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RESTORING ORDER: THE PAPAL MONARCHY, REPUBLICANISM, AND POLITICAL
THOUGHT IN ITALY, 1220-1300

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BY
GRIFFIN RIDLEY

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For Paskalina with love

It is only to vain men that all is vanity; and all is deception only to those who have never been sincere with themselves. Joseph Conrad, "Prince Roman"

All of this like some ancient anointing. So be it. Evoke the forms. Where you've nothing else construct ceremonies out of the air and breathe upon them. Cormac McCarthy, The Road

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Acknowledgments

I became interested in the medieval papacy out of a deep curiosity about the sources of its authority. This curiosity extends to those situations in which humans more or less voluntarily accept that other people preside over themselves. On closer inspection, explanatory words like power, coercion, persuasion, authority, and legitimacy do not seem to explain very much. Too often such terms suggest formulae, wherein key words act as variables that are plugged into predetermined equations: thus historical research becomes the mere imposition of theory. In the end, different descriptions, not shoe-horned formulations of cause and effect, may be what we want out of historical writing. This dissertation began as an effort to trace papal government, but with thoughts like these in my mind, it became an attempt to outline and interpret various modes of political thought in the later thirteenth century as they related to different conceptions of legitimate political behavior, understood as various responses to perceived political disorder in later thirteenth-century Italy.

I would like to thank my undergraduate professors, especially Robert von Hallberg, Christopher Chinn, Benjamin Keim, and Kenneth Baxter Wolf, and my committee members at Chicago: Ada Palmer, David Nirenberg, and Jonathan Lyon. Conversations with the Bourbon family, especially Brett Bourbon, led me to push myself and to order my thoughts. My grandparents George and Peggy Beadell encouraged, in different ways, an early curiosity about historical things. My parents Jon and Georgia listened to my first history lectures without demure or apparent discomfort—for multitudes of reasons they owe my deepest thanks. The same goes to my siblings Cameron Ridley and Maegan Hollander and their families. But above all I would like to thank Paskalina Bourbon, who among numerous things has helped me learn how to make distinctions.

Introduction

In the years 1309-1311 the poet Dante (1265-1321) thought peace and order could come again to Italy. He hoped the Emperor Henry VII (1308-1313) would bring it. For decades, since the death of Emperor Frederick II in 1250, central and northern Italians had seen warfare and political disarray. Peace became a dream, worthy of hope but in practice seen for only a few years at a time, if that long. The virtually independent Italian cities seemed severed from the traditional sources of political authority. The papacy was unreliable. The emperor was absent. But civil war was everywhere. Dante's Florentine contemporary Remigio de Girolami (1235-1319) wrote in 1304 that modern men destroy cities and provinces out of love for their own private good, forgetting the common utility that alone could remake political order.¹ In his Political Letters, Dante argued that the Italian way of independent civic government amounted to a departure from the eternal divine order promised by imperial, Roman law.² He thought Henry VII might restore the connection between Italians and heaven; but he was wrong. Henry came to Italy in splendor but died there, humiliated in part by Dante's fellow Florentines.³

It would be too easy to assume that Dante's imperial political views were commonplace and typical. But they marked a departure from the past half century and more of some important

¹ Remigio dei Girolami, *De Bono Communi*, in *Dal bene commune al bene del commune: i trattati politici* (Florence: Sismel, 2014) ed. Emilio Panella, pp. 146-221.

² See his argument on the relationship between politics and peace in *Monarchia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1916), ed. E. Moore: 1.2; Dante famously argued that rule by a Universal Monarchy would constitute the rule of reason over passion and so create a universal peace: *ibid.*, 1.12: Genus humanum solum imperante Monarcha sui et non alterius gratia est: tunc enim solum politie diriguntur oblique, democratie scilicet oligarchie atque tyrannides, que in servitutem cogunt genus humanum...et politizant reges, aristocratici quos optimates vocant, et populi libertates zelatores, quia, cum Monarcha maxime diligat homines, ut iam tactum est, vult omnes homines bonos fieri: quod esse non potest apud oblique politizantes. See Justin Steinberg, "Messianic and Legal Time in Dante's Political Epistles," in *Le lettere di Dante: Ambienti culturali, contesti storici e circolazione dei saperi* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020) ed. Antonio Montefusco and Giuliano Milanvoli, 2:371-394.

³ See Dante's denunciations of the Florentines in *Epistole* (Florence: Società Dantesca Italiana, 1960), ed. Ermengildo Pistelli: 7.15-28.

political thinking in Italy.⁴ This was partly the result of a historical fact that shaped political thought: from the death of Frederick II (1194-1250) to the coming of Henry VII, no emperor entered Italy. While Roman lawyers could continue to comment on ancient imperial law, practically minded Italian political thinkers thought about how to restore order when the imperial throne lay vacant; insofar as imperial law remained operative in this period, it did so in a time when there was no ultimate imperial judge presiding over Italy. Practical political thinkers had to look elsewhere for political answers. In this dissertation I explore how some of them—chroniclers like Jacopo da Varagine, Rolandino of Padua, and Salimbene de Adam—wrote in very different ways about how to restore political stability. They produced works that contain contributions to the history of political thought which historians have hitherto ignored.

The chroniclers I study in this dissertation are less well-known than Dante, but they are eloquent and sophisticated. From my perspective, the history of political thought should interpret how past actors wrote about how to deal with political issues as they understood them. My purpose in this dissertation is to demonstrate how late thirteenth-century Italian chroniclers implicitly taught their readers to restore political order in communities wracked by violence. In doing so they employed disparate concepts relating to authority, power, and the sources of political and social legitimacy. My interpretations of these chroniclers concentrate on the different ways these chroniclers configured the proper relationships between individuals, groups, social and political customs, historical issues like causation and the grounds of historical knowledge, and rational behaviors as they pointed to God's ultimate stability, in order to teach

⁴ Alexander Lee, in *Humanism and Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2018), argues that humanists in the period 1260-1335 defended the empire as the natural setting of Italian political life, but in asserting this Lee focuses on the political thought of the Paduan poet Albertino Mussato (1261-1329), who belongs to Dante's generation. Lee ignores the political thought of the authors writing from c. 1260-1300 whom I discuss in this dissertation.

their readers to act in a way that would be conducive to political stability in the troubled political world within which they lived. I have found it useful to organize my interpretations of their arguments according to their different views of the papacy. These authors adapted to historical contingency. In the absence of an emperor, they discussed how the remaining source of hierarchical order, the papacy, fit or did not fit into their political schemes. I therefore trace how these authors wrote about the relationship between the papacy and their polities. Some advocated making peace within their city by uniting the people in common devotion under the Roman popes. Others thought that their cities would best find peace if they were left alone. Still others agreed with the Roman Church that the popes should rule a world-wide empire, but worried that they had become too corrupt to do so. While modern historians typically focus on the way that fourteenth-century Europeans began to question the foundations of papal authority, already these thirteenth-century chroniclers were initiating similar investigations.

My interpretation of these chroniclers rests on a methodological claim about the kinds of sources that can be used to learn about how people in the past thought and argued about politics. Historians of thirteenth-century political thought typically write about imperial and papal ideology as found in letters and law codes, the works of the Roman lawyers who commented on Justinian's Code, and scholastic philosophers like Thomas Aquinas who wrote in massive compendia and commentaries.⁵ But the authors I study wrote chronicles, and historians have not

⁵ Of the authors I study—Jacopo da Varagine, Salimbene de Adam, Rolandino of Padua, the anonymous authors of the papal lives—only one, Brunetto Latini, is commonly mentioned in overviews of medieval political thought. See Francis Oakley, *The Mortgage of the Past: Reshaping the Ancient Political Inheritance (1050-1300)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Antony Black, *Political Thought in Europe 1250-1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Joseph Canning, *A History of Medieval Political Thought 300-1450* (New York: Routledge, 1996); idem, *Ideas of Power in the Late Middle Ages, 1296-1417* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Kenneth Pennington, "Law, Legislative Authority, and Theories of Government, 1150-1300," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c.350-c.1450* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) ed. J.H. Burns 424-453; J.A. Watt, "Spiritual and Temporal Powers," in *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought, 367-423*; they are missing also from anthologies of texts relating to medieval political thought, e.g. *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011) ed. Joshua Parens and Joseph C.

generally focused on interpreting chronicles as sources of political thought.⁶ By studying how thirteenth-century Italian chroniclers prescribed political conduct, I join my dissertation to those medieval historians—like Gabrielle Spiegel and Nicolai Rubinstein—and those early modern historians—like James Hankins and J.G.A. Pocock—who study historiographical texts as records of thinking about politics.⁷ By doing so, I have been able to interpret the political thought of authors who are almost universally missing from histories of medieval political thinking.

