's rule in 1259. The Este lord was to be rewarded with a place of honor in the procession held to mark the event during the octave of St. Anthony of Padua.

Another religious woman of aristocratic background was Elena Enselmini (1207-1231), who descended from a branch of the Transelgardino clan that included the Forzatè among its members<sup>48</sup>. But rather than earning her sanctity from a life of religious leadership and devotion, like her contemporary Beatrice d'Este, this early Clarissa's life was marked by visions and miracles as well as suffering, poverty and prayer. Her status was enhanced by the legend that as a thirteen year old virgin, she took the veil from St. Francis himself when in 1220 he founded the convent at Arcella in Padua returning from his mission to the East. At Arcella she promoted a common life of fasting, prayer, manual labor, and strict observance of the liturgy of the canonical hours, which soon caused an illness, characterized by violent fevers that eventually rendered her nearly blind. Adopting a life of silence like St. Anthony, her companion at Arcella in his final days, she was able to communicate her ecstatic visions and prophecies with gestures to letters of the alphabet held by the other Franciscan sisters. There she died at the age of twenty-three only a few months after her beloved friar, Anthony.

The power of her visions and the sanctity of her life, confirmed by her uncorrupted body, soon created a lively cult of followers. Several of her miracles were recorded by Bartholomew of Pisa, a student at the Paduan *studium*, in the 1370s, in his popular book of comparison between the lives of Jesus and Francis, written at the end of the Trecento, where her name was often linked with Francis and Clare as evidence of her *fama sanctitatis*. An account of her life and visions was composed in the 1440s by the Paduan notary and humanist Sicco Polenton, who had earlier been an official in the Carrara chancery. In 1443 Pope Eugenius IV confirmed the widespread belief in her sanctity by granting an indulgence of 100 days for a visit by the faithful to her tomb<sup>49</sup>. Although Elena Enselmini did not live long enough to oppose directly Ezzelino's Ghibelline rule over Padua, her status as a beloved Franciscan saint, and her leadership in the religious vocation of women, guaranteed her a place among the *beati* of late medieval Padua.

<sup>47</sup> Her role as a monastic reformer is described in *Chronicon Marchiae*, 51-52.

<sup>48</sup> On her life and family: Paolini, 1996; Gonzato Debiasi, 1994; Marangon.

<sup>49</sup> Polenton; on the sources for her cult, Gonzato Debiasi, 1994.

Another aristocratic reformer of a female religious community was Crescenzo da Camposampiero (d. *ante* 1265), scion of one of the great feudal families of the Trevisan March. Forsaking the easy life of a canon at the cathedral chapter, Crescenzo emerges in the historical record as a parish priest at San Luca, where in 1213 he leased property to house a small group of female penitents; this eventually formed the convent of Santa Cecilia<sup>50</sup>. Credited with the construction of San Luca and Santa Cecilia in the center of the city, Crescenzo – devoted to the *cura animarum* – is noted as building new churches with his own hands. These sources explain his depiction in simple clerical garb, wearing a *berettone*, building a wall, with brick and trowel in his hands, as in Giusto de' Menabuoi's altarpiece in the Baptistery. His sanctity is recorded in the Favafoschi chronicle of 1335, and his cult is documented at the end of the Trecento in the nearby church of Sant'Agnese.

Another monastic leader of the reformed Benedictines was the close friend of Bl. Giordano Forzatè, Compagno Ongarello (d. 1264), from a family of Padua notables<sup>51</sup>. Compagno emerges in the historical record in a document of 14 November 1219 as the founding prior of the Paduan monastery of Santa Maria di Porciglia, given lands on which he built a dual monastery that followed the Benedictine rule. A high point of his rule as prior was the synod held on 10 January 1239, to enforce uniformity of rule and customs among the monastic houses of Padua. During the persecution of the White Monks and the exile of Giordano Forzatè and Arnaldo da Limena under Ezzelino's rule, Compagno remained in Padua as the "eyes and ears" of the monastic community. After forty-four years of rule Compagno died and was buried at Santa Maria di Porciglia, soon joined by the thaumaturgic St. Anthony the Pilgrim. Overshadowed by his popular miracle-working neighbour, Compagno's cult never developed beyond generations of devoted Benedictine sisters.

The blessed Arnaldo da Limena (1185-1255, also called Limeniani), abbot of Santa Giustina and close associate of the monastic reformer, Giordano Forzatè, was probably the most conspicuous religious martyr from the tyranny of Ezzelino da Romano<sup>52</sup>. A member of a distinguished family of episcopal vassals from the eastern Padovano, and trained as a student of canon law, by 1207 Arnold had entered Santa Giustina as a monk, and was elected abbot only two years later. Much of his career was occupied with defending his monastery's property rights, which resulted in numerous lawsuits, and its traditional role in election of the bishop of Padua. These activities propelled Arnaldo into a position of civic leadership, so that he and the monks of Santa Giustina entertained the Emperor Fredrick II and his consort Isabella during

<sup>50</sup> On Crescenzo and his cult, Barzon, 1975, 43-227; Rigon, 1988, 177-222; Gios, 1999b.

<sup>51</sup> For his life, Daniele, 1999. Texts documenting his role in the founding of Santa Maria di Porciglia in 1219 and the synod promoting uniformity, in 1239: Dondi dall'Orologio, 1813, 18-19 and 100-01.

<sup>52</sup> On Arnaldo and his hagiography: Rigon, 1980, 27-32; Collodo, 3-34. His career is summarized in Gios, 1999a; Angiolini, 133-36.

their visit to Padua in the winter of 1239. Such proximity to imperial power forestalled, for a time, any persecution by the new Ghibelline rulers of Padua.

But with the see of Padua vacant after the death of his kinsman, bishop Giacomo di Corrado, in the 1240s, Santa Giustina became the center of opposition to Ezzelino's rule, resulting in Arnaldo's arrest and imprisonment at Asolo in November 1246. Charged with treason to the imperial authorities, Arnaldo was (according to near contemporary reports) kept chained on a diet of bread and water until his death after enormous suffering, eight years later, on 10 February 1255<sup>53</sup>. A cult soon developed at Asolo around the tomb, containing his uncorrupted, virginal body. A later anonymous work, *De transitu*, composed by a monk of the monastery for the translation of his body to a sumptuous new tomb at Santa Giustina, emphasized the satanic character of his persecutor Ezzelino and Arnaldo's own holy life. The pseudo-Favafoschi chronicle from the 1330s stressed his origins from the noble "capitanei de Limena", as well as his unjust imprisonment and suffering at the hands of the da Romano lords<sup>54</sup>. Along with Giordano Forzatè, he became in later traditions one of the two great martyrs of communal Padua.

Bl. Luca Belludi, O.F.M. (1200-1285) was, after St. Anthony, the most saintly of all the Franciscans of late-medieval Padua<sup>55</sup>. According to tradition, like Bl. Elena Enselmini, Fra Luca had been received into the Order in 1220 at the hands of St. Francis himself. Luca first met Anthony of Lisbon at Assisi in 1227, and accompanied him to Rome the next year. Thereafter he became his constant companion, earning him the unique title of "socius Sancti Antonii", in many documents, inscriptions, and writings of the period. Following the death of Anthony in 1231, Luca assumed the leadership of the Franciscan community in Padua, perhaps overseeing the construction of the Basilica and mediating disputes between the friars and citizens of Padua. According to legend, Fra Luca even confronted Ezzelino da Romano with his cruelties and crimes, as Albertino Mussato later depicted in his tragedy, *Ecerinis*, c. 1315. But most of his life was spent in contemplation and prayer devoted to the goal of poverty and renunciation of worldly goods. Pure of heart and mind, an ardent Franciscan leader during his long presence in Padua, Luca Belludi was probably not the great preacher and peacemaker depicted in the pseudo-Favafoschi chronicle of 1335 and Bartholomew of Pisa's celebration of St. Francis and his order written in the 1390s. His greatest miracle, his prophecy of the liberation of Padua from the tyranny of Ezzelino in 1259, was immortalized in the frescoes in his burial chapel, painted by Giusto de'

<sup>53</sup> On his imprisonment and death, Rolandinus Patavinus, 64-66; *Chronicon Marchiae*, 18, 24-25

<sup>54</sup> Collodo, 24-34: discussion of his early legend, and editions of the *De preciosi transitu beati Arnaldi confessoris atque abbatis monasterii Sancte Iustine de Padua* and the pseudo-Favafoschi chronicle from the 1330s.

<sup>55</sup> Gamboso, 1988, 127-41, 146-69: the standard life, with many extracts of documents and discussion of points of controversy. Useful summaries: Gamboso, 1999, Blasucci; Lazzari.



Menabuoi in 1382 under the patronage of Naimerio and Manfredino Conti, two major members of the Carrara affinity. To perfection of life and dedication to poverty, Luca Belludi added the gift of prophecy through the inspiration of Padua's most popular saint.

### 5. *The Cult of the Virgin Mary*

More than the cult of Padua's patron saints and its recent *beati*, the most popular holidays of the Paduan liturgical calendar were the observances of the Marian feasts. At the end of the thirteenth century, Egidio, patriarch of Grado and prelate of the provinces of Venetia and Dalmatia, bestowed on the bishop of Padua the right to grant indulgences of forty days to penitents who attended Mass in the Duomo and gave alms during the octaves of the four feasts of the Virgin Mary – Nativity, Purification, Annunciation and Assumption – and on the feast of St. Daniel<sup>56</sup>. While eventually all these Marian feasts would be celebrated throughout the city by the confraternity of Santa Maria dei Colombini, at the end of the thirteenth century, only the feast of the Annunciation was accorded a public procession. It seems that several decades before Enrico Scrovegni acquired the old Roman Arena from Manfredo Dalesmanini in 1300 and constructed his famous oratory there, there was already a tradition of communally sponsored procession from the town hall to the Arena on the feast of the Annunciation. A communal statute assigned to the spate of legislation in feast days enacted under the Venetian Podestà Matteo Querini, in 1278 but found incorporated only in the city code of 1420 describes such a procession in great detail<sup>57</sup>. Essentially, the communal statute enjoined the bishop of Padua to celebrate the feast of the Annunciation by staging the representation of the angelic salutation of Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in the Arena. At half past ten in the morning (*medie terciè*),

Two boys were to be dressed up, one in the form of an angel, with wings and a lily, the other in the manner of a female virgin dressed as the Virgin Mary. Thus, one of them should portray the angel Gabriel, the other the Virgin Mary, and the lord bishop or his vicar with the (cathedral) chapter and the Paduan clergy and with all the monks of the religious houses of Padua, with their crosses, ought to congregate at the Duomo, and thence to go in procession to the Palazzo della Ragione of the commune of Padua.

There the Podestà of Padua was to have gathered his judges and staff with all the judges and officials of the commune of Padua, and all the knights, doctors and citizens of Padua. Then the two boys, dressed as Gabriel and the Virgin Mary, were to be placed on two chairs and, following established custom, carried to the Arena, preceded by the trumpeters of the commune and the Paduan clergy and followed by the Podestà, the Paduan citizen body, with the Gastaldi of the city's merchant and artisan guilds.

<sup>56</sup> Dondi dall'Orologio, 1815, 73, doc. 37.

<sup>57</sup> The text of the 1278 statute is found only in *Stat. Ref.*, fol. 304v; recently published with English translation in Jacobus, 346-47.



There in the courtyard of the Arena, in the places made ready in the usual way, the Angel should greet Mary with an angelic salutation, and perform other gestures which have been established for the representation of this kind of Annunciation, as they are accustomed to do. And this feast ought to be carried out as an act of veneration without any expense to the commune or guilds, but in this feast, the trumpeters of the commune who are usually salaried by the public, ought to sound their trumpets, and accompany the Angel and Mary with music from the (communal) palace to the Arena, without any further salary or payment. And the lord Podestà ought to make certain that his knights together with the police take precaution that nothing untoward should result from the great throng of people.

If the date of 1278 usually assigned to this statute is correct, it seems clear that a procession of the communal officials and clergy from the Duomo to the Arena, where the Annunciation was paraliturgically re-enacted in pantomime, had already been a central feature of the ritual life in Padua for some decades in the second half of the thirteenth century. If the reference to the angelic greeting occurring in the places mentioned as “*loci preparati et soliti*” means “religious buildings, chapels”, there may have already been a small church in the Arena before Enrico Scrovegni built the oratory there at the beginning of the Trecento<sup>58</sup>. But it seems unlikely that a “golden Mass” was performed as part of the angelic salutation that was the central act of the ritual staged in the Arena<sup>59</sup>. Rather, a close reading of the Paduan *ordo* for the Annunciation shows that any spoken or sung drama with extensive speaking parts was performed at the Duomo in the late afternoon after dinner on 25 March. Hence, the procession with boys dressed as Gabriel and Mary to the Arena in mid-morning was a dumb-show, not a “golden Mass”<sup>60</sup>.

Two decades later, under the influence of the reforming bishop of Padua, Giovanni Savelli, and during the *podestaria* of the Perugian jurist, Ongaro degli Oddi, on 14 May 1298, another statute was passed for the celebration of the Feast of the Annunciation at the Arena<sup>61</sup>. The new statute changed the nature of the procession to the Arena in small but significant ways, bespeaking an attempt at reconciliation between church and commune and assigning more active roles both to the bishop and communal officials. To the three established patron saints of Padua whom the feast honors, the statute adds a fourth, St. Daniel martyr and levite. As we have seen, Bishop Savelli had achieved his translation into a new tomb in the Duomo just two years earlier. The feast of the Annunciation was also dedicated to the most important elements of the laity of Padua: “to the honor and peaceful and quiet state of the *comunanza* of the guilds and of the *gastaldiones* of the whole Paduan people”. To co-opt

<sup>58</sup> This speculation in Kohl, 2003, 182-83.

<sup>59</sup> Thus Jacobus, 1999, 93-107; Jacobus, 2008, 308-12.

<sup>60</sup> Young, 2:248-50, for the text of the Paduan *ordo* for the Annunciation, which explicitly directs that the drama, with speaking parts and chorus, be staged at the cathedral in the late afternoon, after dinner.

<sup>61</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fol. 104v; recently published with English translation in Jacobus, 348-49.

powerful members of the Paduan popolo in the service of the newly reformed diocese, two groups were singled out. The *comunanza* included the most powerful guild members of Padua, while the *gastaldiones* were a board of fifteen elected leaders of the guilds that served to defend the interests of the Paduan *popolo*. Together these two constituted the leaders of the commune acting through its *Maggior Consiglio*<sup>62</sup>.

The line of march of 1298 included the same groups as stipulated in the statute of 1278. But the purpose of the festival had changed “so that the freedom of the Church can be preserved in perpetuity by the lord Podestà and his staff, the Anziani and the officials of the commune of Padua, now and in the future”. Every year on what appears in both manuscripts as the “feast of the Denunciation [*Denunciationis*] of the Blessed Virgin Glorious Mary, the bishop and the clergy of Padua ought to congregate together at the church of the palace of the Commune of Padua”. When the clergy had gathered at half past ten in the morning (*in hora medie tercie*) in what was the great hall of the *Maggior Consiglio*, they were to be joined by the commune’s salaried trumpeters and the boys dressed as the Virgin Mary and the Archangel, who were to go in procession to the chapel of the Arena, where they were to perform “the representation of angelic salutation”. The bishop and Podestà were to invite the monks and friars of the city of Padua, who were not directly under episcopal jurisdiction (*exempti*), to participate.

That (the religious) for the love of the commune of Padua on the said day and hour were to gather, with their crosses and congregations at the Duomo, and attend the aforesaid carrying in procession, and that the Gastaldi of the guild of the *arx* of the commune of Padua at the aforesaid hour in that same place, with all and each of the guilds congregated, join willingly the same feast and procession, and devoutly enter on their (liturgical) calendar the celebration of the aforesaid feast, and in future they ought to observe the feast in this manner without any expense to the commune and guilds of the Paduan popolo.

The statute concluded by repeating the requirement (from 1278) that the Podestà deploy his knights and police for crowd control, so that nothing untoward would result from the great throng of people.

As stated, there were small but important differences between the two statutes that defined that celebration of the Annunciation in Padua. To be sure, common to both versions was a procession of the communal leaders and clergy of Padua, accompanying boys dressed as Gabriel and the Virgin Mary from the city center to the Arena, where the angelic salutation of the Annunciation was re-enacted. The procession in 1278 was to start with the bishop, clergy and monks at the Duomo and proceed to meet the lay and government officials at the town hall, while in 1298 it began on the commune’s territory in the church located in the great hall of the Salone, where the bishop and clergy were to

<sup>62</sup> These definitions are taken from the fundamental study by Kenneth Hyde, which discusses the complicated power alignments in late Duecento Padua: Hyde, 211-14, 244-46.

gather with the boy actors for the procession to the Arena. Gathered at the nearby Duomo were the monks and friars of Padua, who “out of love for the commune of Padua” were to join the bishop and secular clergy and carry Mary and Gabriel “to the Chapel of the Arena”. While guildsmen of Padua were to participate in the procession defined in 1298, it was mainly a clerical affair, which was to be carried out for the benefit of, but at no expense to, the commune.

In this later version, Mary and Gabriel were to be carried “to the Chapel of the Arena”, suggesting that an oratory already existed in 1298 on the site of the Scrovegni chapel, though the phrase could be a later interpolation which simply described what had become a standard procedure by the time of the redaction of the Carrara statutes in 1362. The statute of 1278, surviving in the Venetian code of 1420, returns to a simpler preamble, which dedicates that feast to the “honor of Almighty God, the saints and the Virgin”, and to the “peaceful, good and quiet status” of the city of Padua, and omits any mention of honouring the city’s four patron saints, the Holy Roman Church, and the guilds of Padua. Possibly it bespeaks a period of cooperation between church and commune, when civil authorities promoted the cult of the saints and religious observance in the cities of late medieval Italy<sup>63</sup>.

#### 6. *Confirmation of Sainthood in Bricks and Mortar*

In the two decades of cooperation between church and state in Padua following the fall of Ezzelino da Romano, the commune undertook a vigorous program of construction and repair of religious houses in the city, with special attention to the well-being of the smaller nunneries of the Benedictine order and the convents and friars of the Mendicant orders. Starting in 1265, the commune provided that the Podestà oversee an annual contribution of 100 lire each to the Franciscans, Dominicans and the Augustinian Hermits for winter clothing during the coming year, made in late October, shortly before All Saints. Another clothing allowance was made in June to the Conventual Franciscans housed in the Basilica of Sant’Antonio in time to acquire new habits for the celebration of the feast of their patron saint<sup>64</sup>. The communal clothing allowance to the Mendicants of Padua continued into the Carrara era, with a smaller grant of fifty lire to the Carmelites added at some time in the Trecento. But, in general, the heyday of communal support for church construction and renovation occurred during the second half of the Duecento.

The tyranny of Ezzelino da Romano had diminished the fortunes of the Benedictine nunneries of Padua. To aid their recovery, in 1275 the *Maggior Consiglio* voted to contribute to the repair, upkeep and expansion of the several

<sup>63</sup> Vauchez, 1993, 153-68, 294-99.

<sup>64</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 1151; repeated with changes in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 215v.

houses: a grant of 200 lire to the nuns of Santa Maria della Misericordia on the Prato della Valle for the repair of their dilapidated dormitory, final payment of a long promised grant of 200 lire to Santa Maria Maddalena for the repair of the convent and support of its nuns, 200 lire to the nuns of San Prodocimo for a dormitory to replace a structure destroyed in the recent defense of the city, and grants of 200 lire each to the nuns of Arcella and San Giacomo at Pontecorvo for repairs to their infirmaries so they could continue to care for the poor and infirm<sup>65</sup>. On 26 February 1276, the Commune made additional grants for the upkeep of five other convents: to Santa Maria di Saonara for the repair of the nuns' residence, to San Bernardo for its infirmary and refectory, to Santa Cecilia for the repair of its dormitory, to San Leonardo for the reconstruction of dilapidated buildings, and to Santa Maria Maddalena for the construction of a hospital<sup>66</sup>. But the civic authorities of Padua dedicated most of their resources for public works to the construction of the Mendicant churches that were being built on the periphery of the city in the late Duecento. As early as 1265, the commune of Padua was making, through local bankers, an annual contribution of 4,000 lire to the Franciscan basilica of Sant'Antonio for its construction. A decade later the Maggior Consiglio voted to have the commune contribute whatever was needed for the Eremitani to complete construction of a new dormitory for the friars, and 1500 lire to the Dominicans for the completion of the church of Sant'Agostino. In 1276, the commune agreed to pay whatever was required to enlarge the newly constructed church of Santi Filippo e Giacomo (called the Eremitani) so that it could accommodate the officials and laity of Padua at Mass<sup>67</sup>.

A later statute, drafted in July 1300, shows that the commune appropriated an additional 4,000 lire for the construction and enlargement of the great preaching churches of the local Mendicant orders: 1,000 lire to the Dominicans at Sant'Agostino, 2,000 lire to the Franciscans at Sant'Antonio, and 1,000 lire to the Augustinians for improvements in the Eremitani near the Arena<sup>68</sup>. That December the commune made a further grant of 4,000 lire to the Dominicans to be lent to the commune by a banker, as soon as full repayment was made to Enrico Scrovegni for money he had lent for the enlargement of Sant'Antonio. These sums were to be lent to the commune of Padua without usury ("pecuniam mutuare comuni Padue sine aliquibus usuris"), repaid from communal taxes (*dazii*) assigned directly to the lenders. Enrico Scrovegni's large loan to Sant'Antonio of 4,000 lire was symptomatic of how the commune of Padua marshalled the support of its wealthiest citizens in a building program for the grand new Mendicant churches of the city.

As we have seen, the commune promoted the civic pantheon in Padua in another way: through the statute of 1278, which created a system of solemn

<sup>65</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 1152, 1157, 1161, 1162, 1163.

<sup>66</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 1155.

<sup>67</sup> *Stat. Com.*, 1156, 1159, 1160, 1164.

<sup>68</sup> Ganguzza Billanovich.

feasts and court holidays that reflected both the requirements of canon law and a local calendar of religious observances honouring the city's patron saints and their relics, important local holidays, and, most of all, the titular saints of parishes and religious houses<sup>69</sup>. In the heyday of the Paduan commune, under the impulse of the bishop and the "guild of chaplains", or local clergy (*fratelia cappellanorum*), the urban parishes developed and matured so that by 1308 the entire system received definition<sup>70</sup>. The list of the saints' feasts mandated by communal statutes is a striking reflection of the saints commemorated in brick and mortar, in the city's parish churches, religious houses, and altars. Though the cult of saints reflected in feasts and places of Trecento Padua did not reach the 115 observed in late medieval Perugia, still nearly every major saint received his or her due recognition in both the liturgical calendar and parish structure<sup>71</sup>.

A. Universal saints: apostolic	
<i>Feasts in statutes</i> (20)	<i>Churches, convents, chapels, altars</i> (17)
Andrew ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Sant'Andrea
Barnabas ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	
Bartholomew ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Bartolomeo
James the Greater ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Giacomo (chapel in Sant'Antonio)
John the Evangelist ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Giovanni Evangelista (oratory)
John the Baptist (1278)	San Giovanni Battista (oratory)
Luke ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Luca
Mark ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Marco
Mary ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Santa Maria (Duomo)
Mary Magdalene (1278)	Santa Maria Maddalena (O.S.B.)
Matthew ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Matteo Evangelista
Matthias (1278)	San Mattia
Paul ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Polo
Peter ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Pietro (O.S.B.)
Peter and Paul ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Santi Pietro e Paolo
Philip and James ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Santi Filippo e Giacomo (the Eremitani, O.S.A.); also chapel in Sant'Antonio
Simon and Jude ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	
Stephen ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Santo Stefano (O.S.B.)
Thomas the Apostle ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Tommaso Apostolo
B. Universal saints: early and medieval	
<i>Feasts in statutes</i> (26)	<i>Churches, convents, chapels, altars</i> (15)
Agatha (1278)	Sant'Agata
Agnes (1278)	Sant'Agnese
Ambrose (1278)	
Anthony Abbot (1278)	Sant'Antonio di Vienna
Augustine (1278)	Sant'Agostino (O.P.)
Barbara (1278)	Santa Barbara
Benedict of Nursia (1278)	San Benedetto (O.S.B.)
Bernard (1278)	San Bernardo di Porciglia (O.S.B.)
Blaise (1278)	San Biagio
Catherine of Alexandria (1278)	Santa Caterina

<sup>69</sup> Tramontin et al., 279.

<sup>70</sup> Rigon, 1988, 117-41; Sambin.

<sup>71</sup> Dickson. It is from this essay that I mainly derive my categories.

Cecilia (1278)	Santa Cecilia
Clement (1278)	San Clemente
George (1278)	San Giorgio (O.S.B.); oratory Sant'Antonio (O.F.M.)
Giles (1278)	Sant'Egidio
Gregory the Great (1278)	San Gregorio Magno
Juliana (1278)	Santa Giuliana
Lawrence (1278)	San Lorenzo
Leonard (1278)	San Leonardo (O.S.B.)
Lucy (1278)	Santa Lucia
Margaret of Antioch (1278)	Santa Margherita
Martin of Tours (1278)	San Martino
Nicholas (1278)	San Niccolò
Salvator (1278)	San Salvatore (hospital)
Thomas Martyr	San Tomio
Urban (1420)	Sant'Urbano (O.S.B.)
Ursula (1278)	San Francesco (altar)
C. Universal saints: Mendicants	
<i>Feasts in statutes (6)</i>	<i>Churches, convents, chapels, altars (6)</i>
Anthony of Padua, O.F.M.	
( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Sant'Antonio (O.F.M. Basilica)
Dominic, O.P. (1278)	San Domenico (altar Sant'Agostino O.P.)
Francis of Assisi O.F.M. (1278)	San Francesco Piccolo (O.F.M.)
Louis of Toulouse, O.F.M. (1278)	San Luigi (altar San Benedetto)
Peter Martyr, O.P. (1323)	San Pietro Martire (altar Sant'Agostino O.P.)
Thomas Aquinas, O.P. (1278)	San Tommaso Aquino (altar Sant'Agostino O.P.)
D. Local saints	
<i>Feasts in statutes (8)</i>	<i>Churches, convents, chapels, altars (7)</i>
Anthony the Pilgrim (1278)	Sant'Antonio Pellegrino (oratory)
Canziano (1278)	San Canziano
Daniel Martyr Levite ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Daniele (oratory); chapel in the Duomo
Hermagoras of Aquileia (1278)	
Fermo (1278)	San Fermo
Justina of Padua ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	Santa Giustina (O.S.B.)
Maximus (1278)	San Massimo
Prodocimus ( <i>ante</i> 1236)	San Prodocimo (altar Santa Giustina O.S.B.)

Tab. 2. *Saints Venerated in Padua and the Padovano, c. 1235-1420*<sup>72</sup>

Of the twenty universal saints of the Gospels inrepresented in the liturgical calendar – that is: the apostles and the evangelists; the friends of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, and Mary Magdalene – only three apostles, Barnabas, Jude and Simon, were not accorded a church or altar in Padua. Of the twenty-six saints of early Christianity (fathers of the Church and martyrs), only Ambrose, patron saint of Milan, was not honoured in bricks and mortar. In Padua, as in Perugia, the liturgical calendar corresponded closely with the naming of parishes, monasteries and altars for apostles, fathers of the Church

<sup>72</sup> Sources. For statutes: Table 1 above; *Stat. Com.*, 181-83; *Stat. Car.*, fols. 101v-105r. The year of communal recognition is given in parentheses. For churches, convents, monasteries, hospitals, chapels and altars: Gasparotto; Rigon, 1988; Sella and Vale, 181-204; Puppi and Toffanin. Name alone indicates a parish church in Padua; added in parentheses is the abbreviation of the order for religious houses, or the type of religious place – e.g. hospital or chapel, or for churches in the contado, the name of the town.





Fig. 1. Giusto de' Menabuoi, Paradise (ceiling fresco, Padua cathedral baptistery). Photo by Giuliano Ghiraldini, Comune di Padova, by permission of Curia vescovile di Padova, Ufficio beni culturali.

and early martyrs. Only St. Bernard of Clairvaux and St. Thomas a Becket were added from the twelfth century. Given the power of the Franciscans at the Basilica of Sant'Antonio and the aspirations of the Dominicans at Sant'Agostino, the feasts of major Mendicants were added early to the liturgical calendar, or, as we shall see in the case of St. Peter Martyr and St. Louis of Toulouse, widely commemorated in the fourteenth century. The relics of three patron saints, Prosdocimus, Justina, and Daniel, were housed in either the Duomo or the ancient Benedictine house of Santa Giustina, and attended by the appropriate monks, canons and confraternities. As we have seen, a fourth patron saint, the popular St. Anthony the Pilgrim, enjoyed an enthusiastic following at his tomb at Santa Maria di Porciglia. The other local saints, venerated at Padua, included Maximus, the second bishop of Padua, Hermagoras of Aquileia (d. 70), the colleague of St. Peter and the first bishop of Aquileia, and two early martyrs, Canziano and Fermo, whose cult was spread throughout northeast Italy.



7. *The Semiotics of Sanctity: Fina's Synthesis*

Almost all saints commemorated in Padua's churches, convents and altars, and in its liturgical calendar, came to be depicted in the frescoes and on the altarpiece of the Baptistery when it was redecorated and converted into a Carrara mausoleum in the 1370s. This celebration of Padua's saints was the work of Giusto de' Menabuoi under the patronage of the consort of the ruling lord, Fina da Carrara, née Buzzacarini (1325-1378). Working with her husband's new hand-picked bishop of Padua, the Benedictine Raimondo Ganimberti of Friuli, Fina renovated and enlarged the Baptistery when she converted it into a mausoleum for herself and her husband, starting in 1375<sup>73</sup>. The massive depiction of Paradise in the dome included the figure of 108 identifiable saints, inclusive of many of Padua's local saints. Among local saints depicted in a place of privilege, next to John the Baptist and the Virgin in the dome, are three patron saints of Padua, Prosdocimus, Justina, and Daniel, followed by two early bishops, Maximus and Fidenzio, while the fourth patron saint, Anthony, is seated with his fellow Franciscans, far from the chosen few. Monsignor Claudio Bellinati has suggested that the aged Petrarch had a role in devising the pictorial scheme, and indeed his hidden portrait is to be found as an onlooker in the scene of Christ before Pilate<sup>74</sup>. But Petrarch died in July 1374, before Giusto began to paint the walls of the Baptistery. Little is known of Bishop Raimondo's interests or career, but the iconography suggests that he cooperated with Fina to transform the walls and altar of the Baptistery into a celebration, indeed a synthesis, of the universal saints of Christendom with those peculiar to Padua<sup>75</sup>. The hidden depictions of Fina and her daughters in the birth of John the Baptist, her honoured place in the donor's portrait, the importance of bishops, women and Paduan saints in the paintings suggests that Fina and her bishop worked together to create the program.

Conceived and painted under the direct patronage of the Carrara family at the height of the dynasty's power, the frescoes of the Baptistery are a celebration of Padua's Guelph traditions, its faith in the universal saints of Christendom, its support of the Holy Mother Church and the papacy, its respect for the sacrifice of early martyrs, and its recognition of the more recent contributions of the saints of the Mendicant order. To these concerns, which would have been important to many Italian city-states, the Baptistery's bishop, patrons and artists added special interests. The most obvious is the desire to celebrate the feminine, as both mother and martyr. Fecundity is a central theme, with emphasis on the miracle of Joachim's fatherhood and Elizabeth's birthing and on nurture in the narratives of the life of John the Baptist, and on Mary's role of Genetrix of God in scenes from the life of Christ. The role of

<sup>73</sup> On Fina's patronage: Kohl, 1989; Kohl, 2001; Spiazzi, plates 17 and 18.

<sup>74</sup> Bellinati, 81-82.

<sup>75</sup> On bishop Raimondo, Gaffuri and Gallo, 951-54.

<i>Row 1, left of the Virgin Mary: the apostles, evangelists, fathers of the Church</i>
Peter; the apostle Paul; Andrew; James the Less; Philip; the apostle Thomas; Bartholomew; Matthew; Simon; Jude; Matthias; Barnabas; Mark; Luke; Jerome; Ambrose; Augustine; Gregory the Great.
<i>Row 2, right of the Virgin Mary: four saints from her life</i>
Joachim; Anne; Zachary; Elizabeth; [thirteen Old Testament matrons and prophets].
<i>Row 2, left of the Virgin Mary: fifteen early martyrs and popes; three local saints</i>
Stephen; Lawrence; Vincent of Saragossa; Sebastian; George; Maurice; Theodore; Martin, pope and martyr; John, martyr; Paul, martyr; Cosmas, martyr; Damian, martyr; Cornelius, pope; Cletus, pope; Clement, pope; Nicholas of Bari, bishop; Leonino, bishop of Padua; Bellino, bishop of Padua; Giordano Forzatè.
<i>Row 3, right of the Virgin Mary: John the Baptist presenting local, hermit, monastic and Mendicant saints</i>
John the Baptist; Prosdocimus; Justina; Daniel, martyr and levite; Maximus, bishop; Fidenzio, bishop; Paul, the First Hermit; Anthony Abbot, of Egypt; Macarius the Great; Benedict of Nursia, O.S.B.; Bernard of Clairvaux, O.Cist.; Dominic, O.P.; Francis of Assisi, O.F.M.; Thomas Aquinas, O.P.; Anthony of Padua, O.F.M.; Peter Martyr, O.P.; Louis of Toulouse, O.F.M.; Nicholas of Tolentino, O.S.A. Herm.; Sigismund, king of Burgundy (d. 524).
<i>Row 3, left of the Virgin Mary: John the Evangelist presenting sixteen female saints</i>
John the Evangelist; Martha, sister of Lazarus; Mary, sister of Lazarus; Mary Magdalene; Agnes; Catherine of Alexandria; Apollonia; Thecla; Barbara; Ursula; Lucy; Margaret; Agatha; Bridget; Gertrude, O.S.B.; Clare of Assisi, O.F.M.; Elizabeth of Hungary, O.F.M., Tertiary; Empress Helen, mother of Constantine (d. 330).

