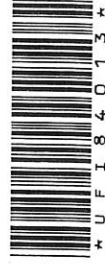


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# CULTURES OF VOTING IN PRE-MODERN EUROPE

*Edited by Serena Ferente, Lovro Kunčević,  
and Miles Pattenden*



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*Investigation Conducted by the Copenhagen Polis Centre* (Copenhagen: Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabsnævn Selskab, 2000), especially the "Conclusion" at 597–623.

41 Such a particular idea of freedom in respect to local tradition, even within a superior rule or without a real democratic participation, is strongly emphasized by E. Igor Mimeo, "La repubblica come categoria storica", *Storia*, 43–44–45 (2009): 125–167.

42 As a general survey, see Christoph Dartmann, "Eine Kultur der Niederlage? Wählen in der italienischen Stadt des Hoch- und Spätmittelalters", in *Technik und Symbolik vormoderne Wahlverfahren*, Historische Zeitschrift Beiheft 52, eds. Christoph Dartmann, Günter Wassilowsky and Thomas Weller (Oldenbourg: Verlag München, 2010), 53–70; Hagen Keller, *Il laboratorio politico del comune medievale* (Naples: Liguori, 2014), especially 165–226; Christin, *Vox populi*.

43 Fasoli and Sella, *Statuti di Bologna dell'anno 1288*, I, 14 'Quomodo et qualiter propositiones et reformationes fieri debent'. The very same system was used in ancient Greek cities: see the example of Sparta in Thucydides, *Histories*, I, 87.

44 'non possit formare nec difformare partem, pro qua vadit, nec aliquam aliam, nec dicere: ista est melior pars vel alia, nec ista est deterior vel alia' nec similiter verba, nisi hoc solum "ego vado pro tali parte": Cessi, *Deliberazioni del Maggior Consiglio di Venezia*, II, 82.

45 Dina Bizzarri, ed., *Gli Statuti del comune di Torino del 1360* (Turin: Tip. Gabetta, 1933), in particular § XXX 'De partitis faciendis in credentia et alis consiliis a tabulas albas et nigras et non aliter, exceptis negotiis proprie dominum tangentibus' (32).

46 The celebration of a *parlamentum* was a reason of political coercion much more than a mean of participation: 'come fu questo parlamento, così fatti furono gli altri, colle spade in mano': Marchionne di Coppo Stefani, *Cronaca fiorentina*, ed. Niccolò Rodolico (RR/ISS XXX) (Città di Castello: Lapi, 1903), 335.

47 Even in seignourial regimes, however, total abolition of councils was very rare, as I remark in my "Signori e consiglieri", in *Signorie cittadine nell'Italia comunale*, ed. Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur (Rome: Viella, 2013), 383–401.

48 In fourteenth-century Bologna, for example, former officers appointed within the *Consiglio del popolo* were sometimes more than the 'ordinary' members: Anna Laura Trombetti Budriesi, ed., *Lo statuto del comune di Bologna dell'anno 1335* (Rome: ISIME, 2008). In a sense, such an 'extraordinary' membership of the councils had been introduced even earlier by the use of *sapientes*: on this subject, see Menzinger, *Ghiuristi e politica nei comuni di Popolo*.

49 Riccardo Fubini, "Dalla rappresentanza sociale alla rappresentanza politica: Sviluppi politico-costituzionali in Firenze dal Tre al Cinquecento", in *Italia Quattrocentesca. Politica e diplomazia nell'età di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, ed. Riccardo Fubini (Milan: Franco Angeli, 1994), 41–61.

50 Philip Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).

51 Gian Maria Varanini, "Aristocrazie e poteri nell'Italia centro-setentrionale dalla crisi comunale alle guerre d'Italia", in *Le aristocrazie dai signori rurali al patriziato*, eds. Renato Bordone, Guido Castelnuovo and Gian Maria Varanini (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 2004), 121–193.

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## PARTIES, QUOTAS AND ELECTIONS IN LATE MEDIEVAL GENOA

Serena Ferente

The nexus between voting and political parties has until now received only occasional attention from historians of late medieval Italy. This may be because, whereas the frequency and centrality of voting and elections in that time and place is beyond doubt, little consensus exists on the suitability of the category of 'political parties' in the same period. Eighteenth-century analysts of the political party phenomenon – including, among others, David Hume and John Adams' – looked back to the Italian Middle Ages as a precedent and a model (positive or negative); Max Weber was one of the last in a distinguished lineage regularly to include examples from Antiquity and the Middle Ages in his reflections on the nature of political parties.<sup>2</sup> Twentieth-century political science has instead deliberately severed the genealogical link connecting pre-modern and modern party forms. Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan acknowledged that the history of the idea of 'party' should go back to the Middle Ages but subscribed to the schema put forward, a few years earlier, by Giovanni Sartori:<sup>3</sup> 'political parties' are intrinsically modern phenomena, whereas before modernity one should rather speak of 'factions'. Indeed 'faction', not 'party', has been the more frequented conceptual bridge between the social sciences (particularly anthropology and sociology) and medieval and early modern political history, fostering exchanges around, for example, the idea of patron-client relations, or that of social networks.

Sartori's argument deserves to be rehearsed, as it endeavors to make explicit (from the perspective of a political scientist) what is often an implicit conceptual distinction. Parties are not factions, because (1) they are not *evil*, (2) they act as parts of a *pluralistic whole* and (3) they *express* wider constituencies and not simply the interests of the contestants themselves.<sup>4</sup> Political parties presuppose, therefore, a relatively pluralistic state form, a relatively widespread access to and participation

dimension of the acceptance (or lawfulness) of political pluralism. If the state form is ill-defined, if politics is confined to very small circles (such as a court or an oligarchy) and if organized political dissent is in itself illegal or immoral (or, one could add, sinful), then we should speak not of political parties but of factions.

The concrete examples, the epitome of medieval *partes*/parties, which Max Weber and his predecessors had in mind, were the Italian Guelphs and Ghibellines. Weber, in particular, based some of his assumptions on the medieval party on a reading of the statute of the *Parte Guelfa* of Florence.<sup>5</sup> Issued in 1335, when Guelfism was nearly a century old, these statutes present the Florentine Guelf Party as a fully institutionalized body, endowed with material resources, and integrated in a political system where Guelfism was the official credo of the commune and Ghibellinism was proscribed.<sup>6</sup> Even though the Guelf Party had formed a century earlier as one of a pair of opposites, by 1335 no official Ghibelline Party existed in Florence. The Florentine Guelf Party in the fourteenth century thus seems to perfectly illustrate one of the problems Sartori saw in medieval *partes*: this Guelf *part* endured only because it claimed to be one and the same with the *whol*e. A true multiparty system failed to form because Florence – and by extension the medieval commune – was incapable (ideally and practically) of accommodating and normalizing political pluralism within a single institutional framework. Its multiplication of political entities (the commune, the *popolo*, the *parte*, etc.) produced a pluralism of different, and presumably nonmodern, kind, whereas competition between parties always exceeded the confines of institutions, becoming violent, or leading to the exclusion or expulsion of one side.

