THE CULTURE OF VIOLENCE IN RENAISSANCE ITALY

Proceedings of the International Conference

Georgetown University at Villa Le Balze, 3-4 May, 2010

Georgetown University

edited by

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VIOLENCE AND REPRESSION IN LATE MEDIEVAL ITALY

In every historical period, as in any society, violence can take many forms. It can be expressed in revenge and conflict, laws and sentences, words and images. Between the second half of the thirteenth century and the first half of the fifteenth, central and northern Italian city-states frequently suffered moments of disruption of the social peace because of factional battles. Violence became the language of political resolution, and repression its natural consequence. The good and peaceful state of the community was achieved through the political use of banishment (a monetary fine), forced confinement (a political sentence), *ammonizione* (a warning), or public executions. All those who, due to every sort of earthly corruption, had contaminated the good government and the peaceful state had their voices repressed. All over the Italian peninsula the old consular nobility was divided, and the *podestà*, a stronger, more impartial executive magistrate, was emerging as the preeminent figure. Violent attacks began to be organized by factional leaders who were motivated by a thirst for revenge and the desire to erase all trace of their opponents' power. These violent conflicts represented a political act and, at the same time, an episode in the bloody struggle between the two opposing parties, the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. The end of the fighting and the subsequent attacks and massacres announced the triumph of one faction over the other. Final victory could only be achieved by those able to conquer the city's strongholds. Wars and insurrections, provoked by an important family or a political party, inevitably produced a monopoly of power maintained by the strength

of the winner. In this paper I shall examine psychological and social factors that contributed to the rise in violence and repression in late medieval Italian city-states.[1]

In a political climate like this, full of violence and hate, communal legislation could not prohibit the practice of vendetta. Political struggles were deeply embedded in the collective mentality and ingrained habits of the citizenry along with the progressive division of the consular commune. This mentality was the product of a specific culture based on the practice of blood feuds; the conflicts were the expression of a particular environment that made and used them as the most efficient instrument for the resolution of political conflict (fig. 1). In 1939 Gina Fasoli (1905-1992) theorized that "in every Italian city-state there are two political parties always scuffling and always ready to turn the whole city upside down."[2] She was referring to the case of the Geremei and Lambertazzi in Bologna, the Ardinghelli and Salvucci in San Gimignano, the Oddi and Baglioni in Perugia, the Visconti and Gherardesca in Pisa, the Aigoni and Graisolfi in Modena, the Orsini and Colonna in Rome, the Fieschi and Spinola in Genoa. But although the Guelphs had won out over the Ghibellines in 1266, Dante writes that at the end of the 1290s the Guelphs split into

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[1] David Herlihy, "Some Psychological and Social Roots of Violence in the Tuscan Cities," in *Violence and Civil Disorder*, pp. 129-154; Daniel Waley, "A Blood-Feud with a Happy Ending: Siena, 1285-1304," in *City and Countryside in Late Medieval and Renaissance Italy: Essays Presented to Philip Jones*, ed. by Trevor Dean and Chris Wickham (London: Hambledon, 1990), pp. 45-53. On the practice of the blood feud, see Andrea Zorzi, "La cultura della vendetta nel conflitto politico in età comunale," in *Le storie e la memoria: In onore di Arnold Esch*, ed. by Roberto Delle Donne and Andrea Zorzi (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2002), pp. 135-170. On city-states as independent political entities made up of a city and its surrounding *contado* (subject territory), see Daniel Waley, *The Italian City-Republics*, 3rd edition (London and New York: Longman, 1988), and Philip Jones, *The Italian City-State. From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997). All these human expressions are bound to passions, always connected to cultural rules, personal tendencies, and beliefs of societies. Barbara H. Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions in History," *The American Historical Review*, 107 (2002), p. 842.

[2] Gina Fasoli, "Ricerche sulla legislazione antimagnatizia nei comuni dell'alta e media Italia," *Rivista di storia del diritto italiano*, XII (1939), I, pp. 86-133, and II, pp. 240-309; II, p. 263.

two coalitions: "After prolonged discord, they'll come to blood; the rustic party [the Whites] will chase the other [the Blacks] out with great offence. But then, within three years, they too must fall and the other party prevail, using the power of one who tacks his sails"[3] (fig. 2). This culture of 'opposing factions' – given visual form in paintings by Giotto (1277-1337) (fig. 3) – permeates the legislation of central and northern Italian city-states.[4]

Late medieval writers make recurrent reference to violence as a part of a citizen's education. From sources, it is evident that politicians shared, diffused, and accepted the practice of violence to pacify the political arena. In the set of beliefs of communal citizens, the practice of aggressiveness played a pre-eminent part;[5]

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[3] "Dopo lunga tencione / verranno al sangue, e la parte selvaggia / caccerà l'altra con molta offensione. / Poi appresso convien che questa caggia / infra tre soli, e che l'altra sormonti / con la forza di tal che testé piaggia": Dante Alighieri, *La Divina Commedia*, ed. by Fredi Chiappelli (Milan: Mursia, 1965), *Inferno*, VI, 64–69; all citations of this text are from this edition, cited by *canto* and line number.