It is worth dwelling on the status of this methodological claim. In thirteenth-century Italy, chroniclers produced histories which did not just describe political events. Instead, they wrote chronicles in which they tried to convince their readers to adopt courses of political action, and they did this to try to restore peace and order to Italy and to their cities. The chronicles I discuss are therefore examples of practical political thought; their chronicles were meant to effect future political actors, not simply to record historical happenings. One would be wrong to think that they are mere repositories of communal memory or that they easily represent how people generally thought about or evaluated political actions. Hence by ‘practical’ I do not mean that they are simplistic, or that interpreting them is simple. The authors whose works I analyze

Macfarland, and *Readings in Medieval Political Theory 1100-1400* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000), ed. Cary J. Nederman and Kate Langdon Forhan.

⁶ But see Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997). Spiegel argued that medieval chroniclers could describe actions as historically justified, hence legitimizing them as customary, and thus prescribe them for future political actions. I discuss her arguments more in chapter three. I have also learned from the approaches of the following essays: Bjorn Weiler, “Tales of First Kings and the Culture of Kingship in Western Europe, c.1050-c.1200,” *Viator* 46:2 (2015) 101-127; idem, “Describing Rituals of Succession and the Legitimation of Kingship in the West,” in *Court Ceremonies and Rituals of Power in Byzantium and the Medieval Mediterranean* (Leiden: Brill, 2013) ed. Beihammer, S. Constantinou, and M.G. Parani 115-140; Philippe Buc, “Writing Ottonian Hegemony: Good Rituals and Bad Rituals in Liutprand of Cremona,” *Majestas* 4 (1996) 3-38. The warnings of Antony Black on the uses of chronicles as sources of political thought are pertinent: see *Political Thought in Europe*, pp. 4-5.

⁷ Nicolai Rubinstein, “The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence: A Study in Mediaeval Historiography,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (1942) 198-227; J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), particularly the “Afterword” added in 2002; Hankins, *Virtue Politics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019). I discuss the work of J.G.A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner below.

prescribed forms of political action that derived from different visions of politics, which themselves were constituted by different conceptions of reason, knowledge, human communities, and history. By analyzing them together, and by remaining cognizant of the broad political conditions in which the chroniclers lived and to which they responded, I have been able to identify and discuss a story of political thought in thirteenth-century Italy that previous historians have missed. Through concentrating on how these authors fit the papacy into their arguments, I recover a lost debate on the uses of the papacy for the Italian cities in the later thirteenth century, and I organize my chapters not according to chronology but to these views on the papacy, so as to clarify that debate.

The sources I use to make this argument are integrally connected to the political and social units in which they were produced. Most of the chronicles I discuss were written to somehow effect the conduct of politics in the Italian communes, the independent Italian cities of the later Middle Ages. They tried to influence the expectations and customs of political actors within them. In order to explain how civic chronicles were connected to the communes, it is necessary to first provide a brief account of their intertwined histories. In the rest of this Introduction, therefore, I will provide an account of the political history of thirteenth-century Italy, paying special attention to how the mid-thirteenth-century wars between the popes and emperors helped to destabilize the Italian city republics and set the stage for the political thinkers I study. Following this, I summarize the two scholarly literatures that I respond to in this dissertation: that of the ‘papal monarchy’ and that of thirteenth-century republicanism. I end this Introduction with a short description of my chapters.

The Origins of the Communes

Scholarly arguments about the origins of the Italian city communes have long raged and will likely continue to burn.⁸ Recently, the historian Chris Wickham has convincingly argued that the communes first emerged as informal, private arrangements for the common defense of town-communities in central and northern Italy in the later eleventh and early twelfth centuries.⁹ Cities were natural places of government in medieval Italy. Even in the early middle ages, Italian society never became quite as concentrated in the countryside as had society in other areas in post-Roman western Europe. The small cities and towns of central and northern Italy remained centers of population, politics, and culture in the medieval *Regnum Italicum*. The political centrality of these centers only intensified after Italy's earlier medieval kings lost much of their power in the tenth century. The successors of these kings, the German king-emperors beginning with Otto I (962-973), tried to retain their authority by entrusting rights of legal jurisdiction and defense to the semi-autonomous bishops of the small cities and towns of northern Italy. In the late eleventh century a series of conflicts between the popes and the emperors concerning the obligations of bishops disturbed this political status quo. Because of resulting difficulties surrounding episcopal successions and the wider issues of warfare and politics, by the 1080s and 1090s bishops in many Italian towns could no longer lead the common defense of the cities. The higher authorities—the emperors and popes—were themselves embroiled in conflict. A political vacuum had emerged.

⁸ For a still useful overview see Edward Coleman, "The Italian Communes: Recent Work and Current Trends," *Journal of Medieval History* 8 (1999) 373-397.

⁹ *Sleepwalking into a New Century: The Emergence of Italian City Communes in the Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015). In this section I rely also on the articles in ed. David Abulafia, *Italy in the Central Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), especially Edward Coleman, "Cities and Communes," pp. 27-57, and Trevor Dean, "The Rise of the Signori," pp. 104-125; Daniel Waley and Trevor Dean, *The Italian City-Republics* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013 4th edition); Philip Jones, *The Italian City-State: From Commune to Signoria* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Jean-Claude Maire Vigueur, *Cavaliers et Citoyens: Guerre, conflits et société dans l'Italie communale, XIIe-XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2003); Jean-Claude Vaire Vigueur and Enrico Faini, *Il Sistema Politico dei Comuni Italiani (secoli XII-XIV)* (Milan-Turin: Bruno Mandadori, 2010).

In response to this disorder, the local elites of many towns entered power-sharing arrangements whereby they sought to ensure the common defense of the community and the acceptable conduct of legal disputes. This was the beginning of the Italian communes. They first appear in documents from early twelfth-century Pisa and Genoa. The development of these arrangements looked different in every locality, but by 1150 most of the towns of central and northern Italy were ruled by ‘consuls’ who were elected in civic assemblies (contiones) composed of oligarchical local elites. After the 1170s, moreover, many of these communes possessed legal sanction from the Holy Roman Emperors.¹⁰ The elites who ruled the communes were usually from the knightly milites class.¹¹ The widespread use of consuls was soon eclipsed by the election of podestà (mayors) who ruled each town for one year, being subject to a process of reckoning after their rule ended (the sindicatio). The podestà were very often careerists who spent much of their life serving in one town or another,¹² and most of the authors whose works I analyze in this dissertation lived in communes ruled by annually elected podestà.

The Beginnings of Communal Historiography

It seems that the denizens of these communes started writing about them in historical works early in the twelfth century. Thus the historiography of the communes emerged at nearly the same time as the communes themselves. These early historical texts indicate that the people of the early communes thought of their cities as functionally independent. They reveal too that their rulers conceived of themselves as living according to a mixture of Christian and ancient

¹⁰ Paolo Brezzi, “I Comuni Cittadini Italiani e l’Impero Medioevale,” in *Nuove Questioni di Storia Medioevale* (Milan: Marzorati, 1969), pp. 177-207.

¹¹ Maire-Viguer, *Cavaliers et citoyens*.

¹² V. Crescenzi, “Il sindacato degli ufficiali nei comuni medievali italiani,” in *L’Educazione giuridica IV, Il pubblico funzionario: modelli storici e comparative* vol. 1. (Perugia: Libreria universitaria, 1981), pp. 384-529.

¹² In *Cavaliers et Citoyens*, pp. 35-66; cf. J-C. Maire Vigueur (ed), *I Podestà dell’Italia comunale* 2 vols. (Rome: Collection de l’École Française de Rome, 2000); E. Artifoni, “I podesta professionali e la fondazione retorica della politica comunale,” *Quaderni storici* 63 (1986), 687-719.