The history of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines from the 1240s onward, then, has stood for a vision of medieval partisan conflict as pernicious and constantly on the verge of explosion, unable to become an element of government. Partisanship was confined outside institutional politics, turning into antipolitical violence and exclusion, or instead it penetrated institutions through informal clientelistic networks, which acted in ways more akin to corruption and electoral fraud than legitimate competition. Such an image is not incorrect but, if the *jeu de mots* can be forgiven, is very partial. A wealth of sources and case studies have been brought to light in the past two decades, which call for a profound renewal of our understanding of late medieval forms of partisanship.<sup>7</sup>

The paradigmatic place of the histories of Florence and Venice is one of the causes of the perspectival distortion. Between the late thirteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries, Florence and Venice developed two distinct models of republicanism self-government, 'popular' the former, aristocratic the latter. The two republics, however, addressed the problem of partisan conflict in remarkably similar ways. The Venetian way revolved around the *sestata*, or 'closure' of the regime into a formal oligarchy, generally believed to have begun in 1297.<sup>8</sup> The drafting of an official and more or less definitive list gave the constitutional characters of an oligarchy to a political system that might have already tended to become socially aristocratic. After

those who were not in the list were in principle excluded. The closing of a regime to the point of rendering it a patrician oligarchy became an appealing constitutional model for many, in late medieval Ragusa for example, and in much of Italy from the fifteenth century, when Bologna and Perugia adopted it; in the sixteenth century, a large number of dominant or subject cities in Italy gave themselves a closed patriciate of sorts.

The beginning of the Venetian *serrata* followed a Florentine constitutional reform of comparable magnitude and opposite ideological tinge, known as the *Ordinamenti di Giustizia*. The Ordinances of Justice, first issued in 1293,<sup>9</sup> mandated that a large group of families, branded as *magnates* and whose names were written in a list, be excluded from elective offices and subjected to certain judicial disabilities. The entry in the name of which the ordinances were issued, the *popolo* of Florence, presented itself and its values of justice and peacefulness as beneficial for the entire 'Commune and city of Florence', in the very act of excluding other Florentines from full political membership.<sup>10</sup> In drafting a list of the excluded, the Florentine reformers left the issue of positive political membership relatively undefined and open to new entrants, particularly migrants from Florence's surrounding countryside, but also former magnates who accepted to change their family identity and renounced their name.

In both Venice and Florence, the groups that emerged as fully enfranchised in the fourteenth century rejected all party division in their midst (between Guelphs and Ghibellines, and between nobles and *popolo*), and sought, more or less successfully, to enforce *concordia*, concord, through electoral procedures whose rules were explicitly designed to stamp out partisanship. Both Venice and Florence, as it is well known, resorted to multistep elections, combining the randomness of sortition with qualitative phases of nomination and preliminary scrutiny. The Venetian oligarchic constitution defused conflict more successfully than the more permeable Florentine ruling group; the increasingly rigid legal boundaries the Venetian patriciate erected around itself limited the competition for office (the *gara d'uffici* which the Florentine chronicler Dino Compagni saw as one of the main causes of partisanship) and rendered the vertical ties between patricians and the *popolo* of Venice electorally useless, albeit often politically important. The performance of unity was an essential, and even existential, condition for the functioning of the Venetian oligarchy; divisions formed in its midst but were resolved internally and hidden from view, and divisive issues in assemblies and councils never 'froze' into durable party cleavages.<sup>11</sup>

In Florence the only legitimate electoral partition was determined by guild affiliation, and indeed the number of recognized guilds, the respective quotas between major and minor guilds and the guilds' autonomy in drafting nominations returned as the crux of all Florentine electoral reforms throughout the fourteenth century.<sup>12</sup> The presence of factions is far easier to trace in Florentine documents than in Venetian ones, from the clash between White and Black Guelphs in the 1300s, to the so-called *ariguelfi* faction in the 1360s, to the rise of the Medici faction in the



strong evidence, for example, of oaths taken together by the anti-Medici faction in the 1460s<sup>13</sup> – and oaths could be the first ritual step toward consolidation. Even so, all those factional groupings never organized explicitly as a *part*, as they had in the thirteenth century, and never obtained electoral recognition. The presence of a fully recognized *Parte Guelfa* in the Florentine one-party system might have even functioned as a deterrent.

A very different solution to the problem of political division was conceivable, however. A proposal, made by an obscure Florentine citizen, Dino Gucci, in a *Consulta* meeting of 1430, pointed to such a solution:

Let the Signori constitute a commission of 24 citizens, choosing 12 among those citizens not partisan in any way, and the same number among those partisan in this division that is said to exist, and let them be in equal number from each party, as this seems better.<sup>14</sup>

Since it seems that a division exists, Gucci proposed, let the government acknowledge its existence by constituting a commission, composed in equal number of partisans and nonpartisans, and let the former have an equal number of members from each side of the cleavage. (The division concerned the continuation of the war with Lucca, a matter of great importance, on which the records of *Consulte* meetings and other contemporary documents show ample evidence of clashing opinions, as well as a general awareness of who the leaders of each camp were.)

Dino Gucci's proposal was unusual, outlandish even, in the context of early fifteenth-century Florence. It was not unprecedented, however. It echoed, in fact, a short-lived reform enacted about one hundred fifty years earlier, the *pax* between Guelfs and Ghibellines brokered by the papal legate, Cardinal-Latino Malabranca, in 1279–80.<sup>15</sup> One of the terms of that complex settlement, the one with the most profound constitutional significance (but also, curiously, the least studied), was the creation of a new supreme government council, the Fourteen, to be chosen with a new electoral procedure, designed to openly take into account party affiliation and do so by reflecting the respective numerical strength of the parties within the citizenry. A twelve-member commission, formed by six Guelfs and six Ghibellines, was to be charged with organizing a sort of political census of 'all [male] citizens, from adolescents aged 21 to old men aged 70', in order to determine 'who is Guelf, who is Ghibelline, as well as who is Common or Indifferent'. Councils and offices of the commune were then to be allocated proportionally among Guelfs, Ghibellines and Indifferents 'according to the number of heads found in each party'.<sup>16</sup> The reform would in turn imply that distinct lists of eligible citizens needed to be created, according to their party affiliation, or lack thereof. There are scant sources that can illustrate how this reform was implemented and applied to elections in the following months, but it seems clear that party registration was indeed taken into account for candidates/nominees.<sup>17</sup> It might well be that an effective Guelf

the Fourteen, which had eight Guelf and six Ghibelline members – the Indifferents apparently not represented.

