

GRANUM BONUM: GRAIN DISTRIBUTION AND THE EMERGENCE OF
POPULAR INSTITUTIONS IN MEDIEVAL GENOA

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Granum Bonum: Grain distribution and the emergence of popular institutions in medieval Genoa

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Introduction

This dissertation is an exploration of Genoese institutionalism that demonstrates the way grain and grain distribution were intertwined with state debt and public spending in the exercise of political power in the medieval urban republic under the fourteenth-century government of Simone Boccanegra (r. 1339–1363) and his successors. While the discussion of the institutionalization of grain distribution is focused on the fourteenth century, this dissertation takes a long view, describing how the fourteenth century government of Genoa established itself within the context of the evolution of the Genoese state and the development of law in medieval Italy.

Institutionalism in Genoa is a fascinating topic but an understudied one. For a city with such a rich “modern” historiography that stretches back to the nineteenth century and earlier, few scholars have sought to explore the functions of the state in the republic. There is a common assumption that the Genoese consciously created a weak state because loyalty to one’s family clan and the ability to be an independent merchant were more important than a controlling state. Even in my initial trip to the *Archivio di Stato*, after explaining my interest in the fourteenth-century Genoese state, one of the archivists best acquainted with the medieval materials told me that the commune was not that important, invoking the old comparison with Venice again. Too often historians are distracted by Genoa’s activities in the wider Mediterranean and not at home in Liguria.

But the Genoese state, weak or otherwise, is what forced a group of petty, selfish nobles and merchants to enter into a social compact that had far reaching implications. It was not a state of anarchy that allowed this group to engage in the overseas activities that

interest scholars of the Middle Ages—to colonize Corsica, Sardinia, and the Crimea, establish commercial enclaves in the Levant and Egypt, and establish extensive trade networks in the Low Countries and Britain. Regardless of the relative extent of the Genoese state, it is worthy of study for its influence on the rest of the medieval world.

This dissertation does not necessarily contest that the Genoese state was “limited” from a modern perspective, but that does not make it any less worthy of study. After a discussion of the sources and relevant historiography (chapter 1) and of the city and its region (chapter 2), chapter 3 reconstructs the political configuration of the Genoese city-state from its extrication from imperial authority in the ninth century to its “complete” form at the apogee of Genoese commercial reach in the thirteenth century. Although medieval Italian city-states were generally known as *comuni* (sing. *comune*), the Genoese used the term *compagna* to describe their social arrangement. This chapter presents the *compagna* as an arrangement of institutions that were informally constituted together (my term). As we shall see, this structure was informal by design and was meant to exclude certain individuals from accessing political power.

As elsewhere in Italy, there was a stark contrast between the elite order and everyone else. This dissertation has adopted the term *nobilis* (pl. *nobiles*), or the *nobilis* order to describe this elite group because it reflects the nomenclature used in our sources from the period.¹ Elites in other Italian cities are referred to using different terms; in the case of Florence, for example, this group was known as the *grandi*. As we shall see in chapter 1, though medieval Italian urban societies were divided between elites and non-

¹ This dissertation uses order in the sense of a Latin *ordo* (pl. *ordines*). While the medieval Italian *ordines* certainly project many aspects of Roman *classes* (sing., *classis*), *ordo* is more accurate and does not possess the anachronous connection to modern classes.

elites, the origins of the powerful families could vary from city to city. The non-elites of medieval Italy are universally known as the *popolo*. This term covers a vast swath of society. This dissertation uses *mercantes* to refer to the wealthy, politically active members of the *popolo*. It is necessary to note that the *nobiles* also engaged in mercantile activity, but their landed holdings provided more money than the non-*nobilis mercantes* could hope to accrue through commerce alone. Leveraging their position, the *nobilis* order used the loose structure of the Genoese government to their advantage, forcing members of the *mercantes* to integrate themselves into each institutional entity separately in order to be on equal footing politically.

In particular, chapter 3 discusses Genoese experiments with public debt, or the *compera* as it was known in Genoa. The city was the first political entity to create a system where the state could sell off future revenues—usually profits from the salt gabelle—to investors who would supply the capital needed for state expenses. This was a crucial entity in the Genoese commune. Investment in it made one a full political participant in the *compagna*, that is to say a stakeholder with a say in the direction of the state. In this way, the politically active *nobiles* were able to keep power in the hands of a small group of individuals. While members of the *popolo* could eventually invest in the *compera*, as we shall see, the origins of the institution can be found in an agreement between the members of the *nobilis* establishment. Perhaps the informal arrangement of institutions of the Genoese commune suggests that the Genoese state was “weak” or “less-pervasive” by modern standers, but this was by design. Understanding this helps us to consider the political institutions of medieval Italian communes on their own terms.

Chapter 4 describes the emergence of *Ius Comune* in Italy. This was the system of legal thought that governed medieval Italy and the Genoese *compagna*. This chapter also explores the creation of *popolo* institutions in Genoa within this framework and the foundation of the government of Simone Boccanegra in 1339. Boccanegra, like other *popolo* leaders of the fourteenth century, used the *Ius Comune* system to reconstruct the government of his hometown. This new political organization sought to serve the needs of the *popolo*, who had long been excluded from the highest levels of political participation and the victims of factional violence among the *nobiles*. Boccanegra restructured state spending. While he was unable to dissolve the state's debt that had accrued, he created a new structure for future spending; he created a series of administrative apparatuses that paid for state expenses using money from a central fund. As Boccanegra sought to secure the backing of the *popolo*, he introduced the purchase of grain at state expense.

Chapter 5 chronicles the institutional evolution of the Boccanegra regime with a particular focus on early experiments with state grain distribution. Although Boccanegra initially tried to rule through a consensus between the orders, the *nobiles* eventually drove him from power, and he was forced to live in exile in Pisa. After returning eleven years later, Boccanegra ruled on behalf of the *popolo*, and this is when he began to experiment with grain distribution. This not only responded to the concerns of the poorest members of the *popolo*, but it also directed state spending on something to benefit them rather than the costly foreign wars, which were in the interest of the political elites.

Finally, chapter 6 explores data from the archival sources of grain distribution, demonstrating the way these efforts became an institution of the *popolo* state. By exploring these manuscripts, it is possible to see the ways that the theoretical ideas of the *Ius Comune*

actually played out in the day-to-day activity of the Genoese and their Ligurian neighbors, bridging the theoretical with the practical. Too often, however, these legal ideas are expressed in abstract terms without concern about their actual practical application throughout the world that produced them. In this way, the philosophy of law is isolated from reality, and scholars such as Bartolus of Sassaferrato—to pick a scholar of particular importance to this dissertation—become links in a chain bridging antiquity to modernity, conveniently ignoring the world around them. But the manuscripts left behind by the fourteenth-century Genoese state are an early example of the enactment of legal government through a legal process that is disconnected from any individual person in post-Roman Europe; the Genoese and its Italian neighbors created disembodied states.²

Thus, if we want to think in terms of the post-medieval world, the Genoese example is of tremendous relevance to an understanding of the emergence of modern statecraft. Indeed, while the major kingdoms of Europe came to a momentous agreement at Westphalia in 1648, the order that emerged was still based on the personal authority of princes. This “modern” character of the medieval Italian commune is especially true if we consider how the ideas expressed during this period are such important strands in the fabric of “modern” ideas of governance. For example, the fourteenth-century Italian use of the term *Il Stato* as the powers and authorities granted by the voters standing in the *Piazza* is a far more “modern” derivative of the Latin, *Status*, than other terms that share that root. The study of the internal dynamics of Genoa and other medieval Italian city-states is instructive to this end.

² As will become clear, there is a place for the personal office of the Emperor, but it is up to the reader to decide what the actual role the emperor should play within the *Ius Comune* system.

The specific focus of this study is grain distribution and the interrelated issue of state debt and how that state spent its money. State debt, in particular, is a topic that requires more scholarship to be better understood. While scholars have begun to revisit the problem of the emergence of state debt (see chapter 2), there are two major lacunae in the history of this institution. First, Genoa does not receive the treatment it deserves. As the first governmental entity to enact such a system, it is a shame that Venice (and Florence) has dominated the treatment of this phenomenon's manifestation in the Italian peninsula. Second, the social role that state debt played has not been fully explored.

When historians first began to study the thirteenth-century origins of this institution, the focus was on the precise numbers associated with it. This is not meant as a criticism; scholars needed to examine these data to understand how the institution was constructed from a practical standpoint. The problem is, however, that very often the numbers lack sufficient context to reveal what they meant to the society that produced them. It is virtually impossible to completely understand how fiscal figures relate to the day-to-day use of money. What is the relationship between the Florins that were spent in the marketplace and the bookkeeping currency found in state fiscal registers and the ledgers of merchants? Indeed, it is almost impossible to completely understand the spending power of physical money because there were almost always multiple systems of currency in use in regions—for example, the Florentine penny and Florin were widespread in Italy, but Venetian currency was in use as well—and merchants might have to buy goods in the eastern Mediterranean using Byzantine Hyperpyroi, sell them in their local currency or in kind, and record all value accrued in the bookkeeping currency. It is easy to get lost in the woods among all of these numbers, but what remains is to understand the role that the

institution played in the social world of medieval Italy. This dissertation seeks to do that. By reconstructing the other institutions of the Genoese state, this dissertation will demonstrate that state debt was a powerful tool for maintaining political power among a political elite; and taking control of debt allowed insurgent groups to seize control of the state, restructure the state, and consolidate their authority.

Grain distribution and access to food, on the other hand, was a vital component of the evolution of the institutions of the Genoese state. Members of medieval Latin Europe relied on grain for the majority of their caloric intake; historians have explained and meditated on this fact for years.³ For years, historians were fixated on the relationship between bread and the Eucharist in the religious imagination of Latin Europe. The *Cambridge History of Food*, for example, devotes the majority of its section on food in medieval southern Europe to mystical aspects of the bread and wine in the Eucharist.⁴

Of course, historians of the *Annales* school have been interested in commercial networks for many years; indeed, Michel Balard, as one of the best exponents of the *Annales* school, is of crucial importance to this dissertation.⁵ This scholarship has not been sufficient because, as we shall see in chapter 6, there is reason to question the exact results of this data-driven approach. Like medieval money, it is hard to accept what is recorded as a perfect record of what we want it to reflect; medieval notarial documents—including the body of manuscripts used in this dissertation—were written to satisfy the legal

³ See, for example, Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993). Here, Bartlett equates the spread of the cultivation of grain, among other things, to the spread of medieval Latin “civilization.”

⁴ Kenneth Alhala, “Southern Europe,” in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, vol. 2, ed., Kenneth F. Kiple, Kriemhild Coneè Ornela (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1203–1209.

⁵ Michel Balard, *La Romanie Génoise (XII^e–XIII^e Siècle)*, 2 vols., *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia patria* N.S. 18 18 (Rome: École Française de Rome, 1978).

requirements of the legal-political structure that created them; hence the need to thoroughly integrate them into the long-term development of *Ius Comune* in Italy in chapter 4.

By looking at the example of state grain distribution in Genoa in the fourteenth century, we can draw two important conclusions. First, regardless of figures whose meaning is not entirely known, there is further evidence of the continued importance of Sicilian grain to subsistence in the region. Second, in spite of Genoa's commercial reach into the Black and North Seas, local grain continued to be an important source of subsistence. This further underlines one of the core elements of Horden and Purcell's, *The Corrupting Sea*.⁶ Here, the authors argue that the Mediterranean is a "mosaic" of microregions that are interdependent on each other.⁷ This conceptualization meant that even as long-distance commercial networks emerged, local networks were always important to subsistence throughout the region. One might expect that the mountainous terrain of Liguria would make human habitation particularly difficult and reliant on grain harvests from further afield; And while this dissertation does not deny this notion entirely, Horden and Purcell respond to this issue in a way that supports some of the conclusions drawn here:

Mountain microecologies, like almost all microecologies, are parts of greater ecological networks (as Braudel conceded, but with regard only to transalpine trade routes and to a few other, somewhat picturesque, examples: 1972a, 45–6, 206). This interdependence is, moreover, especially pronounced where the fragmentation is most intense. Mountains can seem hostile and marginal areas; yet they are actually integrated into the patterns of production and communication that abut them. That explains why mountain zones unexpectedly—and even paradoxically—become regions with wide internal coherence and close contact and interchange across that appear, to the outsider, to be formidable physical obstacles.⁸

⁶ Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of the Mediterranean* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

⁷ See *Ibid.*, 77–80 for the most succinct explanation of this aspect of their argument.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

To put this in plain terms that are relevant to the discussion at hand, the example of Genoese subsistence networks in the fourteenth century not only support Horden and Purcell's argument about local subsistence networks but provide a vivid illustration of the way control of these networks could become politicized in violent ways. As we shall see in chapter 6, while Genoa needed to purchase grain from the breadbasket of Sicily, the city always relied on local grain harvest.

The rich body of printed primary-source evidence and archival records allow us to understand how that grain distribution became politicized and institutionalized to shore up support for popular politicians in medieval Genoa. This is instructive because it allows us to better understand the tools of *popolo* politics in late-medieval Italy. Beginning in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century, the elite rulers of the communes were overthrown in favor of pro-*popolo* leaders, and measures such as grain distribution often became politicized in these cities, as Cohn has described in *Lust for Liberty* (see chapter 1 for a more complete description of Cohn's work and its importance to this dissertation).⁹ Indeed, while the mountains of Liguria might suggest that the city of Genoa was cut off from the rest of Italy, the city exhibits patterns of political development prevalent throughout the region.

This narrative of the politicization of grain distribution and its relationship to popular politics is not limited to later medieval Italy. The Gracchi brothers in the late second century BCE are perhaps the most well-known example of the politicization of

⁹ Samuel K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty: The Politics of Social Revolt in Medieval Europe, 1200–1425* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

grain distribution. Both brothers legislated the for the distribution of free grain as part of their radically popular legislative programs, and their successors, like Clodius, continued to use this method for whipping up support among the lower echelons of society. These measures caused so much volatility that Sulla banned them in his attempt to stop demagogues from emerging and stirring up the mob. This dissertation demonstrates the timelessness of this approach. Just as in antiquity, subsistence was politicized in the Middle Ages, and as we shall see in the conclusion, this trend continued into early modernity.

Genoa is an important setting to describe the development of these processes. The city was among the largest in Europe and exercised an influence that extended far beyond northwestern Italy. The Genoese did not pursue a territorial empire as Rome did in an earlier era or the European colonial empires of the early modern period, but it was one of the most important Mediterranean powers in the thirteenth century and possessed commercial enclaves in the major ports of the Levant, Egypt, the Crimean peninsula, and islands throughout the Aegean and Mediterranean. Too often, histories of the region focus on other cities, especially Florence. But with the exception of Venice—a city about whom much ink has been spilled—few of these cities shaped political events and economic development in the Mediterranean to as much as Genoa. A better understanding of the political and institutional development of Genoa is crucial to having a more complete understanding of the medieval world as a whole.

Chapter 1: Sources and Historiography

1.1: Unpublished Manuscripts

The Archivio di Stato di Genova is a massive archive. It is not only one of Europe's major repositories of medieval materials, but it also contains manuscripts from the entirety of the city's long history, well into modernity. While scholars have mined this archive for over one hundred years (and more), the collection continues to yield new insights and enable the production of innovative scholarship, a tradition this dissertation seeks to enrich. Indeed, the sheer number of unread manuscripts in the archive should continue to provide a rich source base for many dissertations to come. The Archivio di Stato is divided into *sottovelli*, or sublevels, which contain documents that are bounded by chronology and type. There is a total of one hundred one *sottovelli*, whose compositions range from documents relating to school administrative rules in the early-twentieth to medieval manuscripts. The manuscripts that inspired this dissertation are a part of the *sottovello* known as the Antico Comune.

The Antico Comune, like the other *sottovelli* in the Archivio di Stato, consists of manuscript collections in various formats that are organized into sequential order from Antico Comune 1 to 793. A simple description of the organization of the entire *sottovello* can be found in Valeria Polonio's helpful volume, *L'Amministrazione della Res Publica Genovese fra Tre e Quattrocento: l'Archivio "Antico Comune."*¹⁰ The book is not

¹⁰ Valeria Polonio, *L'Amministrazione della Res Publica Genovese fra Tre e Quattrocento: l'Archivio "Antico Comune"* (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1977).

exhaustive, but it remains incredibly useful and the primary reference for projects seeking to mine the resources of this *sottovello*.

The criteria for the assignment of manuscript or collection numbers varies depending on the particular *sottovello*, but documents usually conform to some sort of chronological progression. In the case of the *Antico Comune*, most entries are sets of fiscal documents of individual administrative *officia* (sing., *officium*) established by the fourteenth-century *popolo* government. For example, the first collection, *Archivio di Stato di Genova, Antico Comune 1* is a cartulary produced by the notaries who served the *Officium massarii*, or the Office of sums, whose records began in 1340.¹¹ This was the central repository of capital accrued from selling shares in the state debt and other sources of profit for the state, and this is the earliest collection of registers. Forty registers comprise the entire *Officium massarii*, which cover the period from 1340 to 1442. Polonio's work contains lists of every collection of documents held in the *Antico Comune* with a transcription of the first page of each one.

All of the unpublished manuscripts cited in this dissertation come from the *sottovello* known as the *Antico Comune*. In particular, this study focuses on the *Officium victualium*, whose records track state spending of funds granted from the *massarii* for grain. Overall, the *Antico Comune Sottovello* is relatively understudied, especially considering the wealth of information found there. There are probably a variety of reasons why the *Antico Comune* has not received the same attention as other parts of the *Archivio di Stato*. Part of the problem may be the chronology of the documents collected here. The manuscripts of this *sottovello* cover the period after 1339, with an emphasis on the years

¹¹ *Officium Massarii* (1339), Antico Comune 1, Archivio di Stato di Genova.

before 1407, at which point the Casa di San Giorgio was established to manage the commune's finances. (The records from the Casa are housed in a separate archive.) The period covered by the *Antico Comune* is seen as one of relative decline for Genoa. This reputation is partially earned, especially in comparison to Venice, Genoa's great rival. Genoa has always been seen in the reflective light of her Adriatic enemy from the vantage of hindsight. The fourteenth century saw Genoa's presence in the Mediterranean contract, while Venice and other powers, such as Aragon and the Ottoman Empire, began to occupy commercial spaces that Genoa had previously monopolized. The period after 1407 also has significant allure for scholarship. The *Casa di San Giorgio* was one of the first chartered banks in Europe and was one of the major contributors to the development of modern systems of credit. But an examination of finances of the fourteenth century, held in the *Antico Comune*, reveals more about the role that state spending and debt played in society as it developed.

We should make note of the content of two other *sottovelli* of the *Archivio di Stato* to convey a clearer picture of the entire collection and better understand how the *Antico Comune* is relatively understudied. The most famous *sottovello* is that of the *Notai Antichi*. The *Notai Antichi* are the 16,778 different registers, cartularies, and *filze* that draw researchers to Genoa every year. Beginning sometime before the mid-twelfth century, the government of Genoa demanded that notaries deposit copies of their registers into the public record in case of future dispute. The first of these registers, that of Giovanni Scriba, was submitted to the state in 1154 and is the oldest extant notarial cartulary in the world.¹²

¹² Giovanni Scriba, *Il cartolare di Giovanni Scriba*, ed. Mario Chiadano and Mattia Moresco (Torino: S. Lattes & c., 1935).

These cartularies hold a variety of material and are important for our purposes because while the fourteenth-century commune employed its own notaries to work for the state, like so much other Genoese state business, the commune also contracted private notaries. This is a reminder that all manner of government business would have been facilitated by private notaries and that the records of the *Antico Comune* likely do not encompass the entirety of state spending. Thus the cartularies of the *victualium* do not describe all grain purchased by the state in the fourteenth century or imported into the city.

Numerous scholars have worked with the records of the *notai antichi*, some of which have been published in edited form.¹³ Indeed, examples of notarial acts from the *notai antichi* have been included in sourcebooks for undergraduates to illustrate the “commercial revolution.”¹⁴ Over the past several years, the Archivio di Stato di Genova has been working to catalog the *notai antichi* and the various notarial records found in other *sottovelli*. The archive has begun to record the results of this work, as well as their process online.¹⁵ Additionally, countless studies have been undertaken using these manuscripts as evidence. One of the most innovative volumes from the last twenty years is Quentin van Doosselaere’s book, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa*.¹⁶ Doosselaere uses the vast quantity of notarial documents to persuasively reconstruct the

¹³ See, for example, the *Notai liguri dei secoli XII–XV* series published by the Società Ligure di Storia Patria, which contains fifteen published notarial cartularies. Like other publications of the *Società Ligure*, these texts have been made available digitally on their website: http://www.storiapatriagenova.it/BD_vs_sommario.aspx?Id_Collezione=7. For a general summary of the documents held in this series, see Gian Piero Begnetti and Mattia Moresco, *Per l’edizione dei Notai Liguri del Sec. XII* (Genoa: R. Deputazione di Storia Patria per la Liguria, 1938).

¹⁴ See, for example, Robert S. Lopez and Irving Raymond, eds., *Medieval trade in the Mediterranean world: illustrative documents* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927), 191–192.

¹⁵ “Inventario del Fondo Notai Antichi,” Archivio di Stato di Genova, <http://www.archiviodistatogenova.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/157/inventario-del-fondo-notai-antichi#2> (Last updated: May 31, 2018).

¹⁶ Quentin van Doosselaere, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics in Medieval Genoa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

way business and investments shaped the social world of the medieval Genoese. These documents, while not as rich as narrative or literary sources, reveal aspects of medieval society that these other sources simply do not. And their sheer number means that, when taken together, they constitute a suitable sample size to make broader conclusions based on data. For example, Doosselaere (as well as other scholars who employ documents of practice) is able to reveal the economic activity of women and their role in society in a way that is different from their *perception* in literary texts that are often written by men.

While the *Notai Antichi* comprise the most well-known *sottovello* of the *Archivio di Stato*, the *Archivio Segreto* holds a number of interesting collections for historians of the Middle Ages as well. The documents in this sublevel are varied but are related to Genoa's relationship with foreign powers. It is here where the various treaties, records of the colony of Caffa, and the *Diversorum* registers, which scholars such as Geo Pistarno have studied, are found. In addition to his published scholarship, Pistarno has published a number of cartularies of notaries working in the Genoese commercial empire. Other scholars, such as Michel Balard, have published volumes in the *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare Series*, which has produced edited versions of notarial cartularies from places such as Crete, Caffa, Pera, and Corsica.¹⁷ This dissertation uses a variety of documents from this archive that have been published in edited form.

1.2: Published Primary Sources

¹⁷ For example: Pietro Battifoglio, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: Atti Rogati a Tunisi da Pietro Battifoglio (1288–89)*, ed. Geo Pistarno (Genoa: Università di Genova, Istituto di medievistica, 1986) or Lamberto di Sambuceto, *Notai Genovesi in Oltremare: Atti rogati a Cipro da Lamberto di Sambuceto, 11 ottobre 1296–23 giugno 1299*, ed. Michel Balard (Genoa: Università di Genova, Istituto medievistica, 1983).

Historians seeking to reconstruct aspects of Genoese history are not limited to unpublished manuscripts. Since at least the eighteenth century, Italian historical institutions, often as part of the larger Italian national project, have published edited versions of historical documents from the Middle Ages. Thus, we have a wealth of published narrative, legal, diplomatic, and commercial sources with which to reconstruct Genoese history. Perhaps the most valuable of these is the nearly unbroken narrative of chronicles written by representatives of the commune from the end of the eleventh century into the modern period. The first of these chronicles, the *Annales Ianuenses*, was written by Caffaro di Rustico, who lived from 1080 to 1166. Caffaro wrote his history to glorify the deeds of his fellow citizens and presented it to the Genoese government where it was received and entered into the official record. The Genoese government then ordered that Caffaro's work be continued by a series of continuators, a process that lasted until the thirteenth century. The *Istituto storico Italiano* published these chronicles as part of the *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* series in 1890 in five volumes.¹⁸

Although the "official chronicle" ends in the thirteenth century, two brothers, Giovanni and Giorgio Stella, picked up the thread left by the official chroniclers and

¹⁸ The entire collection of the *Annales* have been published in five volumes in the *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* series. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano, ed., *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi Continuatori da MXCIX al MCCXCIII*, vol. 1, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 11 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1890); Luigi Tommaso Belgrano and Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, eds., *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi Continuatori da MXCIX al MCCXCIII*, vol. 2, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 12 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1901); Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, ed., *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi Continuatori dal MCLXXIV al MCCXXIV*, vol. 3, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 13 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1923); Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, ed., *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi Continuatori dal MCLXXIV al MCCXXIV*, vol. 4, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 14.3 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1926); Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, ed., *Annali Genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi Continuatori dal MCLXXIV al MCCXXIV*, vol. 5, *Fonti per la storia d'Italia* 14.4 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1929). Hereafter, volumes of the *Annales* will be referred to by their series number. E.g., FPLSI, 12, page #.

recorded a history of Genoa during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This is the narrative source that is cited the most in this dissertation, and it differs from the other chronicles in a couple of ways. First, whereas the *Annales Ianuenses* represent an “official history” that was entered into the formal city record—indeed, the original manuscript contains a miniature of Caffaro presenting his work to the consuls—the Stella brothers’ history is a more nuanced volume created without government oversight. Furthermore, since written at the beginning of the fifteenth century during the florescence of humanist learning, the authors display a very competent grasp of Latin composition. There is, however, fairly transparent bias because, as we shall see later, Giovanni admits that he is a member of the *popolo* and a Ghibelline. In this way, his voice can be considered as representative of the fourteenth-century *popolo* government that institutionalized grain distribution toward the end of that century. The work also reflects the nascent humanism that was beginning to pervade the intellectual culture of Italy. These aspects make it a more engaging history than previous histories of their city despite the fact that the authors were not eyewitnesses to the events they describe. The work was published in edited form by Giovanna Petti-Balbi as the seventeenth entry in the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* series in 1975.¹⁹ The edition is excellent and incorporates differences between various manuscripts.

While the narrative evidence written by Genoese hands is very rich, this dissertation also takes into account other chroniclers from outside of Genoa. In particular, Giovanni and Matteo Villani’s Tuscan dialect chronicles are particularly rich. While these brothers focus on their home, Florence, their works represent a detailed, contemporary narrative of

¹⁹ Giorgio Stella and Giovanni Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, ed. Giovanna Petti Balbi (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1975)

events in Italy and the broader Mediterranean world as well.²⁰ The other major works of medieval historiography this dissertation considers are the Catalan chronicles of the fourteenth century.²¹ These works are more limited in scope and do not possess the same level of historical nuance that the others do, but the relationship between Genoa and Aragon is important to understanding the Ligurian city's changing role in the Mediterranean during the fourteenth century. The Kingdom of Aragon began to assert itself as a Mediterranean power in the thirteenth century, at which point it began to enter into conflicts with Genoa over Sardinia and Corsica. These chronicles present an additional perspective that enriches our understanding of Genoa in the Mediterranean.

Genoese history also benefits from a wide range of published material relating to legal history in addition to the narrative chronicles. For example, the *Liber Iurium*, which was first published as part of the *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* (HPM) series.²² Although the title, *Liber Iurium*, literally means “book of laws,” it is actually a collection of privileges and diplomatic materials ranging from the charters that govern the first feudal nobles that submitted to communal authority in the ninth century to treaties that Genoa signed with other Italian cities at the end of the Middle Ages. The variety of these documents is too great to summarize here, but they are used throughout the dissertation. Finally, and perhaps most important to this dissertation, there is the collection of the laws and statutes of Genoa,

²⁰ This dissertation consults the following edition: Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, ed. G. Porta (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo/Guanda, 1991). But for this and other “standard” works, standard part and chapter number are cited and can be accessed in any edition.

²¹ In particular, the chronicle of Bernat Desclot, Peter the Ceremonious, and Robert Muntaner. Bernat Desclot, *Crònica* 5 vol, Miquel Coll I Allentorn, ed. (Barcelona: Barcino, 1949); Peter III of Catalonia, *Chronicle*, trans. M. Hillgarth and J.N. Hillgarth (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1980); Ramón Muntaner, *Crònica*, ed., J.F. Vidal Jové (Madrid: Allanzo Editorial, 1970).

²² Cornelio Desimoni and Luigi T. Belgrano ed. *Liber Iurium Reipublicae Ianuensis*, 2 vols., *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 7 and 9 (Turin: Augustae Taurinorum, 1854, 1857). Hereafter, HPM 7, *Liber Iurium*, page #.

the *Leges Genuenses*, also published in the *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* series. This is a set of municipal laws that the Genoese created to govern their city.²³

There are a number of other miscellaneous treaties and texts published by the Società Ligure di Storia Patria. This dissertation cites a variety of texts published in this series, but one in particular is worthy of note here. Pasquale Lisciandrelli published a list of treaties and agreements, including many not found in the *Liber Iurium*, along with where to find them.²⁴ In this way, it is a directory of important materials published by not only the Società Ligure but also the other major series of edited and published medieval texts.

1.3: Secondary Sources

1.3.1: Secondary scholarship on Genoa

The body of scholarship on medieval Genoa is immense. While the city has not received the same attention as Venice or Florence—particularly from Anglophone scholarship—to suggest that there is a paucity of secondary research would be an understatement. For example, the Società Ligure per la storia patria began publishing documents and modern scholarship in the nineteenth century. A great deal of this early scholarship continues to be invaluable. This dissertation, for example, cites Giovanni Battista Semeria's 1848 (amazingly) comprehensive two-volume history of the Ligurian church, *Secoli cristiani*

²³ Cornelio Desimoni and Luigi T. Belgrano ed. *Leges Genuenses*, *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 18 (Turin: Augustae Taurinorum, 1901).

²⁴ Pasquale Lisciandrelli, *Trattati e Negoziati Politiche della Repubblica di Genova*, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, Nuova Serie 1 (Genoa: Società Ligure per la Storia Patria, 1960).

della Liguria, ossia, Storia della metropolitana di Genova.²⁵ The city continued to produce important modern historians of the Middle Ages. In addition to publishing on a wide range of issues related to the commercial development of Latin Europe, Robert Lopez wrote extensively on his own city.

The work of these scholars has placed history of Genoa at the center of scholarship about the economic history of Latin Europe. The documents that notaries left behind are key pieces of evidence in our understanding of the transition to written law and the commercial revolution. Indeed, it was Robert Lopez who wrote one of the earliest attempts by a social and economic historian a comprehensive economic history of medieval Europe.²⁶ And the *commenda* contract—a form of legal document that found widespread use in medieval Italy—and its related types have become as crucial a technology to the commercial revolution as the heavy plow is to the agricultural revolution.²⁷

Because of this expansive scholarship, we must content ourselves with a more limited historiographical discussion that focuses specifically on those works that have contributed to the understanding of the sources described above. In particular Steven Epstein's *Genoa and the Genoese* is of utmost importance. It is the only scholarly survey of the history of Genoa in English and while it is beginning to show signs of its age, the variety of scholarship included makes the footnotes invaluable.²⁸ As will become abundantly clear, especially in chapters 5 and 6, the timeline of revolts and changes in

²⁵ Giovanni Battista Semeria, *Secoli cristiani della Liguria, ossia, Storia della metropolitana di Genova della diocesi di Sarzana, di Brugnato, Savona, Noli Albenga e Ventimiglia*, 2 vols. (Turin: Tipografia Chirio e Mina, 1842).

²⁶ Robert S. Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950–1350* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

²⁷ It should be noted that the Genoese had their own term for this type of contract, the *societas*.

²⁸ Steven A. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

government in the appendix is almost as useful.²⁹ Epstein's work is a response to scholarship on Genoese history that focuses entirely on the city's exploits in the wider Mediterranean rather than developments at home between the walls of the city, and the author seeks to understand social dynamics within Genoa. The book does an excellent job of describing the activities of the medieval Genoese in their city, but it does not articulate any sort of institutional history of the commune of Genoa from a legal perspective. This dissertation seeks to fill that lacuna in the historiography.

Two French historians are of particular importance to this study. The first is Michel Balard, who dedicated much of his career to studying the overseas holdings of Genoa. His massive thesis, *La Romanie Génoise*, attempts to reconstruct Genoese activity in the Black Sea.³⁰ Balard employs a wide variety of evidence to accomplish his goals. He not only uses material from the *Archivio Segreto* but also the *Antico Comune*. Indeed, Balard is the only other scholar to cite the manuscripts of the *Officium victualium*. Unfortunately, he assumes that the *victualium* registers are an accurate accounting of *all* of the grain imported into Genoa during the years that they cover. While other scholars have worked with different records from the *Antico Comune*, it is time for a reevaluation of these materials that address their role within the Genoese state.

Jacques Heers is the second great French historian whose influence is important to this dissertation. His *longue durée* study of Genoa in the fifteenth century, *Gênes au XV^e siècle. Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*, is incredibly useful.³¹ Heers's study is especially helpful for its description of the city, for example, the amount of space covered

²⁹ Ibid., 325–326.

³⁰ See n. 5.

³¹ Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XV^e siècle. Activité économique et problèmes sociaux* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1961).

by the medieval city. As a product of *longue durée* history, *Gênes au XVe siècle* is a wide-ranging study that attempts to address all aspects of life in late medieval Genoa. He discusses the economy, subsistence needs, commercial networks, goods, and class. Particularly important to this study is the fact that the author makes numerous estimates using the available data to come up with what he saw as plausible numbers for population, the amount of food consumed, and other important urban and social characteristics at the end of the Middle Ages. While this dissertation is of the opinion that Heers's population estimate is far too high (see chapter 2), his information about the special layout of the city is incredibly important to the one suggested below. Also important is his description of the changing topography of the city. Given that Genoa is nestled up to the Mediterranean and surrounded by mountains, the hillier regions of the city needed to be leveled in order to accommodate a growing population. With this in mind, knowing when areas of the city were opened to settlement is crucial to developing a plausible estimate of people who lived within the walls of Genoa.

Giovanna Petti Balbi is the most important historian of fourteenth-century Genoa and is the most significant influence on this dissertation. During her life, Petti Balbi amassed an impressive list of publications, but her greatest service to scholarship was the edited edition of the Stella chronicle that provides crucial narrative structure for this dissertation. This interest in chronicles led to her work on Caffaro and his successor chroniclers as well.³² Two major works by Petti Balbi have contributed to the historical framework of the dissertation: *Simon Boccanegra e la Genova del '300* and *Governare la*

³² Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Caffaro e la cronachistica Genovese* (Genoa: Tilgher, 1982).

città. Pratiche sociali e linguaggi politici a Genova in età medievale.³³ The former is incredibly useful because it contains chapters on all aspects of Genoese society. Particularly important is the chapter on the debt. Additionally, both works have helped to develop a more precise understanding of the individuals and groups that made up Genoese political life.

While Genoa during the fourteenth century has been comparatively overlooked, a new generation of scholars is beginning to develop its history. *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, a new edited volume from Brill, helps to summarize this work and should become the standard point of entry for new English-speaking students of medieval Genoa.³⁴ Luca Filangieri's chapter on "The Commune" and Carlo Taviani's chapter on "Companies, Commerce, and Credit" are important to this dissertation.³⁵ The former is especially useful for understanding of the institutional development of the commune of Genoa, beginning with its foundation in the tenth century.

1.3.2: Scholarship on the Italian commune

While a grounding in the historiography of Genoa is important, we must look at works of scholarship on the Italian commune more generally. Although there are aspects of the Genoese case that make it unique and worthy of a focused study, the city roughly follows

³³ Ibid, *Simon Boccanegra e la Genova del '300* (Genoa: Marietti, 1991); Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Governare la città. Pratiche sociali e linguaggi politici a Genova in età medievale* Reti Medievali ebook 4, (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2007).

³⁴ Carrie E. Beneš, ed., *A Companion to Medieval Genoa* (Leiden: Brill, 2018). Cited chapters listed separately in the bibliography.

³⁵ Luca Filangieri, "The Commune," in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, ed. Carrie E. Beneš (Leiden: Brill, 2018) 95–119; Carlo Taviani, "Companies, Commerce, and Credit" in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, ed. Carrie E. Beneš (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 427–447.

the pattern of the institutional evolution of the Italian commune. This trajectory has four stages: 1) extrication of Italian cities from the hegemony of the German Empire; 2) the establishment of a communal structure; 3) the descent of political elites into violence; and 4) the reformation of the political structure and the imposition of one-man rule, or the *signorie* (sing. *signoria*). The chapters of this dissertation follow this trajectory for the case of Genoa and works of synthesis are useful for establishing a comparative framework with which to better understand the case at hand.

As one might expect, the historiography of medieval Italy is dominated by Italians. Unfortunately, Italian historians have largely avoided the formative period between the end of Carolingian authority and the end of the eleventh century—that is to say, the first of the four stages mentioned above—by which point the communes had fully established themselves. Chris Wickham illustrates this gap in the historiography in his recent book on the emergence and evolution of the commune, *Sleepwalking into a New World*:

The quantity of detailed and comparative scholarship on the communes has not been as substantial as one would think. For a long time Italians concentrated on their immediate antecedents, and when consuls appeared they perhaps thought their job was done; for example the leading Italian historians of the generation before this one, Giovanni Tabacco and Cinzio Violante, did most of their empirical work on the period before the late eleventh century.³⁶

This quote is instructive. Not only have Italians largely ignored the early stages of communal development, but because they tend to focus their discussion on specific cities, there are few great works of synthesis that attempt to incorporate the entire region. Many of the most important syntheses, such as Philip Jones's *From Commune to Signoria*, are

³⁶ Chris Wickham, *Sleepwalking into a New World: The Emergence of the Italian City Communes in the Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014).

written in English.³⁷ Lauro Martines, an Italian himself, wrote his landmark synthetic history of the development of the commune, *Power and Imagination: City-States in Renaissance Italy*, in English.³⁸ General histories of this sort try to explain two related processes, both of which are vital to the Genoese case. The first is the organization and stratification of society into political and nonpolitical classes. And the second is the character and origin of the political class. As noted in the introduction, the nomenclature for the former tends to vary according to specific historical context, and the non-political class is most often called the *popolo*. This bifurcation of urban society did not often remain stagnant. In many cases, wealthier members of the *popolo* emerged and attempted to join the political class using money, violence, social movements, or some combination of all three. Finally, we have the guilds, or *arti*, which came to represent members of the non-political class. Florence has come to represent the paradigm of this process.³⁹

Many synthetic works of scholarship focus on the related issue of the conflict between the Holy Roman Empire and the papacy, which resulted in the emergence of the Guelph and Ghibelline factions that would define political violence in many Italian cities for most of the twelfth century. Divisions in the political class, usually between old nobility and new merchants, fell along these lines. *From Commune to Signoria* is perhaps the most complete synthesis of all the aforementioned patterns that the cities of medieval Italy exhibited. Drawing on developments across the peninsula, Jones traces civic development from the transition of the ancient to medieval world, the development of urban

³⁷ Philip Jones, *From Commune to Signoria* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

³⁸ Lauro Martines, *Power and Imagination: City-States In Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998).

³⁹ For the traditional (and still valuable) narrative, see Edgcumbe Staley, *The Guilds of Florence* (London: Methuen & co., 1906).

governments, and the expansion of medieval trade networks. His discussion of the variety of urban elites is of vital importance to this project. His description of the variety of ways that political elites institutionalized their authority is of particular use to this dissertation. For example, Jones presents the variety of terminologies for rural nobility—*nobiles rurales*, *rusticani*, *comitati*.⁴⁰ As we shall see, some scholars have tried to suggest that the political elites that emerged in the communes of Italy had uniform backgrounds. Jones demonstrates that while patterns were similar, one should be careful to not overstate these similarities. Indeed, *From Commune to Signoria* explicitly addresses how the Genoa trajectory differed from other communes. For example, when Jones describes how new groups entered into the political order, he states that “there is equal evidence that gaps in the ranks [left by impoverished or extinct political clans] were largely filled by parvenus, families at Genoa of more strictly urban or commercial connections or, as at Florence and Siena, merchant ‘usurers’ or ‘bourgeois’ (to quote the Gallicizing poem, *Fiore*, attributed to Dante).”⁴¹ As we can see, while every Italian city had a political class that monopolized power that eventually allowed new members in, the composition of that group varied from city to city.

Jones also helps to contextualize the documents of the *victualium* as evidence of a more widespread effort to introduce legislation and controls over necessary resources such as grain. He states:

Still more rigorous were controls over the marketing and processing of produce organized, from as early as the first half of the twelfth century, in the form and frequently the name of the antique civic *Annona*, under variously designated

⁴⁰ Philip Jones, *From Commune to Signoria*, 301.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 303.

officials of *Grascia*, *Abbondanza*, “*victualium*,” or as at Venice for example, particular commissions on corn, oil, and meat, fish, salt, and so on.⁴²

While these measures are known among the scholars of the region, unfortunately, there are no studies that focus on any of these institutions. Thus, this dissertation helps to fill an important gap in historiography.

In many ways, Wickham’s work mentioned above, *Sleepwalking into a New World*, represents a continuation of the comparative, synthetic approach of Jones. Rather than attempting to provide a comprehensive description of life and politics in medieval Italy as Jones does, Wickham attempts to describe the crystallization of the political elites of Italian cities that created the communal order in a comparatively slim volume. Wickham accomplishes this by using Milan, Pisa, and Rome as examples of communal development.

Other scholars have attempted to present the emergence of political orders as more uniform. For example, Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur’s 2003 volume *Cavaliers et citoyens*, attempts to explain the development and constitution of political classes in cities. In this book, Maire Vigueur argues that the political core of the commune is the entirety of the collected cavalry of the city.⁴³ The attempt to create some sort of “unified theory” of the origins of the political classes of medieval Italy is ultimately a fool’s errand. As we shall see in more detail in chapter 3, the Genoese political order was comprised of old landed nobility that came into the city to dominate politics. Najemy has shown that in Florence,

⁴² Ibid., 489.

⁴³ Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, *Cavaliers et citoyens: Guerre, conflits, et société dans l’Italie communale, XII^e–XIII^e siècles* (Paris: Broché, 2003).

on the other hand, the elites were simply old families who gradually accrued honor and would have hewed more closely to the Viguer's model.⁴⁴

In addition to an interest in the origins of the political order, scholars have been interested in the emergence of new groups that introduced new rivalries and divisions within this group. To a certain extent, this interest is reflected in the primary sources, especially those from Tuscany. The prevalence of the tension between old and new men is present in both Villani and Dante, two of the most iconic writers of the fourteenth century. Indeed, Marco Santagata has traced a deep mistrust of "new men" in the writings of Dante.⁴⁵ As noted in the quote from Jones above, this composition of these new groups varied greatly from city to city.

Ultimately, as stated above, Florence and the other Tuscan communes are often seen as the paradigmatic example of the processes that characterize medieval Italy. This focus is unavoidable. While one might be tempted to argue that Milan was the biggest and most powerful Italian city, Florence was large and powerful in its own right. Additionally, the fact that the language of Dante was intelligible by most Italian aristocrats at the time of Italian unification and the fact that the rest of Europe had enshrined the literary prestige of that dialect meant that Florence would always command the attention of scholarship. That said, this dissertation proposes that the example of Genoa serves as a useful example of communal development and evolution. As we shall see in chapter 4, the narrative of the division of the political order into Guelph and Ghibelline factions did not always happen along Florentine lines.

⁴⁴ John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence, 1200–1575* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 5–34.

⁴⁵ Mario Santagata, *Dante: A Life* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard, 2018), 9–13.

1.3.3: Scholarship on the evolution of law and *Ius Comune* in medieval Italy

The proliferation of Roman Law, the development of the legal system known as *Ius Comune*, and the spread of the study of law at the university level are all of fundamental importance to this dissertation. Chapter 3 traces the legal origins of the Genoese commune and chapter 4 describes how the glossators of Roman law and their successors shaped the evolution of law and statecraft in Genoa and Italy, including the popular government of Genoa in the fourteenth century.

Charles M. Radding's book, *The origins of medieval jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna* is of crucial importance to the presentation in the dissertation of the beginnings of the execution of law and order in early medieval Italy.⁴⁶ Radding's description of the spread of the importance of the court of the Lombard kings and the notarial technocrats that assisted them helps to demystify the period preceding the age of the glossators and the apogee of legal education at Bologna. Additionally, Hastings Rashdall's monumental three-volume history, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages* is still of use here.⁴⁷ Finally, *The Laws of Late Medieval Italy (1000–1500)* by Mario Ascheri is the best combined summary of the spread of Roman Law and the evolution of medieval universities in Italy.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Charles M. Radding, *The origins of medieval jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna, 850–1150* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁴⁷ Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages*, 3 volumes, 2nd edition (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1936).

⁴⁸ Mario Ascheri, *The Laws of Late Medieval Italy (1000–1500)* (Leiden: Brill, 2003).

In addition to the emergence and development of legal institutions, the substance of the philosophies of the great legal minds of the Middle Ages is of utmost importance to understanding the ways the fourteenth-century government of Genoa adapted the legal framework that governed their society to achieve their goal of restructuring the state. In particular, chapter 4 focuses on the thought of Bartolus of Sassaferrato and Baldus di Ubaldis. Joseph Canning has written on these topics extensively in *The Political Thought of Baldus de Ubaldis* and *A History of Medieval Political Thought (300–1450)*.⁴⁹ Finally, on the thought of Bartolus, the massive two-volume collection of essays to commemorate the six-hundredth anniversary of the glossator's death is still the most useful collection of materials related to this great fourteenth-century legal mind. In particular, this dissertation is interested in Bartolus's idea of *consulum representat mentem populi*, and Ullmann's chapter in, "De Bartoli sententia: Concilium repraesentat mentem populi," in *Bartolo da Sassoferrato, studi e documenti per il VI centenario* remains the best modern explanation of this theory.⁵⁰

Finally, because the unpublished manuscripts cited in this dissertation are notarial records of state, this dissertation takes into account a variety of scholarship on notaries. Bologna, as the home of the most important university for the study of law and the training of notaries and other legal professionals, led the way on using notaries as officials of the state. Therefore, the historiography of later medieval Bologna helps to develop models of how the notariate of Genoa operated in the fourteenth century reformation of the Genoese

⁴⁹ Joseph Canning, *The Political Thought of Baldus de Ubaldis* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought (300–1450)* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁵⁰ Robert Ullmann, "De Bartoli Sententia: Concilium repraesentat mentem populi," in *Bartolo da Sassoferrato, studi e documenti per il VI centenario*, vol. 2 (Milan: Giuffrè, 1962), 705–734.

state. Beginning in 1282, Bologna had a short-lived guild government that greatly expanded the role of the notary. This history is outlined by B.R. Carniello in his article “The rise of an administrative elite in medieval Bologna: notaries and popular government, 1282–1292.”⁵¹ While this guild government ultimately failed, Bologna continued to experiment with the roles that notaries played in civic administration. In 1337, two years before Genoa would begin their own popular government, Taddeo Pepoli seized control of Bologna and used notaries to settle civil disputes and bring stability to his city, an innovation that Shona Kelly Wray documents in “Instruments of Concord: Making Peace and Settling Disputes Through a Notary in the City and Contado of Late Medieval Bologna.”⁵² As we shall see in chapter 4, the *popolo* regime of Simone Boccanegra followed that of Pepoli in its use of notaries to execute governance.

Wray continues her scholarship of the notaries of Bologna in her more complete treatment of the history of the city, *Communities and Crisis: Bologna during the Black Death*.⁵³ While Wray is primarily interested in notarial evidence as a source for social rather than legal or institutional history, her discussion of the notarial bureaucracy is tremendously helpful for understanding contemporary developments in Genoa. Here she discusses the way notaries were crucial for tax collection and registration, a concept adjacent to public debt.⁵⁴ Finally, Brill has also published a handbook for Bolognese history, *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*.⁵⁵ The history of the

⁵¹ B.R. Carniello, “The rise of an administrative elite in medieval Bologna: notaries and popular government, 1282–1292.” *Journal of Medieval History* 28, Vol. 4 (2002): 319–347.

⁵² Shona Kelly Wray, “Instruments of Concord: Making Peace and Settling Disputes Through a Notary in the City and Contado of Late Medieval Bologna,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 3 (2009): 733–760.

⁵³ *Ibid*, *Communities and Crisis: Bologna during the Black Death* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁵⁵ Sarah R. Blanshei, *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). Specific chapters cited are listed individually in the bibliography.

university, the description of Pepoli's regime, and the exploration of the roles of notaries are all useful here.

Bologna and Genoa were not the only cities in Italy to utilize notaries as legal administrators. *Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome* by Laurie Nussdorfer is another piece of scholarship that presents an incredibly useful model for understanding the developing roles of notaries in later medieval Genoa.⁵⁶ Nussdorfer chose Rome because she is a specialist of early modern Rome. The problem with Rome as an example is that the papacy slowed down the development of communal institutions. Indeed, Nussdorfer recognizes this but is able to demonstrate that the extensive source base makes early modern Rome a useful object of study.⁵⁷ Additionally, Nussdorfer gives a more complete general history of the public notary or *notarius publicus* that incorporates the legal-theoretical underpinning of the position. Perhaps the most useful aspect of this analysis is the specific references she supplies to the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*.⁵⁸ The *Corpus* was the ultimate source of so much of medieval law, and it plays a significant role in this dissertation's understanding of sovereignty. Indeed, this dissertation argues that the reformation of the Genoese commune saw the popular government attempt to realize Bartolus's pronouncement that within the *Ius Comune*, a city has a right to establish its own laws and councils. Nussdorfer's work helps to bridge the divide between the theory of law and its practice.

⁵⁶ Laurie Nussdorfer, *Brokers of Public Trust: Notaries in Early Modern Rome* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4–5.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

One of the most helpful examples of scholarship about the use of public notaries is *Le ville, le gouvernement et l'écrit à Montpellier (XII^e–XIV^e siècle)* by Pierre Chastang.⁵⁹ This dissertation is, in many ways, an exploration of the *practice* of civil government. While Montpellier could be seen as somewhat removed from the Genoese case, Chastang's work proves to be useful. The author begins the work with a quote from *Theses on Fruerbach* by Karl Marx that is instructive to studies of this type: (quoting Chastang's French edition) "*La question de savoir si la verité objective est accessible à la pensée humaine n'est paune question de théorie, mais une question pratique.*" It is only through the study of the exercise of power that it can truly be understood. It is one thing to read the high scholastic theory of how the king and his lieges exercised power theoretically, but the study of these notaries and the documents they produced is one of the best ways to understand the articulation of state authority in medieval Europe. Using the notarial records of the *universitas* of Montpellier, Chastang unfolds the exercise of state authority in that city.

The archival documents in this dissertation detail the names of individuals who provided specific sums of money to buy specific amounts of grain sourced from various provenances. It might be tempting to take these seemingly accurate numbers as a correct recounting of state funds. Chastang, however, takes a more nuanced look at this sort of document, suggesting that lists, especially in communal governments, belong almost to another genre of text that straddles literature and pragmatic or practical writings ("*littéraires* ' ou *pragmatiques*) and employed in a variety of contexts (*contexts très*

⁵⁹ Pierre Chastang, *Le ville, le gouvernement et l'écrit à Montpellier (XII^e–XIV^e siècle)*, *Essai d' histoire sociale* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2013).

variés).⁶⁰ The diverse and various contexts in which urban governments have employed lists should caution us to simply take the records that the Genoese left behind simply as an accurate (or inaccurate) recounting of objects, people, or money. His Montpellier model is instructive in a number of ways.