[4] "Per loro superbia e per loro malizia e per gara d'ufici, ànno così nobile città [Florence] disfatta": Dino Compagni, *La cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suoi* (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1912), book I, chap. 2, p. 8. See also Dante, *Inferno*, VI, 60-75.

[5] The history of hate, fear, cruelty and love – which easily turn into passion and lust – became one of the keys for "reading the cultural settings of societies" starting in 1941, when Lucien Febvre wrote an article in which he theorized that "emotional life [is] always ready to overflow the intellectual life." According to Febvre the associations created by emotions contribute to the building of the languages and the institutions of societies: Lucien Febvre, "La sensibilité et l'histoire: Comment reconstituer la vie affective d'autrefois?," *Annales d'histoire sociale*, 3 (1941), pp. 5-20. In more recent times this approach to the study of history has had renewed success. In 1985 the modernists Peter Stearns and Carol Stearns published in *The American Historical Review* an article in which the theory of *emotionology* – that is, the fusion of sociology to psychology as privileged points of observation for the study of history – was developed. On this theme see Peter N. Stearns and Carol Zisowitz Stearns, "Emotionology: Clarifying the History of Emotions and Emotional Standards," *American Historical Review*, 90 (1985), pp. 813-836, and Peter N. Stearns and Carol Zisowitz Stearns, *Anger. The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986). In 2002 Barbara H. Rosenwein wrote an article, again published in *The American Historical Review*, maintaining that every culture has its forms of expressivity, and emotions depend on language, cultural practices, expectations, and moral beliefs: Rosenwein, "Worrying about Emotions," pp. 821-845. In 2008 Carol Lansing theorized that communal societies had their politics conditioned

sometime between 1261 and 1291 the judge Bono Giamboni wrote in his moral treatise *Il libro de' vizi e delle virtù* that revenge is the "virtue by which everyone is allowed to vanquish his enemy."[6] In his *Tesoretto*, Brunetto Latini (c. 1220-1294) commented that "all those who have given offense have to be vigilant and go about the city with an armed guard."[7] And again, underlining the political abilities of the *podestà*, Brunetto writes in his *Tresor*, "there is no doubt, as the world says, that he [the *podestà*] knows and wants to balance judgment, to give justice back its proper political weight, and to punish all malefactors with the sword of justice."[8] The chronicler Giovanni Villani (1276-1348) obsessively writes of intrigues and discords between opposing families within Florence ("intrigue and discord... among the Adimari and the Tosinghi and other households")[9] (fig. 4).

The Florentine merchant Paolo da Certaldo considers in his *Libro di buoni costumi* that "the prime happiness for a human being is the practice of revenge."[10] Ser Filippo Ceffi, a Florentine notary of the first half of the fourteenth century, in his *Dicerie* invites the rectors of the commune to create peace and concord among citizens by repressing every act of dissent; justice cannot be separat-

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by passions, and that the promulgation and enforcement of the laws in restraint of grief led medieval communes to a well-ordered state: Carol Lansing, *Passion and Order. Restraint of Grief in the Medieval Communes* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[6] Bono Giamboni, *Il libro de' vizi e delle virtudi e il trattato di virtù e di vizi*, ed. by Cesare Segre (Turin: Einaudi, 1968), XXXVI, i.e., the chapter on *Delle schiere della Iustitia e de' suoi capitani*.

[7] "Chi ha offeso deve sempre stare all'erta e girare per la città con una guardia armata": Brunetto Latini, *Il tesoretto*, ed. by Giovanni Pozzi and Gianfranco Contini, in *Poeti del Duecento*, ed. by Gianfranco Contini (Milan and Naples: Ricciardi, 1960), vol. II, pp. 168-284.