Two-party government in Florence lasted less than three years. A far more consequential reform in 1282 inaugurated Florence's durable second *popolo* regime, where eligibility was determined by guild affiliation, rather than party affiliation.<sup>18</sup> From this moment the Florentine *Arti* – primarily socioeconomic, rather than political, entities, unlike the Guelf and Ghibelline Parties – became the constitutional foundation of the government of the commune. The Fourteen were soon replaced by a newly formed supreme magistracy, called the Priors of the Arts. Dino Gucci's proposal in 1430, whether or not it was consciously reminiscent of that old and short-lived precedent (its acknowledgment of the third group, of nonpartisans or Indifferents, is suggestive), left no trace at all in legislation. One of the consequences of the inclusion of the principle of party affiliation in electoral procedures, in the thirteenth as in the fifteenth century, was the official recognition of parties, and therefore their institutionalization. In order to form a two-party council, or even just a multiparty commission like the one suggested by Dino Gucci, the partisan affiliation of all those with the right to be elected needed to be recorded and to an extent fixed. The reform would have made the division visible and, to use Sartori's category, the *evil* of partisanship a legal requirement.

### The Genoese political system

Florence's failure to embrace this option has until recently obscured the fact that other Italian communities successfully adopted it. The largest and most powerful of these was Genoa, where partisan affiliation was a visible and relatively stable foundation of electoral politics from the fourteenth century to the first quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

The following description of the Genoese political system is by the humanist Antonio Ivani of Sarzana and dates from 1477:

In Genoa there are a great number of patricians, whom we vulgarly call nobles, such as, for example, the Fieschi, the Doria, the Spinola, the Grimaldi, the Centurioni, the Gentile, the Lomellini, and many others. Some of these favor the Guelf party, others the Ghibelline: but all of these together usually oppose themselves to the *popolo*. The latter consists of three categories of citizenry: the *cappellazzi*, the *popolo grasso*, and the plebs. The *cappellazzi*, that is the tribunes of the plebs, are the Adorno, the Fregoso . . . With these the patrician families have mingled by means of the different factions that exist among them as well as favours and reciprocal marriages, such as the Fieschi and the Doria with the Fregoso, and the Spinola with the Adorno. In the *popolo grasso*, the Giustiniani have preeminence for the great size of their family and for their wealth. The Cattanei, the Fornari, and many others come

allow themselves to become involved in the same various favours. After these come the orders of craftsmen and the multitude of the plebs, the greater part of which usually follow the different factions in arms.<sup>20</sup>

The structure of the Genoese party system in the fifteenth century was the complex result of three different and intersecting cleavages: Guelph/Ghibelline (more often called Blacks/Whites), nobles/*popolari*, and Fregoso/Adorno. These cleavages emerged at successive points during two centuries, but the oldest were not canceled out by the most recent, because the former did not overlap with the latter, and instead divided political society according to different parameters, which in principle encompassed everyone who was politically active. The image that emerges from Antonio Ivani's description is not only that of a pervasively partisan political society but also one where multiple political and social ties (factions, favours, marriages) connect the different parties. Of the three party cleavages identified by Ivani, two had 'frozen' into official partisan affiliations: Guelph/Ghibelline, and nobles/*popolari*. From 1339, Genoa had a *stato popolare*, a regime in which the nobles were legally excluded from certain important political posts, and in particular were excluded from the highest office, the newly instituted doge. Whereas the exclusion rules affecting the nobles changed over time, nobles were never allowed to hold the doge's office before the oligarchic constitution of 1528.<sup>21</sup>

The Genoese *popolo* was institutionally divided into the categories of *grasso* and *minuto*, which is to say into merchants and artisans. The doge being necessarily a man of the *popolo*, the Adorno and Fregoso factions emerged as a consequence of the competition, wholly internal to the *popolo*, for appointment to the position of doge. The two great popular clans of *cappellazzi* Fregoso (or Campofregoso) and Adorno, which gave the names to the factions, were in fact the ones who divided the dogeship among themselves for much of the fifteenth century. They thereby remained *popolari* despite their wealth, land holdings and their followers and clients throughout the *Riviera*, which rendered them socially and culturally very similar to the nobility. Noble Ghibelline families like Doria and Spinola participated in the competition for a post from which they were legally excluded by establishing alliances with one of the popular factions: in the fifteenth century, the Spinola tended to support the Adorno and the Doria supported the Fregoso. The powerful Fieschi, noble and Guelph, were, in the words of a contemporary, 'for themselves, and wherever they lean they tip the balance'.<sup>22</sup>

Of the four great noble families and *alberghii* of Genoa, Doria and Spinola were of Ghibelline color and Grimaldi and Fieschi were Guelph. It was agreed in 1378 that there would always be two representatives from this group of only four *alberghii* among the *Anziani* (the Elders, that is the governing council), always 'keeping the colors'. The Genoese *popolo* was in the majority Ghibelline (although this was not true everywhere in the subject communities of the *Riviera* and the settlements in the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, or in the largest city of the Genoese domin-

quarter of that of the Ghibellines. In the early 1500s around 62.4 percent of the 1,113 citizens in a list of those eligible were registered as Ghibelline.<sup>23</sup>

Documents produced by the Genoese parties as such have not emerged for the fifteenth century, although the full proceedings survive of a council of the Ghibelline Party summoned in 1395 to deliberate and vote on the cession of the lordship over Genoa to the king of France, Charles VI. The Genoese government kept official books in which the two *vice-doges* drew up lists of eligible citizens, updated every six months, based on information mandatorily provided by the *consuetudine* (topographic units of the city and the suburbs) and the *alberghii* (associations of families bearing the same name): it was in these books that party affiliation (the 'color') of each individual was registered for the use of elections. The Genoese state archives preserve a large quantity of interim records of fifteenth-century elections of magistrates and officials on individual paper sheets, where the names of nominated candidates are neatly listed under Black, White, Noble, Popular, Merchant and Artisan.<sup>24</sup> Different electoral lists, purses or boxes existed and a record of party affiliation for all the citizens was effectively consulted. We also have something very rare: in 1410, forty-seven 'Guelph noble and popular citizens', in some cases with sons and brothers, went to the notary to register as Ghibellines.<sup>25</sup> This document confirms that it was necessary to officially certify one's own party affiliation, at the very least when an individual or a family decided to jump ship and register into a different party.