In addition to providing guidance on how to understand the contents of *victualium* documents themselves, the similarity between the structures of the Genoese texts and those in Chastang's study will help to draw important distinctions and similarities between the French and Italian cases.

1.3.4: Scholarship on the emergence of state debt

The study of state or social debt is the final historiographical trend that needs to be discussed. The study of the history of public debt is long and has experienced a revival of sorts in recent years. Unfortunately, Genoa does not command the pride of place it deserves, and the city usually receives only brief recognition for being one of the first political entities to establish such an institution. Oftentimes, these histories focus on the development of the institution in the Low Countries. The issue with this perspective is that it looks at the subject of state debt with the advantage of hindsight because people have integrated its development there with the “grand narrative” of the Western capitalist economy. From this perspective, the problem of state debt is focused on the absorption of *rentes* and related privileges into those of a city. This sort of historiography thus sublimates the development of public debt into the feudal narrative that still dominates ideas of the

⁶⁰ Ibid., 279.

Middle Ages in some quarters. Despite this, as we shall see, the origin of state debt, while related to the absorption of these feudal rights, actually has different origins.

Perhaps the clearest description of the origins of state debt is James Tracy's chapter, "On the Dual Origins of Long-Term Urban Debt in Medieval Europe" in the edited volume, *Urban Public Debts: Urban Governments and the Market for Annuities in Western Europe (14th–18th Centuries)*.⁶¹ This chapter recognizes the emergence of public debt in Genoa, but it does not have the space to explore it fully. Unfortunately, while the volume has chapters dedicated to Florence and Venice, it does not have one for Genoa, the city that instituted a state debt first.

Genoa is notable not only for being an early adaptor of such an institution, but the *Casa di San Giorgio*, founded in 1407, is an incredibly important moment in the history of the development of state finances. The *Casa*, an institution created to solve all of the debt related problems Genoa faced, went on to exert a tremendous influence on the development of the idea of credit. Indeed, even in the chapter from *Companion to Medieval Genoa* devoted to *commenda* and *societas* contracts, credit more generally, and the *Casa di San Giorgio*, but the pre-fifteenth century debt is given little attention.⁶² This combination of subjects is natural in some respects. The Genoese were given to dividing just about any type potential future profits into shares in exchange for capital up front. There have been many studies detailing the evidence for the division of the profits of a shipping voyage,

⁶¹ James Tracy, "On the Dual Origins of Long-Term Urban Debt in Medieval Europe," in M. Boone, K. Davids, and P. Janssens, eds., *Urban Public Debts: Urban Governments and the Market for Annuities in Western Europe (14th–18th Centuries)* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 13–26.

⁶² Carlo Taviani, "Companies, Commerce, and Credit," 429–424.

such as the extensive scholarship of Hilmar Krueger on the subject.⁶³ This scant treatment is very much a reflection of traditional historiography of state debt in Genoa and Italy more broadly.

The two foundational works on the subject of state debt in medieval Genoa are *Il debito pubblico Genovese: Inventario delle compere anteriori a San Giorgio o no consolidate nel banco (sec. XIV–XIX)* by Domenico Gioffre and *Studio Sulle finanze genovesi nel Medioevo e in particolare sulla casa di S. Giorgio* by Heinrich Sieveking.⁶⁴ The former focuses on the era before the establishment of the *Casa* in 1407, while the second concerns the period after. Gioffre's work is fundamental to this dissertation. Gioffre's work is very much in the vein of more widely cited material on Florence and Venice, such as Draghi's work on the Venetian public debt, which provides a useful comparative example.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, Gioffre's volume, while a work of technical brilliance, fails to integrate its description of the debt into the society that produced it. This dissertation fills this particular gap in the historiography by showing that the political elites used state debt to consolidate their monopoly on power.

⁶³ Hilmar C. Krueger, *Navi e proprietà navale a Genova, seconda metà del sec. XII* (Genoa: Società Ligure per la Storia Patria, 1985).

⁶⁴ Domenico Gioffre, *Il debito pubblico Genovese: Inventario delle compere anteriori a San Giorgio o no consolidate nel banco (sec. XIV–XIX)*, Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria nuova serie 6 P (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1996); Heinrich Sieveking, *Studio sulle finanze Genovese nel Medioevo e in particolare sulla casa di S. Giorgio*, Atti della Società ligure di storia patria 35.2 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1906).

⁶⁵ A. Draghi, *I Prestiti della Repubblica di Venezia (Sec. XIII–XV), Introduzione Storica e Documenti* (Rome: R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1929).

Chapter 2: Genoa—its character and inhabitants

2.1: Genoa and Liguria

Genoa's medieval center, the *Porto Antico*, remains one of the best-preserved urban areas from the Italian Middle Ages despite the bombing of the city during World War II when Liguria was a hotbed of communist partisan activity. The city, which is located in the center of the region of Liguria, about one hundred seventy-five kilometers east of the French border, is wedged between the mountains—at the confluence of the Maritime Alps and Apennines—and the sea. The labyrinthine streets and extant walls from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries found in this district convey the feeling of the medieval past in a way that is unique, even in Italy.⁶⁶



Figure 1

⁶⁶ Image taken from Google Maps:
<https://www.google.com/maps/@44.4129583,8.9269094,3a,75y,85.79h,115.28t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sVrx8itMtD87L2PB2tWB1HQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656..>

While Bologna, for example, retains many of its medieval urban building—in fact, its chamber of commerce is housed in the old merchants’ guildhall—Genoa’s *Porto Antico* is more suggestive of the experience of a medieval city. There is no grid or organization, but there are many ramps and flights of stairs that often lead to dead ends. The narrow streets are lined with multistory buildings, many built hundreds of years ago, that have shops with produce from all over the Mediterranean spilling onto the street. The city’s government has posted signs directing visitors to the main sites, but these rarely provide assistance because the intended route leads the traveler through many twists and turns without further assistance. More often than not, rather than reaching one’s destination, they find themselves facing the sea.

Genoa, wedged as it is between the mountains and the sea, feels like it is constructed on an incline, a characteristic that gives visitors the impression that they are constantly sliding into the Mediterranean. The further one gets from the sea and into the outskirts of the city, the feeling of sliding backward increases. As the city grew in size, its inhabitants had to dig into the mountainsides, flattening a hill in the thirteenth century to allow for more housing. The tombs in the Monumental Cemetery of Staglieno, established in 1835 and situated on the edge of the city, are arranged almost as terraces. The climb to the summit of the cemetery provides the traveler with a breathtaking view of the city’s constant slide into the sea below them. Unfortunately, as Genoa has grown in size, and high-rise apartments have been constructed around Staglieno, this human development has increasingly put the city in danger of flooding and mudslides as the vegetation that had

previously absorbed rainfall has been cleared away, which means that flashfloods can descend from the mountains without warning.⁶⁷

This terrain has shaped the history and culture of the region profoundly. For example, the steep, rocky slopes make large-scale grain agriculture difficult, and there are no waterways into the interior, making the import of cereals from Lombardy difficult. These characteristics isolate Liguria from the rest of Italy. Thus, just as visitors to Genoa feel themselves sliding into the sea, the inhabitants of the city relied on the sea for their wellbeing and lived as sailors and traders and, in the process, turned their back on the peninsula. Today, the Genoese have a reputation for coldness or arrogance; perhaps the region's geographic isolation from the rest of Italy and seaward orientation contributed to this reputation.

The original inhabitants of Liguria, the various *Ligures* tribes, settled in the region in the fifth or fourth millennium BCE and established many of the cities of the Riviera, including Genoa, as fishing settlements and centers of trade. These settlements would have served as crucial stopover points on the way to the ports of southern Gaul, such as the Greek colony, Massalia (present-day Marseille). Renaissance era writers suggested that the name Genoa, or *Ianua* in Latin, was related to the Roman god, Janus, the god of, among other things, doorways and entrances, and Genoa was the “gateway” to western Italy. They also invented a mythic king, named Ianus, whose story seems to have been elided with that

⁶⁷ In 2011, torrential rains caused extensive flooding, which killed six people when the lobby of an apartment where they sought shelter flooded.

of the god.⁶⁸ Later historians have dismissed this presumption to argue that the name comes from the Indo-European root for knee, an etymology that the city shares with Geneva.⁶⁹

The earliest permanent community was a fortified settlement on a hill known as *Castrum*, the modern *Castello* district on the south side of the *Porto Antico*. The city gained a reputation for commerce very early. Strabo refers to the city as the “emporium of the *Ligures*,” and Livy states that the city became an ally to Rome after it was sacked by the Carthaginians in 209 BCE. From there, it became the nexus of Roman trade in northwest Italy.⁷⁰

Very little remains of Genoa from the Roman period or earlier.⁷¹ While the quality harbor made some sort of settlement at that location inevitable, the city was not the only major settlement in the region during antiquity. For example, there was, apparently, a significant Roman city-center in Savona, which the Genoese completely destroyed in the sixteenth century in an effort to finally subordinate the city that had consistently resisted Genoese regional dominance.⁷² The destruction of Roman Savona was a major blow to our understanding of antique Liguria.

It was in the post-Roman era that Genoa rose to prominence and began to develop into *La Superba*, the haughty or proud. As we shall see later in this dissertation, the city emerged as an independent polity in its own right in the ninth century. From there, Genoa

⁶⁸ For a summary of these founding myths, see Carrie E. Beneš, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250–1350* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2011), 63–88.

⁶⁹ Ibid., “Introduction,” in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, Carrie E. Beneš ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2008): 1–14, 3.

⁷⁰ Ibid.; cf. Strabo, *Geographia*, ed., A. Meineke (Leipzig: Teubner, 1877), 3.8 and Titus Livius, *Ab Urbe Condita*, ed., Wilhelm Weissenborn (Berlin: Weidman, 1871), 21.32.

⁷¹ Gian Pietro Brogiolo and Sauro Gelichi, *La città nell’alto medioevo italiano: Archeologia e storia* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1998), 24.

⁷² Umberto Benigni, “Savona and Noli,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1913), 490

began to expand into the Mediterranean. After the Fatimid sack in 934–935, *La Superba* maintained a formidable navy, raiding Muslim-held Sardinia in 1016 and Mahdia in 1087 with the Pisans.⁷³ Citizens of Genoa served as soldiers in the First Crusade, and eventually, the city sent ships, participating in the conquest of Antioch (1098), Jerusalem (1099), and Caesarea (1101).⁷⁴ This participation provided the city with crucial enclaves in the Levant and allowed them to participate in the Latin European commercial expansion into the eastern Mediterranean. The inhabitants of Genoa became wealthy through trade, and the saying, “*Ianuensis ergo mercator*” (Genoese therefore a merchant) became widespread in Latin Europe.

Over time, this commercial presence caused Genoa to enter into military and commercial rivalries with other Italian cities, first locally in the Tyrrhenian Sea with Pisa, and later with Venice in the eastern Mediterranean with whom the Genoa fought four wars before the end of the Middle Ages. Genoa would best Pisa at the battle of La Meloria (1284), but the wars with Venice were largely inconclusive. *La Superba*’s conflicts with its Adriatic rival are the best-known aspect of medieval Genoese history. The two cities are often described as rivals, often in contrast to each other, and Petrarch’s reference to the two cities as the “twin torches” of Italy suggests that contemporary Italians also saw the two cities as leaders in Italy.⁷⁵ But, whereas Venice was *La Serenissima*, the Most Serene Republic, a city whose political establishment was stable and well-instituted, Genoa’s

⁷³ The campaign against Mahdia is narrated in an epic poem written by an anonymous Pisan. A full text can be found online: Anonymous, *Carmen in Victoriam Pisanorum*, The Latin Library, accessed January 9, 2019, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/carmeninvictoriam.html>.

⁷⁴ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 28–32; On the Genoese participation in the siege of Genoa, see FPSI, 11, 5.

⁷⁵ See n. 248.

public life was characterized by a disunited nobility and an unstable political structure, which we shall explore more fully in chapters two and three, and it was this structure, according to more traditional narratives, that led to Genoa's downfall as a merchant empire.⁷⁶ In reality, the trajectory of Genoa during the early modern period is more complex than simple factionalism leading to a decline of overseas ambitions.

While the rivalry between Genoa and Venice dominates modern narratives of the city, in many ways, the relationship between Genoa and the rest of Liguria is more important to this dissertation. Because of the lack of space between the sea and the mountains, Genoa was unable to grow to the size of Milan, Florence, or Venice and absorb so much of the population of the regions that surround them. Thus, we see a collection of medium and small settlements that fan out along the Ligurian coastline with Genoa in the center. (The parts of Liguria to either side of Genoa are referred to as the eastern and western Riviera.) The most populous of these cities—Savona, Albenga, and Ventimiglia—are all located on the western Riviera. Sailors from each of these cities would spread out throughout the Mediterranean and serve in Genoese navies. In this way, Paola Guglielmotti has described this region as a sort of “extended harbor,” over which Genoa attempted to exert control of shipping and movement over the course of the Middle Ages.⁷⁷ While the city of Genoa served as a commercial hub, it was its gradual domination of the other cities of the gulf that allowed it to take on its rivals in the Mediterranean. Thus, while the

⁷⁶ For the early communal structure of Venice, see Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venice, a maritime republic* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 86–101.

⁷⁷ Paola Guglielmotti, “Genoa and Liguria,” in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, Carrie Beneš ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 49–71, 53.

intraurban population of Genoa never reached the size of Venice, it recruited from the entire Riviera to man its fleets and compete with its Adriatic rival.

Jacques Heers, as we shall see later in this chapter, has done the most to trace out the political contours of medieval Liguria cartographically. In his work, *Gênes au XVe siècle: Activité économique et problèmes sociaux*, the author includes a map that is a patchwork of dependent cities and the lands of the Doria, Fieschi, Grimaldi, Malaspina, and Spinola families.⁷⁸ These families would dominate the politics of Genoa as the *nobilis* establishment, which will be the focus of chapter three. Genoa forced the other cities of the gulf into dependent status using legal means and ecclesiastical structures.

2.2: Liguria and Genoese domination

The idea of an Liguria as an “extended port” is useful for understanding Genoa’s ability to compete with Venice in terms of manpower and ships, and the historical trajectory of Genoa’s domination of the gulf of Liguria is generally unidirectional. While the city certainly faced resistance from the Rivas throughout the Middle Ages, these rivalries hardly reached the level of Pisa or Venice. Savona was Genoa’s greatest regional rival. The relationship between Savona and Genoa mirrors, in some respects, the relationship between Pavia and Milan—but perhaps on a smaller scale. Two regional cities wherein the larger dominates the other.

⁷⁸ Jacques Heers, *Gênes au XVe siècle*, xi. The fact that the new *Companion to Medieval Genoa* adapts this map to a modern base map attests to the accuracy of Heers’s effort.

As we shall see in the following chapter, Pavia was the seat of the Lombard and later Carolingian monarchs. The palace of the king of Italy was in Pavia for much of the early Middle Ages, but the political importance of the city was superseded by the sheer size of Milan. Likewise, Savona was an important regional seat in the early Middle Ages. The bishops were the counts of Savona until that title was taken by the regionally powerful marquesses of Montferrat in 981. The first marquess was Aleram, who was invested with the lands of Alessandria in 955 and was given the title in 958 by Berengar II of Italy—roughly the same time that Genoa emerged as an independent polity. Aleram’s descendants would continue to play an important role in regional politics throughout the Middle Ages, often allying with groups in Genoa and acting through their landed holdings in northwest Liguria.

Savona remained under feudal control until the thirteenth century, when Genoa began to exert its own domination over the city. Though the city ruled it itself as an independent commune from 1191 to 1215, and again in 1238–1251, 1318–1332, and 1335–1350, it remained under Genoese domination. (As we shall see, there are clear reasons for Savona’s ability to extricate itself from Genoese hegemony.) *La Superba*’s reasons for their domination of Savona, as well as the other ports of Liguria, appear to be economic; Genoa sought to install itself as literally the preeminent port in the region.

For example, in 1153, the Genoese imposed a series of restrictions on Savona, which were reimposed in 1168 and 1181, that required the city to provide military service at Genoa’s discretion, observe a number of consular decrees that restricted trade, contribute to paying for the expenses of Genoese diplomatic missions, and required Savonese vessels to stop at Genoa, paying harbor fees in the process and forcing these ships to carry Genoese

merchants.⁷⁹ The aim was to route all contact with the world beyond Liguria through Genoa.

It should be remembered that the imposition of Genoese hegemony was not necessarily unwelcome in all quarters. For example, Albenga was another city that faced the threat of marquesses of Montferrat. To ensure their freedom from these feudal lords, Albenga allied itself with Genoa against the marquis of Montferrat in 1150.⁸⁰ Albenga sought Genoa for refuge, and, as we shall see, *La Superba* was able to impose a legal and administrative structure over Albenga.

The expansion of Genoese ecclesiastical structures supported the legal and political strategies above. Returning to the example of Savona, in 1133, Pope Innocent II elevated the see of Genoa to an archdiocese that included three districts in Corsica, the monastic dioceses in the Ligurian-Piacentine Apennines, and Brugnato in the Ligurian highlands. Despite this, the powerful archdiocese of Milan remained in control of Savona. To counteract this, the archbishop of Genoa established a subordinate diocese in Noli, a small city to the west of Savona, in 1239. The establishment of the new diocese under the authority of the Genoese bishop allowed the holder of that office to exert pressure on Savona from both east and west.⁸¹ As we shall see in the next chapter, the archbishopric was a powerful arm of the Genoese aristocratic state.

Albenga and Savona are cities on the western Riviera. The eastern Riviera fell under Genoese dominion more easily. The region lacked a large city like Savona around

⁷⁹ For a summary of the relationship between Genoa and Savona, see Guglielmotti, "Genoa and Liguria," 59–60; cf. HPM 7, *Liber Iurium*, 166 (document 187), 230 (document 277), and 316 (document 330).

⁸⁰ Lisciandrelli, *Trattati e Negoziazioni*, 10.

⁸¹ Guglielmotti, "Genoa and Liguria," 68.

which the cities could mount a resistance and Genoa did not face any territorial enemies such as the marquises of Montferrat. Some mention should be made of the smaller settlements in the valleys of Liguria, who also play a role in this story. Whereas much research has been done to demonstrate the way Genoa used treaties to absorb the coastal cities of Liguria into its hegemony, Paola Guglielmotti has done much research into the way Genoa controlled the settlements around it, particularly the valleys to the north. She points out that in 1202, the Genoese came to an agreement with the representatives of the different valley communities, with each valley represented by a single individual.⁸² It appears that, like the cities of the coast, the villages of the valleys come to be dominated by Genoa by the thirteenth century.

2.3: Demography

While the relationship between Genoa and Liguria is important, much of this dissertation is concerned with developments inside the walls of Genoa, and this section will help to fill out our understanding of Genoese society by constructing a population estimate. This is necessary because the majority of the archival materials cited here are drawn from an administrative apparatus known as the *Officium victualium* (Office of Provisions). We shall introduce these materials more completely later in the dissertation, but for now, what matters is that the records of this office contain amounts of grain that the government of Genoa purchased, their provenance, and the identities of individuals who provided the

⁸² Paola Guglielmotti, *Ricerche sull'organizzazione del territorio nella Liguria medievale* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2005), 88.

capital for these purchases. These purchases happened in times of crisis when normal supply was disrupted. As noted earlier, Michel Balard is the only scholar to have explored the information contained in these texts.⁸³ But, as we shall see in chapter 5, Balard's conclusions were based on an incomplete understanding of Genoese society and the role that the *victualium* played in the city's government and finances. Balard seems to take these records as a complete accounting of the grain that the city consumed, but as we shall demonstrate later, that this assumption is flawed.

The related questions of food supply and how to measure are ones that have vexed historians of the Middle Ages for years. David Abulafia is fond of quoting a fact, taken from the fourteenth-century work, *Libro del Biadiaolo*, that claims that Tuscany could only produce enough grain for Florence—then one of the largest cities in Latin Europe—to sustain itself for four months out of the year.⁸⁴ Like Balard's interpretation of the *victualium* records, his observation reads too much into medieval administrative figures because he takes them as an extreme example of the way the populations of medieval cities had grown to the point where they consumed more food than the grain supply of their immediate hinterlands could reasonably supply. This is a simplistic understanding of medieval subsistence networks. First, it ignores consumption in the hinterland. People in the countryside were not only producing for the cities, they had to eat, too. Furthermore, cities, even in the later Middle Ages, did not necessarily have control over all of the agricultural production around them—agricultural surplus did not automatically funnel

⁸³ See page 192 for a discussion of this content.

⁸⁴ David Abulafia, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations Between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes*, Cambridge studies in medieval life and thought 3rd ser. Vol. 9 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 51. The text has been published as, Domenico Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaioolo*, ed. Giuliano Pinto (Florence: L.S. Olschki, 1978).

into the cities. Liguria, as we have already seen, was a patchwork of cities and *nobilis* landed holdings. If a *nobilis* clan was in open conflict with those factions in power, it was within their legal rights to withhold grain shipments. This means that Genoa and other medieval cities needed a flexible supply network that would have included grain from far afield, regardless of the fecundity of the surrounding countryside. Furthermore, we shall see concrete evidence of the way access to urban markets and its benefits could be contested in medieval Liguria. Therefore, this dissertation will argue that the *victualium* records reflect a need based on political emergency rather than a consistent demand normally fulfilled by other means, and even more important, the *victualum* records reflect efforts to manage communal debt rather than recording the grain consumption of the populace. We shall use contemporary estimates of food and population consumptions to better understand the efficacy of the *victualium*.

The demography of medieval Italian cities, including Genoa, is a fraught topic, and estimates of urban population sizes can vary widely. For much of the medieval period, we lack data from censuses that could provide precise population information. This has not, however, prevented historians from making educated estimates regarding population size. Despite the variability of these estimates, there is some consensus about urban population sizes in relation to each other. Most scholars of medieval demography organize the cities of medieval Italy into tiers. During the central Middle Ages (c. 1095–1346), the three largest cities in the region were Venice, Milan, and Florence. Genoa is most often placed

in the second tier and was probably the largest city in this echelon.⁸⁵ Despite this consensus, population estimates for all of these cities can vary greatly.

There are a variety of methodologies that historians of demography have applied to develop population estimates for medieval cities. The most accurate method is to use some sort of contemporary data with a reconstruction of the spatial characteristics of the city. The surface area of a city acts as a check on an estimate because there is a limit to how many people could conceivably live in an urban hectare (a square with one hundred-meter sides or 2.47 acres) during the Middle Ages. The existence of walls permits estimates of population and density. While there were extramural settlements outside of most cities, walls provide a baseline for understanding the area covered by medieval cities. The contemporary data that historians of urban demography use can take different forms. For example, many medieval authors of historical, geographic, or travel works made population estimates in their writings. Despite the existence of these sources, some modern scholars refuse to believe in the accuracy these figures because estimates from premodern authors are often exaggerations, or the authors (supposedly) have no basis for the knowledge they claim to have. Despite this, these authors are often our only sources. And in support of this evidence, the pioneer of medieval demography, Josiah Cox Russell, has argued that, “Many who refuse to believe in figures of city population also feel free to fill their studies with statements which are quite as questionable as [medieval] population estimates and feel no qualms about them.”⁸⁶ Russell goes on to state that while medieval

⁸⁵ For an example of this hierarchy, see: Antonio Ivan Pini, “Fonti e metodi per la storia demografica Italiana de secoli XIII–XV,” in *Città medievali e demografia storica*, ed. Antonio Ivan Pini (Bologna: Cooperativa Libreria Universitaria Editrice, 1996), 95–115.

⁸⁶ Josiah Cox Russell, *Medieval Regions and their Cities* (Devon: David & Charles: Newton Abbot, 1972), 23.

estimates of population (or any large number of things) can be very rough, they provide a baseline from which historians can build. We shall return to this idea in a moment when we actually construct a population estimate for Genoa. Furthermore, as we shall see, we should not be so hasty to dismiss the estimates of medieval authors as hyperinflated. Merchants have a handle on numerical data, and the medieval Italians were merchants.

The use of administrative data, rather than narrative sources, is perhaps the ideal way of reconstructing medieval population. For example, records detailing the tax on the hearth or the head of a household are common in northern Europe. Using this information, it is then possible to use age tables and models of family size to extrapolate a (relatively) accurate estimation of population size that can be checked against the number of people who could plausibly live in the space covered by a medieval city.⁸⁷ Unfortunately for historians of medieval Italy, many cities did not impose a head-tax because many medieval Italians opposed such measures on theoretical grounds.⁸⁸ In other cases, such fiscal records simply do not survive. The government of Florence only imposed the *catasto* tax (a quasi-income tax) in the fifteenth century when the wars with Milan had imposed significant pressure on the Florentine fiscal system. These records have been invaluable to our knowledge of the population of that city.

David Herlihy and Christian Klapisch-Zuber's collaborative work, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: une étude du catasto florentin de 1427*, was the first major work to digest the vast amount of data contained within the records of the *catasto*.⁸⁹ The focus of their

⁸⁷ Ibid, 24.

⁸⁸ John M. Najemy, *A History of Florence*, 118.

⁸⁹ David Herlihy and Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, *Les Toscans et leurs familles: une étude du catasto florentin de 1427* (Paris: Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences sociales, 1978).

work illuminates the various family structures present in fifteenth-century Tuscany—ranging from the wealthy families in the city to the agriculturalists who worked as sharecroppers (participants in the *mezzadria* system). While they recognize the inherent problems in their model of population size, their work remains a landmark in the study of medieval Italian demography. Like Florence, Genoa faced significant fiscal pressures throughout the Middle Ages, but the Ligurian republic refused to impose such a measure as a head tax until the very beginning of the sixteenth century. This, combined with the fact that no chronicler of the city recorded an estimate of the size of the city, means that we need to resort to more creative means to arrive at a plausible estimate for the population of medieval Genoa.

The absence of administrative data of any kind for Genoa, however, does not mean that we cannot come up with a plausible population estimate. Before doing so, we should examine the range of models that other historians have constructed and their relevance to our approach. Of particular interest to us here is Josiah Cox Russell's *Medieval Regions and their Cities* noted above. Russell's work represents a standard model for the reconstruction of urban demography in the Middle Ages, and many subsequent scholars have put their work in conversation with his. What is more, Russell incorporates other scholarship and presents different models for the physical size of medieval cities. Using a comparative framework, Russell conceives of the city and its "region" as a single population unit. In this model, a region may have single major city with various urban agglomerations of varying sizes throughout.⁹⁰ For Russell, Genoa exists in Liguria, which is the periphery of the greater region of Milan. While the discussion of Genoa and Liguria

⁹⁰ Russell, *Medieval Regions and their Cities*, 15–38.

above would suggest that we should not conceive of it as an extension of Lombardy, Russell's model does presage the idea that Genoa and the Riviera represent a sort of "extended port" rather than a collection of isolated cities, which, as we discussed above, allowed the much-smaller city to vie with its larger rivals, namely Venice.

The most useful data available concerning the medieval population of Genoa is the actual size of the medieval urban core, combined with records from other cities. While the mountains that surround the city represented physical impediments to the growth of the city, their presence also meant that the space the city covered remained relatively stable throughout the premodern period. Using the area of the city in concert with estimates of population density and respective surface areas of other cities in medieval Italy, it is possible to arrive at a plausible estimate for the pre-Plague population of the city. Then, using mortality estimates for the Black Death, we can come to an educated estimate for the size of the population that the *victualium* serviced in times of emergency in the years after 1356 after its foundation.

Before moving on, it is helpful to examine earlier estimates of the population of Genoa to gauge our own. While historians are in agreement that the city of Genoa had a smaller population than many of its Mediterranean rivals, estimates for that number vary greatly. Working off hearth data gathered from around 1500 that suggests that the city had around 11,500 homes, Russell suggests that the city must have had something around 57,500 inhabitants around 1500 calculating five individuals to a hearth. The author goes on to state that the Ligurian city was at its commercial and military height at the end of the thirteenth century, and he goes on to suggest that it was possible for the city to have

contained around 60,000 inhabitants at that time.⁹¹ Jacques Heers, on the other hand, argues that the city would have had somewhere around 80,000 inhabitants at the height of its power in the late thirteenth century. The French scholar argues that while the estimates of demographers appear to be cogent, the small size of the purported population fails to explain the extent of Genoa's commercial and colonial empire, ignoring the fact that the city could draw on manpower from greater Liguria.⁹²

In a more recent volume addressing the demography of Italy, Lucia Sandri and Maria Ginatempo make another higher estimation of Genoa's population. Using available data, Sandri argues that the city had a population of around 47,500 inhabitants living in 3,500 houses in 1155. This number then ballooned to 40,000–80,000 in the mid sixteenth century, a range that is too large to be of any use.⁹³ Sandri and Ginatempo are only willing to make a more precise estimation for the size of the medieval city in 1155 when the Barbarossan walls enclosed the city in an area that encompassed fifty-five hectares. Despite this, we can judge how much the city grew by incorporating the space enclosed by later walls and the leveled hill mentioned above. The author goes on to surmise that these fifty-five hectares would have held 35,000 houses, and, using a coefficient of “more or less than 13 inhabitants per house,” Sandri makes her case for the population of the city during the twelfth century.⁹⁴ This ratio of inhabitants to house is remarkably high, even in the Middle Ages. This problem is rooted in the verticality of the city.

⁹¹ Russell, 70.

⁹² Jacques Heers, “Les limites des méthodes statistiques pour les recherches de démographie médiévale,” *Annales de démographie historique* 4 (1968): 43–72.

⁹³ Maria Ginatempo and Lucia Sandri, *L'Italia delle città: Il popolamento urbano tra Medioevo e Rinascimento (secoli XIII-XVI)* (Florence: Le lettere, 1990), 68.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

While the mountains that surround Genoa make the calculation of the surface area that the city covered straightforward, the geography also explains some of the variance in modern estimates. The restriction that the mountains imposed caused inhabitants of the Ligurian city to build more vertically than those of other cities. This is evident in Cristoforo de Grassi's painting of Genoa from 1597, which was based on a 1481 drawing.⁹⁵



Figure 2

This picture represents the earliest image of the city, and most of the residential buildings possess multiple stories. What is more, the vertical nature is evident in some of the remaining medieval architecture, such as the remains of the gatehouse near the Darsena metro station (see image below).⁹⁶ We shall return to the problem of the vertical quality of Genoa when we calculate the population of the city, but we must first address the problem that no medieval author provided an estimate of the city's population.

⁹⁵ Cristoforo de Grassi, *View of Genoa*, *Christoforo de Grassi (nach einer Vorlage von 1481)*, Oil on Canvas, in Galata Museo del Mare, Genoa.

⁹⁶ Taken from Google Maps street view: <https://www.google.com/maps/@44.4129583,8.9269094,3a,75y,85.79h,115.28t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sVrx8itMtD87L2PB2tWB1HQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>.



Figure 3: The Porta de Vacca near the *Porto Antico* in Genoa.

Since the chroniclers of Genoese history provide no information on the population or density of their city, we must look at other cities for models of medieval urbanization. This evidence is useful to us because unlike modern cities, available building technology and distribution networks meant that there was an upper limit to how dense a city could become. For our purposes, we shall look at narrative evidence for the cities of Milan and Florence. For the population of Milan, we have the account of Bonvesin della Riva, a lay member of the *Ordine degli Umiliati* and teacher of Latin Grammar. Della Riva wrote *The Wonders of the City of Milan* as a panegyric praising the qualities of the Lombard city.⁹⁷ As a member of the *Umiliati*, Bonvesin would have been uniquely situated to make population estimates. The *Umiliati* formed trade associations in Milan and were actively engaged in civic life. The order had well over one hundred chapter houses in the city and

⁹⁷ Bonvesin della Riva, *De magnalibus mediolani. Meraviglie di Milano*, ed. and trans. P Chiesa (Milan, 1998); translation taken from Bonvesin della Riva, "The Final Product of the Commercial Revolution," in *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative Documents*, ed. Robert S. Lopez and Irving W. Raymond, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1967), 60–69.

were members engaged in ministering to the population.⁹⁸ In this account, Bonvesin claims that there are 12,500 dwellings that open on to the street in which “. . . many families live with their dependents.”⁹⁹ The author goes on to state that there are around 200,000 individuals living in the city of Milan, including non-citizens. Perhaps most interesting for our purposes, Bonvesin states that the city of Milan consumed 1,200 *modii* of grain daily.¹⁰⁰ This is a useful number that we can consider in terms of Genoa later. While this information is useful, we need to accept that 200,000 inhabitants seems remarkably high for any premodern city, but the number of dwellings is interesting.

Two things need to be noted about Bonvesin’s account with respect to his accuracy. First, the author might have had some access to economic data concerning the city. His order, the *Umiliati* were widespread throughout Lombard society, and many lay members were part of the professional class and both the order and its members kept meticulous records.¹⁰¹ Thus, even if Bonvesin did not directly consult any data gathered by the notaries that the order employed, he would have had a unique perspective on the demography of the city through his interactions with Humiliati. Second, the account is from 1288, and the number, regardless of its accuracy, describes a pre-plague city somewhere near its population apogee. If we accept the estimate of 15,000 dwellings, however, we find that on average, sixteen people would inhabit each of these buildings. This ratio is not necessarily out of hand if we assume that many of these dwellings would have had multiple stories. As a comparative, the tenements of the age of the Industrial Revolution would have

⁹⁸ Frances Andrews, *The Early Humiliati* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 145.

⁹⁹ Della Riva, “The Final Product,” 60.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 65. A modius is equal to 8.62 liters of grain.

¹⁰¹ Andrews, *The Early Humiliati*, 34–35.

not only housed a large number of people, but they may have also had devoted space to a kitchen or food preparation, opening up more space for inhabitants. Finally, according to Russell, the city covered an area of five hundred hectares.¹⁰²

While some scholars have sought to confirm della Riva's estimate, many reject it.¹⁰³ While Bonvesin would have had some access to the records of the *Umilati*, which would have contributed to his accuracy, accuracy is not inherent to the panegyric. The author's praise is not limited to the beautiful buildings and abundant crops of the Po Valley, but the population as well. Bonvesin goes so far as to call the Milanese particularly tall, friendly, and attractive.¹⁰⁴ It would not be too much of a stretch to assume that the author overestimates the population of the city he is praising.

Russell is one modern historian who has questioned Bonvesin's population data, but he accepts the Lombard's estimate of the number of doors that open onto the street (which he equates with hearths). Using this figure, he argues that there would have been 75,000 individuals living in the Lombard city during the thirteenth century. It is likely that this number is low. Indeed, while Russell's estimations, methodologies, and models are still useful to scholarship today, many scholars currently tend to believe that medieval Italian cities were large. For example, Giuliano Pinto's model of urban population of Italy conceives of northern Italy as a single population unit. Of the entire urban population, 280,000 people lived in the three cities that had around 100,000 inhabitants, including Milan, Florence, and Venice. Within this model, Milan had a population of somewhere

¹⁰² Russell, *Medieval Cities*, 68.

¹⁰³ Cf. Ibid., 67–76; Ginatempo and Sandri, *L'Italia delle città*, 73–78

¹⁰⁴ Della Riva, "The Final Product, 63."

around 100,000 or even more.¹⁰⁵ Sandri and Ginatempo agree with Pinto that Milan's late-twelfth-century population was somewhere between Russell's estimates and that of Bonvesin, stating that the city could have had 150,000 inhabitants.¹⁰⁶ We shall return to this discrepancy after we have examined data from Florence.

Like Milan, we have a contemporary account of the population of the city of Florence from the pre-plague period. Giovanni Villani wrote his *Cronica* at the end of the 1330s.¹⁰⁷ Many modern historians are more accepting of Villani's data than della Riva's. Villani sometimes shares the sources of his information, appears to have taken an active hand in commercial life, and was not writing a work of panegyric—the work was written to record the events of Villani's lifetime rather than praise his city. Indeed Villani's estimates for figures related to communal finances have been checked against official records and have been found to be largely accurate. What is more, he served as a director of municipal finances and was “. . . frequently consulted by those ‘merchants wise and subtle’ who were charged with public duties at the same time he was writing.”¹⁰⁸ While this by no means suggests that we should take Villani's writings as gospel, the goals of the author may have resulted in greater accuracy, or at the very least, a diminished propensity to exaggerate data.

Villani claims that there were some 15,000 men capable of bearing arms in defense of the city. He goes on to assert that there were around 90,000 mouths to feed of people of

¹⁰⁵ Giuliano Pinto, “Poids démographiques et réseaux urbains en Italie entre le XIIIe et XVe siècle,” in *Villes de Flandre et d'Italie (XIIIe–XVe siècle). Les enseignements d'une comparaison* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008): 13–29, 14.

¹⁰⁶ Russell, *Medieval Regions and their Cities*, 68–69.

¹⁰⁷ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, 11.94 (pg. 1352–1352),

¹⁰⁸ Armando Sapori, *The Italian merchant in Middle Ages* trans. Ann Kennen (New York: Norton, 1970), 106–107.

both sexes in the city. Additionally, Villani not only provides information about the amount of grain consumed by the city, but he provides how he has arrived at that number. He states that the city consumed one hundred forty *moggia* (the Florentine word for *modius*) of grain daily and eight hundred a week in 1280. This weekly number is equal to the amount of grain Milan consumed in a day, which suggests that one of our scholars is rather far off. But we have better reason to believe Villani, who arrived at these numbers using figures that bakers provided and using sums from the tax on grinding. There is a practical reason for deferring to Villani as well. We can convert the Genoese unit of Grain, the mina, to Florentine *moggia* directly, as we shall see in the last chapter. In addition to grain, Villani states that the city of Florence consumed about 4,000 oxen and calves, 60,000 mutton and sheep, 20,000 she-goats and he-goats, and 30,000 pigs yearly. By the end of the thirteenth century, the city encompassed some six hundred thirty hectares.

Let us now turn to Genoa itself to discuss how this data relates to our subject. Of all the scholars of medieval Genoa, Jacques Heers's work has contributed most to our understanding of the social structure of that city in the later Middle Ages. His still excellent *Gênes au XVème siècle* helps us to conceive of the relationship between the Ligurian city, its hinterland, and the wider Mediterranean. Additionally, using evidence from wills, Heers is able to help us begin to model the effects of the plague on the city. We must look to another older article, however, to begin to consider the demography of the city: "Urbanisme et structure sociale à Gênes au moyen-âge." In this article, Heers meticulously describes the evolution of the urban plan of Genoa.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁹ Jacques Heers, "Urbanisme et structures sociales à Gênes au Moyen Age," in *Studi in onore di A. Fanfani*, vol. I (Milan: Istituto Editoriale Cisalpino, 1962): 369–412.

According to Heers, there were some 4,889 houses in Genoa during the mid-fifteenth century. He arrived on this number using the records of another administrative office that the Genoese created in the sixteenth century called the *gabella possessionum*, which was organized to finally institute a tax on properties. While this data is from a later period, it is logical that we would be able to use it for the late fourteenth century. As Russell points out in his assessment of Genoese demography, the city's population zenith would have been in the later thirteenth century before the arrival of the agrarian crises of the early fourteenth century and, of course, the initial wave of the Black Death. Thus, it is unlikely that new homes were needed after the mid-fourteenth century. What is more, according to Heers's article on the urban structure of Genoa, the physical area of the city remained relatively stable during the post plague years and into the fifteenth century.¹¹⁰

Let us now return to the data from Milan and Florence and consider what these means for modeling Genoese population. If we accept Villani's estimate that Florence had 90,000 mouths to feed in an area that covered 630 hectares, we find that pre-Plague Florence had a density of about 142.86 individuals per hectare. If we accept Bonvesin's numbers for Milan, we find that the Lombard city had a much greater density of four hundred individuals per hectare. But if we look at modern estimates, however, we find density estimates that appear to be more realistic. For example, if we accept that Milan had closer to 100,000 inhabitants, we get somewhere around 200 individuals per hectare, and if we suggest that there are 150,000, the number is 300.

While each of these estimates present a city that is much denser than Florence, I would argue that this should not necessarily be unexpected. First, the physical size of a city

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 392.

is not necessarily going to grow at the same rate as population. People will naturally want to cluster around the city center or in particular neighborhoods. For instance, if a family has multiple children, it might only be possible for one of the children to remain in the house, set up their own family, and care for the parents (the original residents of the home) in their old age. While it is of course possible for some siblings, particularly an unmarried sister but some fraternal households certainly existed, to remain part of an extended household, the majority need to move out, but they may wish to live close by. What is more, our estimates for the populations of Milan and Florence come from the pre-Plague period in European history that was a period of growth; births would have outstripped deaths. Therefore, I contend that as historical cities grew at increasing rates, they could increasingly grow upwards and denser as well as outward. Additionally, the numbers that we have for the area that medieval cities cover usually do not include the entire suburban area.

What do these numbers mean for Genoa? Florence and Milan were both able to grow without geographic obstacles. Genoa was not afforded this luxury. Yes, the city leveled one of the hills that surrounded it in order to make more room for human habitation, but the inhabitants faced significant limiting factors. On the basis of the above comparison, this dissertation argues that the density of Genoa is much closer to that of Milan than that of Florence. If we multiply the area of Genoa that Heers calculated in hectares (293, 2.57 acre per hectare) by the two ends of the population density estimates for Milan (200 and 300), we get a range of 58,600 and 87,900. This range is in line with most earlier estimates. For the purposes of this dissertation, however, we shall take the average of the two numbers, 73,250 as a working estimate for the pre-Plague apogee of Genoese population. If we

assume that we can read Heers's evidence from the *gabella possessionum* back to the fourteenth century, we find that each building would have housed around 14.98 inhabitants, a number that is not excessive, especially if we assume that these buildings would have contained multiple living units.

If we accept 73,250 people as a reasonable estimate for Genoa's intramural population at its pre-Plague peak, we must now contend with the effects of the demographic disaster of the Plague. Like estimates of Italian urban population, those concerning the effects of the plague on the populations of cities vary widely. For example, Kathryn Reyerson has suggested that the disaster claimed as much as three-fourths of the population of Montpellier.¹¹¹ The level of urbanization in medieval Italy would have caused the Black Death to have a profound effect on the population of the peninsula and 1356 is far too early for a significant recovery.

Like estimates of urban populations, those regarding the effects of the plague often vary widely. The most prolific scholar working on the subject today is Ole Benedictow. His book, *The Black Death 1346–1353: The Complete History*, may have a formidable title, but it lives up to the lofty claim.¹¹² While scholars have criticized Benedictow for presenting estimates that tend to be high, the author is not working in a vacuum. The volume not only includes the author's own assumptions but cites the scholarship of others. Not only that, but for Italy, there is a great deal of data from notarial registers that many scholars have taken as generally reliable.¹¹³ Examining the work of scholars of the period,

¹¹¹ Kathryn Reyerson, "Changes in testamentary practice at Montpellier on the eve of the Black Death," *Church History* 45 (1978): 253–269.

¹¹² Ole Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346–1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2004).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 288.

Benedictow has revealed that in Tuscany and Piedmont, the two regions that border Liguria, death rates in urban settings ranged from 40%–60%.¹¹⁴ Given the close quarters of Genoese urban life, we should assume that the city experienced heavy casualties. With this in mind, I propose that Genoa suffered a very high rate of casualties—around 60%—and that the city had a population of around 29,300 inhabitants after the plague.

If we accept that the city of Genoa had a post-Plague population of around 29,300, the city would require about one third of provisions of what pre-Plague Florence would have required, or about 240 *modii* of grain a week. Again, if we accept that Florence had 90,000 mouths to feed and required 800 *modii* a week, Genoa's post plague population was a little over a third of that amount, and the city would have required 260.44 *modii* a week. So we can take 240–260 *modii* of grain a week as a rough estimate to better understand the extent that the *victualium* was capable of supporting the population's subsistence requirements. Additionally, these numbers line up with how much grain Milan required in a population comparison between the Lombard city and Tuscany. These numbers are very rough, but they will give us a practical baseline when we reach the end of the dissertation and begin to analyze the data from the *victualium*.

2.4: Conclusions

Like the rest of Europe, Genoa's population would take centuries to recover from the plague. After the Middle Ages came to a close, the city continued to exert its influence as bankers of the Habsburgs. This is perhaps the aspect of modern Genoese history that is best

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 285 and 308.

known to modern historians thanks to Braudel's interest in the role that the Genoese played in the development of modern capitalism between 1557–1627, which he refers to as the “Age of the Genoese.”¹¹⁵ But the Genoese continued to participate in grand historical processes. For instance, the city was a major emigration point for the Italian diaspora, and Genoese and Ligurians emigrated to both North and South America. They brought their culture with them to the Americas.¹¹⁶ For example, the neighborhood of La Boca in Buenos Aires was settled by many Genoese and the area retains a significant Italian aesthetic. The pastel hued residences are reminiscent of the cities of the Riviera and the nineteenth century Ghost Tower on Wenceslao Villafañe Street recalls the neo-Gothic architecture that dots Genoa. Even today, the soccer club that Genoese immigrants formed in 1905, Boca Juniors, are still referred to as “Xeneizes,” “Genoese.”

¹¹⁵ Philip Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* vol. 1, trans., Siân Reynolds (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 500–504.

¹¹⁶ Donna Gabaccia, “Italian Diaspora,” in *The Encyclopedia of Diasporas*, ed., Melvin Emer, Carol R. Ember, and Ian Skoggard (Boston: Springer, 2005), 144–152.

Chapter 3: The composition of the Genoese commune

3.1: Argument

This chapter outlines the aristocratic structures of power that made up the Genoese commune, which the regimes of Simone Boccanegra and his successors sought to deconstruct after 1339. While it is tempting to think of the commune as a monolithic entity, it is helpful to think of it as a collection of institutions that were integrated to facilitate the workings of a state. The debt played an important role in these entities, but there were others. These included: (1) the full assembly of individuals that had the right to participate in politics whose competition in this arena was eventually driven to factional violence; (2) the Ligurian church, which served as the source of this group's legitimacy to participate in politics and govern; (3) the public debt and the means to pay for inhabitants' participation in the goals of the commune; (4) the offices and political institutions that facilitated their participation; and (5) the cultivation of pacts of *concordia* that made peace between the factions and provided for the continuation of the entire corporate body. All of these entities were intertwined to the extent that understanding one, such as the debt, requires an understanding of how all five were entangled with each other. While the commune is often seen as the central entity in the medieval Italian state, we are deploying the term in a way that is particular to the Genoese case. The commune, as it is referenced in this chapter and the rest of this dissertation, refers to the collected institutions that made up an informally constituted state in medieval Genoa.

3.2 The composition of the aristocratic establishment (*ordo nobiliorum*), and their control of ecclesiastical structures

As we saw in the previous chapter, the composition of the political class—that is to say participants in all of the Genoese structures of power—of medieval Italian cities has occupied scholarly interest for many years. As we saw in the last chapter, different scholars have suggested a variety of answers to this question: they were the men who could supply a horse and support the commune's cause on the field of battle; they were a mercantile elite that had long previously descended from non-nobles; or they were a narrow aristocracy. Despite the attention, the answer to this question remains elusive and few identifiable trends emerge. Indeed, the only demonstrable pattern is that the political classes of medieval cities were uniformly small elite but grew to accommodate emerging orders of society. Despite this, these elites varied in terms of their background. For example, in Florence, all too often taken as the paradigm, the *grandi* were certainly elites, but they were not uniformly noble. Usually they were close-knit familial clans originating in the outlying cities of Tuscany who formed power blocs that intensified as these families grew in size and stature. In Genoa, however, as we shall see, the nucleus of the elites consisted of noble, landed families who moved into the city and dominated politics there—the *nobilis* establishment they are referred to here.

The *nobilis* establishment was the fundamental pillar of the original Genoese structures of power. Luca Filangieri places the *compagna*, which we shall discuss later in the chapter, as the crucial moment in the development of the independent Genoese state,

but the emergence of a political class predicates this development. The *compagana* was meant to regulate political competition among this group. Thus we should consider the emergence of this group as the fundamental development in the pre-1339 political order. Indeed, it was between the individuals that comprise the *ordo nobiliorum*¹¹⁷ that the state was constituted; the *nobiles* invested in the debt, served in the church, occupied the important offices of state, and participated in councils.

The church is paired with the *nobiles* in this section because the two institutions were fundamentally intertwined, and the two girded each other's authority in crucial ways. Genoa, as an independent, self-governing entity, was a new institution during the early Middle Ages, and the church represented an ancient institution of unimpeachable authority. Indeed, at least in Italy, the administration of the later Roman Empire had elided with the metropolitans, an arrangement that continued into the Lombard and Carolingian periods as we shall see more vividly in the next chapter. Thus, the bishoprics of Liguria possessed the necessary institutional memory and political power to govern and administer a city, and the *nobiles* were only too happy to staff the institution and use it to their advantage.

The administrative experience of the local ecclesiastical structures is visible in the few extant texts from the tenth century that describe Genoa. What few documents we have from this period are charters of property bequests and other gifts to the church.¹¹⁸ For example, the figure of Bishop Teodulf of Genoa emerges as one of the major players in the early development of the city during this period. During the tenth century, many families living in Liguria devoted money to local churches, and we see that various churches and

¹¹⁷ The term *ordo nobiliorum*, or *nobiles* for short, is a hybrid of terminology used in medieval sources (*nobiles*) and the traditional Latin terminology for social divisions within society (*ordo*).

¹¹⁸ HPM 7, *Liber Iurium* I, 3-8.

monasteries in the region developed significant collections of income-generating properties. These institutions, particularly the monastery at Bobbio, developed the agricultural productivity of their lands.¹¹⁹ Indeed, these productive church lands would have contributed to the burgeoning economy of Liguria and the regional market of Genoa during the early Middle Ages.¹²⁰ By the time of the foundation of the first *compagna* in 1099, the church and political class had cemented their positions in Genoese society.

The core of the *ordo nobiliorum* that integrated itself into the Ligurian church hierarchy were the *quattuor gentes*, the four clans: the Spinola, Doria, Grimaldi, and Fieschi. These clans originated as territorial magnates. For example, the Fieschi, who would emerge as the most powerful of the families, owned vast estates around Lavagna, a community to the southeast of Genoa. This outlying settlement, along with the other holdings of the great families, became subordinated to Genoa over time and Lavagna, in particular, produced much of the little grain produced in Liguria every year.¹²¹

Boccaccio captures the character of this group in the eighth story of the first day:

In Genoa, then, a long time ago, there lived a gentleman called Ermino de' Grimaldi, who was generally acknowledged, on account of his vast wealth and huge estates, to be by far the richest citizen in Italy of his day. Not only was he richer than any man in Italy, he was incomparably greedier and more tight-fisted than every other grasper in the whole wide world. For he would entertain on a shoestring, and in contrast to the normal habits of the Genoese (who were wont to dress in the height of fashion), he would sooner go about in rags than spend any money on his personal appearance.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Ross Balzaretti, "Early Medieval Genoa," in *A Companion to Medieval Genoa*, ed. Carrie E. Beneš (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 72–94, 77.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 79.