Tab. 3. *The Seventy-eight Saints Depicted in Paradise, in the Dome of Padua's Cathedral Baptistery*<sup>76</sup>

women in religious life is reinforced by the large number of female saints depicted in Paradise: nine prophets and four holy matrons from the Old Testament shared half of Row 2 with Anne and Elizabeth and their husbands, from the lives of Mary and John the Baptist. The third row, nearest the viewer, with John the Evangelist kneeling before the Virgin in her *mandorla*, depicts seventeen female saints, three Marys from the life of Christ, nine martyrs from the early Church, regal saints, the Empress Helen and Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, and recent founders of female communities, Bridget, Clare and Gertrude.

Part of the second row of saints emphasized sacrifice and martyrdom, starting with the Protomartyrs, Stephen and Lawrence, and continuing with depictions of the martyr saints from the Great Persecutions, Vincent, Sebastian, Theodore and George, two youthful pairs, John and Paul, Cosmos and Damian, and several martyred popes, Cornelius, Cletus and Clement. It

<sup>76</sup> Source: Bellinati, 44-49. Of the 108 figures in the Paradise in the dome, thirty are Old Testament figures and are not listed among the saints depicted there. These include seventeen to the right of the Virgin Mary, in Row 1: Adam, Eve, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau, Benjamin, Joseph son of Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Joseph, husband of Mary, Tobias, Judas Maccabee, and Job. To the right of Mary in Row 2 are four Old Testament matrons: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah; and nine prophets, Simeon, Haggai, Amos, Isaiah, Jonah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Elias and Daniel.

concludes with three Paduans, two bishops, Leonino and Bellino, who were, according to local traditions, martyred in defense of their office, and Giordano Forzatè. Sharing the third row, nearest the viewer are saints dear to Padua, the monastic tradition, and the Mendicant orders. Presented to the Virgin by John the Baptist are three patron saints of Padua, with the attributes of their office: the aged, bearded Prosdocimus with mitre, pointing towards Justina, with martyr's palm, and followed by the youthful Daniel, with a pilgrim's staff and a model of Padua. Next come Maximus, with crosier and open book, by tradition the second bishop of Padua, and Fidenzio, the third.

Hermits and monks follow: Paul, the first hermit, then Anthony Abbot, who occupied a special place among Paduan saints, Macarius the Great, and Benedict, the founder of Bishop Raimondo's own order. Among the Mendicants, the founders, Dominic and Francis are represented, and the fourth patron saint of Padua, Anthony. From more recent Mendicants, favored by the Carrara family, are the Franciscan Louis (d. 1297), of the Angevins of Naples, who became bishop of Toulouse, Peter Martyr O.P., and Nicholas of Tolentino (d. 1305), who was not yet canonized. Next to Constantine's mother, the Empress Helen, holding the true cross, is the Vandal king of Burgundy, Sigismund (d. 524), with crown and scepter, who converted to Catholicism. Thus, the female and local Paduan saints were accorded a privileged place, each seated in the row at the bottom of the cupola, nearest the viewer. And every saint is identified not just by a well-known attribute, but also by their names inscribed on tables below their chairs. Thus, the lord of Padua and his consort, the bishop, and members of the Carrara circle informed the faithful of the most important saints of Padua and of Christendom.

The interests of the bishop of Padua in the artistic program were even more clearly stated in the donor's portrait. Here Fina Buzzaccarini appears kneeling in the place of honor, to the right of Virgin and Child, surrounded by Padua's sainted bishops, and their protector, St. Daniel. She is perhaps the first female donor in Italian art to be accorded such an honor. For example, in Altichiero's contemporary donor portrait in San Giacomo at the Santo, Caterina, wife of the donor, Bonifacio Lupi, is accorded a place of secondary importance on the Virgin's left. But here the two patrons of the Baptistery, John the Baptist and John the Evangelist, present the donor, Fina, to the Virgin and Child, with Maximus, second bishop of Padua, in the background. On the Virgin's left, Sts. Prosdocimus and Fidenzio, the first and third bishops of Padua, stand behind the youthful Daniel martyr and levite, dressed in the sumptuous robes of a deacon, holding a palm and the model of the city of Padua that had become his symbol<sup>77</sup>. Thus, by the late fourteenth century, the patron saints had taken on recognized traits, the grave and fatherly Prosdocimus, contrasted with the beautiful, virginal Justina and the youthful, handsome Daniel. About this time Daniel also took on a historical identity: the son of Eliazar, a Jew whom St.

<sup>77</sup> On St. Daniel's iconography: Kaftal, 80-81.

Prosdocimus had converted to the Christian faith, Daniel became a deacon and missionary and his many conversions earned him the enmity of the pagans. They seized the young Daniel and martyred him by crucifixion<sup>78</sup>.

The polyptych on the altar in the Baptistery's sacristy represents another ambitious attempt to honor all Christendom's saints, at their several levels of importance. Since Fina provided explicitly for the completion of the decoration of the chapel and its altar from the sale of her silver and clothing after her death, it seems certain the altarpiece was the last of Giusto's commissions to be completed<sup>79</sup>. The result was an altarpiece remarkable for its complex hierarchies of sainthood, signed, in effect by its patrons since the coats-of-arms of the Carrara and Buzzacarini families appear at either end. The central figures were Jesus, the Virgin, and John the Baptist, with the largest central panel depicting the Virgin with Child enthroned, topped by the Baptism of Jesus by John, with the Pietà at the bottom. On either side are twelve scenes from the life of the Baptist: on the viewer's left, six from his birth and the lives of Zachary and Elizabeth, and on the right, scenes from John's ministry, betrayal, death and burial. Above this narrative are the large depictions of six saints, the four fathers of the Church, Ambrose, Gregory the Great, Augustine and Jerome, each in his distinctive attitude and dress, and on the ends two major saints: Francis receiving the stigmata, and Sebastian with a sword in his left hand and a sheaf of arrows in his right.

In the smaller niches, the themes of death and martyrdom are continued with the depiction of five popes (all of whom had been accorded an altar in the Duomo) at each end: Urban, Clement, Sixtus, Silvester, and Fabian, and three famous martyr saints: Stephen, Lawrence, and the more recent Peter Martyr, a Dominican murdered by heretics in Lombardy, represented with palm and book. As we shall see, in the early years of signorial rule, the Paduan commune created for him a place of honor on Padua's liturgical calendar, marked by a solemn procession from the town hall to his chapel in the Dominican house of Sant'Agostino. A few years later, the Dominicans were further honored in the apse of their foundation by the tombs of two Carrara lords, Ubertino (d. 1345), and Giacomo II (d. 1350); the latter had been Fina's father-in-law. In eight still smaller tabernacles atop these saints are represented the authors of the New Testament: the four evangelists, depicted by their symbols, and four authors of letters: James, Peter, Paul and Jude.

In the *predella*, the patron selected and Giusto depicted another twelve holy men and women: the city's patron saints and two early bishops, also portrayed in the donor's fresco, include Anthony of Padua, Justina, Prosdocimus, Daniel martyr, and the later early bishops, Maximus and

<sup>78</sup> On the developed account of St. Daniel's background: Corsato, 100; Scardeone, col. 104.

<sup>79</sup> Kohl, 1989, 25, for the passage from the will of 22 September 1378, which reads: "reliquit Capelle predicate solum ad ornatum et pro ornamento ipsius Capelle et altaris in ea existentis totum suum argentum et vestimenta quod et que repertum fuerit dictam testatricem tempore obitus sui habere".

Fidenzio. Represented as well are six of the most significant of the anti-Ezzelino *beati*, who were still venerated in Padua, but rarely depicted in Trecento art. Reading from left to right these *beati* are: Crescenzo da Camposampiero, Compagno Ongarello, Giordano Forzatè, Arnaldo da Limena, Antonio Manzoni “il Pellegrino”, and Beatrice d’Este<sup>80</sup>.

The semiotics of Padua’s patron saints was also reflected in religious processions staged by the confraternities of Padua. From a statue of 1334, the lay brothers of the confraternity of the Arca di Sant’Antonio were to gather with candles every June on the first Sunday after St. Anthony’s Feast and process with the figures of St. Francis and St. Anthony (probably statues) from the Duomo to the Basilica, where the candles each member had purchased were presented to the friars. A similar procession continued in more elaborate form into the Quattrocento. And on 13 June, the feast of St. Anthony, the confraternity (now composed of both men and women) proceeded from the Duomo to the Basilica with four patron saints, each with the proper coat-of-arms (*sbarra*) and dressed in appropriate garb. Prosdocimus appeared with bishop’s mitre, Daniel in the clothing of a deacon, Anthony as a friar, and Justina, dressed in white and purple damask, carrying a knife and the palm of her martyrdom<sup>81</sup>. And in addition to the annual procession of Gabriel and the Virgin to the Scrovegni Chapel on the Annunciation, it is possible that the Duomo’s confraternity of the Servi di Dio e della Santa Madre used representations of the Holy Mother in its observances of the five Marian feasts<sup>82</sup>.

Starting with Giacomo II da Carrara, the lords of Padua memorialized the city’s patron saints on their coins. In the 1340s, Giacomo II had Prosdocimus depicted on a new two-*soldi* coin. This tradition continued with Francesco il Vecchio, who placed images of Sts Prosdocimus and Daniel on the reverse of his newly-minted *carrarino*. After his restoration in 1390, Francesco Novello honored the tradition by depicting three of the city’s patrons, Prosdocimus, Anthony and Justina, on coins issued during his rule<sup>83</sup>. Thus, the later Carrara lords in a sense legitimated their rule over Padua by issuing coins that bore the effigies of the holy protectors of the city.

## 8. *The Carrara Saints*

While Fina Buzzacarini and the religious leaders of Padua were creating frescoes to depict the major and minor saints of Padua, the Carrara lords instituted a number of public observances: *palli* and processions to commemorate turning points in the political life of Padua. The first such horse

<sup>80</sup> Bellinati, 79-81.

<sup>81</sup> *Statuti di confraternite*, xcli, 99, 131-32.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 10-23.

<sup>83</sup> Webb, 233, 245, citing *Corpus nummorum*, 188-206; Rizzoli and Perini, 111-21.

race was instituted in 1318, to be run annually on the Feast of St. James the Greater, 25 July, to commemorate the election of Giacomo il Grande da Carrara as the first lord of the city. The *palio* was to run from the city centre at the Piazza delle Biade through the gate at Pontecorvo to Volta Barozza some three kilometers to the south, with prizes of scarlet cloth, a young goose and an owl<sup>84</sup>. In the next decade, the Dominicans of Padua received due recognition when a solemn feast with procession was established on the saint's day of the early thirteenth century Dominican, Peter Martyr. Just as the Franciscan friar Anthony had interceded to aid the reconquest of Padua from Ezzelino da Romano in 1256, so the intercession of the Dominican missionary and martyr had helped to seal the peace between Paduan exiles and citizens on his feast day of 29 April 1323. On 4 May in the Palace of the Anziani, under the auspices of the German vicar of Padua (which had recently been placed under the protection of Heinrich, king of Bohemia and duke of Carinthia), local civic leaders, including Giovanni Camposampiero, Albertino Mussato, Rolando da Piazzola, and the nominal lord, Marsilio da Carrara, met to confirm that an annual procession was to be held on 29 April to celebrate peace among the warring factions of Padua<sup>85</sup>.

The Anziani of the commune and the fifteen Gastaldi of the guilds were to determine who should form the line of march, and the amount of the gift of candles and other oblations to be offered at the altar of St. Peter Martyr. And the Gastaldi were to add this feast to those which the guilds of Padua were to celebrate forever. A month later on 2 June in the great hall of the episcopal palace, in the presence of the bishop's vicar and the same communal leaders, the nature of the procession was spelled out in detail<sup>86</sup>. The Podestà with the Anziani and all his officials, and the Gastaldi of the guilds with all guild members were to march from the Palazzo della Ragione to the chapel of St. Peter Martyr in the church of Sant'Agostino, carrying wax and alms in the amount determined by the Anziani and the Gastaldi. Three years later, on 18 April 1326, the Anziani and Gastaldi, assembled in the communal palace, voted to spend 100 lire for oblations and expenses of the procession of the feast of St. Peter Martyr "all of which money is or will come of the treasury of the king [Frederick Habsburg] or from the coffers (*canipis*) of the commune of Padua"<sup>87</sup>. In May 1331, during the domination of Padua by the Scaliger dynasty of Verona, the annual procession in commemoration of the peace between Paduans made on the feast of St. Peter Martyr was confirmed<sup>88</sup>. As provided in an earlier statute, for this solemn feast, the Podestà, his judges and knights,

<sup>84</sup> On the election, Kohl, 1989, 39-42. For the statute: *Stat. Com.*, 1382, also in *Stat. Car.*, fol. 103r.

<sup>85</sup> Discussion of the feast and an edition of the 4 May 1323 statute in Meerseman, 2:805, 832-34; Gloria, 1888, 2:13-14

<sup>86</sup> Archivio Di Stato, Padova, *Archivio Diplomatico*, perg. 5933, 2 June 1323; an excerpt in Gloria, 1888, 2:14.

<sup>87</sup> Archivio Di Stato, Padova, *Archivio Diplomatico*, perg. 6127, 18 April 1326: "de omni pecunia que est vel erit in camera vel extra camera domini Regis vel in canipis communis Padue".

<sup>88</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fols. 101v-102r.



the Anziani and communal officials, and Gastaldi and guild members were to form the procession which carried gifts of candles (*doplerios*) and a *palium* valued at a hundred lire to the saint's altar. Thus the Dominican Peter Martyr joined Anthony and Daniel as one of Padua's major intercessory saints, and his solemn feast was to rival others in the extent of communal gifts to his order and the size of the procession.

The solemn feasts added during the rule of the Carrara family over Padua often celebrated victories over the arms of enemies, foreign and domestic, with the staging of a *palio* or a procession. Of course, the lords of Padua were not unique in such observances. During the fourteenth century, Venice instituted an annual votive procession on 15 June to the church of San Vito to celebrate the thwarting of the Tiepolo conspiracy in 1310; a procession on 22 July to the church of Santa Maria Maddalena to commemorate the peace concluded between Venice and Genoa in 1356; a feast for St. Isidore, on 1 April, instituted by the Council of Ten, in observance of the thwarting of Doge Marino Falier's plot to overthrow the government; and the Feast of St. Martial, on 1 June, in 1373, established to celebrate three recent victories – over Padua in the recent border war, over rebels at Zadar, and a third over Turks in Romania<sup>89</sup>. Similarly, to celebrate the reconquest of Padua from the Scaliger lords in 1338, Ubertino da Carrara ordered that a *palio* be held annually on 3 August<sup>90</sup>. Apparently this observance did not long survive, soon to be replaced by a procession to celebrate the fall of the last Scaliger stronghold at Monselice on 19 August 1338. That was the feast day of the Franciscan saint, Louis of Toulouse, and Ubertino da Carrara and the commune of Padua ordered an annual procession to the saint's altar in the Basilica of Sant'Antonio, sponsored by the guilds of Padua<sup>91</sup>. The adoption of a saint's day to celebrate a Carrara victory reached a low point when, in 1345, Giacomo II da Carrara ordered that a *palio* be run annually on the eighth of May<sup>92</sup>. This was the date on which Giacomo murdered his distant cousin Marsilietto Papafava da Carrara to seize the lordship of the city. But apparently this assassination was never celebrated among the religious holidays of late medieval Padua.

Three saints' days were added to the liturgical calendar as major feasts in the second half of the Trecento. A confraternity in honor of the desert father St. Anthony Abbot, also called of Vienne (from his principal shrine in the French Alps), was founded at Padua in the middle of the century<sup>93</sup>. Its membership,

<sup>89</sup> On the institution of saints' feasts in fourteenth century Venice to commemorate peace treaties and political events, Rigon, 2000, 408-11.

<sup>90</sup> Cortusi, 91.

<sup>91</sup> Cortusi, 93; Cessi 1:149-51, for an edition of the statute from documents of the notaries' guilds. That this observance was not recorded in the Carrara code suggests that its celebration was probably of short duration, though Louis of Toulouse's feast day was included among the solemn feasts of Padua in 1362, in the redaction of Marco Querini's statute of 1278.

<sup>92</sup> Cortusi, 115; Gloria, 1861, 4:229.

<sup>93</sup> See the introduction to the edition of the confraternity's statutes in De Sandre Gasparini, 155-58.



which included several minor officials at the Carrara court, was dedicated to maintaining a hospital for the poor and infirm on the outskirts of the city. Soon after its founding, a communal statute, passed in 1354 under the podestà Pietro Badoer of Venice, decreed a procession for the saint's feast on 17 January<sup>94</sup>. After the conventional honoring of God, the Virgin and all the saints, the statute mentions only the two oldest patron saints, Prosdocimus and Justina, as well as St. Anthony of Vienne. It ordered the Podestà with his officials and men of Padua and all the guilds to proceed to the church of Sant'Antonio di Vienne in borgo Savonarola with the usual gifts of candles and wax.

Perhaps founded from practice by a similar confraternity in Venice, the procession for this saint was retained in the liturgical calendar after the Venetian conquest, with the express command that the oblations collected on the feast day be used for the confraternity's hospital for the poor<sup>95</sup>. In 1372 was established a procession to the Carmelite Church of Santa Maria near Ponte Molino on the feast of the Purification of the Virgin. As with the confraternity of St. Anthony of Vienne, the Podestà with the Anziani, judges and his officials of the commune and all the guilds were to proceed to the church to hear Mass. While the throng was at the church, the Gastaldi of the brotherhood of Santa Maria were to collect offerings for its upkeep<sup>96</sup>.

To commemorate the great victory of Carrara arms on 25 June 1386 over a vastly larger Veronese force outside Padua on the Brentella canal, a celebration was established on the feast of the translation of the Frankish bishop, St. Eligius, or Sant'Allò in Italian<sup>97</sup>. On that day, the Podestà with his officials and staff, the Gastaldi of the guilds, the clergy and the people of Padua, bearing the banners of the guilds and wax candles as oblations, were to march to the church of San Clemente, where an altar to Sant'Allò had just been constructed. In the church, which was opposite the palace complex of the ruling family, the Carrara Reggia, the throng was to hear a solemn Mass dedicated to the "perpetual memory of victory, the good, peaceful, enduring and tranquil status of the magnificent lord, and of the city and people of Padua, and of all its inhabitants". This feast marked the high point of the Carrara dynasty's use of saints for its own glory and status.

### 9. Venice's Innovations

The celebration of the Brentella victory was observed for only two decades, for on 17 November 1405, Padua fell to the Venetian army and the ruling lord, Francesco Novello da Carrara, and his two sons were soon to be executed in a

<sup>94</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fol. 103v.

<sup>95</sup> *Stat. Ref.*, fol. 301v.

<sup>96</sup> *Stat. Car.*, fol. 321r (1372).

<sup>97</sup> *Stat. Car.* fol. 105r. For a contemporary account of the battle, Gatari, 248-54; for the importance of victory, Kohl, 1989, 235-36.

Venetian prison. The feasts, with *palii* and processions, that celebrated the election of the first Carrara lord, the conquest of Monselice and the Brentella victory, were promptly abolished. In their stead, the Venetian Podestà established that every year on the anniversary of the conquest of Padua a solemn Mass was to be heard in the Duomo, followed by a grand procession in which the Podestà led his officials and knights, the doctors and students of the university and the citizen body around the piazza. That afternoon (*post nonas*) the barbers of the city, selected by the Podestà, were to run a foot race from Bassanello in the southern suburbs, through the city's gate at Santa Croce to the church of San Martino at the city's centre. The first prize was a bolt of velvet cloth valued at fifty ducats, the second a chopping block, the third a hen, and the fourth a ham. The next day, jousts were held in piazza San Clemente, under Giovanni Dondi's famous clock tower, for a prize of silk cloth also worth fifty ducats. There, between the seat of the communal government and the palace of the Venetian rector and captain, the young worthies of Padua competed with the knights of the Venetian garrison<sup>98</sup>. The new Venetian masters impressed their Paduan subjects with a grand civic procession and sumptuous prizes. And for a time at least, a secular chivalric pastime supplanted the religious rituals of late medieval Padua.

But, in general, the new statutes that Venice promulgated for Padua in 1420, with the help of a board of some of the most distinguished local law professors, did not radically alter public ritual in the city. There remained the three fairs and festivals of medieval origin in honor of the three great patron saints of the city, Prosdocimus, Justina and Anthony<sup>99</sup>. For each of these fairs, the commercial and artisanal life of the city moved to the Prato della Valle. There the guildsmen of Padua were enlisted to construct a large pavilion for the temporary residence of the Podestà, his judges, knight and notaries. Wool merchants provided new timber for tables and frames. The carpenters' guild was charged with constructing the edifice and dismantling it at the end of each fair. The merchant's guild provided the canvas covering, while the used-clothes retailers (*strazzaroli*) had to stitch and sew the covering together. Carters brought in straw for each fair, while Jews and moneylenders had to provide free of charge decorated beds for the communal officials who resided on the fair grounds. All retailers and artisans had to display and sell their ware only at the fairs, while their shops in the rest of the city were to remain closed. And as usual, reprisals against foreign merchants were suspended while they attended and traded at the fair. In short, the new Venetian authorities mobilized the entire guild community to make the fair of each patron saint a commercial and civic success<sup>100</sup>.

<sup>98</sup> *Stat. Ref.*, fol. 327v; discussed and edited in Gloria, 1861, 1:228, 4:100.

<sup>99</sup> On Venetian policy of retention of observances for local patron saints in the Terraferma state, Viggiano, 14-15.

<sup>100</sup> *Stat. Ref.*, fol. 326r; discussion in Gloria, 1861, 1:143-44. On the use of resources of guilds in fairs and festivals in Venice, Mackenney, 133-50.

The ritual calendar of feasts and holidays remained virtually unchanged from the communal period. Matteo Querini's statute of 1278 was repeated in the reformed code of 1420 with only a few additions. To the four Marian feasts enumerated in the Carrara code of 1362 were added two new holidays: the feasts of the Visitation and the Immaculate Conception, which had begun to achieve recognition at the beginning of the Quattrocento. The Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth was appointed for 2 July. The second new feast, for the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, fell on 8 December. Also added was a feast honoring St. Urban, an early martyred pope associated with the cult of Santa Cecilia; he had come to figure prominently in Paduan hagiography.

But within two more decades, an official religious procession of a particularly Venetian complexion appeared in Padua: the feast of Corpus Christi. By 1441 the entire Paduan populace was arranged in strict order for a procession through the centre of the city. Beginning with grammar school pupils accompanied by their masters, there followed members of the thirty-two guilds, fifteen *scuole*, nine orders of monks and friars, the clergy of Padua, university students of law and medicine and members of the College of Jurists. At the centre of the procession was the sacred body of Christ followed by the bishop of Padua, now always a Venetian noble. Following him were the Venetian rectors and garrison, the members of the College of Physicians and, finally, the citizens, *popolani* and women<sup>101</sup>. The quintessential public festival of the Venetian Republic had now become the central act in the ritual life of subject Padua. While preserving the fairs and feasts honoring Padua's patron saints from the high middle ages, Venice had also put the stamp of its own civic rituals on its most valuable mainland possession. But in the larger liturgical life of Padua, the patron saints remained whose lives recorded great moments in church history: the missionary work of Prosdocimus spreading Christianity north of Rome at the behest of St. Peter, the martyrdom of a local maiden defending her faith during Diocletian's great persecution, and St. Anthony, the great Franciscan saint who brought the new order of Little Brothers north of the Apennines.

### 10. *A Brief Epilogue*

In June of 1995 I returned to Padua to make a final check of the archival citations for a study I had completed on the Carrara dynasty, staying in a *pensione* on the Prato della Valle, within easy bus ride of the State Archives that had moved to the suburbs at Brusegana. That Sunday morning, I walked to the Piazza del Santo to be greeted by hundreds of the faithful, in their holiday

<sup>101</sup> See Gloria, *Territorio*, 1:213-14, which details the line of march from an act of Padua's Council passed on 11 July 1441. On the importance of the Corpus Christi procession in Venice, Muir, 223-30; on its importance in fifteenth-century Europe, see Rubin, 245-71.

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best, coming out of the Basilica. I soon realized that this was the Sunday of the octave of the Feast of St. Anthony, and the local faithful were honoring their favorite patron saint, as they had done annually for nearly seven centuries since his death. I was for a moment part of a great throng of folk, a public display of love and respect that the Paduans had provided annually for centuries to demonstrate the esteem and affection for the holy man they honored as their city's greatest saint.

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#### *Abstract*

This article addresses the question of the evolution of civic ritual in late medieval Europe between the early thirteenth and early fifteenth centuries. Arguing for the importance of the participants as well as the planners of civic ritual, and for the need to contextualize the forms of ritual behaviour, it also offers a new case study: the changing civic calendar and the celebration of feast days in the northern Italian city of Padua. It publishes for the first time documentary evidence for the patronage and iconography of saints' days in Padua, drawing heavily on the city's statutes, and aims to interpret what it was that religious and civic officials – as well as Padua's citizens and inhabitants – intended and experienced. It not only throws light on the reverence for universal and local saints in the Paduan Christian calendar, but also focuses on the festivals, holidays, fairs, parish life and churches of late medieval Padua and its contado.

#### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 13<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; hagiography; devotion; art; iconography; patronage; statutes

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## The Carrara Among the Angels in Trecento Padua\*

by Meredith J. Gill

In the 1350s, the Paduan painter, Guariento di Arpo, completed an ambitious decorative scheme for the palatine chapel of the Reggia, the seat of Padua's ruling dynasty, the Carrara. The artist's cycle of paintings, comprising both wall frescoes and panels, constitutes an original, multi-media project for the medieval period, and it signals not only a milestone in Guariento's career, but also a decisive moment in the history of the Carrara family's cultural patronage. In this essay, I consider the reconstruction of this distinctive program, and connect it to Carrara identity and the family's claims as lords of Padua. In his inclusive, even-handed account of the cultural landscape of the late medieval Veneto, Benjamin G. Kohl allowed for artistic innovation as well as continuity; in this light, Guariento's commission offers another illuminating case-study in Carrara patronage in which refined taste and religious sensibility accompany the dynasty's resourceful and tenacious political worldview.

On the walls of the chapel, Guariento depicted two tiers of subjects drawn from Scripture in two rows of continuous narrative. Set into a frieze above the frescoes were (now illegible) inscriptions, while underneath them ran a series of painted Gothic arches, above a fictive marble socle zone. Along with these murals, the artist produced a sequence of over thirty panel paintings that describe a celestial vision: the Virgin and Child accompanied by Four Evangelists and surrounded by members of the hierarchies of angels (Figs. 2-8). He accomplished this with extraordinary coloristic effect. The cycle of panels was dismantled in the late eighteenth century, and the surviving frescoes of the west wall are now part of the renovated meeting rooms of the Paduan Academy, for which one wall of the chapel was demolished. Most of the panels, including twenty-nine representations of the orders of angels, are now in Padua's Musei Civici<sup>1</sup>.

\* This essay is drawn from my book, *Angels and the Order of Heaven in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, Cambridge, 2014.

<sup>1</sup> See Banzato, 1998a, 21-22; Banzato, 1998b, 57-58. The frescoes of the chapel (now the Accademia Galileiana di scienze, lettere ed arti) were restored by Leonetto Tintori. Other panels are now in the collections of the Pinacoteca, Arezzo, and the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University (*Armed Angel*

The program exemplifies Guariento's debt to fourteenth-century Venetian artists such as Paolo Veneziano, as well as to Byzantine models, evident most especially in the linear style of his panel of the *Virgin and Child*. Guariento's angels, on the other hand, reveal a newfound and expressive maturity evocative of the Gothic tenor of contemporary Venetian sculpture, and they are prophetic of the artist's celebrated (and now mainly lost) *Paradise* for the Palazzo Ducale in Venice of 1365-1368<sup>2</sup>. The biblical episodes convey, for their part, an acute psychological observation and an innovative, even theatrical presentation, aided by a characteristically lively architectural invention that distinguishes Guariento from Giotto, even as it recalls his more famous Trecento predecessor (Fig. 1).

Two themes are at least as important as Guariento's striking, even idiosyncratic formal language: first, the question of the reconstruction of the chapel's interior, and, second, the theological intellection governing the decoration as a whole. In 1765, before the panels were dismantled, they were described as located on the ceiling ("soffitto") with the Virgin at the center and the Evangelists at the four corners ("ai quattro angoli"). Later scholars have proposed two solutions for the relationship between the frescoes and panels, neither of which seem to have a precedent: first, that there was a grand polyptych against one wall (though this is contrary to the eighteenth-century evidence), and, second, that the panels comprised a ceiling design within an encompassing vaulted scheme. In this second arrangement, the Virgin would have been located as a kind of keystone at the center. In this hypothetical context, four trapezoidal panels were situated within sections of the vault defined by its ribs<sup>3</sup>.

Even less has been said about the choice of biblical narratives, let alone their remarkable relation to Guariento's carefully conceived definition of angelic nature. The chapel and any reconstruction of it invite consideration of two kinds of questions: the first has to do with the painted illusion of the celestial realms, with the observer's encounter with the angelic, and with the operations of color and light in the fictive heavens. These subjects bring to mind a challenge at the heart of artistic practice, namely the evocation of the otherworldly and invisible though persuasive naturalistic means<sup>4</sup>. The second,

[Prince] [wood, 83.8 x 52.1 cm.] [Bequest of Lucy Wallace Porter 1962.279]]. In the seventeenth century, the windows of the room were enlarged which damaged the frescoes. See also Banzato and Pellegrini, 71-72. In 1779, according to d'Arcais's entry in this volume, part of the palace complex, including the chapel, was ceded to the Academy, and at this time, one wall was demolished. In 1902, the panels entered the collection of the Museo Bottacin. Additional panels are in the Museo Civico Malaspina, Pavia, and the Castello del Catajo, Padua, while one of the *Cherubim* and an *Angel with a Shield and Lance* appeared for public sale in the 1980s. In the nineteenth century, other wood were recorded in private collections, possibly those same two panels.

<sup>2</sup> D'Arcais, 25-30; Banzato and Pellegrini, 14-15; 65-74; figs. 23-51.

<sup>3</sup> In her catalogue entry in Banzato and Pellegrini, 72-73, D'Arcais summarizes these proposals.

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, Shearman, 1987, 657-68; Shearman, 1992, chap. 4, "Domes," 149-91.

related – but more speculative – kind of question has to do with how apparently unlike artistic programs might be linked to one another; that is, how far can we go in positing congruities among works of art across time, even into the sixteenth century? From this perspective, Guariento, likely in consultation with his patrons and advisors, devised a scheme that presages some of the grand pictorial ensembles of the Renaissance.

Guariento's biblical episodes commenced at the upper level of the east wall, to the right of the altar. Visitors to the chapel likely entered through a doorway in this eastern wall, one that led to and from the palace's guest quarters. Only two fragments of fresco from the east wall survived the eighteenth-century renovations. These comprise the subjects of Adam and Eve before God (Gen. 1: 27), and Joseph interpreting the dreams of the Pharaoh (Gen. 41: 15-16), which probably belonged to the lower level. The frescoes opposite these, on the west wall, survive in better condition, beginning with the story of Noah (Gen. 9), Noah's benediction by God after the flood, and his subsequent drunkenness. At the center of the west wall (Fig. 1), we see Abraham's encounter with three angels (Gen. 18: 2). There follows the destruction of Sodom (Gen. 19: 24) in a scene of devastation surveyed by two of Abraham's angels, after which we see the figure of Lot's wife – Lot having entertained the angels – transformed into a statue of salt (Gen. 19: 26). Abraham's attempt to sacrifice Isaac (Gen. 22: 9-14) succeeds this scene. After this, finally, we see Jacob in the company of Joseph, who is sold by his brothers into slavery (Gen. 37: 28). Below these events, on this wall and moving towards the altar at the north, the sequence begins with David's victory over Goliath, and the judgment of Solomon, followed by the abduction of Elijah (4 Kings 2: 11), who is sky-borne in a fiery chariot conveyed by angels. The chariot supplies an elevated reference perhaps to the Carrara wheel emblem. There follows the story of Daniel's three companions, Ananias, Misael, and Azarias, who refuse to worship an idol, despite Nebuchadnezzar's threat to throw them into a burning furnace; an angel must rescue them (Dan. 3: 17-49). Adjacent to this miracle, Judith decapitates Holofernes (Judith 13: 10)<sup>5</sup>.

In many of these scenes, Guariento emphasizes angelic witness and angelic intervention (with Abraham, Isaac, Elijah, and Ananias), and he also selects incidents in which heroic individual action (Abraham, Joseph, David, and Judith) will ensure the salvation of a chosen people. The painter's inclusion of the Book of Daniel is intriguing in this way since archangels play key roles as intermediaries, counselors, and saviors. Daniel's Book (7-12) privileges visionary encounters in which angelic communication plays an important part. The Archangel Gabriel must explain Daniel's second vision of the figures of animals to him; in the third vision, he appears again as Daniel beseeches God for the fulfillment of his promises of mercy to Jeremiah. Gabriel explains how the seventy years of desolation should be interpreted. Daniel's fourth vision

<sup>5</sup> Hueck, 67-69.

ends with a statement as to how the Archangel Michael, guardian angel of Israel, will save the people. The outcome of the Azarias narrative in Daniel also depended on a divine messenger's salvific intervention, thereby reinforcing the larger symbolic meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's story as a prefiguration of the universal kingdom of a Messiah.