Genoese parties, then, must be understood in the context the Genoese electoral system and its voting culture. Guelph and Ghibellines, nobles and *popolari*, did not emerge as assembly factions – the *partes* in Genoa and everywhere in Italy began as groups and movements of the political society, congealing around clienteles, class interests, ideology and supralocal alliances. Competition and compromise between parties shaped the electoral rules, and electoral rules in turn influenced the party system and voting cultures.

### Elections in Genoa

The Genoese electoral system has not been studied in depth, and despite the abundance of potential sources no single constitutional text allows a straightforward description of the rules. The Genoese *regulae* of 1363 and 1413, both written under Adorno doges, are not the exact equivalent of a statute, and their validity was strictly connected with the tenure of the doge under which they were issued.<sup>26</sup> It is clear, however, that many of the norms included in the *regulae* both shaped and followed the legal custom. The *regulae* strive to establish firm procedures particularly for the election of the doge and the offices immediately dependent on him, yet such procedures were seldom applied in practice; chronicles suggest that the dogeship continued to be won in most cases by the leader of a faction that prevailed politically or militarily, outside the strictly electoral contest. The election of the

Middle Ages, Genoa developed a peculiar tradition of contractual foreign lordships, which consisted primarily in the replacement of the doge with a governor sent by the foreign lord (generally the king of France or the duke of Milan). During those periods, the rest of the government apparatus remained virtually unchanged under the control of the Genoese, and elections continued to take place with regularity.

Unlike dogeships and governorships, all other political offices in Genoa were generally assigned through elections. The college of the *Anziani* or Elders, who shared the highest government powers with the doge or the governor, and the powerful economic magistracies of the republic were renewed with continuity and regularity, belying the impression of instability conveyed by the comings and goings of doges and governors.<sup>27</sup> The procedures detailed by the 1413 *regulae* for the election of the twelve *Anziani* involved several phases. First the doge and the outgoing *Anziani* gathered in council, nominated eight among 'the best and sufficient' citizens, 'lovers of the peaceful state of Genoa', from the city and its suburbs. Each nominee was to be approved by a majority of at least ten out of fourteen votes (the doge having two votes). Each of the eight elected was then summoned to the palace accompanied by another citizen, so that the real identity of the elected was not apparent to him or to those who saw him, before he reached the palace; once in the presence of the doge, the 'truly elected' took their oath of loyalty, while the 'falsely elected' were dismissed. This first eight-member commission proceeded, together with the doge, to elect a second commission of eight electors, approving each name with a majority of at least seven out of ten votes. The summoning of 'true' and 'simulated' elected citizens to the palace was repeated, and so was the oath-taking for the former and the dismissal of the latter. The second commission of eight electors was the one in charge of electing the new college of the *Anziani*. They were to choose eleven citizens from the city and one from one of the suburban *podesterie* of Voltri, Polcevera and Bisagno, in rotation. For all these commissions, and for the *Anziani*, the *regulae* prescribe parity of representation between nobles and *popolari*, and, within the quota for *popolari*, parity between merchants and artisans; the *Anziano* elected from the *podesterie* belonged to the quota of artisans. Parity between Guelfs and Ghibellines is not explicitly mentioned in the *regulae*, but there are reasons to believe, as I will mention later, that it was applied.<sup>28</sup>

Such a complex procedure, which reprises almost verbatim that of the *regulae* of 1363, appears overwhelmingly concerned with preventing lobbying and corruption. All communication and gift exchange between the first and the second group of eight electors is prohibited. Electors cannot nominate themselves, their own electors, or their and their colleagues' fathers, brothers or sons. Former *Anziani* can be elected only after one year out of office, and no current officeholder is eligible. The curious summoning of 'simulated' elected citizens together with those *vere electi* must have also aimed to thwart last-minute deals, made before the conscience of the elected was bound by their solemn oath in the palace to act *bene et legaliter*, that is, 'well and within the law'. The earlier *regulae* of 1363 contemplated for the

one for merchants, the other for artisans, from which a further commission of six electors would be drawn randomly.<sup>29</sup>

Silence about the use of sortition in the *regulae* of 1413 does not necessarily indicate that sortition was not employed. The *regulae* are vague, for example, on the procedure for the election of the powerful offices of *Mercanzia* and *Gazaria*, which are expected to elect their successors 'in the usual way', *more solito*. A different early fifteenth-century set of laws, devoted specifically to *Gazaria*, describes the election of its officials in more detail: the eight outgoing officials were to nominate thirty-two eligibles (presumably resorting to the vote on each nominee), write their names on *cedule*, put them into purses according to the usual party quotas and draw from those purses eight names every six months. The purses were to be completely renewed every year, thus giving nominees a fifty-percent chance to be elected within the year, in principle – a slightly higher chance in practice, since, if one elected recused himself for admissible reasons, the purse was used again to elect his substitute.<sup>30</sup>

The distribution of the republic's many salaried offices, often entailing territorial jurisdiction, was a crucial electoral moment in Genoa – so much so that the *regulae* allow officials and citizens to obtain authentic copies of the relevant electoral norms from the palace notaries. Such offices must be granted 'communally and not by property', the *regulae* say – the reference is to the practice of selling salaried offices received through election, a practice deprecated and prohibited elsewhere. All salaried offices were to be assigned once a year, in December, with a three-step nomination-and-vote process similar to the one prescribed for the *Anziani*, and were subject to a number of exclusions on the basis of kinship links, place of origin of the candidates, previous appointments to the same position and so forth. The commissions of electors were formed according to the party quotas and each nominee needed to be elected with a very large majority – ten out of twelve votes if the doge was present, nine out of ten in his absence, in the first commission; eight out of ten votes with the doge, six out of eight without him, in the second commission.<sup>31</sup>

A further legislative reform of 1443 confirms that the assignation of salaried offices was the object of strenuous competition and many complaints in Genoa. The stated aim of the reformers was to choose 'the best and most suitable' men, 'lovers of the present state of the republic', but also to adhere strictly to the quotas reserved to the 'colors', nobles/*popolari* and Guelf/Ghibelline. Offices that were individual rather than collegial needed to rotate among the colors; a book of all those applying for an office (a *liber requirementum*) was to be compiled in early December, and applicants needed to be aware of which office fell to which color that year.<sup>32</sup>

### Quotas and qualified majorities

Given such an electoral system, political competition and conflict operated around



political clout and offices for their party not so much by influencing the outcome of single elections but by negotiating or renegotiating the electoral equilibrium of quotas as a whole. Parity in the allocation of offices between Blacks and Whites (i.e. Guelfs and Ghibellines) and nobles and *popolari* reigned throughout the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth; in the quota reserved for the *popolo*, merchants and artisans usually had the right to equal representation. These quotas concerned all the republic's principal magistrates (*Anziani*, *Moneta*, *Mercanzia*, *Gazaria*, extraordinary magistracies and commissions, *San Giorgio*, and even official embassies), and those of its territories, with the exception of the office of doge, who needed to be always assigned to a Ghibelline from the *popolo*. In Caffa, the principal city of the Genoese dominion in the Black Sea, offices were also allocated to equal quotas of *cives* (Genoese citizens) and *burgenses* (non-Genoese inhabitants of Caffa). A report of the consul and *massarii* of Caffa in 1471, written four years before the fall of that city to the Ottomans, claims that the observance of quotas for the colors there conflicted with the assignment of offices to the best candidates. The authors of the report argue that the *burgenses* in Caffa 'do not much care about colors', but only that parity be preserved between *cives* and *burgenses*.<sup>33</sup> The problem of competence versus party affiliation might have been felt in Genoa, too, but not acutely enough that it inspired a revision of the system.