¹²¹ Petti Balbi, *Governare la Città*, 102–114

¹²² Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans., G.H. McWilliam (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 103–104; for the Italian, Brown University has provided a digital version online: http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/texts/, "Fu adunque, buon tempo è passato, un gentile uomo chiamato messere Ermino de' Grimaldi, il quale per quello che da tutta era creduto, di grandissime possessione e di denari degran lunga trapassava la ricchezza d'ogni altro ricchissimo Cittadino che allora si sapesse in Italia. E sì come egli di ricchezza ogni altro avanzava che Italico fosse, così

This excerpt is interesting. While it suggests that not all *nobiles* of the Genoese were miserly, it does hint at their vast wealth. Of course, Bocaccio himself may have had reservations about the power of aristocratic elites; the fact that he chooses a Genoese noble to frame this tale of avarice is telling.

These old families emerged in the aftermath of the collapse of the Carolingian Empire, though it is possible that some of them were even older families that persisted through the period of upheaval following Justinian's wars. During this period, local landowners began to assert their independence in the face of a crumbling central authority. While the Fieschi lands were not officially confirmed until the beginning of the eleventh century by Conrad II, their power has its origins during this earlier era. Over time, the *quattuor gentes* were gradually joined by lesser nobles—the della Volta, de Castro, Embriaco, de Mari, and Pevero. As these new clans rose to prominence, the commune expanded to absorb this group, creating new offices and allowing these families to participate in the church hierarchy.

The inclusion of these new families in the political establishment, as well as the gradual introduction of non-*nobilis*, but incredibly wealthy, families, such as the Lomellini, who are referred to as *mercantes* in the historical record and eventually appear in the records of the *antico comune* as part of the new *popolo* establishment, led to increased

d'avarizia e di miseria ogni altro misero e avro che al mondo fosse soperchiava oltre misura per ciò che non solamente in onorare altrui teneva la borsa stretta, ma nelle cose opportune alla sua propria persona, contra il general costume de' genovesi che usi sono di nobilmente vestire, sosteneva egli per non ispendere difetti grandissimi, e similmente nel mangiare nel bere."

factionalism.¹²³ In many ways, this dissertation argues that the absorption of new families was a violent process that only happened under the duress of political factionalism and consolidated with agreements of peace and concord (see below). This factionalism gradually became bound up in the regional conflicts between Guelph and Ghibelline parties that emerged in medieval Italian cities. This conflict, which began in Florence in the twelfth century and reached its apogee at the battle of Montaperti in 1260, pitted supporters of the ultimate authority of the emperor against those who supported the papacy. The partisans of the emperor called themselves Ghibellines, after the Hohenstaufen castle Waiblingen, whereas the Guelphs, the supporters of the papacy, took their name from the chief rival of the Hohenstaufens, the Welfs of Bavaria. The names, in both cases, result from the inability of medieval Italians to pronounce the German “W.” Of course, one of the difficulties with understanding these factions is that their composition and aims were by no means consistent from city to city. For example, given their connection with ecclesiastical structures, the old nobility of Genoa found themselves on the Guelph side of the conflict, while in Bologna, their aristocratic counterparts were Ghibelline, or imperial, in orientation.¹²⁴

We begin to see strong evidence for the way the church and *nobiles* reinforced each other after the turn of the millennium. At this point—although there is nothing to indicate that this was not a continuation of previous trends—members of important families begin occupying important roles in the church. Unfortunately, we do not have the list of the

¹²³ Families like the Marini can also be found in the *Antico Comune*. Though the old *nobiles* would always resist the *popolo* regime, the lesser *nobiles* found allies in the *popolo* against the ancient hegemon.

¹²⁴ For a description of the popular elements of Bolognese Factionalism, see Guido Antonioli *Conservator pacis et iustitiae: la signoria di Taddeo Pepoli a Bologna, 1337–1347*, Bologna medieval ieri e oggi 3 (Bologna: CLUEB 2004).

complete succession of bishops of Genoa intact, but we see the names of important *nobiles* families pop up as bishops during the first half of the central Middle Ages.

Caffaro's description of the election of Ugone della Volta—one of the second rank of families that jointed the *quattuor gentes* mentioned above—as bishop in 1163 is illustrative of the way the Genoese episcopate had become intertwined with Genoese governance institutionally. Caffaro states that after the death of Bishop Siro and the celebration of his funeral, the canons of San Lorenzo, the abbots of the monasteries of Genoa, *the consuls and the senators* came together and elected Ugone to the position.¹²⁵ Here, we see that the individuals who occupied important positions in civic governance participated in the election of this important ecclesiastical post. While we should not conceive of the bishop of Genoa as bearing the power of a prince-bishop in the Holy Roman Empire, but we see a similar pattern here. The long-term institutional memory of the church allowed the office of the bishop to consolidate temporal authority in an urban setting. But whereas in the northern case, the bishops had a tendentious relationship with the urban leaders,¹²⁶ here, the bishops consolidated with the urban elites, drawn from the local nobility, to cement their collected authority.

This relationship cut both ways. Just as the secular officers had a say in ecclesiastical matters, the bishop and his administration had a role in civic governance. Most importantly the church played an important role in the city's foreign policy and facilitated the absorption of many of its earliest colonies. As Genoa began to stretch its

¹²⁵ FPLSI 11, *Annales Ianuenses*, 75. The *senatores* are presumably the elders (the word comes from *senex*, *senis*) that are gathered together on the *parlamentum*, mentioned below. This body likely evolved into the *anziani* that would play an important role in the government later in the Middle Ages. Both *anziani* and *senatores* are both literally referring to “old men.”

¹²⁶ David Nichoolas, *The Growth of the Medieval City* 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2007), 127

fingers into the western Mediterranean and assert hegemony over Corsica and Sardinia, they did it by encouraging nobles from the islands to make charitable bequests to the diocese of Genoa.¹²⁷ Although Genoa was far from the first Italian city to commit to the First Crusade, much to Caffaro's chagrin, they eventually offered aid to Baldwin for his subjugation of the coastal cities of the Levant.¹²⁸ In return, the diocese of Genoa received churches and their parishes in these coastal cities. These partitions were governed by the diocese, not the commune of Genoa.

The bishop served as the face of the Genoese commune to the world in other ways. For instance, as Genoa asserted itself in the Mediterranean world in the eleventh century, its citizens and allies became notorious for piracy. Sometimes these pirates raided citizens of polities with whom Genoa had concluded a truce of some sort. As this notoriety grew, in order to prevent war or breaking the truce, the Genoese created a court, the *Officium Robarie*, in the late thirteenth century, where these claims could be redressed. It was the bishop who oversaw this court.¹²⁹

The bishop probably played a role in the dispensation of justice within the city as well. The office of bishop in Latin Christendom had long been associated with justice by Middle Ages. Indeed, many early Roman churches were also houses of justice and bishops

¹²⁷ Stephen L. Dyson and Robert J. Rowland Jr., *Archaeology and History in Sardinia from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages: Shepherds, Sailors, and Conquerors* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007): 198–217).

¹²⁸ Of course, the gifts of *fondachi* (sing. *fondacho*), or commercial hostels in Islamic controlled lands are similar in structure but come later and are different in their institutional structure.

¹²⁹ For a description of the evolution of this office, see Benjamin Kedar, "L'officium Robarie di Genova: un tentativo di coesistere con la violenza," *Archivio storico Italiano* Vol. 143 (1985): 331–374. After Boccanegra's uprising in 1339, the office shifted to the court of the "Doge and Anziani." These records are part of the *Antico Comune sottovello* and are discussed in chapter 6. Helpfully, Roccatagliata has translated these documents in Italian and rearranged them into an order based on the specific cases: Ausilia Roccatagliata ed., *L'Officium robarie del commune di Genova* (1394–1397) 2 vols., *Collana storica di fonti e studi* 54 (Genoa: Università di Genova, Istituto di medievistica, 1989).

retained this role even as the empire crumbled. Thus, the process that we see happening in Genoa was fairly common throughout the rest of northern Italy. As Giuseppe Sergi summed up in his description of tenth-century Italy, “The leading characters on the political scene in the middle of the tenth century included well-established bishops, and bishops like those of Reggio and Genoa who had recently seen their positions strengthened by concession of new areas of jurisdiction.”¹³⁰

We can begin to investigate how the church buttressed the legitimacy of the Genoese commune in two documents from the twelfth century that describe the powers of the consuls. The first is known as the *Breve della Compagna di Genova*.¹³¹ This is the Genoese governmental document that most closely resembles a “constitution,” in a modern sense. The *breve* is a “brief” in the sense of a “set of instructions given to a person about a job or task.” In this way, it describes the source of the consuls’ authority, the geographical extent, and the roles they might play in society. The earliest copy is from 1157, and after an invocation to the Trinity and host of other heavenly figures, the document describes the election of the consuls. It states:

From the next day after [that] of the purification of Holy Mary. I [the selected consul] am [instated] for the honorable *compagna* by the law of God for up to four years. Indeed, in the present year I shall have four consuls for the commune and eight [if necessary], who were publicly elected in the *parlamentus* and have sworn on the office of the consul; with [this] year having been decided we shall have consuls according the majority of the consular governments of the commune and from what is agreed upon and of the deliberations of those gave debate and have come to an agreement concerning the terms of the consuls and of their election. And each one of those elected consuls will praise or stand according to what is in the briefs (*brevibus*) of their limits concerning the honor of God and of the mother church of Genoa and the bishop and the complaints which come before him and will heed and labor in praise of him [the bishop] . . . [the rest of this section of text

¹³⁰ Giuseppe Sergi, “The Kingdom of Italy” in *The New Cambridge History III: 900–1024*, ed., Timothy Reuter (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 346–371, 359.

¹³¹ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 1–3.

describes the geographic reach of their remit and the individuals over whom they can exercise their authority, there is a particular emphasis on war early in the text].¹³²

This text, which goes on to outline the powers of the consul, also sheds light on the overall *compagna*, the political structure of the Genoese state discussed below. Here, we see that the consuls were elected by an assembly—likely comprised or dominated by members of the *nobilis* order—that the number of consuls was fluid, but that four was typical, and they served for a span of four years. If some sort of crisis emerged, however, this number could be enlarged to up to eight consuls. All of this was fluid, but the *parlamentum*, presumably comprised of the *nobiles*, agreed on term length and number of consuls.¹³³ We shall return to this structure at the end of this chapter.

Crucially, we also see the important role in society that the bishop played in this text. We see that the brief of the consul includes the “honor of God and the mother Church and the bishop and the complaints that come before him.” It seems that the consuls were purely executive officers. They were charged with carrying out the directives of others, namely the bishop. Indeed, the *breve* is more a description of the *restrictions* to consular power, rather an explication of their authority. For example, the consuls are unable to invest in trade, build buildings, towers, or make major bequests to churches, in other words, they are cut off from normal public life to maintain order. The bishop dispensed justice and the

¹³² Ibid., 1. “*A proxima ventura die purificationis Sancte Marie. Ego ad honorem dei iuro compagnam usque ad annos quattuor. In presenti quidem anno habeo quattuor consules pro commune, et VIII pro placitis, quo publice in parlamento electi fuerint et consulatum iuraverint; transact vero hoc anno habeo consules sicut maior pars consulum de communi et de placitis et consiliatorum qui affuerint consilio in numero personarum concordata fuerit de quantitate temporum et consulum et eorum electione. Et quodcumque ipsi electi consules laudaverint aut statuerint secundum quod in euorum brevibus determinatum est de honore Dei, et ianuenses ecclesiae aliarumque ecclesiarum ianuensis civitatis atque achiepiscopatus et de lamentationibus que ante eos venerint observabo et operaborum laude eorum . . .*”

¹³³ See note 10.

consuls carried it out. That said, they are charged with adjudicating disputes among members of the commune.¹³⁴ These would have been more common, every-day disputes that did not require full legal proceedings.

The bishop of Genoa also played a prominent role in the *Statuta Consularis Ianuensis*, produced in 1143.¹³⁵ Although this text was completed sometime before the earliest copy of the *breve* (the HPM text references changes in different versions of the documents), we should understand the two texts in tandem with each other. Furthermore, as we saw above, the *Breve* clearly builds on existing traditions, so we can assume that the conception of the state presented in this document is merely the earliest *extant* example of this, rather than a product of the moment of its inception. While the *Breve* describes the extent of the authority of the consuls, the *Statuta*, on the other hand, describes the laws that were made to enforce them. Indeed, the relationship between the two texts becomes clearer when we consider the opening line of the *Statuta*: “From the next following day of the purification of the blessed Mary all the way up to one year.”¹³⁶ Both texts indicate that the consular office begins the day after the feast of the purification of the virgin. The crucial position that the bishop played in the administration of justice can be found immediately after: “We consuls, having been elected for [service to] the commune, will praise and work for the honor of our bishop and our mother church and our city.”¹³⁷

¹³⁴ “Ego non faciam neque facere faciam specialem et meditativum asaltum alicui homini istius compagne in ianue.”

¹³⁵ *Leges Municipales*, *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 2 (Turin: Augustae Taurinorum, 1838), 243–252. Hereafter HPM 2, *Leges Municipales*, page #.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 243: “A proxima ventura die purificationalis sancta Marie usque ad annum unum.”

¹³⁷ Ibid., “Nos consules electi pro communi. Laudabimus et operabimur honorem nostril, archiepiscopus. Et nostre ecclesie et nostre civitatis. De mobile et immobile, cum lamentatione rationabiliter.”

Much of the rest of the document is concerned with the consuls carrying out fair justice that is not reduced in any way (*Nos non minuemus iusticiam alicuius nostri concuius pro commune*).¹³⁸ The institution of the Ligurian church overlaps that of the state in many ways. For example, the consuls swear in advance to render vindication, uphold justice and the honor of their bishop and the mother church. The rest of the document contains a series of laws, beginning with statutory legislation on the settling of feuds before getting into more specific types of crimes, such as homicide. While the laws give us some idea of what was important to early medieval Genoese, it is the evidence that they provide about the centrality of the church to the administration of justice that is most important here.

Leveraging the importance of the church within the Genoese structures of power, the *nobiles* controlled Genoa by occupying important positions in the Ligurian church. Many of the named archbishops from the twelfth and thirteenth century were representatives of *nobilis* clans.¹³⁹ Take the Fieschi, for example. These individuals not only contributed archbishops but also the only two Genoese popes, Innocent IV (1243–1254) and Adrian V (July–August 1276), were members of the Fieschi family.¹⁴⁰ Indeed, we find the tombs of important members of the Fieschi family taking up significant space in the Cathedral of San Lorenzo. When Simone Boccanegra and his followers came to power, they needed not only to remove the *nobiles* from power but also contend with the Ligurian church, which needed to be extricated from the communal government.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Semeria, *Secoli cristiani della Liguria*, 56 onward.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Ott, “Innocent IV,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 8, ed., Charles G. Herbermann, et. al. (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1910), 17–18.

3.3: State Debt and the commune

As we saw in the *Breve* and the *Statuta* documents, the *nobiles* instituted their power by establishing the legitimacy of their government in the Ligurian ecclesiastical infrastructure and achieving consensus in public assemblies that they would have dominated. This group also controlled the profits from *gabelles*, such as the tax on salt collection, which was used to pay for state expenses. The salt tax was the most important in the Genoese case and continued to be so for much of its history. That said, acting on behalf of the commune of Genoa, the *nobiles* needed a way to access a larger sum of money that could be spent flexibly. The salt tax would have trickled in slowly. State debt was the answer to this problem.

As noted earlier, the Genoese were the first state to institute such a measure, but we can see its origins in much older Mediterranean practices. Elites in the region had long resented direct taxation, and a comparative example helps to clarify the way the institution emerged from the sociopolitical fabric of Genoa outlined above. For this, we turn to Xenophon's *Ways and Means* (Πόροι ἢ περὶ Προσόδων).¹⁴¹ Completed in 354 BCE, this text describes how the traditional means of financing the Athenian state had failed under stress, and the author goes on to urge the elders of the city to establish a capital fund financed by the aristocracy, who would then receive interest from their investments. Prior to the mid-fourth century BCE, Athens, like Genoa, looked to their aristocracy for funding during times of emergency. For much of the classical period (490–323), we see what could

¹⁴¹ Xenophon, “Ways and Means, or On Revenues,” trans. Wayne Ambler in *Xenophon: The Shorter Writings* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press: 2018): 175–188.

be described as more informal means of funding events. Athens imposed what are called *liturgies* (λειτουργία), from the roots *laos* (λαός) and *ergon* (ἔργο), “the people” and “work” respectively. A liturgy was associated with a specific state expense. For example, they could pay for choral tournaments, agonistic events, or military needs, such as triremes. The Athenian government would first ask for volunteers before assessing who could best afford these expenses before resorting to assigning them based on lot. Athens thus sustained itself by looking to its wealthiest citizens.¹⁴²

While the *liturgies* are unique to Athens in their particular form, this idea that the aristocracy should provide for the state through free-will gifts rather than direct taxation on wealth was widespread in Ancient Greece. French scholarship describes the phenomenon of paying for these *liturgies* and the competition between aristocrats to outdo each other—this usually involved paying for state festivals, temple restorations, or paying for warships—with the neologism, *euergetism* (εὐεργετέω), literally the doing of good deeds.¹⁴³

Unfortunately for Athens, this system did not always work, a situation that Xenophon describes in the *Ways and Means*. By the time Xenophon completed this, his last work, Athens’s ability to compete as a major player in the Greek world was on the wane. They had lost the Peloponnesian war in 404 BCE after nearly thirty years of intermittent conflict. After they threw out their Spartan overlords and recovered some of their naval power, the Athenians attempted to reassert themselves by establishing the

¹⁴² W.S. Ferguson, “liturgy,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). Accessed online.

¹⁴³ Antony J.S. Spawforth, “euergetism,” in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd ed, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford University Press, 2005), accessed online.

second Athenian Empire, which collapsed in 355 BCE because the Attic city once again abused their allies—and to a certain extent, Macedonian hegemony was irresistible.

The *Ways and Means* is addressed to the elders of Athens. In it, Xenophon lambasts the leaders of Athens for engaging in the same imperialistic policies that had led to discontent and rebellion in the original Delian League and the catastrophic end of the Peloponnesian War. These renewed policies led to a second Delian League, a second empire, and a second collapse. After witnessing the repetition of this Sisyphean exercise of asserting Athenian hegemony over the Hellenic world, Xenophon urged his home city to eschew imperialistic policies and recognize that the natural revenues that come from commerce and agriculture in Attica should be enough to sustain the city.¹⁴⁴

Xenophon blames the aristocrats for the failure of Athenian imperialism, suggesting that during past conflicts, their financial support was perhaps not as generous as it should have been. With that problem in mind, he suggests establishing a capital fund:

But as regards other sources of revenue as seem to me to be possible, I know that a capital fund will be needed. I am not without hope, however, that the citizens would contribute eagerly for such things, since I have in mind that the city contributed a great deal when it gave aid to the Arcadians at the time Lyistratus was in command, and a great deal also at the time of Hegesilaus. And I know that triremes have often been sent out at great expense and that this has occurred even when it was not clear whether it would be for better or worse, and yet it *was* clear that they would never recover what they contributed nor even get a share of it.

Contributors could acquire no acquisition so fine as the one for which they spend to establish a capital fund. For he who makes a ten-mina contribution, as [he might if he were investing] in a ship, receives almost a fifth, since he receives three obols per day . . .

When the capital fund should be sufficient, it would be fine and good to build additional lodgings for shipowners around the harbors, and fine also to build fitting places for merchants who buy and sell, and public lodgings for those who visit.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Xenophon, *Ways and Means*, 177–179.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 178–179.

This transition from informal *liturgies* to Xenophon's suggestion of a "capital fund" (which was never put in place) parallels the trajectory of the funding of the Genoese commune in interesting ways. First, while this method of funding the state might seem illogical, the inhabitants of ancient Greece, like those in medieval Italy, actively resisted direct taxation (on income, property, or other forms of personal wealth). The social pressure placed on the aristocrats to pay for state expenses allowed these individuals to increase their prestige, by volunteering for particularly expensive or visible projects. Furthermore, this sort of giving would have cemented the power and authority of the aristocracy. As the only group paying for state expenses, they would have seen themselves as occupying a more important position in society. This dissertation argues that a similar phenomenon occurred in medieval Genoa—aristocrats paid for state expenses informally before the institution of a formal system of debt. We can see evidence of this as far back as the tenth century. With this in mind, I am extending the roots of the public debt back over one hundred fifty years from its traditional origins in the mid-twelfth century and before and showing that this institution played an important role in society by cementing the power and prestige of the aristocratic class.

The earliest example of the *nobiles* of Genoa sharing the expenses of the city comes from 935, when the Fatimid navy, acting as pirates, raided the Ligurian coastline. Unfortunately, our evidence for this raid is scant, but what survives provides us with some tantalizing clues for understanding early medieval Genoese society. From an Italian perspective, Liutprand of Cremona's Latin chronicle relates how Fatimids came to Genoa, captured it, and sailed away with the treasures of the churches.¹⁴⁶ A near contemporary

¹⁴⁶ Balzaretto, "Early Medieval Genoa," 74.

Arabic account from Sicily seems to corroborate Liutprand's narrative.¹⁴⁷ Benjamin Kedar seized on a later source to suggest a certain level of wealth and economic sophistication that Genoa achieved by that point, a notion that Ross Balzaretti seems content to dismiss.¹⁴⁸ This later source is from Sicily and mentions a silk market that is unlikely to have existed. Kedar used this source to suggest that already by the late-ninth century, Genoa had developed a sophisticated textile market. Unfortunately, this detail is probably a later interpolation that connected the early history of the city to its later reputation as a major center of textile commerce, a trade that saw Genoese merchants sell luxurious Flemish cloth to Sicily.

While Kedar's well-known article seizes on a red herring, he is building off of traditional historiography, namely Robert Lopez's oft-cited piece, "Aux origines du capitalisme Génois," which sees the Fatimid sack as a pivotal moment in the emergence of the Genoese commercial empire.¹⁴⁹ Lopez argues that in the aftermath of this raid, the local aristocracy came together to build a navy to protect itself and counter Fatimid incursions by acting as pirates against Fatimid holdings and to demonstrate that Genoa could respond to any raiding. Most importantly, however, Genoa used the capital earned from piracy to invest in commerce, and from there, the rest is history.

There is certainly some truth to the hypothesis that the Fatimid raid indirectly contributed to Genoa's position in the Mediterranean, but we suggest that the ramifications

¹⁴⁷ Filangieri, "The Commune," 98.

¹⁴⁸ Benjamin Kedar, "Una nuova fonte per l'incursione musulmana del 934-935 e le sue implicazioni per la storia Genovese," in *Oriente e Occidente tra medioevo ed età moderna: Studi in onore di Geo Pistarno*, ed. Laura Balletto (G. Brigati: Genoa: 1997): 605-616; for the Filangieri's response, see Filangieri, *The Commune*, 98.

¹⁴⁹ Robert S. Lopez, "Aux origines du capitalisme Génois," *Annales d'Histoire Economique et sociale* 9 (1937): 429-454.

for internal dynamics of the Ligurian city are more significant. This is the first known example of the Genoese aristocracy pooling their money to fulfill the needs of the community when normal revenues were not sufficient. These nobles were participating in something like the *euergatism* that describes elite behavior in classical Greece. Furthermore, it is unlikely that this instance would have been the first time the Ligurian aristocracy pooled their money for the good of the city, but it is the earliest example that we can identify in the available source material. Whatever money could be gleaned from traditional revenues was simply not enough to pay for even a small fleet, and this cooperation is an early example of the cohesion of the early commune. While Filangieri is correct in his assertion that the Genoese Mediterranean economy had not yet reached any level of sophistication, the event also provides other clues for the ways the early commune was bonded together.

The purchase of the ships is not the only example of Genoese *euergatism* implicit in this episode, it also further demonstrates the importance of the church to the early development of the Genoese commune. The fact that both Arab and Italian chroniclers mention church treasures being hauled off is evidence of *nobilis* establishment's investment in the church. Any sort of gilt altarpieces or related accoutrements would have represented a major investment in the cash-poor, rudimentary economy of the early Middle Ages. Thus, this suggests that the church was occupying the attention of local elites. Indeed, these "treasures" could potentially be a further example of the *nobiles* collectively investing in the "needs" of the community.

The *nobiles* of Genoa continued their informal arrangement of pooling resources to pay for state expenses for much of the early Middle Ages until the twelfth century. Perhaps

the most tangible example of Genoese *nobiles* informally pooling their wealth for the public good occurred in the twelfth century, when Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was attempting to force northern Italy to submit to his rule. Fearing an attack from the Holy Roman Emperor, the Genoese quickly constructed the massive medieval walls that were completed in 1163 and begun sometime earlier in about 1155.¹⁵⁰ The remnants of these fortifications can still be seen around the old medieval center. The nobles and the bishop donated all of the money needed to construct these walls.

This system worked for a time as the Genoese aristocracy was willing to provide funds for state projects when the proceeds of indirect taxation were insufficient. As the medieval economy became more complex and merchants became wealthier, the needs of Italian cities likewise grew more complex and greater. Thus, the governing order of Genoa felt the need to formalize this funding system, which in turn made it more flexible. They did this for the first time around the same time as the construction of the Barbarossan walls in the mid-twelfth century, when, once again, the wealthy members of society needed to pool their resources and pay for a fleet large enough to aid Count Berengar IV of Barcelona's attacks on the Muslim rulers of Andalusia.

By the twelfth century, the Genoese commune began to look beyond Liguria and develop its presence in the wider Mediterranean world. Around the same time that the walls were beginning to be constructed, we find the first example of the Genoese instituting a form of the public debt for the first time in the history of humankind. In 1148, Count Berengar IV of Barcelona enlisted the Genoese to assist with naval support for his eventual

¹⁵⁰ FPLSI 11, *Annales Ianuenses*, 41.

conquest of Barcelona. The Genoese were capable sailors and would have been helpful allies.¹⁵¹

To pay for this fleet, the Genoese created a unique institution: the *compera*. The *compera* was the sale of future tax revenues to investors in exchange for cash or other resources to pay for the needs of state. The investors, known as *comperisti*, purchased shares, or *loci* (sing. *locus*), for one hundred Genoese pounds.¹⁵² The shareholders would then be entitled to the profits from the various gabelles placed on goods in Liguria. The first *compera*, known as the *Compere del Capitola*, gave the *comperisti* the profits from weights and measures, returns on iron mines, and on minted coins, as well as harbor fees

As Genoa continued to expand its reach throughout the Mediterranean, the *nobiles* continued to develop state debt as an institution and its importance extends beyond the economic sphere. Investment in the debt, like the integration of the *nobiles* into the church hierarchy, served to entrench the political class in the structures of the commune. As we shall see in the next section, it was very easy to join the Genoese commune, especially compared the Ligurian city's arch-nemesis, Venice. A prospective member of the Genoese community need only to swear an oath in the cathedral or one of its subject churches; in Venice, on the other hand, one had to establish residence—something that was very difficult to do in *La Serenissima*—for a period of ten years before being considered for full citizenship. This meant that while anybody born outside of the walls of Genoa could join and serve the commune, there was a separate stake-holding (literally) group that had the ability to integrate themselves in the institutions of power outlined here.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 83.

¹⁵² Gioffre, *Il debito pubblico Genovese*, 18.

The debt not only played a crucial role in the structures of power of the commune, but it also helped to cement *nobilis* authority within those structures. Purchasing shares in the debt would have been part of what it meant to be a “full participant” in the Genoese state. One participated in the *parlamentum/anziani*, made bequests to the church and served in the major offices, and agreed to pacts of *concordia*. Purchasing shares in the debt was one more hurdle that groups that were marginalized politically needed to leap in order to get on even footing with the *nobilis* establishment.

The way revenue from the compera was collected and distributed changed over time and this had important political and social ramifications for our purposes here. Initially, a functionary was entrusted with keeping the records of the compera and distributing funds to the comperisti. These individuals would have worked in concert with the “duo de ratione” (the “two of the account) and the “Officium inquisitorum constitutorum ad inquirenda debitum Comunis” (Office of Established Inquisitors for investigating the debt of the commune) who kept the commune’s records of account.¹⁵³ Of course, as more and more *compere* were created and the finances of the state became more complex, this job became more difficult. Furthermore, as we have suggested, the debt and investment in it became politicized. The result was the creation in 1320 of a new administrative office: the *Officium Visitatores* or Office of Overseers.¹⁵⁴ I do, however, question the date of the foundation of this office. This information is from Gioffrè, an excellent scholar to be sure, but the information he provides is from a later date, and I have

¹⁵³ Ibid., 19.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 20.

not found evidence that the office was in operation this early. We shall return to this issue later.

There were to be four overseers, two from the *nobiles*, two from the *popolo*. They had supreme authority over financial matters and all financial officers of the commune. One was attached to the Giudice del Capitolo, who oversaw the dispersal of funds to the debtors, and the other three were to oversee the government's collection records.¹⁵⁵ The creation of the *Visitatores* is evidence of the way the debt became politicized. The *popolo*, as we shall see in the next chapter, had attained a certain degree of political authority, and they wanted to have a say in the debt.

Three years after the creation of the *Visitatores*, however, a new institution was created: the *Protectores and defensores Comperarum Capituli* (Protectors and Defenders of the Established Compere). This was a group created by the debtors themselves, and they gradually took over the collection and distribution of profits at the expense of the *Visitatores*. As we shall see in chapter five, the *popolo* government of Simone Boccanegra revitalized the role of the *Visitatores* in a way that took back control of the state debt and spending for the *popolo* and his new government.

Further proof of the relationship between investment in the debt and the *nobilis* establishment can be found in a document from 1259. Two years earlier, Guglielmo Boccanegra became the first *capitano del popolo*. Boccanegra was the great-uncle of Simone Boccanegra, the leader of the 1339 government, and he was one of the few prominent explicitly pro-*popolo* and anti-*nobilis* politicians in Genoa before the fourteenth century. Unfortunately for him and his followers, the regime did not last long, and he was

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

overthrown in 1261, and he subsequently sought life as an exile in France. Despite its brevity, we can draw important conclusions from his government's documents. In 1259, he and his administration banned the sale of shares in the public debt for a year. The relationship between the *nobilis* establishment and the debt is made plain in the text:

In the name of the lord amen. We, Guglielmo Boccanegra, by the grace of God captain of the commune and people of Genoa, desiring, as we are required by our office, to provide the absence from duty or the constancy of loyalty of the ancient noble citizens of Genoa just as in the present as in the past. Those [*nobiles*] who hardly ever refused to expend their own property to the commune, who also, by this particular and precise oath, they establish that for one year the profits or returns of the commune are not able to be sold or transferred to another's possession. And for a major warning, they make it that these words are inscribed on the walls of the Church of San Lorenzo and shall appear there for the course of the year.¹⁵⁶

The above quote is a fascinating window onto the role that the debt played in Genoese life. First, it recognizes that the *nobiles* had traditionally given their wealth to benefit the needs of the commune. Despite this, Boccanegra sought to stop the alienation and future sale of shares of the state debt. While he does not explicitly lay out the reasoning making for this step, it is likely that he wanted to stabilize control of state finances, which had been in the hand of the *nobiles* and make sure that they could not be consolidated in the hands of specific individuals who might seek to leverage their power

There is another aspect of this text worthy of remark. This *decretum* is unique because a notary of the Empire prepared this instrument and gave it legitimacy. This is unlike other thirteenth-century government documents from Genoa. Take, for example, the

¹⁵⁶HPM 7, *Liber Iurium I*, 1288: “*In nomine domini amen. Nos, guillelmus buccnigra, dei gratia, capitaneus comunis et populi ianue, volentes ut tenmur utilitati reipublice providere. Absentiam et fidei constantiam antiquorum nobilium civium ianue tanquam presentiam memorantes. Qui vix aut nunquam recusaurunt pro comuni utilitate impendere propria ubi comunia defuerunt Qui vixaut nunquam recusaurunt pro comuni utilitate impendere propria ubi comunia defuerunt. Qui etiam speciali et preciso iuramento. Auctoritate consilii statuerunt quod ultra annum introitus vel redditus comunis vendi vel alienari non possent. Et admaiorem cautelam in litteris grossis tenorem statute describe fecerunt in muris ecclesiae sancti laurentii ubi adhuc apparent littere ipse.*”

Statuta Consolatus, which simply ends with the final law. The call to legitimacy in this earlier document is the invocation of the *ecclesia Matrix*, the mother church—that is to say the main cathedral of Genoa—as the foundation of Genoese political authority. The notary of the Empire is notable here first because it was a repudiation of the traditional Guelph orientation of the *nobilis* establishment. If the Guelph’s appeal to authority was to the church, the natural repudiation would be to seek legitimacy from the Holy Roman Empire. Guglielmo’s grandnephew, Simone, would echo this by aligning his *pro-popolo* government with the Ghibellines in chapters 4 and 5. This will become even more apparent in the next chapter when we explore the *popolo* commune of Simone Boccanegra more completely. Here we have Simone’s great-uncle developing a similar institutional counter to the *nobilis* commune.

It should be noted that the 1259 document does not try to put a stop to all of state expenditures (*exitus*). For example, it states that in peacetime, the salaries of officeholders should continue to be paid. (Presumably if peace was broken with one of Genoa’s rivals, these salaries would be directed toward the war effort rather than the officeholders.) The final passage that clearly demonstrates that this was part of an effort to deconstruct *nobilis* control of the institutions of the Genoese state comes at the end of the *decretum*. The authority that made this *decretum* “official” was a “notary of the Empire.” This is in institutional opposition to the Ligurian episcopate. By this point, ecclesiastical and imperial institutions had been vying for authority and political legitimacy throughout the Italian cities for over one hundred years. Few other documents of the commune actually invoke the emperor as a source of authority. More often, a simple notary was mentioned when needed. For example, there is a series of documents that describes the terms under which

the Genoese *compagna* received Peter, the *Iudex* of Arboria (one of the administrative divisions of Sardinia) as a vassal. Peter's representative and chancellor, confusingly also named Peter, chancellor of Peter the king and judge of Arboria, prepared the instrument that conveyed a lucrative property into the possession of the Genoese commune.¹⁵⁷ The document that received *Iudex* Peter as a vassal was written up by a notary who was simply summoned into service: "*Ego willielmus calige palii notarius rogatus scripsi.*"¹⁵⁸ It follows that this invocation of the authority of emperor in Guglielmo Boccanegra's *decretum* is evidence of the *capitano*'s attempt to restructure the authority of the Genoese state.

One final document, another *decretum*, will underline the uniqueness of the text of Guglielmo's prohibition of the sale of shares against the debt. For this we turn to another *decretum*, this time one that consuls of the aristocratic structures of power issued. In 1136, the commune allowed Azolinus Placentius, a *nobilis* from Beldemand [?], one of the Ligurian towns subordinated to Genoa, to labor on the sea for a period of fifteen years without molestation. The exact parameters of this *decretum* are not as important as the idea that *decreta*, when issued by the *consules* as officers of the aristocratic Genoese commune, were prepared by a notary by the order of the *consules*.¹⁵⁹

Unfortunately for the *popolo* of Genoa, Guglielmo Boccanegra's regime did not last long. His most significant contribution to the trajectory of Genoese history in the Mediterranean also led to his downfall. In 1259, he signed the Treaty of Nymphaeum with the exiled Nicaean Byzantine emperor, Michael VIII Paleologos, against the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople. In exchange for providing naval support, the Genoese

¹⁵⁷ HPM 7, *Liber Iurium I*, 351.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 350.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 190: "*Ego iohannes notarius iussu suprascriptorum consulum scripsi.*"

received major concessions. Most importantly, they were granted the colony of Pera at Galata and the right to collect dues on all grain leaving and entering the Black Sea—a strategic source of grain for Mediterranean powers dating back to the first Athenian Empire—along with number of other strategic points in Aegean and Black Sea regions. Of course, Genoese advancement in the eastern Mediterranean came at the expense of Venice and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Because of the subsequent capture of the crusader kingdom in Constantinople in 1261, the pope placed Genoa under interdict, a punishment that the city would not be able to throw off for many years. The fallout from the interdict allowed the *nobiles* to reenter the city and reestablish their authority.¹⁶⁰

The results of this treaty, however, were very much in the favor of the non-*nobiles* and underlines the idea that Boccanegra's regime was opposed to the *nobilis* commune. The Treaty of Nymphaeum gave the Genoese unparalleled access to the Black Sea. This access allowed new elements of society to emerge. For example, the names included in records of the *Officium Gazarie*, the office that administered the Black Sea colonies and the later eastern Mediterranean colonies. The names of families in the documents of the *Gazarie* are illustrative. We see the great merchant clans, the Lomellini, Martini, Montaldi, and others. It is clear that Boccanegra favored the *mercantes* and that his attempts to gain control over the debt was likely were anti-*nobilis* movement. Regardless of the reasons behind Boccanegra's loss of power, his brief period as *capitano* is illustrative of an early attempt to rearticulate the Genoese commune.

After the *nobiles* returned, they continued invest in state debt in exchange for profits from the salt gabelle and other forms of indirect taxation. Most of the debt was consolidated

¹⁶⁰ FPLSP 14, *Annales Ianuenses*, 40–41.

into a single *compera* in the early fourteenth century: the *compera pacis* (the *compera* of peace). The first quarter of this century saw the rifts in the *nobilis* establishment deepen, as we shall see in the next chapter, and a civil war between the Genoese Guelph and Ghibelline factions drew regional actors, along with representatives from further afield, including the kingdom of Aragon, Robert of Naples, and others, into the Ligurian conflict. After years of warfare, the factions came to a peace that consolidated debts incurred by both sides. The Guelph debts amounted to 623,000 Genoese pounds and the Ghibellines owed 272,835 pounds, 6 solidi, and 5 denarii. To pay for this, the Genoese sold shares that paid back 10% on one hundred ten-pound shares. The money to pay for these 10% returns came from indirect taxation. There was a 4 solidi tax on any measure of wine, 1 for a mina of grain, 5 for a cantare of meat, cheese, or fat, 1 for a cantar of wood, fruits, or vegetables, 1 for candle wax, and 1 for a barrel of oil. The only tax on landed wealth was a small tax of 3 denarii per Genoese pound on land sales.¹⁶¹ From this it is clear that the wealthy politicians are passing on the costs of their long civil wars on the *popolo*. Recall that the *nobiles* derived much of their power from their landed holdings, and they would not have relied on food being bought and sold in the marketplace. Ultimately, the *compera pacis* continued to be a drain on Genoese finances until the fifteenth century, when the proceeds from a charitable donation from one of the city's leading citizens eventually fulfilled the debt.

3.4: The structures of the Genoese Commune—the *compagna*

¹⁶¹ Gioffré, *Il debito pubblico*, 126–128.

The penultimate pillar of the Genoese commune discussed here is the *compagna*. The *compagna* served as the administrative institution of Genoa and the other structures of the commune were folded into the *compagna*, as we shall see. This administrative institution, a civic entity unique to Genoa, is the most elusive entity within the Genoese commune. It cannot be defined satisfactorily given the fact that the no Genoese author ever put down a definition in writing.

The Genoese are curious within Italy for their use of the term *compagna*. The word is the root of the modern word “company,” and its medieval use is best known in the Florentine context. The great *compagne* of that city were among the wealthiest business entities in the Latin medieval world and the objects of many studies.¹⁶² Yet the Genoese use of this term seems to have evolved separately as an institution of the state. Yet, as we shall see, there are some interesting parallels that are worth considering.

Before making comparisons, however, we need to better define the term in the Genoese context as best we can and describe how the Genoese thought about the *compagna* and the governance of their city changed over time. Defined in simplest terms, the *compagna* was an agreement between the political class to govern the city of Genoa. It was not, however, the first iteration of such an agreement and it certainly was not the last. As we have seen, Genoa earned its independence from the decaying post-Carolingian kingdom of Italy after the efforts of local elites in the tenth century. The exact contours of the political arrangement that emerged at this time are elusive at best. It is clear however, that the political elites were not subject to either the king of Italy or the marquises of

¹⁶² See Hunt, *The Medieval Super Companies, : A study of the Peruzzi Family of Florence* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 38–75.

Montferrat, the most important local feudal lords who would loom large over Ligurian regional history but never exercise direct control over the city of Genoa. Thus, the absence of a monocratic system would necessitate some sort of power-sharing agreement among the nascent political class of Genoa, and the *compagna* emerged from this organization.

Caffaro describes the first *compagna* of Genoa in 1099 in the first year of his chronicle. This is illustrative. By the time he began his chronicle, Caffaro was an old man, firmly ensconced in the Genoese political establishment. Historians have made light of the connection between the beginning of the chronicle and the First Crusade. There is good reason for this: Genoa's role as an enemy of Muslim mariners is a theme throughout the text, and the author had previously written a history of the Genoese support for Count Berengar's assault of Almeria, in which he participated. Despite this, we should consider the beginning of the narrative in the context of the establishment of the first *compagna*. Clearly, this event is particularly important as it represents a formalization of the political order, of which Caffaro was a part. Indeed, the entire text begins: "Truly in that time of Caesar, shortly before, in the city of Genoa, a *compagna* of three years and six consuls was established."¹⁶³ The consuls, drawn from the political elites, were to govern Genoese society. As we have already seen in the *Breve della Compagna*, by the twelfth century, the duties of these officers had been well established.

Eventually, however, Caffaro gradually phases out the use of the term to describe the governance of Genoese society. Over time, the administrations of the "consuls of the commune (*consules comuni*) seem to be the primary way of describing the governorship

¹⁶³ FPLSI 11, *Annales Ianuenses*, 5.

of the city. Despite this, as we shall see, the pillars of the *compagna* continued to be a major part of the cities institution.

But how should this institution be defined, exactly, besides as an “agreement for governing the city?” The Genoese never defined the arrangement in any of their legal writings beyond what has been cited above. To answer this vexing question, Filangieri states that “In order to define this association, scholars have highlighted two closely-related points: first the chiefly economic nature of the *compagna*, and second, Genoese society’s limited ability to establish a strong institutional framework for its government.”¹⁶⁴ We have already discussed the latter of these two claims; it is our contention that the “weakness” of the Genoese institutional framework was an advantage in that it allowed an amorphous group of political elites to maintain control of Genoa and its lands.

In a legal sense, the *compagna*, like the other communal governments of medieval Italy, was an *universitas*. Unfortunately, this identification does very little to help us better understand the nature of the *compagna*. An *universitas* is a legal entity found in Roman law that is formed between three or more people. Once formed, an *universitas* could act as an individual or a sovereign entity in and of itself. In the Middle Ages, universities, guilds, trade agreements, and many more legal arrangements were organized as *universitates*. Given this great variety, besides an understanding of its very basic legal structure, it is not enough to attain a clear understanding of what the *compagna* was and the purpose it played in Genoese society.

To better understand the Genoese *compagna*, we shall turn not to the other communal governments of Italy but to the private *compagne* of the banking families of

¹⁶⁴ Filangieri, “The Commune,” 99.

Florence. Edwin Hunt's *The Medieval Super-Companies* is perhaps the best description of these organizations in the English language. Here he says:

The medieval super-companies, like most companies of significant size, were organized legally as quasi-permanent multiple partnerships. They were quasi-permanent in that they did not dissolve with the death or retirement of a partner, and even upon the "dissolution" of the partnership they were immediately renewed. Each partnership lasted as long as it suited the partners; some were closed and profits distributed after two years, while others continued for as many as twelve years. The main purpose of closing a partnership was to affect a new alignment of shareholdings, usually, but not always accompanied by a formal distribution of profit.¹⁶⁵

We have already seen how the lengths and the number and types of officers of the *compagne* could vary. Above, the first recorded commune was to be three years with a total of six consuls. But the version of the *compagna* outlined in the *Breve* document discussed above was to last for four years and have four consuls, which the author assures the reader is based on an agreement reached among the members of the *parlamentum* and tradition. Furthermore, the *Breve* allows for increasing the number of consuls to eight.

There is also evidence of the Genoese government distributing the profits of the *compagna* upon its dissolution, that is to say when the consuls' terms of offices came to an ended; at the end of Caffaro's entry for the year 1163, the author discusses how all of the commune's *introitus et exitus* was distributed in a gathering in front of everyone who was part of the *compagna* based on a list of investors that was made open to all. This list had been in the care of the consuls for the duration of their terms.¹⁶⁶ The fact that the *compagna* had a fixed length, a changing number of office holders depending on the needs of the time, and that profits were distributed upon dissolution is suggestive of some similarity between

¹⁶⁵ Edwin S. Hunt, *The medieval super-companies*, 76

¹⁶⁶ FPLSI 12, *Annales Ianuenses*, 36–37.

the great banking *compagne* and that of Genoa. Furthermore, this selection reinforces the connection between the state debt and the actual administration of the city. The *compagna* was a private agreement between political elites based on fiscal contributions to the state, which allowed its members to select the officers of the commune.

Interestingly references to the *compagana* disappear in Caffaro as the chronicle continues into the twelfth century. Despite this, the *brevis* document of 1157 and later in 1161 were the only general law codes governing activity in the city ever produced. By 1230, the roles of consuls began to be more clearly defined. While the institution seems to have receded in importance within the written record of Genoa, it remained foundational to the Genoese commune and the aristocratic stranglehold on power. Unsurprisingly, we see the ecclesiastical structures folded into the administration of the *compagana*. To illustrate this, Filippo de Lamberto was accused of losing the goods of Genoese citizens in Sicily. He was later barred from ever standing for consul again. Interestingly, the bishop stood with the other consuls of the *compagna* to hand out this judgement. Here we see the *compagna* not only the debt and the aristocratic establishment but the ecclesiastical establishment as well.

As we encountered in the *Breve* above, we have already encountered many of the main offices of the commune above—the *parlamentum*, the *consules*, the episcopal court as the administrator of justice, and others. There are some, however, that we have not encountered. The factionalism that plagued politics caused the *nobiles* to institute a podestarial regime in 1191. The office of the podestà is unique to medieval Italy and Provence. Because factional violence was not unique to Genoa, medieval Italian cities resorted to appointing non-citizens as the executive administrators beginning in the mid-

twelfth century. The idea was that an outsider, who was not a part of local factionalism, would be able to be an independent arbiter. These podestà formed a professional class of political administrators.¹⁶⁷ While the podestarial regimes failed to bring about lasting concord in Italy, the institution reveals new information about the *nobilis* stranglehold on government in Genoa. During this period, Genoa established the *aminiculum rectorum* (assistant of the rulers). These were to be nobles, and the *Annales* explicitly state that they will have power over finances (*introituum et exituum peccuniae rei publice Ianuensis et collectarum*), of galleys, and the protection and care of castles. Of course, control of *intryotus* and *exitus* was fundamental to taking control of the Genoese state, but we shall also see that the *popolo* regimes of Boccanegra and his successors were fixated on taking control of the fortresses of Liguria.

The idea that there was a smaller class of stakeholders in the commune drawn from among the nobility helps to clarify something that has puzzled historians of Genoa. It was exceptionally easy for an individual to join the *compagna*, especially when you compare this to the difficulty of securing the citizenship of Genoa's greatest enemy: Venice. To be a citizen of Venice, one needed to claim residence in the city for twenty-five years—something that was notoriously difficult to do without citizenship—as well have some sort of familial connection to the city.¹⁶⁸ To become a member of the Genoese *compagna*, all one needed to do was swear an oath. We have the formula of that oath from 1158. According to this text, individual simply needed to attest to residence and make a claim that they are making the oath without fraud or bad intent and that the individual making

¹⁶⁷ Jones, *From Commune to Signoria*, 408–419.

¹⁶⁸ Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic*, 151–152.

the oath will not direct any moneys, fortresses, or lands against the city. After swearing this oath, one would be a member of the *compagna*. They would not, however, have been full participants in the commune. An individual that had recently sworn the oath probably not be allowed to invest in the debt, participate in the assemblies, and definitely would not be able to integrate themselves into the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Allowing anybody to join the *compagna* as a non-stakeholder would have given the *nobilis* stakeholders to access to a large pool of mariners, laborers, and soldiers.

3.5: The Genoese commune—the pact(s) of *concordia*

The final aspect of the commune that needs to be described is also the most elusive. Historians of Genoa have surmised that there was some sort of pact of *concordia* that was sworn among the *nobilis* establishment to ensure peace and stability in the city. “*Concordia*” was an important legal concept in medieval Italy, but unfortunately, we do not have many documents of practice that are associated with the imposition of *concordia* on a city. Despite this, Katherine Jansen has undertaken a very illustrative study that we can apply to the Genoese case in her recent book, *Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy*.¹⁶⁹ Here, Jansen argues that “by the end of the thirteenth century, the term *pax* came to be identified more with the ends of civil society: the common good (while at the same time pointing toward the eternal beatitude in the city of God); *concordia*, or civic harmony, was understood to be the means by which civil society attained this end, conceived as the

¹⁶⁹ Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *Peace and Penance in Late Medieval Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018).

common good of peace.”¹⁷⁰ Jansen’s book discusses the ways that aristocratic clans, who had become embroiled in factional violence, ended their violence with formal ceremonies that incorporated the church into public life in interesting ways. Indeed, if we return to the quote above, *pax* is a reflection of the heavenly order that is only achieved through *concordia*. With that in mind, the church would have been integral to recognizing when *concordia* had been established. Thus, this concept would have further entrenched the Ligurian church into the power structures of that society.

The problem with *concordia*, especially as illustrated in Jansen’s book, is that its establishment is not necessarily a legal action but an ideal that is achieved after conflict. Oftentimes, there were public rituals to accompany the ending of conflict. In the last chapter of Jansen’s book, the author attempts to reconstruct what ceremonies of *concordia* might have looked like. She bases her reconstruction in medieval images of the kiss of Judas from the gospels and expanding on the ways the idea of the “public kiss” evolved in Latin culture. She goes on to demonstrate that the public “kiss of peace” was integral to medieval Italian peacemaking after factional violence. Unfortunately, it is unlikely such actions to appear in the written record of legal texts, but they would have been important rituals to the societies of the city-states. Factional violence was not “war,” which usually ends with a peace treaty and both sides retreating across their agreed upon border; factional violence ended with both sides rejoining the same society. Indeed, in 1259, Peter of Aragon signed a *capitula* that recognized a state of *concordia* between Aragon and Genoa.¹⁷¹ However, it would have been strange for such a legal document to be contracted between

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 63

¹⁷¹ HPM 7, *Liber Iurium I*, 1291.

two private individuals rather than two independent polities. This is because war is a legitimate exercise of violence and a treaty is the way that conflict ends. For the factions perpetrating violence in the cities of Italy, a “peace treaty” (or *capitula*) would not have been an acceptable method of bringing a close to this violence. This book successfully uses artistic evidence, ranging from painting to public decorative sculpture, to show that these ceremonies played a very important role medieval Italian society. Although Jansen does not make specific reference to Genoa, in a city where factional violence was rife for much of the central Middle Ages, it should come as no surprise that the ideal of *concordia* can be found in the *Annales Ianuenses* and the various state documents collected in the *Liber Iurium* and the *Leges Genuenses*. Most importantly, however, as we shall see in the next chapter, the government of Simone Boccanegra saw *concordia* as an important goal and that it was his government’s duty to enforce these goals.