The Carrara lords might have claimed that their rule of the Paduan territories was permitted by divine agency and divine right. For them, Guariento's themes were robustly affirming, particularly in light of the visit to the city of the future emperor, King Charles IV of Bohemia, in November, 1354. He lodged at the Carrara palace, known as the *Reggia*, as a guest of his loyal imperial vicars, and it is reasonable to suppose that he was a fitting beholder of these scenes<sup>6</sup>. The family's princely aspirations are reflected, too, in the tapestry-like articulation of the wall surface and in the elaborate settings of medieval townscapes, architectural ornament, and refinements of armor and costume.

Guariento's heavenly assembly of angels in the panels, by contrast with the frescoes, is a pictorial homily on their nine orders as formulated in the *Celestial Hierarchy* of the fifth-to-sixth-century Pseudo-Dionysius. In descending order, the artist enumerates the Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations (or Dominions), Virtues, Powers, Princes (or Principalities), Archangels, and Angels. Oddly absent is the highest order of all, the Seraphim, though it is possible that they framed the damaged panel of the Virgin and Child. We begin with the lower Angels (Figs. 2-3) whose attributes are the small bodies of souls; the Archangels hold balances, weighing souls; the Princes hold shields and lances (Fig. 4), while the Powers walk chained demons. The Virtues grasp lilies (Fig. 5), and act in aid of humankind with miracles. The Thrones sit on marble seats, with scepters and orbs (Fig. 6), and ten seated Dominations have orbs and batons within rainbow mandorlas (Fig. 7).

Twenty-two of the panels are rectangular, while five have slanted sides or triangular shapes. Unfortunately, the panels have been cut down so that these variations may have no relation to their original context. The panels of angels of the same order are generally of the same height; the triangular panels are taller than these, and those showing groups of angels are the largest of all. Whereas all of the full-bodied angels are set against blue backgrounds, the paintings of the Virgin and Child and the Evangelists have gold backgrounds, as do two smaller images of the Cherubim. As befitting their association with Divine Wisdom, the Cherubim hold discs on which are inscribed "PLENITUDO

<sup>6</sup> Hueck, 63-75. Charles IV made Giacomo II da Carrara imperial vicar in 1348: "More than simply a token of Charles' friendship or symbol of prestige, the imperial vicariate brought legitimation of Carrara rule over Padua, broader authority in the affairs of northeast Italy, and the possibility of greater independence from Venice". Kohl, 1989, 93. On this same visit to Italy, Charles named Francesco da Carrara knight and vassal of the empire; he, in turn, knighted a number of his close Paduan allies. Charles received the Iron Crown in Milan in January, and the imperial crown in Rome in the following year. *Ibid.*, 97.

SIENCIE” (“fullness of knowledge”), after Pseudo-Dionysius. These two images, and perhaps others of their kind, may have framed the Virgin, flanking images of their superiors, the Seraphim. Perhaps most revealing is the fact that all of these figures are clearly not to be read in any way *da sotto in su*. Rather, judging from the directions of their bodies and the gentle, rhythmic inclinations of their heads, they are to be read from one side to another, left to right or right to left. They invite, then, to be read as if they had been set as a series of panels along the walls, above the frescoes and just below the ceiling proper.

This cycle of angels has no precedent in terms both of its scale and in terms of its relationship with a mural scheme, which begins, thematically, and according to Early Christian tradition, to the right of the altar. In Padua, however, there was an early Trecento precedent for the ranks of angels. This was in the Cappella Angelorum of Padua’s Augustinian church of the Eremitani. Here, an unknown Venetian painter executed a now-destroyed diagram of the orders of angels alongside the *Last Judgment*. These angels also followed the nine hierarchies of Pseudo-Dionysius<sup>7</sup>. At the Eremitani, as at the Reggia, Cherubim carried the Pseudo-Dionysian text on roundels on their chests; the Thrones were also seated on rainbows within mandorlas. The Virtues performed three kinds of miracles, including curing the infirm and exorcising demons. These angels stood before abbreviated natural forms – a plant, animals, and the ocean – each of which resonated with the sequence of Creation. Their type recalls the angels at hand during the days of Creation in the thirteenth-century mosaic cycle in the Creation cupola of the atrium of San Marco in Venice<sup>8</sup>. Even more apt is a comparison with the dramatic mid-Trecento orders of nimbed angels in the cupola known as the Dome of the Angels of the Baptistery of San Marco<sup>9</sup>. Intended as a mortuary chapel for Doge Andrea Dandolo (1343-1354), the iconography of the angels here recalls the

<sup>7</sup> Christe and Bonvin, 67-99. The authors note the different versions of the orders among Pseudo-Dionysius, Gregory the Great’s *Moralia*, and his *Homily 34*. The Eremitani cycle corresponds to Pseudo-Dionysius and *Homily 34*, although the *Homily* omitted the Dominions. The third through seventh orders vary among these sources.

<sup>8</sup> This is the hypothesis of Fogolari, 81-89. See Demus, Plates 40; 41; 44a. These show the six-winged Cherubim at the base of the cupola. Cf. also the subject of *Joseph Thrown into the Pit and Brethren Feasting* of the first Joseph cupola of the atrium of San Marco (Plate 52) with Guariento’s fresco of Joseph.

<sup>9</sup> At San Marco, and reading clockwise, a Cherub with ten wings holds a disk, inscribed “SIENCIE PLENITUDO;” a crowned Throne, seated on a globe, holds a liliated scepter and scroll (inscribed “TRONIS”); a Domination, who wears armor, transfixes a devil with his spear while holding scales containing a soul; he is inscribed “DOMINACIONES;” an Angel (inscribed “ANGELI”) and an Archangel (inscribed “ARKANGELO”) hold bound souls above a cave containing others; a Virtue, inscribed “VIRTUTES,” bears a scepter as he leans over a skeleton by a flaming rock and a spring; a Power (inscribed “POTESTATES”) binds a devil in chains; a Principality (on whose scroll is written “PRI[N]CIPATU[S]”) is dressed in armor and bears a sword. He is seated on a stool decorated with animal heads. Nearer the Cross on the altar below, a Seraph holds a scepter and



ninth-century mass still in use for the souls of the dead, in which God asks Michael to liberate the souls of the deceased. The Powers at the Eremitani wore priestly vestments such as dalmaticas and stoles, while the Princes, in armor, were lavishly armed (as they are in Venice). In the chapel at the Reggia, in the only other surviving panel of a group of angels, the Princes on their ribbon clouds are similarly equipped (Fig. 8)<sup>10</sup>.

In addition to the mosaics at San Marco, Guariento had, too, another magnificent precursor in the mid-thirteenth-century mosaics of the Baptistery of Florence. Though he was well-traveled, however, we have no firm evidence that he went to Tuscany. In the Baptistery, and flanking Christ (whose book reads “CREAVI DEU[S] ANGELOS”), are the orders of angels in pairs. They are also identified quite unusually by inscriptions ringing the days of Creation. As to the question of who might have had a role in collaborating with Guariento as a courtly advisor, Petrarch’s name inevitably emerges. In the late 1360s, and with his last patron, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, Petrarch likely contributed in an advisory capacity to the decoration of the palace’s famous Sala Virorum Illustrium. Perhaps he also had some part in the earlier scheme in the chapel and in its typological design<sup>11</sup>.

Later, in Venice, Guariento chose to depict angels again with great specificity in his glorious and largely lost *Paradise* in the Doge’s Palace (1365-1368). Here, too, the passage of the human soul was key. When Tintoretto came to paint his great canvas of c. 1588, a masterpiece that supplanted Guariento’s fire-damaged Venetian fresco, his angels guided the souls of the Blessed with a certain measure of emphasis and panache. He also portrayed representatives of the Nine Orders with their attributes, such as scales, orbs, and lilies. They did not, though, physically carry their charges, as did Guariento’s angels; rather, they guide, lead, and coax. This was the artist’s response, perhaps, to the mid-sixteenth-century climate of speculation on the matter of the soul’s justification.

It is tempting to see an Augustinian impulse behind each Trecento chapel’s decoration, particularly given the Augustinian presence in Padua. The city was, after all, a vibrant intellectual center in the later medieval period. The Augustinian, Giles of Rome (Egidio Romano), who was the author of several later thirteenth-century works on the measure, cognition, and composition of angels, had been in Padua in 1281 when he attended the meeting of the Augustinian General Chapter<sup>12</sup>. Among Giles’ studies was his treatment in at

scroll inscribed “SERAPHIN,” as he sits on a cushioned bench. Nine half-figured angels with torches encircle the blue sphere housing Christ in the center of the dome. He is flanked by two red and gold seraphim with six wings (following Isaiah 6: 1-2).

<sup>10</sup> At the Eremitani, the Archangels held balances for the weighing of souls, and they stood above the lowest order, the Angels, who waited to escort those judged to Heavenly Jerusalem. Cozzi, 30.

<sup>11</sup> See now Richards.

<sup>12</sup> From 1285 until 1291, Giles of Rome held the first chair of the Augustinian order at the University of Paris. Suarez-Nani, 77-178; 209-47.



least two treatises of the distinction between essence and existence as these categories had been defined by Thomas Aquinas. This distinction had far-reaching consequences for the intellectual framework of medieval angelology<sup>13</sup>. The Colonna family, who counted Giles among them, had also long been a sponsor of angelic schema in works of art. In the fifteenth century, at the family enclave outside Rome, at Riofreddo, in the vault of a small oratory, an artist who was likely the felicitously-named Arcangelo di Cola da Camerino frescoed a colorful diagram of the winged and whirling circles of heaven. This commission joined a better-known altarpiece for Rome's basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in which Masolino encircled the Virgin at her Assumption with a wreath of angels, each angelic order carefully identified by color and attribute<sup>14</sup>.

Guariento's accomplishment in Padua brings an added dimension to the character of Carrara patronage. While members of the family were enlightened patrons of the arts and promoted the city's local saints, they are not generally identified by historians and art historians as theologically learned or artistically adventurous. Yet the erudition and visual spectacle of the chapel's decoration presuppose patrons who were astute and discriminating, patrons who knew how to impress international visitors and local neighbors alike. In adumbrating other programs, namely those at the Eremitani and at Venice's great basilica, Guariento associated the Carrara with their influential neighbors: with their own town's powerful mendicant presence, and with the Venetian republic's long line of Doges. Within the walls of their residence, the Carrara claimed the protection of the angels in this life and the next, linking their right of rule to that of the Bible's kings and heroes who had been rescued in desperate and dangerous circumstances by God's elite emissaries. In this, the artist also raises questions for the modern scholar about center and periphery, questions that continue to inform our understanding of the history of the Veneto in the medieval period.

In this light, Benjamin G. Kohl's scholarship on Paduan artistic life is groundbreaking, for he frequently argued on behalf of the inimitable creative solutions of the city's artists<sup>15</sup>. Taking Ben's lead, we must think again about the tensions in late medieval Padua between signorial government and Carrara wealth. This tension and its impact on daily life in the city, so effectively encapsulated by him,

<sup>13</sup> Giles of Rome, *Theorems on Existence and Essence (Theoremata de esse et essentia)*; Giles of Rome (Egidius Romanus), Ms., *Quaestiones disputatae de esse et essentia; Quaestiones de mensura angelorum* (France, 1325-1375), Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 847.

<sup>14</sup> See Roberts, 295-97.

<sup>15</sup> With characteristic straightforwardness, he set out the challenges facing the art historian at the beginning of his essay, Kohl, 2004, 176. He quoted Dorothy Whitelock's *The Audience of Beowulf* (1951): "The effect of any work of art depends not only on the author's power and skill, but also on what is already present in the minds of its hearers, or readers, or – in the case of the visual arts – its beholders". Ben brought to light the work of under-recognized artists, such as Giusto de' Menabuoi, as well as his Paduan patrons, chiefly Fina Buzzacaroni, consort of Francesco il Vecchio

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attain pictorial resolution in the Carrara household's place of worship, and in the salvific acts of the angels in Guariento's biblical subjects, as also in his angels' kindly almsgiving and decisive intervention in the afterlife.

da Carrara. See Kohl, 1989; and Kohl, 2001. He offered further glimpses of his integrated understanding of the relations between art and its social matrix in Kohl, 1998, especially in chaps. 5 and 6 ("Signorial Government and Carrara Wealth"; "Creating Carrara Affinity").



Fig. 1. Guariento di Arpo, Abraham's Meeting with Three Angels and the Sacrifice of Isaac (fresco, west wall, former chapel, Carrara Palace, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 2. Guariento di Arpo, Angel with a Soul (panel, 82 x 58 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 3. Guariento di Arpo, Angel Weighing Souls and Combatting a Demon (panel, 80 x 57 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 4. Guariento di Arpo, Armed Angel with Shield and Lance (Prince) (panel, 90 x 58 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 5. Guariento di Arpo, Angel with a Lily and Two Kneeling Figures (Virtue) (panel, 80 x 57 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 6. Guariento di Arpo, Angel Enthroned with Scepter and Orb (Throne) (panel, 90 x 57 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.





Fig. 7. Guariento di Arpo, Group of Ten Seated Angels with Lilies and Orbs (Dominations) (panel, 119 x 107 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.



Fig. 8. Guariento di Arpo, Group of Armed Angels (panel, 110 x 107 cm, Musei Civici, Padua), by permission of Comune di Padova, Assessorato alla Cultura.

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### Abstract

In the 1350s, the Paduan painter, Guariento di Arpo, completed an ambitious decorative scheme for the palatine chapel of the Reggia, the seat of Padua's ruling dynasty, the Carrara. On the chapel's walls, the artist depicted two tiers of subjects in fresco drawn from Scripture. Along with these, in a sequence of over thirty panel paintings, he portrayed a celestial vision: the Virgin and Child accompanied by Four Evangelists, surrounded by the hierarchies of angels – all with extraordinary coloristic effect. The program is a milestone in the artist's career, expressing not only his debt to fourteenth-century Venetian works and Byzantine models, but also a newfound maturity prophetic of the artist's celebrated (mainly lost) *Paradise* for Venice's Palazzo Ducale

## The Carrara Among the Angels in Trecento Padua

(1365-1368). In this essay, I reconstruct this distinctive program, and connect it to Carrara identity and the family's ambitions for Padua.

### *Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; art; paintings; iconography; patronage; Guariento di Arpo; Carrara family

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**“The monument constructed for me.”**  
**Evidence for the first tomb monument of**  
**Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel, Padua**

by Robin Simon

1. *Introduction*

Amid the continuing research into the Arena (Scrovegni) Chapel in Padua<sup>1</sup>, there is relatively little said about one of its greatest works of art: the sculptural group by Giovanni Pisano (c. 1250-c. 1315). Its existence is, however, significant testimony to the extraordinary nature of Enrico Scrovegni's patronage. In the first few years of the fourteenth century, Enrico (d. 1336) commissioned a full-scale narrative fresco decoration of a brand-new chapel from Giotto (1266/1267-1337) the greatest painter of the day – one of the greatest of all time – whose immediately preceding work was at St. Peter's in Rome for the Jubilee year of 1300. There, Giotto had provided the mosaic in the apse, the high altarpiece in front of it, and the Navicella mosaic on the reverse façade of the portico<sup>2</sup>. Now Giotto took on a commission in Padua by one of its richest citizens. This private individual managed to have featured in his chapel – either through his own efforts or that of his heirs – no fewer than three portraits of himself (fig. 1), a number paralleled at this time only by Pope Boniface VIII (c. 1235-1303) in a tomb he had had constructed in St. Peter's by 1299<sup>3</sup>. Enrico appeared in the Arena Chapel in the form of a donor fresco in the Last Judgement on the west wall; as a standing statue from the life, now in the adjoining Museo Civico; and in a recumbent tomb sculpture in the east end of the apse. In addition, Enrico commissioned the greatest sculptor of the day, Giovanni Pisano, to produce... well, what?

This crucial question has not often been clearly addressed. Yet the answer would seem to be that Giovanni was commissioned to create some at least of the elements of a funerary monument – probably the most important – and that they survive in the form of Giovanni's marble Madonna and Child with two

<sup>1</sup> The most challenging recent monographs are Jacobus, 2008; Frugoni.

<sup>2</sup> Gardner, 1974.

<sup>3</sup> Gardner, 1983.



flanking angels (fig. 2) that now sit on the high altar, which they have done only since the long restoration of the chapel in the late nineteenth century and first years of the twentieth. Another element of this lost monument survives, I would suggest, in the form of the standing statue of Enrico “from the life” now in the nearby Museo Civico (fig. 3) which by 1560 had been moved to the sacristy, where it was recorded by Scardeone<sup>4</sup>. It is not by Giovanni but it is carefully attested to in an inscription on its base as a correct likeness – and very possibly, it would seem, on the scale of life – of Enrico: “Propria figura domini Enrici Scrovegni militis de larena”. It also clearly shows Enrico as a young man, as does Giotto’s portrait, in marked contrast with the effigy with heavily furrowed brow on the present tomb (see fig. 1) of some decades later, which looks as though it could well have been modelled from a death mask. There are just a few wrinkles upon the standing effigy and none in Giotto’s portrait, which suggests the relative dates of the portraits: the fresco was the first; the standing statue next; and finally the recumbent tomb figure.

## 2. *The monument*

We know that Enrico had a monument built for himself inside his chapel: he tells us so in his will. The will (of 12 March 1336) makes clear that the Arena Chapel was specifically intended as a mausoleum for himself, for it housed his funerary monument:

Eligo mei corporis sepulturam apud ecclesiam et in ecclesia Sancte Marie de Caritate de l’Arena de Padua, scilicet in monumento in ipsa constructo [pro] me, quam ecclesiam et quod monumentum ego per Dei gratiam feci de bonis propriis construi...” (“I [Enrico Scrovegni] choose that my body be buried in church and in the church of St. Mary of Charity in the Arena in Padua, that is to say in the monument constructed for me in it, which church and monument I, by the grace of God, had built out of my own assets...”)<sup>5</sup>.

This monument cannot, however, have been the wall monument that currently occupies the central part of the apse (fig. 4). That has been attributed to Andriolo de Santi (before 1320?-c. 1376), or to the “Master of the Scrovegni tomb”. Its recumbent figure of Enrico is of rather higher quality than most of Andriolo’s effigies – compare the figures of Ubertino and Jacopo II da Carrara on the tombs discussed below, of 1345 and 1351 respectively – and it is dateable to the mid-century<sup>6</sup>. When Enrico died in 1336, in enforced exile in Venice, he

<sup>4</sup> Scardeone. There was a silver coin underneath it of “about 1360” which suggests its having been moved to the sacristy at about that time. See Simon, 1995, 32-33.

<sup>5</sup> Kohl, 45. The will was published by Hueck. It has now been fully transcribed and edited, with an Italian translation, in Bartoli Langeli, 397-539 (480-481 for the passage quoted here). There is a subsequent reference (ibidem, 482-483) to the “decoration of the tomb in the Arena”, but that is clearly related to the cost of its being properly ornamented at the time of the actual burial service.

<sup>6</sup> Uncertainty still surrounds much of Andriolo’s career and the identification of his hand. Wolters,



was initially unable to be buried in own chapel and in his carefully constructed monument. Instead, as his will instructed – revealing as it does that Enrico was well aware of the fact that he had little control over the situation – his body was first interred in San Mattia di Murano, and was subsequently brought to the Arena by his son Ugolino and widow Giacopina, after which they eventually had a new tomb monument constructed in the central bay of the apse. They were in no position to create such a monument until, realistically, any time before 1350, and it was more probably around 1352, the year in which Giacopina and Ugolino are actually recorded back in residence at the Scrovegni palace in the Arena<sup>7</sup>.

### 3. *Comparable monuments*

From 1320 until his death in 1336 – following his initial flight in 1318 – with only one hasty interlude in 1328, Enrico had lost control of his chapel and indeed of his properties in Padua, to his great enemy, Marsilio da Carrara, all of it plaintively set out in his will: “Since Lord Marsilio...by violence and his power took over all my possessions... which by right belonged to me in Padua and in the Padovano”<sup>8</sup>. Marsilio’s ally Cangrande della Scala briefly occupied

1974; Wolters, 1976, 32-39, 116ff, 168-69; Moskowitz, 238ff. Andriolo did sign the contract for the tomb of Jacopo II da Carrara in 1351, but it was with two collaborators, and even the recumbent effigy may not, in fact, be by his hand. Again, when he signed the contract for the Chapel of San Felice in the Santo in 1372, although the design is surely his, the execution of the various parts of the ensemble is less certainly so, and we find him being paid for the tombs in the chapel, for example, along with his son Giovanni on 20 March 1376. See Richards, 144ff., 231. The initial contract with Andriolo was published by Sartori, 311-14. Further complexity is added by the identification of an unknown master (the ‘Master of the Scrovegni tomb’) as the hand, rather than that of Andriolo, responsible for the tomb of Enrico with its recumbent figure and also that of Bishop Castellano Salomone (d. 1322) in the Duomo at Treviso. See, for example, Moskowitz, 240-43. The gulf in quality between the effigy of Jacopo II da Carrara and the effigy of Enrico in the Arena is considerable (the latter is conspicuously higher) and suggestive, although not conclusive, in the light of Andriolo’s frequent use of collaborators noted above.

<sup>7</sup> Kohl, 43. Enrico died on 20 August 1336. On 23 November 1336 his body was moved from Murano to Padua: Jacobus, 2012, 404. The new tomb (which we see today) cannot have been created in that short space of time, especially since Marsilio da Carrara (see below) was still so firmly in possession of the palace and, during this interval, access to the chapel was hard won by Enrico’s widow (Jacobus, 2012, 404). Jacobus argues that the recumbent statue had already been created, probably before c. 1320, but that seems impossible to accept, in view of the aged and deeply wrinkled appearance of Enrico’s face noted above in comparison with the two other likenesses, themselves separated by a number of years. Nor do I find convincing the arguments for the incorporation of the Giovanni Pisano angels into an ensemble that would have included the present framework of the recumbent statue. Louise Bourdua has given a paper (Renaissance Society of America, 28 March 2014) contradicting Jacobus’ suggestions, and putting forward her own reconstruction of the tomb, publication of which is planned (the summary details known to the present writer indicate that her conclusions differ from those put forward here).

<sup>8</sup> Kohl, 45.

Enrico's palace adjoining the chapel after taking over the city in 1328. Cangrande died in 1329 and Marsilio, who had effectively remained in control of the city through swearing allegiance to Cangrande, thereafter took possession of Enrico's palace and controlled access to the chapel. He would have been unable to use it, however, since Enrico retained the advowson – *jus patronatus* – a point on which church law was unbending<sup>9</sup>. But these Carrara and della Scala connections may be indirectly significant. Two Carrara tombs that are now adventitiously to be found in the neighbouring church of the Eremitani provide suggestive evidence for the hypothesis offered here that the Pisano figures in the Arena Chapel originally formed part of a tomb monument; and the well-known della Scala tombs in Verona may also reflect features of the same monument.

Marsilio himself (d. 1338) is buried in a wall tomb in the church of Santo Stefano in what used to be the separate village of Carrara Santo Stefano, but which is now part of Due Carrare, a town made up of a marriage with Carrara San Giorgio, in the Colli Euganei. Although Marsilio's tomb is a handsome object, with a carved central Madonna and Child flanked by two saints and a smaller, kneeling figure of the deceased, with the Virgin Annunciate to the left and the annunciating angel to the right, none of it reflects the Giovanni Pisano sculptures in the Arena Chapel in any way. But the tombs of Marsilio's successors, on the other hand, conspicuously do so. These are the tombs of Ubertino (d. 1345) and Jacopo II (d. 1350), both by Andriolo dei Santi (fig. 5, fig. 6). Both tombs are adorned by sculptures of the Madonna and Child flanked by angels carrying candles that clearly reflect Giovanni's sculptures in the Arena Chapel<sup>10</sup>. One of the most striking features of the marble angels on the Carrara tombs is that they have bronze wings attached to them (see fig. 5), of the kind that we know were originally attached to Giovanni Pisano's angels in the Arena Chapel, where the slots in the shoulders of the angels for their attachment are still visible. And it is a fact that the use of bronze wings as attachments to sculptures became, after the construction of the Arena Chapel, a recurring feature of tomb monuments in the area surrounding Padua for much of the century: the famous Scaliger tombs in Verona are a case in point.

<sup>9</sup> Simon, 1995, 25 and esp. n. 7.

<sup>10</sup> These two tombs were moved to the Eremitani from their original location in the choir of the Carrara family church of Sant'Agostino, just outside the walls of Padua, following its demolition in 1819. They are now both on the south wall of the Eremitani, which means that only one of the deceased is facing the right way, Ubertino, who still has his feet facing east. Jacopo would originally have been on the north wall of the choir and therefore also with his feet facing east. The resemblance between the figures on the Carrara tombs now in Sant'Agostino and the Pisano Arena Chapel sculptures was briefly noted (and without details) by Roberto Paolo Novello in Banzato et al., I, 169; and see *ibid.*, 268 ff., for a summary of much of the published thinking about the Giovanni Pisano sculptures, including the common presumption that they were on an altar (although it is not usually clear which, since, as noted above, the present altar is a much later construct, while the original altar was only just beyond the chancel step), and noting that the present author (Simon, 1995, 33) proposed that they were specifically funerary.

The Carrara tomb sculptures in the Eremitani are also flanked by twisted columns, which may indicate that such a feature was originally to have been seen on the Enrico monument: certainly, such columns are often to be found on tombs<sup>11</sup>. And, among many other re-used stone fragments that can be identified in the Arena Chapel, there are several twisted columns: for example, those at the north-west and south-west horns of what I have previously identified as the pastiche high altar (palimpsest might be another word for it)<sup>12</sup>. Re-used elements may include those twisted columns now on either side of the standing statue of Enrico referred to above, the rather distinctive bases of which have a pattern that is similar to, although not identical with, those at floor level of the pilasters in the apse. The carving of the capitals on these flanking columns similarly resembles, but does not match, those of the pilasters; while the canopy over this statue of Enrico is markedly different in all respects from those over the stalls in the apse.

#### 4. *The Pisano sculptures*

The character of the two flanking angels in the Arena Chapel (fig. 2) has been the subject of much speculation. But we can identify them probably as sub-deacons and certainly as acolytes, wearing cinctured and apparelled albs. The role of sub-deacons, and that of acolytes separately, whose functions were often fulfilled by sub-deacons<sup>13</sup>, was then, as it still is, specifically to assist at the altar,

<sup>11</sup> Twisted columns are a feature of, e.g., the tomb of Cardinal de Bray in San Domenico, Orvieto, 1282, and the reliquary tomb of St. Luke the Evangelist in Santa Giustina, Padua, of c. 1316.

<sup>12</sup> Simon, 1995, 27. Cf. Jacobus, 2008, 49 and n. 17.

<sup>13</sup> They are not tonsured, as deacons would usually be, and certainly not priests and so could not be holding chalice and ciborium, as a pair, respectively. Deacons would wear dalmatics and not just albs (which would be underneath the dalmatic) and also a stole over the left shoulder (as opposed to the stole of a priest, worn over both shoulders), worn directly over the alb. The Pisano angels are also conspicuously young, especially that to the right of the Virgin, no doubt reflecting the fact that acolytes took their minor orders in adolescence. Apparelled albs were particularly in use during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and there are storiated apparels for an alb (as distinct from a dalmatic) in the Victoria & Albert Museum, 8128 to B-1863, *opus anglicanum* dating to 1320-1340: cf. James. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, now accessible on line (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/>), has ample information about the topics discussed here: see especially "Ordines Romani", "Acolytes", "Subdeacons", "Deacons". A clear account of apparelled albs is in Macalister, 66-67: "The more usual ornamentation, however, and that which became universal in later years, consisted in ornamental patches of embroidery, technically called apparels, sewn on to various parts of the vestment. There were two such rectangular patches just above the lower hem, one in front, one behind; two similar patches, one on the back, the other on the breast; two small patches, one on each cuff; a narrow strip encircling the aperture for the head, more for use (as a binding to prevent tearing) than for ornament; and, in earlier examples, two narrow strips running down in front and behind like the clavi of the Roman tunic". The bands around neck and cuffs, and narrow bands running down the arms and sides, in addition to the more obvious panels, are still visible on the albs worn by the Pisano angels. Jacobus has posited

chiefly at Mass, as would be most appropriate here, where posthumous Masses for the soul of Enrico would be offered up. Acolytes have to hold the candles next to the person or object to be illuminated, and they are clearly designed to do so this in this instance. The way they hold the candlesticks indicates as much, and also which relative positions they occupied, because acolytes ought to grasp their candlesticks with minute attention to detail, as is the case with all aspects of the liturgy. In this case, the rule is that the inside hand should be lower than the outer, the outer hand itself grasping the candlestick at the top<sup>14</sup>. It is noticeable that none of the acolytes in the two Carrara tombs observes the correct positioning of the hands, and it is possible that when the tombs were moved to the Eremitani they were wrongly repositioned: but, at the same time, nor are they vested either as sub-deacons or acolytes, or even in albs, but wear classicizing drapes. They shelter beneath adapted acroteria at the tomb-chest angles – and they are not assisting at an altar<sup>15</sup>.

None the less, the implication of the similarities between these sculptures on the Carrara tombs and those in the Arena Chapel is that the Giovanni Pisano originals likewise formed part of a tomb. As hinted above, another element of such a monument might have been the standing statue of Enrico Scrovegni (fig. 3)<sup>16</sup>, a figure that, once the recumbent statue in the new mid-century monument appeared, would either no longer be required, or for which there would be no room (see below). The introduction of this later tomb would also have made the Pisano sculptures redundant in their original position (again, see below).

### 5. *Changes in the Arena Chapel*

Without revisiting the complicated business of the relationship of the present apse and its contents to the rest of the chapel, it is enough to say that

the ample use of candles within the Arena Chapel: Jacobus, 1999a. She also mentions a record of the angel at the Sepulchre in twelfth- and thirteenth-century dramas “vested in an alb with gold trimmings”. There are several good examples of apparelled albs worn by angels in St. Francis in Glory on the crossing vault of the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi.

<sup>14</sup> The hands therefore have to be changed over if, say, the act of turning clockwise (invariably, and usually for a procession) reverses the position of the acolyte relative to the priest between two acolytes: something that can still be witnessed today in a well-regulated Mass (though more often, not).

<sup>15</sup> Oddly, the candle-bearing angels on the Jacopo tomb wear stoles crossed over the chest and passed under the girdle (even though they are not wearing proper albs) in the manner only proper to a vested priest. Acroteria are ornaments placed at the apex of a pediment or, as here, at the outer angles (when they are, strictly speaking, acroteria angularia). There were, and still are, examples of this ornamentation on classical structures surviving in Padua, notably the Tomba di Antenore, and they are deployed in the fourteenth century in the adapted form seen on the Carrara tombs illustrated here.

<sup>16</sup> Moschetti stated as much: Moschetti, 37. Ursula Schlegel argued against this, although the thinking is rather difficult to follow (there is, for example, a confusion about the shape of the apse – “choir” – rather than the central niche itself), and her measurements demonstrate that there was ample room for Enrico’s statue in this position. Schlegel, 200.

its construction represented a major alteration to the initial plan of the whole chapel, which had a rectangular east end<sup>17</sup>. A polygonal apse was, however, envisaged at least by the time that the votive fresco by Giotto beneath the Last Judgement on the west wall of the chapel was painted, which was surely no later than 25 March 1305. The east end that we see in that fresco, even though it never came to pass in that form (no transept was ever built), must have been dreamed up for more than one reason. The first might be that it was simply more up to date, with an eye to such closely contemporary developments as the east end of Santa Croce, Florence, which itself, as I have noted elsewhere, looks like a coherent gothic revision of the purely ad hoc addition of successive chantry chapels to the Lower Church of San Francesco at Assisi<sup>18</sup>.

The fact that these were specifically chantry chapels may be significant, since the second, associated, reason for the addition of a polygonal gothic apse at the Arena Chapel, in place of the flat-ended and shallow east end originally planned, may well have been the commissioning of a tomb monument by Giovanni Pisano, for which more space would, naturally, have been required: the date for these Giovanni Pisano sculptures is generally agreed to be around 1310. The oratory Enrico had initially commissioned – this is the term used in the early documents, a particular type of building that the initial layout embodied<sup>19</sup> – was therefore now taking on also the form of a chantry chapel with a tomb monument as its focus. The chantry was an obsessively fashionable phenomenon of fourteenth-century Europe, and nowhere more so than in Padua, as the later Oratorio di San Giorgio and Cappella di San Giacomo at the Santo testify. The frescoed decorations of both, by Altichiero<sup>20</sup>, were influenced by Giotto, and the architecture of the Oratorio, inside and out, by that of the Arena Chapel.

It looks as though the Arena Chapel apse as finally built was designed from the first with a monument in mind; but it cannot have been, of course, the present tomb of Enrico. It must have been, rather, the monument that Enrico refers to in his will. One of the most extraordinary features of the apse is that its central bay is blind, save for an oculus high up above the springing of the vault (fig. 7), which is quite exceptional<sup>21</sup>. The implication is that from its inception, since the exterior surface is undisturbed, this wall must have been designed to carry a monument, and there is indeed a box-like ledge above, and of an earlier date than, Enrico Scrovegni's present tomb, a ledge which, unlike the present tomb, is an integral part of the original elevation<sup>22</sup>.

The illustrations of Benvenuti and Grasselli's survey made in 1871 during the lengthy process of acquisition by the Comune of the chapel show that the

<sup>17</sup> Simon, 1995, esp. 32-33, fig. 16; Jacobus, 2008, 42-46.

<sup>18</sup> Simon, 1989, 435-36; Simon 1976.

<sup>19</sup> Simon, 1995, 30.