[8] "Que vos savez et volez metre jugement en pois, justise a la mesure, et ferir l'espee dou droit a la vengence des maufaitors": Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Pietro G. Beltrami, Paolo Squillacioti, Plinio Torri, and Sergio Vatteroni (Turin: Einaudi, 2007), III, 77, p. 803.

[9] "Brighe e discordie [...] tra gli Adimari e' Tosinghi' e tra altre casate": Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, ed. by Giuseppe Porta (Parma: Guanda, 1990-1991), IX/1, vol. II, pp. 11-12.

[10] "La prima allegrezza si è fare sua vendetta": Paolo da Certaldo, "Libro di buoni costumi," in *Mercanti scrittori*, ed. by Vittore Branca (Milan: Rizzoli, 1986), p. 54.

ed from revenge, because every citizen is authorized to act violently ("to ask help and advice from your friends on how to carry out your revenge").[11] Edward Muir has shown that feuding persisted until the early modern age, becoming the principal framework for all social relationships in many parts of the Mediterranean (especially in mountainous areas as well as regions distant from the political center of the country or along borders between states).[12] Toward the end of the sixteenth century, Giovanni Botero (1544-1617) writes in his *Della ragion di Stato* (1589) that the rich were especially difficult to govern; their luxurious habits and permissive upbringing did not accustom them to self-discipline, and their pride made them contemptuous of authority. But the poor too – he continues – did not find it easy to live under the law; their hardships prepared them for any and all dangers, so that they had almost nothing to lose by armed revolt.[13]

The Bible castigated numerous vices, but it singled out pride and avarice above all others. Christian tradition gave pride and avarice a pivotal position as driving forces of the worldly city. Augustine insisted on the unbroken relationship between the two, explaining that the devil had been made to fall by avarice, and that everyone knows that avarice consisted not only of the love of money, but even more the love of power. This means that for late medieval society pride and avarice were combined, connected, and indivisible (figs. 5 and 6). Among the seven deadly sins, pride – in Greek *hubris* and in Latin *superbia* – is considered the ultimate source from which the others arise. In the *Divine Comedy* Dante

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[11] "E però, messere podestade, il quale siete signore, e a cui s'appartiene di fare giustizia e vendetta, commovete il vostro valore e siate d'animo forte": *Le dicerie di ser Filippo Ceffi notaio fiorentino*, ed. by Luigi Biondi (Turin: Chirio e Mina, 1825), p. 60; "come si dee adomandare consiglio e aiuto agli amici per fare sua vendetta": *Ivi*, p. 27. On Filippo Ceffi and feud as a social practice, see *Ivi*, pp. 20, 22, 27, 59, 60, 61, 73, 74, 84, and 86.

[12] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 104-114; according to him, famous epicenters were Iceland, the Scottish Highlands, Gévaudan in France, the island of Corsica, Liguria and Friuli in Italy, Albania and Montenegro in the Balkans (see pp. 105-106).

[13] "Del modo di ovviare a' romori e a' sollevamenti," in Giovanni Botero, *Della ragion di stato*, ed. by Chiara Continisio (Rome: Donzelli, 1997), book IV, p. 93ff.

refers to pride as the love of self perverted to hatred and contempt for one's neighbor. Everyone in the deeply Christian communal society was well aware of Lucifer and his struggle against God. Everyone was aware that this desire caused his fall and his transformation into Satan. Everyone sensed the story of Lucifer as the quintessential example of pride. To induce feelings of humility, Dante imagined the penance for those guilty of the sin of pride as being forced to walk with stone slabs on their backs (figs. 7 and 8). Cupidity – *avaritia* in Latin – is a consequence of the rapacious desire for wealth, status, and power. Saint Thomas Aquinas writes that greed was "a sin against God, just as all mortal sins, in as much as man condemns things eternal for the sake of temporal things"; in Dante's *Purgatory*, the penitents were bound and laid face down on the ground for having concentrated too much on earthly thoughts. Cupidity defines other examples of greedy behavior: disloyalty, deliberate betrayal or treason (especially for personal gain). Furthermore, greed inspired scavenging and the hoarding of materials or objects, theft and robbery, especially by means of violence, trickery, or manipulation of authority. Such misdeeds included simony, by which one profits from the church. The abuse of power was the worst vice for all those holding public offices.[14]