3.6: Conclusions

Looking back, scholars have criticized the Genoese for not created a strong state. Luca Filangieri describes this situation best:

Institutional weakness is a leitmotif already evident during the tenth and eleventh centuries, when neither bishop nor marquisal officials managed to attain political control of the city. This is not so much the conscious ambition of a society in economic ferment for individualistic self-government, but rather a situation akin to that of many Italian cities of the time. During these years the public sphere was crowded with political actors in competition with one another, which resulted in a wide spectrum of experimental possibilities for both society and its urban institutions.¹⁷²

¹⁷² Filangieri, “The Commune,” 99–100.

Filangieri's statement tempers the more hardline criticism of the Genoese political establishment that places blame for the failure of the city to overcome Venice in their multi-century rivalry at the feet of the political establishment. (Venice had a robust and well-defined state; for past historians, it simply followed that this difference accounted for Genoa's eventual loss.) Filangieri's recognition of the wide range of historical actors present in most medieval Italian cities would have made possible a wide variety of structural experimentation. I would suggest that the structure of the Genoese commune is intended to be dispersed. By creating several different institutions that are separate but interrelated, it made it difficult for new political groups to emerge and participate fully in public life. For example, a prospective political actor might be accepted into the *parlamentum* and allowed to purchase shares in the public debt, but they still needed to integrate themselves into the structure of the Ligurian ecclesiastical hierarchy. The *nobiles* did not want a single monolithic entity; they wanted to create a series of hurdles that potential rivals needed to clear if they ever wanted to participate in the *commune* as full members.

Chapter 4: The development of *Ius Comune* and the emergence of Genoese *popolo* institutions

4.1 Argument

This chapter argues that the Boccanegra regime came about as the result of two processes. First, it was part of the final stage of the development of the theory and practice of jurisprudence in medieval Italy; second, Boccanegra and his followers emerged out of the gradual development of a *popolo* faction in Genoese politics. Unfortunately, prior to the fourteenth century, this faction faced political marginalization from the *nobilis* establishment. It was Frederick II's descent into Italy in the thirteenth century that provided the political catalyst for the *popolo* faction to emerge as a political entity in its own right. Finally, we can see how the Boccanegra regime tied these earlier processes together by looking at the documents from its foundation.

The Boccanegra regime, as we shall see, represents a crucial moment in the institutionalization of law in governance in late medieval Europe. The rich history of jurisprudence in southern Europe allowed urban governments to justify their authority in ways separate from the "traditional" sources of noble parentage or ecclesiastical structures. Genoa not the first or only example of this process. Historians have recently begun to explore this phenomenon in greater detail. In particular, we shall use the example of Montpellier as described by Pierre Chastang at the end of this chapter and the next to place Genoa in a broader context.

4.2: Process one—the development of medieval Italian jurisprudence

4.2.1: Stage One—the origins of medieval Italian jurisprudential thought at the palace of the Lombard kings

At the beginning of the Middle Ages, the Lombard kings—and later, their Carolingian successors—administered law from their palace in Pavia by issuing legal decisions, or *placita* (sing. *placitum*), with the advice of experts in legal practice, known as *iudices*.¹⁷³ These decisions were then recorded by notaries of the palace (*notarii palatii*), who would inscribe the text with the ruler's seal. These *iudices* were necessary because the Lombard kings operated in a complex legal environment that was unique in Latin Europe; while the Theodosian code continued to be a part of the practice of law elsewhere in Europe, such as southern France, the persistence of urban forms and other elements of Roman civic life are indicative of how deeply embedded Roman culture was in Italian society.¹⁷⁴ The new rulers of northern Italy, however, also brought their own legal customs with them and merged both traditions in the person of the king.¹⁷⁵ As we shall see, the king of the Lombards served as the ultimate source of legal authority, but Lombard legal codes, which were presumably

¹⁷³ This is the Latin word for “judge,” but we should not think of these figures as judges in the modern sense. Rather, they were individuals educated in the practice of law who served as advisors to the monarchs and their representatives.

¹⁷⁴ Charles M. Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna, 850–1150*, 33–36. For a description of the persistence of Roman culture, see Federico Marazzi, “The destinies of the late Antique Italies: politico-economic developments of the sixth century,” in *The Sixth Century: Production, Distribution, and Demand*, eds. Richard Hodges and William Bowden (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

¹⁷⁵ The legislation of the Lombard kings along with ancillary evidence such as inscriptions are collected in Carolus Baudus a Vesme, ed., *Edicta Regum Langobardorum*, *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 8 (Turin: Augustae Taurinorum, 1855), hereafter HPM 8, *Edicta Regum Langobardorum*, page #. See also, Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence*, 25–33.

meant to guide royal justice, were not sufficient to administer a society as complex as post-Roman Italy. Thus, these rulers relied on the traditions of local practice of Roman law embedded in Italian society and employed experts to help them issue decisions. Helpfully, in imperial Roman law, the emperor is the ultimate source of legal authority, something that easily elides with the role of the Lombard king.

The importance of the place of the king is evident in the first written compilation of Lombard laws, the *Edictum* of Rothari, first transcribed in 643.¹⁷⁶ The text begins with a somewhat-believable history of the Lombards: the *Origo Gentis Langobardum* (origins of the people of the Lombards), which claims that the Lombards came from an island (*insula*), called Scandaman. The exact meaning of *insula* in this context is not clear because, at the time, Scandaman was understood to be in Aquilonia, which is located in southern Scandinavia and is not an island. (Though it would not be surprising if it was remembered to be an island by the time these laws were written down many miles away in Italy.)¹⁷⁷ The text is essentially a king-list that ends with Rothari stating the case for his legitimacy: “I, Rothari, in the name of God, a most excellent man and the seventeenth king of the Lombard people, in the eighth year, by God’s favor, of my reign, and at the age of thirty-eight, in the second indication . . . said to Ticino in the palace.”¹⁷⁸ The last words—“said to Ticino in the palace”—are crucial to this discussion. Ticino is an unknown figure beyond his name, but he is almost certainly the hand that wrote the text. From there, Ticinio records Rothari’s laws, beginning with a problem that should have concerned any eighth-

¹⁷⁶ HPM 8, *Edicta Regum Langobardum*, 5.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., “*Incipit ordo gentis nostre Langobardorum, que egressa est ab insula que dicitur Scandaman, quod interpretatur in partibus Aquilonis, ubi multae gentes habitant...*”

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 9.

century Germanic monarch: “whether any of the people should conspire against the life of the king.”¹⁷⁹ These laws, according to the later historian, Paul the Deacon (c. 720–799), represent the earliest recording of the ancient custom of the Lombards.

The Lombard kings continued to use writing to convey and reinforce their pronouncements. The written record continues with the documents of the *Codex diplomaticus Langobardiae*.¹⁸⁰ These texts are mostly grants of land, often to ecclesiastical institutions. The first, issued by Liutprand (r. 712–744) in 712, responds to concerns about church lands and treasures. Crucially, it ends with two elements that affirm its legitimacy. First, the *signum* (seal or mark) of Liutprand, which confirms that the *vicedominus*, his officer, presumably bearing the message, can stand in for the authority of the king; and second, the notary, Matheus Cornexanus, confirms that he faithfully recorded the contents therein. The language that the notary uses to demonstrate this aspect is illustrative of the power that the written word had acquired by this point: “I, Matheus Cornexanus, of the notaries of the holy palace, saw [to] the authenticity of this transcription and wrote the above words not lessened or increased and faithfully recorded by [means of] the lead sealer of seals of that king.”¹⁸¹ As we shall see, this sort of arrangement with a notary of the chancellery and the *vicedominus* is echoed in the early written material of the Boccanegra regime.

The sort of technical skills demonstrated by the notaries that recorded the documents of the *Codex Diplomaticus* required training. Charles Radding has suggested

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸⁰ *Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae*, *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 13 (Turin: Augustae Taurinorum, 1873), 1. Hereafter, HPM 13, *Codex Diplomaticus Langobardiae*, page #.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 13: “*Ego Matheus Cornexanus sacri palatii notarii autentticum huius exempli vidi et legi bullatum bulla plumbea ipsius regis preter literas plus minusve et fideliter exemplavi.*”

that it was this process where study and practice of medieval Italian jurisprudence originated.¹⁸² Radding goes on to argue that the *iudices* must have been drawn from the body of notaries and that they served as crucial advisers to the king by helping to disentangle the contradictions of the local custom of Roman law and Lombard law to create a coherent practice of jurisprudence and governance. Medieval Italians would build on this practice to create a sophisticated model of communal governance that used the power of the written word, recorded by notaries on behalf of a sovereign, to legitimize political and legal actions.¹⁸³

The Carolingian period in Italy (774–961) saw the emperors expand their administration in the peninsula by investing their representatives, usually called *missi* (sing. *missus dominicus* or envoy of the lord ruler), with the authority to enact legal decisions. Oftentimes, these *missi* would have been local potentates or Frankish nobles who had been granted lands in Italy. In the end, this diffusion of authority among local elites and the near constant absence of the Carolingian emperors provided the cities of Italy with the legal tools to extricate themselves from the authority of the German monarchs. Crucially, the number of notaries increased as the royal administration expanded, contributing to this development.

In some ways, these developments built off of earlier Lombard traditions. During the Lombard period, a *gastald* was a royal agent tasked with enacting royal justice.¹⁸⁴ We

¹⁸² Charles M. Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence: Pavia and Bologna 850–1150* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 37–67.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁸⁴ For example, see the *placitum* recorded here: Cesare Manaresi, *I Placiti de “Regum Italiae,”* vol. 1 Fonti per la storia d’Italia 92 (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano, 1955), 261. Hereafter FPLSI 92, *I Placiti* of FSI, 2, “*I Placiti del ‘Regnum Italiae.’*”

see the merging of these traditions in a *placitum* from 872. In this text, Sansone, the *gastald* of Valva and *missus* of Emperor Ludovico (Louis II r. 844–875), rules in favor of the Monastery of San Vincenzo against the men of the valley of Trita, causing the peasants to become dependents of the monastery.¹⁸⁵ Often, a *missus* would combine the authority of a noble title with their imperial backing to enact legal pronouncements. For example, we see Helmericus, viscount of Piacenza, asserting the authority of his rulings on the basis of both his position as *viscount* and as a *missus* of the lord emperor.¹⁸⁶ We also see an expanding list of titles for individuals capable of dispensing royal justice. For example, there is a series of *placita* issued by Ildeprand, the *auditor* and count of Wido relating to the monastery of Santa Trinita.¹⁸⁷ The role of *auditor* is clearly meant to indicate this individual's authority to *listen* to cases. While the proliferation of imperial administration made it more effective, it also took active governance out of the hands of the king.

Church officials, themselves drawn from the landed nobility, could also serve as *missi*. For example, in 813, we see Giacomo, archbishop of Lucca, enacting justice on behalf of the emperor and ruling in favor of local monasteries.¹⁸⁸ This *placitum*, along with the ruling in favor of the Monastery of San Vincenzo mentioned above, are two examples from the early Middle Ages of church institutions receiving grants of lands and privileges, demonstrating the ways that they accrued power during this period.

We have already seen how the twelfth century consuls of Genoa framed their authority as proceeding from the bishopric. A *placitum* from 859 helps us to understand

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 261–265.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 382.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 304–6.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 80

why the Genoese would have seen this as natural. Here, we have Deacon Giso, the *vicedominus* of the Archbishop of Milan and *missus* of the king, Angilbert, enacting justice.¹⁸⁹ This text is particularly interesting because we see an integration of imperial authority into an ecclesiastical hierarchy. That is to say, we have a subordinate of a bishop standing in for the king. It is not too much of a stretch to suggest that each layer of authority that is placed between the person of the king and the agent enacting legal decisions weakens the actual authority of the king in favor of local, in this case ecclesiastical, institutions.

To assist the individuals invested with the authority to hear legal cases, the Carolingian monarchs also created a large network of notaries and *iudices*. Crucially, a *missus* is not the king himself—he is merely a representative. But if that representative enacts legal decisions that are written down by a notary bearing the seal of the king or claims the authority of the chancellery or palace of the king, those two elements combine to be *nearly* as authoritative as the monarchs themselves. This formulation—codification by a notary and the titular authority of a regent—became foundational for the legal developments described here. The authority of notaries was enhanced during the Carolingian period when Lothar (king of Italy 822–855) began to standardize legal practice by issuing a capitulary inviting students from as far away as Bergamo and Cremona to come and be trained in law before returning to their homes.¹⁹⁰ This dispersal of centrally trained notaries throughout northern Italy is the genesis of a network of legal technocrats and scholars that would enable the creation of *Ius Comune* and the works of the glossators at the University of Bologna and elsewhere at the end of the eleventh century.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 229

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 159–171.

4.2.2: Stage two—the emergence of *Ius Comune* among the medieval Italian jurisprudential network

In 958, the kings of Italy, standing in for the Frankish emperor, confirmed Genoa's *libertas*, their freedom from direct rule, which was reinforced at the Peace of Konstanz in 1183 after Barbarossa's unsuccessful Italian wars (1154–1155 and 1158–1174). This allowed the *compagna* of Genoa to act corporately as the *missi* had during the early Middle Ages, and the documents of the *Liber Iurium*, discussed in the previous chapter, are examples of this. The government confirmed and denied privileges, drew up peace agreements, and arranged treaties of protection with other cities in Liguria. Despite this authority, the stakeholders in the *compagna*, as well as the political classes of the other Italian cities, would continue to face new legal problems as the social world of medieval Italy became more complex in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. To meet these problems, the network of notaries and universities, which expanded to meet the needs of both communal governments and private citizens, gradually developed a legal framework using the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* of Justinian that was known as the *Ius Comune*. The malleability of this system allowed technocratic legal advisers—the *iudices* and others—to render decisions in service of the civic governments of medieval Italy, and, as we shall see, there is ample evidence of medieval Italian cities employing legal experts in this capacity. By the fourteenth century, medieval Italians had developed a complex legal framework that placed the universal sovereignty of the church and empire at the center, but which could be modified to meet the needs of emerging orders, such as Boccanegra and his followers.

The regulatory problems the communal leaders faced are evident from a cursory glance at the *Edictum Rothari* and other Germanic legal codes collected in the *Liber Papiensis*, some of the few codes of law with the authority of a sovereign entity behind them from early medieval Italy. But these texts were simply insufficient to meet the needs of the social world of the central medieval Italian communes. The *Edictum Rothari* is useful for charging potential regicides, but it is incapable of responding to, for example, the complex issues of contract law that emerged out of the commercial revolution. During the eleventh century, however, a generation of legal scholars, using the “rediscovered” *Digesta* of Justinian, responded to the legal concerns of their age. In the traditional narrative, Irnerius (1050–1125) creates the entire “modern” (for the time) tradition of medieval jurisprudence from nothing, transferring the study of Roman law from Ravenna (ignoring Pavia)—where it had resided with the emperors during the last days of Rome—to Bologna, where the university would become the greatest institution for the study of law in medieval Europe.¹⁹² This recounting became the standard narrative, which, in the later jurist Odofredus’s words, describes Irnerius as a light in the darkness, a *lucerna lucis* for all other legal scholars.

In reality, Irnerius was the most brilliant mind among the members of the legal network of notaries, judges, and masters of law that continued to develop after the disintegration of the kingdom of Italy. Whereas Pavia had served as the center of the Italian legal world in the early Middle Ages, the University of Bologna, established sometime in the eleventh century, would become the seat of legal scholarship in the central Middle

¹⁹² Radding, *Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence*, 159.

Ages.¹⁹³ Despite its importance, we should remember that the city was only one part of a larger network that evolved out the Lombard and Frankish traditions of governance through notarial interlocutors. Furthermore, we should remember that the standard narrative was established by Odofredus, a student of Irnerius, whose popularity in the age of print codified his recounting of events, when numerous editions of his works were published throughout the Latin Christian world.¹⁹⁴ This narrative was only revised in the nineteenth century when medievalists began to uncover the ways Roman legal traditions persisted through the collapse of the imperial infrastructure.¹⁹⁵

Unfortunately, some myths remain prevalent, even among scholars, especially those who have not explored these issues with any degree of scrutiny. One myth is that the *Corpus Iuris Civilis* was “suddenly rediscovered” in the papal archives in the eleventh century, which ignores the training of *iudices* and notaries under the Lombards, who must have relied on parts of the *Corpus*, if not the *Digesta* itself, which emerged as the main object of study for the central-medieval glossators (along with the Bible, of course, the ultimate authority in the Middle Ages). Indeed, early medieval Italian legal experts, familiar with the Roman legal tradition that never completely disappeared, used excerpts of the *Corpus* throughout the early Middle Ages to advise their rulers on legal decisions.

¹⁹³ 1088 is the traditional date of foundation of the University of Bologna, but this date was “discovered” in the late nineteenth century as a matter of convenience for the celebration of the institution’s eight-hundredth anniversary. It is clear, however, that there were institutions granting upper-level degrees in the city before this date. For a description of this, see David A. Lines, “The University and the City: Cultural Interactions,” in *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*, ed. Sarah Rubin Blanshei (Leiden: Brill, 2018): 436–473, 437–438.

¹⁹⁴ For example, there are several works by Odofredus found on Archive.org, such as his commentary of the *Digesta*: Odofredus, *In secundam Digesti veteris partem praelectiones quae lectione appellantur cum breves, tum utiles epitomis, sive summarii rerum praecipuarum capitibus praenotatae mendis quam maxima fieri potuit diligentia dispunctis* (Lyon, 1557), https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_fo1pt55jdPUC/page/n3.

¹⁹⁵ For the beginnings of the reassessment of the traditional narrative, see Hastings Rashdall, *The Universities of Europe in the Late Middle Ages*, vol. 1 114–115.

This confusion surrounding the *Corpus* owes itself, perhaps, to the difficulty of understanding it as a collected text and its piecemeal application and transmission throughout its long history.

By way of analogy, the *Corpus* is reminiscent of the Bible in terms of its creation, transmission, and use. The *Corpus* is a body or compendium of Roman law in ways that parallel how the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, is an anthology of sources created over a series of several hundred years and brought together by a set (or sets in the case of the Old Testament) of redactors, which was in turn reinterpreted to suit the needs of later readers. Additionally, just as the Bible was rarely distributed entirely as a whole text in the Middle Ages, the *Corpus* was not also not distributed as a single text, and its various elements were not in use simultaneously everywhere.¹⁹⁶

Work on the *Corpus* began shortly after the accession of Justinian in 527. The emperor ordered that a ten-man commission should gather together all known ordinances (*constitutiones*) issued by the emperors, weeding out obsolete or contradictory ones and adapting them to contemporary needs.¹⁹⁷ The name of this collection, the *Codex* or *Codex Constitutionum*, often gets applied to the entire *Corpus*, but this only breeds confusion, as we shall see. As noted above, in imperial Roman Law, the emperor was capable of issuing law himself, just as the Lombard kings would issue law themselves later. The *constitutiones*, then, are the laws that were set down by the emperors. By the sixth century, however, this legislation had become massive and unwieldy; hence the need for this process of collection and redaction. As Justinian was one of the most active reforming

¹⁹⁶ Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence*, 34.

¹⁹⁷ Mario Ascheri, *The Laws of Late Medieval Italy*, 9–20. This section is helpful because it not only describes the various pieces of the *Corpus*, but it does so within the context of a discussion of later medieval law.

emperors of the later empire, the nature of this work should come as no surprise. The role of Justinian is important because, despite the fact that the Roman Empire “fell” in the west, later medieval thinkers understood the office of emperor to be a universal and eternal source of authority, regardless of who occupied it, and they had to frame any new legislation as having its source in the office of emperor. The *Corpus* fulfilled this requirement emphatically, and legal pronouncements derived from its example carried that authority. And, as we shall see, the Boccanegra government would later issue what could be described as medieval *constitutiones* in place of the emperor.

Following the creation of the *Codex Constitutionum*, Justinian created a new commission of sixteen jurists, this time under the direction of the great legal mind, Tribonian, who had emerged as a leader in the creation of the earlier compendium, to produce the *Digesta*, which was completed in 533. This work brought together the writings of imperial jurists to describe the legal principles of particular cases. Oftentimes, only one—that is, the individual taken to be most authoritative—was cited for a particular point.¹⁹⁸

The third part, the *Institutiones*, were begun in 533, again under Tribonian’s supervision. This was meant to be an introduction to legal study and provides basic instruction in Roman law. These first three elements comprise the *Corpus* proper. Following the completion of the *Institutiones*, all new *constitutiones*, that is to say, new laws that Justinian promulgated, were collected as the *Novellae Constitutiones*, which is sometimes included in the *Corpus* proper and sometimes not.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 11.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 15.

The *Institutiones* were the only part of the *Corpus* in widespread use during the Lombard and Carolingian periods. There is evidence of the presence of the *Constitutiones*, which may have served as a reference for legal statutes, but the utility of the *Institutiones* is clear. As an introduction to legal practice, the text provided a basic set guidelines for *iudices*, and it was probably used to reintroduce those parts of Italy, Latium and the Mezzogiorno, that were retaken by Belisarius to Roman law. In this way, there was a revitalization of Roman law in Italy not seen elsewhere in Latin Europe. The sections of the *Institutiones* explain the legal principles of bequests, the guardianship of minors, land use, property sale, etc. For the Lombards, who were an ethnic-minority military aristocracy ruling over an Italy that was still culturally and legally very Roman, especially in the cities, the *Institutiones* would have been an excellent introduction to the law and custom of the region and would have formed a major part of the training of the Lombard and Carolingian *iudices*.

The *Digesta*, however, is the most important element of the *Corpus* for the discussion at hand, and it was largely unused until the eleventh century—and this is the “rediscovery” of Roman law that sparked the “legal revolution” of the Middle Ages.²⁰⁰ This notion of “rediscovery” deserves some attention, and the idea that the *Digesta* was unknown during earlier periods should be addressed. On this note, it is likely, as noted above, that the *Digesta* was not necessarily unknown to early medieval legal thinkers, but rather, as the actual authority of the crown of Italy dissipated and the jurisprudential network of the peninsula developed in terms of the number of individual agents—notaries, *magistri*, *iudices*—and became more widespread in its integration into civil society, the

²⁰⁰ Radding, *The Origins of Medieval Jurisprudence*, 34.

text reentered use to meet the needs of the more complex society that was not only faced with a vacuum of administrative authority in the absence of the king but also possessed a network of legal thinkers sophisticated enough to use its contents.

Indeed, the *Digesta* would have been a treasure trove to legal thinkers of the central Middle Ages. In addition to being structured around the authority of the emperor (German or otherwise), the text offers legal justifications for rulings and not merely laws. In this way, the *Digesta* was a text that was filled with ideas that jurists could use to flesh out answers to the legal problems of sovereignty, governance, and their relationship to each other and the other aspects of maintaining the legal artifice of a state in ways the *Institutiones* simply did not.

A comparison of the discussion of marriage in the *Institutiones* and the *Digesta* illustrates the difference in utility between the two parts of the *Corpus*. In the former, most of the section on marriage is devoted to laying out which pairings of individuals could not legally be married; for example, the children of two brothers or sisters or of a brother and sister can lawfully intermarry, suggesting that anyone more closely related could not be wed.²⁰¹ In the *Digesta*, on the other hand, we find a much more expansive discussion of the *process* of marriage. The *Digesta* understands marriage in terms of what constitutes a betrothal, the ceremony, the dowry, potential disagreements concerning dotal assets, and land given in a dowry. For each of these topics, the redactors of the *Digesta* include the legal opinions of great Roman minds, such as Florentinus, Ulpianus, and Pomponius. In this way, the *Digesta* presents law and legal opinions as a dialectic of ideas, and a cursory

²⁰¹ Paul Krueger and Theodor Mommsen, eds., *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, vol. 1, *Institutiones and Digesta* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1889), *Institutiones*, 1.10.4.

knowledge of medieval university education should be enough to understand why such an approach would be valuable to the scholars of the medieval Italian jurisprudential network.²⁰² Furthermore, this dissertation largely ignores the emergence of various types of private contracts—*commenda*, private partnerships, wills, and others—for the sake of space. It should be recognized that the *Digesta* is a vast corpus of legal records, reinforcing the idea that, as medieval Latin society became more complex, legal scholarship became more sophisticated to meet society's expanding needs.

The University of Bologna was at the center of the high medieval legal revolution and of the medieval Italian jurisprudential network. Prospective legal scholars would study there and return to their hometowns or new cities where there were opportunities to practice law. Indeed, the institution had developed a significant enough reputation by the early eleventh century to lure the Ligurian, Guido (1035–1070), to study there before becoming bishop of Acqui, a city near Alessandria near the border of Liguria and Lombardy.²⁰³ This example is particularly interesting if we consider the roles that bishops played in the execution of law. It is likely that Guido felt he needed to study law before ascending to his episcopal office where he would have likely been in charge of administering both civil and canon law.

The University of Bologna entered a new and important phase in 1158 when Frederick Barbarossa (r. 1155–1190) granted the institution a *Habita* degree, which placed students under imperial protection and allowed them to plead their cases in imperial courts rather than being subjected to local courts. At the time Frederick Barbarossa was

²⁰² Ibid., *Digesta*, 23.

²⁰³ Rashdall, *The Universities of the Middle Ages*, 108.

attempting to reassert imperial power in northern Italy, and his investment in the university helped to burnish both his theoretical sovereignty and eminence of the institution as an authority of law.²⁰⁴ Graduates would possess degrees and training that had the backing of the universal empire rather than the city of Bologna. Furthermore, the university redoubled its focus on law during the period. Whereas the university had stressed other subjects before Barbarossa's patronage, particularly literature, at this point we see the emergence of a robust legal tradition. This tradition reached its apogee under the guidance of Accursius (1182–1263). Accursius is known primarily for his work as a glossator, who produced the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the longest and perhaps most influential gloss on the *Institutiones* and *Digesta*. Accursius was not the only glossator, and numerous others built on the legal foundation of the *Digesta* to develop a practice of law that met the needs of medieval Italian society.

Graduates of Bologna were favored for governmental positions throughout Italy, including Liguria. In a set of laws issued to govern Albenga, a settlement nearly halfway between Genoa and Nice, we find evidence of the influence of the University of Bologna.²⁰⁵ During the thirteenth century, the major cities of Italy—Venice, Milan, Florence, et. al.—began to expand their influence over the smaller cities around them. This code of laws was issued in 1288 and is the result of Genoese domination over Albenga. Divided into three parts, the first begins by addressing “the compact” (*conventionone*) between Genoa and Albenga. The text ensures a “true peace and clear concord” (“*vera pax*

²⁰⁴ For the early history of the University of Bologna, see David A. Lines, “The University and the City: Cultural Interactions,” 437–438.

²⁰⁵ Josepha Costa Restagno ed., *Gli Statuti di Albenga del 1288*, Fonti per la storia della Liguria 3 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1995).

et purum concordium”) between the two cities. These statutes stipulate that Albenga should have a *magister in grammatica* from Bologna that can offer council, and that if a scholar from Bologna could not be found, they should then look elsewhere for an appropriate candidate.²⁰⁶ The statutes also include provisions requiring *scribas comunis* (scribes of the commune) who are able to record statements of testimony (*dicta testium*) and public acts (*acta publica*) in cartularies of the commune.²⁰⁷ These individuals would have been the ones drawing up the documents of the *libra iuria* of Genoa.

The legal system that emerged from this network of scholars, judges, and notaries is known generally as the *Ius Comune*, which would eventually form the basis for European Civil Law. Mario Ascheri defines this system around five points: 1) It is the element of cultural creation of jurists, both lay and ecclesiastical, that is the “result of the formalization of the concepts and their own homogeneity, emerging as they do from a Romanist base;” 2) the system produced a superior model of written legislation because it is corroborated by “antiquity and centuries-old wisdom,” which in turn served as a “source of legislative and doctrinal solutions” for “the development of their own legislation;” 3) A “stimulus to the technicalization and transcription” of local customs that “would have taken into account . . . the conceptual patrimony of *Ius Comune*;” 4) a criterion for the interpretation of codifications of local legislation that were written in the same “language” as the *Ius Comune*; 5) A method of integration of the various locally available legal codes.²⁰⁸ This

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 191. There were other universities in Italy, but it is interesting to note that few of the major cities (i.e. Genoa or Florence) ever felt the need to establish their own local universities. Perhaps they thought it was necessary to keep the education of legal scholars separate from the administration of cities as a way of establishing that *instrumenta* recorded by civic notaries carried legal weight from beyond local politics.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 41.

²⁰⁸ Ascheri, *The Laws of Late Medieval Italy*, 236.

system did not emerge whole; it took time and energy for it to form, but by the end of the central Middle Ages, most of these elements had come into existence.

Ascheri's definition of *Ius Comune* is comprehensive and illustrates the way this intellectual institution, once it had developed, filled many of the administrative gaps that state authorities in the Middle Ages faced. Eventually, the *Ius Comune* would influence legal systems throughout Latin Europe, where the authority to create new law was in question during the early Middle Ages. In the post-Roman world, when the kings were developing the legitimacy of their administrations, the *Ius Comune* helped to justify the political, legislative, and judicial authority of the royal governments of Latin Europe. We see the influence of Italian legal thought in the *Siete Partidas* (1252–1284) and the reforms of Philip Augustus (r. 1179–1223).²⁰⁹ Indeed, a more obvious example of the influence of Italian law is that Edward I, returning from Palestine, invited the son of Accursius, Francesco, to return with him to England where he served as the king's secretary.²¹⁰

With the administrative system of the *Ius Comune*, as it was expressed in central medieval Italy, in place, later generations of legal scholars continued to expand on the work of their predecessors by developing legal philosophies that expressed a framework for the popular regimes that sprung up across northern Italy in the later Middle Ages, such as that of Boccanegra. These ideas helped Boccanegra and his followers to deconstruct the Genoese aristocratic *commune* and replace it with a new system. These philosophies began

²⁰⁹ For the *Siete Partidas*, see Daniel Panateri, "El prólogo de *Siete Partidas*. Entropía, edición y uso político," *Medievalia* 47 (2015): 54–81; for Philip, see John W. Baldwin, *The Government of Philip Augustus: Foundations of French Royal Power in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 136–175.

²¹⁰ John J. A'Becket, "Francesco Accursius (1225–1293)," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, ed., Charles G. Herbermann, et. al. (New York: The Encyclopedia Press, 1907), 100.

to emerge during the late twelfth and early fourteenth centuries and were expressed in the works of the great glossators of that age. These legal philosophies emerged from, and contributed to, the reinvigoration of the role of the emperor in the execution of legal decisions in the minds of medieval Italian political actors. While the administrative structures of the Holy Roman Emperor in Italy fell apart shortly after the death of Frederick I, his initial patronage of Bologna began to perpetuate the idea that the position of the emperor as leader of the universal Roman Empire was theoretically the ultimate source of sovereignty and authority to govern in Italy—the Italian communes just preferred that the emperor was not present, allowing them to rule themselves autonomously. But it was the presence in Italy of his grandson, Frederick II (r. 1220–1250), and his successors, however, that completed the reinvigoration of this idea. Indeed, as we shall see in the next section, the dynamism of Frederick II affected almost all aspects of political life everywhere in medieval Italy, including Genoa.

4.2.3: Stage three—the Bartolan age and the development of theories of *popolo* governance

If Irnerius was the mind that loomed over the foundation of the Bolognese school, and Accursius dominates the narrative of the glossators of the central Middle Ages, Bartolus of Sassaferrato (1313–1357) is the name that overshadows the legal thought the late Middle Ages. Like those of the other two, Bartolus's reputation is an outsized reflection of his contemporary importance. In reality, Bartolus was one part (albeit a significant one) of a massive web of jurists spread throughout the Italy and Latin Europe, including the *magister in grammatica* at Albenga. This tradition had grown so expansive that Thomas

Diplovatatus (1468–1541) attempted to create a bibliographic encyclopedia of jurists that spans thousands of pages in modern printed editions.²¹¹ The expansive web of jurists and other legal scholars had developed a collective understanding of the administration of law from which Bartolus could derive his legal philosophies.

In this way, Bartolus is not necessarily describing new theories of medieval Italian political thought, but rather he is crystalizing the understanding of the practice of *Ius Comune* as it was practiced during his lifetime. As we shall see, it is possible to suggest that many of the ideas that Bartolus articulates are actually implicit in the practice of law in late-medieval Italy. To put this in more concrete terms, Bartolus's writings express the understanding of law behind the 1339 government of Simone Boccanegra. Furthermore, by thinking of Bartolus as expressing and crystallizing ideas already present in the network of legal scholars of later medieval Italy rather than creating them out of whole cloth, we can use the 1339 government as an example of the relationship between theory and practice. Too often, intellectual and social history have remained isolated from each other. This moment in history bridges these two worlds and suggests that the two influenced each other; influence between the theory and practice of medieval Italian jurisprudence did not travel in one direction alone.

Bartolus and his contemporaries accepted that there were two universally sovereign authorities—the church and the empire—that overlay temporal entities, that is, in the case of Italy, the self-administering city-states like Genoa. The *Ius Comune*, with its placement of the empire at its center, was reflective of this conception. While the pope, as Christ's

²¹¹ Thomas Diplovatatus, *Thomae Diplovataii Opus de praesentia doctorum* (Berlin: R.L. Prager, 1890). Diplovatatus also wrote a biography of Bartolus, calling him the greatest jurisconsult of the age. See *Ibid.*, *De Bartoli de Saxoferrato, iurisconsultorum omnium facile* (Bologna: Ioannem Roscium, 1576).

representative on earth and the earthly custodian of the church, was a formidable authority, it was the jurists' conviction that all Christians were Roman citizens and therefore under the jurisdiction of the empire and its laws.²¹² This doubled source of sovereignty, while perhaps internally inconsistent, allowed political actors to pick and choose their source of sovereignty to suit their needs. To bring this discussion back to Genoa, while the aristocratic *commune* leaned into the ancient and divine authority of the church to derive the legitimacy of their offices, the *popolo* government looked to new adaptations of Roman law to justify their sovereignty.

4.3: Process two—the emergence of *popolo* politics in Genoa

4.3.1: Stage one—the creation of *popolo* institutions in Genoa

As the developments of the preceding section transpired, we see two processes internal to Genoa that allowed for the 1339 reformation of the Genoese commune. First, the original *nobilis* establishment was continuously forced to accept more familial clans into their ranks while the “lower orders”—members of the *artes*—began to take a more active role in society. As we shall see, however, more was needed for the *popolo* to assert authority in their own right; the *nobiles* allowed for *popolo* participation in politics throughout the twelfth century, but they prevented the lower order from achieving real power independent of their political establishment. As an imperfect analogue that nevertheless gets at the essential idea proposed here, the *nobiles* incorporated the *popolo* in order to marginalize

²¹² See Joseph Canning, *The Political Thought of Baldus de Ubaldis*, 23–30.

them institutionally as Bismarck did the socialists in modern Prussia.²¹³ The second development, which finally allowed for the *popolo* to emerge as a power in their own right, was the period of political rupture that lasted from Emperor Frederick II's descent into Lombardy in 1226 to his death in 1250. This moment completely destroyed the *nobilis* establishment's unity and allowed the *popolo* to emerge.

Before moving forward, it is crucial to note that the *popolo* was not a clearly delineated group. The *popolo* was not a formal group organized into neighborhoods or on some other basis. The Florentine example simply does not apply to Genoa. Indeed, it is unique within medieval Italy. This is a worthwhile distinction to make because too often certain cities, especially Florence, are held up as models, but too often these models deploy terms—*popolo*, *nobiles*, even titles like *capitano del popolo*—with radically different definitions.

Looking back with the benefit of hindsight, the eventual introduction of new groups into the Genoese *commune* was unavoidable. The sort of decentralized and informal arrangement of institutions discussed in the previous chapter does not lend itself to exclusivity in the way that the Venetian model of a more explicit aristocratic government, mediated by the *scuole* and *arte*, provided a more rigid social order.²¹⁴ At around the same time that Genoa was grappling with political factionalism and the increasing importance of wealthy merchants and the *artes*, the Venetian government imposed the *Serrata del Maggior Consiglio*, or the Closing of the Great Council, in 1297, which effectively cut off

²¹³ See Richard E. Frankel, *Bismarck's Shadow: The Cult of Leadership and the Transformation of the German Right, 1898–1945* (Oxford: Berg, 2005).

²¹⁴ For the marginalization of the “little people” in favor of the aristocratic establishment, see Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 104–111.

any new citizens from participation in public life.²¹⁵ While Venice eventually reopened the ranks of the governing class after the demographic collapse that accompanied the plague, Genoa never imposed any sort of universal legal restrictions to participation in public life.

Besides a more informal governmental structure, access to participation in commerce was also more open in Genoa. While Venice had a strong economy that expanded throughout the Mediterranean, society was more stagnant, and nobles dominated investment in trade. In Genoa, on the other hand, we see wider participation in commerce. In a situation such as this, where there was no strict barrier preventing participation in public life beyond the necessity of immense wealth, powerful backers, and considerable vision, it is not surprising that a small number of family merchant clans broke through to vie with the *nobiles*.²¹⁶

The introduction of new orders into Genoese politics is evident in the creation of institutions of the Genoese state that represented *popolo* interests in the thirteenth century. Throughout this earlier period, however, the *popolo* was a weak faction, especially when compared to parallel groups in other cities, such as Florence where the *popolo grasso* was a distinct and powerful entity in its own right. The *popolo* in Genoa, by contrast, often needed to operate in concert with allies from among the *nobiles* and communities outside of the city in Liguria who must have chafed under *nobilis* landownership. We see a significant example of this coalition building in the role that the *popolo* played in the

²¹⁵ Ibid., 114.

²¹⁶ Musarra, "Political Alliance and Conflict," 125–127. For widespread access to trade, see van Dooselaere, *Commercial Agreements and Social Dynamics*, 148–169; for a vivid illustration of this phenomenon, see Robert Lopez and Irving Raymond, eds., "Commenda Contracts of Humble People," in *Medieval Trade in the Mediterranean World: Illustrative documents translated with introduction and notes*, 1st ed. (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1955), 182.

conspiracy of Guglielmo di Mari. In 1227, Guglielmo came together with other *nobiles* who felt that they had not received the honors and offices that they felt their station demanded. This in itself is an interesting insight into the way the Genoese aristocratic political establishment closed itself to “less fortunate” individuals. In the words of the *Annales Ianuenses*, these were people who were “not in that [meaning the current] *compagna*.”²¹⁷ Importantly, in the description of Guglielmo’s supporters, we find nearly all of the *populares* and many people from the cities of the western Riviera under Genoese control: Agesci, an eastern neighborhood within the Barbarossan walls, through to Recco, Camogli, and Porto Venere, and people from Noli participated in the conspiracy as well. The conspiracy was ultimately unsuccessful and the major conspirators were harshly punished.

The one major effort to restructure the government before 1339 came during the short-lived regime of Guglielmo Boccanegra, which we encountered earlier. It seems to have broken out spontaneously in 1257 when a clamor arose in the bread-maker’s district of Genoa; the people rose up and elected Boccanegra “captain of the Genoese people,” “not with discretion, but with tumult and raised voices” (“*sine discretionem sed cum tumult et vociferatione*”).²¹⁸ Despite the window onto the importance of state debt in the Genoese *commune* that this moment provides, this new government was ultimately short-lived. The one lasting result of the regime was that Genoa asserted itself in the Aegean and Black Sea. Boccanegra signed the treaty of Nymphaeum with the exiled Byzantine dynasty in Nicaea

²¹⁷ FPLSI 13, *Annales Ianuenses*, 28 (1227).

²¹⁸ FPLSI 13, *Annales Ianuenses*, 25 (1257). This story is reminiscent of the Catilinarian Conspiracy, which came about in the Late Roman Republic among a group of individuals who had failed to secure political office the traditional way.

in 1261. This led to the Byzantine recapture of Constantinople, the end of the crusader empire there, and Genoese domination of commerce in the Black Sea at the expense of Venice. Unfortunately for the Genoese, it also caused the pope to place the city under interdict. Perhaps seizing on the discontent that resulted from the interdict, *nobilis* exiles returned to Genoa with allies from Lucca and Florence, and the coalition drove Boccanegra out of Italy in 1262; the former *capitano dell popolo* went on to serve the king of France until his death.²¹⁹

The Guglielmo Boccanegra regime is illustrative of the place of *popolo* politics in Genoese public life prior to 1339. Until the fourteenth century, when the political ramifications of Frederick II's descent into Italy had fully played out, the goals of *popolo* politics could only be achieved under the guidance of the *nobiles*. For example, at the end of the thirteenth century, a pair of "captains of the people" led the Genoese government. But unlike Guglielmo Boccanegra, who came from an old but non-*nobilis* family, these individuals were usually members of the *nobilis* establishment. In this way, Genoese politicians could pay lip service to the idea of allowing other orders into the commune, while still maintaining overall control of the government. The establishment of a council of the *popolo* in 1270 is another example of the way that the popular impulse in politics could be coopted. In this case, two men from *nobilis* families, the Doria and the Spinola, who were "friends as much to the nobles as they were to the *popolo*," established this council.²²⁰

²¹⁹ Ibid., 44–48 (1261).

²²⁰ Ibid., 150, (1270).

Other *popolo* institutions were incorporated into the Genoese *commune* as the Middle Ages progressed, including one that would be important to the creation of the Simone Boccanegra regime. During the last third of the thirteenth century, we see the first references to the *Abate dell Popolo* (sometimes spelled *Abbate*). This is literally the “abbot of the people,” but the title had nothing to do with any monastic order. The exact nature of the office of the abate is blurry. The medieval Genoese did not articulate the exact parameters of the office in any extant legislation from the time of its establishment. The 1288 set of laws from the city of Albenga, however, helps to shed more light on this Genoese *popolo* institution.²²¹

In his introduction to the statutes of Albenga, Vito Piergiovanni refers to the thirteenth century as the period of the “birth of the books of statutes” (“*la nascita dei ‘libri statutorum’*”).²²² Piergiovanni suggests that it was the incursion of Frederick II and his later dealings with the Italian communes that spurred the cities of northern Italy to legislate legal codes more aggressively.²²³ Mario Sbriccoli has taken this idea further and argued that books of statutes worked as a sort of *de facto* “flexible constitution” for Italian city-states.²²⁴ We should understand the statutes of Albenga in this context because they describe the structure of the state, its finances, and its offices.

Proceeding from this point, Genoa began to assert its dominance over its neighbors through the creation of legal codes that articulate the relationship between cities. As noted

²²¹ Josepha Costa Retagno, ed., *Gli Statuti di Albenga del 1288*, Fonti per La Storia della Liguria 3 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1995). (Hereafter FSL 3, *Statuti di Albenga*.)

²²² Vito Piergiovanni, “L’Organizzazione dell’Autonomia Cittadino: Gli Statuti di Albenga del 1288,” in *Gli Statuti di Albenga del 1288*, ed. Josepha Costa Retagno, Fonti per la Storia della Liguria 3 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1995), IX.

²²³ Ibid., X. “*De conventione inter Ianuam et Albinganam edita firma tenenda.*”

²²⁴ Marco Sbriccoli, “Legislation, Justice and Political Power in Italian Cities, 1200–1400,” in *Legislation and Justice*, ed. Antonio Padoa-Schioppa (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 37–55.

above, this text “concerns the clearly stated convention to be [that is to say, must be] held between Genoa and Albenga.”²²⁵ While the *Liber Iurium* articulates, for example, the relationship between Genoa and cities it dominated in terms of protection or a pacific state of interaction, the statutes of Albenga go further. The text begins by stating that the code was established in the name of “the most high God and the glory of the Virgin Mary, and the splendor and adornment and glory of the laudable and honorable city of Genoa and for the tranquility and pacific state of the city of Albenga and of all its friends . . .”²²⁶ This text is important for two reasons. First, it shows the government of Genoa creating new law rather than adapting the traditional practice of law to meet contemporary needs. By the thirteenth century, we see that medieval Italians were becoming more comfortable with the idea of fashioning a legal-political world that worked to their advantage. Second, these statutes give us a window into the structure of government and the operation of political institutions in Genoa.

We should understand that the statutes of Albenga reflect the practice of government in Genoa. We find a contemporary example of the administrative structures of a hegemon reflected in those of a subordinate city in the example of the relationship between Venice and the cities of the Veneto. During the thirteenth century, Venice set up neutered versions of its own governmental structures in the cities it ruled such as Verona. Like Venice, these cities had an assembly with a doge, but Venice appointed all candidates. Thus, to provide a corollary from literature, the “prince” that brings closure to *Romeo and Juliet* would have been a Venetian appointee who would have, in the words of the statutes

²²⁵ Retagno *Statuti di Albenga*, 15.

²²⁶ Ibid., “*Ad honorem Dei altissimi et gloriose Virginis Marie, et decus et decorum et laudis gloriam Ianue honorabilis civitatis, et ad tranquillitatem et statum pacificum civitatis Albingane et omnium amicorum*”

of Albenga, enforced the “tranquility and pacific state” of Verona.²²⁷ In this way, the role of the abate as outlined in the Albenga statutes probably mirrors that officer’s role in Genoa. We have already seen the way Genoa imposed itself on the cities of the Riviera in the way it developed a similar aesthetic and structure on the parish churches it subordinated (see below).²²⁸ It would make sense for the government of Genoa, as it became more powerful, to force the cities under their hegemony to adopt similar legal structures.



Figure 4: Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista, Monterosso al Mare (top) and Cattedrale di San Lorenzo, Genoa (bottom). These churches show a similar aesthetic approach signifying their unity under the Cathedral of San Lorenzo.

²²⁷ See Lane, *Venice, A Maritime Republic*, 98–99. Here, Lane describes how the Venetian administration of local government was arranged along parishes and administered by *capi* chosen by the Venetian Grand Council. Outside of the lagoon, local towns under Venetian hegemony would be allowed their own statutes but a *podestà* selected by the Grand Council would act as a local doge.

²²⁸ Image credits: K. Weise, *Church of Monterosso al Mare*, 2018, from Wikimedia Commons, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChiesaMonterossoFacc.jpg>; Davide Papalini, *Navata centrale della Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista, Monterosso al Mare*, from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monterosso_al_Mare-chiesa_San_Giovanni_Battista-navata_centrale1.jpg; *St. Lawrence Cathedral*, 2006, from Wikimedia Commons, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St.LawrenceCathedral.jpg>; *St Lawrence Cathedral (Interior)*, taken from Wikimedia commons, 2006, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Inside_St.LawrenceCathedral.jpg.

In the statutes of Albenga, the abate was an individual who was selected from “the best of all the *popolo* of Albenga” (“*melioribus tocius populi Albingane*”) for the maintenance of the “good state of the commune and *popolo*” of the city (“*bonum statum communis et populi Albingane*”).²²⁹ The abates were assisted by constables (*conestabulos*) to carry out their commands in the countryside as well as consuls to provide advice and assistance.²³⁰ The remit of the office was vague and open-ended, which suggests that they could exercise a wide range of power to achieve their ends. Additionally, this individual was assisted by a council and was instructed to open his home to the citizens of Albenga to hear complaints. Finally, the abate was charged with managing payments and the financial relationship between the commune and the *popolo*.²³¹ While the Genoese institutions of the office of the captain of the people (after it had been coopted by the *nobiles*) and the council of the *popolo* are likely minor concessions to suggest that the *popolo* had a place in the politics of Genoa, the abate demonstrates that the lower order was beginning to actually assert itself.

While the institutions of the Genoese state began to accommodate *popolo* participation in the thirteenth century, other opportunities emerged that allowed wealthy non-*nobilis* citizens, namely the *mercantes*, to exercise power in the city’s overseas holdings. Even as Genoa’s commercial tentacles reached out to the edges of the Mediterranean world, the landed nobility of *la Superba* continued to exercise tremendous power through their Ligurian estates. This meant wealthy non-*nobiles* had to seek

²²⁹ Retagno, *Statuti di Albenga*, 20.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 220.

opportunities to wield power abroad. Kathryn Reyerson has already demonstrated the ways that individuals of means could use overseas raiding to gain landed holdings that could bring wealth that far exceeded that which could be obtained through trade alone.²³² Indeed, Benedetto Zaccharia's exploits to this end are well known, and he was rewarded handsomely for his service to the Byzantine crown with the alum mines of Phocaea where he made his wealth.²³³ Overseas activities could bring power to non-*nobilis* Genoese institutionally as well as financially.

The records of the *officii gazarie*, which describe the colonial administrations of the Black Sea colonies, begin in 1313, and shed light on the ways that wealthy *mercantes* could seize power.²³⁴ A variety of useful information can be found in these documents, such as regulations controlling movement through the Black Sea, weights and measures, and prohibitions against the sale of ship supplies to enemies of the commune. For our purposes, the identities of the first consuls who oversaw Genoese activity in the Black Sea are of interest to us because, of the eight individuals who were selected by the abate and council of *sapientes*, none are from the old *nobilis* families in Genoa.²³⁵ The fact that the *sapientes*, presumably a council dominated by the *nobiles*, and the abate, the servant of the *popolo*, agreed to this composition suggests that the *gazarie* was an institution where *popolo* participation in government was sanctioned. Genoa continued to create new administrations of the *gazarie*, and they continued to elect individuals who were not

²³² Kathryn Reyerson, "Lordship and Piracy in the Medieval Mediterranean World" (Conference Paper, 20th Annual Mediterranean Studies Association International Congress, Valletta, Malta, June 1, 2017)

²³³ See Robert Lopez, *Genova marinara nel duecento*, Benedetto Zaccaria, *ammiraglio e mercante*, Biblioteca storica Principato XVII (Milan: Giuseppe Principati, 1933).

²³⁴ Although the term "colony" and "colonial" are weighed down with the baggage of the nineteenth-century manifestation of the phenomenon, it is the word that makes the most sense for this context.

²³⁵ HPM 3, *Imposicio Officii Gazarie*. 305.

members of the *quattuor gentes*. Thus, while it would be foolish to suggest that the *popolo* absolutely controlled Genoese overseas activities, this theater certainly provided different opportunities for these men.²³⁶ Furthermore, these opportunities would have contributed to the *popolo* foundation of power.

While the *popolo* had emerged as a distinct political entity by the first half of the thirteenth century, as we saw above, they could not seize power by themselves, no matter how many institutions they created or opportunities in the eastern Mediterranean they seized. The thirteenth-century descent of Frederick II into Italy radically altered urban politics throughout the peninsula, including Genoa, and his intervention “opened up the playing field,” so to speak, for non-*nobilis* politicians to enter public life. The Hohenstaufen king of Italy was an active player in Mediterranean politics (especially through his title of king of Sicily), and he had designs of reasserting imperial authority over northern Italy; his military invasion of Lombardy in 1237 was the last credible threat that the Holy Roman Empire posed to Italy before the Second Italian War of Independence (1859), and it inflamed the internal politics of the city-states there.