Roman values, that they wanted to expand the boundaries and wealth of their cities through warfare, and that they would prefer to do so by fighting against the enemies of the faith, though other Italians were fair prey.¹³ The best examples of early communal historiography come from Pisa and Genoa, two cities that rapidly attained maritime predominance in the Mediterranean in the late eleventh century. Pisa and Genoa were, moreover, the first cities to develop communes as forms of local government. I discuss some of this early historiography here because it will help the reader to situate the later authors I discuss in this dissertation, many of whom came from the same or analogous traditions of historiography.

Caffaro of Caschifellone (c.1080-1166) was a Genoese soldier and diplomat who served as consul of the Genoese commune multiple times in his long life.¹⁴ He took part in the First Crusade as a soldier and a sailor, and he served as Genoa's emissary to the Roman See in the 1140s. But most importantly of all, for our purposes, he privately wrote a *Cronica* containing the history of the Genoese commune. In this work he described the glorious exploits of the Genoese people. For example, he gave one of the most biased of all accounts of the First Crusade when he explained that it began when Pope Urban II (1088-1099) personally asked the Genoese to capture Jerusalem. According to Caffaro, the Genoese conquered Jerusalem with just a little help from

¹³ Michele Campopiano, "The Problem of Origins in Early Communal Historiography: Pisa, Genoa and Milan Compared," in *Using the Written Word in Medieval Towns: Medieval Urban Literacy* volume 2 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014) ed. M. Mostert, A. Adamska, 2:227-250; Chris Wickham, "The Sense of the Past in Italian Communal Narratives," in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe* (London: Bloomsbury, 1992) ed. Paul Magdalino.

¹⁴ G. Arnaldi, "Uno sguardo agli Annali Genovesi," in idem, *Studi sui cronisti della Marca Trevigiana nell'eta di Ezzelino da Romano* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, 1963), 225-245; G. Petti Balbi, *Caffaro e la cronachistica genovese* (Genoa: Tilgher, 1982), Frank Schweppenstette, *Die politik der Erinnerung. Studien zur Stadtsgeschichtsschreibung Genuas im 12. Jahrhundert* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2003); R. Bordone, "Le origini del comune di genova," in *Comuni e Memoria Storica: Alle origini del comune di Genova atti del convegno di studi genova 24-26 settembre 2001* (Genoa: Tilgher, 2001, 237-259; R.D. Face, "Secular History in the Twelfth Century: Caffaro of Genoa," *Journal of Medieval History* 6 (1980) 169-185. The usual edition is *Annali genovesi de Caffaro e de'suoi continuatori, dal MXCIX al MCCXCII* (Genoa: Tipografia de R. Istituto Sord-Muti, 1890-1929), ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano.

other crusaders. His Cronica concerns the commune, not the city of Genoa. He began it with the First Crusade because he considered it to be the commune's first public action.¹⁵ When Caffaro presented his Cronica to the communal council of Genoa in the 1140s, the members of the council voted to make it the official history of the Genoese commune. A succession of chroniclers brought the Genoese annals up to date until the 1290s.¹⁶

As late as the early eleventh century, pirates from north Africa raided and pillaged the Tuscan town of Pisa. By the end of the century, the town organized its own piratical raid on the northern African town of Mahdiya, in modern Tunisia, and about a decade later, the self-ruling elites of Pisa conducted a successful raid on the Muslim communities in the Balearic Islands off the coast of modern north-eastern Spain. The leaders of these expeditions returned to Pisa bearing loot and plunder, which they placed as trophies in their cathedral. They had artisans inscribe epigraphs on the walls of their churches that celebrated their deeds.¹⁷ Educated authors tried their hands writing epic poems that celebrated Pisa's exploits.¹⁸ These poets compared Pisa to ancient Rome. Thus the author of the *Carmen de victoria Pisanorum* (c.1095) described how the Pisans captured Mahdiya just as the ancient Romans took Carthage, and he proceeded to celebrate how the "Pisan people (gens) destroyed the most impious people," the Muslims of Mahdiya, and "slaughtered them like cattle."¹⁹ The author of the *Carmen* still assumed that the

¹⁵ On this theme see John E. Dotson, "The Genoese civic annals: Caffaro and his continuators," in *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), ed. Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewis and Duane J Osheim: 55-85.

¹⁶ These are edited in *Annali genovesi*, ed. Belgrano.

¹⁷ G. Scalia, "Epigraphica Pisana-testi latini sulla spedizione contro le Baleari del 1113-1115 e su altre imprese anti-saracene del sec. xi," *Miscellanea di studi ispanici* 6 (Pisa: Università di Pisa, 1963) 234-286; idem, "Romanitas' pisana tra xi e xii secolo: le iscrizioni del duomo e la statua del console rodolfo," *Studi Medievali* 13 (1972): 791-843.

¹⁸ G. Scalia, *Il carme pisano sull'impresa contro i Saraceni del 1087* (Pisa: Liviana, 1973).

¹⁹ Anonymous, *Carmen de victoria Pisanorum*, ed. H. Cowdrey in "The Mahdiya campaign of 1087," *English Historical Review* 92 (1977) 1-29, 24-29; Alasdair Grant, "Pisan Perspectives: The Carmen in Victoriam and Holy War, c.1000-1150," *The English Historical Review* 131 (2016) 983-1009.

bishop of Pisa led the Pisans. But a few decade later, the author of the *Liber Maiolichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus*, a long epic poem one-third the length of Vergil's *Aeneid*, attributed leadership to the elites who led the expedition against the Muslims in the Balearic Islands. He wrote for the "praise and glory of the Virgin Mary," and "for the honor and glory of the people of Pisa and the exaltation and augmentation of the status of the city of Pisa."²⁰ He described the speeches of the Pisans before battles, and listed many of the names of the Pisan elites who went on the expedition. In this way the author promulgated the sense that Pisa was a neo-Roman, Christian republic: piratical, expansionary, and self-governing.

The Papacy, the Communes, and the Empire

The authors of the Pisan *Carmen de victoria* and the *Liber Maiolichinus* described the Pisans as acting at the behest of the pope in Rome, just as Caffaro described the Genoese as taking action after the pope asked them to capture Jerusalem.²¹ This tells us something important about the attitudes of the communal elites toward external hierarchies. The communes remained legally within the Holy Roman Empire. But in the many conflicts between popes and emperors that troubled Italy in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, many Italian communes sided with the popes against the emperors, who were supposedly their legal rulers. A polycentric political environment—characterized by many particular localities—permitted a certain freedom of choice and strategic action. The rulers of the particular communes could choose, in times of conflict, between the two contrasting superior authorities, the papacy or the empire, according to their own interests.

²⁰ Anonymous, *Liber Maiolichinus de gestis Pisanorum illustribus* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1904), ed. C. Balisse, 85.

²¹ On the *Carmen*'s links to the papacy see Grant, "Pisan Perspectives."

This element of choice became particularly pronounced in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. From the 1150s to the late 1170s the Emperor Frederick I (1152-1190) fought against a coalition of self-governing Italian towns, led by Milan. These towns united into a kind of political association called the Lombard League.²² They were Frederick's foes in part because he wished to exert more control over the Italian communes than they were willing to countenance—especially since they had become used to decades of virtual autonomy. At the same time, Frederick fought against Pope Alexander III (1159-1181). Frederick supported another bishop as pope. Pope Alexander and the Lombard League made common cause against him. Eventually he had to make peace with both parties. As part of the deal with the Lombard League he recognized the rights and immunities of the functionally independent cities in the Peace of Constance (1183), which has been called the Magna Carta of the Italian communes.²³

The same pattern repeated in the 1220s through to 1250. Another conflict emerged between some of the communes, some of whom were allied with the pope, against other communes arrayed under Emperor Frederick II (1220-1250). The conflict has become famous, not least because medieval historians like Ernst Kantorowicz have written biographies of the charismatic and learned Frederick II, “the wonder of the world.”²⁴ On the other hand, historians

²² Gianluca Raccagni, *The Lombard League, 1164-1225* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Lidia Capo, “Federico Barbarossa nelle Cronache Italiane Contemporane,” *Bullettino dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo e Archivio Mauratoriano* 96 (1990): 303-345.