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[14] According to the bibliography, pride diminishes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and vanishes in the fourteenth century (on this, see Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes Before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *The American Historical Review*, 76 [1971], pp. 20-21). The sources show that pride and avarice are both quoted as the main causes of social disorder. On the seven deadly sins – i.e., wrath, greed, sloth, pride, lust, envy, and gluttony – see Morton W. Bloomfield, *The Seven Deadly Sins. An Introduction to the History of a Religious Concept, with Special Reference to Medieval English Literature* (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State College Press, 1952); John Bossy, "Moral Arithmetic: Seven Sins into Ten Commandments," in *Conscience and Casuistry in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 214-234; and Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000). Samuel Kline Cohn Jr. has recently posited that humanist works of the fifteenth century had not "anticipated Calvinist ideals of seventeenth-century English preachers and other thinkers in praise of the accumulation of wealth for its own sake. In the work of these fifteenth-century thinkers, like their less famous contemporary testators, the utility of wealth and the splendor of objects and possessions – not exchange value – was extolled": Samuel Kline Cohn Jr., "Renaissance Attachment to Things: Material Culture in Last

In the collective imagination of late medieval authors, avarice and pride were considered the main causes of civic conflict. They could be elaborated in various ways according to the situation and erudition of the writer, but they were universally perceived as the main threat for proper management of the *bonum commune* (i.e., good government). The Ghibelline notary and chronicler Giovanni da Cermenate (Milan c. 1280-c. 1344) writes in his *Historia de situ Ambrosianae urbis et cultoribus ipsius* (covering the period from the origins of Milan to 1314) that pride and avarice brought about the schism of the Della Torre family of Milan.[15] A reflection on pride and avarice, certainly influenced by Sallust's analysis of Roman corruption, influenced the writings of Albertino Mussato (1261-1329) in identifying *avaritia* as the prime corrosive force in Paduan society.[16] At the end of the thirteenth century, the anonymous chronicler of the *Storie pistoresi* attributes the disastrous division in Padua of the Guelph party to the pride (ambition) and avarice of two different branches of the Cancellieri family: "and in the city or the countryside there was no one else as great as they whom they [the Cancellieri family] did not subjugate."[17]

Similarly, Dino Compagni (c. 1255-1324) showed the division of the Florentine Guelphs into the Blacks and the Whites to be caused by the pride of the Donati and the wealth of the Cerchi. Giovanni Villani inveighed against the two wealthy families among the ranks of evil citizens who have corrupted and depraved the whole world with false customs and false gain. Compagni defines the Donati as "noblemen and warriors, but not of outstanding

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Wills and Testaments," under review by the *Economic History Review*. I would like to thank Sam Cohn for letting me read the article before publication.

[15] Giovanni da Cermenate, *Historia Iohannis de Cermenate, notarii Mediolanensis, de situ Ambrosianae urbis et cultoribus ipsius et circumstantium locorum ab initio et per tempora successive et gestis imp. Henrici VII*, ed. by Luigi Alberto Ferrai (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1889), p. 26.

[16] Albertino Mussato, *De Traditione Patavii ad Canem Grandem*, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, X (Milan, 1727), col. 715.

[17] "E per loro grandigia e ricchezza montano in tanta superbia che no era nessuno sì grande nè in città nè in contado che non tenessero al disotto": *Storie pistoresi*, ed. by Silvio Adrasto Barbi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, Vol. XI, part 5 (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1925), p. 3.

wealth,"[18] and the Cerchi as "great businessmen and very rich merchants… but soft and unsuspecting, boorish and ungrateful, people who in a short time had come into great wealth and power."[19] At a public dance celebrating May Day, Dino Compagni reported that gangs of young men of two factions traded insults and blows (fig. 9). Pride and wealth were again turning rivalry into open war. "The blow," he reports, "caused the destruction of our city, because it increased the great hatred among the citizens."[20] When Dante asks in the third circle of the *Inferno* what were the reasons for Florentine discord, the answer "Three sparks that set on fire every heart / are envy, pride, and avarice"[21] (fig. 10).

Between 1404 and 1405 the Florentine Dominican friar – later cardinal – Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) viewed social disorder as rooted in the dishonesty, greed, and ambition of individual citizens. These vices have for Dominici both psychological and social dimensions: "There is no justice, but deceit, force, money and factional and family ties; all the books of law can be burned."[22] At the end of the fifteenth century Francesco Patrizi of Siena analyzed civic vices, describing the citizens' behavior, and considered pas-

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[18] "Gentili uomini e guerrieri e di non soperchia ricchezza": Giovanni Villani, *Nuova cronica*, IX/39, vol. II, p. 63.