4.3.2: Stage two—the descent of Frederick II as the catalyst for sociopolitical change in Genoa and Italy

Despite the chaos that accompanied him, for many thinkers, politicians, and even poets, Frederick II and his successors represented an opportunity for stability. We have already discussed the way that later jurisprudential thinkers, such as Bartolus, conceived of the

²³⁶ Cf. *Ibid.*, and 367.

legal authority of the imperial crown. Frederick represented a legitimate manifestation of that authority, and for individuals such as Dante, only an emperor possessed the legal authority to solve the ills of factional violence that plagued late-medieval Italy. When it came to his local politics, Dante was a traditionalist, and despite his middling social status, he was loyal to the old aristocracy of Florence. As one modern biographer puts it, “His numerous writings over the years were accompanied, like a leitmotif, by Aristotle’s saying: ‘nobility is virtue and ancient wealth.’”²³⁷ For the Tuscan poet, the introduction of new groups into the Florentine political establishment had led to chaos and violence in the politics of his hometown that the old institutions were incapable of containing.²³⁸ Genoa, Florence, and many of the other cities of medieval Italy faced the problem of factional violence and social unrest caused by new orders emerging into public life. So, while the political situations of these cities differed with respect to the composition and age of the traditional ruling class and the particular *popolo* institutions that emerged, pro-imperial Italians understood the potential for Frederick and his successors to return Italy to a state of *concordia* along similar lines.

Dante and others like him saw Frederick II and his successors, especially Henry VII of Luxemburg (king of Italy from 1311–1313), as individuals who could restore order to the peninsula because they believed that the emperors were the ultimate authority of civil law; they could respect the authority of the church on ecclesiastical and theological matters, but the emperor reigned supreme over the civil realm. To this end, using a wide variety of evidence ranging from contemporary legal philosophy to Roman histories, Dante produced

²³⁷ Marco Santagata, *Dante: The Story of His*, 273.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 45–52. For Dante’s allegiance to the ancient rite of nobility, see *Ibid.*, 273.

De Monarchia between 1312 and 1313. In this text, Dante draws three general conclusions: 1) “universal peace is the greatest blessing conferred to man,” and it is only through the rule of the emperor that this can state can be achieved; 2) the Roman people did not use violence to obtain dominion over the world but this was conferred by divine providence; and 3) because Christ chose to be born under the empire, this sanctioned them the right to govern the human race.²³⁹

While *De Monarchia* is Dante’s best scholastic argument for the restoration of the Kingdom of Italy, it speaks in terms of universals: the “Church,” the “Empire,” and “Roman Citizens” (in this case, Christendom). His ardent desire for a king to rule Italy—because only a king could restore order cities engulfed in factionalism—is most eloquently and passionately stated throughout the *Comedia*.²⁴⁰ For example, during the ascent up the mountain in *Purgatorio* VI, Virgil meets a fellow Mantuan, the poet Sordello (c. thirteenth century), and the two embrace, recognizing their shared home. This vision of two countrymen, divided by time but embracing without fear of political factionalism, causes Dante the poet²⁴¹ to lament that such concord is not present in his contemporary Italy, and that the peninsula is a “ship with no helmsmen in a great storm” (“*nave senza nocchiere in*

²³⁹ Dante Alighieri, “Monarchia,” in *Tutte le Opere*, ed. Italo Borzi, Giovanni Fallani, Niccola Maggi, and Silvio Zennaro (Rome: Grandi Tascabili Economici Newton, 1993), 1071–1045, (pg. 1074), 1.4.2, “*pax universalis est optimum eorum que ad nostrum beatitudinem ordinantur*.” The entire text is divided into three parts that systematically respond to these concerns. For a succinct summary of the book and the context surrounding its composition, see Santagata, *Dante: The Story of His Life*, 266–268.

²⁴⁰ The *Comedia* is Dante’s allegorical tale of the journey of the “Pilgrim,” understood to be a metaphorical version of the author, through Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven. The poet Virgil is Dante’s guide through the first two. Although this work is concerned with the afterlife, Dante was a man of his world, an opinionated man of politics, and his views reflect the ideals of pro-imperial factions.

²⁴¹ Scholars of Dante separate the voice of Dante the Pilgrim, the allegorical manifestation of the author, from Dante the author of the poem. Here, we see the author lamenting that the peace between Mantuans that exists in Purgatory cannot be found in fourteenth-century Italy.

gran tempesta”) whose “inhabitants are never free from war” (“*ora in te non stanno sanca Guerra*”).²⁴² Dante then turns to address all of Italy, saying:

Search, miserable one [Italy], around your shores
then look into your heart
if any part of you rejoice in peace.

If there is no one in your saddle, what good
Was it Justinian repaired your harness?
Your shame would be less great had he not done so.

Ah, you who should be firm in your devotion
And let Caesar occupy the saddle,
If you but heeded what God writes for you.²⁴³

In this metaphor, the horse represents Italy, the harness—the object that guides the horse—is the *Corpus Iuris Civilis*, or perhaps the *Ius Comune* more generally, and the rider is the emperor. Dante closes by asking the question, what good is the harness to the horse without the rider? Justinian equipped Italy with a system of law that requires an emperor, and without such a figure, there can be no *concordia* because all of this is in accordance with the will of God. Unfortunately for him, Dante eventually concludes that Italy simply was not ready for an emperor. Near the end of *Paradiso*, in *canto XXX*, the poet describes a “wedding feast” (*nozze cenì*) where there is a space for the “soul of noble Henry,/who on earth, as emperor, shall attempt/to set things straight for Italy before she is prepared.”²⁴⁴ Henry VII was the last great hope for Dante, and, as we shall see, Genoa and the *nobilis*

²⁴² Dante, *Purgatorio*, ed. and trans., Jean Hollander and Robert Hollander (New York: Anchor Books, 2003), 6.77, (pg. 82).

²⁴³ Ibid., 6.86–93. Translation taken from Dante, *Purgatorio*, trans. Jean Hollander and Robert Hollander (New York: Anchor Books, 2004), 123–124.

²⁴⁴ Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*. 30.136–138. Translation taken from Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, trans. Jean Hollander and Robert Hollander (New York: Anchor Books, 2007), 821.

establishment's eventual rejection of Frederick and his successors were major contributors to Italy's perceived unreadiness for imperial rule.

Although the *nobiles* of Genoa eventually rejected the rule of Frederick II and his successors, they were initially receptive to the benefits of an imperial alliance. This reception could be confusing to modern historians because scholarship has long considered pre-1339 Genoa to be a Guelph base, given the close relationship between ecclesiastical institutions and the *nobilis* establishment, but this preconception begins to break down upon closer inspection. The fact that there was no strong opposition to their authority suggests that the *nobilis* establishment, having been entrenched in said ecclesiastical institutions, did not need to define itself in opposition to an imperial party. So, while the *nobiles* found allies in the traditionally Guelph cities of Lucca and Florence during the brief regime of Guglielmo Boccanegra, these cities were partly allies of convenience during that episode. Indeed, the idea that Genoa had pronounced Guelph and Ghibelline *parte* prior to the thirteenth century continues to fall apart when one ponders the fact that, initially, the Genoese referred to the imperial and ecclesiastical parties as *Mascherati* and *Rampini* respectively, and they only conformed to standard terminology later.²⁴⁵ Thus, this dissertation argues that the Guelph/Ghibelline rivalry was significantly muted in Genoa during the period before the descent of Frederick II. And because of this, when Frederick arrived, the *nobiles* did not yet see the crown and church as mutually exclusive political entities and were willing to work with the emperor, at least at first. This conclusion is important because scholars of medieval Italy have too often taken the example of Florence,

²⁴⁵ Musarra, "Political Alliance and Conflict, 126. The term, *mascherati*, may refer to the Provençal term, *masca* (witch or masked person), which was used derogatorily to refer to imperial partisans. The meaning of the term *Rampini* is completely unknown.

where the Guelph and Ghibelline rivalry was the dominant political narrative, as representative of the political situation in the rest of Italy.

Furthermore, this understanding of Genoese factionalism makes the reasoning behind the city's different responses to Frederick I and Frederick II clearer. With respect to the former, the Genoese joined the Lombard League's resistance to Barbarossa in the twelfth century, and representatives of the city are signatories on the Peace of Constance; but we should see this resistance to imperial authority in terms of what was understood to be a genuine threat to their hard-won *libertas*—freedom to govern themselves—rather than any loyalty to the role of the universal church as an administrative institution in Italy. Conversely, in the thirteenth century, there was at least a faction of the Genoese that welcomed Frederick II at first.

In 1226, Frederick II held an imperial diet at the Lombard city of Cremona. This meeting had three main goals. First the prosecution of Frederick's planned Crusade to the Holy Land, the suppression of heresy, and the reassertion of imperial rights in Italy.²⁴⁶ The Genoese received Frederick II favorably, and in return for this support, the monarch confirmed Genoa's *iurisdictio*—the right to administer and create law—over the rest of Liguria in a *diploma* issued that same year.²⁴⁷ In this text, Frederick addresses his *fideles* in Genoa, just as Adalbert and Berengar did in the ninth century. In this case, however, all the Genoese citizens (*universi cives Ianue*), rather than a small group of *nobiles*, are the *fideles* of the monarch.²⁴⁸ Frederick then confirms Genoese military authority from

²⁴⁶ David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 154.

²⁴⁷ Dino Puncuh ed., *I Libri Iurium della Repubblica di Genova*, Vol. 1 Pt. 2 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1996), 40–43. Note: This is an edition of the *Liber Iurium* of Genoa that incorporates other documents, such as the one at hand, which were not included in earlier compendia.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 40.

Monaco to Portovenere, which included not only the land, but all the sea routes (*totam maritimam*). Then, most importantly for our purposes, the Hohenstaufen ruler also confirms that the consuls and podestà of Genoa:

. . . have the duty and unconstrained means for rendering justice, [and] punishing wrongdoing in the city and districts according to their good faith and to the good [legal] custom of this city and to hand [over] to protectors, overseers, guardians, and all that which the judge ordains they should have from the emperor in his jurisdiction and in his districts and in those which we relinquish or will relinquish.²⁴⁹

Crucially, the quoted section states that the consuls and podestàs have the freedom to administer law according to the custom of the city, but the empire remains the ultimate authority. While the Genoese eventually rejected the emperors, the logic of this text indicates the presence of ideas that Boccanegra would build on later in the legal documents of his regime. To underline this point, in the above excerpt, the consuls and podestàs are administering land through the grant of the emperor. They are to “hand over . . . all that which the judge ordains . . . from the emperor.” There is an assumption here that the emperor is the ultimate authority over these lands, but the variety of agents included—protectors, overseers, and guardians—suggests that Frederick and his supporters in Italy were allowing for the presence of local customs of law. Finally, Symon Donati, an imperial notary, copied out the text and Nicolaus of San Lorenzo, a notary of the sacred palace, copied a version the text for the Genoese.²⁵⁰ Here, we can see how the trajectory of cities and institutions administering law in place of the king, which began at the *Palatio Regis* in

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 41, “. . . *habeant ius et facultatem liberam faciendi iusticiam, puniendi maleficia in civitate et in districtu suo bona fide, legitime et secundum bonos mores ipsius civitatis et dandi tutores et curators et mundualdos et cetera omnia que iudex ordinaries habere debet ab imperatore in sua iurisdictione in suo districtu et in suos quos concedimus et concedemus.*”

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 43.

Pavia and continued through the civic *libra iuria*, reached a logical conclusion in this legal text that Frederick II issued.

Genoa's cordial relationship with imperial authority did not last, and it eventually inflamed tensions between the *quattuor gentes*. After the death of Frederick in 1250, the Holy Roman Empire no longer had a leader that was charismatic and skilled enough to hold Italy together, and the crown lost any unified support it had in Genoa. The cracks began to appear before Frederick died. In 1243, Sinibaldo Fieschi acceded to the throne of St. Peter as Pope Innocent IV, at which point support for the imperial crown would have been untenable, and the *nobilis* establishment fractured irrevocably. The Grimaldi and Fieschi remained allied to ecclesiastical structures, retrenching themselves in the Guelph cause, while the Spinola—the family whose member declared himself a friend of the people when he established the council of the *popolo*—and the de Mari—the descendants of Guglielmo the conspirator—finally established a strong Ghibelline party.²⁵¹

The violence of Genoese politics during this era became more chaotic than it had ever been before; there were nineteen unexpected and often violent changes in government between 1250 and 1339.²⁵² And the violence spilled into the Riviera as exiled nobles turned to piracy to achieve their ends. Frederic Cheyette referred to the coast of southeastern France as a “Ghibelline hunting ground” during this era.²⁵³ This volatility in the Genoese government and its changing relationship to imperial authority is exemplified by Henry VII's experience in the city. In 1310, Dante's champion descended into Italy after his election as emperor. He first traveled to Milan where he was crowned king of the Italians.

²⁵¹ Musarra, “Political Alliance and Conflict,” 126.

²⁵² Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 325.

²⁵³ See Frederic Cheyette, “The Sovereign and the Pirates, 1332,” *Speculum* 45, no. 1 (Jan. 1970): 40–68.

At the time, the *nobiles* of Genoa were in a period of truce, but in 1309, Opizzano Spinola attempted to rule alone as rector and captain-general for life, which provoked an enemy coalition to drive him into exile. Spinola eventually returned in the entourage of Henry VII in 1311. The Doria, then in power, allowed them to enter, and out of respect for the imperial office and a desire for peace, they submitted to the emperor for a total of twenty years. Unfortunately, Henry did not stay in Genoa long enough to affect lasting *concordia* and left after two months, traveling to Rome to seek a papal coronation before he died in 1313. After he left, the Genoese broke the *concordia* he imposed and descended once more into factional violence.²⁵⁴ Dante never forgave Genoa for abandoning the peace Henry had brought. At the end of the *Inferno*, in the penultimate tercet of the thirty-third canto, Dante addresses Genoa, saying “O men of Genoa, race estranged/from every virtue, crammed with every vice,/why have you not been driven from the earth?”²⁵⁵ This reputation for factional violence was so widespread that Petrarch felt compelled to write a letter to Simone Boccanegra’s successor and the people of Genoa, imploring them to end their violence.²⁵⁶ This violence became so commonplace that the fourteenth century chroniclers, the Stella brothers, appear to become confused about who started it, describing it as a series of *revolutiones*, literally a situation that turns itself over and over, starting again at the

²⁵⁴ For events in Genoa, see Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 73–75. For a general discussion of Henry VII and his program in Italy, see John Law, “The Italian North,” in *The New Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. 6: c. 1300–1415, ed. Michael Jones (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 442–468, 443–4.

²⁵⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, 33.151–153. Translation Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*, ed. and trans. Jean Hollander and Robert Hollander (New York: Viking, 2002), 615. Canto 23 is the circle of hypocrites.

²⁵⁶ Francesco Petrarca, *Selected Letters*, trans. Elaine Fantham, vol. 2 The I Tatti Renaissance Library 76 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 171–189. Petrarch wrote letters to both the doge of Genoa and his counterpart in Venice in 1352. The primary goal of these letters was to convince the two cities to abandon their wars against each other in order to direct their efforts towards ending the Roman Empire in Constantinople and liberating the Holy Land. In his letter to Genoa, however, Petrarch also chastises the city for their civil wars and urges them to abandon this intermural violence, ending the letter with, “But abstain from civil wars.”

beginning with each turn. It was at the end of this series of conflicts that the *compera pacis* was created.

4.4: Two processes converge—the foundation of the *dogate* of Genoa

Finally, the *popolo* instigated what Stella referred to as a “hard turn.”²⁵⁷ After years of “*revolutiones*” in the traditional sense—constantly turning over with no change—by taking advantage of the divisions within the *nobilis* establishment brought about by the imperial intervention, the *popolo* were able to assert themselves as a distinct political faction on their own. In 1339, a group of electors selected from the Genoese *popolo* gathered together in the *Piazza San Lorenzo* to ask the people they represented for advice about whom they would like to have as their abate.

Despite their intentions, the event spun out of control, and the *popolo* rose up and upended the old order and created the office of the doge for the first time in Genoese history.²⁵⁸ The event began with people from the crowd calling for Simone Boccanegra, a man with strong *popolo* connections, to become the new abate. At one point, an individual called for Boccanegra to be made doge, a demand that the entire crowd eventually echoed.²⁵⁹ The gathered members of the *popolo* then began to cross the city calling out,

²⁵⁷ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 129

²⁵⁸ Tom Scott, *The City-State in Europe, 1000–1600: Hinterland, Territory, Region* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 39–40. The term *popolo* is a difficult one to define. Tom Scott notes that in traditional historiography, it referred to non-nobles of economic significance, but argues that it should have a broader and nebulous connotation that encompasses the groups of people who opposed the traditional order. For this dissertation, the term will be used as Scott employs it in the sense that the government of 1339 was meant to be an antidote to the aristocratic violence associated with the political process during the preceding two centuries.

²⁵⁹ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 130.

“Long live the *popolo* and merchants and long live the doge.”²⁶⁰ The people who installed Simone Boccanegra as the sole governor of the Ligurian city were tired of the violence that had plagued Genoese politics and disrupted civic life for nearly a century.

The 1339 government of Simone Boccanegra, as it was constituted, tied together many of the threads discussed earlier in this chapter in an effort to remove the *nobiles* from power and deconstruct the *nobilis commune*. First, building on contemporary currents in jurisprudential thought and the revitalization of the authority of the imperial crown that accompanied Frederick II’s descent into Italy, Boccanegra’s government looked to the imperial crown for authority rather than to the bishopric. The legitimacy of this restructuring makes more sense if we recall how bishops acted as *missi* in the early Middle Ages. These ecclesiastics were not governing in their capacity as a representative of the universal church; rather, they were local officials vested with imperial authority. As such, these representatives could be removed from their position and another entity could act as the conduit for imperial authority. Indeed, the *Diploma* of Frederick cited above makes no mention of the church as an intermediary of secular power. This idea is fully explored in the writings of Bartolus and his contemporaries, which shed light on the way Boccanegra and his followers used the concept of the legal authority of the emperor to reframe government in Genoa.

The legal theories of Bartolus and his followers are implicit in the first official document that the administration of Simone Boccanegra issued: the *Conferma della elezione del primo doge* (this Italian name, the Confirmation of the Election of the First

²⁶⁰ Ibid. It is on account of this cry that this dissertation refers to the subsequent administrations of the city as the *popolo* government.

Doge, is the modern Italian name ascribed to the text).²⁶¹ The *Conferma* is a legal document that describes the public ceremony wherein Boccanegra was made the first doge of Genoa. First, it is important to note that within the text, the authority of the church as an institution is marginalized. So, although the prooemium invokes the trinity, the virgin Mary, and the patron saints of the city, and the *piazza* of the cathedral of San Lorenzo is the stated location of the ceremony, the bishop is not presiding as one might have expected would have happened during an earlier period. Rather than looking to the bishop, the assent of the gathered members of the commune, the laws of the city, and the power of the *baylia* (an elected body) provided the legal weight behind the document, a stark contrast to the episcopal authority as the source outlined in the *Brevis* text examined in the previous chapter.²⁶²

The text is careful to assert that the *entirety* of the population of the city gave their assent to the proceedings, stating that it took place in front of a complete *parlamento* of the inhabitants of the city, with as many *nobiles* as *popolo*.²⁶³ Unlike past administrations, this new one brought the fractious ruling class together with the *popolo*, but despite the assent of the *nobiles*, Boccanegra and his followers, as we shall see, sought to marginalize and distance them from power.

The assembled citizens of Genoa took on a great deal of power in the creation of their new government, adapting contemporary trends in popular governance and legal philosophy to suggest that the *popolo* of Genoa had the ultimate power to shape the

²⁶¹ HPM 18, “Leges Genuenses,” 32–36.

²⁶² Ibid., 33.

²⁶³ Ibid. “ . . . in plena et gernerale parlamento hominum civitatis Ianue et suburbiorum hominum civitatis Ianue et suburbiorum, tam nobelium quam popularium.”

structure of the state. A reading of Bartolan legal philosophy makes these strategies clear. This understanding of the glossator's writings rests on the idea that, generally speaking, there are two directions of legislation in the Western tradition: ascending and descending. Simply put, ascending law is that which is promulgated by assemblies of the people or that which emerges from custom; descending law, on the other hand, is that which is handed down from above, such as from a king. Both theoretical sources of legal authority in medieval Italy—the crown and the Pope—are descending sources of authority.²⁶⁴ Despite this, the glossators understood that sources of ascending law could exist within the confines of a system of descending authority and that the people, broadly conceived, had the right to legislate their own laws or operate according to their own custom as it had developed; recall that Frederick II confirmed Genoa's right to administer law based on its own custom and the practice of Roman law. This attitude is very much in step with the desire of Boccanegra's supporters to alter the state.

Boccanegra was not attempting to create a government that realized Bartolus's best known adage: "*civitas sibi princeps*" (a city is a prince unto itself), which contributed to the foundations of modern state theory. If Boccanegra and his followers believed in such a concept, their regime would have been a break with the past because it would have placed the authority of Genoa on par with that of the emperor.²⁶⁵ This idea would influence early modern state regimes in Europe, but the Middle Ages were not ready for such a concept. A Bartolan idea that is present in the *Conferma* text, however, is, *concilium representat mentem populi* (let the council represent the mind of the people). This concept assumes

²⁶⁴ Walter Ullmann, "De Bartoli Sententia," 707–709.

²⁶⁵ Magnus Ryan, "Bartolus of Sassoferrato and Free Cities. The Alexander Prize Lecture," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 10 (2000): 65–89.

that the council of a city should reflect the desires of its inhabitants or citizens. Such a philosophy of government would keep the theoretical position of the Genoese commune subordinated to the imperial crown. Indeed, Floriano Jonas Cesar has shown that within the context of a system wherein *concilium representat* is in play, the emperor is able to remain the source of ultimate authority.²⁶⁶

Bartolus's commentary on the *Digesta* helps us understand how the ascending legislation of the Genoese *concilium* could exist within the framework of an imperial authority. Bartolus states that when the *populus* (in this case all Genoese, *popolo* and *nobilis*) has *iurisdictio*—legal authority—“they are able to make law, [with] the authority of a superior not expected.”²⁶⁷ If we return to the imperial *Diploma* of 1226, we know that Frederick had already accorded *iurisdictio* over the Riviera to the “*populus*” of Genoa. So, while Ullman has argued that the idea of “*concilium representat*” cannot change the government, Boccanegra and his followers would not have seen themselves as doing so. Rather, they were changing the laws that governed their city. Yes, they were creating new laws and reducing the authority of the episcopal institutions, but they were not challenging the ultimate authority of the empire.

What is more, Bartolus had a fairly practical attitude when it came to the factional conflict that was rampant throughout Italy and the ability of these factions to alter the conditions of their government. In *De guelfis et gibellinis*, Bartolus states that sometimes, people hold political positions for the public good, and other times their own utility. Citing

²⁶⁶ Floriano Jonas Cesar, “Popular Autonomy and Imperial Power in Bartolus of Saxoferrato: An Intrinsic Connection,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 5 (2004): 369–381.

²⁶⁷ Bartolus, *Commentarius ad Digesta*, (Turin: Augustus Tauriensis, 1577), 1.1.9, no. 4 fol. 9 va. “*potest facere statutum, non expectata suerioris auctoritate.*”

Roman legal principles, he states that those who direct factional violence to achieve private ends—specifically referencing legislation from after the Catilinarian conspiracy when Cicero put citizens to death without a trial to seize power—they do so illegally.²⁶⁸ Using this logic, the *nobilis* regime was illegal because the *nobiles* marginalized the *popolo*, keeping power in their own hands for their own benefit.

We find evidence for the understanding that while the *populus* of Genoa were exercising their *iurisdictio*, they believed that they were not deconstructing the theoretical sources of legal authority in Italy at the end of the text. Here we find a list of eighteen men who witnessed the ceremony. After the list of names, Conradus Mazzurus, notary of the Empire (*notarius Imperii*), legally ratified the witness of these men.²⁶⁹ Conradus was claiming that he was acting under the authority of the empire, not circumventing it. In this way Conradus is the descendent of the *notarius palatii* of the Lombard and Carolingian kings. Just as a *missus* of the emperor together with a *notarius palatii* combined to enact the authority of these earlier kings, the new *popolo* government was working with a *notarius Imperii* to enact the authority of the empire. The Genoese even hired a doctor of law, Francesco Neri di Volterra, banned from Florence, to make legal decisions in 1339, which underlines how the city was indebted to the *Ius Comune* legal tradition.²⁷⁰

The use of notaries to create law and establish a *pro-popolo* political order was not unique to Genoa. By the thirteenth century, notaries had become associated with the work of judges. What is more, we have in Bologna, a location that should not be surprising,

²⁶⁸ Diego Quaglioni, ed., *Politica e diritto nel Trecento italiano. Il “De tyranno” di Bartolo da Sassoferrato (1314–1357) con l’edizione critica dei trattati “De guelphis et gebellinis,” “De regimine civitatis,” e “De tyranno,”* Il pensiero politico, Biblioteca 11 (Florence: Leo S. Olschicki Editore, 1983), 131–146.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 35.

²⁷⁰ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 132.

precedent for the use of notaries as agents who supply the legitimacy of the laws of popular governments. In “Instruments of Concord: Making Peace and Settling Disputes through a Notary in the City and *Contado* of Late Medieval Bologna,” Shona Kelly Wray has shown that the populist government of Teddeo Pepoli (r. 1337–1347) used notaries extensively to enforce the decisions of his new popular regime.²⁷¹ Antonio Ivan Pini went so far as to call Bologna a “republic of notaries” during the rule of the *popolo* in the 1270s and 1280s.²⁷² Bologna, as the most important center of law in medieval Italy, would have set a precedent for the *popolo* government, and it is not too big a leap to suggest that the framers of Boccanegra’s new administration would have seen notaries as useful tools for legitimizing statecraft based on that model.

We should be careful, however, in the ascription of Bartolan ideas to the Boccanegran government where they are never explicitly referenced. That said, this reading of fourteenth-century Genoese politics is not without precedent. Emmanuel Wardi produced some of the most incisive work on the internal politics of Genoa, but unfortunately an untimely death prevented him from making widespread conclusions. He did, however, address the issue of Bartolus in the logic of the Genoese government.

In “Rank and file participation in politics in late medieval Genoa: the commune’s submission to the French in 1396,” Wardi addresses the debate that transpired in the Genoese assemblies over whether or not the city should submit itself to the king of

²⁷¹ Shona Kelly Wray, “Instruments of Concord: Making Peace and Settling Disputes through a Notary in the City and Contado of Late Medieval Bologna,” *Journal of Social History* 42, no. 3 (Spring 2009): 733–760.

²⁷² Antonio Pini, “Bologna nel suo secolo d’oro: Da ‘comune aristocratico’ a ‘repubblica di notai,’” in *Atti del convegno internazionale di studi storici sulla figura e l’opera di Rolandino*, ed. Giorgio Tamba (Milan: Consiglio nazionale del notariato-per una storia del notariato nella civiltà europea, 2003), 3–20.

France.²⁷³ For those in favor of submitting to France, the king would be a “super *podestà*” who could use his immense power to bring an end to the factionalism in the city that the Boccanegra regime failed to stop; clearly, the Genoese had not learned from the failures of Henry VII earlier in the century. After much debate, which Giovanni Stella remembers attending in his youth, the Genoese decided to submit themselves to the French king. In response to this decision, the king of France sent a legate who stated that the *sapientes* (elders) of Genoa had previously consulted the citizenry and that the submission to the French crown was based on their consent. Wardi states that the idea of “*concilium representat*” would never have occurred to the French legate, and his recognition of the councils was an attempt to integrate himself into Genoese political structures that confused him. On the other hand, Wardi also suggests that the doge, Antoniotto Adorno, who had probably never read his works, would nevertheless not be “loathe to agree with Bartolus.”²⁷⁴ This idea that Adorno, even in his ignorance, would have agreed with Bartolus, reinforces the idea that the glossator’s writings, and those his fellow legal philosophers, emerged from the practice of government around them, and that theory and practice reinforced each other rather than one proceeding from the other.

While Boccanegra and his followers were careful to ensure that the *nobiles* consented to the government, they still feared their power and sought to remove them from the city. Indeed, the list of witnesses that Mazzurus recorded illuminates the composition of a new group in power in the city. None of the men were from the *nobilis* order, and many were members of the craft guilds. Of all of the guilds, the butchers are the most represented,

²⁷³ E.P. Wardi, “Rank and file participation in politics in late-medieval Genoa: the commune’s submission to the French in 1396,” *Journal of Medieval History* 28, no. 4 (December 2002): 373–399.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 390

with four from their ranks providing witness of the ceremony. The presence of guildsman at this ceremony is interesting.²⁷⁵ As we stated earlier, during the central Middle Ages, these confraternities were much weaker in Genoa than they were in other Italian cities, such as Florence, and we do not see the *arte* mentioned in de Mari's conspiracy, for example. It makes sense that the pro-*popolo* regime of Simone Boccanegra would have embraced them; they presented an underutilized institution around which the *popolo* could rally.

To reinforce their power and perhaps fearing yet another resurgence of *nobilis* power, the *Conferma* text invests the doge with incredible authority, legally speaking. After reiterating once again the universal assent granted by the presence of the Genoese *popolo* and the community and the city of Genoa, the text states Boccanegra not only had the power to govern and rule but was also outside of the law (. . . *caret capitulis ordinationibus et aliis regularitatibus civitatis Ianue et districtus* . . .).²⁷⁶ Later regimes would neuter the authority of the doge, as we shall see in the next chapter.

In addition to removing the *nobiles* from power, the Boccanegra regime sought to take the protection of the *concordium* in the city out of the hands of the *nobiles*. The stated purpose of the new office of doge was to improve and exalt the status of the entire population of Genoa and establish peace and tranquility within the city and the lands that surround it, and the subsequent activity of this administration and its successors were to be directed toward this end.²⁷⁷ Whereas in the last chapter we discussed how some sort of

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 34.

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 33.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 32. "...et ad bonum statum augmentum et exaltacionem populi Ianue, et tocius civitatis et comunis Ianue, riparium et districtus et statum pacificum et tranquillum eurumdum."

private pact of *concordia* between *nobilis* factions guaranteed “peace and tranquility” under the *nobilis* establishment earlier, here, the doge takes that guarantee away from the *nobiles*. The changes to the government extended beyond the creation of new offices and the establishment of *concordia*; Boccanegra attempted to deconstruct the entire aristocratic political establishment.

Finally, it is possible that the mob may have even attacked the debt by destroying the records of the finances and the financiers. Unfortunately, this is an episode not described in Stella. For this we must turn to Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536). Unlike Stella, who claims to have recollection of the political councils of the late fourteenth century and would have perhaps received information about the political events of the early fourteenth century from family, Giustiniani was born even further from the events in question. The author was a humanist and bishop of Nebbio in Corsica. He is best known for his linguistic works and geography of Corsica, but he wrote a history of his hometown of Genoa that was published after his death in 1539. While he is far-removed from the events, there is perhaps reason to consider his version. He was from a noble family, and his record seems to focus more on the *nobiles*. He may have had access to different sources.

His description of the events of October 1339 mirrors that of Stella, but he states that mob also came together in the *Piazza Pubblica* and destroyed all the books containing the financial records of the commune and the list of debtors (“*i libri, dove si contenevano I computi ed I conti della Repubblica*”).²⁷⁸ If this story is true, it is evidence of gradually

²⁷⁸ Agostino Giustiniani, *Annali della Repubblica di Genova di monsignor Agostino Giustiniani* (Genoa: Press oil Libraio Canepa, 1856) Vol. 2, 65.

increasing resentment toward the debt and holders of the debt and the power associated with this status.

4.5: The Boccanegra regime and state debt

Regardless of the veracity of Giustiniani's story, we know that Boccanegra sought to wrest control of the debt. If we recall the different pieces of the Genoese communal government—ecclesiastical authority, the *compagna*, the *nobilis* establishment, the pacts of *concordia*, and the debt—the *Conferma* text wrests each of those institutions from *nobilis* hands except for the debt. The empire became the ultimate source of sovereign authority, Boccanegra controlled the *compagna*, the *popolo* had forced their way into the political establishment, and Boccanegra ensured *concordia*. The debt, however, could not be handled in a short text. Indeed, we saw how important the debt was to Guglielmo Boccanegra's attempts to take control of the state. The most pressing problem that Simone faced was that Genoa had been spending more than it could afford and the subsequent inability to pay the investors the money they were owed had caused unrest and allowed stakeholders to wield significant authority within the city's government. Indeed, interest payments had ballooned out of control, and the city never established an effective means to make the payments, even if it had the money. Also crucial was the fear of alienating future revenues, which concerned the regimes of both Boccanegras.

Simone's reforms were much more significant, however, than those of his great-uncle, and he took a more sophisticated legal approach. It seems that he tried to bring oversight over state spending and finances under the authority of the *popolo* with him and

his government at its head First, the new government changed the way the state paid for expenses, which is reflected in the manuscripts of the *antico comune sottovello*. At the same time, however, Boccanegra and his followers also reformed the laws that oversaw the enactment of those documents, and, as we shall see, he made the connection between the administration and its finances more explicit, which in turn, helped to alienate their enemies from power.

Boccanegra's first move was to consolidate the debt that had already been accrued (and presumably the records of which had not been destroyed if that did indeed happen) and to attempt to pay it back through both legal and more unscrupulous means. As we saw earlier, the earlier *compagne* distributed their profits to investors after the consular terms of office, effectively ceding control of state revenues to a group of wealthy stakeholders. Crucially, Boccanegra could not simply nullify the debt; despite the *nobilis* stranglehold on the government, wealthy *mercantes* had also invested in the *compere*, and nullifying their investments would have certainly been a major misstep as this support would have abandoned him. That said, Boccanegra did evade some of the payments. The price of shares of the *mutua vetera*, nominally worth one-hundred Genoese pounds, fell to eighteen to twenty-three pounds and the *compera salis*, also worth around one hundred pounds, sold for fifty-two to fifty-three pounds.²⁷⁹ This depression in prices suggests that the value of these shares had diminished, probably because payments were either no longer being paid out or individuals did not trust them to be paid out. It could also suggest that Boccanegra was looking to stop people from thinking of investing in the government as a genuine

²⁷⁹ Petti Balbi, *Simon Boccanegra*, 97–99.

source of income or power, thus exerting greater control over the government and limiting others' access to it—this monopolization of power led to has downfall as we shall see later.

In addition to trying to get a handle on the outstanding debt, Boccanegra and his followers attempted to control spending on future expenses. To accomplish this, the new government created an ever-proliferating number of administrative *officia* designed to meet the needs of the state, and the records of these *officia* make up the *Antico Comune*. The first office to be established was the *Communis Ianuae massaria*, whose records comprise *Antico Comune* registers one through forty.²⁸⁰ This text begins to provide the structure of the rest of the manuscripts of the *Antico Comune*. The registers are overseen by two *sapientes* who are were assigned by the doge. For the first register, they were Cristianus Lemellinus and Dominicus de Garibaldo.²⁸¹ According to Niermeyer's *Latin Lexicon*, a *massa* is a patrimony, or a compact group of estates held or left behind by a proprietor, but in this case, the *massarius* is the central fund that records the *introitus* (money coming into the government) and *exitus* (outgoing expenses). As the commune progressed through the fourteenth century, the *exitus* often took the form of payments to other *officia*. For example, in *Antico Comune* 139 from 1378, the first extant example of the *victualium*, we see funds sent by the two officers of the *massarium*.²⁸² Each of these *officia* would have been overseen by a notary of the Genoese chancellery, giving the spending added legitimacy and transparency. As factional rivalries continued, Genoa never gained control over their finances and in 1407, the city folded much of the city's administration into the financial institution of the *Casa di San Giorgio*.

²⁸⁰ *Officium massarii*, Antico Comune 1–40, Archivio di Stato di Genova.

²⁸¹ *Officium massarii* 1339, Antico Comune 1, Archivio di Stato di Genova, Folio 1, recto.

²⁸² *Officium victualium* 1356, Antico Comune 139, Archivio di Stato di Genova, 1 recto.

The various *officia* seem to have been established on an *ad hoc* basis, and the order of their creation gives a good idea of what problems occupied the Genoese government to be instigated when need arose. The second *officium* to be created was the *magistrorum rationalium introitus et exitus*. This refers to expenses meant to pay for the salaries of important magistrates, a problem that the Genoese took seriously, as we shall see. The creation of these *officia* was a way to get a handle on expenses and create transparency in government spending. This was the first time anything like this happened in Genoese administration. As we shall see in the next chapter, this number of *officia* expanded rapidly as the Genoese realized how complicated it was to manage the finances of the commune and maintain a degree of clarity for the investors at the same time. Indeed, we should think of these offices as bringing practices that had been previously informal—especially the actual spending of money generated from the *compere*—into the open and in the public record; the power derived from this activity will be explored more completely later in this dissertation.

Moreover, the Genoese during this period resorted to the confiscation of property to pay off the debt. The records of the *officium rebelles*, for example, beginning in 1350, provide a record of the confiscation of the property of the *rebelles*, that is to say exiles or enemies of the state, in order to pay off the debt. By this point, Boccanegra was driven from the city by the *nobiles* (only to return several years later), and the *nobiles* took control of the city briefly. The first register of this *officium* covers 1350, 1358, and 1362–1364.²⁸³ This span includes the brief *nobilis* regime (1345–1356) that we shall discuss later, but the

²⁸³ Pietro di Sarzano Notarius, Notai Giudiziari (1350, 1358, 1362–1364), Antico Comune 347, Archivio di Stato di Genova.

popolo remained in control for most of the period. As we shall see in the next chapter, this would not be the last time the Genoese used *officia* to attack supposed enemies of the state. One would not be surprised, however, if there were other “confiscations” in the days following Boccanegra’s seizure of power. Stella informs us that many of the *nobiles* fled from the city and one gets the sense that there was significant chaos. Many of the *nobiles* were terrified. Rabella de Grimaldi descended from his home onto the *piazza* where he was met with arms and was greeted by an armed mob who dragged him to the *piazza* and tried to have him put to death. Coming to his aid, Boccanegra was able to “steal away their furor with amenable words.”²⁸⁴ In such chaos, one must assume the property of the *nobiles* was open for the taking.

This desire for transparency and control of spending becomes clear when we examine the continuing reformation of the commune. The *Regulae Comperarum Capituli* represents the major legislative accomplishment of the Boccanegra regime. The 1339 text, whose reference to the *compera* in the title should be noted, is a wide-ranging code that underlines the way that the state debt touched on many facets of Genoese society. In addition to laying out the duties of various communal officeholders and other aspects of communal society, it also hints at the administration of the fiscal *officia* of the *Antico Comune*. The text begins with a description of the *officium visitatores*, or Office of Overseers. As stated above, Gioffrè says that the office was founded in 1320 but provides no evidence for this note. Regardless of the actual date of the establishment of the office, the codification of the rules governing their roles is a further example of Boccanegra taking

²⁸⁴ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 131–132, “*sed dux veris amenis irrationabilem illorum furorem amovit.*” Giustiniani corroborates this event.

control of the debt and state spending. Indeed, the very fact the rules were actually recorded at this moment is evidence of Boccanegra and his supporter's push to bring the practice of governance into the public eye and foster transparency to a previously informal system.

The *Visitatores* were not explicitly attached to the *massaria* and the others in the sense that its records are held in the *Antico Comune*, but it was related. The title, the Overseers, is a description of its function; the *visitatores* were charged with overseeing the operation of the state and the spending of its money. The office was staffed by four individuals, two from the *nobiles* and two from the *popolo*. These men were to be supported by two notaries.²⁸⁵ Regulation five is perhaps the most explicit description of the importance of the *visitatores*:

And also, the four *visitatores*, or anyone from them, should be involved with the auction of the public shares and the profits of the Genoese Commune. And [they should also] record the sales of those [future] profits along with [the names of] those persons buying as well as their guarantors with one of their notaries, and take care that those buyers should immediately be satisfied [with] the payment of the entire value [of the investment] at its conclusion.²⁸⁶

This regulation was meant to solve the persistent problem of the profits from shares of the *compera* not being paid out. Other regulations were put in place to make sure that these payments were made and were accurate. The *vicarious*—a figure whose role is not made

²⁸⁵ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 37–39.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 40: “*Teneantur etiam dicti quattuor visitatores, seu aliquis ex eis, interesse incantationibus calegarum et introytuum Comunis Ianue una cum notario suo, et ipsas ementes et fideiussores introytum et personas ipsas ementes et fideiussores ipsorum, et curare quod totius facienda in suis terminis.*” Throughout this dissertation, I have endeavored to produce translations that hew closer to the literal, because legal documents require precise understanding. But in this case, the phrase “*Tenantur . . . interesse incantationibus calegarum*” is difficult to render in smooth English. In this case, a more literal translation would be, “they are held to be among the incantations of the public shares.” The exact wording is, frankly, difficult to understand, particularly the word, “*incantatio*,” because the only translations *Lewis and Short* and *Niermeyer*’s offer are related to spell-craft and magic. Given the rest of the text, this makes absolutely no sense, and thus I have chosen to extrapolate from the rather obscure meaning of a “false statement,” to understand that that an *incantatio* is some sort of legal statement, which is a leap from the idea of a spell as some sort of formulaic statement.

explicit but seems to be a “vice doge” who was more responsible for the day-to-day management of the city—and a judge should administer “each and every” (*omnes et singulos*) payment. Additionally, it seems that the *visitatores*, or at least a majority of them, could stand in for the *vicarius*.²⁸⁷

Crucially, the text mentions some of the salary that should be paid from the *officium magistrorum rationalium introitus et exitus*, revealing these regulations explicitly bridged the institutions of the commune and the debt. The two individuals from the *ratione* (*duobus de ratione*), presumably the two individuals who managed the *magistrorum rationalium*, should receive eighty pounds, the scribes should be paid sixty, and the two *nuntii*, twenty-four, and the heads of the guards of the *nuntii* had a salary of fifteen pounds.²⁸⁸ Finally, there is to be a “committee of inquisitors” (*bailia inquisitorum attributa Visitoribus*) assigned to the *visitatores*. This group should make inquiries throughout Genoese territories and search for neglect or any other potential crimes.²⁸⁹ This concern for salaries should not be entirely surprising; if we recall Guglielmo Boccanegra’s *decretum* on the debt, it states that salaries for state officials should continue to be paid unless the city entered wartime.

The *Comperarum* is clearly meant to be comprehensive. In addition to facilitating investments and payments, it contains provisions that stipulate where the rest of the funds should be directed after the officials had been paid. The regulations were especially concerned with fortifications in Liguria. Additionally, the fact that one of the *visitatores*, along with one of the two notaries, was to sit with the *iudex* of the *comune* and record

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 41.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 41.

proceedings that relate to the *compera* is a reflection of the role men occupying this position played in the earlier *popolo* regime in Bologna. The *officium visitatores* was the first of many administrative apparatuses, including the *victualium officium*, that the new government created. Notaries served as the legal witnesses and facilitators of all of them.

In addition to creating an institution to oversee the execution of state spending, the *comperarum* also establishes laws to govern the collection of gabelles on salt as well as on ships entering the Black Sea and the ports of Liguria. The individuals in charge of this activity were to submit records of their accounts weekly and the profits were to be used to reinforce fortifications in Liguria. There were to be officers with scribes to oversee the gabelles on salt in Genoa, the coasts, and districts. Presumably these people were then, in turn, overseen by the *visitatores*. These regulations were clearly created out of a fear of alienating future profits from these gabelles.

Law one hundred fifty-nine is illustrative of Boccanegra's goals. This regulation ensures that the salaries of the consuls and any other officer of the commune should not come from private hands, removing the threat of collusion with wealthy individuals. Instead, it lists the amount of money that various ecclesiastical institutions have invested in the *compera salis* and that the salaries of these officials should come from the profits of these shares. In this way, the *Conferma* limited the political power of ecclesiastical institutions, and the *Comperarum Capituli* limited their fiscal authority by placing their revenues in the hands of the officers of Boccanegra's government.²⁹⁰ The text also has provisions for who was able to buy shares in the *compera* and made sure that there was enough money in the bank for the bank to make regular payments with a list of people who

²⁹⁰ Ibid., I;92–93.

put up money as security.²⁹¹ Interestingly, the individuals overseeing this process are all non-*nobiles*, and, judging by the name Paschalis Fornarius (baker), at least one is a representative of the *arti*.

The ways that the Boccanegra regime used the debt and state finances as a political tool becomes clearer as we proceed through the *Comperarum*. In particular, there are a series of regulations governing the financials of the butchers. As we saw above, several members of the butchers' guild were witnesses of the *Conferma* text. Of the *arte*, they seem to be wielding the most political power. For instance, under the new regime, it was decided that because the butchers worked in a dangerous profession, they should be able to have a pension for four years after they end work.²⁹² The power of butchers' guilds in medieval Europe is well known. Coville's classic study, *Les Cabochiens et l'ordonnance de 1413* revealed the brutality of the "Cabochian terror" under the Parisian butchers led by Simon Caboche.²⁹³ And Philippe Wolff has revealed the active role that the butchers' guild of Toulouse played in the politics of that city.²⁹⁴ Scholars have once again taken up this theme in recent years. In her excellent study of the butchers of Siena, Valentina Constantini points out that the members of this guild not only had access to weapons, namely knives, were also well off given the high price that fresh meat commanded.²⁹⁵ Constantini goes on to point out that between 1250 and 1460, there were forty-six butcher's revolts in Latin Europe.²⁹⁶ Valentini situates the participation of the participation of the Sienese "great

²⁹¹ Ibid., 1:22–26

²⁹² HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 56.

²⁹³ Alfred Coville, *Les Cabochiens et l'ordonnance de 1413* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1888)

²⁹⁴ Philippe Wolff, "Les bouchers de Toulouse du XIIe au XVe siècle," *Annales du Midi* (1953): 375–393.

²⁹⁵ Valentina Constantini, "On a red line across Europe: butchers and rebellions in fourteenth-century Siena," *Social History* 41, no. 1 (Feb., 2016): 72–92.

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 33.

revolt” of 1318 within the context of similar uprisings at nearly the same time in Florence, Ferrara, Bologna, and Venice.²⁹⁷ As we shall see in even greater detail in the following chapters, the butchers of Genoa would go on to play a significant role in the new Genoese political establishment, and the regulations discussed here were established to consolidate the power of the new political order. The laws go on to state that butchers are not allowed to provide the security payments for investments in the debt on behalf of *nobiles*, perhaps preventing collusion between the two groups and breaking apart the *nobilis* establishment.

Finally, we see individual investors, presumably new investors in the debt, wielding political power in regulation ninety-seven. Here, we see it stipulated that shareholders (*participes*, people who have a “part”) should have a voice (*habeant vocem*) in the election of the consuls and scribes of the *compera*.²⁹⁸ While one could see this as merely allowing investors oversight on their assets, it also allowed the officials involved in the *compera* to have access to power. Furthermore, this dissertation suggests that some of the regulations put in the *Regulae Comperarum Capituli* are a formalization of a system already put in place. That is to say that in the past, it was understood that stakeholders would have a say in administrative decisions. But by controlling who could invest in the *compera* and formalizing their relationship to power, the Boccanegra regime institutionalized his new regime’s control of the debt and the state at the same time.

Finally, it should also be noted that the *Regulae Comperarum Capituli* is also explicit about the conduct of notaries. For example, law one hundred ninety-two states that no notary under an official of the city of Genoa is able to validate a document

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 38–40.

²⁹⁸ *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 65.

(*instrumentum*) with information that pertains to activity that they do not see. Law one hundred ninety-five is an extensive discussion about how notaries in the employ of the state should be provided with all the material needed to do their job and that said agents should protect and guard their equipment.²⁹⁹

4.6: Conclusions

The regime of Simone Boccanegra was a bold application of legal traditions, and it was different from the radically popular, but short-lived, Ciompi regime in Florence, the retrenchment of the senatorial class in Venice, or the Visconti seizure of power in Milan. In truth, it combined elements of more popular uprisings with a *signorial* regime. Perhaps the most interesting parallel is near-contemporary Mantua. Ludovico I Gonzaga (1268–1360) seized power from Rinaldo Bonacolsi in 1328 and was elected *capitano del popolo*. Like Boccanegra, he also claimed to be acting as a representative of imperial power as a vicar, but unlike their Genoese contemporary, the Gonzaga family became the quintessential Renaissance despots. The Gonzagas entrenched their power and ruled over the city until the War of Mantuan Succession in the eighteenth century. Boccanegra and his successors in Genoa, on the other hand, continued to vie with the *nobiles*, and no doge was able to seize individual power. This dissertation argues that the assemblies and the body of legislation—developed out of the jurisprudential traditions of medieval Italy—that the *popolo* regime instated, kept the Boccanegras and the new families from becoming

²⁹⁹ Ibid., 115.

Renaissance despots like the Gonzagas. In this way, Genoa, unlike the other cities, carried the jurisprudential tradition of medieval Italy forward more faithfully than the other cities.

Chapter 5: Boccanegra and the early institutionalization of grain distribution at Genoa

5.1: Argument

The final two chapters of this dissertation describe the emergence of grain distribution as an institution of *popolo* politics in medieval Genoa and place it within the context of urban administration. A crucial part of this process was absorbing the functions of the informally constituted state into a more “public” and formalized expression of power. The *nobiles*, it seems, were originally included in this new structure. When he first seized power on the back of a *popolo* uprising in 1339, Boccanegra appears to have sought to rule through consensus, but the *nobiles* had other ideas, and they withdrew into their estates in the countryside as exiles. From their exiled position, they raided Genoese agricultural production and shipping. These efforts eventually culminated with Boccanegra being driven from power, but he returned in 1355 and established the *Officium victualium* a year later as a response to chaos that resulted from the violence the *nobiles* wrought during his absence. The return of the doge marked the beginning of a period of more pronounced *popolo* rule. As we shall see in the next chapter, doges used the system of grain distribution established by Genoa to institutionalize *popolo* government.

5.2: Boccanegra and the *nobilis* establishment until 1345

The decisions that Boccanegra and his followers made after 1339 are interesting to consider because they indicate that while he sought to completely restructure the Genoese *commune*,

he was not necessarily intending to remove the original *nobilis* establishment completely; he seems to have pursued policies aimed at a *concordia ordinum*, a concord of orders, to use a legal parlance that would have been familiar to his contemporaries. The *Conferma* text from the last chapter supports this conclusion. The document is very careful to stipulate that Boccanegra was elected “in a full and general convocation and a full and general *parlamentum* of the men of the city of Genoa and of the suburbs, of as many *nobiles* as *popolo*, gathered in the *Piazza San Lorenzo* for a *parlamentum* called together by horn in the customary way.”³⁰⁰ Here we can see that the Boccanegra regime is careful to articulate that it is enacting its changes through traditional means, but it also describes that the *nobiles* were equally represented. The text goes on to say that:

“ . . . an abundant multitude of the Genoese *popolo*, in the presence of the *nobiles*, Raffaello Doria, knight, and Galeazzo Spinola of Lucallo, [who were] then the captains of the commune and *popolo* of Genoa, and Niccolo de Fentanegio, notary and then abate of the *popolo* elected, as if by divine inspiration, the prominent and distinguished man, the lord Simone Boccanegra, a citizen of Genoa . . . ”³⁰¹

The presence of Raffaello Doria and Galeazzo Spinola, as the *nobilis* representatives of the council of the *popolo*—the late-thirteenth-century institution described in the last chapter—is further evidence that while Boccanegra sought to reduce the authority of the *nobiles*, he could not eliminate their influence altogether. Many of the *nobiles*, however,

³⁰⁰ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 32. “in plena et generali concione, et in pleno et generali parlamento hominum civitatis Ianue et suburbiorum, tam nobelium quam popularium, congregatorum in platea beati Laurentii ad parlamentum more solito congregatum cornu et compagna.”