<sup>20</sup> Simon, 1977.

<sup>21</sup> Simon, 1995, 32-33.

<sup>22</sup> Simon, 1995, 30.

oculus in the east end was at that time covered over by plaster that, despite some damage, appears to have featured stars on a blue background of the kind especially associated with the Madonna<sup>23</sup>. On the ledge above the tomb of Enrico were the three statues by Giovanni Pisano, set beneath a shallow cusped canopy. There subsequently followed a restoration of this part of the chapel when much of this arrangement was dismantled. The oculus was re-opened, and the Pisano sculptures were now placed on the high altar<sup>24</sup>.

As can be seen (fig. 7) an earlier plaster layer, frescoed with a familiar fourteenth-century drapery pattern, emerged from beneath the baroque design. In fact, this layer of (later) fourteenth-century plaster had itself probably also covered the oculus, and so cannot in that case have been original – although further examination and analysis would be needed finally to determine this point – and it reached down to a point just above a horizontal line stretching from a slot cut into the edges of the bay within the pilasters on either side: it has a clearly delineated swagged lower edge. These slots carried a flat stone slab over the shallow cusped canopy that housed the Pisano statues when they were in this location. The shallow, V-shaped outline of the cusped canopy can in turn be seen on the brickwork below this frescoed drapery, stretching from an angled slot at either side similarly cutting into the sides of the bay. This shallow V-shape can be seen as marking the top of a clearly defined area of frescoed plaster which itself is painted with angels' wings at either side, evidently replacing the bronze wings that must have been removed in order to fit the Pisano angels into this shallow space, for which they were never intended.

There are, however, clear traces of another, earlier, feature, marked by a right-angled area outlined (as none of the other elements is) on the bare brick of the original niche. The frescoed drapery referred to above is on plaster that fractionally but distinctly overlaps the apex of this right-angled feature, which itself may have been a canopy intended to shelter a statue. It would seem that this frescoed drapery should therefore be associated with the shallower canopy, an interpretation that is confirmed by the fact that it was painted, quite coherently – even its careful sinopia is visible – in such a way as to stop just short of the horizontal slab that surmounted the shallow canopy. The right-angled canopy – if that is what it was – must antedate all this. The frescoed pattern – which was itself subsequently painted over, as the Benvenuti and Grasselli illustration shows – of fourteenth-century date could therefore be interpreted as having formed part of the changes that took place when the new (Andriolo de Santi/"Master of the Scrovegni tomb") monument to Enrico Scrovegni was installed. At the same time, Giovanni Pisano's Madonna and Child and two acolyte angels, which, it is suggested here, had formed part of an original monument, would now have been placed directly over the new

<sup>23</sup> Jacobus, 2008, 157, fig. 17; Banzati et al., 52, fig. 31.

<sup>24</sup> Moschetti.



tomb monument with its recumbent figure of Enrico. We may also infer that the standing figure of Enrico “from the life” was moved to the sacristy at this time (where it was often recorded) where underneath its base was subsequently found a silver coin of “about 1360”<sup>25</sup>. The nature of the inscription on the base of this sculpture (quoted above) indicates that it was added when the sculpture was moved from a previous location: at the time of its removal a record would have been required, confirming its accuracy as a portrait of Enrico. The present canopy enclosing the figure would not fit either of the canopy traces in the central niche and does not appear to be original, but was presumably constructed to shelter the statue when it was moved.

If the area indicated by the right-angled area against the original brickwork of this central bay points to the original location of the standing statue of Enrico, it was there for the purpose of playing a part within the original monument that Enrico had had constructed – as he puts it – which itself would therefore have taken the form of a complex ensemble of the kind that Giovanni Pisano was developing in the latter part of his career. It would also fit in with the particular circumstances of the interior decoration of the chapel, with its Last Judgement on the west wall (see below). Moreover, if the standing statue was in this niche in the central bay of the apse, it would have been placed upon what is a curious original feature: a ledge that forms the upper surface of a kind of rectangular box which is now seen – with signs of some damage on its frescoed surface – directly above the top of the tomb containing the recumbent Enrico. We may be sure that there was a proper tomb container within the earlier monument hypothesized here, but the function of this rectangular box might have been to represent a tomb underneath the standing statue which it supported: it has a fictive porphyry panelled front of the kind associated with tombs, and indeed the new monument to Enrico has actual porphyry panels on its front surface, beneath the figure.

The original high altar of the chapel was positioned just inside the chancel step, in accordance with the arrangements stipulated for the lay-out of an oratory, and the burial monument would therefore have been behind the altar, as is the case with comparable if not identical arrangements in near-contemporary chapels. An important example is that of the St. Nicholas (Orsini) Chapel in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi, a chapel which was in fact frescoed by a close assistant of Giotto who had worked with him immediately beforehand in the Arena Chapel, where his hand can quite easily be identified – and this connection with Assisi may, of course, be a significant point in this context.

The fact that the standing figure of Enrico is by a hand other than that of Giovanni Pisano does not invalidate the suggestion that they both formed part of the one monument. It would not have been necessary for Giovanni actually to visit Padua in order to create his monument for Enrico, and a sculptor nearer

<sup>25</sup> Moschetti, 35; Tolomei.



to hand could have been commissioned to take the likeness from the life. It should be noted, in the context of this hypothesized funerary monument, that this standing figure shows Enrico with his hands clasped in prayer and with his eyes open<sup>26</sup>. In this respect too, therefore, there is a different iconography and purpose in play from that of the present tomb, which shows Enrico recumbent with closed eyes – and dead. In contrast, and it is a crucial point, the standing statue shows Enrico at the Day of Judgement: a bodily resurrected Enrico. The deceased in the St. Nicholas Chapel at Assisi referred to above is also shown bodily resurrected – although opposite his tomb, in fresco over the reverse entrance arch. The same phenomenon is to be seen in the resurrection fresco above the tomb in the Bardi di Vernio chapel of Santa Croce, Florence<sup>27</sup>, and so is a feature of tomb monuments of the time. Like these frescoed figures, Enrico would also have appeared in full colour, for ample traces of the original polychromy survive upon the surface of his statue.

<sup>26</sup> These facts make it improbable that he could have appeared in this guise on the outside of the chapel in an exterior niche on the north side as suggested by Jacobus, 1999b, 29, a suggestion accepted by Frugoni, 54–57. There are problems with Jacobus' reading of the brickwork and stone cill in this area of the north wall. The "seams" in the brickwork referred to on the right-hand side of the "niche" do not align vertically with those that can be discerned above it (see measured drawing, Banzato et al., I, 65; Frugoni, 57, fig. 17). More significantly, the stone cill that we see at the bottom is asymmetrical: it extends clumsily to the right-hand side of the filled-in rectangle of brick and so its shape cannot have defined the truncated niche that Jacobus suggests contained the statue. It is hard to accept the notion that the statue could have been positioned on what would have been a fragmentary and asymmetrical cill, but in addition the niche itself is not centred over the entrance to the crypt below it: it is well to the right (west) side of the crypt entrance. Nor does the stone of the cill appear to match any other in the chapel fabric, with the possible exception of that used for the adapted Venetian window on the east side of the sacristy. In addition, this presumed niche is also some way to the right (west) of the original north door, too far to have made sense to the family visitors who are imagined as having accessed the church through this door. These visitors, it is implied, would have included Enrico himself (Jacobus, 1999b, 21; and see fig. 2.3 for a photograph of the asymmetrical cill discussed here), but it is odd that either he or his family could have needed an inscription on the base of the statue to remind him/them that this was a true likeness. In this location, within the palace precincts, it is also hard to understand how it fulfilled the public role that is asserted for it, "commissioned as part of a broader strategy to construct a public persona for its subject, Enrico Scrovegni" (Jacobus, 1999b, 24). As noted above, the identifying inscription seems much more likely to have been added at the time when the statue was moved to the later sacristy from its original location. In any event, I would suggest that the north door was the original sacristy entrance into the church, remembering that the layout was initially that of an oratory, and indeed this door gives immediately onto the space before the original altar. Moreover, sacristy and crypt are very often contiguous, as would have been the case here, while the disturbance of the wall surface in this area, and the presence of pilasters that are truncated at the same level either side of the north door, hints at a lost structure enclosing both north door and crypt entrance (a building along these lines is shown by Jacobus, 2008, 90–91, figs. 4, 5). No contemporary instances have been adduced in which a secular patron, in the form of a standing statue in a niche, can be seen commanding a side entrance to that patron's chapel (nor indeed, a main entrance).

<sup>27</sup> Herzner also notes this fresco, but suggests that Enrico was buried by the side altar at the right of the arch.

In his resurrected body, Enrico will have wanted to open his eyes, as it were, on someone who could ensure that there were no slip-ups in getting him to heaven, either Christ Himself or a saint through intercession. Here, in the Arena Chapel, with a dedication to the Virgin, the best thing would be for Enrico to find himself closely associated with the Madonna, in the form of a sculpture in which she is holding her Son. In all the funerary monuments in chapels around this time that include effigies and altars there is a Madonna and Child in close association, present either as sculpture or fresco, and usually with patron saints: other saints appear with the Virgin in the votive fresco on the west wall.

If, as may have been the case, there was a chest tomb set on the floor behind, and perpendicular east-west to, the altar<sup>28</sup>, Enrico would have been placed in it with his feet facing east – a famous instance where the recumbent effigy and body are also situated at the extreme east end of a chapel, with the feet, as was desirable, pointing east, is the tomb of Henry V in Westminster Abbey. Enrico would in this arrangement have been lying interred facing the Madonna and Child, if that central sculpture was positioned within, but not right against the wall of, the central bay of the east end. In this position the Madonna and Child could have been flanked by the acolyte angels, at either side of the tomb, and perhaps they were even on either side of Enrico's chest tomb: all these sculptures are carved in the round, and there must have been room for those original bronze wings to play their part in the ensemble. Above this tomb, in the centre of the east wall, the standing resurrected Enrico would have been facing Christ Himself, in His role on the Day of Judgement on the west wall at the opposite end of the chapel: where the Madonna, of course, also accepts the church of the Arena from Enrico. Such an interplay between liturgical east and west walls is, as noted above, still to be seen – and it was very close in date to the Arena Chapel – in the St. Nicholas (Orsini) Chapel in the Lower Church of San Francesco, Assisi.

The halo of Christ in Judgement on the reverse (west) wall of the Scrovegni Chapel was reflective: it still contains mirrors that were originally silvered<sup>29</sup>. The point is perhaps that the halo could have cast sunlight back upon the east end of the Chapel, where Enrico was buried, an effect that may have been visible on a certain day (or days) of the year. It has been observed that on 25 March a sunbeam strikes the doorway of the Chapel depicted in the donor part of the fresco on the west wall<sup>30</sup>. That works because the chapel is orientated slightly north of east and south of west. It takes into account the fact that the spring equinox, on or about 20 March, is one of only two days in the year when the sun rises exactly in the east (the other is the Autumn equinox, on or about

<sup>28</sup> The later monument which we now see has him lying north-south, as is the case in, for example, the tombs in the Orsini chapel at Assisi.

<sup>29</sup> Basile, 33.

<sup>30</sup> Jacobus, 2008, 326-27; fig. VIII.

22 September). In fact, in the Julian calendar then in use, the spring equinox was fixed at 25 March, the feast of dedication of the chapel and, shortly after the sun was up on that day, its light could fall through the relevant window on the south wall in such a way as to allow this to effect to occur. Whatever the role of Christ's halo (which remains very speculative), the composition of Enrico's monument suggested here would have formed part of a powerful relationship between the east and west ends of the chapel. At the west end, especially on the feast of the dedication, the sunlight might strike the doorway of the chapel that Enrico was presenting to the Virgin; the statue of a resurrected Enrico at the east end faced directly towards this scene and the Last Judgement; while the contiguity of the altar to Enrico *resurrectus* would itself have been hugely significant, where the Real Presence was ensured by a daily Mass.

The tableau envisaged here would certainly have been both elaborate and dramatic, but similarly dramatic tombs, and tombs stressing the resurrection in particular, are a feature of Italian sculpture in the years either side of 1300 – an aspect of the rage for chantries – and taken to a degree of great sophistication by Giovanni Pisano himself at this time. Giovanni Pisano produced something highly dramatic in his figure of Margaret of Brabant being hauled up and out of her tomb on the way to heaven, a tomb conceived close in time to his sculptures for the Arena<sup>31</sup>. The physically energetic manner in which Margaret emerges on the Last Day is an important point, since the very corporeality of the action stresses that it marks the moment of the resurrection of the body. As with the standing figure of Enrico, this is not the flight of the soul.

We do not have to rely only upon materials inside the Chapel for evidence to support the hypothesis put forward here: that the standing figure of Enrico and the Giovanni Pisano sculptures were part of an elaborate funerary monument. In addition to the points made above about the similarity between the Pisano group and the sculptures on the Carrara tombs, with the use of bronze wings in common, in addition to the marked similarity in the poses of the figures, there is other evidence in Padua to suggest the existence of a major funerary prototype featuring freestanding figures, as the Giovanni Pisano sculptures evidently were. Tomb designs in Padua and Verona in the later fourteenth century feature free-standing figures carved in the round, and include both standing and active figures of the deceased<sup>32</sup>. In one of the key

<sup>31</sup> Von Einem. Compare in the Duomo, Pisa, and originally centred in the apse behind the High Altar, the tomb of Henry VII of Luxembourg with his counsellors by Tino da Camaino c. 1315; and, rather later, that of Cino da Pistoia (Duomo, Pistoia, c. 1337). A complex ensemble, much of which survives, although there is no separate image of the deceased, is the tomb of St. Peter Martyr, San Eustorgio, Milan, by Giovanni di Balduccio, 1339. Relevant examples of tomb monuments with effigies are Arnolfo di Cambio's tomb of Cardinal de Bray (San Domenico, Orvieto) and the tomb of the bishop Tommaso d'Andrea (after 1303, Duomo, Casale d'Elsa). The tomb of a member of the del Porrina family (Duomo, Casale d'Elsa, datable perhaps to c. 1313) actually shows the deceased standing, with open eyes: Norman, 2:118 (fig. 141).

<sup>32</sup> Examples include the della Scala tombs in Verona already mentioned and that of Vettor Pisano, Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice.

chapels to reflect the influence of the Arena Chapel, both in its architecture and in its frescoes, the Oratorio di San Giorgio outside the west end of the Santo, the function of the building was not only identical to that of the Arena as an oratory but it also included a grandiose free-standing tomb monument, fragments of which survive, although its reconstruction must remain almost as speculative as the hypothesis offered here<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> For illustrations of these fragments and a reconstruction, see Mellini. The Oratorio di San Giorgio was apparently built by 3 May 1378, and frescoed by Altichiero 1379-1384: Simon 1977, 258ff.



Fig. 1. Three portraits of Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel, Padua. From left to right: by Giotto (1266/1267-1337), c. 1304; by an anonymous ?Paduan sculptor, c. 1310 (detail, now in Museo Civico, Padua); attributed to Andriolo de Santi (before 1320 - c. 1376), c. 1350 (detail). Private photo collection.

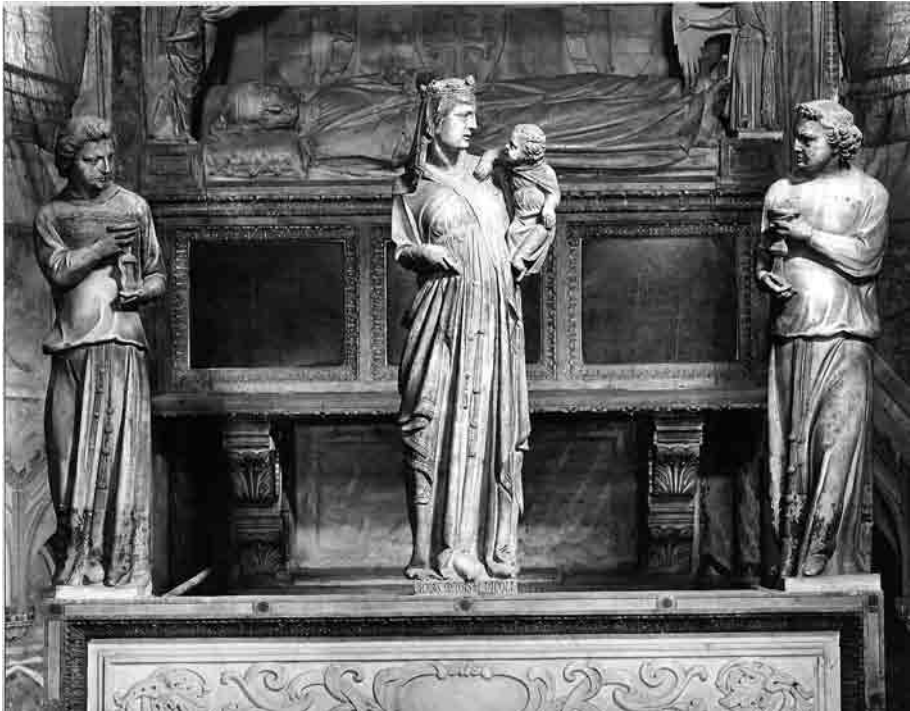


Fig. 2. Madonna and Child and two acolyte angels, by Giovanni Pisano (c. 1250 - c. 1315), marble, c. 1310. Private photo collection.



Fig. 3. Enrico Scrovegni, "from the life". Anonymous ?Paduan sculptor, marble, c. 1310. Museo Civico, Padua. Private photo collection.



Fig. 4. Tomb of Enrico Scrovegni by Andriolo de Santi (before 1320 - c. 1376), c. 1350. Arena Chapel Padua. Private photo collection.





Fig. 5. Tomb of Ubertino da Carrara, d. 1345, by Andriolo de Santi. Church of the Eremitani, Padua (formerly S. Agostino, Padua). Private photo collection.



Fig. 6. Tomb of Jacopo II da Carrara, d. 1350, by Andriolo de Santi. 1351. Church of the Eremitani, Padua (formerly S. Agostino, Padua). Private photo collection.



Fig. 7. Central bay of apse, east end of Arena Chapel, Padua, detail of blind bay with oculus, traces of canopies, frescoed drapery, and box-shaped ledge directly above later tomb shown in fig. 4. Private photo collection.

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*Abstract*

The wall monument to Enrico Scrovegni in the Arena Chapel in Padua was realized by Scrovegni's heirs about fifteen years after his death. This paper focuses on a marble Madonna and Child with two flanking angels by Giovanni Pisano, currently on the high altar of the chapel, and on a standing statue of Enrico "from the life", by a different sculptor and now in the nearby Museo Civico. It suggests that they were originally intended as key elements of a tomb monument for Enrico, whose plan was superseded and modified by the later monument. Among the evidence produced: inferences from the tomb monuments of Ubertino and Jacopo II da Carrara; iconographical characteristics of the Pisano group; the complicated history of the building and decoration of the chapel, whose apse seems the intended site of the original monument; and suggestions as to the different positions in the chapel occupied over time by the Pisano group.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; art; sculpture; iconography; patronage; Enrico Scrovegni; Giovanni Pisano

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# **“Stand by your man”: Caterina Lupi, wife of Bonifacio. Artistic patronage beyond the deathbed in late medieval Padua\***

by Louise Bourdua

## *1. Introduction*

The chapel of St. James situated opposite the shrine of St. Anthony of Padua in his eponymous basilica in Padua has received a fair deal of attention in recent years. We can safely say that it was a collaborative venture in many ways, from the authorship of its frescoes (Altichiero and Avanzo)<sup>1</sup>, its architecture and sculpture (Andriolo de' Santi, his son and extended family)<sup>2</sup>, and its patronage, even though the commission has been described in the not too distant past as the “Chapel of Bonifacio Lupi”<sup>3</sup>. The chance discovery of a document, some years ago led to the conclusion that the initial foundation was a more complex affair, which owed much to the relationship between the Lupi and their relations on Bonifacio’s mother’s side, the Rossi family<sup>4</sup>. More recently, I have argued that the Franciscan friars could not be removed from the equation particularly with regards to the choice of the titular saint<sup>5</sup>. In this essay, I wish to turn to the most neglected collaborator until now, Caterina di Staggia, wife of Bonifacio.

The narrative scenes depicting christological and Jamesian stories were among the first to include portraits of contemporary and recently deceased men among the saints and other protagonists<sup>6</sup>, and Caterina has occasionally

\* I am grateful to Michael Knapton, Reinhold Mueller and Gian Maria Varanini for their help in making the publication of Caterina Lupi’s will possible. Ben Kohl and I had planned to write this article together. Special thanks are due to Rachele Scuro who transcribed the notarial minute published here following its discovery by Reinhold Mueller. Thanks also to Mattias Biffi for going over my transcription of the Florentine original.

<sup>1</sup> Benati, 385-98.

<sup>2</sup> Bourdua, 1999, 687-97.

<sup>3</sup> Norman, 2:179.

<sup>4</sup> Bourdua, 1999, 694.

<sup>5</sup> Bourdua, 2012, 190-99.

<sup>6</sup> The classic essay remains Mardersteig, 1974, 251-71.

been credited as a participant<sup>7</sup>. Everyone agrees that Bonifacio Lupi must be the bearded man sporting a helmet bearing the word “AMOR”, who appears at the bottom right of a council meeting presided by a monarch located on the east wall of the chapel<sup>8</sup>. The problem arises with the identification of the figure to his right, who looks at the observer and is painted in three-quarter profile with fine features and long eyelashes. Diana Norman was reluctant to accept suggestions that this may well be Caterina for, as she argued, how could a woman have been depicted “within the overtly male context of a council”?<sup>9</sup> Later, Alessandra Sibilila contested the, until then, accepted depiction of Caterina as the devotee kneeling next to St. Catherine flanking the enthroned Virgin and Child with Sts James and Bonifacio on her other side. This was on account of the cloak worn by St. Catherine’s protégé, which in her view could only have been worn by a man<sup>10</sup>. John Richards, on the other hand, has identified the pilgrims in two other narratives as the disguised Bonifacio and Caterina, and reminded us that fourteenth-century painting in Padua frequently mixed reality with fiction<sup>11</sup>. Thus, if Petrarch could make guest appearances in Padua fresco cycles after his death including the Council scene in St. James’, why could not Caterina, the patron, during her lifetime?

As for her artistic patronage, Ben Kohl and Enrico Lombardi are the only two scholars to have considered the issue in some depth, the latter in his study of the Lupi hospital foundation of San Giovanni Battista in Florence<sup>12</sup>. Whilst this essay makes no pretence at being exhaustive, it clarifies Caterina’s role as patron in Padua and Venice before and after the death of her husband Bonifacio and reproduces her will in full for the first time. That a married woman of the élite classes played a role in the production of highly prized works during the fourteenth century, challenges Catherine King’s claim that only widows, members of religious communities, and women rulers could commission art<sup>13</sup>. It is also interesting (if not surprising) that despite being in a self-imposed exile to Venice, Caterina retained an attachment to her adoptive city of Padua, her parish church of San Fermo and the basilica of St. Anthony (the Santo). Finally, over a decade after her husband’s death and as she dictated her final wishes contemplating her own mortality, Caterina commissioned liturgical vestments still bearing her husband’s coat of arms.

<sup>7</sup> Fiocco, 261 and 265; Lombardi, 199, acknowledges Caterina as an “ottima collaboratrice”; Richards, 148, 156; Bourdua, 2004, 121-23.

<sup>8</sup> Plant, 415.

<sup>9</sup> And yet, as a patron, she compares her to other “wealthy, well-placed women”. Norman, 2:179, 190.

<sup>10</sup> Sibilila, 356-59. During the same conference, Ben Kohl reiterated that this image must be that of Caterina. Kohl, 2002, 325-26.

<sup>11</sup> Richards, 151.

<sup>12</sup> Lombardi, 99-212. Lombardi’s lack of specificity and footnoting apparatus is problematic however. Foladore, 33-34 follows Cenci, but is not without errors.

<sup>13</sup> A view which extends to the cities of Florence and Siena put forward by King, 1995.



In this final act of fidelity, she reiterated her independence as a patron, while at the same time continuing to honour her deceased spouse's memory and provide for his soul as well as her own<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. *Paduan Patron*

Whilst it cannot be proven or disproven that Caterina was involved in the commission for the chapel of St. James from the very start<sup>15</sup>, her financial participation at the building stage at least was crucial to its completion. The basic facts are worth reiterating. On 13 December 1370, Bonifacio obtained a concession from the Paduan lord, Francesco il Vecchio da Carrara, to make his will or make gifts to religious houses<sup>16</sup>. From this moment, Lupi was therefore authorised to establish a chantry. The building contract for the chapel of St. James was an agreement between himself and Andriolo de' Santi, the Venetian sculptor and head of one of the most active workshop in the Veneto<sup>17</sup>. The pact was drawn up on 12 February 1372 by the learned proto-humanist Lombardo della Seta, Petrarch's amanuensis<sup>18</sup>. Some scholars consider Lombardo to have been the superintendent of works<sup>19</sup>. However, the start of building activities would have coincided with the last two years of Petrarch's life, which found Lombardo occupied at Petrarch's bedside in Arquà<sup>20</sup>. As for Bonifacio Lupi, he would have been hard pressed to oversee a building site personally: he was sent on an ambassadorial mission to Hungary as soon as works started, and returned that summer, served on the battle field against

<sup>14</sup> Chojnacki, 1975, considers the issue of women's loyalty to their natal and husband's families; for a study on affection between spouses see Chojnacki, 1988; see also Ariès.

<sup>15</sup> Bonifacio and Caterina were betrothed from at least 30 March 1360, as noted in an act by Doge Michele Steno on 19 August 1405 in Archivio di Stato di Venezia (ASVe), Procuratori di San Marco (PSM) de Ultra, b. 176. A codicil to Bonifacio's testament drawn up on 17 May 1368, pledges 1000 ducats to Caterina. Gloria, 2:72; cited by Kohl, 1988, 51; Kohl, 1998, 178; discussed in Kohl, 2002, 322.

<sup>16</sup> ASF, Diplomatico, Normali, 13 December 1370. Billanovich, 260 records that he obtained Paduan citizenship on the same day. Angiolini, 590, states that Bonifacio Lupi was granted citizenship of Padua by January 1375, but this is incorrect.

<sup>17</sup> Bonifacio Lupi was not present; the act was drawn up by Lombardo della Seta and witnessed by Domenico della Seta, Giovanni son of late Pavino di Sbughi of Ferrara and Pazzino, brother of Manno and son of Aparado di Donati of Florence. The original survives in Andrea di Codagnelli's notarial *abbreviature*, Archivio di Stato Padova (ASP), Notarile, t. 407, fols. 3r-5v; the contract was published without critical apparatus most recently by Sartori, 1963, 311-14; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 456-58. There is no basis to support Angiolini's claim (590) that the chapel was completed before 23 April 1371.

<sup>18</sup> The standard work on Lombardo remains that of Ferrante; most recent bibliography in Pasquini, 481-85.

<sup>19</sup> Billanovich, 1989, 263.

<sup>20</sup> On Petrarch's end of life, see Ferrante, 251. She was convinced that Lombardo had gone up to Padua to deal with this contract but had returned to Arquà thereafter.



Venice, was captured at the battle of Buonconforte and imprisoned in July 1373, and ransomed only later<sup>21</sup>. He is documented once in Padua in July 1375, and again in May 1376; that year we find him active in diplomatic missions in Venice (and again in 1378), and later in the Chioggia War<sup>22</sup>. Lupi therefore relied on agents who were either relatives such as Corradino Lupi, or friends such as Lombardo and his brother Domenico della Seta and Nicoletto Spadari<sup>23</sup>. To cite but a single example, Domenico della Seta ordered the first recorded liturgical furnishings (vessels and cloths) for the chapel on behalf of Bonifacio in 1374<sup>24</sup>.

Caterina's initial role in the chapel is documented in October 1374, when she oversees the month's expenses and relies on Corradino Lupi to act as go-between until 30 July 1375<sup>25</sup>. Her name disappears from the record until 1395 and 1396 when sets of vestments are made for her and shipped to the Santo<sup>26</sup>. Caterina's absence, however, is probably more indicative of the patchy survival of the Paduan accounts and its nature than of her true role<sup>27</sup>. Other sources indicate that she was taking care of business interests in Tuscany<sup>28</sup>.

The chapel of St. James must have been open for business by 1379, the year in which a summary of the expenses of its frescoes was noted<sup>29</sup>. Although the local friars approved Lupi's request for daily masses on 19 October 1376 (presented to the friars by his notary Andrea Codagnelli), it is highly unlikely that any mass was celebrated during the painting phase of its ceiling and walls, a campaign that necessitated scaffolding and began in March 1377, and ended

<sup>21</sup> For Lupi's life see most recently Lombardi. For a more scholarly view, see Billanovich. Cenci, remains useful.

<sup>22</sup> Sartori, 1963, 321-22, sketches his military whereabouts; see also Kohl, 1998, 178. Gloria, 2:109, 117, 128, 136, 140, publishes extracts of his civic engagements in Padua during those years. See also Bourdua, 2004, 121.

<sup>23</sup> Lombardo is specifically implicated in this commission as documented on 12 February 1372, 19 October 1376, 21 November 1382. Domenico handles payments regularly between 12 February 1372 and 21 July 1374, and again in November. We find him active on this commission on 19 October 1376, during the winter and spring of 1380 and in 1381. He died in 1382. Corradino Lupi handles payments for a year between 21 July 1374 and 30 July 1375, and again in November 1374. See ASF, Firenze, Diplomatico, Spogli, vol. 14, fol. 259v; published in part in Gonzati, 1:CXI-CXIV; Sartori, 1963, 318-20; *Archivio Sartori*, 458-59; Bourdua, 2004, 110, 112-13, 121.

<sup>24</sup> The originals are in ASF, Ospedale di S. Giovanni Battista detto di Bonifazio (Bonifazio), filza 183, M. Liber Expensarum capelle (183/M), fols. 13r-14r. The list is published without scholarly apparatus in Gualandi, 5:145-49; Sartori, 1963, 316-17.

<sup>25</sup> ASF, Bonifazio, filza 183/M, fols. 6v-7r; Sartori, 1963, 319; Lombardi, 199, acknowledges her role in controlling expenses when her husband is taken up by war and diplomacy.

<sup>26</sup> See below nn. 48-57. Gifts of vestments by pious women were not unusual and can be traced as far back as the eighth century. See Miller, 92.

<sup>27</sup> The record keeping changes radically with a different scribe and recording practice from fol. 7r of the account book in ASF, Bonifazio, 183/M. From September 1375, artisans are recorded as direct recipients.

<sup>28</sup> Kohl, 1988, 54; Sartori, 1966, 318.

<sup>29</sup> Bourdua, 2004, 113.

two years later. Even before completion of their Paduan chapel, the couple were busily planning their much larger foundation, the hospital of St. John the Baptist on via San Gallo in Florence, founded on a site licensed for construction in 1377 and by all accounts operational by 1387<sup>30</sup>. Bonifacio also came to the rescue of his kin group on many occasions, beginning with the completion of the chantry chapel of his distant cousin Raimondino Lupi, following his death in November 1379, and the establishment of the perpetual chantry<sup>31</sup>. Only the two completion receipts of 30 May 1384 survive<sup>32</sup>, but these are detailed enough to reveal that the same painter, Altichiero, had been hired by Raimondino to oversee the fresco cycle and paint the monumental tomb that dominated the chapel dedicated to St. George. Among the witnesses were Bonifacio's 'new' agents, since the death of Corradino Lupi<sup>33</sup>: Anthony the son of Tiberio and Lariolo, grandson, both from Parma. Here too, Bonifacio's own supervisory input was probably minimal and only from 1383, the year of his last mission for Francesco da Carrara<sup>34</sup>.

The Lupi did not have much time to enjoy their Paduan chapels. By the late 1380s, the increasingly tense political situation in Padua took its toll on both Caterina and Bonifacio. Venice was a safer haven and Bonifacio's citizenship granted on 2 December 1355<sup>35</sup>, allowed him to acquire property and enjoy other privileges in the city. This he did but only in 1381<sup>36</sup>. Caterina obtained Venetian citizenship on 21 October 1385 and bought a house in the parish of San Giovanni Decollato on 22 May 1387<sup>37</sup>. One of these properties was on the Grand Canal<sup>38</sup>. It may not be coincidence that Caterina's Venetian house

<sup>30</sup> Although the statutes were drawn up in 1377, the papal indulgence was secured only in 1386 which signifies opening "to the cult" for Zandri, 40. For Billanovich, 273, the hospital is open to the public on 10 June 1388. The position of rector was filled by 30 May 1389, when he was asked to rent out Lupi's Florentine properties. Henderson, 137, states the first mass is celebrated in December 1386.

<sup>31</sup> For this aspect, see Bourdua, 2004, 125. Bonifacio acted as executor of Corradino Lupi's estate after his death on 15 September 1383. Bourdua, 2002, 291-93.

<sup>32</sup> ASP, Notarile, t. 407, fol. 147r; Sartori, 1963, 305-07; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 463.

<sup>33</sup> Discussed in Bourdua, 2002a, 292-93.

<sup>34</sup> Kohl, 1998, 177-79.

<sup>35</sup> Billanovich, 260; Kohl, 1998, 177, 185. The decree is published in Manni, 5:145-47.

<sup>36</sup> As is clear from his will of 5 July 1388, see below n. 40. Lupi appointed proctors to purchase additional properties in Venice in 1387 as noted in Codagnelli's abbreviated notebook in ASP, Notarile, t. 407, fol. 184r, as discussed by Kohl, 1988, 55; see also Kohl, 1998, 185.