[19] "Di grande affare, ricchissimi mercatanti che la loro compagnia era de le maggiori del mondo; uomini erano morbidi e innocenti, salvatichi e ingrati, siccome genti venuti di piccolo tempo in grande stato e podere": Villani, *Nuova cronica*, IX/39, vol. II, p. 63. "La gente nova e i subiti guadagni /orgoglio e dismisura han generata, / Fiorenza, in te, sì che tu già ten piagni" ("New people, and sudden profits / Have produced pride and excess, / Florence, in you, so that already you are weeping over it"): Dante, *Inferno*, XVI, 73-75.

[20] "Il quale colpo fu la distruzione della nostra città, perchè crebbe molto odio tra i cittadini": Dino Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. by Isidoro del Lungo (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1916), book I, chap. 22, p. 69.

[21] "Superbia, invidia e avarizia sono / le tre faville c'hanno i cuori accesi": Dante, *Inferno*, VI, 74-75.

[22] "La quale [iustizia] oggi è sbandita per simili difetti dell'universo mondo; e non è altro iustizia che inganni, forza, danari e amicizia, o parentado; tutti gli altri libri di ciascuna legge si possono abbruciare": Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, ed. by Donato Salvi (Florence: Garinei, 1860), p. 178. On Dominici see Nirit Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers. Giovanni Dominici (1356-1419) and Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001).

sions as elements making up the human temperament. These unsettling perturbations included many emotions – anger, irascibility, volatility, hate, discord, desire – and vices such as lust, pride, and avarice. According to Patrizi, violence is the consequence of these civic vices. It is caused by arrogance and social stratification; both affect the temperament of the citizen and threaten the reign of reason in the human soul.[23]

Numerous were the ways to send messages to legitimize political choices in the name of "the common good and the peaceful state" of the community. The Guelph regimes discredited the Ghibellines (as a consequence of the defeat of Benevento in 1266) as being guilty of having committed crimes against humanity, the Church, and the Christian community; the *popolo* demonized the magnates (as a consequence of the writing of the Ordinances of Justice of 1293) as ferocious and rapacious beasts able to corrupt – with their social behavior – the sacred space of city life. The Florence State Archive records many sentences of heresy against Ghibellines, who were treated as heretics and public enemies of the Holy Church of Rome, so that they could be punished as oppo-

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[23] "Hac animi perturbatione quicumque civis laborat, inutilis est reipublicae, et in hominum coetu importunus habetur. Dissidet sequidem ab aliis, nemini cedit, omnemque humanam societatem dirimit, principum aulas perturbat, seditionibus ac partibus omnia inficit. Hinc conspirationes coniurationesque oriuntur, hinc caedes, direptiones, veneficia, et pestes illae teterrimae, quae status omnes publicos privatosque labefactare soleant' ("Whatever citizen labors under this perturbation of the soul [the vice of discord] is useless to the commonwealth and is recognized as disruptive in human assemblies. He disagrees with others; he gives in to one; he destroys all human society; he creates disorders in the halls of princes; and he corrupts all things with quarrels and divisions. From this arise plots and conspiracies, murders, destruction, poisonings and those black plagues, which are wont to undermine all public and private establishments"): *Francisci Patricii senensis de regno et regis institutione libri IX* (Paris: Aegidium Gorbinum, 1567), p. 123. This theory was influenced by Brunetto Latini, who wrote that like the world itself, the human personality is composed of four elements – that is, hot, cold, dry, and moist – and that the various combinations of these elements produce the four classical psychological types: phlegmatic, sanguine, choleric, and melancholic ("Autresi en sont complexionés le cors des homes et des bestes et de touz autres animaus, car en eaus a .iiii. humors: colera, qui est chaude et seche; fleume, qui est froide et moiste; sanc, qui est chaut et moiste; melancolie, qui est froide et seche": Brunetto Latini, *Tresor*, ed. by Beltrami et. al., book 1, chap. 99, p. 126.

nents of the state.[24] Heresy charges justified the winner's appropriation of ecclesiastical offices and substantial property. The charge of heresy in some cases could trigger the judicial procedure of banishment, proclaimed by the secular authority on the recommendation of the bishop of the city. When this happened, the heretic, if he had not already fled, was arrested within eight days of recognition of his guilt, prevented from having a defense lawyer, and deprived of the right to produce witnesses during the trial. In the 1330s the Florentine Republic created a magistracy composed of twelve citizens whose task was to guarantee the arrest of the heretics or the execution of their death sentence. In Milan heresy was assimilated to necromancy and to witchcraft, making it punishable by death by fire, as is evident in the recorded acts of the *podestà* relative to the years between 1385 and 1429. Heresy charges had little foundation in religious differences, and were instead trumped up by the men in power to punish political oppo-