²³ Paolo Brezzi, “I Comuni Cittadini Italiani e l'Impero Medioevale,” in *Nuove Questioni di Storia Medioevale* (Milan: Marzorati, 1969), pp. 177-207. Text of the Peace of Constance in *Die Urkunden Friedrichs I. 1181-1190* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Diplomata* 10:4 (Hanover: Hahn, 1990), ed. Heinrich Appelt assisted by Rainer Maria Herkenbath, Walter Koch, and Bettin Pferschky, pp. 71-77; Gianluca Raccagni, “The Teaching of Rhetoric and the Magna Carta of the Lombard cities: the Peace of Constance, the Empire and the Papacy in the works of Guido Faba and his leading contemporary colleagues,” *Journal of Medieval History* 39 (2013): 61-79. In general see John B. Freed, *Frederick Barbarossa: The Prince and the Myth* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

²⁴ Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *Kaiser Friedrich der Zweite* (Berlin: Bondi, 1928); but see David Abulafia, *Frederick II: A Medieval Emperor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992); and the various essays in *Federico II* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1994), ed. Agostino Paravicino Bagliani. See too Wolfgang Stürmer, *Friedrich II* (Darmstadt, 1992-2000).

from J.C.L. de Sismondi (1773-1842) have understood the conflict as a struggle between imperial despotism and liberty-loving republics—or at least republicans motivated by local self-interest.²⁵ Recently, revisionist historians like David Abulafia tend to concentrate on the latter.

In a certain sense, pope and emperor had become irrelevant to the real conflict...the real motor [of conflict] was faction and feud in the towns, over which higher loyalties to pope or emperor were superimposed. More lives were lost in the struggles of the factions than on the battlefield of Frederick II; and, to the citizens of the small hill-towns, more was at stake: the horizon did not extend beyond the next range of hills.²⁶

For their part, papal historians have described the ideological claims spread in both imperial and papal propaganda, while mostly forgetting about the wars between Frederick and the communes.²⁷ But this has obscured the way that the popes and their legates doled out privileges to local communal elites in order to garner their support.²⁸

In a way, the polycentric political structure of thirteenth-century Italy gives some support to all these historical approaches. It is important for the reader to have a good sense of these

²⁵ J.C.L. Sismonde de Sismondi, *Histoire des republiques italiennes au Moyen Âge* (Zurich: H. Nicolle, 1807). This could later be coupled with an Italian nationalism suffused with the spirit of the Risorgimento, as in Giuseppe Marchetti Longhi, “La difesa di Milano contro Federico II di Svevia e i Pavesi negli anni 1238-1239,” *Atti e Memorie del Ivo Congresso storico Lombardo* (Milan: Tipografia Antonio Cordini, 1940): 197-219.

²⁶ Abulafia, *Frederick II*, pp. 367-8; for a detailed account see Lucia Baietto, *Il Papa e le Città: Papato e Comuni in Italia centro-settentrionale durante la prima metà del secolo XIII* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull’Alto Medioevo, 2007), and Gianlucca Raccagni, “Tra Lega Lombarda e *Pars ecclesie*: l’evoluzione della seconda Lega Lombarda e la leadership dei legati papali negli anni a cavallo della morte di Federico II (1239-1250),” *Società e Storia* 35 (2012): 249-75.

²⁷ See P. Herde, “Federico II e il papato: la lotta delle cancellerie,” in ed. Herde, *Studien zur Papst- und Reichsgeschichte, zur Geschichte des Mittelmeerraumes und zum kanonischen Recht im Mittelalter* i (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2002), 277-91; G.A. Loud, “The case of the missing martyrs: Frederick’s war with the Church, 1239-1250,” in *Martyrs and Martyrologies* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1993), ed. Diana Wood: 141-52; Maria Pia Alberzoni, “Le armi del legato: Gregorio da Montelongo nello scontro tra Papato e Impero,” in *La propaganda politica nel basso medioevo: Atti del XXXVIII Convegno storico internazionale. Todi 14-17 ottobre 2001* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sul basso Medioevo, 2002), 177-239.

²⁸ On which see again Baietto, *Il Papa e le Città*; and the study of Miriam Clelia Ferrari, “1243: L’operato di Gregorio da Montelongo a Vercelli,” *Studi di Storia Medioevale e di Diplomatico* (Milan: Università degli studi di Milano, 1998), 109-118; G. Petti Balbi, “Federico II e Genova tra istanze regionali e interessi mediterranei,” in *Federico II e la civiltà comunale nell’Italia del Nord* (Rome: De Luca Editori, 1999), ed. C.D. Fonseca, R. Crotti: 99-130. In his recent history of the conflict Brett Whalen has therefore emphasized the way that the popes and the emperor struggled to attract followers in the communes: Brett Whalen, *The Two Powers: The Papacy, the Empire, and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

events, because they would prove to have lasting effects on the instability of Italian politics later in the century. Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) propelled Frederick II, the grandson of Frederick Barbarossa and already king of Sicily, into the throne of the Kingdom of Germany in 1212; Frederick was then crowned as Holy Roman Emperor by Honorius III in 1220. A period of collaboration ensued, but Honorius and Frederick fell out in 1225 because Frederick had not gone on a promised crusade. In 1228 Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241) excommunicated Frederick when he finally did go to Jerusalem. The pope then organized an invasion of Frederick's southern Italian kingdom, a conflict called the "War of the Keys." It ended when Frederick returned and defeated the pope's armies.

At this point, peace was remade between the papacy and the empire. Nor were they destined to make more war.²⁹ Even after the War of the Keys, Pope Gregory and Frederick collaborated in the persecution of heretics in Italy. Hence the historians who have argued that the conflict emerged from differing ideological visions, or that the popes and the emperor were destined to fight because the popes feared a power that could squeeze them from the north and the south have given overdetermined explanations for what were contingent historical happenings.³⁰ However, it is certainly true that the polycentric political structure of Italy helped to cause the conflict by creating its setting and its motivations. When Milan and its allied cities lost the battle of Cortenuova against Frederick II in 1237, all seemed lost for the Milanese and

²⁹ Pope Honorius and Pope Gregory actually tried to make peace between the communes and the emperor throughout the 1220s and much of the 1230s. In fact, Gregory IX had served as papal legate in Lombardy during Honorius III's reign, and during these missions he represented both the emperor and the pope as a peacemaker in order to prepare them for the planned crusade. See Johannes Bernwieser, "Non modo predicantis, sed quasi concionantis. Die Friedensrede Hugolinos von Ostia und Velletri in Cremona (1218) und ihr politischer Kontext," in *Rhetorik in Mittelalter und Renaissance: Konzepte—Praxis—Diversität* (Munich, 2011), ed. Georg Strack and Julia Knödler: 63-94; Brenda M. Bolton, "Our Lord Hugo': Gregory IX Before the Pontificate," in *Gregory IX (1227-1241): Power and Authority* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), ed. Damian J. Smith, 23-70.

³⁰ Abulafia, *Frederick II* repeats some of both arguments, though he ruefully comments on them in Abulafia, "Introduction," in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages*; see too Colin Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

their allies. Many of their podestà were captured, their armies were defeated, and the symbols of their communes were taken by the emperor. But Pope Gregory IX immediately saved them when he sent his papal legate Gregorio da Montelongo to Milan to act as their leader. At the same time he founded alliances between previously neutral cities. This culminated in more ties of mutual defense against Frederick, the declaration by Gregory that Frederick was a heretic and should be judged by a church council in Rome (on the basis that the emperor had abused the church in southern Italy), and the organization of a crusade against him, all in 1239-1240.³¹ Gregory even directed members of the Franciscan and Dominican Orders to preach public sermons against Frederick in cities throughout Italy, a fact that will be important to remember when we consider the Cronica of Salimbene de Adam in Chapter Four.³²

After Pope Gregory died in 1241, nearly two years elapsed before the election of Pope Innocent IV (1243-1254). Frederick II made the delay. He had captured prelates and cardinals returning to Rome in 1240 for the council called by Pope Gregory. He kept them in captivity for a time, and then released them to choose a new pope. He was mistaken if he hoped Pope Innocent would be grateful. The event led to more mutual animosity. Even at this point Frederick attempted to make peace with Pope Innocent, but to no success, and Innocent soon escaped to Lyons, in modern France, where in 1245 he solemnly and grandiloquently deposed Frederick of all his titles and severed the oaths of loyalty binding his subjects to him. From then until late

³¹ Gianluca Raccagni, "The Crusade Against Frederick II: A Neglected Piece of Evidence," *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 67:4 (2016): 721-740; idem, "Gregory IX and the 'Lombard Question'," in *Pope Gregory IX (1227-1241): Power and Authority*, 71-100. For a copy of the letter of excommunication see *Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum selectae* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historia* (Berlin: Weidman, 1883), ed. Carolus Rodenberg: 1.640-641, n. 742.