<sup>37</sup> ASVe, Grazie, 17, fol. 209v; cited in [http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?tipo=pagina&lingua=ita&titolo=dettaglio&collocazione=G17:209V&nome\\_italiano=LUPI \(DEI\) CATERINA MOGLIE DI BONIFACIO](http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?tipo=pagina&lingua=ita&titolo=dettaglio&collocazione=G17:209V&nome_italiano=LUPI (DEI) CATERINA MOGLIE DI BONIFACIO), accessed 7 May 2014; ASF, Spogli, t. 14, fol. 333v; see also Kohl, 1988, 55, and Kohl, 1998, 185, 392 n. 50. For the Venetian purchase, see the original dated 22 May 1387 in ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, cited in Kohl, 1998, 185; and a copy in ASP, Notarile, t. 407, fol. 186r, cited in Kohl, 1988, 55. Its location and investiture (on 3 June) are recorded in two acts dated 27 April 1388 and 29 April 1389, both in ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176. Caterina's testament notes that she does not own the place she lives in by 1405, as noted by Lombardi, 1992, 207; see Appendix.

<sup>38</sup> ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment dated 26 April 1389.

was purchased in the year in which their favorite nephew Ugolotto Biancardo (d. 1408) whom they treated as a son, changed allegiance and left the Carrara for their enemy, Gian Galeazzo Visconti<sup>39</sup>. Yet, we do not know precisely when Caterina left Padua for Venice permanently. Bonifacio, for his part, must have attended the opening of his Florentine hospital on 10 June 1388, and the approval of its statutes two days later<sup>40</sup>. Less than a month later, he made his will in Padua on 5 July in the oratory of St. George but Caterina was not present<sup>41</sup>. He did, however, entrust her (as one of five arbiters) to determine where best to bury his remains temporarily<sup>42</sup>, in the case of Padua's refusal to allow his obsequies in his chantry chapel. He had led the anti-Carrara faction prior to their expulsion from the town at the end of 1388, and was elected capitano del popolo for the new Visconti regime. The future must have looked more promising when Bonifacio purchased a house "in contrada Domo" in Padua in February 1389<sup>43</sup>, and he was still residing in Padua that summer<sup>44</sup>. But there is no consensus as to when or how he died. The date on his tomb has been variously translated as 23 January and 23 June 1389, and either day could refer to its installation on the wall or another event<sup>45</sup>. The chronicler Gatari reports that Bonifacio refused to make a breach in the wall on his property to help Francesco il Novello da Carrara re-enter the city during the summer of 1390, and was consequently punished by him, yet there is no record that he was put to death in ways similar to other traitors<sup>46</sup>. He was certainly dead by 6

<sup>39</sup> Ugolotto was the only son of Bonifacio's sister, Caterina. Kohl, 1998, 179, 185-86.

<sup>40</sup> In the document of 12 June, we learn that the hospital functioned, and that Lupi was a septuagenarian. For both documents see Zandri, 41. ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176.

<sup>41</sup> Abridged copy in ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, notebook titled on cover "Quaternus domini Bonifacij Louo Sancti Johannis Decolati" (Quaternus Louo), fols. 1r-2v. This confirmed earlier points made in the oral will said in front of twelve witnesses of 17 July 1385 in ASF, Diplomatico, Lunghi, 1385, luglio 17, Bonifacio; see Zandri, 45.

<sup>42</sup> The other arbiters were Paganino de Sala, Bartolomeo Capodivacca, Fruzerino Capodivacca and Lombardo della Seta. Caterina was also expected to use monies from her movable goods from Bonifacio's house in Padua to meet the expenses of his initial burial and the eventual repatriation of his body to his chapel in the Santo. ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, Quaternus Louo, fol. 1v. As there is no action point in the notebook nor expense listed elsewhere, this suggests that Bonifacio died in Padua.

<sup>43</sup> ASP, Notarile, t. 407, fol. 217r; cited in Kohl, 1988, 57; ASF Spoglio vol. 14, fol. 344r.

<sup>44</sup> As attested by transactions dated 26 April, 30 May and 30 August, all in ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176; with summaries in ASF, Spogli vol. 14, 349v. An excerpt of the transaction of 30 May can be found in Sartori, 1963, 324; the act of 30 August is published in Cenci, 108-09.

<sup>45</sup> Sartori, 1963, 322, interpreted the cryptic date as January and stated that it referred to the date on which the inscription was mounted on the wall. Zandri, 50, interprets it as 23 January 1389 and a reference to Lupi's death.

<sup>46</sup> Kohl, 1998, 266. Cenci, 93-94, still offers the best summary of the various arguments. For Sartori (1966, 275), Lupi must have died on 21 June during the recapture of Padua by Francesco il Novello; Lombardi, 108-09, believes he died in June 1390 and is followed by Henderson, 137. Billanovich, 276, is the only one who proposes that he died in Venice in the parish of S. Giovanni Decollato on 23 March 1391. No source for this claim is offered however. Baldissin Molli, 2002, 253 n. 48, follows Billanovich, and this date is accepted by Foladore, 2:32.

October 1393 when we find Caterina recorded as widowed<sup>47</sup>. Regardless of how he died, there is no doubt that Bonifacio and the entire Lupi clan were counted among the politically undesirable by the reinstated regime, and their properties at San Fermo and Villa Mandria were reassigned to Carrara supporters after Caterina's exile to Venice<sup>48</sup>.

We hear little of Caterina until 1405, the year of her death. Prior to this, she commissioned vestments for the Santo while living in Venice and had two loads shipped in 1395 and 1396. The first batch consisted of a chasuble of blue velvet with gold fringe with a stole and two maniples and an amice, alb and cinctures<sup>49</sup>. Another chasuble was made of deep purple or paonazzo camlet with stole and maniple and alb, amice and girdle<sup>50</sup>. The two must be those singled out in the 1396 inventory of the chapel as assigned to brother Petro Penacio and listed as “una planeta erat de veluto aqurino et cum armis retro prefati domini Bonifacii de Lupis”, and another “de zambelloto nigro sive sanguineo cum armis ut supra dictum est et uno frixo parvulo”<sup>51</sup>. The third item, a palio or altar frontal, was also made to honour her marital family for the “large altar”, presumably that in the chapel of St. James and not its sacristy: a frontal of blue sendall, with a compaso in the centre with a wolf (the emblem of the Lupi) and with a white and vermilion fringe<sup>52</sup>. A year later (1396), Caterina sent a set of vestments for a deacon and a subdeacon to the Santo in addition to a chasuble of gold cloth “vermiglio” with stole and maniple, three cassocks, three amices and three cinctures furnished with gold of some sort<sup>53</sup>. All these items were recorded alongside those furnishings given to the chapel in 1374<sup>54</sup>, during the first systematic inventory of the Santo's sacristy noted

<sup>47</sup> As attested in a transaction wherein Caterina buys a Bulgarian slave aged twenty named Lena under perpetual bondage for 44 ducats. ASF, Diplomatico, Spoglio, vol. 14, 359r-v; cited in Lombardi, 211. Caterina in her will asks that all her slaves be freed and be provided with their clothes and a dowry of 25 ducats to marry or become nuns.

<sup>48</sup> Kohl, 1988, 59.

<sup>49</sup> “Primo fornida una pianeda de velù azuro con frixi d'oro et stola et II manipoli et amito et camixi e cordoni”, ASF, Bonifacio, 183/M, fol. 14r; Sartori, 1963, 317 offers a slightly different transcription; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 472.

<sup>50</sup> “Item mandò una pianeda de zambeloto morelo stola e manipulo e camizo amito e cordono”, ASF, Bonifacio, 183/M, fol. 14r; Sartori, 1963, 317; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 472.

<sup>51</sup> Padua, Biblioteca Antoniana (BAP), ms. 572, fol. 47r; published in Baldissin Molli, 2002b, 107; see also 62-63. There are no other corresponding chasubles in the entire inventory.

<sup>52</sup> “Item uno palio de zendalo azuro, con uno compaso in meço con lo lovo e con una frança bianca e vermiglia, per l'altaro grande”. ASF, Bonifacio, 183/M, fol. 14r; Sartori, 1963, 317; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 472. It is difficult to interpret “compaso”; could it be a Man of Sorrows?

<sup>53</sup> “Fo mandà per madona Catarina da Vinexia: primo una pianeda, de drapo d'oro vermiglio, stola e manipolo item uno aparamento da zagano con stola e manipolo item uno aparamento da suzagano con per manipulo (sic) item III camixi et III amiti et III cordoni. I diti camixi et amiti fornidi d'oro e sono portati per meser lo Guaçardo et rezemo letera da li frati como avevan rezemu i diti paramenti”, ASF, Bonifacio, 183/M, fol. 14r; Sartori, 1963, 317, offers a slightly different transcription; reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 472. See also Bourdua, 2002b, 22 n. 30; Bourdua, 2004, 102, 195 n. 72.

<sup>54</sup> See above n. 24.

above and begun in September 1396<sup>55</sup>. The majority of the Lupi chapel gifts were listed separately as being in its adjacent sacristy, but some of these vestments (all identifiable by their coat of arms) were kept in the friars' sacristy such as a full set for a deacon and sub-deacon<sup>56</sup>, and a chasuble for communal usage of green velvet decorated with gold birds and deer<sup>57</sup>. Only one item out of the fifty-two listed in the sacristy of the chapel of St. James, an "anconeta a missale", bore the coat of arms of Caterina<sup>58</sup>. It was one of three with the other two displaying the arms of Bonifacio Lupi and a wolf, respectively. Notwithstanding the difficulties of identification, there is no doubt that Caterina's family emblem made little if any visual impact in the chapel. The Lupi's rampant wolf dominated the space and the liturgy, depicted as it was on the chapel's facade, wooden lecterns, cloths for the lecterns, the missal cover, chalice, its altar frontals, the chasubles, even the hand towels of the celebrants<sup>59</sup>.

### 3. *Caterina's Testament and Tomb*

Three versions of Caterina's testament are extant: the notary's original minute on paper, and two originals on parchment; there are also entries pertaining to its execution in Bonifacio's probate notebook in the archives of the Procurators of San Marco<sup>60</sup>. The most notable discovery concerns the date of her will, initially dictated in Venice in 1403 then finally redacted over a two day period on 18 and 19 June 1405. Previously, it was thought that there was but a single will dated 19 July 1405. This may seem a minor issue but bears

<sup>55</sup> BAP, ms. 572, fols. 2r-47v; published without critical apparatus in *Archivio Sartori, 770-832*; fully edited in Baldissin Molli, 2002b, 65-108. The inventory was repeated less systematically until 1753. For the inventory taken in 1793 see Baldissin Molli, 1994, 3-33.

<sup>56</sup> "Item unum aliud paramentum completum cum dalmatica et stricta de serico azuro cum grifonibus aureis et serico viridi cum uno frixo rechamato ad figures cum armis illorum de Lupis, cum quatuor pecolis (sic), foderatum tella sanguinea", and "Item unum aliud apamentum completum cum dalmatica et stricta de serico rubeo et auro cum frixis laboratis deauro de grixolina in campo açuro, foderato tella açura cum armis illorum de Lupis et est descripta (sic) in capitulo ubi sunt scripte alie res domini Bonifacii", BAP, ms. 572, fol. 33v; as noted by Baldissin Molli, 2002, 55, 62 and 95-96.

<sup>57</sup> "Item una planeta facta ad bindas de veluto viridi et de serico laborata ad aves et cervos aureos cum uno frixo simplici de auro cum armis illorum de Lupis, foderata tela rubea", BAP, ms. 572, fol. 34v; Baldissin Molli, 2002b, 55, 97.

<sup>58</sup> "Item tres anconeta a missale, quarum una est cum arma domine Catarine, alia de pano deaurato cum armis domini Bonifacii et alia çala cum lupo", BAP, ms. 572, fol. 47r; Baldissin Molli, 2002b, 107.

<sup>59</sup> For the full list of Lupi "branded" objects acquired by 1396, see Baldissin Molli, 2002b, 106-08.

<sup>60</sup> ASVe, Notarile testamenti, notarile testamenti, b. 367, fasc. 130, six sheets unpaginated, dated 19 June 1405 on page 6, published here as the Appendix; ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment dated 19 June 1405, and Quaternus Louo; ASF, Diplomatico, Lunghi, Bonifazio, 19 July 1405.

significance for the study of her tomb fragments<sup>61</sup>. A stone inscription accompanying the effigy and once bearing the date 20 June<sup>62</sup>, but separated from its original context and truncated since at least 1965, has puzzled scholars. Some saw it as a contradiction of the testament, others believed it referred to an earlier date of execution<sup>63</sup>. A close reading of the Florentine copy of the testament reveals that the muddled date is the result of a scribal error made on the label attached to the parchment when it was inventoried during 1850-1860. The notary had scribbled “Julij” on the first line of the parchment but had crossed it out and written “Junij” immediately after. The nineteenth-century transcription error became the basis of today’s *segnatura*. The Venetian version of the testament is, however, correctly dated and inventoried as 19 June 1405, as is the notarial minute but neither has been cited until now<sup>64</sup>. An extant petition to Doge Michele Steno by Caterina’s executor, Armanino da Ciola dated 19 August 1405, confirms that she was dead by the previous 17 July<sup>65</sup>. Returning to the fragmentary tomb inscription (MCCCCV DI), its slightly larger scale and odd alignment suggest that it was added after the main text, which had been carefully centred. If early sources correctly read what followed as “20 June”, it indicates in all likelihood that Caterina died on that day, the day after her will was finalised<sup>66</sup>.

Yet, when she dictated her wishes in 1403 and asked her notary to redact her will in final form on 18 June 1405, Caterina hoped to recover and see to her tomb commission but failing that, entrusted her executors to bury her in the chapel of St. James in what can only be described as a flat tomb: “sepoltura

<sup>61</sup> Cenci (1964, 91 n. 1) first drew attention to the Florentine copy of her will, published the date 19 July, and remarked that the date inscribed on her tomb was ‘suspect’. Sartori (1966, 276), had initially thought that the tomb date must have corresponded with her death, but revised his opinion on account of this find. Every author thereafter repeats this, including Billanovich, 276 n. 72, and Lombardi, 208. When I published my brief statements on Caterina’s patronage (Bourdau, 2004, 121-23), I had not yet transcribed the Florentine copy nor discovered the Venetian versions and probate notebook.

<sup>62</sup> “MCCCCV DIE XX IUNII”, as read by Manni, 5:151, and “M.CCCC.V.DIEXX.IVNII” as read by Gonzati, 2:396. The damage was first noted by Lotz, 111.

<sup>63</sup> My reading is: “HAC DE FRANCISIS TEGITUR CATHERINA · SUB URNA / CUI NATALE SOLUM · STABIA TUSCA DEDIT / PRUDENS·IUSTA FUIT MORUM GRAVITATE VENUSTA / NORMA PUDICICIE SPLENDIDA CELA BONI / STRENUUS· INSIGNI· COIUNX BONIFACIUS ILLI / MARCHIO SORANCE STIRPE SATUSQß LUPA· MCCCCV DI [...]”. This differs slightly from Wolters, 2:230-31, and Gonzati, 2:396.

<sup>64</sup> ASVe, Notarile testamenti, b. 367, fasc. 130, six sheets unpaginated, dated 19 June 1405, and the probate documents of Bonifacio Lupi, ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment bearing the date 19 June 1405.

<sup>65</sup> ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment dated 19 August 1405.

<sup>66</sup> Full bibliography in Wolters, 1:230-31. More recently, Giovè Marchioli, 310, accepted without question that the date of the inscription corresponded to her death. Sartori, 1966, 276, observes that he had previously thought that Caterina had died on 20 June, as implied by the tomb inscription but, noting Cenci’s discovery of her will dated 20 July (sic) suggested that the date must have recorded the day on which it was put up. Lombardi, 211, adopts the same logic.



piana la quale sia fata fare per li suo chomessarii in chaso che ley non l'avesse fata fare". They could spend whatever they deemed appropriate towards its manufacture: "Anchora abia i diti commessarii plena libertade et autoritade de fare quella spesa che i parerà per fare la dita archa"<sup>67</sup>. Lastly, the slab was to be placed beneath the tomb of her husband<sup>68</sup>, or if the Paduans refused her burial, in the Frari as an alternative until the time came when her remains could be transferred to the Santo. Ten ducats were bequeathed to the Frari to ensure that the friars either buried her or moved her body by ship to Padua<sup>69</sup>.

The lack of details regarding the manufacture of Caterina's tomb in the Procurators' probate notebook and its tomb inscription – begun, interrupted, and added to – suggests her tomb was begun perhaps as early as 1403 but was unfinished by 19 June 1405 and completed by her executors (and not the Procurators of San Marco). Two were originally from Parma: Armanino da Ciola, apothecary, but a resident of Venice since childhood and a citizen from 1383<sup>70</sup>, and Peruço de Marsilij de Parma. Little is known of the third, her companion Francesca de Pavarano<sup>71</sup>, but she was perhaps related to Donnino son of the late Pietro de Pavarano, a notary from Padua who lived in Caterina's parish of San Fermo in Padua<sup>72</sup>. The first large payment received by Armanino on 19 September 1405 pertained to the restitution of Caterina's dowry, outstanding since her husband's death and only restituted after she specifically raised the matter in her will, and after Armanino appeared in front of the judges of the Procurators of San Marco and Doge Michele Steno<sup>73</sup>. The other payment recorded in the probate notebook is a sum total of expenses, 113 libre grosso, for unspecified expenses but ample enough to cover any costs

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix.

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix: "Et se chaso fosse che 'l chorpo de la dita testarisse non podesse esser translato e sepellito al dito luogo de Padoa chomo è dito, vole et ordena esser sepellito a la ghiesia di frari de madona Santa Maria d'i frari minori da Venexia... Anchora vole et ordina la dita testarixe che 'l sia dado per i suo chomessarii per anema soa e di suo passati a la congregacion de Santa Maria Mater Domino, ne la qual ella è, ducati diexe d'oro, vegnando la dita congregacion chomo i soy tegnudi a la sepoltura de la dita testarixe, over fina al luogo che ley sarà posta in nave per esse condotta a Padoa, chomo è dito, e secondo che parerà a i comessarii infrascritti". One assumes her body rested in the Frari for a while since Padua did not surrender to Venice until late November 1405.

<sup>70</sup> Armanino da Ciola, the son of Giminiano, was granted citizenship on 23 March 1383. [http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?tipo=pagina&lingua=ita&titolo=dettaglio&collocazione=SM40:32R SP1:77V&nome\\_italiano=CIOLA \(DI\) ARMANINO DEL FU GIMINIANO](http://www.civesveneciarum.net/dettaglio.php?tipo=pagina&lingua=ita&titolo=dettaglio&collocazione=SM40:32R SP1:77V&nome_italiano=CIOLA (DI) ARMANINO DEL FU GIMINIANO) (consulted 26/2/2014).

<sup>71</sup> "La discreta e savia dona madona Franzescha da Pavarano soa compagna", in Appendix.

<sup>72</sup> The notary is listed among Parma exiles known to the Lupi by Lombardi, 169. The notarial minute of 1403 listed different executors, Beriola Venier and the merchant brothers Zane and Bartolomeo Donado, substituted in 1405. See Appendix.

<sup>73</sup> The payment appears twice in the notebook in ASVe, PSM b. 176 fol. 3r and 6r, and on a loose parchment bearing this date. For the ducal intervention, see another loose parchment bearing the date 19 August 1405. For the will, see Appendix.



associated with a floor tomb<sup>74</sup>. As noted above, Caterina expressed the wish to be buried in a lowly position, as opposed to the more fashionable wall tomb in which her husband was laid. This was an act of humility common to wives<sup>75</sup>. Yet, the result was hardly simple. Enough remains to testify to high quality marbles, polychromy, and unusualness: a larger than life-size effigy exquisitely modelled in deep relief with the head, veil, wimple and hands in white marble, the body in red Verona marble (*rosso di Verona*), and the feet and belt (both lost) presumably of white marble (Fig. 1)<sup>76</sup>. Caterina's other gesture of humility was expressed in a wish to be buried wearing a Franciscan habit. This was not how she was depicted on her effigy however. It is also clear that she had not yet been received into the Third Order as attested by the proviso that her executors should purchase a habit, and spend on it whatever seemed appropriate<sup>77</sup>.

The slab with inscription retains part of its upper border with two-tone lozenges but has lost the two family coats of arms. A description of 1743, some 30 years before the tomb was moved to the cloister of the chapter house and hung on the wall<sup>78</sup>, gives a fuller impression: "on the floor of the chapel ... a *deposito* of white and red marble with the effigy of a woman donning veils as if a nun and with the coat of arms of the Lupi and Francesi with an inscription"<sup>79</sup>. Where this sizeable epigraph was placed, what was its relationship to the effigy, and how the effigy itself was oriented beneath Bonifacio Lupi's tomb is not clear. If it were oriented towards the high altar, it could have been placed against the rear chapel wall.

<sup>74</sup> ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, Quaternus Louo, fol. 6r. Although prices are hard to come by, the more elaborate tomb of Pietro di Dante cost 105 gold ducats in 1364, Biscaro, 430-31.

<sup>75</sup> A precedent for choosing to be beneath the tomb of one's husband is that of Giacobina d'Este who died nearly thirty years after her spouse Enrico Scrovegni. I am grateful to Laura Jacobus who pointed out to me the similarity.

<sup>76</sup> Wolters, 1: 230, measured the effigy as 174.5 cm x 57 cm.

<sup>77</sup> "E si vole esser sopellita chon l'abito del terzo ordine d'i frari minori, in chadauno di diti luogi che la sia sepellita. E per l'abito sovradito faza i suoy commessarii infrascritti quello achordo e spesa che a lor parerà convegnire". See Appendix.

<sup>78</sup> The decision to remove her tomb for reasons of hindrance to circulation was taken on 17 April, 1773 and permission granted on 4 August; Gonzati, 1: CXV; Sartori, 1966, 352-53; *Archivio Sartori*, 460, 464. For its numerous peregrinations around the convent prior to its current resting place, see Wolters, 1:230-31.

<sup>79</sup> "Ma tornando alla sua Cappella in Padova, nel pavimento di essa è il deposito di marmo bianco, e rosso della sua moglie soprammentovata, con figura di donna con veli in testa, simile ad una monacha, e coll' armi de' Lupi, e de' Franzesi, e coll'appresso iscrizione", in Manni, 5:150-51. The observations made forty years later (17 April 1773) also confirm that it consisted of an effigy, an inscription and coat of arms: "una pietra sepulcrale rilevata che serve d'incomodo alle persone", in Sartori, 1966, 353, reprinted in *Archivio Sartori*, 464. A year later (4 August 1774), we find "una lapide in cui rillevasi una statua d'essa famiglia, e rendosi necessario di levare il sigillo colla statua stessa", in Sartori, 1966, 353; *Archivio Sartori*, 460.



Fig. 1. Tomb slab of Caterina Lupi. Padua, Corridor leading from church of Sant' Antonio to the cloister of the Noviciate. Photograph: author.

#### 4. “Stand By Your Man”

Robert Brentano has warned us to ask carefully who was responsible for the testator’s piety, as this is often derived from such diverse parties as friends and relatives, or confessors, preachers and notaries<sup>80</sup>. When we first consider the desired location of Caterina’s burial we note first her pragmatic reasoning. Finalising her will in June 1405, prior to the submission of Padua to Venice, Caterina was aware of the problems posed by her wish to be buried in Padua in her husband’s chapel in view of the banishment of the Lupi by Francesco il Novello and had a fall back position in the church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari in Venice, another Franciscan establishment<sup>81</sup>. Notwithstanding the financial incentive to the Frari, it remains that Caterina was devoted to this community. Further bequests to the convent and the Scuola di San Francesco strengthen this<sup>82</sup>. Her attachment to the friars minor can be attributed to such factors as having had a Franciscan confessor witness her first will in 1403 (Lorenzo de Reato?) and a deep attachment to the Order. As noted in the past, the contemporary Franciscan chronicler Bartholomew of Pisa, writing in the 1390s (thus during her lifetime), reported that she had made a vow to a Paduan Poor Clare, beata Elena Enselmini, if she interceded on behalf of her husband who was at death’s door<sup>83</sup>. Enselmini’s intervention may therefore help explain part of her devotion.

Stanley Chojnacki has observed that husbands and wives could feel “companionship, loyalty, affection for one another”, and has traced a deepening of affection emerging in the fifteenth century. This could manifest itself in various ways, such as in “shared acts of piety and penance”, the appointment of a wife as executor or through terms of endearment<sup>84</sup>. Is there any evidence of such affection between the Lupi couple? Bonifacio placed a good deal of trust in his wife, naming her as one of five arbiters to determine his temporary burial ground and bequeathing the movable goods from his Paduan properties (city and countryside estate), for use towards his funeral and repatriation of his body if need be. Aside from restituting her dowry, he provided her with an annual annuity as long as she lived an honest life<sup>85</sup>. Although neither of their testaments displayed terms of endearment beyond “consorti sue” for him, and “suo marito” preceded by “signore” or “misser” for her, their shared foundation, the hospital of St. John the Baptist on via San Gallo in Florence associated them in life and beyond.

<sup>80</sup> Brentano, 3-4.

<sup>81</sup> “Elleçie quando ley passerà de questa vita che ‘l corpo so debia esser sepellito e transduto a la chiesa e luogo de frari minori di Padoa in la chapella la qual ha fato fa[r]e la bona memoria del dito misser Bonifazi[o] suo marito”, in Appendix. Paduan representatives delivered the symbols of their city to the Doge on 3 January 1406; Gloria, 1:57-58.

<sup>82</sup> “Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per i suo chomessarii sia dato di suo beni ducati diexe d’oro a la schuola de San Franzecho”, in Appendix; see above note 69.

<sup>83</sup> Cenci, 91.

<sup>84</sup> Chojnacki, 1988, 128-40; Chojnacki, 1975, 597.

<sup>85</sup> ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, Quaternus Louo, fol. 1v.

Indeed, the greater part of Caterina's fortune was ultimately to benefit the hospital and its poor, while her former parish church of San Fermo in Padua and current St. John the Baptist in Venice (San Zoane Degolato) each received a full set of vestments for the priest, "as might be found in her house," or purchased to the value of twenty ducats if need be. Both sets would be customised with the Lupi and Francesi di Staggia coat of arms<sup>86</sup>. These two gifts were not simply an act of memorialisation but were intended to benefit the couple's souls. Feeding the poor of her Venetian parish with thirty staia of grain would also play a part of her economy of salvation. When we examine her family bequests, we note that they were divided between her natal and husband's family, with property passed on to her husband's line. With no children of her own, Caterina left her house in Padua to her husband's nephew, Ugolotto Biancardo and his heirs with the proviso that Bertrando Rossi and his descendants should inherit if the line were to become extinct. Ugolotto had previously been designated heir of Bonifacio and had received his personal coat of arms<sup>87</sup>. Female members of the Rossi clan were also remembered<sup>88</sup>. Caterina bequeathed to Verde, the daughter of her brother Ranieri, the usufruct of properties in the family's native Staggia, and of Venetian *imprestiti* (forced loans). From these loans, Verde's daughters, Blancha and Isabetta, were to receive 150 ducats to marry or become nuns<sup>89</sup>.

### 5. *The Hour of Death*

Caterina's testament reveals a network of female friends and kin and a variety of strategies to ensure that she would not be deserted<sup>90</sup>. Her dresses were to be distributed to her female friends, some of whom were widows of Bonifacio's aides, and distant relatives: Liarda (Legarda) Biancardo, former

<sup>86</sup> "Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per anema de so marito e soa sia dato a la chieixia de misser San Zoane Degolato uno paramento da prevede de quelli che al tempo de la morte de la dita testarise ley se troverà aver in chasa, zoè chon planeda e chamixio e chon tuti i altri fornimenti i qual s'apertiene al dito paramento. E non se ne trovando avere el dito paramento in casa, vole et ordena la dita testarixe che se ne compre uno chon i diti fornimenti per i comessarii che sia in tuto de valore de ducati vinti d'oro e al dito paramento che se darà a la dita chieixia sia posta l'arma del egregio chavaliero misser Bonifazio Lovo, fo suo marito, acompagnata chon l'arma de la dita testarise. El qual paramento fornito chomo de sopra è dito sia dato a la sagr[e]stia de la dita chieixia per inventario per sempre may. Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per anema de so marito e soa sia dato a la chiesia de misser Sen Fermo da Padoa uno paramento da prevede fornido chomo l'altro che di sopra è dito, che sia in tuto de valore di ducati vinti d'oro. Al qual paramento sia posta l'arma de l'egregio e nobel chavaliero misser Bonifazio suo marito achompagnata chon l'arma de ley, el qual parato sia dato a la dita chieixia de San Fermo per inventario per sempre may", in Appendix.

<sup>87</sup> Kohl, 1998, 179, 185-86.

<sup>88</sup> Costanza Rossi is a case in point. See Appendix.

<sup>89</sup> We learn from the will that Verde's older daughter, Caterina, was already married. See Appendix.

<sup>90</sup> On women's testamentary practices in Venice, see Guzzetti, *passim*.

abbess of San Polo in Parma, Costanza Rossi, Orsolina widow of Baldo Bacanzani<sup>91</sup>, Agnese daughter of Master Pietro da Galichiano<sup>92</sup>, and Francesca Pavarani<sup>93</sup>. The poor women of noble birth were to receive the rest of her clothes, furs, linens, and woollens. Caterina expected her household to participate in her obsequies and dressed them in mourning black (“da charoto”)<sup>94</sup>, and new veils for the women: her niece Verde and her daughter Caterina, Agnese Galichiano, and all the males and females in her service young or old, while her companion, the wise lady Francesca, in the manner befitting her stature.

Francesca’s inheritance, however, was dependent on her remaining at Caterina’s side until death<sup>95</sup>. Studies of testamentary practices report the custom of making legacies on condition that employees were still in the service of the testator when the death occurred<sup>96</sup>. Caterina distinguished between those employees who would inherit whether they were working for her or not. Unnamed slaves, servants, and a woman simply referred to as Dina for instance, were to be freed, clothed or given money and household goods as long as they remained with her. Her long-standing factor Lariolo, his wife Margareta, his children Tiberio and Maria, on the other hand, would inherit even if not in her household<sup>97</sup>. While it may have been common to foresee the possible exit of service of employees, how typical was it to insert a clause effectively disinheriting one’s companion and executor such as Francesca Pavarani? By all appearances two days before Caterina died, when she was very ill, she asked the notary Angeleto to finalise her will drafted two years before. Seemingly no family member was present, neither her niece Verde, nor her companion Francesca. Was Caterina, widow of Bonifacio Lupi, fearful of dying alone? Although this cannot be proven, the reality of her situation is nonetheless poignant. She was a childless, elderly self-exiled widow whose larger clan resided in Tuscany.

<sup>91</sup> Baldo was also Bonifacio’s proctor (as noted by Lombardi, 211), and a Carrara official; Kohl, 1998, 151.

<sup>92</sup> “Agniese de maistro Piero da Galigana” (as per ASVe, PSM de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment dated 19 June 1405) also received 150 *lire di piccoli*, a bed and bedding. See Appendix. Her father Pietro was another Lupi ally. See Pezzana, 1:73.

<sup>93</sup> Pavarani also received 150 *lire di piccoli*, a bed and bedding. See Appendix.

<sup>94</sup> Boerio, 200.

<sup>95</sup> “Et appresso lassa a la dita madona Franzescha uno leto da chariola de la chamera de la dita testarixe et uno paro de lincoli de quelli de casa e do orieri chon do entemelle. E se ley non se troverà starie chon la dita testarixe al tempo de la morte soa non abia alchuna cosa de quello che la i lassa”. See Appendix.

<sup>96</sup> Guzzetti, 174, notes that many employers, not knowing whether employees or servants would still be in their service when they died, made legacies on condition that employees were still with them. The author does not consider the possibility that this might be in part to avoid dying alone.

<sup>97</sup> “Et per lo semele vuole che ‘l sia vestido e fato a Lariolo so fattore et a Malgarita soa moier non ostante che lor non stiano in casa de la dita testarixe”. See Appendix. On Lariolo, see Bourdua, 2002, 292-93.

## Appendix

### Will of Caterina, daughter of Antonio de Francesi di Staggia, 18-19 June 1405, Rialto, Venice.

Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Notarile testamenti, b. 367, fasc. 130, brief *fascicolo* of six unnumbered pages (the pagination has been inserted in the transcription below to facilitate comprehension of the document's structure and annotations).

Notarial minute in the hand of the notary Angeletto the son of the late Andreuccio of Venice, who on fol. 6r annotates as follows:

“Millesimo quadringentesimoquinto, indicione XIII, die decimo octavo mensis iunii, Rivoalti. Domina Catarina suprascripta infirmitate corporea pergravata sanam tamen habens mentem, rogavit me Angeletum de Venetiis quondam ser Andreucii de Bononia Venetiarum notarium de presenti suo ultimo testamento de eius mandato vulgariter scripto. Testes dominus frater Laurentius de Reate ordinis minorum, frater Gaspar de Veneciis filius Marci tintoris <the text is then annulled with a cross>”.

Addition on fol. 6v:

“MCCCCV die XVIII mensis iunii fuit de novo rogatum. Testes Iohannes Ieminiani de Parma Sancte Malgarite, Iacobus de Corozatis notarius Sanctorum Apostolorum”.

As these annotations infer, on 18 June 1405, Caterina Lupi asked the notary Angeletto to redact in definitive form (“rogavit me”) the testament “de eius mandato vulgariter scripto” which we can presume he composed two years earlier, some time in 1403 as the opening lines of the text edited here demonstrate. This redaction took place the following day in two different moments.