³⁰¹ Ibid., “ . . . copiosa multitude populi Ianue in presentia nobelium virorum dominorum Raffaelis de Auria militis et Galeoti Spinule de Luculo, tunc capitaneorum comunis et populi Ianue, et domini Nicolai de Fontanegio notarii, tunc abbatis populi, ellegit, quasi divina inspiratione, nobilem et discretum virum dominum Symonem Bucanigram civem Ianue . . . ” *Militis* is translated as knight, but this title probably lacked a military function in the fourteenth century. Rather, it was likely an honorary title based in some sort of ancient military tradition that had largely fallen away.

rejected this consensus and fled the city, seeking safety in their landed estates and conducting violence against the Genoese commune from there.

Although his efforts to establish a consensus government failed, there are clear reasons why Boccanegra attempted to include the *nobiles* rather than exiling or completely removing them from power permanently. First, it is clear that Boccanegra had allies among the many branches of the Grimaldi family at the very least. Recall how after calling for Boccanegra to be made doge, the members of the *popolo*, who had originally gathered to elect an abate, then marched through the city in a clamor before attempting to drag a scion of house Grimaldi out into the street and kill or wound him, but Boccanegra stepped in and put an end to it. Later in his career, the Venetians confiscated the property of all individuals bearing the Grimaldi name in response to raiding conducted by members of this familial clan. Boccanegra had to reassure the doge of Venice that there were many branches of the family, and not all engaged in piracy against *La Serenissima*.³⁰²

Taddeo Pepoli, the near contemporary *popolo* leader of Bologna, is the most obvious parallel to Boccanegra, and a comparison of the two is instructive for understanding the situation in Genoa. Like *La Superba*, *La Grassa*, as the Emilian city is known, was engulfed in factional violence during the early fourteenth century, and a *consiglio del popolo* made Taddeo Pepoli, a jurist, the *signore*, the sole ruler of the city. A comparison of the *Conferma* text to the document investing Pepoli with his authority helps to place the Boccengran regime within a broader context. Indeed, given Bologna's prominence as a center for law, it is not too much of a stretch to suggest that the Pepoli

³⁰² Emily Sohmer-Tai, "Honor Among Thieves: Piracy, Restitution, and Reprisal in Genoa, Venice and the Crown of Catalonia-Aragon, 1339–1417," (Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard, 1996), 173–174.

regime could have been a model for other *popolo* regimes that sought to use the legal theories implicit in the *Ius Comune*. Immediately before the quote about the *parlamentum* above, the *Conferma* states that Boccanegra was invested with his power “for the good state and exaltation of the Genoese people, and of all the cities and of the Genoese commune and of the [eastern and western] Rivas, and for their pacific and tranquil state.”³⁰³ The document that invested Pepoli with power, reproduced in the appendix of Niccolò Rodolico’s history of the Bolognese leader, *Dal comune alla signoria: Saggio sul governo di Taddeo Pepoli*, also speaks in terms of a pacific state. Pepoli was invested with power “for defense and strengthening the pacific state of the commune and people of the city of Bologna and its districts and the guilds of the said people [of Bologna] . . . ”³⁰⁴

Unlike Boccanegra, Pepoli drove his enemies from the city and left behind his reasoning for forcing his enemies to remain in exile, stating that “nothing is sweeter or as delightful for a man than to carry out a vendetta for injuries and other evils inflicted upon him . . . ”³⁰⁵ Pepoli understood that if they remained in the city, they could continue to pursue their violent political ends. Furthermore, as a jurist, Pepoli fully explored the power of notaries to enact legal decisions to render peace. He settled numerous cases of violence and legal malfeasance through notaries, as Shona Kelly Wray has demonstrated.³⁰⁶ The

³⁰³ Ibid., 32. “. . . *ad bonum statum augmentum et exaltacionem populi Ianue, et tocius civitatis et comunis Ianue, riperiarium et districtus, et statum pacificum et trequillum eorundem* . . . ”

³⁰⁴ “Documento numero uno” in *Dal comune alla signoria: Saggio sul governo di Taddeo Pepoli in Bologna*, ed. Niccolò Rodolico, (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1868), 207–209. “*Ad conservationem et fortificationem status pacifici comunis et populli civitatis Bononie eiusque districtus et hominum arcium dicti populli* . . . ”

³⁰⁵ In Niccolò Rodolico, *Dal Comune alla signoria*, 126, “*nihil duleius vel delectabilius est homini sicuti vindictam sumere de iniuriis et aliis malis sibi illatis et etiam, uti dixi*”

³⁰⁶ For a full explication of this, see Shona Kelly Wray, “Instruments of Concord: Making Peace and Settling Disputes through a Notary in the City and Contado of Late Medieval Bologna.”

role of both Boccanegra and Pepoli was to establish *pax* or *concordia* in their cities, not to carry out violent vendettas.

Self-exiled to their lands, the new state of affairs did not sit well with the *nobiles*, and they certainly did not want to lose their grip on power. Indeed, as we saw in the last chapter, when Boccanegra's great-uncle, Guglielmo, seized power, it was only a matter of time before the *nobiles* returned with their Tuscan allies (the Florentine and Luccan Guelphs) and retook the city. The *nobiles* did not begin by marching on the city. Rather, the *nobiles* attempted to assassinate Boccanegra, hiring a citizen of Volterra to kill the doge during the feast of Epiphany, but the attempt failed, and the insurgents focused on engaging in raiding and piracy as methods of resisting the new regime. Even as he tried to rule through consensus, Boccanegra recognized the potential for this change of affairs. As we saw in the last chapter, after he was sworn in as doge in the fall of 1339, one of his main concerns was paying for the maintenance of the fortifications along the coast of the Riviera. Stella's chronicle corroborates this, stating that the *popolo* government seized the fortifications running up and down the coast from Ventimiglia in the west to Lerici in the east.³⁰⁷

Unfortunately, Boccanegra's government was unable to consistently hold these forts because the *nobiles* immediately began to wreak havoc. In 1339, sometime after the November revolt, three *nobilis* families, the Malocelli, the Marini, and the Grimaldi, armed vessels and sailed against the Venetian holdings in Greece, then referred to as "Romania

³⁰⁷ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 132

and Aigipeplagus,” “as pirates” (*pirrate*). At the same time, these *nobiles* sent ships to raid Genoese shipping in the gulf of Liguria.³⁰⁸

By 1341, evidence of the financial pressure of maintaining the war against recalcitrant *nobiles* begins to show up in the historical record. The Genoese imposed a tax on the cities it controlled that amounted to 100,000 Genoese pounds.³⁰⁹ Stella gives no explanation of how this tax was received, but we can only assume that such a measure was poorly received and increased the resentment that the inhabitants of Liguria felt toward Genoese domination. While some of the cities, such as Albenga, remained loyal to Genoa, the *nobiles* continued to find recruits for the galleys that raided shipping to Genoa.

Of the *nobilis* families that threatened Genoa, perhaps the most dangerously situated were the Grimaldi, who held Monaco and had declared themselves the dukes of Monaco in 1341 in direct opposition to the *popolo* rulers of Genoa.³¹⁰ Situated just to the west of Ventimiglia, outside of the control of the city of Genoa, the city served as a stronghold for *nobilis* power during this period. From this city, the *nobiles* could operate independently and equip private armies and navies. This was not new; during the period of *revolutiones*, as Stella termed them, piracy was rampant and spilling into areas outside of Liguria. Frederic Cheyette explored the extensive violence and raiding in the countryside that came about as a result of Genoese factionalism and spilled into Languedoc.³¹¹

Although the Grimaldi—clearly branches of the family that were not allied to Boccanegra—had the most advantageous position in Liguria, and their lands would serve

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 135.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ See Cheyette, “The Sovereign and the Pirates.”

as the launching point for the attack that would drive Boccanegra from power, they were far from the only *nobilis* family in the region to use violence and devastation of agricultural production to achieve their goals. The *nobiles* who established themselves in the countryside inflicted a great deal of devastation there. Marchese Giorgio di Carretto, the Marchese of Finarius, for example, raised an armed force against the community of Albenga in defense of his family's rights in response to the walls they had built around Pogi, to which his wife had a feudal claim. After marching on Albenga, the marquis decided to lay waste to the land, " . . . burning trees, devastating vines and fields all the way up to the port of Albenga and placed himself in opposition to the city."³¹² It should be noted that the area around Albenga is one of the largest expanses of flat land in Liguria and thus an invaluable stretch of agricultural land. This would have been a blow. Even if the destruction of these crops did not lead directly to a subsistence crisis, we can assume that the news of this attack would have alarmed the inhabitants of Genoa who assumed the harvest from Albenga could help feed them. The fear that accompanied this violence probably caused the inhabitants of Genoa to desire stability. Boccanegra's establishment of the *victualium* shortly after his return was in response to this fear.

The series of events that eventually led to Boccanegra's removal from power began with even more Grimaldi raiding. Luciano di Grimaldi attacked a ship owned by Daniello Cibo, which was returning from Flanders, laden with cloth.³¹³ To make matters worse, the Genoese Crimean colony at Caffa faced an attack by the local Kipchak khan.³¹⁴ In the midst

³¹² Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 135.

³¹³ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 138. The records of another office, the *officium robarie* (see below 195), which record instances of piracy in the Gulf of Liguria indicate that textiles were among the most common items taken as booty by pirates.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 139.

of this chaos, the Genoese once again equipped six galleys to fight individuals who were “rebels against their regime and pirates.”³¹⁵ They attempted to take Monaco, a hotbed of Grimaldi piracy, but the assault was turned back and many on the Genoese side were killed. Perhaps encouraged by the Genoese failure, in 1344, a coalition of powerful families turned their harassment into a concerted response to *popolo* power. The Grimaldi, Spinola, de Auria, and Flisco gathered together a combined force of footmen and cavalry and descended on the city. Boccanegra realized that he could not resist this force and fled to Pisa.³¹⁶

Giovanni Villani, who was a contemporary of these events, provides information that has not been fully unpacked. He states that Boccanegra brought nine hundred gold florins along with his family and clan (*tutta sua famiglia e parenti*) to Pisa.³¹⁷ This gold is unmentioned by Stella, writing many years later, but Villani was a contemporary of these events and the details he provides about this and other events demonstrate that he had a remarkable degree of access to information from throughout the Mediterranean and Italy, and his account tends to be generally believable. Peter Spufford’s *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* provides some context for this number. This helpful work only aims at constructing rough estimates of conversion because the inherent imprecision of using medieval data, which is often based on incomplete information. That said, his work provides some sort of a baseline understanding for this number. According to Spufford, between 1341 and 1345, a single gold florin was worth about 110 Genoese solidi. Thus,

³¹⁵ Ibid.

³¹⁶ Ibid, 140–141

³¹⁷ Giovanni Villani, 13.38, (pg. 1499).

Boccanegra took with him 99,000 Genoese *soldi*.³¹⁸ At 20 solidi per Genoese pound, Boccanegra absconded with about 4,950 Genoese pounds. This is a significant amount of money. It is likely that he was taking the money from the treasury. While it was prudent for someone in Boccanegra's situation to take any money with him, we should recall how in the *Rerum Capitularum Capituli*, there is a list of people who are the *fideiussores*, individuals who kept money in the treasury to make payments if the salt tax fell through as fiduciaries. This sum of money that Boccanegra took is well over four times the number of the highest number of Genoese pounds held in fiduciary according to the *Capitularum Capituli*.

That Boccanegra fled to Pisa should also be noted. The first doge of Genoa had previously signed a treaty with Pisa in 1341, which was in stark contrast with the last agreement signed between Genoa and the Tuscan port city.³¹⁹ In 1288, in the aftermath of the Battle of La Meloria, the Genoese imposed harsh terms, which included taking parts of Corsica and Sardinia away from Pisa. Additionally, Genoa imposed reparations on Pisa, forcing them to pay for all wartime expenses.³²⁰ Boccanegra's peace with Pisa not only overturned years of bellicose *nobilis* policy toward the old rival, but it also created a new ally to suppress *nobilis* violence. The treaty promises a number of provisions of interest here. In particular, it commands that both parties should come to each other's aid in the event of war. Importantly, they also agreed to work together to keep the sea between them free from pirates. Perhaps the elder Boccanegra in the late thirteenth century could have

³¹⁸ Peter Spufford, *Handbook of Medieval Exchange* (London: Offices of the Royal Historical Society, 1986), 65

³¹⁹ For the 1342 treaty, see HPM 9, *Liber Iurium II*, 524.

³²⁰ HPM 7, *Liber Iurium I*, 127–164.

returned to power instead of fleeing to France if he had a strong local ally from whose territory he could have bided his time.

Finally, we should consider how all of the violence perpetrated by the *nobiles* would have been hard felt by the poorer members of the *popolo*. Historians are careful to specify that when they discuss the “popular” or *popolo* factions in medieval Italian politics, they are referring only to those members of the non-noble orders that were wealthy enough to pose a threat to traditional ruling classes. In the face of *nobilis* opposition in the countryside and their recruitment of mariners from the Riviera to crew their piratical vessels, Boccanegra would have relied on the *capite censi* of Genoa to maintain his position and crew the flotillas he sent out to counter *nobilis* piracy. The chaos caused by the *nobiles* and their blatant attack on agricultural production would have made their position tenuous. When Boccanegra returned in 1355, he ruled more on the side of the *popolo*, and he likely found support because of *nobilis* behavior while they were out of power and their mismanagement of the city during their return.

5.3: The problems of the *nobilis* interregnum—the Plague

The return of the *nobiles* did not usher in good times for Genoa. The problems that the returning exiles brought with them contributed further to the unrest and fear of the Genoese populace that likely led to the establishment of the *victualium* in 1356 upon Boccanegra’s return.³²¹ Unfortunately, we do not have the earliest registers of the *victualium* because they were lost during the transfer of the contents of the *Archivio di Stato* to its current

³²¹ Polonio, *Amministrazione*, 141.

location to protect them from an earthquake. While the *nobiles* entered into ill-advised foreign wars, they are not entirely to blame for everything that went wrong. The Black Death was introduced to Europe at the harbor of Messina on Genoese galleys in 1347. The demographic effects were catastrophic, as discussed in chapter 1. But it is worth also considering the psychological aftershocks of the Plague, as it must have created a feeling of what could be described as existential dread, which, in turn, contributed to the feelings of unrest and uncertainty that Boccanegra attempted to ameliorate with the institution of the *victualium*. To a certain extent, it is impossible to understand the effect that a catastrophe such as this would have had on the population that experienced it. Stella, our main narrative source, was probably born two to three generations after the plague. He remarks that he attended the debates over whether or not Genoa should submit to the king of France in the late 1380s and early 1390s, but wrote his work in the fifteenth century, suggesting that he would have been born after the plague's initial arrival at Genoa in 1348. He could not adequately explain the initial terror the disease would have induced without experiencing the first wave himself. For that year he writes:

“In Genoa and in all the territory around it, even throughout all Italy there was the greatest epidemic, and in fact, as a result of that morbid pestilence, the entire population of Italy was profoundly diminished with quick ruin. Until today, as far as I know, no epidemics have approached the great death that is said to have been in this [1348] year by the people [presumably those who lived through the plague].³²²

On this topic, Villani, our contemporary observer, provides a characteristically detailed account, demonstrating an impressive knowledge of the extent of the plague.

³²² Ibid., 150. “*Ianue et in toto eius territorio sibi confine, in universa quoque Italia, epidemia maxima hominumque decessus fuit ; ex eo namque morbo pestifero velocique interitu Italie populi diminuti sunt valde, quapropter usque hodie etsi alie supervenerint epidemie, huius anni a plebe magna mortalita dicta est.*”

Villani reports that it had ravaged much of the Middle East as far as Mesopotamia. He reports that of eight Genoese galleys that had departed for the Black Sea, only four survived. Most of the sailors had died and those that made it back died shortly thereafter.³²³ Villani goes on to describe how most of the cities struck by the Plague were emptied of people before supposedly succumbing to the plague himself in 1348. The account of Gabriele de Mussi, a notary from Piacenza, corroborates Villani's description of events. He reports that disease arrived on ships arriving from Caffa, which came first to Messina and later to his city of Piacenza, which is located on the other side of the Apennine mountains from Genoa in Emilia-Romagna.³²⁴ After Giovanni Villani's death, his brother, Matteo, continued the work. He reports that 60% of the Florentine population perished in the plague. Interestingly, he seems to grasp that he was living through an event of major significance, invoking Noah and historical plagues from the Roman empire, describing the death as "unheard of" (*inaudita*).³²⁵ Placing current events in the same context as these catastrophes is suggestive of the effect of this pandemic on the population. Perhaps the most revealing description of the plague's arrival in Italy comes from one of Petrarch's personal letters. In a letter to the Flemish Benedictine monk and music theorist, Lodewijk Heyligen, whom he had met at the court of the Avignon popes, Petrarch writes:

Dear brother, if only I had never been born, or died before this! But if I am now compelled to long for death, what do you think I will say if I reach advanced old

³²³ Villani, *Cronica*, 13.84.

³²⁴ A.G. Tononi published an edited version of Gabriele de Mussi's text that can be found in, A.G. Tononi, "La Peste dell'anno 1348," *Giornale Ligustico de Archeologia: Storia e Letteratura* 11 (1884): 139–152. Because this source is appended to the article, this reference can be found listed among the secondary sources in the bibliography.

³²⁵ Matteo Villani, *Cronica di Matteo Villani, a miglior lezione ridotta coll' aiuto de' testi a penna*, vol. 1, ed. Ignazio Moutier (Florence: Il Magheri, 1825), 1.1 (pg. 3–4).

age? If only I might not reach it; but I fear I am approaching it not so much to live longer, but to spend longer dying.³²⁶

While the Black Death clearly caused people living through it to experience some form of existential dread, its effects on subsistence networks are less clear. While the epidemic would have meant fewer mouths to feed, it would have also placed a strain on local agricultural production. The Plague affected agriculturalists as well as city-dwellers. Despite this potential strain, David Abulafia has also suggested that the Plague arrived when systems of exchange were firmly established and would not have made cities any more or less reliant on local production. Thus, while the Plague did not necessarily create a subsistence crisis that immediately led to the creation of the *victualium* whose records were contained in the now-lost first registers, it created a sense of dread that should not be ignored when considering the rationale of Boccanegra upon his return in 1355. The rhetoric surrounding grain, which will be developed in the next chapter, aimed at creating stability, which the plague shattered.

5.4: Problems of the *nobilis* interregnum—wars in the Mediterranean

While it is impossible to blame the *nobiles* for the effects of the plague, their actions in the wider Mediterranean world damaged the city, its access to grain, and its overseas ambitions. Perhaps Genoa's enemies sensed weakness, and they attacked Genoese interests in the wider Mediterranean. The city entered into a third war with the Venetians, the War

³²⁶ Petrarcha, *Selected Letters*, vol. 1, 76–78. “*Utinam, frater, aut numquam natus aut prius extinctus forem! Quodsi nunc optare cogor, quid dicturum putas si ad extremam secetutem venero? Ad quam otinam non venire; sed veniam, timeo, non ut diutius vivam, sed ut diu moriar.*”

of the Straits (1350–1355), after a Venetian attack on Genoese shipping. Unlike past conflicts between the two cities, Venice had strong allies. Both the Byzantine Empire and the Kingdom of Aragon had developed an increasingly tense relationship with Genoa over the course of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

The Genoese had been allies of the Byzantine Empire since they helped to restore the exiled Paleaologan dynasty in 1261. But Genoese support came at a high price. After the tragedy of the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople, the emperors, who found themselves in an extremely weakened position, quickly began to resent the power that the Ligurian republic wielded in the Black Sea. In order to secure Genoese aid, the Byzantines granted the city a colony at Galata on the northern shore of the Golden Horn and the right to assess tariffs on grain products leaving the Black Sea. But Genoa had taken advantage of their alliance and forced Constantinople to become reliant on the Genoese for grain shipments from their Black Sea colonies, especially Caffa. Furthermore, the Genoese became the *de facto* Byzantine navy because the emperors needed to devote resources to the defense of the Anatolian frontier.³²⁷ The resentment grew, and a brief Genoese-Byzantine war broke out from 1347–1349. It is illustrative of the Byzantine state of affairs that the empire was unable to defeat the Genoese who were racked with internal turmoil themselves. Although Byzantium was unable to rid itself from Genoese influence, the empire was only too happy to aid Venice when war broke out between the two Italian cities in 1350.³²⁸

³²⁷ George Ostrogorsky, *History of the Byzantine State*, trans. Joan Hussey (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1957), 404.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, 471. Interestingly, Stella makes no mention of this conflict, which supposedly ended with the destruction of the entire reconstructed Byzantine fleet. Ostrogorsky, however, summarizes the Greek sources.

The Venetians had an even more powerful ally: the Crown of Aragon, which entered the war in 1351. The Iberian kingdom entered into a protracted struggle with Genoa for influence over the western Mediterranean basin as they were beginning to realize their ambitions there. During second half of the thirteenth century through the fourteenth, the kings of Aragon pursued an ambitious campaign of territorial expansion in both the Iberian peninsula and the islands of the western Mediterranean basin. The kingdom came into direct conflict with Genoa during The War of Sicilian Vespers (1282–1302), which marked Aragon's entrance as a major player in the Mediterranean. It had far-reaching ramifications that stretch into the modern world. Most important for our purposes is the expansion of Aragonese authority over Sicily and Sardinia.

The roots of the war can be found in the death of Frederick II in 1250. After his death, he bequeathed his major titles, namely the Kingdom of Sicily and his German lands, to his elder legitimate son, Conrad, (king of Sicily from 1250–1254). Conrad pressed his claim and invaded Italy in 1252. Pope Innocent IV, formerly Sinibaldo Fieschi, was determined to break the unity of the Hohenstaufen lands in Germany and the Kingdom of Sicily. After Innocent failed to make Conrad's half-brother, Henry, king of Sicily, the two sides prepared for war, but Conrad fell ill and died in 1254 and his son two-year-old son, Conrad II, or Conradin as he is commonly known, succeeded him as king of Sicily and as the nominal king of Jerusalem. In reality, Conrad I's successors squabbled over who should take over, and the locals were uninterested in a child ruler they had never met. Innocent then decided that he could dispense with the kingdom as he saw fit, and he entered into an agreement with Conrad I's half-brother, Manfred. The two agreed that the kingdom should fall to papal control, at least until Conradin reached his majority, and Manfred was to have

his lands in the Kingdom of Sicily confirmed. But Manfred saw Innocent IV was duplicitous—the pope had sent his nephew to collect oaths of allegiance to the pope in the kingdom that made no mention of either Conradin or Manfred—and he entered into open conflict with the papacy on behalf of his nephew, Conradin. He was able to force the kingdom to submit by 1257 and was declared king of Sicily outright in 1258. During this period, Innocent died, and his successors Alexander IV and Urban IV continued the struggle to gain control of the Kingdom of Sicily, calling a crusade against Manfred in 1255. Although nothing came of this initially, the popes looked for a foreign prince to take over the kingdom. Urban enlisted the aid of the ambitious brother of the king of France, Charles of Anjou, who, after much back and forth when the Pope offered the title to other possible claimants, accepted the title of King of Sicily from the pope in 1263, and, after protracted negotiations, he invaded Italy in 1265, defeating Manfred at the Battle of Benevento the following year, where Manfred died. At this point Charles was in control of all of southern Italy.

Then Conradin, who had been living as the Duke of Swabia since 1262, invaded Italy in 1267 with the support of Castile. Conradin found support in northern Italy, entering Rome in 1268 after his fleet defeated that of Charles of Anjou. After consolidating his power, he met Charles at the Battle of Tagliacozzo in August. The battle did not go well for the young prince, and he fled the field and hid in Rome before attempting to sail for Sicily. At this point he was arrested and handed over to Charles. Conradin was executed in October of 1268.³²⁹

³²⁹ For more details on this summary, see Steven Runciman, *The Sicilian Vespers: a history of the Mediterranean world in the later thirteenth century* (New York: Penguin, 1960), esp. 40–53 and 81–133.

Charles's rule in Italy was not welcomed. The new King of Sicily had designs on a crusade against the Byzantines, and he tried to force his Italian subjects to pay for the war. The people of Sicily were disinclined to pay for the new fleet and expedition, and they resented the French occupation of the kingdom. Tensions were inflamed on Easter Sunday 1282 in Palermo, when a French nobleman groped a married Sicilian woman outside the Church of the Vespers, and her husband drew a knife and killed the offending knight. The rest of the Sicilians turned on the Frenchmen in the square and killed them all.³³⁰ The uprising spread and the subjects of Sicily called for the King of Aragon to be their king, who had claim to the title through Frederick II's first wife, Constance. The king of Aragon at the time was James II (r. 1291–1327); he decided to press the claim and entered the war.

When the war began, the papacy was strongly on the side of Anjou, and the Genoese, then aligned with the papacy, also chose to back Charles. Charles also had the backing of the current pope, Martin IV (r. 1281–1285), a Frenchman with strong biases in that direction. But eventually, after years of violent warfare, a new pope came to occupy the throne of Saint Peter, Pope Nicholas IV (r. 1288–1292). Unlike Martin IV, Nicholas was not completely in Anjou's pocket; but rather, he sought to bring peace to the southern half of the Italian peninsula. Nicholas attempted to negotiate an agreement that would see Charles of Anjou confirmed as ruler of Sicily while Aragon would receive the right to rule Sardinia in exchange for giving up the claim to Sicily.³³¹ This agreement resulted in a brief peace with these terms, but there was a resumption of hostilities and the war raged on until

³³⁰ There are several valuable chronicles of the War of Sicilian Vespers, and how the outbreak of the conflict happened is under debate. The above narrative relies on Bartholomeus de Neocastro, *Historia Sicula*, ed. Giosue Carducci and V. Fiorini, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores Nuova Edizione 3.3* (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1922), 10–12.

³³¹ Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 365. (CLXIII).

1302 when the kingdom of Sicily was divided in two, with Aragon gaining control of the island of Sicily. The grant of Sardinia to the Aragonese is crucial to understanding the enmity between Genoa and the Iberian kingdom.

The Genoese lost their claim to hegemony over Sardinia as a result of the War of Sicilian Vespers. Although the Ligurian city never had any sort of claim that would be universally recognized as legitimate, the city had exerted a considerable influence over the island for many years by the outbreak of the Vespers. For much of the Middle Ages, beginning with the complete collapse of Byzantine authority in Corsica and Sardinia in the ninth century, the island of Sardinia was divided into independent *giudicati* or judgeships and the government was at least nominally overseen by judges (*judike*), these were a holdover from the old Roman administrative structure.³³² These rulers were not actual judges in a traditional sense. Rather, they governed as petty monarchs. As both Genoa and Pisa attempted to assert themselves as Mediterranean powers in the twelfth century, the two cities vied with each other to control Sardinia and its rich grain harvests.³³³ The *nobilis* government of Genoa integrated Sardinia into their hegemony using their traditional tools, exerting the authority of the Genoese archbishopric and accruing land and developing patronage networks on the island. To be sure, this was an exploitative relationship, one that the Genoese were unhappy to give up.

The Aragonese pressed their claim and invaded Sardinia in 1323 under Alfonso IV and took over the island.³³⁴ The *nobiles* were unable to resist this invasion because they

³³² Marco Tangheroni, "Sardinia and Corsica from the mid-twelfth to early fourteenth century," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History, vol. 5: 1198–1300*, ed. David Abulafia, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 447–457.

³³³ Abulafia, *The Great Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 274.

³³⁴ Muntaner, *Chronicle*, 543–544. (CLXI)

were too busy fighting each other to mount a full-scale resistance. It would have made sense for the *popolo* government not to contest the Aragonese invasion of the island when it came to power sixteen years later for multiple reasons. First, Sardinia would have been a significant part of the *nobilis* power base. Not only did the archbishopric of Genoa exert a degree of authority over the ecclesiastical structures on the islands as we discussed in chapter 3, but the *nobilis* families administered significant territories on the island, including the incredibly powerful Doria family, which had holdings around Sassari.³³⁵ So, while it is possible that elements of the *popolo* government may have resented the loss of Genoese influence over Sardinia, the consensus likely would have recognized that continuing to cultivate a positive relationship with the Kingdom of Aragon and reduce the power of the *nobiles* would have been more advantageous to the pro-*popolo* politicians.

It is against this diplomatic backdrop that the War of the Straits, the third Genoese-Venetian war, broke out in 1350. Ships from the two republics increasingly found themselves in conflict with each other during the fourteenth century and full-scale war was probably inevitable and eventually erupted when the Venetians attacked a Genoese merchant flotilla destined for Chios.³³⁶ In 1350, Peter IV received envoys from both Venice and Genoa who presented their cases for which side Aragon should take in the conflict. Aragon had clear reasons for entering the battle given their conflicts with Genoa outlined above. There is also intriguing evidence of how foreign actors could be confused with the fractious internal politics of Genoa in the *Chronicle* of Peter III (of Catalonia, IV of

³³⁵ John Law, "The Italian North," in *The New Cambridge Medieval History Volume 6: 1300–1415*, ed. Michael Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 419.

³³⁶ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 150–151.

Aragon).³³⁷ The *Chronicle* was a collaborative text undertaken by court officials under the close supervision of Peter himself. As such, it is logical that we can take the text as indicative of the king's view of Mediterranean politics and the relationship between Genoa and Aragon. The *Chronicle* states that the king's council was split between those who favored aiding the Venetians and those that did not. Peter IV's final decision to support Venice rested on what he saw as a betrayal on the part of the Genoese because he saw Boccanegra as an ally.

Like his friendly treatment of Pisa in 1340 (see chapter 4), there is evidence to suggest that Boccanegra attempted to change the Genoese relationship with Aragon, and Peter considered the Ligurian city an ally. Despite hostilities in the late thirteenth century, Boccanegra sent his own brother to serve the king of Castile who fought with the Aragonese against the invasion of the "King of Morocco," indirectly allying the Boccanegras with the Aragonese, at least on a short-term basis.³³⁸ One should not be surprised if the Crown of Aragon considered Genoa an ally at that point. But when the *nobiles* returned to power in 1345, they did not carry on friendly relations with the Aragon. After the *nobilis* restoration, the Doria, owners of significant landed holdings in Sardinia, emerged once again as one of the leading families of Genoa; the choice of Paganino Doria as commander of the siege of the Venetian island holding of Negroponte during the course of the war is evidence of their return to prominence. The Doria thus found themselves in a position to attempt to take back their Sardinian lands. In addition to instigating a fight with

³³⁷ Peter III of Catalonia, *Chronicle*, 452. Somewhat confusingly, Peter IV is referred to as Peter III in this chronicle. When Aragon was unified in the 11th century, there had already been a Peter I of Aragon but not of Catalonia. Thus, Peter is Peter IV of Aragon and III of Catalonia. This dissertation refers to him by his Aragonese title as that is his paramount title.

³³⁸ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 133.

the Venetians and entering into a war with the Byzantines, the Doria rose up and fomented a rebellion in their lands around Sassari. It was this action, according to the *Chronicle* of Peter IV, which drove the Aragonese king to enter the war against the Genoese. Confused with the constant political turmoil in Liguria, Peter viewed the actions of the Doria as representative of the entire city and believed that all of the Genoese were betrayers and entered the war on behalf of the Venetians.³³⁹

By the time Aragon entered the war, the Genoese and Venetians had already opened hostilities. The first major engagement of war after the raids on shipping discussed above occurred in September of 1350 when twenty Venetian galleys attacked fourteen Genoese under the command of Nicolaus de Magnerri. Nicolaus was tasked with defending merchants operating in the eastern Mediterranean. Unfortunately for him, he lost the encounter, and ten of the ships were captured. In response, on 9 October, the *nobilis* governor of the island of Chios attacked the Venetian island colony at Negroponte, on the island of Euboea, and went on to capture twenty-three Venetian galleys later that month.³⁴⁰

But these skirmishes were the prelude to an even larger battle. In 1352, the Genoese sent a large fleet against a combined force of Byzantines, Venetians, and Aragonese. Paganino Doria led forty ships against Genoa's combined enemies. Stella reports that the Genoese came out victorious in this altercation as well. The chronicler claims that the Genoese captured more than 4,000 men after this battle.³⁴¹ Despite this setback, the Venetians and Aragonese, united by the strength of their hatred of the Genoese, were able

³³⁹ Peter III, *Chronicle*, 452.

³⁴⁰ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 150–151.

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 151–152

to arm a further sixty galleys to send against their Ligurian rival.³⁴² The Genoese fleet, led by Antonius di Grimaldi, was roundly defeated and lost a total of twenty-one galleys with all of their crewmen. This individual battle is illustrative of the way that the large kingdoms of Latin Christendom were overtaking the abilities of the Italian city-states to wage war. The Crown of Aragon, along with Venice, lost a significant amount of manpower in the early in the wars. Although the Byzantines, locked in the precipitous decline that began with the fourth crusade, were forced to withdraw from the war, the other two forged on. Venice was always a larger city (as discussed in chapter 2) and had holdings in Dalmatia and the Veneto that provided many more men than even the “extended port” of Liguria could provide. And Aragon, of course, had huge territories in Iberia from which they drew manpower. The two allies were able to overwhelm Genoa and absorb the losses incurred by Paganino. Eventually, The citizens of Genoa, however, eventually found their backs against the wall. Their fleet was destroyed, and they were cut off from their holdings in the eastern Mediterranean.

Shortly after the loss of their fleet, the *nobiles* regime did the unthinkable, they submitted the city to the authority of the Bishop of Milan. In his history of Venice, Norwich suggests that the reason for this was grain shortages.³⁴³ With Venice and Aragon dominating in the eastern Mediterranean, the Ottomans creating instability around the Black Sea, and Sardinia out of Genoese hands, the city needed a powerful ally to help import grain and stabilize the city. Leveraging another major Paganino Doria naval victory, Bishop Visconti and his powerful family, the Dukes of Milan, were able to broker a truce

³⁴² Ibid., 152. “*Dum ardens otium Ianuenses teneret, Catalanos et Venetos,-erant enim Catalani et Veneti contra Ianuenses concords,-armate sunt Ianue sexaginta galee.*”

³⁴³ John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Penguin, 1977), 572–573.

and would have been able to ensure that Genoa was well supplied with grain from Lombardy. That said, the Genoese, who valued their *libertas*—freedom from external rule—above all else resented Milanese rule.

The Genoese chafed under the rule of the Visconti, even the *nobiles*. There were uprisings throughout Liguria; the region could only remain stable for so long. In November 1356, fourteen nobles and the entire population (*totus populus*) took up arms, but they were not unified. Seemingly out of nowhere (Stella give no indication of his return), Boccanegra showed up in the neighborhood of the leather merchants and led his supporters to the piazza of the Palazzo Publico; he was made doge the next day.³⁴⁴

5.5: The return of Boccanegra

It is interesting that the *nobiles* kept the new governmental structure during brief their return to power. Perhaps they liked the idea of authority resting in one man's hands, as long as that man was from the *nobilis* order. Thus, Boccanegra did not need to reinstitute the “dogate” that he had created. But he had to deal with a number of problems that faced the city after the period of *nobilis* rule. First, while peace with the Venetians had been established, the Aragonese fought on, and the doge imposed a forced loan on the wealthy worth 50,000 Genoese pounds to fight the Iberian enemy.³⁴⁵ These efforts would have been largely damage control. The city had lost access to large portions of the eastern Mediterranean and most of their holdings in Sardinia. Furthermore, Milan, after being

³⁴⁴ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 155.

³⁴⁵ Gioffre, *Il debito pubblico Genovese*, 188.

driven out of Liguria, still had designs on the city. The two cities would eventually come to an agreement that saw some of the fortresses on the Ligurian border returned to the city after the death of Boccanegra, but Genoa had to pay reparations totaling 300,000 florins to the Milanese, which we shall address in the next chapter.³⁴⁶

The grain purchases that would have been recorded in the earliest *victualium* registers, which are now lost, likely came from the new *compera* he levied. Some of that money had to furnish the debt to Milan, but it would have paid for other things as well. The fact that the *nobiles* had wasted money on ships and men in the War of the Straits would have been dismaying to the population. These losses, combined with the trauma of the plague, would have made life feel unstable. It is likely that these people would have demanded some sort of support from Boccanegra if the doge wanted their political backing.

If we compare the *popolo* response to a period of similar chaos from earlier in the century in 1319, we can understand why Boccanegra felt the need to institute state grain distribution to secure the support of the *popolo*, who, if Norwich is to be belied, faced shortages. Stella begins his description of 1319 by describing a conflict between the Guelphs and Ghibellines that included violent conflict in the countryside, placing outlying settlements under siege, coupled with naval encounters. This state of affairs was familiar to the *popolo* by Boccanegra's day, and this chaos is remarkably similar to the sort of violence that the *nobiles* perpetrated during the Boccanegra's first reign. In 1319, the *popolo* responded by taking to the streets and hurling rocks at the house of one of the leading citizens. In response, the government sent both galleys and individuals on foot to search for food. Unfortunately, They were turned back from Nice, Marseille, and other

³⁴⁶ HPM 9, *Liber Iurium*, 745.

places in Provence. But on 7 October, ten galleys sent out by members of the Guelph *mercantes* returned from a voyage from Constantinople, laden with provisions that totaled eighty *mina* of grain.³⁴⁷

Boccanegra probably wanted to avoid this state of affairs, and this is how we should understand the records of the *victualium*. Like the events surrounding the *popolo* uprising for grain in 1319, when Boccanegra returned, the inhabitants of Genoa had endured long-term political violence, which was exacerbated by plague and costly foreign wars. The *victualium* was the institutional response to the concerns of the *popolo*. Whereas in the past, the hungry Genoese had to hurl rocks at the homes of the *nobiles*, now they had a leader who was restructuring the fiscal apparatus of the state to their advantage. The *victualium* was part of a concerted effort to spend state-debt funds on programs that benefitted the populace rather than the violent, fractious elites. Boccanegra and his successors would establish other *officia* to pay for state expenses, but the *victualium* was the first after Boccanegra's return, and that is important.

Unfortunately, because of an earthquake, we do not have numbers for the introduction of the *victualium* in 1356, nor do we have information for the provenance of the grain that the office purchased. Our first *victualium* records come from 1373 and we have further records from 1384 and 1385. Between 1356 and 1373, the office was set in motion twice, in 1360 and 1361, for which we do not have extant data. The remainder of Boccanegra's reign was similar to the experience of his earlier reign. There was a great deal of internal factional turmoil with continued *nobilis* resistance from Monaco and a

³⁴⁷ For description of these conflicts, see Stella, *Annales Genuenses* 88–90; for the discussion of the grain, see 91–92.

failure to institute *popolo* rule in the countryside. We do not, however, have a great deal of information for the years of 1360 and 1361 in Genoa. For the entry for the year 1360, Stella states that he saw nothing written down or related by anyone concerning that year.³⁴⁸ For 1361, however, Stella states that a “pestiferous sickness” reigned in the city and many people died, perhaps causing enough alarm for calls for the *victualium* to be set in motion once again.³⁴⁹ We do, however, have some indication that Genoa continued to be involved in external conflicts during the crisis. Matteo Villani, continuing the *Cronica Nuova* after the death of his brother, includes a good deal of information. Much of his discussion of the 1360’s concerns the conflict between Florence and Pisa, which culminated in the Battle of Cascina. The Genoese, both Boccanegra and his *nobilis* enemies, participated in this conflict. The doge honored his alliance with Pisa and supported that city after living in exile there.³⁵⁰ Indeed, Ricceri Grimaldi, a representative of the family friendly with Boccanegra, found himself captured by the Florentine commander, John Hawkwood, while fighting on behalf of the Pisans.

Backed by their Florentine allies, the *nobiles* once again raided Genoese lands. Perino Grimaldi, an enemy of Boccanegra, wrought havoc throughout the Riviera on behalf of the Florentines.³⁵¹ Villani points out that because Boccanegra had found refuge in Pisa during his exile, he brought Genoa into the conflict and fought on behalf of that city.³⁵² This sort of conflict would have caused the entire Tyrrhenian coast to descend into chaos.

³⁴⁸ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 156. “*Memoranda per neminem scripta vidi, nec sensi relata per aliquem.*”

³⁴⁹ Ibid., “*Regnavit Ianue egritudo pestifera, epidemia scilicet, hominumque decensus; hominum nempe interiit multitudo.*”

³⁵⁰ Unfortunately, we have no knowledge of the sum of money that Boccanegra took with him to Pisa according to Giovanni Villani.

³⁵¹ Giovanni Villani, *Cronica*, 11.24.

³⁵² Ibid.

All of this conflict led to unrest within the Genoa, and it appears that Boccanegra was beginning to lose the widespread support of the *popolo*. In his entry for 1362, Stella reports that many powerful members of the *popolo* had become jealous of Boccanegra.³⁵³ At the same time, *nobiles* in the western Riviera were beginning to foment another uprising against the doge's rule. This unrest was probably manifested during the previous years, and combined with the return of the plague, it likely caused Boccanegra to yet again set the *victualium* in motion in 1360 and 1361. Indeed, Niccolo de Caneto, a representative of the Guelph *popolo*—a faction that Stella fails to describe in any detail—and Leonardo di Montaldo, a leader of the Ghibelline *popolo* and future doge, rallied to his support.

Unfortunately, Boccanegra was unable to see if his efforts would bear fruit because he died in 1363. Stella suggests that Boccanegra was poisoned. In that year, King Peter of Cyprus (r. 1358–1369) visited Genoa during his trip to Europe when he had the pope confirm his title and sought support for a new crusade. According to the chronicler, Pietro Malocello invited the king to dine with him in his country house in Sturla, a region to the east that had now been enveloped by the expansion of Genoa. King Peter accepted the invitation and brought Boccanegra with him. Somebody poisoned the doge at this banquet, and he fell ill later that evening and died. Hearing of Boccanegra's sickness, an armed crowd marched on the ducal palace and demanded to see the body of their leader.³⁵⁴ Petti Balbi rejects Stella's story that Boccanegra was poisoned, citing the fact that the 1363 code of laws passed by his successor mention his many sicknesses.³⁵⁵ Regardless of the reasons for Boccanegra's death, his successor, Gabriele Adorno, was quickly elected.

³⁵³ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 157.

³⁵⁴ Ibid., 157.

³⁵⁵ Petti Balbi, *Simon Boccanegra*, 42

5.6: Conclusion

The *nobilis* interregnum created many new problems for Genoa. These problems opened the door for the intensification of *popolo* authority in the city. And although neither Boccanegra nor Adorno could solve the problems Genoa faced, the careers of both are instructive toward a better understanding of the continued institutionalization of *popolo* politics and the place of subsistence in politics. Examples from Samuel Cohn's excellent work on late-medieval urban revolts, *Lust for Liberty*, support the idea that in Italy, grain distribution had overtly political goals rather than a simple attempt to fulfill the subsistence needs of the community. For example, Cohn cites the example of the Ciompi in Florence distributing grain to supporters.³⁵⁶ In 1371, Sienese wool workers contrived to redistribute grain to the poorest inhabitants of the city.³⁵⁷ Lastly, Cohn argues that grain riots that came about from starvation rarely precipitated major political change. Authorities were usually compassionate and simply gave food to the starving masses. But grain, and access to it, could have political ramifications even when the need was not dire. Citing an uprising from Florence in 1368, Cohn describes how a crowd of five hundred approached Florence's grain market and began to grab sacks of grain, "not for their own consumption, but to dump on the doorsteps of their rulers. Theirs were acts of revolutionary theater."³⁵⁸ As the crowd did this, they chanted along the way "Long live the people."³⁵⁹ This moment is reminiscent

³⁵⁶ Samuel K. Cohn, *Lust for Liberty*, 61–62.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 68.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 72.

³⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

of the actions of the Genoese *popolo* in 1319 and what Boccanegra was trying to avoid with the establishment of the *victualium* in 1356. This chapter has demonstrated that Boccanegra recognized the utility of grain as a tool to rally the masses in times of chaos. As we shall see in the next chapter, the doge's successors continued to develop this new style of governance, and instituted grain distribution as a means of rallying support.

Chapter 6: The records of the *victualium* and the Ghibelline *popolo*

6.1: Argument

This chapter demonstrates how the institutionalization of state grain distribution in medieval Genoa sheds light on three processes. First, it illustrates the institutionalization of *popolo* authority in politics. Overall, it seems that the *popolo* leaders were attempting to formalize the structures of power in Genoa and bring them into the public eye. If we recall chapter 3, the structures of power in medieval Genoa entrenched the existing political class because they were informal. For the first time, laws governing the *compere* were put in writing. This created transparency, which was perhaps a step toward stability. After his death, Boccanegra's *popolo* successors fractured into new rivalries, and the old Guelph-Ghibelline rivalry became important once again. During this period, grain distribution became an institution of the Ghibelline *popolo*. Especially important among this group were the members of the *arti*, which were beginning to assert themselves more forcefully in Genoese politics, especially the notaries. Second, the participation of notaries helped to bridge the institutionalization of grain distribution to the importance of *Ius Comune* in the *popolo* governments of late-medieval Italy. By drawing on the political-legal authority that notaries developed during this period, these legal technocrats were able to provide transparency to state spending of capital from the debt. Finally, *popolo* grain distribution demonstrates how Genoa's foreign policy shaped subsistence networks, connecting the high theater of Mediterranean geopolitics to the experience of the Genoese *popolo minuto*. These conclusions about the social ramifications of state grain distribution in Genoa are

implicit in the texts of the period. We do not have as clear a record as the Florentine example that Cohn supplies in *Lust for Liberty* where members of the *popolo* seized grain stores, throwing them in the street and distributing them, shouting “long live the people.” But we can see these connections clearly by reading Stella’s chronicle and the new codes of laws in conjunction with the registers of the *victualium*.

6.2: The new *popolo* search for *concordia* and consensus

After the death of Boccanegra and the election of Gabriele Adorno as doge, a new order of politicians emerged to control Genoese politics. These were drawn from the wealthy, non-*nobilis mercantes* who were originally swept into power along with Boccanegra accompanied by the cry, “long live the *popolo*, *mercantes*, and doge” in 1339. This group would eventually be referred to as the *cappellazzi* in various texts, supposedly because of their distinctive headwear. These new clans turned their back on Boccanegra’s personal legacy and attempted to remove his family from positions of authority completely. They carried on with a new political within the new state structure, and they more aggressively excluded the *nobilis* order from political authority. At the same time, however, the new *popolo* order fractured into a myriad of new political parties (*parte*) that multiplied throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, causing the same sort of factionalism that had plagued the years of *nobilis* dominance but with different actors. As different factions achieved short-lived dominance, they used the organs of the state to their advantage. This chapter will examine grain distribution as one of those tools, building on Boccanegra’s initial application of this method in 1356. While grain distribution invariably occurred

during periods of military action or on the heels of natural disaster—plague or famine—it was also fundamentally tied to the *popolo* Ghibellines, who seem to have been connected with the *popolo minuto*. Indeed, grain distribution helps to clarify these factions because it ties these politicians to the *popolo minuto*—people that would have benefited most from grain distribution.

The reign of Boccanegra's successor, Gabriele Adorno, was a never-ending search for political consensus that would end in failure after the second doge's reign. His tenure was also eventful. He made peace with Milan and consolidated the city's independence from Milan, taking back the border fortresses on which politicians of the city had fixated. Unfortunately, the new factionalism, led *La Superba* off of this track toward establishing consensus, even when they received an unearned stroke of good luck, which we will explore more fully below, that could have stabilized the state debt if the group had engaged in more prudent spending. This new factionalism began in the penultimate year of Boccanegra's reign, when *nobilis* unrest in the Riviera (*in terries litorum Ianue*) compelled powerful members of the *popolo* to voice their jealousy of the doge, and they threatened revolt. But among them there were the "sensible and intensely wealthy" (*prudens et dives valde*) man, Niccolo di Caneto, a member of the Guelph *popolo*, and the legal mind (*iurisperitus*) and member of the Ghibelline *popolo*, Leonardo di Montaldo, who came together and prevented the ousting of Boccanegra.³⁶⁰ The scant information provided about these men is nevertheless revealing of the internal political situation that had emerged during the final years of Boccanegra's reign. The Montaldo and Caneto clans would continue to play prominent roles in the further political divisions of Genoa.

³⁶⁰ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 157.

This evidence also demonstrates that by this point, the *popolo* had split into two distinct Guelph and Ghibelline parties, which would enter into a series of violent conflicts with each other in the next decade. The fact that a man known for his legal expertise was a representative of the Ghibellines should also be noted. As we shall see below, in the discussion of Stella's identity, this dissertation argues that the technocrats of the *ius comune*—the notaries and *magistri* of law—consolidated with the Ghibellines, and, as we shall see, helped with the technical aspects of the institutionalization of grain distribution. Niccolo di Caret, his Guelph counterpart, must have been a wealthy member of the *mercantes* that were initially swept into power with Boccanegra in 1339. In essence, as the old money became marginalized, the new money sought to separate itself from labor in the new political order.

Both halves of this dichotomy also splintered into clans that sought to represent their supporters and wield political power. As noted above, this political elite would come to be known as the *cappellazzi* collectively. The etymology of this term is debated. In his excellent introduction to political factionalism in Genoa, Antonio Musarra, for example, suggests that it derives from *caput*, Latin for head, and these men followed leaders (heads) of the *popolo* “who seized power by force.”³⁶¹ Wardi, on the other hand, suggests that the name derives from a type of hat worn by these partisans. Regardless of the origin of the term, these were the main historical actors of this political narrative.

The Adorno, Campofregoso, Guarco, and Montaldo appear to have emerged as the dominant rivals and sought the aid of less-powerful families to achieve their political ends. These new political clans had diverse social backgrounds, but as Mussarra goes on to, “they

³⁶¹ Musarra, “Political Alliance and Conflict,” 134.

were all of humble origins.”³⁶² For example, the preeminent family in this narrative, the Adorno, were originally from Taggia on the western Riviera, and they began their rise to power as drapers that began to invest in banking enterprises.³⁶³ Their Campofregoso rivals, on the other hand, were from the villages around Rivarolo and found their wealth in commerce.³⁶⁴ Each of these families had contributed a doge by the end of the fourteenth century. Interestingly, by the fifteenth century, it appears that people marked their political allegiance by the coloration of their stockings, which could indicate party or familial affiliation.³⁶⁵

In a letter, written in 1400 in Genoa, from Piero di Benintendi, an employee of the Datini company, to his patron, Francischo de Marcho, illustrates the mutability of this political situation. He states that:

in the present month [March], on the nineteenth day, the *Cappellazzi* had taken up arms, one against the other, evidently, the partisans of the Adorno and the party of the Campofregoso with their followers formed one party and on the other there were the Guarco and Montaldo with their followers. The Adorno party yelled: “Long live the Adorno!” and the opposing party screamed: “Long live the Guarco and Montaldo.”³⁶⁶

The captain—*capitano* (the office of the captain of the people seems to have continued into the late fourteenth century)—Batista Boccanegra, fled the ducal palace and returned to his own house as violence raged in the streets for three days, refusing to emerge while the

³⁶² Ibid., 135.