³² Maria Pia Alberzoni, "Friedrich II und die Bettelmönche," *Päpste in staufischer Zeit* (Göppingen: Gesellschaft für Staufische Geschichte, 2020), ed. Karl-Heinz Rueß: 95-119, 111.

1250, when Frederick died, warfare continued between Frederick and the Lombard towns allied with the papacy.

All these events served to increase the amount of political disorder in Italy. By no means did the death of Frederick signal the end of hostilities. Rather, what had been multiple local conflicts, temporarily grafted into a larger, dualistic conflict between allies of the empire and allies of the church, again splintered and multiplied. These conflicts remained interconnected, not least because the factions of the *pars imperii* (party of the empire) and *pars ecclesiae* (soon to be known, following Tuscan usage, as the Ghibellines and Guelfs respectively) continued as political associations linking factions across cities throughout central and northern Italy.³³

Nor was this all. The conflicts between these vaguely ideological associations combined with conflicts of a more social kind then occurring in the region. Alongside, between, and under the conflicts of the Guelfs and the Ghibellines, was the struggle between the *milites* and the *populus*. A class of civic aristocrats who fought the wars of the communes had for long ruled the cities (in Florence called the ‘magnates’ but elsewhere called *milites* or ‘knights’). This warlike group engaged in interminable feuds among themselves and with other cities: indeed war was their way of life, as Maire Vigueur has amply demonstrated, and they used the communes to lead that way of life.³⁴ But in the course of the thirteenth century, another elite group calling itself the people (*populus*, or *popolo*) fought for dominance in the communes. The political history of the towns soon dissolved into yet more factional contests. For example, in Florence the Guelf-allied

³³ Bartolus de Sassoferato, the fourteenth-century jurist, would argue that the terms ‘Guelf’ and ‘Ghibelline’ signified nothing more than two opposing factions. But this was not the case in thirteenth-century Italy; see Sanfilippo, “Pace di Cardinale Latino,” 14: “In Italia guelfismo e ghibellinismo avevano assunto un fondamento ideologico, erano diventati due schieramenti veri e propri, con collegamenti intercittadini e interregionali, con dimostrazioni concrete della solidarietà guelfa e ghibellina verso i compagni di fazione o di schieramento che erano stati sconfitti nelle lotte cittadine.”

³⁴ Maire Vigueur, *Cavalier et citoyens*.

popolo seized power in 1251, expelled Ghibelline magnati, and ruled the city with expansionist zest, fighting wars against enemies throughout Tuscany and conquering territory. In 1260 the members of the so-called primo popolo were expelled and a pro-imperial group seized power, though conflicts continued throughout the century. In 1268 the Guelf-popolo again seized power, exiled the Ghibelline magnati, and confiscated their property; later, under the Ordinances of Justice enacted in 1293, the ruling Guelfs outlawed the traditional feuding of the magnati. Thus the popolo-Guelfs defeated even the magnati-Guelfs, though this uneven victory was achieved many years after the passage of the Ordinances of Justice.³⁵

All of these conflicts formed a crisis of political order. The authors I study responded to it by devising ways of recovering peace. But they had yet more to contend with. Going further in this historical overview, the reader should understand that, in the domain of high politics, the popes remained powerful and energetic throughout this period of rampant disorder and warfare. The popes had defeated Frederick II. Soon they wiped out his dynasty by asking Charles of Anjou (1226/7-1285), the younger brother of Louis IX, king of France (1226-1270), to take the throne of Sicily from Frederick's remaining heirs.³⁶ After 1268 this process of replacement was complete. Charles soon exercised himself in political conflicts throughout Italy, the popes his willing collaborators, at least until Pope Gregory X (1271-1276) negotiated the election of Rudolf of Habsburg in 1273 as the king of Germany. This was an attempt to counteract their Charles's hegemony in Italy. But Rudolf had few Italian ambitions and gave the imperial rights

³⁵ Vieri Mazzoni, "Note sulla confisca dei beni dei ghibellini a Firenze nel 1267 e sul ruolo della Parte Guelfa," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 158:1 (2000), 3-28; The Ordinances of Justice are edited by Francisco Bonaino, "Ordinamenta Iustitiae Communis et Populi Florentiae: Gli Ordinamenti di Giustizia del comune e popolo di Firenze compilati nel 1293 e nuovamente pubblicati da Francesco Bonaino," *Archivio Storico Italiano* 5:1 (1855), entire text.

³⁶ Jean Dunbabin, *Charles of Anjou* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

for the Italian region of Romagna to Pope Nicholas III (1277-1280) in 1278.³⁷ This grant would motivate the popes to turn more and more towards warfare and policies of territorial consolidation, a trend lamented by Salimbene de Adam, the chronicler I study in Chapter Four.

Meanwhile successions of popes tried to make peace between warring factions in many Italian communes. But the efforts only produced more disorder and recrimination: old Guelfs were seldom happy to watch the popes favoring traditional Ghibellines. For example, papal legates attempted to negotiate between Florentine factions about eight times between 1260 and 1305. In 1272 Pope Gregory X himself visited Florence preaching the virtues of forgiveness and the blessings of peace. He was convincing, but not for very long.³⁸ Cardinal Latino Malaspini had the most success when, after a disastrous attempt to make peace between the popolo and the milites of Bologna, he wrote a treaty which prescribed power-sharing agreements between the Florentine Guelfs and Ghibellines. This treaty proved the ancestor of the later, guild-based regime that characterized Florentine republicanism for centuries.³⁹ Yet for many authors, the political activism of the popes spelled out the dangers of entrusting too much authority with them or their legates. These efforts at peace, like other political interventions by the papacy in this era, motivated mistrust and criticism, even as the absence of the emperors pushed the papacy to prominence. Increasingly, the popes became viewed warily by the elites of the Italian communes. Some of them turned to other ways to remake peace.

Chronicles and Ars Dictaminis: Attempts to Restore Order

³⁷ *Les Registres de Nicolas III (1270-1280)* (Paris: Albert Fontemoigne, 1898), ed. Jules Gay, letters numbered 684-698.

³⁸ *Les registres de Gregoire X* (Paris: Thorin & Fils, 1892), ed. Jean Guiraud: n. 355.

³⁹ Text in I. Lori Sanfilippo, "La pace del cardinale Latino a Firenze nel 1280. La sentenza e gli atti complementari," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il Medio evo e Archivio Muratoriano* 139 (1980) 193-259.

The authors I discuss in this dissertation responded to this persistent disorder with arguments about how to restore and then maintain political order and stability. They did so by urging their readers to follow the examples of political conduct which they described in their chronicles. Ronald Witt, in his work on the origins of the Renaissance, has shown that these authors were heirs to the traditions of communal chronicle-writing begun at Pisa and Genoa in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.⁴⁰ These authors were also heirs to a second rebirth of classical learning. This consisted of a renewed interest in Roman rhetoric, which was tied to the political uses of speech in the Italian assemblies. The civic elite of communal Italy valued the written word and expected their governors to write eloquent letters and laws; moreover, a podestà needed to be able to speak well in judgments and in the public assemblies.⁴¹

To this end, teachers like Boncompagno da Signa (1170-1250) instructed the communal elite in Latin grammar. He and his ilk produced educational treatises on speaking and writing. These handbooks, produced by grammarians like Boncompagno, Guido Faba, and Albertano of Brescia, are today called the *ars dictaminis* literature.⁴² They are usually formularies, or

⁴⁰ Ronald Witt, *'In the Footsteps of the Ancients': The Origins of Humanism from Lovato to Bruni* (Leiden: Brill, 2000); see too L. Capo and E. Faini, "Annali cittadini, memoria pubblica ed eloquenza civile in età comunale," *Storica* 61-62 (2015): 109-142; Girolamo Arnaldi, "Il notario-cronista e le cronache cittadine in Italia," in *Cronache e cronisti dell'Italia comunale* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'Altomedioevo, 2016) ed. Lidia Capo; Girolamo Arnaldi, "Cronache con documenti, conrache 'autentiche' e pubblica storiografia" in *Le scritture del comune: amministrazione e memoria delle città dei secoli xii e xiii* (Turin: Scriptorium, 1998), ed. G. Albini: 121-140; idem, *Studi sui cronisti della Marca Trevigiana nell'età di Ezzelino da Romano* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano Per il Medio Evo, 1963); M. Zabbia, "Il Contributo dei notai alla codificazione della memoria storica nelle città italiane (secoli xii-xiv)," *Nuova Rivista Storica* 82:1 (1998): 1-16; R. Bordone, "Il passato storico come tempo mitico nel mondo cittadino italiano del medioevo," *Società e storia* 51 (1991): 1-22; Rubinstein, "The Beginnings of Political Thought in Florence."