The Genoese quota system was stable but not static. A political movement or a crisis could prompt a change in the electoral quotas, but such changes always proved to be short-lived. In 1477, for example, for about two months the newly instituted magistracy of the Eight Defenders of the Fatherland was elected according to different quotas, tilted in favor of the *popolo* (six members) and specifically the artisans (four members), whereas parity between Blacks and Whites was maintained.<sup>34</sup> A similar allocation, with two thirds of the offices assigned to the *popolo*, was the most important electoral reform pushed by the government installed after the revolt of the *Cappette* in 1506.<sup>35</sup>

A very clear example of how political conflict translated into electoral outcomes comes from the peace stipulated on 1 January 1454, with the intermediation of the apostolic legate Cardinal Domenico Capranica, between the then doge of Genoa, Pietro Campofregoso, and Gianfilippo Fieschi, count of Lavagna.<sup>36</sup> This peace put an end to the hostilities between the doge, on the one hand, and Fieschi and his followers, on the other. Given the importance of the figures involved and the reciprocal concessions exchanged, it marked an important junction for the fifteenth-century Genoese state. Of the thirty articles that it comprised, one in particular, the eighteenth, was extrapolated from the full text and recopied in four notes to be sent on the same day to the two allied governments of Florence and Milan, to the pope, and to the dethroned king of Naples, René of Anjou.<sup>37</sup> The 'special eighteenth clause', brought to the attention of these four addressees, stated

that the Guelph color must have half the benefits, the offices, the remunera-

as is customary . . . in mode and form such that the said color is understood to have its own *statuto*.

Neither the doge Fregoso nor the count Fieschi would be 'exempted by any reason of color', that is, they would not be able, under any circumstance, to patronize offices beyond the quota reserved for their respective color.

An important and obvious consequence of the Ghibelline majority in the *popolo* of the city of Genoa was that a regime with equal representation between Guelfs and Ghibellines inevitably favored the Guelfs, because their quota of offices was split among fewer eligible persons. The skewed nature of the electoral quotas was clearly understood by contemporary Genoese; the peace of 1454 marked a victory (military and political) of the Guelph Party and of those areas in the *Riviera* where the Guelfs were stronger.<sup>38</sup> Gianfilippo Fieschi reasserted the parity of colors on behalf of the whole Guelph Party; thus in the eighteenth article of the peace a member of a leading Genoese noble Guelph family negotiated the parity of the colors in the distribution of the offices of the republic, acting not in his own name or that of his named accomplices and associates (among whom there were many Ghibellines) but in the name of the Guelph Party.

In return, the mechanism dividing offices between colors allowed Gianfilippo Fieschi to claim for himself a rather impressive personal power of patronage, without at all officially modifying the Genoese constitution. The 1454 peace takes the distinct appearance of an electoral agreement where it prescribes that Fieschi would 'govern and nominate the officials' in the small Riviera towns of Recco, Rapallo, Portofino, Monterosso, Crovara, Framura and Moneglia. He would nominate the *podestà* in another eight locales (all officials who would take orders from the doge and be paid with public money), and assign salaried posts within Genoa itself:

One knight of the four of the Most Illustrious Doge, and one of the knights of the *podestà* . . . and one Vice Doge, and the *collateraria*. *Item* . . . one ministry, one of the consuls of justice, one of the consuls of the levies, one of the officers of the syndicators, one of the officers of Bisagno, one to one of the offices of the ordinary expenditure, one to one of the offices of criminal justice, one to one of the offices of the craft guilds, and one to one of the offices of the *Meranzia*.

Gianfilippo, who received for himself the post and salary of captain general of the republic, would also be able to nominate the patrons and officers of the Genoese galleys, should the need arise to build up a military fleet, with a quota of one third reserved for the Guelph color and two thirds for the Ghibelline – here the fact that the quota of Guelfs among patrons of ships was one third rather than half seems to further confirm that, especially within the *popolo*, the Guelfs were simply not of sufficiently large number.

Perhaps the most powerful confirmation of the widespread Genoese culture of

the *Dame della Misericordia*, whose charitable purposes were at best of a semipublic nature, became in 1478 the object of complaints about the lack of equal representation of nobles and *popolari* in its leadership, this *collegium of mulieres*, too, was urged to elect its eight female leaders according to the party quota system in use in the republic's male-led *Ufficio della Misericordia*.<sup>39</sup> The Genoese laywomen involved in the charitable society must have proceeded, therefore, to compile their own eligibility lists and record their members' party affiliation, before engaging in the electoral process of nominations and votes.

The qualified majorities repeatedly prescribed in the *regulae* for the election of officials deserve particular attention. A majority of at least two thirds of the votes, often expressed via the ballot, was a requirement for all the elections of which we have detailed descriptions in legislative texts. When every collective magistracy, every office, every commission is formed according to the party rule along the two intersecting cleavages, nobles/*popolo* and Blacks/Whites, then the requirement of a qualified majority means that no individual party can elect a candidate on its own. No Guelph can be elected only with Guelph votes; no noble can be elected only with votes from the nobles. Cross-party alliances are necessary at every turn, at every election, hundreds of times a year, and they need to be managed by a large number of citizen-electors. These votes required, then, those political 'favors' mentioned by Antonio Ivani in his description of the Genoese party system. A constant exchange of votes between parties must have been in fact a structural requirement of Genoese electoral practice.

It seems plausible that this electoral requirement fostered, in turn, the distinctive political culture of coalition-formation, which has been observed for the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.<sup>40</sup> If factional conflict is indeed one of the characters of Genoese political life, an equally striking trait is that major crises, even those leading to the contractual subjection to external sovereigns, such as the dukes of Milan or the kings of France, not only left the internal Genoese constitution largely unchanged but also never succeeded without cross-party alliances and coalitions. Another feature of Genoese politics, the cross-party petitions requesting amnesty for those who had caused political trouble, which regularly rained on the new governments after every political crisis, was an expression of the same political culture.