Both originals are extant: see, respectively, Archivio di Stato, Florence, Diplomatico, Lunghe, Bonifazio, dated 19 June 1405, and Archivio di Stato, Venice, Procuratori di San Marco de Ultra, b. 176, loose parchment dated 19 June 1405. Both originals are however in a poor state of conservation, with widespread damage to the script, in the upper and middle areas of the Florentine parchment, and with serious damage to the left hand side of the parchment with loss of text in the Venetian original. It seemed therefore appropriate to publish the notarial minute redacted by Angeletto; its content is transferred faithfully to the originals, certifying its authenticity, and a sample check also confirms that the variations in the text are minimal. In the vernacular text, in the initial protocol the two originals in ASVe and ASF record in latin the place and calendar date, the text of the arenga (“cum vite sue terminum unusquisque prorsus ignoret, e nil certius habeamus...”, etc.) and mention the notary Angeletto da Venezia tasked with completing (“comple”) the document “cum suis solemnitatibus iuxta mores Venetiarum usitatis et opportunis”. In the eschatocol, just before the notaries' signatures, we find the ritual formula by which the testatrix confers on her executors the “plenissima virtus et potestas” to act legally with respect to the execution of the will, and declares that the document constitutes her final wishes, thereby annulling any previous testament.

Testamentum domine Catarine Lovo.

[1r] Al nome de la santa et individua Trinità, Padre, Fiolo e Spirito santo, in l'anno de la \*\*\*<sup>1</sup> del nostro signor misser Iesu Christo mille quatrocento tre, indicione duodecima \*\*\*<sup>2</sup>, a dì \*\*\*<sup>3</sup> del mese de \*\*\* in Vinexia<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Blank space of circa six characters.

<sup>2</sup> Blank space of circa six characters.

<sup>3</sup> Blank space of circa six characters.

<sup>4</sup> The text is cancelled by means of small crosses from In l'anno up to Vinexia.



Perché alchun non è che sapia el termene de la vita soa et alchuna cosa non abiamo pluy zerto cha la morte, per<sup>5</sup> tanto chadaun se dé guardare che de sprovezudamente luy non passe de questa vita, sì che i beni suo non romagna desordenadi. Per la quale chosa la spetabele egregia e vertuosa dona madona Chatarina fiola che fo del nobel homo et egregio Antonio d'i Françesi da Staza del contado de Firence e mo' relitta del spetabelle et egregio chavaliero misser Bonifacio d'i Lovi da Parma, marchese de Soragna, siando ley<sup>6</sup> agrevada de infirmitade corporale ma ampyo siando sana<sup>7</sup> de la mente et abiando bon et intiegro conseio per la gracia de l'altissimo Creatore, damente che ley volesse di suo beni fare plena dispozione açò che renduto per ley el suo spirito a l'altissimo Creatore de quelli beni non possa adevenire alchuna lite, molestia over errore, fezie et ordenò el suo testamento in questo modo, zoè:

In prima rechomandando l'anema soa a l'altissimo Creatore e a la gloriosa verzene madre Madona santa Maria e a tuta la chorte del ziolo. Elleçie quando ley passerà de questa vita che 'l corpo so debia esser sepellito e transduto a la chiesa e luogo di frari minori da Padoa in la chapella la qual ha fato fa[r]e la bona memoria del dito misser Bonifazi[o] suo marito. E si vole el so chorporo esser sepellito soto la sepoltura del dito so marito in una sepoltura piana, la quale sia fata fare per li suo chomessarii in chaso che ley non l'avesse fata fare. Et<sup>8</sup> se chaso fosse che 'l chorporo de la dita testarisse non possede esser translato e sepellito al dito luogo de Padoa chomo è dito, vole et ordena esser sepellito a la ghiesia di frari de madona Santa Maria d'i frari minori da Venexia. E si vole esser sopellita chon l'abito del terço ordine d'i frari minori, in chadauno di diti luogi che la sia sepellita. E per l'abito sovradito faza i<sup>9</sup> suoy commessarii infrascritti quello //[[1v]] achordo e spesa che a lor parerà convegner. Anchora abia i diti<sup>10</sup> commessarii plena libertade et autoritade de fare quella spesa che i parerà per fare la dita archa o a Padoa o a Venexia o che sarà sepellito el suo<sup>11</sup> chorporo. E per lo simele dé fare quella spesa che a lor parerà e piaserà per i ossequii e per la soa sepoltura.

E vole et ordena la dita testarise che 'l sia pagato e satisfato tuti chi da ley dovesse avere, sença alchun litigio e contradicione.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che 'l sia dato per i suo chomessarii per anema soa e di suo passati a la congregacion de Santa Maria Mater Domino, ne la qual ella è, ducati diexe d'oro, vegnando la dita congregacion chomo i soy tegnudi a la sepoltura de la dita testarise, over fina al luogo che ley sarà posta in nave per esser conduta a Padoa, chomo è dito, e secondo che parerà a i comessarii infrascritti.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che per i suo chomessarii sia dato di suo beni ducati diexe d'oro a la schuola de San Franzecho e a la schuola del Chorporo de Christo in le qual ella è, zoè ducati çinque per chadauna, per anema soa.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che per anema de so marito e<sup>12</sup> soa sia dato a la chiezia de misser San Zoane Degolado uno paramento da prevede de quelli che<sup>13</sup> al tempo de la morte de la dita testarise ley se troverà aver in chasa, zoè chon planeda e chamixio e chon tuti i altri fornimenti i qual s'apertiene al dito paramento. E non se ne trovando avere el dito paramento in casa, vole et ordena la dita testarise che se ne compre uno chon i diti fornimenti per i comessarii che sia in tuto de valore de ducati vinti d'oro e al dito paramento che se darà a la dita chiezia sia posta l'arma del egregio chavaliero misser Bonifazio Lovo, fo suo marito, acompagnata chon l'arma de la dita testarise. El qual paramento fornito chomo de sopra è dito //[[2r]] sia dato a la sagr[e]stia de la dita chiezia per inventario per sempre may.

<sup>5</sup> Followed by chadaun struck through.

<sup>6</sup> agrevada up to ampyo siando added in the margin.

<sup>7</sup> Followed by del chorporo struck through.

<sup>8</sup> Followed by po, struck through.

<sup>9</sup> Followed by d added but cancelled.

<sup>10</sup> Followed by mey struck through.

<sup>11</sup> Corrected over mio.

<sup>12</sup> de so marito e inserted above the line.

<sup>13</sup> Followed by a que struck through.



Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per anema de so marito e soa sia dato a la chiesa de misser Sen Fermo da Padoa uno paramento da prevede fornido chomo l'altro che de sopra è dito, che sia in tuto de valore di ducati vinti d'oro. Al qual paramento sia posta l'arma de l'egregio e nobel chavaliero misser Bonifazio suo marito achompagnata chon l'arma de ley, el qual parato sia dato a la dita chiezia de San Fermo per inventario per sempre may.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che 'l sia dato e distribuito per anema soa tra i poveri [d]e la contrada de San Zoane Degolado stara tren[t]a del formento che ley se troverà aver in casa, del qual ne sia fato farina a spese de la so chomessaria. La qual farina sia distribuyta chomo è dito. E se chaso fosse che 'l non fosse tanta quantità de formento in casa de la dita testarise vuole et ordena che ne sia comprato tanto che sia una fiata la dita summa de stara . xxx . per la chaxione sovradita.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per anema soa sia fate celebrare al luogo de madona<sup>14</sup> Santa Maria d'i frari minori messe . C ., de le qual sia dite quelle che se porà avanti la soa sepoltura e l'avanzo de le dite messe sia fate dire al pluy presto che se porà e per far celebrare le dite messe e per zera a quelle sia dato per i comessarii ducati tre d'oro.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che per anema soa sia fato celebrare le messe de san Griguol al pluy presto che se porà, per uno bon religioso al qual sia dato per celebrare quelle e per zera ducati do d'oro.

//[[2v] Anchora lass[a] la dita testarise a Marchior fiolo de Nicholò Guiçardo libre cento de pizoli, veramente se 'l se atrovasse per i libri de<sup>15</sup> la dita testarisse e se ley<sup>16</sup> avesse dato le dite £ cento o parte alchuna de denari<sup>17</sup> avanti la morte soa al dito Marchior vole et ordena che tanto sia defalchato del dito legato e dato meno al dito Marchior quanto avesse avuto da ley.

Anchora lassa la dita testarise a Albertino fiolo che fo del Toresano da Padoa £ cento de pizoli per lo muodo e chondizione se contiene de Marchior soprascrito.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che trovandosse la Dina che sta in chasa chon ella stare chommeso ley al tempo de la morte s[o]a, che a quella Dina sia dato di beni de essa testarise £ çinquanta de pizoli et uno leto da chariola et una coltra et uno paro de linzoli da cariola de quelli de casa soa<sup>18</sup>.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che la discreta e savia dona madona<sup>19</sup> Franzescha da Pavarano soa compagna abia et aver diebia una de le soe robe de quelle che a quel tempo se troverà aver la dita testarixe. Et oltre de çò vuole la dita testarixe che la dita madona Franzesca sia vestida secondo la soa qualitate, chon i altra de casa i qual sarano vestidi per lo ossequio. Et appresso lassa a la dita madona Franzescha £ cento çinquanta<sup>20</sup> de pizoli. Et anchor lassa a la dita madona Franze<s>cha uno leto da chariola de la chamera de la dita testarixe et uno paro de linçoli de quelli de casa e do orieri chon do entemelle. E se ley non se troverà starie chon la dita testarixe al tempo de la morte soa non abia alchuna cosa de quello che la i lassa<sup>21</sup>.

Anchora vuole et ordena la dita testarixe che tuti i altri suo drapi de lana et de lino e pelize e pignolad<i> et altri panni de ogni raxion che apertegnisse al dosso de la dita testarixe tuti siano dadi e distribuydi per i suoi chomessarii tra povere zentil donne, secondo la discrecion di diti suo chomessarii<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Followed by Maria struck through.

<sup>15</sup> i libri de inserted above the line.

<sup>16</sup> e se ley inserted above the line.

<sup>17</sup> Followed by che struck through.

<sup>18</sup> Followed, in the same ink, by reference mark consisting of four circles arranged as a cross and intersecting diagonally with another four small circles, directing the reader to the first paragraph of fol. 3r.

<sup>19</sup> Preceded by another madona struck through.

<sup>20</sup> Inserted above the line.

<sup>21</sup> Reference mark in the form of a grid with 9 boxes containing a dot in the first, third, fifth, and ninth box, directing the reader to the paragraph added in the margin of fol. 5v.

<sup>22</sup> Reference mark, in the same ink, in the form of an asterisk with a circle on each side, directing the reader to the first paragraph of fol. 4.

Nota che questi II lassi die esser scriti driedo lo lasso de madona Orsolina a questo segno<sup>23</sup>.

//[[3r]<sup>24</sup> Anchora la hereditade la qual la dita testarise ave da Guielmo de Girardo di Guarini che fo abitadore de la tera de Chortesele d'i marchesi da Varan, la quale heredità spetava a luy e de la dita hereditade ella si hae publico instrumento de vendeda e de donacione dal dito Guilielmo, le quale cose et heredità si sono in Padoana e de questa heredità ella si ne hae publico instrumento, zoè de una casa e de dinari per la quale heredità a ley è stato et è detenuto le possession de padoana, le qual la bona memoria del fo signore e marito misser Bonifazio Lovo marchese de Soragna lassò a ley in vita soa, e driedo la so morte a lo spedale<sup>25</sup> de Santo Zovani Batista de via San Gallo de Firenze. E per tanto vole et ordena la dita testarisse che le dite possessione liberamente sia date a lo spedal sovrascrito per quello modo e condicione ha lassato lo soprascrito so signore e marito, chon tute quelle raxione che hae la dita testarise in le dite possessione, fazando memoria che choloro<sup>26</sup> che le hano et occupano non le ha avute per zusto presio. Et per lo simelle una chasa che è in Padoa e ducati centosesanta d'oro, de le qual chosse ne hae carte che spetano a la dita heredità, vole et ordena la dita testarise che pervegna e pervegnir debia al dito hospedale chon tute quelle raxione che hae la dita testarise.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che lo uso e la habitacion de una soa chasa posta in Padoa in la contrada de San Fermo, a la quale è choerencia da una parte i heredi de maistro Chonstantino merzaro over misser Nicholò da Trento e a le altre tre le vie comune, sia et essere debia perpetualmente de lo egregio chavaliero misser Ugoloto Bianchardo e di suo heredi. E in chaso che 'l dito misser Ugoloto e tuti i suoy heredi manchasse, vole la dita testarise che la dita casa chon tute le suo raxione e iurisdicione pervegna e pervegnire debia in li fioli che fo de lo egregio chavaliero misser Bertrando d'i Rossi da Parma e in so heredi, de la quale casa la dita testarise ne ha charta e piena raxione.

//[[3v] Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che ogni raxione che ley ha in le possessione e chase [d]a stazia secondo el tenore de una sentencia fata e data per misser Franzesco Ranucii da Firença, la qual sentencia è ne le mane de quelli<sup>27</sup> de l'arte de Chalamala da Firenze e de le quale possession la dita testarise ha zerte charte in casa, debia spetare a<sup>28</sup> madona Verde<sup>29</sup> neza de la dita testarise e moiere de Girardo da Chuna, si che ley habia de le dite ogni usufruto fina che ley viverà. E dopo la so morte vole la dita testarise che pervenga in li diti poveri infermi del dito hospedale da Firenze.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che per anema soa sia dato a la dita madona Verde soa neza per i suoy chomessarii in tuto quello tempo che la dita madona Verde viverà el pro de ducati cinquecento de gli impresti de la dita t[e]starise e manchando la dita madona Verde vole et ordena la dita testarise che 'l dito pro<sup>30</sup> di diti ducati zinquecento de impresti sia dato per gli suoy chomessarii a i retori de l'arte de chalamala da Firenza, i qual sia tegnudi de dare a li poveri infermi del sovrascrito hospedale de San Zoane Batista da Firenze, over al dito hospedale chomo meio parerà a i retori sovraditi per ben e utelle del dito hospedale e d'i poveri sovraditi.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che al tempo de la morte soa el sia fato una vesta da choroto di beni de la dita testarise a la dita madona Verde soa neça et un'altra a Chatarina fiola

<sup>23</sup> Annotation in the margin, followed by a cross reference to the end of fol. 4r in the shape of a circle with a cross.

<sup>24</sup> Cross reference mark located in the margin next to the first paragraph directing the reader to the third paragraph of fol. 2v.

<sup>25</sup> Cross reference mark in the form of an elongated letter s which directs the reader to the paragraph below to be inserted from de Santo up to Gallo.

<sup>26</sup> che choloro inserted above the line.

<sup>27</sup> Preceded by another de quelli struck through.

<sup>28</sup> Followed by la dita but struck through.

<sup>29</sup> Cross reference mark, in the same ink, in the form of a circle with a dot with two rays below which directs the reader to the note added at the end of the paragraph from neza to Chuna.

<sup>30</sup> Followed by Si but struck through.

de la dita madona [Ver]de, la quale al presente è maridada, et apresso sia dato uno vello nuovo a chadauna d'esse.

Anchora vole, ordena e lassa la dita testarixe a Blanca e Isabeta fiole de la dita madona Verde ducati çentoçinquanta d'i suo imprestedi per chadauna de quelle per so maridar o monegar<sup>31</sup>. E se alchuna d'esse over se tute do morisse avanti che le fosse maridade over monegade vole la dita testarise (...)<sup>32</sup>.

//[[4r] Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che subito driedo la morte soa el sia deputado a nome de Blanca e de Isabetta fiole de la dita madona V[e]rde zoè per chadauna de quelle per so maridar over monegar ducati centro e zinquanta de imprestedi de la dita testarixe e che 'l pro crexia sovra el cavedale per la dita chaxione. E siage dato sì el chavedale chomo el pro quando<sup>33</sup> quelle, over alchuna d'esse, serà maridade over monegade. E se alchuna d'esse over tute do morisse avanti el so maridar over monegar, vole la dita testarixe che 'l pro de quella over de quelle che chussì morirà chomo è ditto e per lo simel el pro che de tempo in tempo se averà d'i diti imprestedi sia dato perpetualmente per i suo chomessarii a i ditti retori de l'arte de Chalamala, i qual lor debia dare e distribuyre a lo spedal sopradito de San Zoane Batista da Firenze.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che in chaso che Lariolo suo fattore se trovi stare a salario de la dita testarixe al tempo de la morte soa<sup>34</sup>, che d'i suo beni gli sia dato al dito Lariolo e so moiere Malgarina e fioli infrascritti chomo de soto se dirà, zoè: al dito Lariolo e Malgarina £ duxento de pizoli; a Tiberio fiolo del dito Lariolo uno letto da chariola, una choltra e uno paro de lanzoli e do orieri<sup>35</sup> de quelli de casa de la dita testarixe; a Maria fiola del dito Lariolo uno leto da chariola, una choltra e uno paro de lenzoli e do orieri de quelli de casa de la dita testarixe.

Anchora lassa la dita testarixe a la nobel dona madona Chostança d'i Rossi una de le suo robe de le quale<sup>36</sup> a quel tempo se troverà aver la dita testarixe.

Anchora lassa la dita testarixe a la nobel dona madona Orsolina relita de misser Baldo Bachençan una de quelle robe che la dita testarixe se troverà aver a la morte soa.<sup>37</sup>

//[[4v]<sup>38</sup> Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che tute quelle schiave over serve le qual [a] quel tempo sarà in casa soa sia et esser diebia libere e franche da ogni legame de servitudine e siano franchade e dadoge charta de franchisia per i comessarii de la dita testarixe. Et apresso lassa a le dite schiave over serve tuti i suo panni da so dosso de lana e de lino, nuovi e vechi, e boni e rey, che a quel tempo elle se troverano avere. Et anchor lassa a le dite per so maridar over monegar ducati vintiçinque d'oro per cadauna, siando in ellecion de quelle el tempo del so maridar over monegar.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarise che tuti maschi e femene, pizoli e grandi, de che condicion se sia che se troverà habitar chon salario e senza salario ch[o]n la dita testarixe al tempo de la morte soa in casa soa, sia et esser debia vestidi da choroto per lo ossequio secondo la qualitate e condicion de quelli e de quelle, chomo parerà a i suo chomessarii e secondo la lor discrecion.

Anchora che tute le dite femene la qual serà in casa abia et aver diebia uno vello nuovo per zasch[a]duna.

Et per lo semele vuole che 'l sia vestido e<sup>39</sup> fato a Lariolo so fattore et a Malgarita soa moier non ostante che lor non stiano in casa de la dita testarixe.

<sup>31</sup> o monegar *inserted above the line.*

<sup>32</sup> *The paragraph has been left incomplete and cancelled by small crosses, in the same ink.*

<sup>33</sup> *Preceded by another quando struck through.*

<sup>34</sup> *Inserted between the lines.*

<sup>35</sup> E do orieri *inserted at the end of the line with a cross to indicate where to integrate.*

<sup>36</sup> al *inserted but struck through.*

<sup>37</sup> *On the line below in the centre of the page there follows the reference mark in the shape of a circle with a cross directing the reader to the previous reference to the addition on the margin of fol. 2v.*

<sup>38</sup> *In the margin next to the first line the reference mark in the shape of asterisk with a circle on each side, in lighter ink, directing the reader to the previous reference at the end of fol. 2v.*

<sup>39</sup> vestido e *inserted above the line.*

E per lo simele Marchior fiolo che fo de Nicolò Guicardo diebia esser vestito e fato non ostante che ello non stia in casa chon la dita testarixe.

Et açò se possa mandare ad execucione i legati sovrascritti, vuole et ordena la dita testarixe che l se diebia schuoder ducati . V<sup>c</sup>. d'oro, i quali ley dié avere per la soa dote da la chomessaria de la bona memoria de misser Bonifacio Lovo suo marito de la quale ley non è anchor pagata. Et ha la charta de la dita dote in casa e de ciò ne fa anche mencione el testamento de la bona memoria del dito misser Bonifacio Lovo.

Et perché la fameia de la dita testarixe abia tempo de poder trovare //[[5r] stancia, vole la dita testarixe che la dita fameia habia le spese del viver de bocha di beni de la so chomessaria per lo tempo de . V . mesi in la casa in la quale ley se troverà abitare, de la quale per quel tempo sia pagato el fito di beni de la comessaria de la dita testarixe<sup>40</sup>.

Anchora vole et ordena la dita testarixe che lo resto de suo impremedi che son tuti zercha ducati II<sup>m</sup>CCLXIII grossi XXI pizoli XXII may non se possa vender, alienar, obligar né impignar né in altri translar, ma sempre stia fermi. E chussi sia scritto a la camera de li impremedi. El pro del dito resto di diti impremedi vole et ordena che in perpetuo pervegna e pervegnir debia a lo spedale de San Zoane Batista de via Santo Gallo sopradit[o] el qual hospedale fese far la bona memori[a] del so signore e marito misser Bonifacio Lovo. E diebia pervegnire al dito hospedale in questo modo, zoè che quelli de l'arte de Chalamala i debia rezever e distribuire in questo modo: che ducati trenta i debia dare per salario di medesi che medegerà i poveri infermi del dito hospedale e ducati XVI diebia dare per salario de uno capelano el qual ogni di zelebra messa a la [ca]pella nuova fata al dito hospedale.

Anchora vuole et ordena e lassa la dita testarixe<sup>41</sup> tuto el residuo over resto di suo beni sì mobelli chomo stabelli, desordenadi e chaduchi e ch[e a] desordenado e chaducho podesse adevegnire, a i retori de l'arte de Chalamala de Firenza chomo a<sup>42</sup> patroni de lo spedal de San Zoane Batista da Firença in via Santo Gallo<sup>43</sup>, e quelli per nome del dito hospedale<sup>44</sup> instituisse suoy universali heredi chon questa condicione, che i diti retori de l'arte de Chalamala e padroni de lo spedale sovrascritti et heriedi de la dita testarixe mettano e meter debiano tuti i diti beni che a le lor man pervegnano ad utilidade del dito hospedale dove a lor meio parerà e de pluy utilità per lo dito hospedale, e questo etiamdio per soplire se bisogno serà al salario di medesi e del capellano se alcuna chose manchasse.

//[[5v] Et executori de questo suo testamento e suo fedel comessarii lassa et ordena la dita testarixe<sup>45</sup> ser Peruço de Marsili da Parma e ser Armanin da Ziola spicier e la sopradita dona Franzescha da Pavaran chon questa condicion che<sup>46</sup> manchando i diti ser [Pe]ruzo e ser Armanin vole la dita testarixe<sup>47</sup> driedo da lor i signor procolatori de san Marcho sovra le chomessarie constituydi<sup>48</sup>, romagna in so luogo a di semble chon la dita dona Franzescha. I qual commessarii che per lo dito muodo serà<sup>49</sup> debia e possa driedo la morte de la dita testarixe intrometer et aministrar la soa comessaria e mandar ad execucion tuti i lassi<sup>50</sup> et ordeni sopraditi.

<sup>40</sup> Followed by a reference mark in the shape of two oblique parallel lines intersected by a third line with dots at the ends, in lighter ink, directing the reader to a located in the margin of fol. 5v.

<sup>41</sup> og inserted but struck through.

<sup>42</sup> chomo a inserted above the line.

<sup>43</sup> chon ques inserted but struck through.

<sup>44</sup> From per to hospedale inserted above the line.

<sup>45</sup> Followed by a reference mark in the shape of an inverted V cut at the point to be inserted from ser Peruço to da lor. Within the paragraph a passage now struck through read: la de nobel dona madona Beriola Venier e i nobelli homeni misser Zane e misser Bortolonio Donado fradelli e manchando lor.

<sup>46</sup> da Pavaran inserted above the line, in lighter ink, but in the same hand. Also above the line the body of the text continues in the same ink up to che.

<sup>47</sup> la dita testarixe inserted above the line.

<sup>48</sup> The section from romagna to Franzescha is here inserted in accordance with a reference inserted in the form of an inverted V with a small circle with a dot at the top located under the paragraph itself.

Anchora vuole et ordena la dita testarise che la nobel dona madona Liarda di Bianchardi fiola che fo de Antonio Bianchardi che fo abadessa de San Polo da Parma sia dato<sup>51</sup> una de le sue<sup>52</sup> robe [d]e le pluy belle che la se<sup>53</sup> troverà avere a la morte sua<sup>54</sup>.

Anchora<sup>55</sup> lassa la dita testarise ad Agniexe de maistro [Pi]ero da Galigane £ çinquanta de pizoli et una roba de quelle che la dita testarise se troverà avere in casa al tempo de la morte soy. Et apresso che la sia vestita da ossequio e siage dato uno vello nuovo chomo a le altre de casa. Et apresso i sia dato uno leto de quelli de casa de la dita testarixe, fornito de cavazali, orieri e choltra e lenzoli de quelli de casa de la dita testarixe.

Ancora lassa la dita testarise<sup>56</sup> a ser Anzoletto nodaro sottoscritto<sup>57</sup> per suo faticha de ogni testamento che luy convengniré trare sì a i mie chomessarii, chomo a i procuratori, chomo a i heredi, ducati otto d'oro per cadauno. E questo in presencia de li testimonii infrascritti<sup>58</sup>.

Nota che questi II legati dié esser die esser scriti driedo lo lasso de madona Francescha a<sup>59</sup> questo segno<sup>60</sup>.

Nota che questo legato dié esser scritto driedo lo ordenamento de la fameia a questo segno<sup>61</sup>.

//[6r]<sup>62</sup> Anchora vuole et ordena la dita testarise che ò sia remesso a chadauno de i diti legatarii, sì maschii chiamo femene, tuto quello che lor ge fosse o podesse esser tegnudi per alchun muodo<sup>63</sup>.

Millesimo quadrigentesimo quinto, indicione XIII, die decimo octavo mensis iunii, Rivoalti. Domina Catarina suprascrita infirmitate corporea pergravata, sana tamen habens mentem, rogavit me Angeletum de Venetiis quondam ser Andreucii de Bononia Venetiarum notarium de presenti suo ultimo testamento de eius mandato vulgariter scripto.

Testes dominus frater Laurencius de Reate ordinis minorum, frater Gaspar de Veneciis filius Marci tinctoris<sup>64</sup>.

//[6v] MCCCCV die XVIII mensis iunii fuit de novo rogatum.

Testes Iohannes Ieminiani de Parma sancte Malgarite, Iacob de Corozatis notarius Sanctorum Apostolorum.

Testamentum domine Catarine Lovo.

<sup>49</sup> From che to serà inserted above the line.

<sup>50</sup> sovraditi inserted but struck through.

<sup>51</sup> sia dato inserted above the line.

<sup>52</sup> Corrected over mie.

<sup>53</sup> la se corrected above the line over io me struck through.

<sup>54</sup> Corrected over mia.

<sup>55</sup> This paragraph corrects the beginning of a preceding one which read: Ancora lassa dita testarise a Franzescha.

<sup>56</sup> la dita testarise inserted above the line in lighter ink in the same hand.

<sup>57</sup> nodaro sottoscritto inserted above the line in lighter ink in the same hand.

<sup>58</sup> Followed by a reference mark in the shape of a cross with dots within its spaces directing the reader to the first paragraph of the following page, fol. 6r.

<sup>59</sup> Above the line.

<sup>60</sup> Written in the margin next to the third and fourth clauses of fol. 5v and followed by a reference mark in the shape of a grid with dots, in lighter ink, which directs the reader to that located on fol. 2v.

<sup>61</sup> Written in the margin, in lighter ink, next to the paragraph which refers to the payment for the copies of the testament, with reference to the mark of two oblique parallel lines intersected by a third line with dots at the ends located on fol. 5r.

<sup>62</sup> In the margin next to the first line a reference mark in the shape of a cross with dots within its spaces which directs the reader to that located on fol. 5v.

<sup>63</sup> There follows a space of about half the length of the folio for the addition of the date, but this is now cancelled.

<sup>64</sup> The entire section from Millesimo to a tinctoris is cancelled by means of a large cross.

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#### Abstract

The chapel of St. James in the Santo, Padua is still commonly described as that of Bonifacio Lupi, a condottiere who participated in all the major political and military adventures of north and central Italy during the second half of the fourteenth century. As is often the case, however, the initial foundation was a more complex affair, which owed much to the relationship between the Lupi and their relations on Bonifacio's mother's side, the Rossi family. The chapel's refurbishment and fresco decoration serves as an excellent example of collaboration between a number of parties, including Caterina di Staggia, wife of Bonifacio. This essay spans thirty years and focuses on Caterina's artistic patronage, first as the spouse of Bonifacio and later as his widow, until her own death in Venice in 1405. A detailed analysis of her gifts in life as in death suggests that despite her self-imposed exile to Venice, Caterina remained true to her adopted city of Padua. Moreover, even after Bonifacio's death, Caterina commissioned furnishings on his behalf. This exemplifies a traditional wish to honour her deceased spouse's memory and provide for his soul, and yet reiterates her independence as a self-standing patron.

#### Keywords

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; art; Caterina Lupi; patronage; wills; sources

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# Altichiero in the Fifteenth Century

by John Richards

## 1. Introduction

The complex polarities of fame and infamy, fame and death, contemporary reputation and posthumous glory occupied a central place in early Renaissance thought, above all in that of Petrarch (1304-1374)<sup>1</sup>. Not the least of his contributions to Renaissance culture was his extension of these polarities to the lives of artists. The main thrust of his piecemeal eulogy of Giotto (1266/1267-1337), pronounced in various contexts, was that the painter's reputation was founded on demonstrable substance, therefore deserving to survive. Dante (c. 1265-1321) famously chose to illustrate the shifting nature of celebrity by means of Giotto's eclipse of Cimabue (c. 1240-1302) but without commenting on the justice or injustice of the transference of fame involved<sup>2</sup>. Petrarch's concerns were rather different. No less keen than Dante to underline the ephemerality of renown, he was careful to contrast with it something that emerged as a central theme of his vision of history: a concept of true Fame, deserved Fame, the *Gloria* which triumphs over Death. The eclipse of contemporary repute was to be expected; "it happens daily and as a common

<sup>1</sup> When Ben Kohl gave what he described at the time as his first ever art history lecture it was mainly about Altichiero. This was at the Association of Art Historians' Conference in Edinburgh in 1984. Robin Simon (convenor and a co-contributor to this volume), Ben, Robert Gibbs, Evelyn Silber and I presented papers, mostly on trecento painting in the Veneto. Though this was many years before his great book on Padua appeared, Ben had already achieved legendary status as the man who had read the whole Paduan archive. This was knowledge he was always happy to share. He allowed me to read drafts of *Padua under the Carrara* in advance of publication and readily shared his thoughts on various matters whenever prompted. I recently found myself giving a paper in the very room in which our AAH session had taken place, some twenty-seven years previously, and I was reminded of Ben's extraordinary scholarship and of the void he has left behind. Not very long before he died he had agreed to contribute to a volume of Petrarch studies which I and others were planning. The association of his name with this project added immensely to its prestige. That the book will not now appear as planned is perhaps appropriate, and this paper, of which a version was published in the *RIHA Journal*, 20 August, 2013, must serve in its place as my tribute.

<sup>2</sup> *Purgatorio*, XI, 94-96.

thing that many who were famous and prominent in their lifetime become unknown and obscure after they have died. Does this surprise you?”<sup>3</sup>.

Against this, Petrarch offsets the prospect of future renown where it is deserved. That this proven fame is to be expected only after death, and perhaps long after, is of a piece with most of the rather chilly consolations offered by the *De remediis utriusque fortunae* (1353-1361): “true Glory only exists for those who are no longer present”<sup>4</sup>. Petrarch further, and remarkably, allows a concern with Fame as a mark of artistic distinction: “If anyone says that craftsmen are not seeking fame but money, I would probably have to agree as far as the common sort is concerned. But I deny it regarding the very best craftsmen”<sup>5</sup>.

Fluctuating renown is demonstrated nowhere better than in the case of Altichiero (*fl.* c. 1360-1393), an artist with whom Petrarch is likely to have had personal contact, who is associated more than any other with the contemporary translation of Petrarch’s literary output into visual form, and in whose work after Petrarch’s death the poet’s own reputation and likeness were preserved for posterity<sup>6</sup>. When scholars like Förster and Schubring began to write about Altichiero in the nineteenth century they were to a considerable extent raising him from the dead. There was in their time no consensual critical tradition which recognised Altichiero’s stature. His name had survived in the wider domain as no more than an appendix to Vasari’s life of Carpaccio. It was only in the second half of the twentieth century that the painter’s reputation came into focus again, allowing him to enjoy the *rivincita* attributed to him by Giuseppe Fiocco<sup>7</sup>. The rather unsettled, fragmentary and distracted nature of this renewed critical attention, even when it did appear, may be seen as a consequence of the lost centuries of regard.

It is the chief purpose of this discussion to demonstrate that the loss of a tradition of Altichiero’s significance happened not immediately after his death (by April 1393), as is generally the fate of the undeserving in Petrarch’s definition, but more gradually, and that he remained a living force in the Quattrocento, not at all to be despised as a model. This excludes discussion of Altichiero’s presumed pupils and the considerable number of *Altichiereschi* and semi-*Altichiereschi* whose work still graces the churches of the Veneto and beyond. Much of this work is pretty good, and painters like Martino and Jacopo da Verona are well worth the kind of extended discussion they have never yet received, but their connections with Altichiero tell us little about the extension of his reputation and influence beyond the circles of his pupils, which I take both to have been<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Petrarch 1:313.

<sup>4</sup> Petrarch 3:204-05.

<sup>5</sup> Petrarch 3:204.

<sup>6</sup> Richards, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Fiocco, 284-85, notes some key figures of the Altichiero revival.

<sup>8</sup> Aliberti Gaudioso offers a well illustrated survey. Sandberg Valalà, 190-321, made the first serious attempt to catalogue Altichiero’s Veronese followers and influence.