⁴¹ Enrico Artifoni, "Dal Dio del linguaggio al Dio dei buoni costumi. Ausilio divino e gruppi intellettuali nella cultura retorica e didattica del Duecento italiano," in *Il favore di Dio. Metafore d'elezione nelle letterature* (Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano Per il Medio Evo, 2017), ed. Francesco Mosetti Casaretto: 511-528; idem, "La politique est 'in fatti' et 'in detti'. L'éloquence politique et les intellectuels dans les cites communales au XIIIe siècle," in *Le pouvoir des mots au Moyen Âge* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2014), ed. Nicole Bériou, Jean-Patrice Boudet, and Irène Rosier-Catach, 209-224; idem, "I podestà professionali e la fondazione retorica della politica comunale," *Quaderni storici* 21 (1986): 687-719.

⁴² The essays in *Il pensiero e l'opera di Boncompagno da Signa* (Signa: R. Allegri e Fratelli, 2002), ed. Massimo Baldini; James Powell, *Albertano of Brescia: The Pursuit of Happiness in the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia:

collections of model speeches and letters. In these letters and speeches were included ethical statements or maxims drawn from ancient Roman authors such as Seneca and Sallust. These quotations were meant as examples of clear and pristine Latin. Education in language was thus paired with education in morals and politics. The Florentine chronicler Giovanni Villani celebrated Brunetto Latini (1220-1294), a Guelf-popolo teacher of *ars dictaminis*, for composing many books on “the vices and the virtues” and for “teaching the Florentines to speak well, and to wisely guide and rule the republic according to politics.”⁴³ Likewise, teachers of *ars dictaminis* like Latini were employed by communal governments to compose the laws (*statuti*) and official letters of the communes.⁴⁴ Many of the authors I study tried, like Latini, to teach their co-citizens how to “wisely guide and rule the republic according to politics.”

Armed with educations in law and *ars dictaminis*, as well as in theology and the Bible (though this applies more to the clerics), the authors I study adapted the chronicle form of historical writing for more theoretical uses. In that way they were heirs to the rich tradition of

University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992); Guido Fava, *Trattati e raccolte epistolari* (Florence: SISMEL, 2014), ed. Elisabetta Bartoli; *Ars dictaminis: Handbuch der mittelalterlichen Briefstilhehre* (Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, 2019) ed. Florian Hartmann and Benoit Gerevin.

⁴³ Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica* (Parma: Fondazione Pietro Bembo, 1991) ed. G. Porta, 1.9, pp. 27-28: “Nel detto anno MCCLXXXIII morì in Firenze uno valente cittadino il quale ebbe nome ser Brunetto Latini, il quale fu gran filosofo, e fue sommo maestro in retorica, tanto in bene sapere dire come in bene dittare. E fu quegli che spouse la Rettorica di Tulio, e fece il buono e utile libro detto Tesoro, e il Tesoretto, e la Chiave del Tesoro, e più altri libri in filosofia, e de’ vizi e di virtù, e fu dittatore del nostro Comune. Fu Mondano uomo, ma di lui avemo fatta menzione però ch’egli fue cominciatore e maestro in digrossare i Fiorentini, e farli scorti in bene parlare, e in sapere guidare e reggere la nostra reppublica secondo la politica.” On this understanding of ‘politica’ see Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*.

⁴⁴ See *Cronache e Statuti della città di Viterbo*, ed. Iganio Ciampi (Florence: Tipografia Regia, 1872), 3.506: Cum comuni utilitati liceat omnibus expedire ut magister Fratellus civis noster dictet missivas et remissivas litteras pro Comuni, statuimus quod potestas et camerarius et unusquisque eorum in solidum teneantur dare et facere dari infra primos tres menses sui regiminis et officii VI mediales grani et totidem salmas puri vini pro mercede laboris suo. Ita tamen ut in eius ponatur voluntate an velit granum, vinum an pecuniam, prout valebunt pro tempore, recipere a Comuni. Et ipse magister litteras sibi ad dictandum commissas pro ipso Comuni a potestate vel iudice, (scribat) quam utilius et pulcrius extimabit, ut scripta Communis nostri, que se diffuderint et publicent circumquaque, sint ad decus civitatis et notarii honorem...item pro bono statu et augment Communis Viterbii, cum intersit nostra viros sapientes habere, duximus statuendum quod magister Fratellus predictus ab omni collecta, datione et exactione...perpetuo sit immunis. Quoted in Florian Hartmann, “Decet ergo cives cum civibus concorditer vivere: Ideal und Identität in Kommunalen Artes Dictandi Oberitaliens,” in *Rhetorik in Mittelalter und Renaissance: Konzepte—Praxis—Diversität* (Munich: Müncher Beiträge zur Geschichtswissenschaft, 2011) ed. Strack and Knödler: 41-62.

communal historiography seen first in the Pisan poems and Caffaro's Annals. Partly inspired by Roman historians, and likely emulating authors like Helinand of Froidmont, who earlier in the century placed a mirror for princes in his chronicle, they expanded the uses of the chronicle in the domain of political education.⁴⁵ Some of the works I discuss have affinities with the massive compilations containing encyclopedias and histories then being produced by scholastic academics in France.⁴⁶

While authors of civic annals in other cities wrote simple accounts of events, the authors I study wrote ambitious meditations on history and politics. I will discuss these authors and their intellectual traditions more in the following chapters. At this point I pivot to describe the two scholarly traditions that I respond to in this dissertation: the literature on the papal monarchy and the academic literature of civic republicanism.

Historiography 1: The Papal Monarchy

'Papal monarchy' is the term medieval historians have used to describe the political-ecclesiastical association led by the Roman Church and its popes. Historians have often described the thirteenth-century papacy as ruling a centralized church government. This reflects medieval canon law and the canons of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) held in Rome.⁴⁷ The council fathers intended to protect ecclesiastical liberty, to

⁴⁵ Helinand of Froidmont, *De bono regimine principis*. Patrologia Latina, ed. JPL Migne (Paris, 1844-1865): 212:735-746. Jacopo da Varagine read and quoted from Helinand in his *Chronicle of Genoa*.

⁴⁶ On new developments of historiography in thirteenth-century—particularly the movement towards universal histories enfolding mirrors for princes and other advice literature—see Bernard Guenée, *Comment on écrit l'histoire au XIIIe siècle: Primat et le Roman de Roys* (Paris: CRNS Editions, 2016) ed. Jean-Marie Moeglin; idem, "L'historien et la compilation du XIIIe siècle," *Journal des Savants* 1:3 (1985): 119-135.

⁴⁷ See the work of Brian Tierney, for instance: *Origins of Papal Infallibility, 1150-1350: A Study on the Concepts of Infallibility, Sovereignty and Tradition in the Middle Ages* (Brill: Leiden/New York, 1972); Tierney also traced the origins of conciliarism, whose adherents tried to limit papal power: *Foundations of the Conciliar Theory: The Contribution of the Medieval Canonists from Gratian to the Great Schism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955). See the modern edition of Fourth Lateran's canons: *Constitutiones Concilii quarti Lateranensis una cum Commentariis Glossatorum* (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1981), ed. Antonio García y García.

reform the clergy, and to suppress heresy by creating a hierarchical system of investigation and accountability. For instance, the council canons order bishops to annually travel their dioceses to keep an eye on their subordinate clergy. Archbishops were to send investigators to monitor the bishops and the pope was to preside over the whole edifice as its guardian and watchman. Bishops were still to hold ecclesiastical courts, but appeals to the papal curia would be encouraged, and popes were to send legates to investigate abuses. The legates were supported by taxes called ‘provisions’, culled from the churches they visited. This government, in which popes and their legates theoretically kept clerics unblemished by corruption and accountable to the law, looks like it shares much in common with methods of administration seen in other thirteenth-century European governments.