### Justifying party affiliation

It would be hasty to assume that the official existence and coexistence of parties in Genoa, in the broader European context of a moral discourse that reviled and delegitimized parties, would be entirely unproblematic. The very same 1413 *regulae* that mandated, in their second article, that the doge be always *de populo ghibellino*, contained an article devoted to 'extinguishing partialities', *ad partialitates extinguendas*.<sup>41</sup> This article, again reprising the earlier *regulae* of 1363,<sup>42</sup> condemned the pernicious effects of divisions and partialities in past times and prohibited, in

these two parties and the mentioning of the parties' names. Equal representation of nobles and *popolari*, and, within the latter, of merchants and artisans, was instead reasserted. In a departure from the *regulae* of 1363, however, the *regulae* of 1413 added that this article's content was to be further discussed, and if necessary amended, within one year, by a specific commission. Thus by 1413 earlier aspirations to stamp out the division between Guelphs and Ghibellines, while preserving that between nobles and *popolo*, must have appeared obsolete or unsustainable. The choice to officially call the parties Blacks and Whites, instead of Guelphs and Ghibellines, was in all likelihood an attempt to wriggle out of the tension between moral discourse and political pragmatism – a tension that the Genoese always resolved in favor of the latter.

The most obstinate and systematic attack on parties in the fifteenth century was waged by Observant Mendicant preachers, who devoted sermons in each cycle of preaching specifically to the 'sin' of factionalism.<sup>43</sup> Franciscan preachers, thanks to the immense popularity of orators like Bernardino of Siena, could have ambiguous effects on civic communities, generating great bubbles of fervor and swift, yet often short-lived, reforms. In Genoa, one official attempt was made in the fifteenth century to upset the electoral division according to parties, and it followed the preaching of the Observant friar Battista Tagliacarne. On 29 March 1465, the Milanese governor (who at the time had the functions of the doge) and the *Anziani* presented the following proposal to the council:

*Segno*, Sirs, the reason for your convocation is this. The majority of you have understood what this venerable religious friar Battista Tagliacarne proposes concerning the removal of colors in this city and in our country, and how many good reasons he has produced regarding this matter, hence . . . we have called this meeting so that once again you can listen to his advice about this and, having heard everything, offer your wise counsel on that which to you appears best to do.<sup>44</sup>

During the deliberation *messer* Battista da Goano described the proposal of the friar and the government to be so clearly just, so evidently agreeable, that it required few arguments in its favor. Speaking as the jurist that he was, he reminded everyone that 'divisions are condemned by both civil and canon law and by the most authentic authors'. Thus he supported the proposal to extinguish the colors and cease to say their names, as well as the adoption of other criteria for the election of magistrates, to be established by an ad hoc commission formed, in order to begin virtuously, 'without observing the said colors'. The majority of the votes recorded supported Battista da Goano's opinion. Under the record of his speech, however, no decree was ever added by the governor and the *Anziani*. The proposal came to nothing: perhaps it was noted that such a major modification of custom would require a reshuffling of the existing equilibrium and a reform of the Genoese electoral sys-



The Adorno and Fregoso factions, produced by the competition for the doge-ship, constituted a further factional layer, which cut across the two other cleavages but never enjoyed official electoral recognition in the form of quotas. More ephemeral factions or lobbies constantly formed, which aimed to influence elections and the allocation of offices; the most important of those was perhaps the enigmatic group called the *Botta* or *botteschi*, already known in the mid-fifteenth century and still active in the early sixteenth.<sup>46</sup>

The difference between the opaque *Botta*, similar to a lobby, or even a secret society, and the *colori*, institutionalized by the electoral system, was clear to the Genoese themselves. The former kind of faction was not perceived as fully legitimate. In 1510, during the king of France Louis XII's lordship over Genoa, complaints reached the ear of the king about the fraudulent influence of the *botteschi* on the elections of the *Anziani*. When the king proposed a reform that would abolish 'all such passions and manners [of doing]', including the quotas for colors in all elections, the Genoese representatives responded firmly that it was not advisable to do so, that this would be too great a departure from their *forma del vivere*, their 'form of life' – civic and republican life, one might add – which had remained unchanged for a long time. 'Great confusion' would follow a reform of this kind, and no loving ruler would wish such an outcome.<sup>47</sup>

So the Genoese stuck to their old reprehensible political passions throughout the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth. Party affiliation lost much of its importance only with the oligarchic constitution of 1528. This reform aimed to ensure the survival of the republic during the existential uncertainties caused by the Italian Wars and singled out membership of the *alberghi* as the primary basis for electoral and political franchise. A closed list of names was eventually established, similar to the Venetian one.

## Conclusion

The case of Genoa may be the most complex and best documented instance of a model of party system that several other communities adopted in late medieval Italy. The juncture between political parties and electoral procedures is a crucial locus where the complexity and resilience of a political system can be gauged. Like in most self-governing communities in Italy, in Genoa, in addition to the right to vote, it was the right and fair opportunity to hold office that mattered to citizens. Political parties concentrated their efforts on negotiating and enforcing quotas in all the republic's magistracies. Parties constituted the principal channel through which citizens accessed political office and were successful in enforcing a degree of social and political pluralism in the selection of the ruling group, even though they promoted the paternalistic logic of client-patron rapports, made of both consensus and abuse, and occasionally also violence. More fluid factional formations and pressure groups, which sought to exercise political influence, needed to rely on coalitions

In Genoa, quotas, not election results, were the product of political competition. In order to be certain of maintaining their share in government, their *part* in the *stato*, as the documents say, party quotas, and the parties themselves needed to be official and public. Despite a dominant political discourse that was profoundly fearful of political division and hostile to its official recognition, the Genoese devised and sustained for a couple of centuries their own *forma del vivere*, which acknowledged that division existed indeed but could become part of a relatively stable and cooperative political system. This was an original path, even in the highly experimental context of late medieval Italian politics and institutions, and one that invites a revision of long-held assumptions about medieval political cultures and their relationship to modern ones.