## 2. Marin Sanudo and Flavio Biondo

It is clear that, locally at least, the frescoes Altichiero painted in the newly built *Sala Grande* of Cansignorio della Scala's (1340-1375) palace in Verona in the 1360s were still thought of as something worth seeing throughout the Quattrocento. The evidence of two documents of 1427 and 1431, both referring to a "sala magna depicta"<sup>9</sup>, is fleshed out in stanza 135 of the *Fioretto* of Francesco Corna (1477), which indicates their exceptional quality: "et è sì ricca d'oro de pinture con le figure tante naturale, che tutta Italia non ha un'altra tale"; and identifies the subject matter: "le istorie di Tito Vespisiano"<sup>10</sup>. Marin Sanudo's *Itinerarium... cum syndicis terre firme* of 1483 establishes the location of "la salla pynta", that it was "excelente", and by use of the definite article that it stood out amongst the many painted rooms in the sprawling Scaligeri palace complex, seat of the Venetian Podestà in Sanudo's time<sup>11</sup>.

Sanudo (1466-1536) offers no attribution, but in a later paragraph he names Altichiero and Pisanello (c. 1395-1455) as the two leading painters of Verona. The significance of these references emerges from their particular context. The *Itinerarium* is a book describing a journey through sixty centres of population on the Venetian mainland, running to some 140 pages of text in the Paduan printed edition of 1847. In the course of this, Sanudo mentions only one other artist (Donatello) and only three other examples of figurative art, all large-scale fresco decorations, one of which is the *Sala virorum illustrium* in Padua, also in part attributable to Altichiero<sup>12</sup>.

His reference to the *Sala Grande* suggests a first-hand experience of the hall and its approaches:

À do piazze, una sopra la cui è la fontana bellissima nominata Madonna Verona; et li se fa el mercado de marti, zuoba e venere, e nel giorno di San Zuanne Batista si giostra ivi; l'altra dove è i palazi, dil Podestà, magnifico, con la salla pynta excelente; l'altro dil Capit[ano], et ivi in corte sta il Camerlengo. Apresso è una chiesulla antiqua de S.[ta] Maria, unde è le arche de li Signori de la Scalla, tre, alte, marmoree et intalgiate<sup>13</sup>.

This is a walk made by countless tourists today, from the Piazza Erbe to the Scaligeri cemetery of Santa Maria Antica. Only access to the former Podestà's residence is presently more difficult. The *Sala Grande*, the main public space of Cangrande della Scala's palace as enlarged by Cansignorio after 1364, and seat of Venetian civic authority in Verona in Sanudo's time, was then more accessible.

<sup>9</sup> Sandri, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Corna, 50. The narratives were evidently based on the *Jewish Wars* of Josephus.

<sup>11</sup> Sanudo, 97. A new critical edition of the *Itinerarium* has just been published, edited by Gian Maria Varanini, sadly too late for the purposes of this essay.

<sup>12</sup> Mommsen, 1952; Richards, 2000, 104-34.

<sup>13</sup> Sanudo, 97.

The ostensible origins of Sanudo's mention of Altichiero's name are typical of humanist practice. Sanudo, only seventeen when he made his journey, had already given proof of his credentials in the *Memorabilia deorum dearumque*, written at the age of fifteen and heavily dependent on Boccaccio<sup>14</sup>. The convenient habit of imitation served him well throughout his writing life. The *Itinerarium*, though written in the *volgare*, is no exception, Gaetano Cozzi suggesting that Sanudo wrote his book as a result of his contact with Flavio Biondo's *Italia illustrata*, first published in 1474<sup>15</sup>. If anything, this understates the extent of Sanudo's dependence on Biondo (1392-1460), which is nowhere more evident than in Sanudo's list of Veronese worthies, which ends with: "Giacomo Cavalli... Captain General of the Venetians... Nicolò Cavalli and his sons; the learned Guarino... and, excellent in the art of painting, Altichiero and Pisan[ell]o"<sup>16</sup>.

This is clearly derived from Biondo's account of Verona, which similarly goes through the list of distinguished members of the Cavalli clan, pays homage to Guarino (1374-1460) in more extended terms, and concludes with the best painters: Altichiero, "an excellent painter" in the previous period, and the superior Pisanello, the supreme painter "of our age... of whom Guarino has written" (Biondo, 1474)<sup>17</sup>.

Sanudo's deviations from his source invite comment. His elimination of Biondo's careful distinction between Altichiero and Pisanello, a distinction of both chronology and esteem, may reflect the rather simpler needs of a book largely concerned with listing things of note in Venetian territory<sup>18</sup>. But it might also reflect something more specific, both here and elsewhere in Sanudo's discussion, an aspect of his journey suggested by his more detailed attention to the role of the Cavalli in Veronese and Venetian history. It is clear from his

<sup>14</sup> Cozzi, 335.

<sup>15</sup> Cozzi, 336.

<sup>16</sup> "Jacomo Caballo, milite splendido, di militia prestantissimo, de' Venetiani Cap[itano] generale meritissimo, et nel numero di patricij azonto, *usque in hodierna* dura; et è Nicolao Caballo con li figlioli soi: Guarino docto, di fama nominato, pochi anni vi è stato, *etiam* veronese, et do in arte pyctoria excelenti, Alticherio et Pisano. Sed in questa nostra etate vi riconobi io Leonardi Pelegrin et Andrea suo filio..." Sanudo, 98-99.

<sup>17</sup> "Ea quoque expeditione, in qua Luchinus Vermes Cretam Veneto reparavit imperio, Georgius Caballus Veronensis eques praestantissimos militares ducens ordines navatae fortiter operae id retulit decus, ut senator a Venetiis fuerit constitutus... Sed iam claudat Veronensium gloria digniorum aciem Guarinus quem supra in eorum catalogo, quos eloquentiam in nostrum saeculum longo postliminio reduxisse ostendimus, merito laudum praeconio decoravimus. Pictoriae artis peritum Verona superiori saeculo habuit Alticherium. Sed unus superest, qui fama ceteros nostri saeculi faciliter antecellit, Pisanus nomine, de quo Guarini carmen extat qui Guarini Pisanus inscribitur". Biondo, *Italia illustrata*, I, 377, cited in Clavuot, 129.

<sup>18</sup> That Altichiero had a formative influence on Pisanello's development has been a given of much modern scholarship from Hill to Paccagnini, e.g. "both [Altichiero and Avanzi] represent the same tendencies which culminated in Pisanello": Hill, 9; and "[it was] the awareness [Pisanello] developed of the austere and monumental quality of Altichiero's art, which... became a truly integral part of his artistic expression": Paccagnini, 148.

later chapter on Vicenza that Sanudo had been travelling up to that point in the company of Nicolò Cavalli “doctor jurisconsulto”<sup>19</sup>. As a member of this distinguished family of Veronese servants of the former Scaligeri *signori*, Nicolò was well placed to redirect Sanudo’s attention to a figure not mentioned by Biondo, Giacomo Cavalli (d. 1384), greatest of his family and the first to hold high office in Venetian service.

It most of all invites comment that Sanudo mentions Altichiero and Pisanello at all. That their names were already embedded in the list provided by his chosen source is more a question of opportunity than of explanation. It is possible that textual conservatism of this kind is the whole of the answer. But Sanudo’s use of Biondo is not so inflexibly slavish that he is unwilling to bend it to his particular needs, or according to his specific local knowledge. Sanudo is likely to have seen dozens of works of art in his travels without finding it worth mentioning them. If he was happy to accept the singling out of these two painters with the rest of what he took from Biondo, he must have had his reasons.

The extra factor may have been, quite simply, Nicolò Cavalli, who could have drawn Sanudo’s attention to his family chapel in Sant’Anastasia, to the great votive fresco by Altichiero on the south wall and perhaps to Giacomo Cavalli’s role in its commissioning<sup>20</sup>. Sanudo’s restitution of equality between the two Veronese painters may thus have been a sop to Cavalli family pride. The yoking together of the two great names may also have been reinforced by the sight of the adjacent Pellegrini and Cavalli chapels in Sant’Anastasia, boasting major works by Pisanello and Altichiero respectively. The layout of Sanudo’s text perhaps preserves an echo of this experience in the way his account shortly afterwards slips so easily from the Cavalli to the Pellegrini family<sup>21</sup>. If we can reconstruct from Sanudo’s reference to the “salla pynta” the walk from the Piazza Erbe that took him there, we might imagine an extension of this stroll – no great distance – to Sant’Anastasia, where Biondo’s reference, fortified by Cavalli interests, was given additional solidity in Sanudo’s young mind.

This is only one of several possible explanations. The juxtaposition of Altichiero’s name with the description of the “salla pynta” allows for no firm inference that Sanudo had connected the two things, and it cannot be taken for granted that Nicolò Cavalli either knew or cared who had painted his family’s fresco in Sant’Anastasia more than a hundred years before. No such assumptions can be made with any confidence for a period when the cult of the individual artist, the deliberate preservation of his memory after death, was still in its infancy. Even so, the relative solidity of the local tradition of the *Sala Grande*’s importance is clear, and it is perhaps on account of it that the first section of Vasari’s note on Altichiero in the 1568 version of the *Vite* is

<sup>19</sup> Sanudo, 110.

<sup>20</sup> Richards, 2000, 92-96.

<sup>21</sup> Sanudo, 99. See n. 15 above.

apparently so much more coherent than the section on Altichiero's Paduan works which succeeds it.

If Sanudo's references require examination, even more so do those of Biondo, who was not a native of the Veneto. The form of his reference to Altichiero is not itself at all remarkable; it is as much of a humanist commonplace as descriptions of Giotto as a second Apelles. Altichiero is treated as a sort of John the Baptist, precursor to the greater Pisanello, much as the developing tradition for artists' biographies used Cimabue in relation to Giotto. What is significant is that Biondo knew his name at all.

Biondo's knowledge of Verona came, as was usual with him, from a mixture of first-hand investigation and enquiries made via his voluminous correspondence. In the case of Verona the two types of source may have combined to some extent in the person of another of the city's great names, Guarino Guarini, mentioned in both Biondo's and Sanudo's texts. Biondo appeared in Guarino's circle around 1420, remaining in Verona for about two years. Other meetings took place during the 1420s, when Biondo was in the service of the Venetian Republic in various places. In 1427 he returned to his native Forlì. He visited the Veneto again around 1450, when he was assembling the evidence for *Italia Illustrata*, by which time Guarino had been long resident in Ferrara. Contact between the two, predominantly by letter, was constant during the intervening years.

The passage from *Italia Illustrata* given above makes it clear that Biondo's reference to Pisanello is secondary to, and its presence explained by, his familiarity with the ekphrastic poem "Si mihi par voto ingenium fandique facultas..." addressed by Guarino to Pisanello<sup>22</sup>. The most likely inference must be that Biondo had also heard of Altichiero, whose name he is unlikely to have encountered outside the Veneto, from Guarino. Whether this happened while Biondo was in Verona, perhaps with Guarino acting as his guide and faced with the frescoes, or by letter, is a matter for conjecture. What is more to the point is that Guarino, if he was the source, must have impressed on Biondo some idea of Altichiero's importance. Biondo's particular approach to the two painters is expressly calculated to give the palm to his contemporary Pisanello, but the process also serves to reflect back on Altichiero a measure of esteem, even if only of the kind doled out to the precursor Cimabue in early Tuscan art-historiography.

There are no references to Altichiero in Guarino's surviving work, but it is hard to think that he would not have known of him, not least through his extensive and close relationships with the Cavalli. Guarino, it should be remembered, was born (if only just) during the *signoria* of Altichiero's patron Cansignorio della Scala, and he lived the first decade and more of his life under Scaligeri rule. Altichiero himself was probably still alive and working well into Guarino's early maturity. Guarino's early life brought him into contact with

<sup>22</sup> Hill, 113-18, Baxandall, 87-96.

precisely those followers of Petrarch responsible for key aspects of the rapprochement between literary humanism and the visual arts, men like Pierpaolo Vergerio (1370-1444/1445) and Giovanni Conversino (1343-1408), under whom Guarino studied in Padua<sup>23</sup>. For all that, Guarino's understanding of painting is still rather naïve. The abundant classical allusions of his poem – “interesting rather than beautiful” as Hill puts it<sup>24</sup> – cannot disguise the essential simplicity of Guarino's judgemental basis: “I put forth my hand to wipe the sweat from the brow of the toiling figures... The image, though but painted, speaks so vividly, that I scarce dare to utter a sound...”<sup>25</sup>. This could almost have been written in the 1370s; the language is that of Boccaccio and Villani, Pisanello as *naturae simia*. The undeveloped nature of Guarino's criteria reflects what Baxandall calls “one of the more disconcerting facts of Quattrocento art history that more praise was addressed to Pisanello than to any other artist of the first half of the century... [and that] Pisanello, not Masaccio, is the ‘humanist’ artist”<sup>26</sup>. Pisanello, to put it simply, gives you more to describe.

Sanudo's reference to the Veneto's other great trecento fresco cycle on an Antique theme, Francesco da Carrara's (1325-1393) *Sala virorum illustrium* in the Reggia in Padua (c. 1370-1380), suggests almost as strongly as his description of the “salla pynta” that he had seen it for himself: “È sopra la piazza grande il palazzo dil Prefecto, bellissimo, primo, *ut multi dicunt*, de palazzo de Italia, dove è camere, grande salle, et una con tuti li Imperadori et viri illustri, le opere sue; retrato ancor è Francesco Petrarca et Lombardo Asserico; questa fece riconzar, perché era antiqua, F.S.”<sup>27</sup>. His description of the iconography of the hall is predominantly accurate: it contained some, though not all, “imperadori” and many “viri illustri”, together with representations of “le opere sue”. The trecento frescoes were destroyed by fire in the sixteenth century, except for the portrait of Petrarch, twinned on the end wall with the repainted portrait of Lombardo della Seta (“a Serico”, d. 1390). It is not surprising that Sanudo was shown this great hall, the Paduan equivalent of the *Sala Grande* and, like it, part of the Venetian administrative complex after 1406. Biondo had preceded him here too, listing the Reggia among the “belli palagi” of his day<sup>28</sup>. Once again, even without any reference to authorship of the paintings, it is still remarkable that Sanudo singled it out among all the painted rooms he must have seen throughout the region, many of more recent vintage. In this instance Sanudo's family piety may have been a factor, for the F.S. of his text was Francesco Sanudo, *Capitanio* in Padua in 1480 and responsible, as Sanudo notes, for the restoration of the frescoes.

<sup>23</sup> Sabbadini, 6-7.

<sup>24</sup> Hill, 113.

<sup>25</sup> Baxandall, 93.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 91.

<sup>27</sup> Sanudo, 25.

<sup>28</sup> Biondo, *Roma Trionfante*, IX, 320r-v, cited in Pellecchia, 377.



### 3. Michele Savonarola

Sanudo's personal encounter with the *Sala virorum illustrium* may be compared with the description given by the Paduan Michele Savonarola (1385-1468) in his *Libellus de magnificis ornamentis regie civitatis Padue* (c. 1445-1447), written in Ferrara, to which city he had moved in 1440<sup>29</sup>. In the present context Savonarola's work has one useful feature which distinguishes it from the accounts by Biondo and Sanudo: he makes explicit attributional connections between works of art and named artists. His attributions have been intermittently discussed in recent years; they are central to what was until recently the chief focus of most writing about Altichiero, the issue of his collaboration with the Bolognese painter Jacopo Avanzi (*fl.* c. 1360-1384)<sup>30</sup>. The present discussion requires no raking over these coals, beyond a reminder that Savonarola's attributions are generally well founded, if incomplete.

Just like Sanudo's, Savonarola's account appears to record the direct experience of the locations he describes<sup>31</sup>:

When one ascends the principal staircase, one finds balconies, all decorated, on the upper floor around the loggia, with marble columns and magnificent windows overlooking both courtyards. On either side are two most spacious halls, of which the first is called [the Sala] Thebarum and the other [the Sala] Imperatorum... by the hands of the illustrious painters Ottaviano and Altichiero<sup>32</sup>.

Throughout the *Libellus*, Savonarola provides a wealth of local detail quite beyond the scope of Sanudo, or even Biondo (in the Veneto at least). The essential purpose of his book relates it to the genus of patriotic *laudatio* to which the *Itinerarium* and others belong. What distinguishes Savonarola is not just his depth of knowledge but the level of sophistication at which he operates. The *Libellus*, as well as containing a significant body of information about artistic life in Padua, has a place – if perhaps a minor one – in the process by which painting achieved a status parallel with that of the Liberal Arts, whether or not Savonarola intended this in such explicit terms<sup>33</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> For Savonarola's life see Gloria, 1:496-97.

<sup>30</sup> For Avanzi see Benati, Simon and Richards, 2000, 167-74.

<sup>31</sup> Simon, 267.

<sup>32</sup> "Cumque honoratas scalas ascendis, podiola lodiam parte in superiori circumstantia, columnis marmoreis ac magnificis fenestris, que ad utramque curiam aspectum habent, etiam ornate invenis. Stantque due amplissime et picturis ornatissime sale ad latera horum situate, quarum prima Thebarum nuncupatur, altera Imperatorum nominatur prima maior atque gloriosior, in qua romani imperatores miris cum figuris, cumque triumphis, auro optimoque cum colore depicti sunt. Quos gloriose manus illustrium pictorum Octaviani et Alticherii configurarunt... Et ut uno verbo, pace aliarum civitatum, dicam, nullum in Italia ita magnificum, nullumque ita superbum invenitur". Savonarola, 49.

<sup>33</sup> Baxandall, 76, compares Savonarola unfavourably with Filippo Villani.

The discussion of painters and painting in the *Libellus* falls into three categories. The first and most conventional type, broadly cognate with Sanudo's references, is topographical and biographical. During the course of his discussion of Padua's most significant sites and famous men, Savonarola's itinerary takes him into a number of chapels and other ornamented interiors. The accompanying descriptions are accurate but otherwise unexceptional, the emphasis being on the inherent interest of the site or of the person buried there or otherwise associated with it. The discussion of the jurist Prosdocimo Conti, for instance, triggers a reference to the Conti family's chapel in the Santo, decorated by Giusto de' Menabuoi (c. 1320-1391) in the 1380s, Savonarola emphasising its qualities in general terms<sup>34</sup>. An earlier reference to the same chapel in the section *De divinis et spiritualibus* and to the other most prominent chapels in the Santo, that of St. Anthony in the north transept, and the facing chapel built by Bonifacio Lupi (d. 1390) between 1372 and 1379 and dedicated to St. James the Great, are of this type, though the decorations of these last three are attributed to specific painters<sup>35</sup>. The nearby Oratory of San Giorgio, listed just after these, is described in much the same way, though without an attribution at this stage<sup>36</sup>.

The second category concentrates on the painters themselves, six of whom are singled out in the long third chapter, "De viris illustribus non sacris", after the clerics, natural philosophers (Pietro d'Abano e.g.), medics (Savonarola's own profession), and other men of intellect, including the twin stars of early Paduan humanism, Albertino Mussato (1261-1329) and Lovato Lovati (c. 1240-1309). Savonarola's choice of artists was hardly calculated to pander to any narrow *Patavinitas*. He begins, all the same, with Paduans or what he defines as Paduans: "In hoc autem ordine duos famosos civitas nostra habuit, Guarientum... et Iustum"<sup>37</sup>. Giusto de' Menabuoi was actually a native of Florence, though a citizen of Padua by the time he came to paint the baptistery frescoes which Savonarola describes. The palm goes to Guariento d'Arpo (1310-1370), a genuine son of Padua, and specifically to his great fresco of *Paradise* in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in Venice, arguably the greatest commission of the north Italian Trecento and to Savonarola crowning proof of the dominance of the Paduan school<sup>38</sup>.

Of the remaining four painters of the Paduan Trecento on this list, none was a native. The painter of the St. Anthony chapel in the Santo is for the second time identified as Stefano da Ferrara<sup>39</sup>, and the extra-Paduan origins of the other three, listed in order of merit – an approach used consistently throughout

<sup>34</sup> Savonarola, 34.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 16.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>38</sup> Flores D'Arcais, 72-73.

<sup>39</sup> Savonarola, 44.

the *Libellus* for all categories of person – are unequivocally spelled out: “... primum in sede locabo Zotum Florentinum... Secundam sedem Iacopo Avancii Bononiensi... Tertiam vero Altichiero Veronensi...”. The award of supremacy among the outsiders to Giotto, “pictorum princeps”, rests in this passage on established humanist arguments of a rather generalized kind<sup>40</sup>. For the more specific basis on which Savonarola made his selection, implicit to an extent in the actual nature of the list, we must look to the third level of discussion, first encountered in two passages placed before and after the list of painters. Though exact interpretation of Savonarola’s meaning is rather impeded by the confused quality of his text, of which, as his modern editor remarked, “molti passi sono oscuri”, the gist of his critical choices is clear enough<sup>41</sup>.

In this part of the *Libellus* Savonarola turns to a consideration of the “mechanicos”, including the mathematicians, “whose knowledge is not far from philosophy”. and the painters, “to whom is given knowledge of the lineaments of figures and the projection of rays” within the ambit of “the science of perspective”<sup>42</sup>. In the passage following the list of Paduan painters, Savonarola attributes to them the creation of “a most famous school of painters”, whose distinction rests on perspective, “the mother of painting”, again placing special emphasis on “the wonderful projection of the rays”<sup>43</sup>.

Though Savonarola maintains the established distinction between liberal and mechanical arts, the substance of his text tends to push painting in a liberal arts direction, rather as though his observations outran his categories. He returns to the theme in a long passage near the end of the *Libellus*. Here painting, “in respect of which the splendour of our city is uniquely manifested”, and its “mother” perspective – which is “a part of philosophy” – are linked with the study of literature and other arts as a peculiarly Paduan mark of civic distinction. The presence of Giotto as the *fons et origo* of this status is once again specified, and its importance for Padua is underlined by Savonarola’s observation that “from all parts of Italy the painters gather” and that without this aspect of Paduan culture “the fame of our city would never have crossed the Venetian lagoon”<sup>44</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> “[Giotto], qui primus ex antiquis et musaicis figuris modernas mirum in modum configuravit”. Savonarola, 44.

<sup>41</sup> Savonarola, vii. I am extremely grateful to Elisabetta Toreno for her invaluable help with Savonarola’s often baffling Latin. As Segarizzi further observes: “non dobbiamo cercare negli scritti di Savonarola né eleganza di stile, né purità di lingua”.

<sup>42</sup> “Postremo ad mechanicos gloriosos et sua in arte illustres viros me converto, quorum scire a philosophia non est longinquum, et mathematicarum artium practica est. Hi sunt pictores, quibus lineamenta figurarum et radiorum projectiones nosse datum est, ut quibus prospectiva scientia gloriatur per eos practicos demonstratur”. Savonarola, 44.

<sup>43</sup> “Hi etenim sua in arte illustres viri ita gloriosam suis pictoris urbem nostram reddiderunt, ut famiosor pictorum schola facta sit. Cumque de pictoribus commemoratio tam gloriosa sic a me facta fuerit et de geometria sic aliquid a nobis actum, cum perspectiva picture mater habeatur, et pars in ea dignior, cum de stupenda radiorum projectione pertractet”. Savonarola, 44.

<sup>44</sup> “Neque parve facio pictorie Studium, quod singulare decus urbis nostre existit, cum ad studium litterarum et bonarum artium pre ceteris artibus adhereat, cum pars sit perspective, que de

The overall thrust of this consideration of painting's broader characteristics is quite clear. The emphasis is placed on "perspective", and the nature of Savonarola's list can hardly fail to confirm as a determining criterion for its own construction what his remarks emphasise quite insistently, the projection of pictorial space, an art practised with unparalleled brilliance in the Padua of Guariento, Giusto and Altichiero two generations before Brunelleschi (1377-1446) stood on the Duomo steps in Florence. Five of Savonarola's six painters, and in this they evidently distinguished themselves from the dozens of recorded painters of Padua whom Savonarola might have mentioned, possessed, as their inclusion in this context implies, qualities of intellectual distinction related to that *ingenium* with which Petrarch credited Giotto, "cuius pulchritudinem ignorantes non intelligent", and here identified in perspectival/spatial terms<sup>45</sup>.

In the context of an article about Altichiero's reputation, Savonarola's attributions are obviously worth examining. His view of Altichiero was based on two of the three major commissions we know the painter carried out in Padua: the *Sala virorum illustrium* (probably early 1370s), the Chapel of San Giacomo (1377-1379) and the Oratory of San Giorgio (1379-1384). Savonarola allows him a part share of the *Sala virorum illustrium* and complete authorship of San Giorgio. San Giacomo he attributes wholly to Jacopo Avanzi.

The primary visual evidence, such as it is, establishes that Altichiero had a hand in the *Sala virorum illustrium*; the rather battered portrait of Petrarch is clearly by him. Secondary evidence, in the form of the illustrations of the Darmstadt codex of the text on which the *Sala virorum illustrium* frescoes were based, Petrarch's *De viris illustribus*, suggests the presence of Jacopo Avanzi too. As both literary and visual evidence suggests his collaboration with Altichiero in the *Sala Grande* and as a number of the frescoes in San Giacomo are identical in style with works reliably associated with Jacopo, Savonarola's attribution is correct as far as Avanzi's presence is concerned. How, then, do we account for Savonarola's omission of Altichiero, who was paid handsomely for his work in San Giacomo in 1379, and who is the author of the majority of the frescoes<sup>46</sup>?

projectionis radiorum loquitur. Hic etenim philosophiae pars est. Suis enim gloriosis atque formosis et plurimis in numero admirandis picturis Zotus pictorum princeps nostra vivit in civitate, sicque ceteri quatuor, de quibus primo loco actum est. Ad quas visendas ex omni Italiae parte pictores confluunt, veniuntque iuvenes hoc studio cupidi, ut, sic ab eis doctores facti, ad lares deinde proprios redeant. Neque solatiosum hoc tibi tacebo. Nam cum ex Neapoli industrius iuvenis ad artem hanc adipiscendam Paduam profectus esset, ut eum de studio suo, in quo delectatus sum, aliqua interrogarem, post multa respondit: Famam civitatis nostrae lacunas Venetas nunquam pertransisse, nisi gloriosa studii pictoriae fama per illustres nominatos pictores illustrata fuisset". Savonarola, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Mommsen, 1957, 80. I exclude Stefano simply because his artistic personality is much less firmly defined than that of the others. His St. Anthony frescoes are lost. Savonarola may have included him as a sop to his new home. For the Paduan painters of the Trecento, see Sartori, 1976.

<sup>46</sup> Sartori, 1963, 320.

This can perhaps be explained by the suggestion that Savonarola had access to the book in which the chapel's patron, Bonifacio Lupi, bound together all the documentary material relating to the chapel's construction and decoration<sup>47</sup>. In this book, which is now lost but which probably included the original contracts, Savonarola might have encountered Avanzi's as the first, or only, name: either as senior partner of his and Altichiero's team, or because, around 1376, Altichiero may still have been finishing the Petrarchan frescoes of the *Sala virorum illustrium*, only fully joining the San Giacomo team a little later. The key point here is that Savonarola thought *all* the frescoes in San Giacomo were by Jacopo Avanzi and that his admiration of them may therefore be attached in large measure to Altichiero. It should be emphasised that Altichiero is the author of about 70% of the total frescoed surface and of everything below the main cornice, the area one would expect to attract most attention, including the great Crucifixion which dominates all views of the chapel from the main body of the church.

The sum total of Savonarola's specific references to Altichiero's work, including those to Jacopo Avanzi, is greater than those of Biondo and Sanudo combined, but it is not much more informative in the sense of immediately identifying those qualities which underpinned the survival of Altichiero's reputation into the Quattrocento. Of San Giacomo Savonarola says little more than that it was by Jacopo Avanzi, and that the paintings were glorious<sup>48</sup>. Of the *Sala virorum illustrium* he says it was "painted with gold and colour by the illustrious painters Ottaviano and Altichiero"<sup>49</sup>, and of San Giorgio that Altichiero "decorated it with great skill"<sup>50</sup>.

These references straddle the boundary between the topographical and biographical elements of Savonarola's discourse, and the absence from them of the kind of reflection embodied in the third category of discussion is a consequence of Savonarola's division between the different strands of his argument. Padua, in his book, deserves fame for *these* locations, for *these* men, and for *these* aspects of its cultural and civic life. It makes perfect sense in context, as the retention of much the same division in guide books written five hundred years after the *Libellus* confirms. It means, though, that the basis for Savonarola's discrimination between the deserving-of-fame and the undeserving must be reconstructed from dispersed remarks rather than arguments specific to named artists.

<sup>47</sup> Sartori, 1966, 284.

<sup>48</sup> "Que manibus Iacobi de Avantio gloriosissimus imaginibus depicta est" and "secundam sedem Iacobi Avanti bononiensi dabimus, qui magnificorum marchionum de Lupis admirandam cappellam veluti viventibus figuris ornavit". Savonarola, 13.

<sup>49</sup> "Auro optimoque cum colore depicti sunt... manus illustrium pictorum Octaviani et Alticherii configurarunt". Savonarola, 49. For Ottaviano (da Brescia) in this context, see Mommsen, 1952, 101-02.

<sup>50</sup> "Maximo cum artificio decoravit". Savonarola, 44. Savonarola's longest reference to San Giorgio, 33, concentrates on the tomb of Raimondino Lupi, of which a detailed description is given. The tomb was painted by Altichiero, though Savonarola does not mention this.

One feature of Savonarola's *Libellus* that invites comment is the exclusion of any discussion of Quattrocento painting in Padua. Savonarola thus fails to mention either Paolo Uccello (1397-1475) or Filippo Lippi (c. 1406-1469), both of whom had worked in Padua prior to the writing of the *Libellus*, though in Lippi's case after Savonarola had left for Ferrara. Neither does he mention the most recent major fresco cycle to have been painted in Padua before his departure, Giovanni Storlato's *Life of St. Luke* (1437), which he must have seen, given the frequency of his references to the abbey church of Santa Giustina, where the frescoes are located. Nor does he refer to the Paduan Francesco Squarcione (c. 1395-1468), whom he surely knew, given the documented association between the painter and Savonarola's son<sup>51</sup>.

Lightbown suggests that Savonarola's exclusion of Squarcione and his contemporaries is to be explained because Squarcione's school "had as yet made no great impression stylistically. It may even have been [Squarcione's pupil] Mantegna's (c. 1431-1506) precocious genius that brought to it much of its subsequent fame"<sup>52</sup>. Martindale is generally more sceptical with regard to Squarcione: "exactly what Squarcione taught and what facilities his household and workshop offered are likely to remain a matter of speculation"<sup>53</sup>. Paduan painting of the early Quattrocento has rarely enjoyed much critical acclaim, a situation which is in marked contrast with its longstanding intellectual, scientific and pedagogical distinction. Indeed, Christiansen describes the city in this period as "artistically backward" and Battisti comments on the generally depressed conditions of a pictorial culture lacking exemplary contact with the new developments of Tuscany<sup>54</sup>. Donatello (c. 1386-1466) and Mantegna only arrived in Padua after Savonarola had left, and the *Libellus* was written before their work in the Santo and the Eremitani had been completed.

The omission of Uccello and Lippi cannot, in the light of Savonarola's trecento list, be accounted for on the grounds that neither was a native of Padua. More to the point is the nature of the *Libellus* itself. However superior it may be to other examples of its genre, its principal purpose is still that of establishing the grounds for Padua's fame. Savonarola's reason for including anything or anyone in his book hinges on their contribution to that. The assumption that follows from this is clear: in Savonarola's day Padua was famous for a number of its trecento painters, and for reasons which allowed him to give them something like the same billing as the men of intellect<sup>55</sup>. There

<sup>51</sup> Muraro, 69.

<sup>52</sup> Lightbown, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Martindale and Garavaglia, 7. Kristeller's reading remains valid. Of Squarcione he says: "One certainly does not gain from [his] pictures that impression that Squarcione was the influential artist whom the Paduan tradition, repeated since Vasari by almost all writers, represents him to have been" and that: "[Squarcione] was not so much the artistic, but rather the business head of his workshop". Kristeller, 26.

<sup>54</sup> Christiansen, 111, n.12. Battisti, 100.

<sup>55</sup> "If the Paduan school of the fifteenth century had been independent and autochthonous, it would certainly have taken its departure from the splendid and important works executed in Padua by artists of the Trecento". Kristeller, 32.



was already a precedent for presenting painters of an earlier period as models to be followed in the way writers might model their work on Cicero in the form of Pierpaolo Vergerio's (1370-1444/1445) oft-cited observation (c. 1396) that the painters (implicitly Paduan) of the late Trecento followed the example of Giotto alone<sup>56</sup>. One of the effects of Savonarola's book may have been to adumbrate for the painters of his day, and for their patrons, an extended set of exemplars in the Giottesque tradition. His list could thus be seen as an intellectualised gloss on the Paduan practice, codified in the statutes of the painters' guild, of sending apprentice painters to copy from local frescoes on feast days<sup>57</sup>. Savonarola's emphasis is at least circumstantially supported by the argument it was precisely Filippo Lippi's exposure to the painters of the Paduan Trecento that played a decisive role in the development of his use of pictorial space<sup>58</sup>.

The analogy between humanist imitation of Cicero and Seneca and the use of Giotto and other trecento painters as exemplars was repeated in Savonarola's time by the humanist educator Gasparino Barzizza (c. 1360-1431), teaching in Padua between 1407 and 1421. Barzizza noted an analogy between his own pedagogical technique and that of painters:

I myself would have done what good painters practice towards their pupils; for when the apprentices are to be instructed by their master before having acquired a thorough grasp of the theory of painting, the painters follow the practice of giving them a number of fine drawings and pictures as models of the art<sup>59</sup>.