Historians have long noted the medieval church’s resemblance to kingdoms and states. Historical judgments from the 1970s to the 2010s have remained remarkable stable. Richard Southern argued that the medieval church was a “church-state,” having “all the apparatus of the state: laws and law courts, taxes and tax-collectors, a great administrative machine, power of life and death over the citizens of Christendom and their enemies within and without. It was the state at its highest power, such as even Hegel among modern prophets of the state scarcely contemplated.”⁴⁸ But it was less than a state because it lacked a military and police force: “no sufficient body of powerful men was ever persuaded that they had a Christian duty” to fight for the pope.⁴⁹ In his general history of medieval Europe, Chris Wickham similarly argues that the

⁴⁸ Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York: Penguin, reprint 1990, original 1970), pp. 18-19.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 19-20. “When we speak of a church-state therefore we say too much, for the church was weak in the means of coercion. In the end, the decisive factor in the exercise of coercion was the consent and cooperation of independent secular rulers, who were mainly concerned to safeguard their own inherited interests.” The medieval church relied on the consent of a few monarchs: when this consent was withdrawn, the church’s power vanished, pp. 20-21.

thirteenth-century papal government was part of a wider development of administration, law, and officers in thirteenth-century Europe. He attributed the centralization of papal government to the papal curia's role as an appeals court and the integration of bishops' dioceses within the pope's wider jurisdiction.⁵⁰ It was a considerable power despite its martial ineptitude:

Intercutting with the growing power of kings, that is to say, and often in competition with them, was Europe's first major international power, with an infrastructure by now as coherent as that of any kingdom, and, importantly, an authority which was for the most part not lessened because it was not backed up by battalions: communications, legal precedent, bureaucratic machinery, could do it without arms.⁵¹

The popes were not kings; but they competed with and resembled them.

These descriptions of the medieval church as an empire of law and persuasion which was similar, despite its coercive incapacity, to contemporary European kingdoms is common in papal historiography.⁵² Hence the popularity of the term 'papal monarchy'.⁵³ The origins of the phrase lies in legal exegesis: for example in the 1960s J.A. Watt wrote about the 'papal monarchy' as the theoretical and legal domination of the medieval popes over not only the church but secular

⁵⁰ *Medieval Europe: From the Breakup of the Western Roman Empire to the Reformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 148: "Early medieval legal systems were complex, but it was rare for appeals, whether lay or clerical, to go beyond the judicial tribunals of single kingdoms. In the twelfth century, however, it became more and more normal for clerics throughout Europe to petition the pope to resolve their disputes—and the laity too, in areas, such as marriage disputes, which the church was by now making part of canon law...canon law slowly became more standardized across Europe, and the possibility of appeal linked diocesan politics more and more to that of Rome."

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 149. Southern would have noted that the church did have arms, after a sense; the church relied on the arms of the kings and other secular lords who supported it, who enforced the inquisition and crusades.

⁵² See I.S. Robinson, *The Papacy, 1073-1198: Continuity and Innovation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), *passim*.

⁵³ 'Papal monarchy' is primarily an Anglophone term. Other historians describe the same system of government using similar terms like 'center' and 'periphery.' Jochen Johrendt and Harald Müller, *Römisches Zentrum und kirchliche Peripherie: Das universale Papsttum als Bezugspunkt der Kirchen von den Reformpäpsten bis zu Innozenz III* (Berlin: Neue Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 2008); *idem*, *Rom und die Regionen: Studien zur Homogenisierung der lateinischen Kirche im Hochmittelalter* (Berlin: Neue Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, 2012). See also the comments of John Watts, *The Making of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), *ad locum*.

monarchs.⁵⁴ In 1968 Geoffrey Barraclough used the phrase as a title for the thirteenth-century papacy.⁵⁵ ‘Papal monarchy’ for Barraclough had four senses. These helpfully summarize some important elements of the thirteenth-century papacy. They help to show what the authors I discuss had to deal with. The first: the pope’s theoretical authority as ‘head of state’ was unlimited. The second: the practical exercise of the pope’s authority required a growing bureaucracy. The third: the dominant characteristic of papal administration was legal, based on the judicial function of the Church of Rome. The fourth and final: the popes meddled in political affairs; for instance, by the beginning of the fourteenth century, Pope John XXII spent 63 percent of his resources on waging war.⁵⁶ Barraclough, whose early work was on papal finances, emphasized the development of income taxes levied by popes on clergy and the increased papal control over conferring benefices as an important aspect of “papal sovereignty.”⁵⁷

Extending this argument, Barraclough alleged that this centralization of government corrupted the church.⁵⁸ Papal government had become a bureaucracy without soul, a machinery for advancing worldly ambitions, such as destroying the Hohenstaufen. Indeed, the theme of papal decline in the later thirteenth century as a result of “secularization” is manifest in traditional accounts of medieval history.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ “The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century: The Contribution of the Canonists,” and as a book, J. A. Watt, *The Theory of Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century: The Contribution of the Canonists* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1966).

⁵⁵ *The Medieval Papacy* (New York/London: W.W. Norton, 1968), p. 120: “If we try to summarize the situation of the church at the close of Innocent IV’s pontificate in 1254—or, more broadly, during the long Interregnum between 1250 and 1273, when Innocent IV’s successors, particularly Urban IV, were seeking to use the confusion in the empire following Frederick II’s death to build up their position in Italy—the central fact is that, after a century and a half of centralization, the ‘papal monarchy’ had been constituted.”

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 122-3.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 121-122. Geoffrey Barraclough, *Papal Provisions: Aspects of Church History, Constitutional, Legal and Administrative in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935).

⁵⁸ Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*, 120. See also Kevin Madigan, *Medieval Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 287-298, which effectively summarizes Barraclough’s arguments on this point.

⁵⁹ For example, Southern, *Western Society*, 135.

The emphasis on law continued in Kenneth Pennington's influential examination, *Pope and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Thirteenth Century*.⁶⁰ Pennington studied "the pope's supreme and undisputed authority within the church" according to medieval canon lawyers.⁶¹ He showed that canon lawyers argued that bishops were by law bound to serve the popes just as administrators served kings. His subtitle, *The Papal Monarchy*, alluded to this similarity between papal and royal administration: "Just as a king shared his authority with the great barons of the realm, the pope governed the church with his bishops."⁶² The theoretical demotion of bishops from princes of the church to officers of the pope corresponded to a new emphasis on the powers and rights of the papal office. This had been developing since Pope Gregory VII (1072-1085) but Pope Innocent III (1198-1216) both glorified the papal office and had an administration to set theory into practice.⁶³ Practically speaking, Pennington focuses on how the popes and canon lawyers reserved to the popes the right to transfer bishops from see to see, to depose bishops, to demand benefices from bishops, and to exempt monasteries from episcopal jurisdiction. This legal and fiscal structure looked like nothing less than a kingdom. In fact this papal monarchy was precocious when compared to other European monarchies:

Papal monarchy was one of the great creations of the Middle Ages. The pope was the first European monarch for whom a sophisticated theory of kingship was developed, and the canonists of the twelfth and thirteen centuries were primarily responsible for shaping the theoretical structure upon which papal monarchy rested.⁶⁴

⁶⁰ *Pope and Bishops: The Papal Monarchy in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984).

⁶¹ Pennington, *Pope and Bishops*, p.3.

⁶² Ibid, p. 4. C.f. p. 9: "This study will explore ecclesiastical authority in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries by focusing on developing definitions of papal monarchy and the formation of doctrine that governed the relationship of the popes and lesser prelates." C.f. p.2: "From the time the church shaped its governmental hierarchy to conform to the structure of the late Roman Empire, its constitution has been monarchical."

⁶³ Ibid., 11; pp. 13-114.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 190; Ibid., 2: "In the thirteenth century, the church became independent of secular rule but was subject to the bishop of Rome. It had its own legal system, a sophisticated juridical organization, and an intricate network of relationships among members of the ecclesiastical hierarchy."