## Notes

- 1 David Hume, "Of Parties in General", in *Political Essays*, ed. K. Haakonson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33–39; John Adams, "A Defense of the Constitutions of the United States of America" (1789), in *The Portable John Adams*, ed. J. P. Diggins (New York: Penguin, 2004), 291–335.
- 2 See, for example, Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. H. H. Gerts and C. Wright Mills (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1946), 99–101.
- 3 Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction", in *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, eds. S. M. Lipset and S. Rokkan (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 3–4.
- 4 Giovanni Sartori, *Parties and Party-Systems: A Framework for Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 21–25.
- 5 Weber, "Politics as a Vocation", 99.
- 6 Francesco Bonaini, "Statuto della Parte Guelfa di Firenze compilato nel MCCCXXXV", *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani*, 1 (1857): 1–41.
- 7 For a survey in English of recent research on parties and factions in late medieval Italy, see Marco Gentile, "Factions and Parties: Problems and Perspectives", in *The Italian Renaissance State*, eds. Andrea Gamberini and Isabella Lazzarini (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 304–322.
- 8 See Gehrard Rösch, "The Serrata of the Great Council and Venetian Society. 1286–1323" and Stanley Chojnacki, "Identity and Ideology in Renaissance Venice: The Third Serrata", both in John J. Martin and Dennis Romano, eds., *Vénice Reconsidered: The History and Civilization of an Italian City-State* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 67–88 and 263–293.
- 9 Francesco Bonaini, "Gli Ordinamenti di Giustizia del Comune e Popolo di Firenze compilati nel 1293", *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 1 (1855): 2–93. The ordinances and their social and political meanings have been much debated in the historiography on Florence, ever since the early studies of Gaetano Salvemini and Nicolai Ottokar, who sharply disagreed on the importance of class identities in the conflict between *popolo* and magnates. A summary in English of more recent debates, which have instead focused on the exclusionary mode of the ordinances, as well as their ideological context, enriched by comparative considerations emerging from the case of Bologna, can be found in the first pages of Carol Lansing, "Magnate Violence Revisited", in *Communes and Despots in Medieval and Renaissance Italy*, eds. John E. Law and Bernardette Paton (London: Ashgate, 2010), 35–45.
- 10 On the exclusionary mode in the Italian communes (and particularly Bologna), see Giuliano Milani, *L'esclusione dal Comune: conflitti e bandi politici a Bologna e in altre città*

- 11 The reference here is to Lipset and Rokkan's concept of the 'freezing' of cleavages into party systems: Lipset and Rokkan, "Cleavage Structures".
- 12 John Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus in Florentine Electoral Politics, 1280–1400* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).
- 13 Geno Pampaloni, "Il giuramento pubblico in Palazzo Vecchio a Firenze e un patto giurato degli antimedicci (maggio 1466)", *Bollettino senese di storia patria*, 23 (1964): 212–241. On an evaluation of the anti-Medici faction in those years, see Nicolai Rubinstein, *The Government of Florence under the Medici. Second Edition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 155–198, and Serena Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi. Linguaggi e identità politiche in Italia nella seconda metà del Quattrocento* (Rome: Viella, 2013), 81–126.
- 14 State Archive of Florence, *Consulte e Pratiche*, 49, fol. 32r, 26 April 1430.
- 15 Isa Lori Sanfilippo, "La pace del Cardinale Latino a Firenze nel 1280. La sentenza e gli atti complementari", *Bollettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo e Archivio Muratoriano*, 89 (1980–1981): 193–260.
- 16 Isa Lori Sanfilippo, "La pace del Cardinale Latino", 206–207:  
*per XII viros ydoneos, sex Gueffos et totidem Ghibellinos, de omnibus civibus ab adolescentibus qui vigesimum primum usque ad senes, qui annum septuagesimum attingerunt, disquisitio fuit, qui sint Gueffi et qui Ghibellini; qui vero communes sive indifferentes secundum provisionem ipsorum et qui de neutra parte se profiteri noluerint, ad professionem huiusmodi non coguntur; dividantur autem consilia et officia iuxta numerum capitum, que inventientur in singulis partibus, et hi, qui se volent communes vel indifferentes asserere, similiter iuxta numerum partem in consiliis et officiis sortiantur.*
- 17 This aspect of the reform seems to have escaped the attention of historians of Florence. The record of the nominated and scrutinized from the Florentine *sesto* of Oltarno for the March 1282 election of the Fourteen, where all the names are accompanied by their party affiliation, seems to me to confirm that the quota system was indeed implemented: Alessandro Gherardi, *Le Consulte della Repubblica Fiorentina dall'anno MCCCLXXX al MCCXCIII*, vol. I (Florence: Sansoni, 1887), 71–72.
- 18 On this and successive electoral reforms in Florence, see John Najemy, *Corporatism and Consensus*.
- 19 On parties and factions in late medieval Genoa, see Arturo Pacini, "La tirannia delle fazioni e la repubblica dei ceti. Vita politica e istituzioni a Genova tra Quattro e Cinquecento", *Annali dell'Istituto italo-germanico in Trento*, 18 (1992): 57–119; Riccardo Musso, "I 'colori delle Riviere': Fazioni politiche e familiari a Genova e nel suo dominio tra XV e XVI secolo", in *Guelfi e ghibellini nell'Italia del Rinascimento*, ed. Marco Gentile (Rome: Viella, 2005), 523–558; Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 127–176; Matthias Schnetzger and Carlo Taviani, eds., *Libertà e dominio. Il sistema politico genovese: le relazioni esterne e il controllo del territorio* (Rome: Deutsche Historisches Institut, 2011).
- 20 This portrait of the Genoese political system is found in a letter from the humanist Antonio Ivani da Sarzana to the Florentine Giovanni Giannotti, dated 21 April 1477, published as an appendix to Antonio Ivani, *Historia de Volaterrana Calamitate* (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, XXIV/3), ed. Francesco L. Mannucci (Citra di Castello: Lapi 1913), 47:  
*Est in ea patriciorum ingens numerus, qui vulgo nobiles appellantur, utpote Flischi, Auri, Spinule, Grimaldi, Centuriones, Gentiles, Lomellini et alii plures. Quorum pars guelfam factionem, pars ghibellinam foret: sed simul omnes a populo dissentire solent. Is tribus civium ordinibus constat: capellacis, populo crasso et plebe. Capellacis, velut plebis tribuni, sunt Adurni, Fregosi, Montaldi, Gualchi, quorum duo priores antecedunt potentia et auctoritate. Per diversos inter se factiones et his interitum se favoribus commubiisque patriciorum familie miscuerunt, ut Fregosi, Flischi et Aurnii, Spinulae Adurni. In populo autem crasso Justiniani excellent familia et opibus. Canonici. Furnarii et plures alii subsequuntur, mercature quam seditionibus intentiores, quam-*
- 21 On the constitutional history of Genoa in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, see Vito Piergiovanni, *Gli statuti civili e criminali di Genova nel Medioevo* (Genoa: ECIG, 1980); Rodolfo Savelli, "*Capitula*", *regulae* e *pratiche del diritto a Genova tra XIV e XV secolo*", in *Statuti città territori in Italia e Germania tra Medioevo ed Età moderna*, eds. Giorgio Chittolini and Dietmar Willoweit (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1991), 447–502.
- 22 Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 158–161.
- 23 Georgius Stella, *Annales Genuenses* (Rerum Italicarum Scriptores, XVII/2), ed. Giovanna. Petri Balbi (Bologna: Zanichelli 1975), 316. I calculated the percentage in the early 1500s from the list published by Arturo Pacini, *I presupposti politici del "secolo dei genovesi": la riforma del 1528* (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 1990), 359.
- 24 State Archive of Genoa (henceforth: ASG), *Diversorum Communis*, 3141.
- 25 Archivio Storico del Comune di Genoa, Ms. 440, Giambattista Cicala, *Memorie della Città di Genoa e di tutto il suo Dominio*, t. II, p. 88, in which Cicala copies the names from the notary's acts.
- 26 See the works cited previously in n. 21. *Regulae* also included a government budget. The *regulae* of 1363, issued under Doge Gabriele Adorno, are published in *Historiae Patriae Monumenta*, t. XVIII. *Leges Genuenses*, eds. C. Desimoni, L. T. Belgrano and V. Poggi (Turin: Bocca, 1901), cols. 243–388. The *regulae* of 1413, issued under Doge Giorgio Adorno, are available in several manuscripts, of which I have used ASG, *Manoscritti tornati da Parigi* 19 (15th c.). I will provide references from an eighteenth-century manuscript copy of the same *regulae*, from the Archivio Storico del Comune di Genoa, *Manoscritti Ricci* 91, now available in a digital reproduction on the website of the Società Ligure di Storia Patria, [www.storiapatriagenova.it/BD\\_vs\\_OA.aspx?Id\\_Oggetto\\_Archivistico=53&Id\\_Soggetto\\_Conservatorio=1&Id\\_Progetto=2](http://www.storiapatriagenova.it/BD_vs_OA.aspx?Id_Oggetto_Archivistico=53&Id_Soggetto_Conservatorio=1&Id_Progetto=2), accessed on 31 May 2017.
- 27 On this point, see Christine Shaw, "Counsel and Consent in Fifteenth-Century Genoa", *English Historical Review*, 116 (2001): 834–862.
- 28 Archivio Storico del Comune di Genoa, *Manoscritti Ricci* 91, 57–61.
- 29 *Leges Genuenses*, col. 273.
- 30 *Supplementi alle leggi del Buaialdo*, in *Leges Genuenses*, cols. 741–742. *Gazaria* was the name, derived from that of the Byzantine province once occupied by the Khazars, of the office in charge of Genoese affairs in the Black Sea.
- 31 Archivio Storico del Comune di Genoa, *Manoscritti Ricci*, 91, 265–281.
- 32 Quoted in Vito Piergiovanni, *Norme, scienza e pratica giuridica tra Genova e l'Occidente medievale e moderno* (Genoa: Società Ligure di Storia Patria, 2012), 99–100 (note 109). The 1443 legislation was issued by the *Capitani della Libertà* during one of the brief periods when Genoa had neither a doge nor a governor.
- 33 The report expresses perplexity about the election of four new officials of the *Moneta*, who do not seem as expert and prudent as their predecessors, and asks San Giorgio to authorize an election without quotas, since '*volendo eligere omnes aptos male possunt hic senari colores. Isti bugenses non multum curant de coloribus, solum quod burgensis habeat suum lodium, salicet sint aves et burgenses pro dimidia*': "Codice diplomatico delle colonie Tauro-Liguri", *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria*, 7/1 (1871): 782, ed. A. Vigna, vol. II, 1.
- 34 Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 145.
- 35 Pacini, *I presupposti politici*, 175–176.
- 36 ASG, *Politicorum*, 1648.
- 37 Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 162–165.
- 38 Another peace including similar electoral accords survives from 1450: Musso, "I colori delle Riviere", 543.
- 39 Giovanna Petri Balbi, "Il sistema assistenziale genovese alle soglie dell'età moderna: L'ufficio di Misericordia (secolo XV)", *Reti Medievali Rivista*, 14 (2013): 111–150, [www.rma.unina.it/2145](http://www.rma.unina.it/2145), accessed on 31 May 2017.
- 40 Pacini, *I presupposti politici*, 96; Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 174–175. Contemporary observ-