[24] The origin of the word "heresy" is from Latin *haeresis*, meaning "doctrine" or "philosophical school". However, during the Middle Ages the meaning of this word became derogatory and was connected to a small religious group distinct from a larger one, united by a particular set of beliefs and practices, the *secta*. This term meant treason to God, the worst offense against Christian society. Heretics were those who, while keeping the outward appearance of Christian religion, pursued false opinions from a desire for human approval, earthly reward, or worldly pleasures. This contamination, this infection from which true believers had to protect themselves, threatened the very foundation of the Church, papal authority, and Guelph and popular communes. The idea of contamination and infection comes from the early Middle Ages: see, for instance, Gregory the Great (pope from 590 to 604), in his *Moralia*, the great commentary on the book of Job, where the fallen angel is considered the *alienus*, the alien or stranger *par excellence* (*Moralia*, XII, 36, 41). The fallen angel is the first among those who were alienated from God and from the divine order; and the outsider, Gregory stresses, always displays malignity ('Quis vero alienus nisi apostata angelus vocatur?': *Job*, XV, 19). Following the Scriptures, Gregory teaches in the same treatise that Christians are only wayfarers on this earth (*viator, peregrinus*), on their way to their true – that is, heavenly – homeland (*Moralia*, XXXIV, 3, 6). According to Gregory the Great's mystical interpretation, Babylon is the "city of confusion" which generates the sterile mind of those who are not disposed to the order of the right life ("et quia Bablyon confusion interpretatur": *Moralia*, VI, 16, 24). Alienation is essentially a failure to love God and a refusal to adhere to the order which he has given; it is something very evil and to be avoided at all costs, as evidenced in Gerhart B. Ladner, "Medieval Ideas on Alienation and Order," *Speculum*, 42 (1967), pp. 233-259.

nents, being used as political weapons. Heresy in the society of the communes was not a simple matter of religious belief, but became a part of the power struggle between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines.[25] It is not difficult to imagine that anyone facing such a charge would have tried to escape, thus admitting his guilt. In case of imprisonment, this would have automatically led to the death sentence and the destruction of his goods.[26]

Even when at the end of the thirteenth century the *popolo* took control of the government in many cities of central and northern Italy, politics continued to be led by the criteria of opposing factions. Public life demanded extended political rights to the *popolo*, and the communal leadership continued to develop the "culture of opposites," marginalizing the old aristocratic nobility from public offices. Popular forces now conflicted with the nobility, targeting the wealth and social behavior of the traditional urban and rural aristocracy. The *popolo* was authorized to discredit the magnates; it used the metaphor of the wolf and the lamb, identifying wolves as aggressive, ferocious and rapacious animals that corrupted the sacred space of the city-state. Because of their social behavior and inability to respect the good and peaceful state of the city, magnates could be banished from public offices. Through this campaign of discrediting, the new regime of the rich merchants developed a political ideology of justice based on social contrast, discriminating against all those who had controlled the state from the beginning of its communal political life. This campaign against the magnates legitimized for the *popolo* this form of social abuse.[27] It

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[25] In 1283, i.e., nineteen years after his death, Farinata degli Uberti, the most famous character of his lineage, was condemned for heresy along with his wife, Adaleta; his body was exhumed and burned, his ashes scattered, and his properties confiscated and destroyed: Nicola Ottokar, "La condanna postuma di Farinata degli Uberti," in Idem, *Studi comunali e fiorentini* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1948), pp. 115-123.

[26] The anthropological view of heresy has been studied by Carol Lansing, "Medieval Heresy: An Anthropological View," *Social History*, vol. 11, no. 3 (1986), pp. 345-362.

[27] Fabrizio Ricciardelli, "Lupi e agnelli nel discorso politico dell'Italia comunale," in *The Languages of Political Society. Western Europe, 14th-17th Centuries*, ed. by Andrea Gamberini, Jean-Philippe Genet, and Andrea Zorzi (Rome: Viella, 2011), pp. 269-285.

is curious to note that Remigio dei Girolami (1247-1319) likened the Ghibelline to the lion, the symbol of Florentine power, and the Guelph to the calf, because in Dante's time they were the winners in the political arena, and the calf is a sacrificial animal; the artisans were likened to sheep, innocent and useful because without any political weight[28] (fig. 11).