³⁶³ Petti Balbi, *Simon Boccanegra*, 218–223. It is interesting to note that

³⁶⁴ On the background of the Adorno, see Emmanuel P. Wardi, *Le Strategie Familiari di un Doge di Genova: Antoniotto Adorno: 1378–1398* (Milan: Paravia, 1996), 13–38.

³⁶⁵ Antonio Musarra, “Political Alliance and Conflict,” 136.

³⁶⁶ “*li capelaci se levorono ad arme l’uno contra l’autro, videlicet Adorni et parte de quele de Campofregoso con li lor seguaci da una parte e da l’augra parte Guarchi e Montaldi con li lor seguaci, cridando la parte Adorna: viva Adorni! E la contraria parte cridando: viva Guarchi e Montaldi.*” For the entire letter, see Piero Benintendi, *Lettere di Piero Benintendi*, edited by Renato Piattoli, *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 60 (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1932), 80–83. The quote is found on page 81.

factions drew blood. This competition for power was symptomatic of the sort of oligarchic republican structure typical of medieval Italian city-states, where the competition for power and lack of restraint led to an extremely volatile political structure.

Gabriele Adorno was the first from this group to assume the ducal mantle after Boccanegra. His reign was eventful. He arranged a peace settlement with Milan, faced off one revolt against his power, and he set the *victualium* in motion twice in the process, continuing the development of grain distribution as a tool of *popolo* politics begun under Boccanegra. Through all of this, it appears that his goal was to establish that his rule had the backing of a consensus of the new, fracturing political order. Adorno was elected the day his predecessor died. After Boccanegra passed, everyone in his family had to remain in the ducal palace while ten Genoese citizens were selected as electors, who then elected “the merchant, Gabriele Adorno” (*mercatores*) for the ducal office.³⁶⁷ Stella then describes the multistage electoral process:

And for [the purpose of] electing him doge, the many officers of the Genoese commune assembled together, from whom one elected another: for instance, twenty citizens were selected from the entire populace [and they] selected sixty, out of their rank [social?], of course, of those twenty; the sixty select forty; forty select twenty-one; twenty-one select the ten [that are] sent forth, who constituted that man, Gabriele, into the ducal office; on that day, therefore, on 15 March, six citizens were selected for establishing rules over the doge and the city [under his] direction.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁷ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 157.

³⁶⁸ Ibid. “*Ad eum ducem eligendum multa Ianuensium officia concurrent, quorum unum eligebat aliud: nam cives viginti electi a toto populo elegerunt sexaginta, ex ordine nempe ipsorum viginti; sexaginta elegerunt quadraginta; quadraginta elegerunt viginti unum; viginti unus elegerunt premissos decem, qui eundem Gabrielem constituerunt in ducem; die igitur quinta decima martii sex fuerunt electi cives ad statuendum regulas super duce et urbis regimine.*”

This circuit of elections is confounding. It is likely that this convoluted nature was an intentional attempt to tie Adorno's rule to a particular process that had broad consensus that incorporated the political wills of many other politicians without the danger of a free and open vote—it is always worth considering that republicanism, from Rome through the Middle Ages, to the founding fathers of the United States has lived with the contradictory tension of fears of radical, direct democracy and tyranny.

Thankfully, the “rules” described in this passage are extant, and they are a vivid illustration of the new *popolo* order. The edited version found in the *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* gives it the name *Regulae Communis Ianuae*, the *Rules of the Genoese Commune*. The title places this code in stark contrast with the major piece of legislation that Boccanegra and his supporters created, the *Regulae Comperarum Capituli*, which was discussed in the last chapter. Whereas the *Comperarum Capituli* focuses entirely on the *compera* and the financial aspects of maintaining the Genoese state, the *Regulae Communis Ianuae*, on the other hand, sought to assert control over the Genoese social order generally and more aggressively assert the power of the new *popolo* order.

This order is illustrated in the code's prooemium, which includes a number of names and the roles the bearers of these names played in the new government. Crucially, it includes the identities of the six law makers, the group of twenty selected citizens that began the electoral process described above, and the ten ducal electors; none of these names are from *nobilis* clans. Additionally, there is also representation from a wider variety of the *arti* than can be found in the *conferma* text.³⁶⁹ Here, we finally see the emergence of

³⁶⁹ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 248 and 250. The names of the lawmakers are: Simone di Vignosi, Galeazzo di Casali, Giovanni Sacci, banker, Niccolo di Goano, once named Nicoli, Tomasso Murccio, and Marco Protonarius, notary; the twenty are: Lantarote di Castro, prior, Master Gabriel di Cremona, chirurgicus,

powerful guilds in Genoa—at the twilight of the Middle Ages, by which point the Florentine *arti* had been taking active roles in the government for over two hundred years.³⁷⁰ The text also describes the electoral process that Stella outlines in the quote above but in greater detail than needs to be related here.

The very existence of these laws is an indication of how the new regime felt about the years of Boccanegran rule. The earlier *Conferma* text grants the doge *imperium merum et mixtum*—the same formulation of the legal authority wielded by the Roman Emperors and their central medieval successors, the kings of Europe—within Genoese territory, stating that the doge was free from statutes, rules, and other regulations in the city of Genoa and its districts.³⁷¹ The jealousy that Boccanegra’s rivals felt, which Stella describes, suggests that they feared that the ducal office was careening toward tyranny, and thus, they felt the need to create a set of laws to restrain the doge. These laws explicitly deny that Adorno possessed *imperium merum et mixtum* and more precisely enumerate his duties and authorities. Furthermore, the inclusion of a greater number of names and a clearer articulation of the selection process seems to place restraints on the authority of the executive officer and a clearer articulation of the ruling group so that no single individual is vested with authority. Underlining the discontent that emerged under the Boccanegran yoke, the laws also declare that because of the former doge’s “spiteful and unjust works,

Lanfranco di Cantello, farrier, Giovanni di Bubbio, public accountant, Iacopo Codora, Allegro Bianco, draper, Frederico di Pagana, Pietro Rechanello, Niccolo di Mongino, Raffael di Furneto formerly Pasquale, Antonio di Monelia, minter, Antonio di Roccatagliata, craftsman, Antonio di Benedicto di Borgo, Andrietto di Santa Agneta, Lanfranco Pacia, Matteo Marruffo, Giovanni Pincci, Michael di Monelia bootmaker, Pambello di Casali, and Giovanni di Oppicello, butcher; the ducal electors are: Antonio di Viviano, Iacopo Carpenetus, Ingo Bonus, Iacopo Coadora, Tomasso de Azario, tavernkeeper, Bartolomeo di Viali, Dexerinus di Signano, Ianuynus de Belforte, draper, Peitro di Levi, and Giovanni di Bargalio, craftsman.

³⁷⁰ For a general introduction to this order, see Staley, *The Guilds of Florence*, 33–74.

³⁷¹ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 250. “*caret capitulis ordinationibus et aliis regularitatibus civitatis Ianue et districtus.*”

and the humbling, suffocation, sale, and near destruction of the city and country of the Genoese . . . no Boccanegra or anyone attached to them could ever hold office in Genoa again.”³⁷² Clearly that prohibition did not remain in place, if the record of the Datini—which indicates that a scion of house Boccanegra occupied the office of *capitano* during the author’s stay in the city—representative is to be believed.

Regardless of whether or not the treatment of the Boccanegran clan was unfair, this code also deconstructs *nobilis* power more aggressively than the legislation that the first doge enacted. Whereas Adorno’s predecessor had focused his only extant legislation, the *Comperarum Capituli*, on the state debt, the new doge and his supporters directed the authority of the state toward actively controlling the political orders of Genoa. In particular, the laws make the power of the doge more explicit and articulate the authorities that held them in check. Crucially, the *Regulae Communis Ianuae* also articulates how the twelve members of the advisory body, the *anziani*, were to be elected, which, like the selection of the doge, is incredibly convoluted. They were to number twelve that would serve as ducal advisers, six from the *popolo*, six from the *nobiles*, and they were all to live with the doge in the ducal palace. Perhaps this close-quarters arrangement was meant to induce concord and cooperation. Additionally, it is likely that the multistage election process for both the doge and *anziani* must have been to ensure consensus. A logic that suggests that people selected after so many stages were the only correct candidates. Perhaps this convoluted process was created as an effort to establish a structure that mirrored the complex electoral process of Venice, which both modern and medieval observers have argued was

³⁷² Ibid., 306. “eorum malignis et iniquis operibus comune et patria ianuensis depressa, subfocata, vendita, et pene destructa . . . “

responsible for the remarkable stability of *La Serenissima*.³⁷³ Crucially, Adorno's new laws also more clearly articulate the military or security aspects of the ducal office. For instance, the text states that the doge should have two knights (*milites*) as guards who should be paid two hundred Genoese pounds and given an armed horse.³⁷⁴ Interestingly, state money needed to be placed under guard explicitly, saying that the lord doge should assign armed guards to the officers of the *massarii*—the individuals who were in charge of receiving and releasing state funds to the various administrative *officia*, including the *victualium*—because they make payments [to holders of the debt] and handle state finances—such as purchasing grain for distribution.³⁷⁵

This concern over security can be found throughout the text. Adorno and his followers seem to have been particularly wary of *nobilis* sedition (*sedition*). There are numerous laws prohibiting the types of actions that this group took during the Boccanegran interregnum. For example, they stipulate that “nobody should go to the places in rebellion” (*quod nemo vadat ad loca rebellium*) and that “nobody should go with arms to the lands of the commune” (*quod nemo cum armis accedat ad terras comunis*).³⁷⁶ *Nobiles* are even prohibited from going into the households of prominent members of the *popolo* during periods of unrest. Perhaps the most pointed of these statutes state that nobody should hold fortifications (*castelli*) against the commune and that anybody holding them illegally should return them.³⁷⁷ These pronouncements explicitly invoke the Grimaldi, who were still—and remain to this day—the rulers of Monaco.

³⁷³ See n. 136.

³⁷⁴ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 267.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 303–304.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 311–314.

This code of laws is preoccupied with the fortifications of Liguria. Whereas the primacy of these fortifications in the *Comperarum Capituli* suggests that they were in the forefront of the minds of Boccanegra and his followers, ultimately, the focus is on payments for their maintenance. Adorno, on the other hand, is concerned with who holds these *castelli* and maintaining communal ownership of them. Not only is he careful to state that individuals are forbidden from holding these fortresses against the commune, but people—presumably communal officeholders or the guardians of the fortresses themselves—are forbidden from alienating them from Genoese control.³⁷⁸

Regaining and retaining control of the fortifications of Liguria continued to be the major preoccupation of Adorno's reign. Milan had taken a number of border fortresses in the aftermath of the War of the Straits and their subsequent takeover of the city during the final years of *nobilis* rule. While Genoa had flirted with subordinating itself to the Holy Roman emperors in the past, and the Genoese would agree to do submit themselves to the king of France at the end of the century, subordination to another Italian city seems to have been beyond the pale, and it seems that the Genoese completely resented this imposition and were keen to get the forts back that they had lost. A treaty that Adorno signed with the Milanese and overseen by Pope Urban V (r. 1362–1370) brought these forts back under Genoese control but only for a huge price.

Urban's involvement in this matter is interesting to consider because his career illustrates the extent to which the legal network that created the *Ius Comune* had spread beyond Italy and continued to shape the political environment of the peninsula through the end of the Middle Ages. Born Guillaume de Grimoard in the city of Grizac in Languedoc

³⁷⁸ Ibid.

in 1310, the future Pope Urban V took orders as a Benedictine monk in 1327 in the Priory of Chirac. He eventually studied law at Montpellier before resuming his studies at Toulouse, earning a doctorate in Canon Law in 1342. He would go on to teach at Montpellier, Paris, and Avignon.³⁷⁹ This experience would have made Guillaume a peerless legal mind of his age. The “rediscovery” of the *Digesta* and the emergence of *Ius Comune* were interrelated with the proliferation of Canon Law. In some ways, it might not be worthwhile to consider the two as separate entities, given their shared source base and the consistent presence of biblical allusions and Canon law ideas in the writings of the glossators. Urban brought this expertise to bear in his dealings with Milan and Genoa.

After Grimoard’s distinguished academic career, his predecessor on the throne of Saint Peter, Pope Clement VI (r. 1342–1352), sent him to northern Italy on three peacekeeping missions. The whole region had plunged into chaos as a result of the Visconti family’s machinations. This powerful family had taken over much of Lombardy and had designs of expanding its authority even further. This chaos was compounded by local conflicts, such as that between the *nobiles* and *popolo* at Genoa. Seeing this chaos from afar, Clement sought to end the endemic violence and sent the future Urban V to facilitate foment peace in a mission in 1352.

This era of Guillaume’s life has not been subject to focused scholarship, but it seems that the future pope used this opportunity to build his base of power by allying himself with the Visconti, which also served the purpose of shoring up papal interests in the region. He created a document that absolved the Visconti of their transgressions and gave them

³⁷⁹ Raymund Webster, “Urban V,” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol., 15, ed. Charles G. Herbermann, et. al. (New York: The University Press, 1912), 214–217

authority over most of the region. This allowed the church to have access to the important diocese of Bologna, which the Visconti had threatened to alienate from the Avignon papacy. While this family had wrought violence and chaos in the region, Guillaume hoped they could also bring peace to the fractious cities of Italy—the ends justified the means in his mind. The text itself “absolves Giovanni, bishop of Milan and his nephews/relations are absolved from the sentence and penalty from the occupation and possession of the city, county, and district of Bologna in their doings.”³⁸⁰ The lengthy text then meticulously deconstructs each of the crimes that could be potentially leveled against the Visconti.

Thus, by the time Guillaume donned the papal tiara, he had already developed a vested interest in facilitating peace in northern Italy through an alliance with the Milanese. Furthermore, using his experience as a Canonist, he forged legally binding agreements using a familiar legal framework to subordinate Genoa to Milan financially. The agreement was detrimental to the Genoese and threw them deeper into debt. In order to ensure peace between the cities, the Genoese were ordered to pay the Visconti a total of 200,000 florins in a series of installments in exchange for regaining control of the border fortresses that Milan had seized during their withdrawal from Liguria after the return of Boccanegra. It is interesting to note that a second document, prepared by Pietro di Casteliono, the Genoese jurisconsult (*jurisperitus*), verifies that the many officers of the Genoese commune, listed by name, along with the doge, agreed to the treaty facilitated by Urban V. This is a further example of the way Adorno was denied the sort of unilateral power that Boccanegra

³⁸⁰ Augustin Theiner, ed., *Codex Diplomaticus Domini Temporalis S. Sedis*, Volume 2 (Rome: Imprimerie du Vatican, 1862), 222–233 “*Ioannes archiepiscopus Mediolanensis et nepotes sui sententiis et peonis propter occupationem et detentionem civitatis, comitatus, et districtus Bononiensis in eos latis absolvuntur.*”

wielded. His ability to make arrangements with foreign powers was restricted by the consent of the other elected officials of the commune.

Adorno seems to have been a prudent ruler of Genoa. He was content to not achieve the same level of constitutional power and authority over Genoa that Boccanegra had held. While his dealings with Milan imposed greater financial pressure on Genoa than before, it seems that the fortresses whose return he negotiated were incredibly important to the Genoese populace. Unfortunately, the rifts in the new ruling group reemerged during Adorno's reign. In 1365, Adorno's son-in-law, Petrus Recanellus, engaged in a conspiracy with the Doria. In that same year, there was a *popolo* revolt that tried to make Leonardo di Montaldo a doge, and it had to be put down. Adorno could not remain in power forever. He was eventually removed from power in 1370 in a bloodless coup when Domenico Campofregoso was elected doge.

6.3: Old factionalism with a new face, Cappellazzi violence

Adorno's attempts at creating consensus failed, and the *cappellazzi* were unable to lead Genoa in a manner different from their *nobilis* predecessors. The new leaders engaged in the same sort of factional violence and raiding and overseas foreign wars that plagued the years of *nobilis* rule. These conflicts would have brought on the same fears of a subsistence crisis as the *nobilis* activity encountered in the last chapter. Indeed, as we shall see, manuscript evidence from another administrative *officia*, the *officium robarie*, bears out remarkable similarities to the description of violence from the reign of Boccanegra found in Stella.

Genoa had an unearned stroke of luck during Campofregoso's reign that could have freed the city from the weight of the state debt if the *cappellazzi* had devoted themselves to the actual practice of good governance by reaching across factional lines rather than trying to achieve victory in the various factional conflicts that cut through Genoese life. A man from the *nobiles*, Francesco di Vivaldi, donated ninety shares of the state debt and directed that the annual payments from those shares should be returned to the city to buy up shares of the *Compera Pacis*, which was the major drain on Genoese finances up to this point. Recall that this was the consolidation of the debt after the Guelph/Ghibelline civil wars of the early fourteenth century, the period of *revolutiones*. This donation eventually extinguished that *compera* in 1467.³⁸¹ What compelled Francesco di Vivaldi to make this magnanimous bequest is unknown, but its importance was recognized by Stella, who describes the man as "intensely honorable" (*venerandus valde*) and a singular citizen (*civis egregius*).³⁸² Little is known of Francesco besides Stella's description. But in a city riven by what can only be described as selfish factionalism in the face of the interests of the non-political classes, the donation of ninety shares of debt was very much out of character, and the high praise that Stella heaps on him reflects what was truly a "singular" action.

The new *mercantes* rulers of Genoa were not content to save money and follow a more prudent path, however, and they pursued an aggressive policy toward Cyprus. In 1372, news reached Genoa of a renewal of hostilities with the Venetians at the coronation of Peter II as the king of Cyprus. According to Stella, there was a disagreement about whether the Venetian or Genoese standard bearer should precede the other at the coronation

³⁸¹ Jacques Heers, *Gênes*, 189.

³⁸² Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 164.

ceremony. Characteristically, Stella blames the conflict on the Venetians, naturally suggesting that it was their Ligurian rivals that held the first position, and the Venetians started a brawl (*rixa*).³⁸³ Recall that Stella blames Venetian raiding for the War of the Straits when Genoa could have just as easily have begun the conflict. Regardless, there was violence against the Genoese merchants, which caused them to lose their property. As a result, Pietro Campofregoso declared war on Cyprus.

It is worth considering Genoese interests in the Cypriot war, which were greater than a simple restitution of stolen goods and contributed to tensions between Venice and Genoa. The new king of Cyprus was the son of the King Peter who was a guest of Boccanegra (Peter I r. 1359–1369), and it was at a banquet in his honor that the *nobiles* supposedly poisoned the doge. He was also the son of Eleanor of Aragon, who was the cousin of Peter IV of Aragon, who was betrothed to Peter I of Cyprus in 1353, a diplomatic arrangement that almost assuredly worked against Genoese interests. King Peter II of Cyprus would marry another enemy of Genoa in 1373: Valentina Visconti, the daughter of Bernabò Visconti, the duke of Milan, and the granddaughter of Giovanni Visconti, the archbishop who had imposed Milanese hegemony over Genoa during the *nobilis* interregnum and forced its citizens to pay the exorbitant sum of money in exchange for the return of the border fortresses.³⁸⁴ It is likely that this marriage was meant to counter the Genoese aggression in Cyprus by securing an alliances with one of the Ligurian city's major regional threats.

³⁸³ Ibid., 165.

³⁸⁴ This Valentina Visconti should not be confused with the future Duchess of Orléans (r. 1389–1408). She was the daughter of Giangaleazzo Visconti, the nephew of Bernabò who overthrew his predecessor in 1385.

Regardless of the long-term ramifications, the war against Cyprus went remarkably well, and it seemed to stem the tide of overseas Genoese losses. The years between 1345 and 1372 had not been kind to Genoese overseas ambitions; the infighting of the fourteenth century had weakened the city and the relative expansion of other powers, both local and in the Mediterranean, had depressed the ability of the Genoese pursue the kind of aggressive foreign policy that characterized the thirteenth century. In spite of these setbacks, the response to the attack at the coronation of Peter was on a massive scale, and the Genoese attacked Cyprus in 1373. The Ligurian city initially sent an expeditionary force under Damianus Cataneo, who Stella describes as the leader (*ductor*) and procurator (*preses*)³⁸⁵ of the fleet. And in March of that year, he came upon the city of Paphos on the western coast of Cyprus and raided the island with seven galleys.³⁸⁶ This was probably meant to keep Peter and his forces at bay while the Genoese put together a larger force.

The Genoese state collected 106,000 Genoese pounds from the Genoa and the Riviera to arm thirty-six galleys, which then joined up with the seven already raiding Cyprus. This was no mere raid; it was meant to be a full-scale invasion. Stella even states that there were many horses and machines capable of throwing “great, heavy stones,” including one called “Troy,” which was capable of throwing stones that weighed between twelve and eighteen cantars.³⁸⁷ This invasion fleet seemed to unify the Genoese populace. On June 5, 1373, the force set off “under great exultation and splendid jubilation” (“*sub*

³⁸⁵ Procurator is one possible translation of “*preses*,” and in this context, I suggest that it refers to the person charged with gathering the fleet and crews. He may have also been responsible for securing payment for the crews and the vessels, even if the money came from other sources as we shall see.

³⁸⁶ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 166.

³⁸⁷ Ibid., 167. According to Henry J. Chaney, *Our Weights and Measures, A Practice Treatise* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode), one cantar is equal to 123.2 pounds. Thus, Troy could have thrown boulders over one ton in size.

multa exultation preclaroque iubilo”).³⁸⁸ They sailed first to Portovenere, arriving there on 15 August, before arriving at Cyprus on 3 October. They sailed into the port of Famagusta with 14,000 troops and burned the ships of Peter II before conquering the city and took many Cypriot nobles prisoner, including the king. Although they failed to conquer the rest of the island, the invasion could only be framed as a success in terms of the goals of the Genoese. The Genoese forced Peter II to sign an incredibly hard peace treaty that forced him to pay a tribute of 40,000 florins a year, and he ceded control of Famagusta to the Ligurian invaders, which they held until 1489 when the Venetians seized the city.³⁸⁹

Much of this sum was to be paid out to the financiers of the voyage. Genoa paid for this voyage differently from other projects by establishing a *mahona* (*maona*, pl. *mahone*). The term comes from the Arabic term, *ma'ūnah*, and indicates a mutual assistance association or a special tax assessment, which was usually used for military expedition. This model first appears in the written record in a 1235 expedition for the conquest of Ceuta in North Africa, again in 1346 for the defense of Ceuta, and finally in 1373 and 1378 for the attacks on Cyprus and Corsica respectively. Investors could be compensated in different ways, including the establishment of new *compere*. The *mahone* of Chios and Cyprus, the investors benefitted from the spoils of war. In 1346, they received property and sovereignty over Chios and profits deriving from it.³⁹⁰ In the case of Cyprus, the investors received money from the peace agreement, which is outlined by the treaty the parties signed.³⁹¹ The

³⁸⁸ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 167.

³⁸⁹ Ibid., 168.

³⁹⁰ Taviani, “Companies, Commerce, and Credit,” 431.

³⁹¹ HPM 9, *Liber Iurium II*, 806–815. For the payments to the members of the *mahona*, see page 807.

parties to this agreement eventually received 2,012,400 florins over the course of twelve years.³⁹²

Genoa's stunning success in Cyprus did not save Genoa from the natural disaster encountered that decade. Stella reports:

In that year, up until the month of May, there was a very strong hunger and scarcity throughout all Italy: there was indeed a scarcity throughout many other parts of Christendom; indeed it was so powerful in the city of Genoa that a measure of grain, which is called a *mina*, was valued at sixteen gold florins or twenty Genoese pounds.³⁹³

Campofregoso remained in Cyprus for this period, wrapping up things there while gradually sending ships back, but the food shortage returned a second time the following year in 1375 and lasted the entire year, which caused Campofregoso to sail back to Genoa. When he returned on March 1, he met with the *officium de moneta* and the other councils of the city. They declared that the people were free and immune from other collections and distributed 10,000 florins to the people of Genoa.³⁹⁴ Perhaps this distribution of money was meant to offset the exorbitant price of a mina of grain.

Genoa did not stop their expansion at Cyprus and were ascendant throughout the middle of that decade.³⁹⁵ They were awarded the island of Tenedos by the Byzantine usurper, Andronicus IV, in 1376.³⁹⁶ Venice could not allow Genoa to remain ascendant,

³⁹² Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 235.

³⁹³ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 168, “Anno ipso usque mense maio validissima fames et penuria cepit per universam Italiam: fuit etiam ipsa penuria in multis aliis christianorum regionibus; tanta enim in urbe ianuensi regnavit quod mensura frumenti, que mina dicitur, valuit florenos auri sexdecim sive libras viginti Ianuinarum.”

³⁹⁴ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 168.

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 167.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 169. The text of the treaty can be found here. L. T. Belgrano, ed., “Prima serie di documenti riguardanti la colonia di Pera adunati dal socio L.T. Belgrano,” *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 13 (1877): 97–336, 131–133.

and *La Serenissima* sought the rights to the island from another Byzantine claimant. Control of these islands would allow Genoa to dominate much of the trade in the eastern Mediterranean. The islands of Tenedos and Chios were important stopping points and ports of refuge *en route* to the Black Sea, which was dominated commercially by the Genoese at Caffa. The port of Famagusta would have been a vital port *en route* to Alexandria. While this port was by no means necessary to trade with Egypt, a Genoese presence could prove dangerous to Venetian shipping. The Genoese were notorious for their raiding, and it would be easy for Genoese vessels stationed there—such as the ones that Campofregoso left behind—to sail out and attack the yearly Venetian convoy to Egypt.

Perhaps sensing future hostilities, the Genoese sent a flotilla of ten ships to Tenedos in 1377.³⁹⁷ War became unavoidable the next year when the city began to assemble allies for the fight against Venice. The kingdom of Hungary, a reliable opponent against Venice, along with the duke of Austria, the patriarch of Aquileia, and Lord Francesco Carrara of Padua came to the Ligurian city's aid.³⁹⁸ Unfortunately for the Genoese, only Carrara offered tangible help. The War of Chioggia, as it has come to be known, would be the final war in the rivalry between Venice and Genoa. The conflict was very much two-sided with both cities gaining the upper hand at various points. An early setback in 1378 caused demonstrations against Doge Domenico Campofregoso. Stella seems to suggest that Campofregoso was removed too early when he describes him as an “exceedingly wise leader and indeed a good governor” (“*erat valde prudentis capitis, erat etiam bonus*

³⁹⁷ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 169.

³⁹⁸ Hungary was an important regional rival to Venice over control of the Balkan coastline, and the Venetians targeted the city of Zara (Zadar), then under control of the crown of Hungary.

rector”).³⁹⁹ But a mob attacked the Palazzo Ducale and drove Campofregoso from power, appointing Antoniotto Adorno first, who then stepped down after a larger *popolo* group called for Niccolo Guarco to be made doge.⁴⁰⁰ Guarco wanted to unite the city in a time of war, granting concessions to both *nobilis* and *popolo* elements of societies. To the former, he granted half of the government offices, once again opening the door to *nobilis* political participation. For the *popolo*, he reinstituted the *victualium* (see below), which probably helped to allay fears of a grain shortage in the midst of the conflict with the Venetians.

The Ligurian city came closest to victory when it occupied the municipality of Chioggia. Now a pastel hued tourist trap south of the Venetian lagoon, the city was once an important naval yard and strategic location. Early in the war, the Genoese took it by force and sought to starve the Venetians out.⁴⁰¹ They had Padua on the mainland and Hungary to the east that could choke off Venetian overland supply-routes. Unfortunately, the Genoese refused to negotiate, hoping for an all-out victory. At the same time, the Ligurian city began to see other threats materialize elsewhere. Milan sent an army that was defeated in the mountains by an emergency levy of Genoese led by an unnamed general, the Turks attacked Pera, and the Venetians raided Genoese shipping.⁴⁰²

The war raged on for years before signing a truce on 8 August 1381. The Venetians ceded Tenedos to the Genoese, but the Ligurian city agreed not to fortify it, guaranteeing open access to the Black Sea. Most other commercial rights and privileges from before the war were reconfirmed.⁴⁰³ It was perhaps the longest and bloodiest of the Genoese-Venetian

³⁹⁹ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 171.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 175.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 175–177.

⁴⁰³ HPM 9, *Liber Iurium*, 858–906.

wars, and it ended with very little discernable difference in diplomatic or geopolitical boundaries.

Historians often grant victory to the Venetians in retrospect, but Genoa continued on with many of its Mediterranean colonies intact. Despite this, *La Superba* seems to disappear from Italian historiography during this period.⁴⁰⁴ Epstein faults “the hegemony of Venice and Florence exercise over fifteenth-century Italian history, especially in America. The standard story focuses clearly on these two cities, humanism and art, the Medici and Venetian ambitions, the two republics in a world of ‘new monarchies.’”⁴⁰⁵ Despite the apparent survival of Genoese overseas ambitions, the city continued to exhibit internal unrest. This chaos, combined with the return of plague and famine, would have caused a considerable degree of uncertainty and fear among the intramural population of the city. Thus, one of the ambitions of the revolving door of doges was to establish a certain degree of certainty about subsistence.

As noted above, the reintroduction of the *victualium* accompanied Niccolo Guarco’s seizure of power. As the Genoese continued their internal rivalries, the *victualium* became a crucial tool of the state. It added legitimacy to a prospective doge’s case as defender of the *popolo* (*defensor populi*), as they stylized themselves. As we saw at the end of the last chapter with the example of the urban revolt from *Lust for Liberty*, *popolo* legitimacy in Florence could rest in control of grain and other products. This example,

⁴⁰⁴ For such an assessment of the terms of the War of Chioggia, Cf. Lane, *Venice*, 196. This point, which is made in Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 241, is not entirely true. Certainly, Thomas Allison Kirk has begun to rectify the disappearance of Genoa from the historiography of early modern Italy in his book, *Genoa and the Sea: Policy and Power in an Early Modern Maritime Republic, 1559–1683* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012). See also, Céline Dauard, *Imperial Ambition in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Genoese Merchants and the Spanish Crown* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁴⁰⁵ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 242.

combined with the evidence presented here, suggests that grain distribution was of crucial importance to *popolo* politics in later medieval Italy.

6.4: The 1378 *victualium* registers and the importation of grain into Genoa

Let us turn to the registers themselves and the information contained within them. There is valuable evidence in these texts that support the argument that grain distribution was a key component of the institutionalization of *popolo* authority, but it is necessary to explore the contents of the registers and how they actually pertain to subsistence in Genoa before returning to questions of state. The first extant cartulary of the *victualium* is from 1378.

The text begins by announcing its contents:

In the name of Christ, amen. 1378. The cartulary of the office of provisions of the commune of Genoa from 1378, having been begun on the first day of March of the said year, in which the shares of grain enacted by the said office and the *introitus* and *exitus* of all quantities of money, which are present in the account of the said office, or the officers of the said office, written by the hand of Giovanni Bayro, notary, scribe of the said office, and of those officers who are named here: lord Antonio di Nigro, Lord Giovanni di Trani, Lord Antonio Gentile and Lord Niccolo de Recco, lawyer. Note that Lord Giovanni di Trani and Antonio Gentile were elected in the council and the *anziani* of the lord duke and they were elected in the place [physical location] of those [offices] and nominated under the lords Bartolomeo Ardimento and Pietro di Olivero, who have the position from the first day of November up to the last day of February of '79.

Popolo, Giovanni Bayro, notary.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁶ *Officium Victualium*, 1378, Antico Comune 139. “*In nomine Christi, amen. MCCCLXXVIII. Cartullarium officii victualium comunis Ianue de MCCCLXXVIII, incepto die prima marcii dicti millesimi, in quoscrita sunt partita grani facta per dictum officium et introitus et exitus omnium peccunie quantitatum que in ratione dicti officii, sive officialium dicti officii, pervenerunt, scriptum manu Iohannis Bayri notarii, scribe dicti officii, et quorum officialium nomina sunt hec: dominus Anthonius de Nigro, dominus Iohannes de Trani, dominus Anthonius Gentillis et dominus Nicolaus de Recho speciaris. Nota quod domini Iohannes de Trani et Anthonius gentillis fuerunt electi in conscellarios et ancianos domini ducis et loco ipsorum fuerunt electi et subrogate domini Brtholomeus Ardimentus et Petrus de Oliverio, qui habuerunt locum a die prima novembris usque die ultima februarii de LXXVIII.*

Popolus. Iohannes Bayrus notarius.

This cartulary is the first piece of information about the operation of the *victualium*. It describes how notaries kept the official record of the *victualium* on behalf of four officers that oversaw the its activity, two of whom were selected by the *anziani* and the doge's council. The text indicates that the office was set in motion from November 1378 through the following February. This means that the grain was purchased after the coup in 1378, emphasizing the way grain distribution could be used to establish legitimacy. All of the cartularies follow the same basic format.

The place of the notary, Giovanni Bayro, deserves emphasis here. Giovanni represents an important link in the chain of notaries, scholars, and other medieval legal practitioners. The *iudices* and *notarii palatii* of the Lombard kings were his technocratic ancestors. Furthermore, Giovanni and his fellow Genoese state notaries should be seen as a very early attempt at state bureaucratization. This is an innovation similar to that which Laurie Nussdorfer has explored in early modern Rome in her book, *Brokers of Public Trust*. In this volume, Nussdorfer traces the way notaries facilitated the basic functions of society and enacting the decisions of the state.⁴⁰⁷ This sort of dissipation of state authority among a bureaucracy is crucial to scholarly understandings of the modern state. Foucault's governmentality and the myriad writings this work inspired, such as *Brokers of Public Trust*, comprise a significant part of scholarship on the modern state. Genoa represents an important moment in this evolution, and the fourteenth century government of Genoa deserves recognition in this respect.

⁴⁰⁷ Nussdorfer, *Brokers of Public Trust*, see especially 147–198.

The grain that the *victualium* imported in 1377/1378 came from three locations: Sicily, Marittima, and Provence. Marittima either refers to a city at the very tip of the heel of Italy or Massa Marittima, city in Tuscany between Livorno and Grosseto. The former is likely, given the amount of grain produced in the *Mezzogiorno*. There is very little in the text to explain how this grain came to Genoa, that is to say, by ship, wagon, or who ferried it to its eventual endpoint. Furthermore, there are no extant concurrent *massarii* records where it would be possible to identify spending lines that include more information. Despite these lacunae, the provenance of the grain is a crucial piece of evidence for understanding the relationship between the geopolitical situation in the eastern Mediterranean and the people living at home in Genoa. All three locations are accessible from the western Mediterranean, which would have been important given that the city was gearing up for war with Venice in the eastern Mediterranean. Stella's record for 1377 reports that the city sent a small flotilla to secure Tenedos, whose fate is not recorded. The pending conflict with Venice and the near-constant raiding that would have resulted from escalating hostilities would have made it difficult to import grain purchased in the Black Sea region or Egypt.

Though not explicitly stated in the sources, we should assume that the fate of islands like Tenedos were the source of these conflicts. In the Middle Ages, when long-haul voyages were impossible, rest stations were necessary. And the chain of island allowing the transport of grain and other materials from the Black Sea. As such, Tenedos, at the opening of the Dardanelle strait, was a crucial point in the transmission of subsistence goods from the Black Sea to the rest of the Mediterranean, and the island would serve as a flashpoint for the two cities throughout the end of the fourteenth century. Furthermore, it

seems likely that the purchase of grain in 1377 could have been preventative, given that war with Venice probably would have seemed inevitable to the Genoese—and indeed it was as the War of Chioggia began the following year.

Giovanni Bayro collects all of the information regarding grain purchasing into a double-entry bookkeeping system. To illustrate, figures 1 and 2 represent an example of the *introitus* and *exitus* of funds managed by the *victualium*. The text describes who supplied the money—Raffus and Domdedeo de Sancto Blaxio and the *massariis*—while the columns on the right record the amounts. Recall that the *massarii* are the officials who oversee Genoese finances, distributing money the *victualium* from the *compera* and other sources of money. These amounts are written out in columns. From left to right, these columns list 1000s, 100s, 10s with individual pounds, solidi, and denarii. Figure 1 is a reproduction of page 3 recto. The first entry describes a payment of five hundred Genoese pounds from 9 October. The figures bounded by the box represent the Ligurian numeral six, which directs the reader to folio six verso, reproduced here as figure 2. This includes the opposing entry for the five hundred Genoese pounds on 3 recto with the same names—Raffus and Domdedeo de Sancto Blaxio.

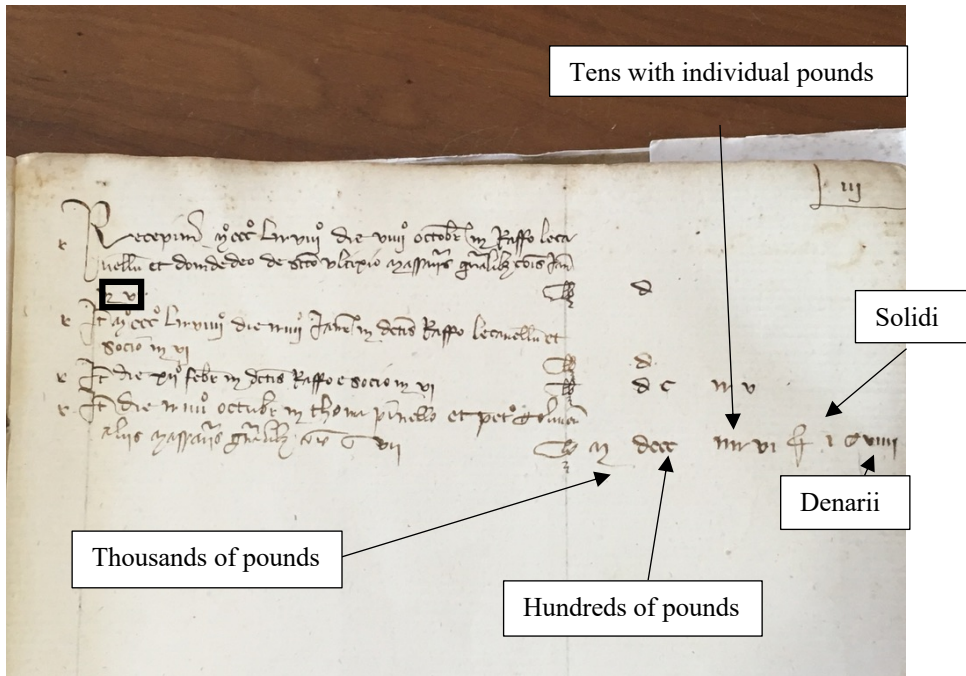


Figure 1

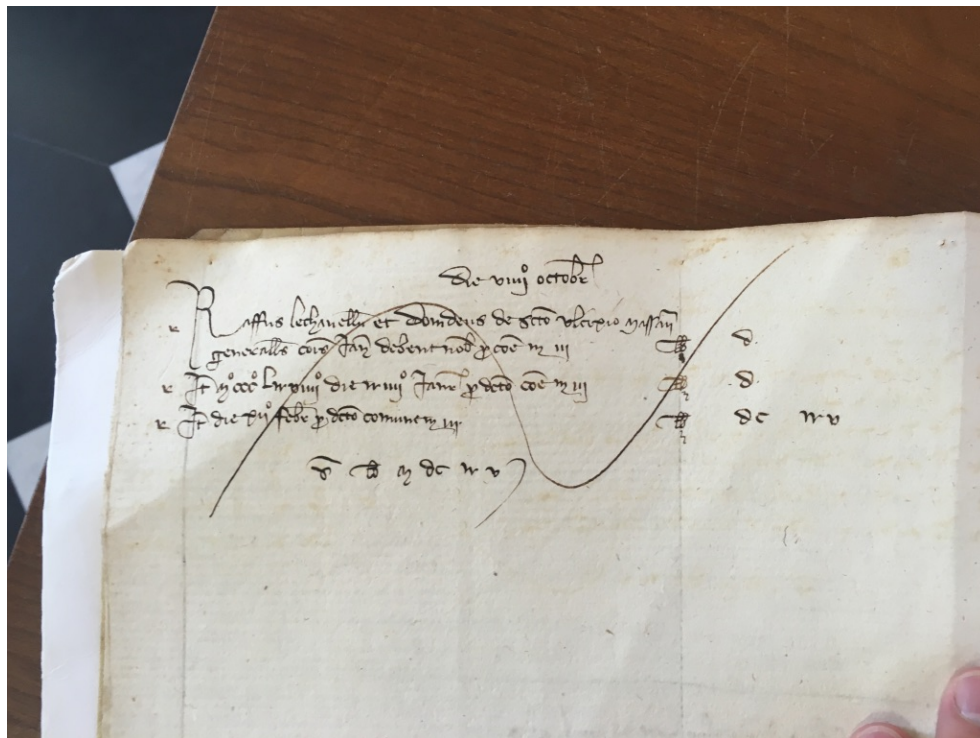


Figure 5

About half of the 1378 register is dedicated to these sorts of entries. The other half details on what that money was spent: grain purchases. Figure 3, for instance, is a

reproduction of 51 recto, which details the purchase of 2,595 mina of grain from Sicily. No further details are provided besides the amount of grain, listed in mina, brought into the city of Genoa somehow, the ultimate provenance of the grain, and the amount of money paid for the grain. A mina is a unit of dry weight that the Genoese used to measure both salt and grain. The “m” symbol bounded by the box is an abbreviation for this term and the provenance has been underlined. The term is pre-classical in origin. In the ancient Near East, a mina was a unit of weight that was divided into fifty shekels. This system was incorporated into the classical world, where a mina equaled first seventy and then one hundred drachmae.⁴⁰⁸ Curiously, Genoa appears to be the only city to use this particular unit, and It is useful to determine exactly how much grain the commune purchased in 1378.

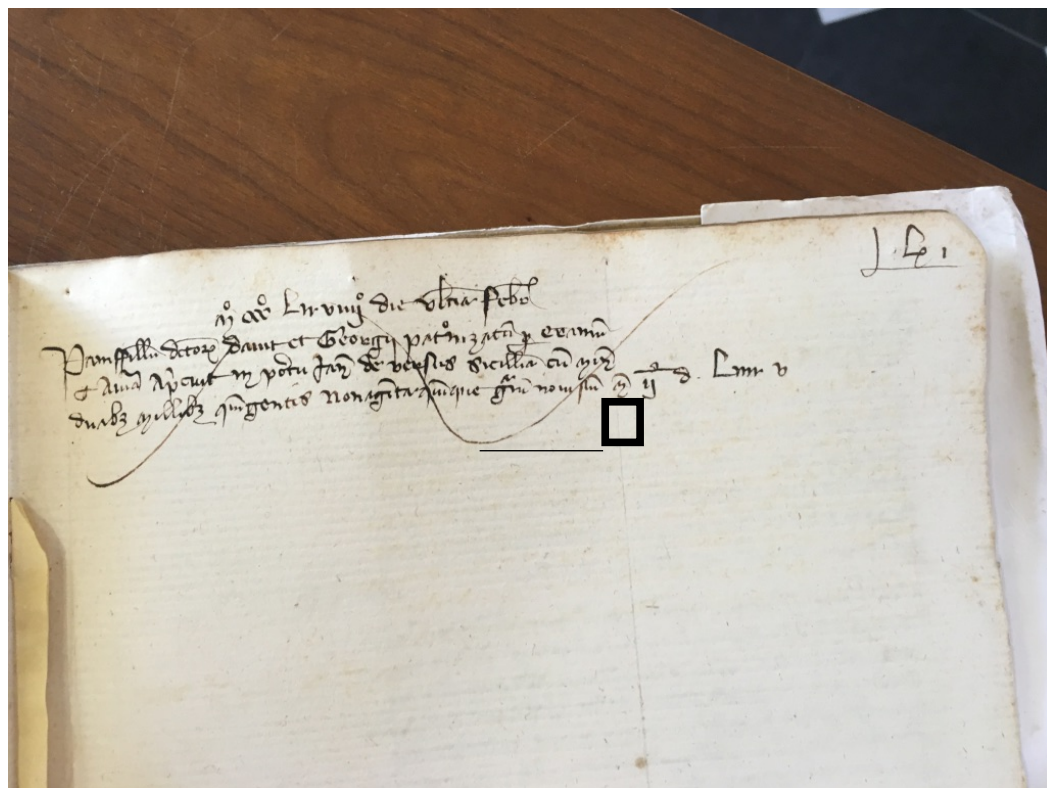


Figure 6

⁴⁰⁸ For reference, see “Weights and Measures,” in *The Oxford Companion to the Bible*, eds. Michael D. Coogan and Bruce M. Metzger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), accessed online.

The *Pratica della Mercatura*, or the *Practice of Commerce*, written by the Florentine merchant, Francesco Balducci Pegolotti in the mid-fourteenth century helps us to calculate the amount of grain in a mina. The text is meant to be a handbook of useful information for merchants, particularly those working in the eastern Mediterranean.⁴⁰⁹ Most of the text is a list of ports with conversions of the weights and measures employed there into Tuscan units as well as currency conversions. Pegolotti had extensive experience from which he drew while writing his work. He was a “factor,” that is to say an administrative officer, of the Florentine Bardi banking family in Cyprus. Here, it can be assumed, he would have met many Genoese and is a reputable authority for the conversion rate. He states that the mina is used for grain, rice, all cereals, and legumes (*grano, e orzo, e tutti biadi, e legumi*).⁴¹⁰ Interestingly, he lists the tolls imposed on visitors to the port, saying that they had to pay four Genoese denarii per mina (he does not specify a mina of what, but we should assume it refers to grain or salt) upon entrance to and exit from the port among other potential charges.⁴¹¹ Crucially, however, he converts the Genoese *mina* into a known unit: the Florentine *staio* (pl. *staia*). According to Pegolotti, a mina is worth 4.916 *staia*, and a single *moggio* (*modius*, see chapter 1) is equal to twenty-four *staia*. Using these conversions, it will be possible to understand the extent that the *victualium* supported the city of Genoa. Therefore, the city imported about 5,479 *moggia* of grain, well short of the 12,480 needed according to a ratio of 240 *moggia* per week calculated in chapter 2. As we suggested in chapter 2, this is a very low estimate for both. This suggests that the

⁴⁰⁹ Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La Pratica della Mercatura*, ed., Allan Evans (Cambridge: The Mediaeval Academy of America, 1936).

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 216.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 218.

institution of the *victualium* was not meant to feed the city year-round. Rather, was a response to an immediate subsistence crisis and a way to shore up *popolo* support for the ducal regime. Finally, as we shall see shortly, we do not have absolute confirmation that each and every one of these *mina* were consumed in Genoa.

Table 1: 1378 Register (ASG, AC 139)⁴¹²

Provenance	Number of entries	Number of Minae	Total Money Spent	Average Price Per Mina (solidi per mina)
Marittima	5	2,154	l. 93 s. 13 d. 0	1.6
Sicily	11	16,263	l. 2629 s. 0 d. 6	3.27
Provence	11	8,334	l. 974 s. 1 d. 6	1.18
Totals	27	26,751	l. 3,696 s. 14 d. 12	

Clearly, this register is operating according to the administrative logic of the Genoese state. The fact that the *introitus* and *exitus* entries are not listed on facing pages, but their partners are recorded with exact-page references suggests that this cartulary was collected and recorded after the fact, and, as we shall see, the financial aspects were of paramount importance here. Further evidence of this can be found on five recto and verso (figures 4 and 5). These pages are a summary of the contents of the entire volume. Crucially, this summary is dated to April 25, 1378, which is the month after the terms of office of the administrators were supposed to end. Interestingly, there is a complete total of money spent—3,661 pounds, 18 solidi, and 6 denarii.

⁴¹² *Officium Victualium*, 1378.

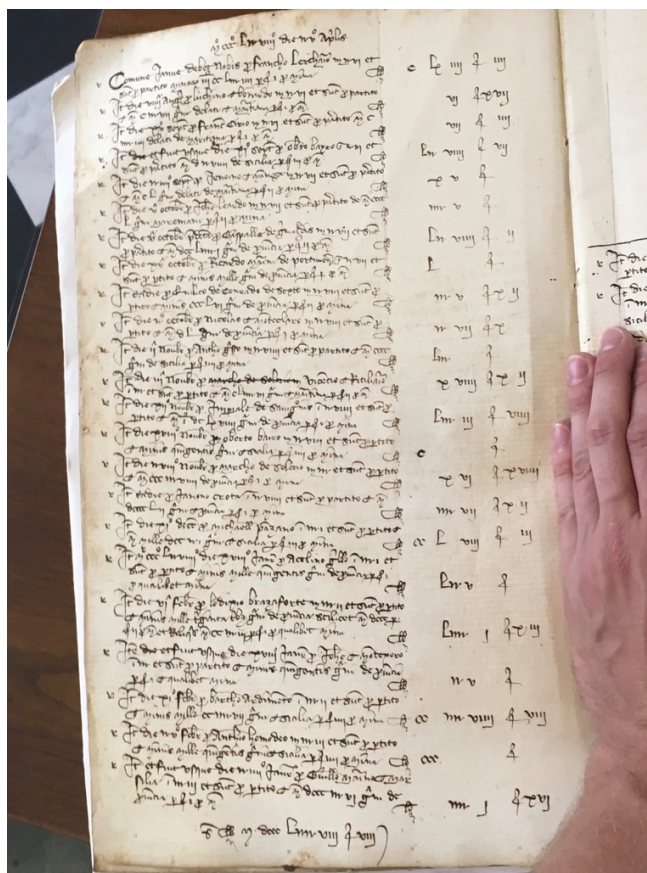


Figure 7

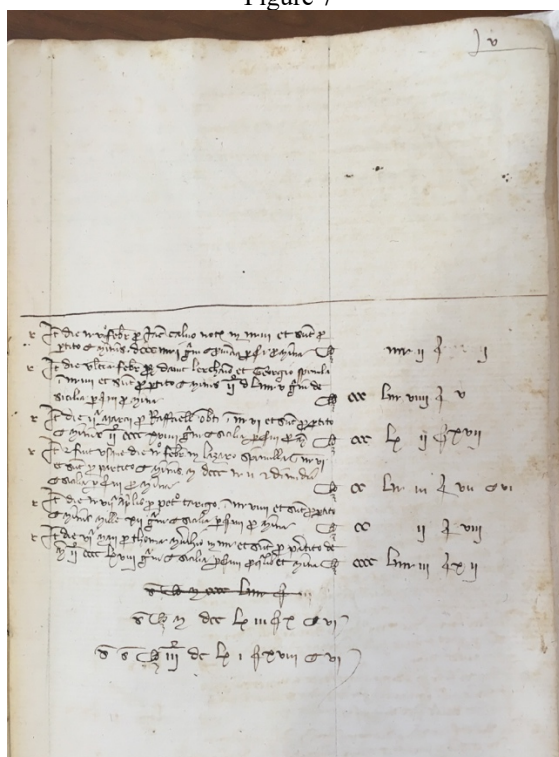


Figure 8

The fact that the summary of this cartulary focuses on money is perhaps a reflection of necessity. The grain was presumably consumed or in the process of being consumed, but the money that paid for it was at the forefront of the minds of the administrators that guided the Genoese government. Indeed, the fact that the cartulary only describes the provenance of the grain in very general toponymic terms, paying no attention to the ships that ferried the grain, its quality, and other related information one would expect to find in an administrative apparatus that oversees grain distribution. Provence is a big place, with more than one port. Rather, we should understand this purely as fiscal records, and this was the primary reason for their recording. Thus, while the information that can be extracted from these texts seems voluminous, we should be careful about how we rely on this data to reconstruct the past. As we shall see below, if we consider the contents of all the registers together, we will find that the *victualium* could not have accounted for all of the grain products consumed in Genoa during a particular year; these records do not include grain imported and sold by independent merchants and middlemen or agricultural produce from Liguria. Finally, I would suggest that it is not in the nature or capacity of medieval governments or the documents they produced to be a full and complete reckoning of anything they purport to cover. As stated above, medieval documents of practice were created to suit the needs of their contemporaries. They are based in a logic of the past, and we have no idea about the care or accuracy paid to the data they record. Indeed, it is difficult to assume that medieval administrators had the same notions of accuracy that we have today.