41 Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova, *Manoscritti Ricci*, 91, 200–202.

42 *Leges Genuenses*, cols. 300–302: “*Quod nullus de verbis parcialibus vociferetur vel loquatur*”.

43 See Cynthia Polecristi, *Preaching Peace in Renaissance Italy: Bernardino of Siena and His Audience* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000); Francesco Bruni, *La città divisa: Le parti e il bene comune da Dante a Guicciardini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2003).

44 ASG, *Diversorum*, 577, cc. 123r–124r, 29 March 1465.

45 Ferente, *Gli ultimi guelfi*, 166.

46 On the *botteschi*, see Carlo Taviani, “Hanno levato l’amore dal comune e postolo a San Giorgio”, in *L’immagine del comune e della Casa di San Giorgio di Genova (XV–XVI sec.)*, in *Libertà e dominio*, 293.

47 Pacini, *I presupposti politici*, 188–189.

# 13

## THE ELECTION OF THE ABBESS

### Political reasons of monastic discipline in Renaissance Parma

Letizia Arcangeli\*

Translated by Serena Ferente

The topic of this chapter is a series of reforms of nunneries implemented in Parma between 1486 and 1525.<sup>1</sup> The most notable change the reforms introduced was to abolish the perpetuity of the abbess’s office. The reforms had deep roots and any explanation of how they evolved in concrete terms, their chronology and their priorities must go back to political transformations, which date back at least to 1480. In some respects the reforms can be analyzed as part of a process of *disciplinamento*.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, female communities, which used to be mostly free from institutional supervision, and a locus of female power, such as the office of the perpetual abbess, fell under the control of civic and ecclesiastical authorities (see the first section of this chapter). On the other hand, the *de facto* powers of the abbesses’ families over their respective nunneries was reduced to the benefit of the city. It was initially the prince who pursued the supremacy of the public over the private, as an element of his attempt to overcome the system of party government that characterized the early years of Sforza rule in the duchy of Milan (discussed in the second section).<sup>3</sup> The city of Parma adopted the same objective only later, when the papal government of Parma endorsed the transition from a political system dominated by factions and vertical clans (including both the landed aristocracy and the urban ‘nobles’) toward a system organized around social orders ( *ceti* ), where the central power recognized as ‘public’ only the city governed by citizens on their way to constitute a patriciate (to be discussed in the third section). Finally, the case of Parma suggests that the monastic rule imposed on nunneries can be read politically: the painstaking discipline of words, gestures and behaviors promoted the political necessity of manners and the repression of personal antagonisms, which could develop into factional allegiances inside and outside the monastic community (as discussed in the final section).