Every form of repression implies the mutual acceptance, by members of a community, of the legitimization of the office which is doing the repressing.[29] Repression is connected to perception of the city as a sacred space, and the idea of sacred is bound to the citizens' perception of inside as the town center (inviolable) and outside as the periphery (where the demons were). The city was always understood to be a community circumscribed within its own physical and institutional space. The natural condition was to live where one was born, where the tombs of one's ancestors were housed and protected by the walls, dwelling within the context of a community of neighbors united by ties of kinship and proximity. Like pilgrims, those who were forced outside their homeland were pushed and pulled across a world as changeable as their own condition. Those who suffered political exclusion were the result of individual or group negation of the dominant order, the accepted norms of coexistence with the laws in force. People forced into exile lived far from their own soil or their own land, beyond the confines of their homeland. The widespread practice of pushing rivals and enemies to the edges of society was meant to force them outside their consciousness and sacred life[30] (fig. 12).

A city was a defined physical space, usually marked out by city walls, which in its aggregation of structures contrasted with the surrounding countryside devoted to farming. It was also a legal space, a place where certain statutes applied, certain legal privileges pertained, and certain jurisdictional rights were exercised. It was fur-

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[28] Charles T. Davis, "An Early Florentine Political Theorist: Fra Remigio dei Girolami," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 104 (1960), p. 667.

[29] This concept is bound to the idea of justice people had in this period; see Samuel Youngs Edgerton, Jr., "Icons of Justice," *Past and Present*, 89 (1980), p. 25.

[30] Fabrizio Ricciardelli, "Introduzione," in *I luoghi del sacro. Il sacro e la città fra Medioevo ed Età moderna* (Florence: Mauro Pagliai Editore, 2008), pp. 11-18.

thermore a social space, a locus for persistent and frequent interactions that created a sensibility about who was a member of the community and who was an outsider. In addition, it was an idea, a place identified by a name and symbols that elicited a sensibility manifested as civic virtue. The city was a mystic body, a place that made possible a politicized community of people, who shared the same values respecting its sacred laws. The idea of *civitas* was a spiritual dimension, and citizens of the commune perceived it as "divine." They searched through Scriptures and the patristic commentaries to find evidence of the City of God and to absorb the idea of the New Jerusalem. Cities became places where they should – but did not – test their moral attitude or learn to subordinate selfishness and pride to the so-called Common Good (*bonum commune*).[31]

Cities were perceived to be communities that were like vicars of God, with the same authority reserved to the emperor. The experiment of the communal city-states bound forever the idea of the urban space to the idea of Pythagorean harmony, to the earthly form of the music of the spheres. Being an enemy of this harmony, promoted and developed by communal values, was understood to be a clear violation of natural as well as civic law, so that city governments were authorized to prevent and punish wrongdoers by means of criminal justice. The sacredness of the city space was counterbalanced by the constantly recurring phenomenon of the

[31] All those who were considered enemies of the *bonum commune* could be persecuted by the community itself. All those who committed crimes associated with the holding of public office, with intrigues and sedition against the commune and with debt legitimized the community to persecute them. Every citizen belonged to a state which could prosecute its political enemies, with the aim of compensation, securing reparation of an economic sort (fine) or of a physical nature (death sentence). Those who were considered enemies of the community could be likened to those sentenced for crimes. The denial of civic status sanctioned by statutory regulations was so far-reaching in such cases that if someone who was subject to a ban for political offences was murdered while in prison by one of his fellow prisoners, the crime was allowed to go unpunished. Many sentences provide further evidence of the harsh treatment reserved for traitors to the state: monetary fines and death sentences carried out in the normal way were not the worst punishments captured refugees had to fear; some had to undergo particularly humiliating sorts of execution, such as being dragged behind a mule until dead: Ricciardelli, *The Politics of Exclusion*, pp. 30-31.

division of urban oligarchies. New political landscapes were always the expression of oligarchic divisions which caused civil battles and violence. Marginalization of political opponents became a constant form of repression in city-states. During the thirteenth century, and for extended periods of time in the two centuries that followed, violence and repression were a part of everyday life and public psychology.