Pierre Chastang's recent work, *La ville, le gouvernement et l'écrit à Montpellier*, helps to explain the utility of this paperwork and place it within a broader regional context.

As discussed in the introduction, Chastang's work is an exploration of administrative documents from the city of Montpellier beginning in the twelfth century but focusing on the fourteenth. While this dissertation has focused on Italy, we should remember that these national borders are thoroughly modern constructions, and medieval Languedoc, while possessing characteristics that made it culturally distinct, also shared many things with Italy and other surrounding regions—especially commercial practice and civil administration.⁴¹³

The most apparent example of this shared administrative culture is visible in numerals that the notaries used in Chastang's study—they wrote Ligurian numerals. The French historian creates categories of purposes of administrative writing: to list (*mettre en liste*), to investigate (*enquêter*), to appraise (*expertiser*), and to communicate (*communiquer*). According to Chastang, the list, in the medieval mind, has biblical roots; they are “symbolic of the infinite, of the ‘infinite universe’ (José Luis Borges) . . . ”⁴¹⁴ The author follows this sentence with a lengthy quote from the Vulgate Revelation before stating:

The list thus makes it possible to classify and know, to bring together according to common criteria, to form groups, classes, and sets; it possesses, consequently, a real noetic power, of which societies since the birth of writing in Mesopotamia knew how to take advantage.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ See, for example, Kathryn Reyerson, “Montpellier and Genoa: The dilemma of dominance, *Journal of Medieval History* 20, 4 (December 1994): 359–372.

⁴¹⁴ Chastang, *La ville, le gouvernement et l'écrit à Montpellier*, 279

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 280. *La liste permet ainsi de classer et de connaître, de rapprocher des objets selon des critères communs, de former des groupes, des classes et des ensembles; elle possède par conséquent un véritable pouvoir noétique, dont les sociétés, depuis la naissance de l'écriture en Mésopotamie, ont su tirer parti.*

Chastang goes on to describe how Montpellier used lists as a way of projecting power by creating public memory.⁴¹⁶ As we shall see in the next chapter, it is very difficult to accept that these documents were meant to be a true and complete accounting of every modius of grain that passed through the gates of Genoa, they fit into this larger scheme of making public the functions of the state. They are creating a public record of the use of state money to fulfill subsistence needs.

Building on this point, there are two general conclusions that can be drawn from them: first, that they represent the institutionalization of *popolo* interests in the face of conflict and uncertainty. While the deployment of the *victualium* had the tangible effect of feeding members of this group—presumably the lower orders—it also served a political purpose by using state-debt spending to benefit a different group of people; and second, that the relative shifts in when money was spent, how much, and the provenance of the grain—especially in AC 143 (1384/1385)—demonstrate the ways external events, namely the War of Chioggia, shaped the *popolo* demand for grain and the potential sources for the satisfaction of that demand.

As we have explored both in this chapter and throughout the dissertation, the government of Genoa frequently sold off shares of its profits from the salt tax for overseas wars to support an ever-expanding commercial empire. Control of this debt meant that one could have access to political power in the city. Because Genoa's expansive commercial network benefitted most of the city's inhabitants in some way through trade, it probably benefitted some more than others, and it would not be surprising if the lowest orders of

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society, the *capite censi* in the parlance of Roman historiography, would have thought that the sale of state profits to finance these efforts and attendant loss of life was a waste of money and energy.

6.5: The *victualium* in the aftermath of the War of Chioggia

When the Genoese reinstituted the office in 1384/1385, the city's leaders once again faced a crisis of legitimacy in the face of unrest after a costly war and the return of the plague. It seems that *popolo* unrest—particularly among the lower orders that would have benefitted from *victualium* spending—had reached a breaking point by 1383. The War of Chioggia, which had led Genoa to the brink of victory over their rivals, snatched defeat from the jaws of victory. That said, to many Genoese, it must have felt like a defeat. The escalation of hostilities was over competition over the island of Tenedos, a crucial link in the shipping routes from the Black Sea to Italian Peninsula. By the outbreak of war, the Ligurian city had already fortified the island, and they received their rights to do so from the Byzantine Emperor—albeit one pretender among several. Over the course of the war, they pushed Venice to the brink of defeat, only to be pushed back, and the Genoese were forced to sue for peace. The Peace of Turin, the treaty that ended the war, forced Genoa to deconstruct their fortifications on the island of Tenedos, and Stella reports that Genoa conformed to this requirement the following year.⁴¹⁷ Genoa had long dominated access to the Black Sea, but this was yet another Venetian success in this crucial trade-zone.

⁴¹⁷ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 184.

The emotional fallout from the war and de-fortification of Tenedos in the aftermath of the War of Chioggia would have certainly contributed to the feelings of unrest that bubbled up in 1383. The Genoese never had patience for losers. Stella gives some interesting information about how the *popolo* expressed their dissatisfaction that also hints at the ways that *popolo* identity had become contested. The entry for the year begins with a conflict between the doge, Niccolo Guarco, and the *anziani*. Guarco would not assent to the particular *visitatores* (not named) assigned to his office because he said these fiscal officers refused to grant him control over money that he needed to pay armed men (*armigeros*). Stella clearly sees the good sense in this because he saw these guards as a private army.⁴¹⁸ Perhaps Guarco deserves some sympathy in retrospect. We have already seen that the *Regulae Communis Ianuae*, the doge was supposed to have *milites* escorts, although perhaps not as many as Guarco wanted.

This disagreement over finances caused the doge and the *anziani* to call a general council to settle the dispute. According to Stella, this general council included as many people from the *contado* as the city. Interestingly, the chronicler uses *nostrantes* to describe the intraurban population. He continues to provide details about the meeting. He reports that Guarco told the crowd that he was bound (*ligatus erat*) by the eight, who were not *nobiles* and Guelphs, and they were turned against him because he was “was drawn from the Guelphs and was a noble” himself. But Stella rejects this, saying that “he was *popolo* and Ghibelline and was born of this type.”⁴¹⁹ He goes on to say that bearers of this name

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 184. “*ad stipendium quosdam armigeros, quos capere volebat ad custodiam*

⁴¹⁹ Ibid. The entire section reads: “*protulit idem dux gentis multitudini contra dictos octo verba querele quod ligatus erat iniquens quodque a quibusdam nobilis guelfus tractabatur; et hoc erat valde veritati contrarium; nome ratio purus de popolo et gibellinus et talis natus erat.*”

had ideas above their station, and this led to the destruction of the republic. At that point, the Guarco regime was completely weakened. The *visitatores* then came forward with their accusation that the doge wanted to recruit a private army and rule the city himself. In order to prevent the assembled crowd from loosing—to use Guarco’s terminology found in Stella—the doge from the bonds of the oversight of the *visitatores*, the butchers’ guild sent representatives to disperse the crowd by offering meat at reduced prices. The butchers then gathered in front of the church St. Thomas, where they were accustomed to selling meat after Easter, and created a commotion, shouting “long live the *popolo*” (*vivat populus!*).⁴²⁰ This caused commotion among the members of the suburban communities of Polcevera, Voltri, and Bisagno. As the *popolo* revolted, they began to make their demands known. Stella states that:

Then, on the day after the nones [of March], many citizens came to the house of the Order of the Preachers [presumably Santa Maria di Castello, a Dominican church just to the southwest of the ducal palace], and indeed all the men from the three valleys of Genoa [north of Genoa], and who were all armed, nearly two thousand in number. Then, those men from the valleys came into the city and yelled, “long live the *popolo* and let the public collections die,” which [referring to the public collections] are called gabelles and tolls; the others clamored for the state to be changed or [at least] the ruler of the city. And Leonardo de Montaldo was selected [as the new doge] . . .⁴²¹

Stella goes on to say that the *popolo* called for new *anziani*, which were to all be from the *popolo*, and Leonardo Montaldo was made doge. The chronicler continues his entry for

⁴²⁰ For the actions of the butchers, see *Ibid.*, 185.

⁴²¹ *Ibid.* “*Qua die post nonam domum fratrum Predicatorum multi cives iverunt et etiam homines de tribus vallibus Ianue, qui omnes armati erantque pene duo millia numero; dum autem essent ipsi de vallibus urbem ingress clamabant aliqui: “Vivat populus et moriantur collections publica,” quas appellabant cabellas et toltas; alii clamabant quod status mutaretur Urbis seu eiusdem dominium. At Leonardus de Montaldo legista . . .*”

1383 by describing how the new *anziani* were all drawn from the *mercantes* or guilds and how the city of Genoa was thus returned to a pacific state.

The information that Stella provides for these years is particularly rich. And we have good reason to accept his description of events—Stella states that he attended the original assembly that Guarco called when he was a boy. It is also in this passage that Stella states that he “is of the *popolo* and therefore Ghibelline.” Our narrator was clearly a man of some learning, and it is likely that he was related to the legal professionals and notaries. Indeed, one bearing the name Giovanni Stella, perhaps a father of our chronicler or some other relation, can be found among the officers of the *victualium* in 1391. I believe that it is not difficult to imagine that the legal professionals were entrenched leaders among the *popolo* because they facilitated its operation.

The goals of the uprising are illustrative of the concerns of the *popolo*, and they have a bearing on the *victualium* as we shall see. The urban *popolo* and their allies from north of the city pushed for all of the gabelles and tolls to be dissolved. These demands seem to have come from the individuals from the three valleys north of the city. This is probably because these individuals would have to come into the city to sell goods and thus would have been subjected to these tolls. These were the sources of revenue for the town as well, however, which also suggests that the *popolo* uprising was concerned with the state’s finances and where money was being directed. These *gabelles* were bleeding individuals dry without providing much day-to-day support for the members of the *popolo*. In this way, the subsequent spending on the *victualium* in 1384/1385 is a reflection of the renewed force of the *popolo* from 1383.

Unfortunately, the new doge was unable to reap the benefits of providing grain to the *capite censi* when a second precondition for the *victualium* reemerged: the plague. In March of 1384, the plague returned, and the entire clergy of the city led relics through the city, imploring God to lift the plague from the city. Unfortunately, the disease claimed the doge, and his ally, Antoniotto Adorno, replaced him and, based on the earliest entries that invoke his name, instigated the *victualium* once again in the early summer, thus, potentially in the aftermath of the abatement of the plague.

From June until October, the city imported 18425.25 *mina* of grain from local sources. The entries record that the grain came from Lombardy, Serravalle, and Gavi. These sources are very interesting to consider within the context of the previous years. First, and most obviously, it appears that the Genoese reach into the eastern Mediterranean and further abroad was severely weakened. The city was no longer importing grain from far abroad. It is likely that the destruction of the fortifications of Tenedos made the Genoese nervous about overseas commerce. Thus, all of the grain came from the immediate northeast. Indeed, both Gavi and Serravalle are located in the “three valleys” to the north of Liguria, whose inhabitants descended into the city to demand the destruction of the *gabelles*. These people would have been agriculturalists and would have been subjected to these fees regularly.

Additionally, we see evidence of the doge’s family participating directly in this grain distribution. Gabriele Montaldo, likely some relation of the doge, was responsible for two sizeable shipments of Lombard grain, the first equaling 2,513.125 *mina* and the second 1574.125 *mina*.⁴²² This significant contribution from a Montaldo, combined with the

⁴²² *Officium Victualium*, 1384–1385, Antico Comune 143, Archivio di Stato di Genova.

provenance of the grain, suggests that this institution of the *victualium* had a clear political motivation based on recent events affecting the government of the city but was catalyzed by a recent emergency—the plague. In this way, it is very much in step with the previous institutions of the *victualium*, which were politically motivated but compelled by recent events—either the plague or damage to agricultural production. Thus, while we can tie most of the instances of the existence of the *victualium* to crisis, there was a clear political motive behind each one.

The political ramifications of grain distribution become even clearer when we consider the final two reinstitutions of the *victualium* discussed in this dissertation—1390 and 1391. As Epstein has stated, “Beginning in 1390, Genoese politics became increasingly complex . . . ”⁴²³ This is an impressive statement given the myriad factions and revolts already discussed in this dissertation, but Epstein’s claim is correct. At this point, the new ruling group split up and the factionalism seems to have reached the levels seen in the 1330s—Stella’s period of *revolutiones*. Epstein goes on to state that the traditional division between Guelphs and Ghibellines once again became important. As before, the Ghibellines seem to have taken up common cause with the lower orders of the *popolo*, and the continued reintroduction of the *victualium* is best understood against this contrast.

The records of another administrative office, the *officium robarie*, are illustrative of this renewal of political violence; they include numerous examples from the 1390s of violent raiding perpetrated by political actors in Genoa. Although the extant manuscripts from this office postdate those of the *victualium*, the *robarie* actually predated the

⁴²³ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 244. The ellipses stand in for text directing the reader to the appendix, which lays out the numerous changes in government.

government of Boccanegra and was established around 1296.⁴²⁴ The original purpose of the office was to hear reprisal claims from foreign actors who sought recompense for acts of maritime theft that Genoese pirates perpetrated against them. As the face of Genoese foreign policy at that time, the archbishop served as the arbiter of these inquests during the thirteenth century. The *officium mercantie* acted as the inverse of the *Robarie* by petitioning foreign rulers on behalf of Genoese merchants who were victims of piracy seeking reimbursement.⁴²⁵

In 1339, however, the composition and purpose of the *Robarie* changed with the institution of the Boccanegra regime.⁴²⁶ Boccanegra saw an opportunity. Rather than the bishop, it was the doge and the *anziani* who heard claims. And rather than hearing reprisal claims from foreign merchants, the *Robarie* served as a space where Genoese citizens could level claims of piracy, banditry, or other examples of wrongdoing against other inhabitants of Genoa. In an effort to get a handle on the recalcitrant *nobiles* of Liguria, the *popolo* regime turned the *Robarie* into a forum where the government could levy claims of banditry, rebellion, or piracy against individuals acting against the state. The records of this office from the late fourteenth century are extant, and are currently held with the cartularies of the *officium giudiziari*.⁴²⁷ Many of these cases deal with raids on shipping, and we have hundreds of records detailing instances of maritime banditry that detail

⁴²⁴ Benjamin Kedar, "L'Officium Robarie di Genova: Un tentativo di coesistere con la violenza," *Archivio storico italiano* 143 (1983), 331–372.

⁴²⁵ Sohmer-Tai, "Honor Among Thieves," 420.

⁴²⁶ Ibid., 421.

⁴²⁷ The initial records of the *Robarie* were likely held in the archiepiscopal archive. Sometime after the change in function, the records began to be held with the records of the popular regime in the *antico comune sottovello*, and they are currently grouped there with the *Notai Giudiziari*, which contain records of criminal proceedings. These documents are ASG, AC, *Notai Giudiziari*, Pietro di Sarzano, *notarius*, 1, 2 (in two volumes), and 3.

numerous captains losing valuable commodities, especially textiles.⁴²⁸ This sort of raiding could have led to fears in Genoa about the stability of subsistence networks.

We also have evidence of Ligurian rebels targeting agricultural lands. For example, in 1396, one Giacomina denounced the recently deposed doge Antonio Guarco, who is described in the text as a rebel (*rebellis*) and an enemy of the commune of Genoa (*inimicus comunis ianuæ*). According to his accuser, Guarco had destroyed the agriculture of the Bisagno area, laying waste to grapevines, melon patches, and other agricultural sources of wealth.⁴²⁹ Furthermore, the fact that this was in Bisagno, to the north in the three valleys, suggests that the inhabitants of this district and the Ghibellines in the city had formed a more solid alliance.

This sort of devastation echoes the description of violence of Marchese Giorgio di Carretto at Albenga and indicates the normality of this sort of destruction at the hands of *nobiles* raiders. The new doge at the time, the returned Antoniotto Adorno, was only too happy to confirm Giacomina's denunciation; indeed, he had recently taken the office from Guarco himself.⁴³⁰ Using the weight of his mandate to declare the former occupant of his office a rebel and a man now responsible for the destruction of the agriculture of Bisagno, a settlement to the north east of Genoa that is now part of the modern city, the doge was able to delegitimize the politically oriented violence of his rival. This attack was not an

⁴²⁸ Cf. ASG, AC, *Notai Giudiziari* 1, 5. It should be noted that the pagination of the registers of the *Notai Giudiziari* is irregular. Citations represent marked page numbers (in Ligurian numerals). There is an Italian translation undertaken by Roccatagliata, which helps to organize the documents, but the translation does not always reflect the format of the text. This example is a rather large "haul". Pirates made off with a number of shirts, expensive spices (e.g. saffron), and even the ship's supplies.

⁴²⁹ Giacomina's case can be found in a series of entries in ASG, AC, *Notai Giudiziari*, 4.2, Folio 105–107. The doge and his *anziani* did their due diligence and acquired a series of witness testimonies when handing down judgement on Guarco. Bisagno is located to the north of Genoa, near the current home of Sampdoria F.C. and F.C. Genoa: The Stadio Comunale Luigi Ferraris.

⁴³⁰ Stella, *Annales Genuenses*, 207.

isolated event. Later in 1396, the Fieschi along with their followers attacked Genoese territory in Polcevera incurring 3,291 Genoese pounds worth of damage, a massive amount.⁴³¹ On December twenty-third, 1395, Giacomo di Vignolo di Chiavari denounced Perente di Polcevera, his followers, and the Guelphs for taking the city of Chiavari.⁴³² The prevalence of this sort of violence would have contributed to uncertainty over subsistence. This use of the state's ability to declare that particular individuals were rebels was presaged in the 1363 legal code of Antoniotto Adorno's ancestor, Gabriele Adorno. Here it states that the doge and his government have the ability to declare that individual political rivals are, in fact, rebels and to treat them as pirates by administering corporal justice (*penem corporalem*) and even executing them.⁴³³ Gabriele's descendent took this approach to another level, systematizing the punishment of rebels in a way that allowed him to attack his enemies.

6.6 Antoniotto Adorno and the *victualium*

This renewed chaos can be traced to 1385, when Niccolo Guarco, who had only taken over from the deceased Leonardo Montaldo the previous year, fled to Finari (Finari Ligure, situated between Albenga and Savona), where he joined with the local feudal nobility, the Marquess of Carreto, and the lords of Finari. Antoniotto Adorno seized power and demonstrated himself to be a prudent ruler. He continued the process of buying up lands

⁴³¹ ASG, AC 182–185, *Notai Giudiziari*, 4.2.

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 310–311.

and fortresses owned by wealthy families in Liguria on behalf of the commune.⁴³⁴ Crucially, for the purposes of the *victualium*, Adorno appears to have accepted Genoa's new place in the Mediterranean: a small city-state in a sea that was being dominated by larger powers. This acceptance led to the *victualium* tapping grain markets further afield.

Much of Adorno's reign seems to have been devoted to diplomacy. He arranged a treaty with Aragon that sought to bring about peace between the two and control piracy—a problem to which both Genoese and Aragonese actors contributed.⁴³⁵ As we shall see, this peace allowed for Genoa to import grain from the Iberian peninsula and Sicily, which was under Aragonese control at the time. Perhaps with an eye to continuing the importation of grain, which would shore up his support among the *popolo*, Adorno also sent ambassadors to negotiate a series of treaties with powers in the eastern Mediterranean. First, it appears that despite the agreement of the Peace of Turin, which ended the War of Chioggia, the Genoese and Venetians had continued hostilities in the eastern Mediterranean, which perhaps explains why the *victualium* was unable to import grain from the eastern Mediterranean. Genoese ambassadors convinced the new pope, Urban VI, to forgive the podestà of Pera, the Genoese colony on the Golden Horn, for violence perpetrated against the Venetians during this period.⁴³⁶ Next, he arranged for a treaty with the Ottoman Sultan Murad I (1362–1389).⁴³⁷ Murad was a particularly skilled Ottoman Sultan. When he acceded to the throne, the Ottomans were in control of much of northwest Turkey. By the end of his reign he had conquered much of Thrace, Thessaly, and historic

⁴³⁴ HPM 9, *Liber Iurium*, 929, 1025, 1054, 1202; cf. Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 243.

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 1082–1096. For agreements about pirates, see especially 1083.

⁴³⁶ Belgrano, ed., “Prima serie di documenti,” 144–145.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 145–146.

Macedonia. These conquests enabled him to exert significant control over movement in the eastern Mediterranean. The treaty set the cost of tolls. Crucially, the text states that the Genoese are able to purchase grain from anywhere in the domains of the Ottoman Empire.⁴³⁸ Finally, and perhaps most crucially, Adorno was able to negotiate for a remission of Genoese payments to Milan.⁴³⁹ This would have freed up funds to pay for the distribution of grain.

Despite Adorno's prudent governance, Pietro Campofregoso drove Adorno from power, forcing him to resign, but the new doge did not remain in office for long. Adorno returned once again the following year, continuing the work of the *victualium*. The registers for 1390 (AC 147), 1391/1392 (148), and 1393 (AC 149) are the only ones to have been examined in detail by another scholar—Michel Balard in his monumental *La Romanie Génoise*.⁴⁴⁰ Balard's work has been tremendously helpful here because they help us to understand the utility of the data found in these cartularies.

Balard provides the following table in his work:⁴⁴¹

Origin of the Wheat	Quantity of <i>mina</i>	Percentage
Sicily	31.010	45
Romania	11,242	16
Caffa	9.402	14
Spain	6.665	9.5

⁴³⁸ Ibid., 148.

⁴³⁹ HPM 9, *Liber Iurium*, 1127.

⁴⁴⁰ Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, 761–762; *Officium Victualium*, 1390, Antico Comune 147, Archivio di Stato di Genova; *Officium Victualium*, 1391/1392, Antico Comune 148, Archivio di Stato di Genova; *Officium Victualium*, 1392, Antico Comune 149, Archivio di Stato di Genova.

⁴⁴¹ Balard, *La Romanie Génoise*, 761–762.

Sardinia	3.772	5.5
Various provenances	6.829	10

The French scholar states that he collected the data displayed in these graphs from the registers of the *victualium* and the *rationales*, which contain records of various state expenses. Furthermore, there are significant issues with combining data from the *rationales* with the *victualium*. The *rationales* records contain all state expenditures, with simplified descriptions of spending. This means that Balard could have been counting the same purchases twice. Additionally, some of these grain purchases could have been made to support naval or military activities or even to support overseas colonies. We know for certain that all grain purchased by the *victualium* was actually consumed in Genoa or Liguria. Having read through AC 147, I question his calculation of *mina* of Sicilian grain. By adding up entry of a grain purchases in only the *victualium* records, I found that the Genoese imported 51,746 *mina* of Sicilian grain. Furthermore, Romania is not even included in this volume. And grain from Caffa is even less significant in all of the extant records of the *victualium*, with a mere 5,897 *mina* of grain in AC 147. We do, however, get closer to sufficient grain to feed the city with 88,088 *mina* imported into the city. But as we shall see below, there is some reason to question how much of this was actually distributed to people living in Genoa. In fact, the *victualium* could have served all of Liguria. How do we use this information then, if there is a major disagreement about the actual relevant numbers? The answer is to accept that this sort of precise calculation of premodern data has too many inherent pitfalls that render the approach difficult to accept as unimpeachably accurate.

small compared to the estimate of Balard above. According to this section of AC 147, 3,975 *mina* of Sicilian grain and 4,052 *mina* from Cartalucho actually entered the hands of distributors. Ultimately, for the purposes of understanding subsistence and grain distribution, I think it best to eschew the precise calculation of data in favor of considering the topography of grain provenance recorded in these manuscripts and thinking of the numbers as relative to each other rather than a complete entity best understood as a whole.

Thinking topographically, Balard ignores grain from Cartalucho entirely. This grain, along with the local grain from Gavi and elsewhere found in the previous register suggest that the Genoese consistently relied on local grain, even when they imported grain from further afield in the eastern Mediterranean. The next two registers see an increase in the amount of grain from the eastern Mediterranean. AC 149 (1393), for example, sees the Genoese looking to grain from “Romania” and “Caffa,” but they never lost their reliance on local sources.

Despite this reliance on local grain, this research is further evidence of the seemingly limitless breadbasket of Sicilian grain. Sicilian grain dwarfs cereals from all other provenances in every cartulary where it is present. Throughout the period, the price remained fairly stable at 2 Genoese pounds per *mina*. That said, we can see changes within the grain market. By the end of AC 147 (1390), the largest register by far, the average price of Sicilian grain was 2.75 pounds per *mina*. The most useful insight, however, is the information that connects the records of the *victualium* to other contemporary legal texts and the evidence for the institutionalization of grain distribution as a crucial part of *popolo* governance of Genoa.

6.7: The regulation of grain distribution and production

We have already seen how the *victualium* was introduced after Boccanegra's return to power, when he ruled with a stronger backing from the *popolo*. He introduced the office three times in total, first in 1356 after his return, and then in 1360 and 1361. Crucially, the office returned in 1378 after Niccolo Guarco seized power with the backing of the *popolo*, and it was reintroduced during subsequent regimes. Antoniotto Adorno was the next doge to reintroduce the *victualium*. Adorno is interesting because he introduced it during the early period of his reign before he was thrown from power by a rival. Adorno then reintroduced the *victualium* after he retook power in less than a year. This is an undeniable pattern. One final set of laws—which was instituted during the brief reign of Doge Leonardo Montaldo and reissued or revised in 1386, during the reign of his ally and successor Antoniotto Adorno—read in conjunction with details from the 1393 register of the *victualium* (AC 149) serves to underline this point.

This new set of laws, called the *Capitula Conservatorum seu Ministrorum* (The Statutes of the Keepers of the State or Ministers) in its edited form are the major piece of legislation from the dogeship of Montaldo and Adorno. These laws, however, extend beyond restraining the authority of state officers; they set standards for society. They state on which feast days butchers can sell meat, they standardize weights and measures, and they standardize the pay of day laborers. It is also in these laws that we can see the institutionalization of grain in Genoese society.

The *Capitula Conservatorum* contains one hundred eighteen different statutes; the first twenty focus on grain processing, distribution, and consumption. The first three are

interesting to consider together because they outline why the Genoese state incorporated grain and bread into the administration of the state. The first law sets standards for the quality of grain to be milled and how much millers could charge for their services. It says:

We state and ordain that each and every miller, and those who exercise the office and art [as an official member of the guild] of millers, must, by the chains of law, receive grain which is good for milling and to guard and protect it legally, and concerning this grain, it should be made into flour, and it should not be exchanged or combined, and they should not accept any of the grain for milling but the *vintenam*. And if by chance a mina of grain should cost more than 30 solidi (1.5 Genoese pounds), they should not accept it for milling unless they receive 18 denarii per mina (for the milling).⁴⁴²

It is possible that these reflect older guild statutes, but the fact that they are written down in the open is reflective of the *popolo* strategy of making the functioning of the state public. The law continues to discuss what should happen if anyone should contravene these requirements—they should pay a fine, 20 solidi for each illicitly milled mina of grain—and other potential problems millers could face. The second statute concerns bread shops, stating that “each and every *pancoglio* and people making bread for sale in the city of Genoa should not allow any person living in the city to acquire for their own use or other, “grain that is not good, sold in the market, and sufficient for making bread as white as everything sold for paste (*pasta*) [at an alchemist].”⁴⁴³ The third law reinforces that grain should not be contaminated. It states that:

“Not any *pancogli*, or anyone else making bread for sale, should mix good grain with bad, nor good flour with bad for making bread. But they should make the bread from good grain and sold in the market; nor indeed should they mix Lombard grain

⁴⁴² HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 396. I was unable to identify an exact definition of *vintenam*. I can only assume, based on context, that it refers to the ear and that it is impermissible to use the less nutritious stalk.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., “*granum non sit bonum, merchantille et sufficiens, secum idoneum ad faciendum panem tam albam quam de tota pasta pro vedendo.*”

with any other grain, under penalty of ten florins for whatever or however many crimes.”⁴⁴⁴

It is interesting how obsessed these laws are with pure grain. Reading between the lines, it becomes clear that the framers of these statutes had two interrelated goals. First, these laws make it clear that the people of Genoa should have regular access to good bread, made with pure grain. In order to ensure this, the millers and bread sellers need to be made not to cut corners and make poorer quality of bread to increase their profits.

The problem with these requirements is that they could force bread merchants to lose money or raise the price of bread so high that quality bread would become unattainable for the poorest elements of society. To counteract this, these laws prescribe a price equilibrium. Law five describes how bread sellers must make bread at a certain weight (or set of weights). The statute also includes a table of prices of bread, which includes the set prices of bread according to weight. These weights can be changed according to the judgement of the *conservatores*. The records of the *victualium* fit into this structure that supposedly controlled the prices at which *pancogli* purchased grain. Figure 7 comes from AC 147; it shows how grain from Cartalucho was sold to proprietors of individual *pancogli* at a rate of 2.25 Genoese pounds per *mina*, while grain from Sicily was sold at a rate of 2.75 Genoese pounds per *mina*.⁴⁴⁵ The grain average price per *mina* at which the government bought that grain was 2.78 Genoese pounds per *mina*. Averaging out grain purchases from the previous section, the commune paid 1.86 pounds per *mina* for grain from Cartalucho. In both cases, the city was operating at a loss.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., 396–397.

⁴⁴⁵ *Officium Victualium*, 1390, 248 Verso.

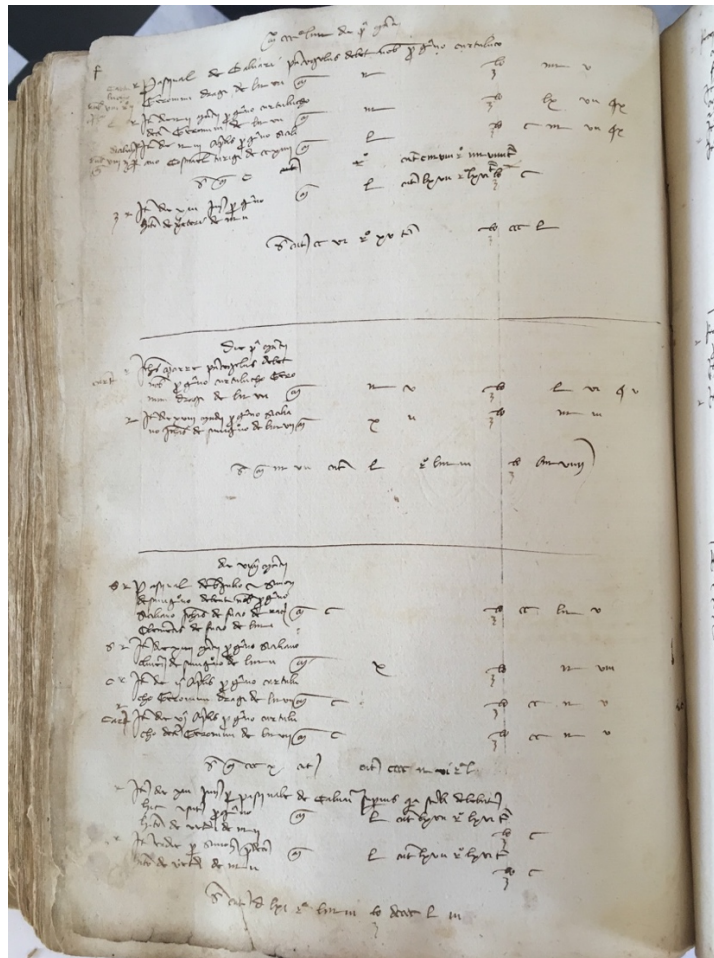


Figure 11

In order to ensure that these rules were being followed, law five also includes a requirement that the *conservatores* and their scribes should investigate the price of grain and record it on irregular days.⁴⁴⁶ Perhaps this irregularity is meant so that owners of *pancogli* could not expect an investigation and keep them only conforming to the rules on appointed days. The most interesting part of this system of maintaining price and quality is found in rule four, which allows *pancogli* to make up for unsold bread. It states that at any point, someone is able to bring sellable bread to the state, which will buy it up.⁴⁴⁷ One

⁴⁴⁶ HPM 18, *Leges Genuenses*, 398.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., 397.

final law, number 104, shows how the state's finances and its stability were bound up in these sales of grain. It requires the *conservatores* to assess the prices of all grain, wine, and wood that is owned by the state make half of it available for public sale. It is likely that the sale of grain in figure 7 are the result of such a sale.

The final register of the *victualium* discussed here illustrates how the *victualium* was integrated into this structure of grain distribution. Adorno's return to power did not last long. He was replaced by Antonio Montaldo, who held the ducal office until 1393. AC 149 spans the end of Adorno's reign and the beginning of Montaldo's. The beginning of the register announces that it contains all the expenses related to grain purchases. It also hints at the fact that the *victualium* may have served more than just Genoa, saying that it contains expenses from all the officials from *albergi*, constabularies, and jurisdictions under the control of Genoa.⁴⁴⁸ While this suggests that some of the grain was consumed outside of Genoa in greater Liguria, it also confirms that the *victualium* records describe grain that was consumed locally and not by military expeditions or in the colonies.

The end of the text includes a list of individuals who could put up money for grain brought in by the office.⁴⁴⁹ Furthermore, it explicitly states that the money for these purchases is supposed to come from the *officium massariis*, that is to say it was financially connected to the state debt. Interestingly, at the end of the entry, the man who signed this text on behalf of the *popolo* is one Giovanni Stella. Here we have a notary integrating the *victualium* into the legal-political superstructure and the state debt. To summarize, the records of the *victualium* are a link in a chain of grain distribution that begins with money

⁴⁴⁸ *Officium Victualium*, 1392, Antico Comune, 149, Archivio di Stato di Genova, 1 recto.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 82 Recto

raised from the sale of shares in the debt. This money was distributed by the *massarii* to the *victualium*, when the officers of this administrative apparatus paid for grain imported abroad. From there it was sold to bread merchants nearly at cost or even at a loss.

6.8: Conclusions

Unfortunately for the *popolo minuto*, the poorer elements of Genoese society, the political chaos only increased through the end of the 1390s. Indeed, there were four different men who claimed the office of doge in 1394. The sorts of effort that the Genoa put into stabilizing grain distribution could never bear fruit in the chaotic environment of Genoese politics. To solve the issue, the Genoese resorted to more extreme measures. In a series of meetings, the members of the *popolo* debated subordinating themselves to the king of France, Charles VI (r. 1380–1422) who they hoped would be a sort of “super-podestà” that could step in and impose order on the city. The decision-making bodies eventually agreed to this solution in 1396, and Charles sent his representative Jean Boucicaut, to administer the city. The king and his representative was unable to accomplish this, and characteristically, the city very quickly rejected the current political order, revolting in 1400. Unfortunately, the French king had a taste for power in Italy and invaded Italy in the fifteenth century.

Characteristically, the Genoese were unable to remain under the oppressive, but stable, thumb of the king of France. Unfortunately, after the exile of the king of France, the Genoese eventually descended into more violent factionalism. The city did, however, solve the problem of the facilitation of the state debt with the creation of the Casa di San Giorgio

in 1407. All of the debt was consolidated into a single institution through a complex process wherein exchanged for a new *compera*, that of San Giorgio. These shares would only pay returns of 7%. The new organization succeeded in regularly paying out the interest. At the same time, members could borrow money from the Casa's revenues from Caffa and Pera. This revenue helped to pay for grain distribution, but the *victualium* records from the era after 1407 follow the new model of Casa paperwork. Unfortunately, the Casa could not keep up with spending, and had to lower interest rates.⁴⁵⁰

Despite the failure of the Casa to keep up with payments, the creation of the institution was a valuable experience that aided Genoa in the new world that was being created by centralizing "national monarchies." The story of Genoa in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is a narrative of the city struggling to maintain its sovereignty, as it gradually found itself sinking deeper and deeper into the orbit of the Spanish crown. The Genoese became important fiscal administrators in the Habsburg imperial structure. They used the lessons they learned in state banking and finances and helped the Habsburg monarchs after the bankruptcy of the Spanish crown in 1557. The Genoese bankers provided this king with fluid lines of credit.⁴⁵¹ Understanding the way social origins of these experiences gives greater depth to this important "modern" institution that fundamentally shaped the development of national credit systems.

⁴⁵⁰ Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese*, 259–260.

⁴⁵¹ Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, 500–504.

Conclusion: bread distribution and definitions of modernity

This dissertation has reconstructed the relationship between grain distribution and the politics and fiscal structure of medieval Genoa. To conclude, we shall place this narrative within the evolution of the important role that the distribution of subsistence materials played in the political and social history of premodern Europe and beyond. In the introduction, we touched on the importance of grain distribution to the foundational “*populares*” politicians of the late Roman Republic, the Gracchi brothers. It is worth considering examples of the political ramifications of grain distribution in the modern era to place the Genoese example within the *longue durée* of the distribution of grain and subsistence products in Western History. We shall focus on two examples specifically: the failure of the crown of France to distribute adequate grain in years preceding the French Revolution and the experience of the Corn Laws in early nineteenth century England.

Steven Kaplan’s massive work, *Bread, Politics and Political Economy in the Reign of Louis XV* is perhaps the most exhaustive exploration of the way grain distribution shaped the political economy of a region in world history.⁴⁵² In the introduction, Kaplan effectively describes the ways the threat of grain shortage affected the psyche of “preindustrial societies”:

The subsistence problem dominated life in old regime Europe in a merciless and unrelenting way. No issue was more urgent, more pervasively felt, and more difficult to resolve than the matter of grain provisioning. Cereal-dependence conditioned every phase of social life. Grain was the pilot sector of the economy; beyond its determinant role in agriculture, directly and indirectly grain shaped the development of commerce and industry, regulated employment, and provided a major source of revenue for the state, the church, the nobility, and large segments

⁴⁵² Steven L. Kaplan, *Bread, politics and political economy in the reign of Louis XV*, 2 vols., Archives internationales d’histoire des idées 86 (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976).

of the third estate. Subsistence needs gave cereal-dependence its most telling expression. The vast majority of people in the old regime derived the bulk of their calories from cereals, in bread or some other form. Never did the old proverb “a man is what he eats” hold truer. Because most people were poor, the quest for subsistence preoccupied them relentlessly; the study of how they dealt with their never-ending subsistence problem tells us a good deal about who and what they were.⁴⁵³

Kaplan is describing eighteenth-century France, but the world he describes could just as easily be medieval Italy, or even Ancient Rome if one considers alternatives for the Church and the estates. The idea that understanding grain distribution “tells us a good deal” about the subjects of historical inquiry in the premodern world is relevant here. Like the *popolo* politicians of fourteenth century Genoa, the kings of France, particularly Louis XV, developed a system for regulating grain distribution that buttressed the crown’s legitimacy.

Given the extent of the French crown’s authority by the eighteenth century, the system the kings created was much more elaborate superstructure for regulating grain distribution. For example, Louis XV developed a police force for ensuring grain prices and quality, going above and beyond the set of laws regulating grain trade found in Genoa. Indeed, it seems that Louis XV was able to control the activities of grain merchants, which was the primary preoccupation of the mercantilist state.⁴⁵⁴

Eventually, as is well known, the grain harvests in France failed, which was a contributing factor to the Revolution in 1789. The famine of the 1780s was not the only subsistence crisis the inhabitants of late eighteenth-century France faced. There was a severe shortage in the 1770s, which led to the “Flour Wars” of 1775. In another book on the bakers of Paris and France themselves, *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question*,

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 1:XVI.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid., 1:52–96.

Kaplan reports that the inhabitants of Reims declared that “if the price of bread does not go down, we will exterminate the king and all the Blood of the Bourbons.”⁴⁵⁵ *The Bakers of Paris* focuses on the regulation of “good grain” that could make high quality bread. The French government of the ancient régime more aggressively policed the sort of *granum bonum* the *popolo* government sought to ensure.

The Corn Laws and the Anti-Corn Law League in nineteenth-century England are a second example of the way grain distribution and popular politics were related. The Corn Laws were a series of laws enforced between 1815 and 1846. These regulations placed high tariffs on imported grain. This was done in an effort to control prices, ensure profits for landlords, and make Britain self-sufficient. These laws spawned a massive political debate between those that supported free trade and mercantilist holdouts, and radical populist politicians with the elite. According to Paul A. Pickering and Alex Tyrell:

Repeal of the Corn Laws had long been part of the programme of working-class radicals. In 1815 they had bitterly opposed the new regulations, and they had denounced the bread tax as the cause of much of their suffering during the years of economic depression that had followed the French Wars. For William Cobbett whose writings enjoyed pride of place on the shelves of many radical working men, the Corn Laws provided one of the most blatant examples of the system of ‘Old Corruption’ that had buttressed the economic and political power of the landowners. They increased the price of bread for the poor, and, like the sinecures and pensions that an unrepresentative Parliament provided for its ‘friends’, they placed a burden of a parasitic and heartless aristocracy on the backs of the people.⁴⁵⁶

The Corn Laws helped to spur the (very) incremental movement toward the development of pro-labor political parties in England. These two examples, drawn from

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question, 1700–1775* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 23.

⁴⁵⁶ Paul A. Pickering and Alex Tyrell, *The People’s Bread: A History of the Anti-Corn Law League* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 139.

both ends of the period that is said to be the end of the “early modern period” and the “modern” period demonstrate something about the past: the politics of empty mouths is a constant throughout history. Countless scholars have discussed and debated what it is that makes the world we live in today modern. Yet one thing remains unchanged—the necessities of subsistence drive political movements. While this is not to say that nothing has changed over time. But it is relevant to recognize that we do not yet live in an age free from want. While the dream of living in a Utopia may just be that, it is worth considering that even as technological advancement increases at an exponential rate, there are still powerful aspects of contemporary life that connect us to the premodern past.

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Paintings

De Grassi. *View of Genoa*. 1597. Oil on Canvas. In Museo Galata del Mare, Genoa.

Photo from Google street view of Genoa. Photography.
<https://www.google.com/maps/@44.4129583,8.9269094,3a,75y,85.79h,115.28t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sVrx8itMtD87L2PB2tWB1HQ!2e0!7i13312!8i6656>.

Davide Papalini. *Navata centrale della Chiesa di San Giovanni Battista, Monterosso al Mare*. From Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Monterosso_al_Mare-chiesa_San_Giovanni_Battista-navata_centrale1.jpg

St. Lawrence Cathedral. 2006. from Wikimedia Commons.
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:St.LawrenceCathedral.jpg>;

St Lawrence Cathedral (Interior). Taken from Wikimedia commons. 2006.
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Weise, K. *Church of Monterosso al Mare*. 2018. From Wikimedia Commons.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:ChiesaMonterossoFacc.jpg>.

Appendix 1: Maps

These maps display the locations referenced in the dissertation.



Appendix 2: Table of dates

568–774: Lombard Italy

775–961: Frankish rule over the Kingdom of Italy and their various successors.

935: Fatimid sack of Genoa.

958: The year that Adalbert and Berenger issued the charter confirming the political autonomy of Genoa.

1088: traditional date of the foundation of the University of Genoa.

1148: The establishment of the first *compera* of Genoa.

2 January 1122–10 June 1190: life of Frederick Barbarossa.

1133: The promotion of the bishopric of Genoa to an archbishopric.

1154–1155: first Italian campaign, which was the catalyst for the construction of Genoa's medieval walls (1155–1163).

1158: Barbarossa's second Italian expedition.

1158: Barbarossa's issue of the *Habita* decree that granted the University of Bologna Imperial status. This is the beginning of the university's rise to become the paramount institution of the study of law in medieval Latin Europe.

1162: Barbarossa's third Italian expedition.

1164: Barbarossa's fourth Italian expedition.

1183: signing of the Peace of Konstanz between the first Lombard League and Barbarossa, which guaranteed the autonomy of the Italian communes.

1191: The establishment of a podestà at Genoa.

1194–1250: Life of Frederick II.

1226: First descent of Frederick II into Italy when he confirmed Genoa's rights over the Riviera at his diet at Cremona.

1256–1270: War of San Sabas (first Genoese-Venetian War)

1257–1262: Reign of Guglielmo Boccanegra as *capitano dell popolo*.

1282–1302: War of the Sicilian Vespers.

1294–1299: War of Curzola (second Genoese-Venetian War).

1311: Arrival of Henry VII at Genoa.

1339–1345: First reign of Simone Boccanegra as doge.

1348–1349: Genoese-Byzantine War

1350–1355: War of the Straits (third Genoese-Venetian War).

1356–1363: Second reign of Boccanegra as doge of Genoa.

1363–1370: Reign of Gabriele Adorno as doge of Genoa.

1370–1378: Reign of Domenico Campofregoso as doge of Genoa.

1372: Genoese invasion of Cyprus.

1377–1381: War of Chioggia (fourth Genoese-Venetian War).

1378–1383: Reign of Niccolo Guarco as doge of Genoa.

1383–1384: Reign of Leonardo Montaldo as doge of Genoa.

1384–1390: First reign of Antoniotto Adorno as doge of Genoa.

1390–1391: First reign of Antonio Montaldo as doge of Genoa.

1391–1392: Second reign of Antoniotto Adorno as doge of Genoa.

1392–1393: Second reign of Antonio Montaldo as doge of Genoa.

1393: Pietro Campofregoso proclaimed doge, Clemente Promontorio proclaimed doge, Francesco Giustiniani proclaimed doge, Antonio Montaldo returns to the dogate for a third time.

1394: Niccolo Zoalio elected doge. Antonio Guarco elected doge for a second time. Antoniotto Adorno elected doge for a third time.

1396: Genoa submits to the king of France.

1407: Establishment of the Casa di San Giorgio.

Appendix 3: Glossary

Anziani: The name of the advisory body to the Genoese doges.

Arti: The term for guilds in medieval Italy. In Genoa, the *arti* were weaker than in other cities, especially Florence. But these confraternities saw their power increase under the regime of Doge Simone Boccanegra and his successors.

Capitano del Popolo: The captain of the people. First seen in Genoa in 1256/1257 but also established elsewhere. These were individuals vested with despotic authority to protect the rights and wellbeing of the *popolo*.

Compagna: The Genoese term for the commune, or the state. For much of the Middle Ages, the *compagna* was an oligarchy ruled by the members of the *nobilis* order.

Compera: The name of the system of state debt used in Genoa. Beginning in 1148, the Genoese sold shares of profits raised from the salt gabelle and other forms of indirect taxation in exchange for immediate capital to pay for state expenses, such as fleets, defenses, and troops.

Consuls: The elected officials that served as the main executive officers of the Genoese *compagna* and the other communes of medieval Italy. Both the number and lengths of the terms of office varied.

Doge: The Venetian term for duke. Though the office of doge is best-known in Venice, the *popolo* regime of 1339 established an office with this name in Genoa. It is likely that the *popolo*, who were fed-up with the *nobilis* factionalism that ran through the city's history up to that point, saw the legendary stability of the Venetian state and took their inspiration from that city.

Gabelle: A gabelle (or *gabella*) was a duty paid on products entering or exiting Genoese territory. The profits from the salt gabelle were used to pay investors in the various *compera*.

The Genoese commune: The term used by this dissertation to describe the informal arrangement of institutions that make up the Genoese state. These include the full assembly of individuals that had the right to participate in politics; local ecclesiastical structure; the public debt; the offices and political institutions that facilitated the participation of the elites; and the pacts of *concordia* that ensure the pacific state of the city.

Genoese pounds: The standard unit of currency found in the notarial records of Genoa. This was primarily a bookkeeping unit, and a mix of both local currencies and Florins

were in use in the market of Genoa. A Genoese pound can be broken into twenty solidi, which in turn can be broken into twelve denarii.

Guelph-Ghibelline: The political *parte* that emerged in the cities medieval Italy. The Guelphs were pro-papal, while the Ghibellines were pro-papal. They derived their names from imperial politics. The term Guelph is an Italianization of Welf, the major rivals of the Hohenstaufen emperors, while Ghibellines took their name from Waiblingen, the major Hohenstaufen fortress.

Holy Roman Emperor: The title adopted by Frederick Barbarossa and his successors. For our purposes, the Holy Roman Emperor could stand in for the Roman Emperor as the ultimate source of legal authority in the *Ius Comune* system and the major rival of the papacy in medieval Italy.

Introytus et exitus: The terms for credits—*introytus*, money coming in—and debits—*exitus*, money leaving or spent—used in medieval Italy and elsewhere.

Ius Comune: The legal system that emerged from the network of scholars, judges, and notaries in medieval Italy that would become the basis of European Civil Law. Mario Ascheri defines this system around five points: the formalization of concepts employed by the legal technocrats mentioned above; the system of written legislation based in “antiquity and centuries old wisdom;” the stimulus to “technicalization and transcription of local customs;” a criterion for the interpretation of codifications of local legislation that were written in a common legal language; and the method of integration of locally available legal codes. See above on p. 107 for a fuller explanation and citation.

Mercanti: The *mercantes* were the non-*nobilis* wealthy merchants who eventually forced their way into the political establishment. Unlike the *nobiles*, the *mercantes* did not have landed holdings and derived all of their wealth from trade.

Mina: The standard unit of measure in Genoa for salt and grain. A mina of grain was worth 4.916 Florentine *staia* or bushels.

Nobilis: The term used to describe the political elites of Genoa. Whereas the term *popolo* is used throughout Italy, there are different terms for the different political elites of the various cities in the region. For example, in Florence they are known as the *grandi*. Unlike the *grandi* of Florence, however, the original *nobiles* were exactly that, families that bore noble titles and often had landed holdings. While much of their wealth was derived from their landed wealth, the *nobiles* also engaged in commercial activity.

Pancoglio: The Ligurian term for a bread shop.

Podestà: A type of executive officer that emerged in twelfth and thirteenth century Italy and Languedoc to settle disputes among the fractious political classes that dominated cities in these regions. These were always foreigners. The idea was that these individuals

would not have any ties to local disputes and their impartial decisions would be accepted. The podestà became a professional class, and the sons of podestà often followed in their fathers' footsteps.

Popolo: The non-elite stratum of society in Genoa and other cities in Italy. For much of the early and central Middle Ages, members of this group were actively excluded from political participation in Genoa.

Quattuor gentes: The four major families that were the core of the *nobilis* order. They were the Fieschi, Grimaldi, Spinola, and Doria.

Officium massarii: The office of sums. This was the central fiscal office of the Genoese commune. Money from this office was transferred to the other fiscal *officia*, like the *victualium*, where it was spent.

Officium robarie: Originally established in the late thirteenth century as a reprisal to receive complaints of Genoese piracy from foreign merchants, the fourteenth century *doges* transformed it to level accusations of banditry and piracy against their political rivals.

Officium victualium: The office of provisions. This office spent money from the *officium massarii* on grain that was distributed to the people of Genoa and Liguria through the *pancogli*.

Officium visitatores: The office of "overseers." These were the officers of the fourteenth century *popolo* governments who oversaw the *introitus* and *exitus* of the *compagna* and the *officium massarii*.