Barzizza gives no indication what type of work Paduan painters used for their pupils' instruction, nor is it entirely clear in what sense the term "model" should be understood. He does state that study of these masters was treated as a preliminary exercise, prior to the direct application of the master's wisdom to his pupils, but implies also that its purpose was to confront young painters with the best of their art – with the equivalent of what would for Barzizza's pupils, have been Cicero, Virgil and Seneca, rather than the less exalted models of the *ars dictaminis*<sup>60</sup>.

The place of Squarcione and his pupils in this context is unclear. Barzizza never mentions him by name and there is no particular reason to think he had him in mind at all. Connections between Squarcione's supposed academy and the firmly documented *Gymnasium* of Barzizza are purely conjectural, even if we go so far (and it is going some distance) as to allow Squarcione admission to Barzizza's category of good painters. Savonarola's list maintains the

<sup>56</sup> "Faciendum est igitur quod etatis nostre pictores, qui, cum ceterorum claras imagines sedulo spectent, solus tamen Ioti exemplaria sequuntur". Vergerio, 177.

<sup>57</sup> Fletcher, 22.

<sup>58</sup> Rowlands, 54-67.

<sup>59</sup> Eisler, 56.

<sup>60</sup> For Barzizza's school and influence, see Mercer, 118-131.



supremacy of Giotto's example asserted by Vergerio, adding to it a selected number of later painters most of whom might be defined as Giottesque progressives, and who broadly confirmed Vergerio's assertion that "the painters of [his] day" followed the example of Giotto alone. It is always possible that it was Squarcione himself, maybe with an eye to recruitment, who helped Savonarola assemble a list which served to enshrine and transmit a settled Paduan sense of its own pictorial exemplars, Altichiero amongst them<sup>61</sup>.

#### 4. Conclusion

Discussion of the visual evidence of Altichiero's impact is beyond the scope of this account. It would have to be extensive and it would have to be argued within a broader analysis of the insufficiently acknowledged role played by trecento painting in a Giottesque tradition in the development of the *ars nova* of early Quattrocento Florence. Even if one were to restrict oneself to the Veneto, the pervasive presence of Altichiero's inventions in the drawings of Jacopo Bellini (c. 1400-1470/1471) and the impact of his spatial adventures on the young Mantegna would support the rather fragmentary evidence of esteem considered here.

Altichiero's reputation in the century or so after his death rested chiefly on the *Sala Grande* and the *Sala virorum illustrium*. This is understandable. Both fresco cycles were located in public, governmental spaces where they would be seen, and both satisfied at least one established criterion for esteem, based as they were on Antique material. This is possibly reflected in Vasari's observation of the Veronese frescoes that "Mantegna used to praise them as the rarest painting"<sup>62</sup>. Apocryphal or not, the point of the remark is that Mantegna was identified as the sort of artist whose praise might be felt to say something significant about them. The frescoes of the *Sala virorum illustrium* were largely replaced in the early sixteenth century and those of the *Sala Grande* were lost to view by 1718 at the latest<sup>63</sup>. This left Altichiero to be represented by the two Paduan chapels done for members of the Lupi family, which were by Vasari's time – and by Vasari – embroiled in the attributional mess which served to obscure Altichiero's role in their creation and deny him his proper measure of renown.

<sup>61</sup> For the Ferrarese aspects of Savonarola's interests, see Richards, 2007b, 469-472.

<sup>62</sup> "Il Mantegna gli lodava come pittura rarissima". Vasari, 3, 635. It should be pointed out that Vasari attached this praise to the *Trionfi* which he says were part of the scheme and which he attributed to Jacopo Avanzi rather than Altichiero.

<sup>63</sup> Richards, 2000, 36.

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#### Abstract

Altichiero was the dominant north Italian painter of the later Trecento. In Padua, in the 1370s and early 1380s, he worked for patrons close to Petrarch and his circle and perhaps in direct contact with the poet himself. By the time of the second edition of Vasari's *Vite* (1568) the memory of Altichiero's work had suffered significant occlusion, and Vasari's account of him is little more than an appendix to his life of Carpaccio. Only since the later nineteenth century, and particularly in the last fifty or so years, has Altichiero's reputation been restored. It is the purpose of this paper to examine aspects of that reputation throughout the century or so after the painter's death (by April 1393).

#### Keywords

Middle Ages; Early Modern Times; 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century; Padua; art; painting; patronage; Altichiero

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# The Tombs of the Scaligers at Verona: a nineteenth century English account

by John Easton Law

## 1. *The memory of the Della Scala*

At the conclusion to his study of the Carrara published in 1998, Benjamin Kohl discussed the destruction of the dynasty and the extinction of most of its members by the Venetian Republic in 1405: “The Carrara dynasty had been removed from power. Its despised and feared *carro* (the dynasty’s principal emblem) was stricken from the monuments of the former Carrara domains, to be revived in moments of rebellion over the next century as the defiant emblem of an independence that Padua had lost forever”<sup>1</sup>. Above that passage, a photograph taken by Judith Kohl showed a surviving, if damaged, *carro* from the gates of Castelfranco Veneto. In an interesting article published in 1986, Paul Kaplan identified the *carro* as well as the Lion of St Mark on the buildings in the background to Giorgione’s *Tempesta* – traditionally dated to around 1508 – seeing its appearance, as Kohl was to suggest later, as a comment on the fragility of the Venetian *stato di terra* on the eve of the War of the League of Cambrai (1509)<sup>2</sup>.

Of course, the arrival of Venetian rule in Padua in 1405 did not by any means obliterate the visual record of the dynasty in the city, as the contributions by Benjamin Kohl and Meredith Gill in this collection make clear. As one of Kohl’s posthumous contributions to this collection discusses, the Carrara mausoleum in the baptistery of Padua – which celebrates the dynasty – survives. However, there remains a striking contrast between their posthumous fate and that of their neighbours and rivals, the Della Scala of Verona. That city had also fallen to Venice in 1405, on 23 June, but the tomb monuments to some of the leading members of a dynasty that had ruled the city from 1260 to 1387 remained largely undamaged outside the church of S. Maria Antica at the very heart of the

<sup>1</sup> Kohl, 1998, 336. This important study has been under-reviewed in Italian journals. In his introduction, Kohl refers to the deliberate destruction of the archives of the Carrara chancery on the orders of the Venetian Council of Ten.

<sup>2</sup> Kaplan, 1986, 405-27. The *carro* survived on the *verso* of the medal struck for Francesco Novello after his return to power in 1390.

commercial, legal and administrative heart of the city, the most striking of the monuments being those of Cangrande I (1308-1329), Mastino II (1329-1351) and Cansignorio (1359-1375). Moreover, this complex of tombs faced the palace which was to become the residence of the Venetian podestà and adjacent to the palace taken over by the Venetian capitano<sup>3</sup>.

A principal reason for the survival of these monuments may possibly lie in the fact that the Venetian Republic did not – over time – perceive the Della Scala as a threat, as it came to view the Da Carrara. The last effective member of the dynasty, Antonio (1381-1387), was in alliance with Venice when he was driven into exile due to a combination of political incompetence, diplomatic miscalculation and military defeat<sup>4</sup>. Verona was then held by the Visconti of Milan, but following the death of Duke Giangaleazzo in 1402, his state disintegrated, and Verona was retaken by Guglielmo Della Scala in April 1404 with the help of Francesco Novello da Carrara<sup>5</sup>. However, on his death in the same month, his sons Brunoro and Antonio II were driven from power by their erstwhile ally, Francesco Novello, and it was from the Da Carrara that Venice took Verona in 1405.

Thereafter, the major threat to Venetian rule in Verona by the ousted dynasty was posed by Brunoro, a favourite of Sigismund, king of the Romans<sup>6</sup>. Sigismund had a claim to the cities of the Veneto as they lay within the boundaries of the imperial kingdom of Italy, and on 22 January 1412, he made Brunoro his imperial vicar for Verona and Vicenza; Brunoro even tried to provoke a revolt in Verona against Venetian rule, which took place on 2 May 1412. That failed, and although the Republic remained watchful as to his movements, and although Verona and Vicenza were not included in the imperial investiture granted to Venice by the now emperor Sigismund in 1437, the Della Scala threat to Venetian rule in Verona had evaporated. It is for that reason that Sebastiano Giustinian, the Venetian ambassador at the court of Henry VIII could report to his government on 6 July 1515 and 18 November 1516 that he had justified to the king's ministers Venetian claims to Verona – then held by the Emperor Maximilian – by pointing out that Venice had ruled the city for one hundred years and by claiming that the Della Scala, who had once ruled Verona had no heirs<sup>7</sup>.

The absence of a Della Scala threat to Venetian rule in Verona might help to explain the observations made by the Venetian patrician Marino Sanudo in his *Itinerario* of the Venetian *stato di terra* composed during, or shortly after, his visit to the *terraferma* in 1483<sup>8</sup>. There is little of triumphalism in his

<sup>3</sup> Simeoni, 19-44; *Guida d'Italia*, 96-199. This building is now named the Palazzo del Governo. Its importance is underlined by the contribution by John Richards in this collection.

<sup>4</sup> For the narrative: Rossini; Soldi Rondinini; Kohl, 1989, 329-34.

<sup>5</sup> Guglielmo was the natural son of Cangrande II, lord of the city 1352-1359.

<sup>6</sup> Law, 2000, ch. X, 10-11 and ch. IX *passim*. The most serious revolt was in May 1412.

<sup>7</sup> Brown, 1854, 1:107-14; 2:9-12.

<sup>8</sup> Brown, 1847, 96-102 (for Verona). Sanudo got the year of Verona's surrender to Venice wrong: it was 1405, not 1404. A new edition and commentary on the *Itinerario* is now available (Sanudo),

account, but he does record the sufferings of the city under previous regimes under “Eccelino de Romano tyran”, then “li signori tyrani de la Scala” and finally “Francesco de Karara la prese, et alor servite con gran calamità et intolerabile dano”. However, Verona “venuta soto l’imperio veneto, per suo beneficio et libertà in mirabile è venuta incressimento et opulenta, e di giorno in giorno melgio si rinova”. Perhaps it was the distant history of tyrannical regimes, and the lack of the threat they posed to the Venetian regime, that encouraged Sanudo to record in his list of the distinctive monuments of the city “le arche de li Signori di la Scalla, tre, alte, marmoree et intalgiate”, a clear reference to the three tomb monuments, supporting equestrian statues, mentioned above<sup>9</sup>.

The Venetian Republic’s perception that the Della Scala no longer posed a threat may also help to explain why their *signoria* continued to feature – almost to be celebrated – in the literature produced by a succession of Veronese chroniclers, antiquarians and historians from the fifteenth century onwards. This has been charted in the *schede* included in the fine 1988 Scala exhibition catalogue edited by Gian Maria Varanini, and also in *La statua equestre di Cangrande I della Scala*<sup>10</sup>. The earliest publication specifically focusing on the dynasty was by Torello Saraina, *Le historie e fatti de’ Veronesi nelli tempi d’il popolo et signori scaligeri*, first published in 1542, and then again – in a possibly lightly censored edition – in 1586. The dynasty came to be extensively covered in the text and documents published by Giambattista Verci in volume VII of his *Storia della Marca Trevigiana e Veronese* (1787)<sup>11</sup>. What is also interesting is that from as early as 1676 measures were taken to ensure the preservation of the Della Scala tombs; on 12 April 1676, the communal council voted to restore the tomb of Cansignorio “che nel cimiterio di Santa Maria Antica con molta magnificenza si vede erretta alle glorie di quel Principe”. In 1766, the tomb of Mastino II was restored, and in 1839 a competition was held to restore the whole complex<sup>12</sup>. Supposed portraits of leading members of the family, and key incidents, real and imagined, from their history – for example the hospitality showed to Dante in exile – became a subject for artists<sup>13</sup>. The Della Scala inheritance also led to the restoration – at times a rather free restoration – of buildings associated with them, for example the castle at Soave in 1890-92. This is a subject that deserves fuller exploration<sup>14</sup>. Their name and

but Brown’s edition has, for this contribution, a wider relevance as he knew the Cheney brothers well. Their prose and verse description of the Della Scala tombs are reprinted below in the Appendix.

<sup>9</sup> For a good survey of the Della Scala legacy in Verona: *I segni della Verona scaligera*.

<sup>10</sup> Varanini, 1988, 559-63: section headed “L’epoca scaligera nella coscienza culturale cittadina”. Varanini, 1995.

<sup>11</sup> Law, 2000, ch. viii.

<sup>12</sup> Varanini, 1988, 561-63; *L’arca di Mastino II*; Napione, 2011; Napione, 2009.

<sup>13</sup> Marini et al., 277-78.

<sup>14</sup> Perbellini, 161-62.



their principal emblem, the ladder, live on in contemporary Verona. The observation in the article republished below held and holds true: the “Scalas have left their impress on every part of their capital”.

## 2. *The British and Verona in the nineteenth century*

The British interest in Verona and its monuments is not hard to explain. The city was on one of the more travelled routes of the Grand Tour, and its Roman remains were an attraction. Interest in its medieval past came later, with the revival in taste for the Gothic in building, sculpture and painting, and Verona’s association with Dante and Shakespeare<sup>15</sup>. This transition can be illustrated from James Hakewell’s *A Picturesque Tour of Italy*, the first bound volume of which appeared in 1820<sup>16</sup>. This included views of Verona, but no detailed drawings of monuments associated with the medieval period other than of the Ponte Scaligero (1817). However, a sharper focus on the Della Scala monuments came with Samuel Prout<sup>17</sup> and Joseph Mallord Turner<sup>18</sup>. These artists helped to inspire John Ruskin, who was drawn to Verona and its medieval monuments many times<sup>19</sup>. References to them are made in his *Stones of Venice* (1851-1853), and his enthusiasm for the city is evident in *Verona and its Rivers*, and *Drawings and Photographs and Illustrations of Verona*, both published in 1870<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> The literature on both is considerable. In art, for the former, see Carlo Canella’s painting, *Cangrande accoglie Dante in esilio* (c. 1835-1840): Marini et al., 2004, 276-77. Also, more famously, Frederic Leighton’s painting, *Dante in Exile*, dated 1864. For the impact of Dante on Britain again there is a considerable literature, but most recently, Havelly, 2011 and Havelly, 2014. On Romeo and Juliet, Clough.

<sup>16</sup> Cubberley and Hermann.

<sup>17</sup> Prout’s *The Tomb of Cangrande I della Scala, Verona*, c. 1824, is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

<sup>18</sup> Turner’s *Four Sketches of the Scaliger Tombs*, 1833, are in Tate Britain, London, as part of the Turner Bequest.

<sup>19</sup> There is a huge literature on Ruskin. A recent exhibition, *I Preraffaelliti*, held in the Museo d’Arte in Ravenna, and then transferred to the Ashmolean in Oxford as *The Pre-Raphaelites and Italy* (both events in 2010) brought out well Ruskin’s fascination with Verona, in terms of his own studies, and those he commissioned from others: Harrison; Law, 2013. Studies of Ruskin and Verona include: Mullaly (with an Italian translation of *Verona and its Rivers*); *My dearest place in Italy*; ‘A noble invention’; Sandrini, publishing Ruskin’s letters from Verona in 1869 and other related material, in both English and Italian. I would like to acknowledge the help given me by Professor Stephen Wildman, director and curator of the Ruskin Library and Research Centre at the University of Lancaster. Ruskin’s enthusiasm for Verona can be found throughout his work as both an artist and an author, for example in Ruskin, 1905, 1-60. In this lecture, delivered in Edinburgh, he compared his host city – unfavourably – to Verona.

<sup>20</sup> Ruskin, 1907. The indices include references to “Tombs at Verona”, “Scaliger Tombs”, “Grande” (Cangrande), “Mastino” (Mastino II) and “Signorio” (Cansignorio).

In terms of history writing, reaching an English reading public, influential may have been J.C.L. Sismondi's *A History of the Italian Republics*, published in a condensed one-volume edition in 1832, which discusses the overthrow of republican governments by signoril regimes of which the Della Scala were one<sup>21</sup>.

Much less well known in terms of the British presence in Italy in the nineteenth century were the Cheney brothers, though they have received some acknowledgement in the *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Edward Cheney (1803-1884), probably the most significant member of the family of that generation, was a close friend of the scholar Rawdon Brown (1806-1883). Brown lived in Venice, virtually without a break – though he also knew Verona – between 1833 and his death in 1883<sup>22</sup>. Edward Cheney also knew Italy well, being a prominent member of the British community in Rome and then in Venice. In the obituary which appeared in the journal of the society with which he was closely associated, *The Miscellanies of the Philobiblon Society*, he was described as a prominent member of Anglo-Italian Society, drawn to Venice as a “homestead of antiquity and art”, belonging “to a generation of Englishmen who regarded Italy as a museum created and preserved for their pleasure and edification”<sup>23</sup>. What the obituary does not bring out, is that he was a major collector of Italian works of art, particularly Venetian, which – together with an important library – were once housed in Badger Hall in Shropshire, as well as in his house in Audley Square, London. He also knew Ruskin well, although they were never close and their tastes only partially coincided. He probably did not share in his friend Brown's long, sometimes difficult, relationship with Ruskin<sup>24</sup>.

It may be that Ruskin's interest in the Della Scala tombs prompted Edward Cheney to write the piece reprinted below. On the other hand, as has been mentioned, Cheney knew Italy well, and there was – in general – a taste for the Gothic, though his own collection was not, by any means, confined to the

<sup>21</sup> Sismondi; the original edition in French appeared between 1807 and 1818. Hallam (first published in 1818) mentions the dynasty among other “tyrannical” regimes: *ibid.*, 184-85, citing Sismondi.

<sup>22</sup> Griffiths and Law, *passim*. On Rawdon Brown: Pemble, 2004. For the British presence in nineteenth-century Venice, see: the essays by Laven and Pemble in Griffiths and Law; Pemble, 1988; Pemble, 1995, Norwich; Bosworth.

<sup>23</sup> I am extremely grateful to Tim Knox, curator of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, for sending me a copy of his article on Cheney (Knox, 2007) and of the lecture associated with it. On Cheney and his family see too: Sebag-Montefiore; Mallalieu; Byam Shaw. The Philobiblon Society was named after a work by Richard de Bury, bishop of Durham (1333-1345), anxious to improve the literacy and learning of the clergy. Cheney was a founding member, and contributed articles on Venetian painters and Venetian illuminated manuscripts. Among the leading patrons and associates of the Society were Prince Albert, the Prince Consort, and his son Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, both highly appreciative of Italian art. The unsigned twenty-two page obituary to Edward Cheney appears in volume 15 (1884) of the *Miscellanies*.

<sup>24</sup> In the extensive Ruskin literature, the Cheneys often appear, though only in passing: e.g. Lutyens, 7, 42, 173-79, 205.

Middle Ages<sup>25</sup>. The inspiration may have been the poem written and published in 1832 by his elder brother, Robert Henry (1801-1866)<sup>26</sup>, anticipating Ruskin's knowledge of the monuments, and as Knox's article makes clear, the range and informed nature of Edward Cheney's interests in Italy<sup>27</sup>. Cheney participated in the growing British interest in Italian medieval and renaissance history, contributing – for example – a long review of James Dennistoun's *Memoirs of the Dukes of Urbino* (1851) to the *Quarterly Review*<sup>28</sup>.

This is the context in which the following contribution to the *Miscellanies* of the Philobiblon Society is reproduced, though not in the form of an edition and commentary<sup>29</sup>. The Cheneys add little to our understanding of the Della Scala or their monuments, but they do add to an understanding of the interest in Italian medieval history, and the appreciation of Italian medieval art, which emerge strongly in nineteenth century Britain and which led on to more academic studies later in that century – and subsequently, as Benjamin Kohl has shown<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>25</sup> In the text published in the Appendix Edward refers to the “fresh remembrance” associated with their “beautiful and conspicuous monuments”.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Henry's poem first appeared in 1837 in an obscure publication: *The Tribute*, dedicated to the writer Edward Smedley. Smedley published *Sketches in Venetian History*, as part of the publisher John Murray's “Family Library” series (London, 1831-1832); the book's engravings were by Prout.

<sup>27</sup> Knox.

<sup>28</sup> Cheney, 1851.

<sup>29</sup> For the original publication of Edward Cheney's piece: Cheney 1871-1872.

<sup>30</sup> This is a subject I have attempted to explore, for example in Law 2005a, 145-64, and also in Law, 2005b, 547-62; Law, 2008. For Benjamin Kohl's interest: Kohl, 2005.

## Appendix

Edward Cheney

### *The Tombs of the Scaligers at Verona*

Amongst the numerous cities of Lombardy which engage the attention of the traveller, none can compete with Verona in picturesque beauty and historical interest. The palaces, bridges, and churches, built on a scale of royal magnificence, denote its former grandeur and importance. The Scalas have left their impress on every part of their capital; but their own tombs far exceed all other monuments in beauty and singularity. This illustrious house has long been extinct.

The family of La Scala which reigned with supreme power in Verona for a hundred and fifty years, and which exercised so great an influence throughout the Italian Peninsula during that period, had no very remote or illustrious origin. An ambitious adventurer succeeded in gaining the supremacy in his native city, and establishing a dynasty that reigned first by favour and affection, and afterwards by tyranny and severity, till, worn out and exhausted, it lost the favour of the people, and the support of its followers, and finally fell a prey to the crafty policy of the more fortunate Visconti.

History rejects the fabulous antiquity which flatterers assigned to this family during the period of its prosperity, and authenticated annals commence with Bonifazio and Fabrizio Della Scala, who were put to death by Eccelino da Romano, tyrant of Padua, in the middle of the thirteenth century.

The first of the family whose name appears in the civic annals of Verona is one Adamo Della Scala, of whom little is recorded beyond his name. The ancient German descent which some genealogists have assigned to this family is not quite supported by evidence, and the origin of the name itself has been no less the subject of unfounded conjecture. Those who derive it from a warrior who first planted a ladder against the walls of a besieged city, and those less flattering, who suppose it to have been given to a mechanic whose trade was making ladders, are equally without warrant for their theory. These considerations, however, are beside our present purpose; it is sufficient that the Scalas, or *Scaligeri*, as they loved to be called, became famous in the history of their native country in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and that they left those beautiful monuments of their grandeur which are the subject of the present notice.

The court of the lords of Verona during their brief period of supremacy became so famous throughout Italy for its splendid hospitality, that it was not only the resort of poets, sculptors and architects, who found favour and employment in it, but was also the asylum of illustrious exiles from every part of the Peninsula.

Dante records the courtesy with which he was received by Cangrande Della Scala. And the court of this prince, and of his still more famous successor Cansignorio, has been made the scene of tragic and romantic incidents. It is this connection between art and history that gives their chief value to the monuments of Italy, which lends them a charm beyond their artistic beauty, and which addresses itself to our imagination through our senses.

The Scalas perhaps now owe their "fresh remembrance" rather to the beautiful and conspicuous monuments they raised to their own glory than to their place in history. Though Cangrande was a great man, tried by a far higher standard than that which posterity can safely adopt in estimating the characters of his contemporaries, he was not without faults, both grievous and heavy; but endowed with qualities rare at any time, and far rarer in the age and country to which he belonged. He was succeeded by princes less worthy than himself, and the race finally dwindled and became extinct; and their sceptre passed into the hands of more powerful and more crafty neighbours.

A brief notice of the princes, whose bones repose in this romantic cemetery, may not be an unfitting preface to the lines which a visit to it suggested.

Mastino I, the first of his house who reigned with supreme authority in Verona, bore the modest title of Captain of the People, to which rank he was raised by acclamation. He was a wise and prudent governor, and a warrior of approved sagacity. He reigned for sixteen years, from 1261 to 1277.

He was succeeded by his brother, Albert I. To this last succeeded his three sons, Bartolomeo, Alboino, and Francesco, better known by the surname of Cangrande, the hero of the race. This last named prince was succeeded by his nephew Albert II, in the year 1314, and subsequently by another nephew, Mastino II, in the year 1329. Cansignorio I, and Paul-Alboin were the next in succession. The first was the father of the magnificent Cansignorio II, who in his turn was succeeded by his two natural sons Bartolomeo II, and Antonio, the twelfth and last lord of Verona, at whose death, or rather expulsion, the independence of the city ceased, and the state became very shortly a province of the Venetian Republic.

Though the love of illustrious birth exists in Italy, as in every other part of the world, the total want of it has never proved a bar to the success of a fortunate adventurer. Legitimacy, too, which was so early established as essential to legal succession in the rest of Europe, was wholly disregarded in Italy. It was not till the subjection of the Peninsula to the Spanish crown that titles of honour, irreproachable pedigree, and the laws of primogeniture, were adopted as indispensable badges of nobility.

The tombs of the Scaligers, the most romantic and the most magnificent in existence, are crowded within the narrow precincts of the cemetery of Santa Maria Antica, the parish church of the Palace, the ancient seat of government in which the Scaligers first fixed their residence. Though much confined, nothing can be more fortunate than their position, surrounded by striking and beautiful objects. The lofty tower, the ancient palace, the dilapidated church, the projecting balcony supported on massive brackets, the mouldering shield, with the weed and the wild flower peeping from every interstice, unite to form a combination of beauty and harmony which is heightened and illuminated by the bright Italian sun which shines over the whole.

The tombs, though standing in the open air and in the most crowded part of the city, defended only by a screen of slight and elastic ironwork, have sustained no injury in a capital which is also a fortress, the scene of frequent civil brawls, often disputed obstinately with an enemy, and taken and retaken by storm.

They are aptly described in Forsyth as "models of the most elegant Gothic, light, open spiry, full of statues caged in niches; yet, slender as they seem, these tombs have stood entire for five hundred years in a public street, the frequent theatre of sedition"<sup>31</sup>.

The earlier tombs are stern and heavy; the classic sarcophagus of the Romans, within whose ponderous and marble jaws are interred according to tradition, the founders of the dynasty, Mastino I, Alberto, Bartolomeo and Alboino Della Scala.

The first of these is assigned to Mastino, who was raised, as has been already noticed, by acclamation to the rank of Captain General of the People, and who, after a reign of sixteen years, was treacherously murdered near his own residence; the memory of which crime is still preserved in the name of the place where it occurred, *Il Volto Barbaro*.

In the second sarcophagus are interred the remains of Albert, the brother, successor, and avenger of Mastino. The sides and lid of the sarcophagus are adorned with sculptured shields and a sacred subject in low relief.

The third is assigned, but without certainty, to Bartolomeo, the third of his house who reigned in Verona, but still with no other title than Captain of the People. He reigned but for two years, from 1302 to 1304. He had the reputation of being a prudent and amiable prince, and his premature loss was regretted by his subject fellow citizens. But his greatest claim on the interest of posterity is, that during his reign the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet occurred, a tale which was commemorated in Italy, both in prose and verse, before Shakespeare gave it a world-wide celebrity. He is the "Escalus, Prince of Verona" of the play.

The fourth of these massive tombs contains the bones of Alboino Della Scala, the son of Alberto I. Though there is no inscription, the insignia of the house of Scala are sculptured on the lid, and on the allusive ladder is perched the Imperial eagle, to denote the favour of the Emperor

<sup>31</sup> This is a reference to Forsyth, 352. Forsyth's book was another publication from John Murray, prominent in publishing work on Italy.

of Germany, and the Ghibeline partialities of the lords of Verona, upon whom the title of Imperial Vicar was now bestowed.

“Che 'n su la scala porta il santo uccello”<sup>32</sup>.

The most remarkable tombs are those of Cangrande, Mastino II, and Cansignorio. The tomb of Cangrande, whom Dante calls “il Gran Lombardo”, is placed beneath a canopy and above the door of the church. The body lies in a sarcophagus in the robes of peace in which he was interred, while his figure on horseback, armed at all points exactly cap-à-pie, and like the ghost in Hamlet with his beaver up, surmounts the canopy. He died too soon for his glory, at the premature age of thirty-eight. Had he lived longer, it has been thought he might have realized those prophetic promises that “the wizard Michael Scott”, pronounced at his birth, which historians have more soberly repeated, and revived the Lombard kingdom of Italy.

The tomb of Mastino II, is more elaborate, more costly, and more imposing than that of Cangrande. The body reposes beneath a lofty canopy on a sarcophagus raised on pillars above the ground. Saints and martyrs guard the sepulchre, and low reliefs, representing the crimes that man is prone to, and the calamities which are their consequence; the origin of evil, the toil and travail inflicted as a curse on his posterity, the first murder and the sensuality of Noah, are sculptured on its sides and on the marble canopy. The new dispensation is also illustrated, and the redemption of the world and the great atonement are figured forth in the Crucifixion and the Resurrection.

Mastino II was the nephew of Cangrande, and, with his nephew Alberto II, who had also been associated with his uncle on the throne, began his reign in 1329, and closed it in 1351. His ambition was equal to that of his uncle Cangrande, but his ability was less; and before he closed his reign, symptoms were already visible that the sceptre of his house would soon be transferred into other and more powerful hands.

The tomb of Cansignorio is the largest, the most imposing, and most magnificent of the race. The design is borrowed and amplified from the tombs of his immediate predecessors, already described.

Like that of Mastino, the sarcophagus on which the statue of the defunct lies stretched is raised on pillars and surmounted by a canopy, upon which stands an equestrian statue, fully armed and with lance in rest. Guardian angels and fainted warriors stand around, and claim the departed chief for their client. St. George, St. Martin, St. Valentine and St. Lewis have each their separate niche and canopy. The Virgin Mary and the Saviour bestow their benedictions, and the cardinal virtues are sculptured on pinnacles above the canopies. If the page of history and the tale of tradition may be credited, the prayers and intercessions of this celestial brotherhood were indeed necessary to secure the acceptance of their wayward client. Cansignorio raised himself to the sovereignty by a crime, and secured the succession by another committed on his deathbed, to his two natural sons Bartolomeo and Antonio.

With these two princes, the first of whom was murdered by the hand of the last, the race expired ingloriously in the year 1388.

The following lines were written in the year 1832, after the disturbances which followed, the French revolution had been quieted by the military occupation of the whole of the Italian Peninsula by the Austrians. They were originally printed in a miscellany called the “Tribute”, edited by the late Lord Northampton, a work which had little or no circulation, and is unknown except to those who originally subscribed for it<sup>33</sup>. These lines will, I believe, be wholly new to most of our members.

<sup>32</sup> Dante, *Paradiso*, XVII, 70-72.

<sup>33</sup> For the poem's first publication: Cheney, 1837. The list of subscribers to the volume includes: Colonel Cheney; Mrs. Cheney; R.H. Cheney, Esq.; Edward Cheney, Esq.; Miss Cheney. Among the pieces printed, “On Our Childhood” by Mrs. Cheney (*ibid.*, 353-54).

*The Tombs of the Scaligers, Verona*  
(by Robert Henry Cheney)

Where Verona's towers look down  
On the valleys once her own,  
Though her glory long has fled,  
And the crown has left her head,  
Traveller, there thou still may'st trace  
Relics of a royal race.  
Many a marble tomb is there,  
Many a niche of sculpture rare,  
Many a fretted canopy,  
Where in death the mighty lie,  
Princes of a race gone by.  
In that lofty pillar'd shrine  
Rests the chief of Scala's line:  
There to guard the holy ground,  
Sainted warriors stand around,  
Imaged in the sculptured stone:  
Soldiers they of Christ alone,  
Who, their Christian warfare done,  
Wear the crown their valour won.  
On the mimic mail impress'd,  
Still the cross adorns each breast;  
And aloft each martial hand  
Raises still his threatening brand,  
Swift to flay, and strong to save,  
Meet to guard the warrior's grave.

They have borne this mortal coil,  
Stain'd by blood and worn by toil;  
They have known the passions' force  
Which beset the warrior's course,  
Envy, hate, and wrath, and fear,  
Vainly dogg'd their bright career;  
Thirst of power and love of gain  
Spread their gilded snares in vain:  
They have triumph'd over sin,  
Frauds without and lusts within.  
They who stood the best can tell  
How to pity those who fell.  
Saintly band, a blessing crave  
For a brother warrior's grave.

Soon his race of glory run,  
Low has sunk La Scala's sun;  
High he kept his heavenly way,  
Bright his noon, but brief his day,  
Not one lingering gleam of light  
Left to gild the covering night.  
All La Scala's power and pride  
Frail and mouldering marbles hide;  
And the stranger's iron hand  
Rules La Scala's conquered land.



## The tombs of the Scaligers at Verona

Hero saints, upraised on high,  
Models to men's wavering eye,  
How to live and how to die;  
Rouse ye now the wise and brave,  
Warn them from the warrior's grave,  
That the warrior's crown to share  
They the warrior's fate must dare –  
You who would be Freedom's friends,  
Learn how pure are Freedom's ends.  
Selfish aims those ends obscure not,  
Foreign aids those ends endure not;  
By patriot hands her work is wrought  
By patriot blood her triumphs bought;  
You, who would be great and free,  
First must merit Liberty;  
Then may ye Freedom's banner wave,  
And proudly ask a warrior's grave.

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*Abstract*

This contribution relates to two of Benjamin Kohl's interests recorded in the bibliography included in this volume: signorial lordships in the Veneto in the late Middle Age and the interpretation of that period of Italian history by historians of the Victorian and Edwardian era. Here the regime chosen will not be the one that occupied Ben Kohl for much of his researching and publishing life, the Carrara of Padua, but rather their near neighbours and frequent adversaries, the Della Scala of Verona. The English commentators on that dynasty whose accounts are presented here are not nearly as well known, nor were they as influential, as Julia Cartwright and Cecilia Ady, discussed by Ben Kohl towards the end of his career, but the Cheney brothers – and Edward Cheney in particular – were prominent members of the British community in Rome and Venice in the nineteenth century and did play a part in raising interest in the cultural history of Italy.

*Keywords*

Middle Ages; 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century; 19<sup>th</sup> century; Verona; sculpture; historiography; Della Scala family

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