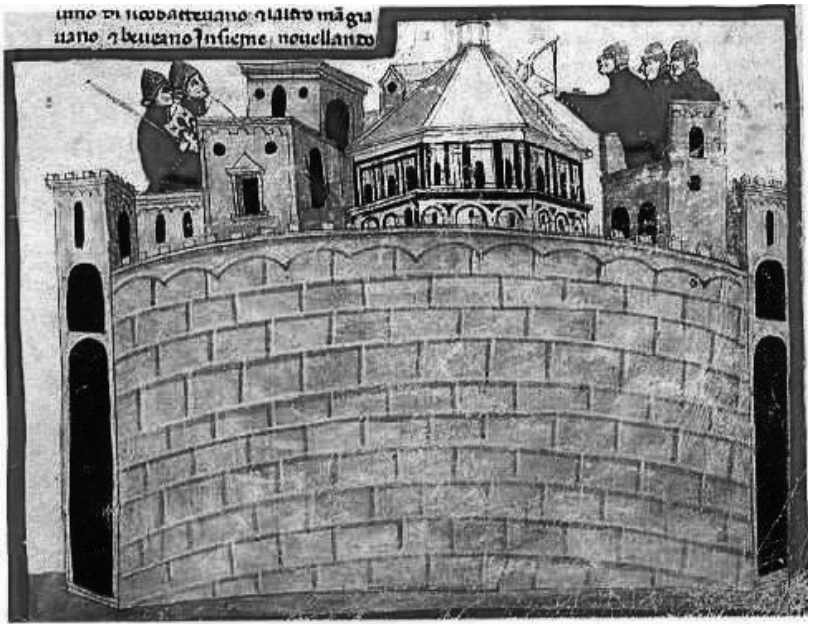
1. 

Fig. 1. This miniature reveals the social tension caused by the denial of power between socioeconomic groups in 1177 Florence. A few years later (Easter 1215), chroniclers explain the birth of Guelfs and Ghibellines.
Miniature from the *Cronica* of Giovanni Villani, mid-fourteenth century. Vatican Library, Chigi Manuscript, fol. 64r (I. VI, 9).

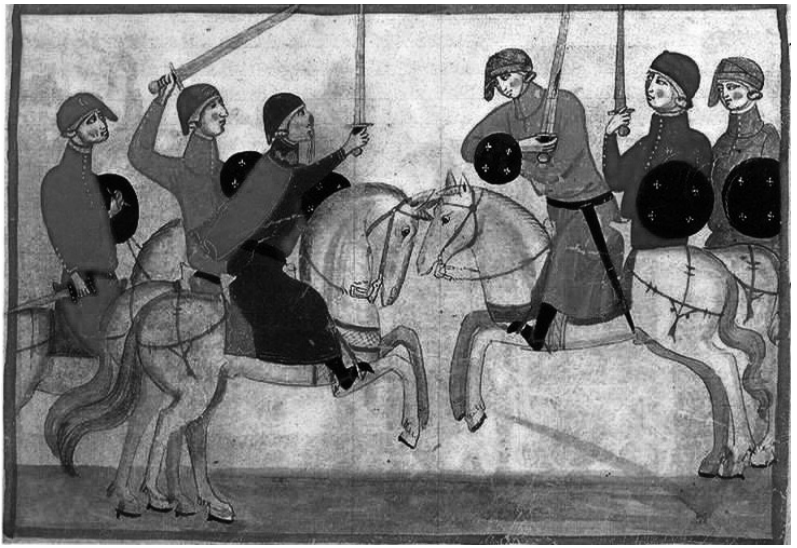
2. 

Fig. 2. The incident when Ricoverino dei Cerchi's nose was severed on the day of *Calendimaggio* (May Day) in 1300.
Miniature from the *Cronica* of Giovanni Villani, mid-fourteenth century. Vatican Library, Chigi Manuscript, fol. 164r (I. IX, 39).

3.

Fig. 3. Giotto di Bondone (b. 1267, Vespignano, d. 1337, Florence)
The Expulsion of the Demons from Arezzo
Upper Church, San Francesco, Assisi (before 1300).
This is the tenth of the twenty-eight scenes of Legend of Saint Francis. During the civil war in Arezzo, St. Francis saw demons over the city. He called upon a brother of his order, Sylvester, to drive them out. The picture area is dominated by the architecture of the city, which is divided from the rest of the world by a crack in the earth, and by the towering church building. Giotto portrays the saint deep in prayer in front of the latter. His strength seems to pass to Brother Sylvester, who raises his hand commandingly in the direction of the city of towers. Thereupon the demons flee, and the citizens can return to their business in peace – they can already be seen at the city gates.

4.

Fig. 4. Aristotle's Book II on vices and virtues, translated by Brunetto Latini. Miniature.
Master and pupils. Master seated at desk with a book. Pupils, some tonsured, seated before him.
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, Shelfmark: MS. Douce 319.