For Pennington, therefore, ‘papal monarchy’ referred to rights adhering to offices within the church hierarchy.

Colin Morris entitled his history of the western church from 1050 to 1250 *The Papal Monarchy* (1988).⁶⁵ Pennington used ‘papal monarchy’ to refer to the authority of the pope within the church. But like Barraclough, Morris used ‘papal monarchy’ to refer also to papal power over laymen. Morris argued that, *sensu stricto*, there could be no ‘papal monarchy’ because medieval church and state were separate, and the church “was debarred from those activities of government which involved the use of force and imposition of death sentences.”⁶⁶ Hence, “A pope could no more rule a kingdom than a king could say mass.”⁶⁷ However, because the ‘state’ was weak in the early Middle Ages, “the clergy supervised activities which in the ancient or the modern world alike have been the business of the state or of voluntary societies,” such as providing schools and hospitals, regulating marriage, preserving peace within Christendom, and defending Christendom against “the infidel.”⁶⁸ But the popes claimed suzerainty over not only the Papal State in central Italy, but Sicily and England. All of which “made it appropriate to speak of papal monarchy as a special feature of the centuries after 1050.”⁶⁹ While Pennington’s definition of papal monarchy described papal authority over bishops, Morris expanded it to describe the whole range of papal authority over both the clergy and the laity. Whereas Pennington based his study of political theory on canon law, Morris described papal taxation, legal jurisdiction, crusades, and the fight against heresy using chronicles, documents, canon law, and other sources.

⁶⁵ *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (citation above).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

‘Papal monarchy’ has since become a popular term among medieval historians, who use it, usually without qualification, to refer to papal government.⁷⁰ Andreas Meyer, for example, entitled a chapter on the history of the western church from the fall of Rome to the end of the Middle Ages the “Papal Monarchy.”⁷¹ One indication of the success of ‘papal monarchy’ is that Meyer did not argue about the term’s usefulness or accuracy, both of which he simply accepted. He remarks that in the twelfth century the papal curia “developed into the real centre of [ecclesiastical] administration, and came to resemble the courts of Western rulers not only in its name but also in its structure.”⁷² Like Barraclough, Pennington, and Morris, he focuses on the subjection of archbishops and bishops to papal jurisdiction.⁷³ Petitioners came to the Roman curia to present court appeals to the pope.⁷⁴ The finances of the papal curia were greatly enlarged by Clement IV’s (1265-68) decree that the pope had the right to bestow ecclesiastical benefices on whomever he pleased and to reserve for himself the ecclesiastical livings of all clerics who died in the curia.⁷⁵ The popes claimed to be “feudal sovereigns” over Aragon, England, Portugal and Hungary.⁷⁶ Innocent III (1198-1216) is credited with centralizing power in the office of the pope.⁷⁷ In all respects, this is familiar from Barraclough, Pennington and Morris.

⁷⁰ See, e.g., Maureen Miller, “A Descriptive Language of Dominion? Curial Inventories, Clothing, and Papal Monarchy, c.1300,” *Textile History* 48:2 (2017): 176-191; Jochen Johrendt, “Die päpstliche Monarchie: Repräsentation und Konflikt,” in *Autorità e Consenso: Regnum e Monarchia nell’Europa Medievale* (Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 2017), ed. Maria Pia Alberzoni, Roberto Lambertini: 163-180; Kevin Madigan, *Medieval Christianity: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), pp. 287-298, entitled his chapter on the thirteenth-century papacy “The Bid for Papal Monarchy,” and emphasizes resistance to papal taxation *à la* Barraclough, even quoting Barraclough’s judgment against the legal nature of papal government on p. 295.

⁷¹ Andreas Meyer, “Papal Monarchy,” in *A Companion to the Medieval World* (Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), ed. Carol Lansing, Edward D. English: 372-396.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 384.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 385.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 386.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 391.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 390: “As [Innocent III] understood himself, he stood between God and man as the representative of Christ the priest-king, judging all, including nations and realms, and himself judged only by God... This enormous and also dangerous claim could be fully realized only within the Church, and in the secular sphere only when the political powers were willing to accept it.”

This penultimate point—the supposed feudal relationship between popes and European royalty—has been recently challenged by Benedict Wiedemann.⁷⁸ He argues that papal-royal relationships were characterized not so much by ‘overlordship’—a view promulgated by such an eminence grise as Walter Ullmann—but by practical and pragmatic political considerations. Wiedemann thus contributes to a growing but still nascent reevaluation of the nature of papal government and the descriptive accuracy of the term ‘papal monarchy’. Historians like Whalen have argued, for example, that the papal edifice of law does not adequately describe the vagaries and limitations of papal political practice.⁷⁹ Whalen and Wiedemann would state that the popes could not command and expect obedience, at least from secular rulers and elites. Rather they had to garner favor through persuasion: as a recent publication of conference proceedings on the papacy states, the popes and the church had ‘authority’ but not ‘power’.⁸⁰ Under this view the normal give and take of medieval rulers, giving privileges and rights in order to take services rendered, characterized also the political practice of the medieval popes. Outside the domain of law, therefore, the ‘papal monarchy’ can look much more flimsy. Perhaps the best way to understand the usefulness of the term is to see it as not so much descriptive as prescriptive. After all, the term best identifies the claims to authority made for the popes in their own writings and in the writings of their supporters. Claims to power and authority clearly do not mean that those things are possessed as a matter of fact. But the popes certainly operated as if they were monarchs, and they and their supporters made vast claims about the rightful extent of their authority.

⁷⁸ Benedict Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship and European Princes, 1000-1270* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

⁷⁹ Whalen, *The Two Powers*, “Introduction.”

⁸⁰ *Authority and Power in the Medieval Church* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), ed. Thomas W. Smith.

Moreover, if we take seriously the revisionist argument that the popes had to rely on their authority to get things done in the world, then an interpretative problem arises. How did the popes have this authority? How did they convince others of this authority? Indeed, as we have seen, medieval historians have long asserted that the popes squandered their authority in the thirteenth century. This narrative holds that the popes secularized and bureaucratized. They became warlords without redeeming spiritual qualities, and they thereby lost the authority their predecessors had, to their great detriment: political defeats followed political defeats, authority vanished, and by the early fourteenth century the popes found themselves in the position of having to abandon Rome and Italy to live a stone's throw away from France, in Avignon, where they remained for the better part of a century. In this dissertation I take this interpretive question seriously; though my first concern is to reconstruct arguments about how to restore and then maintain political order, I am also concerned with showing different views on the papacy and how they related to broader schemes of political thought. Hence a subsidiary interest in the dissertation is my attempt to illustrate the range of opinion on the papacy's decline by looking at how Italian political thinkers treated the popes in their thinking about politics, contained in texts written at the very time during which, historians say, the popes lost their authority. By tracing their views and placing them on a gradient that measures the esteem the authors had for the popes, I reconstruct how educated, informed Italian observers evaluated, discussed, and judged papal behavior during the period of papal dominance and imminent failure. But these looks at the papacy, which are sometimes only side glances, form only one part of wider and more general visions of politics. For these authors the primary political problem was how to restore order and

stability amid great historical change.⁸¹ For some of the authors I study the papacy was not at all the dominant feature of their political thought, though it was something to which they (usually) believed they should respond.

Historiography 2: Civic Republicanism

Any discussion of thirteenth-century *ars dictaminis* authors and the Italian communes leads one to consider the modern reception of medieval Italian political thought. Recently, the most significant requisition of the medieval Italian past falls under the label of ‘republicanism’ and ‘civic humanism’, though medieval historians have made similar arguments. I discuss these scholarly traditions here. It is important to do this because part of what my dissertation accomplishes is the rectification of certain lapses in the narrative of civic republicanism. I do this by considering how medieval republicans discussed the restoration of order, and in part by situating their thought according to the emphasis placed on the role of the papacy in it.

One should note at the outset that medieval Italy has seemed to prefigure modern democracies and republics to more than historians of political thought. The first of these historians in the modern age was de Sismondi, a Swiss economist and political philosopher living and writing during and after the French Revolution. He wrote a sixteen volume *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge* (History of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages), in

⁸¹ One might compare this Bernard Williams’s description of the primary question of all political thought: the maintenance of order through the formation of basically legitimate political associations (legitimacy then becoming a queried concept). Bernard Williams, “Realism and Moralism in Political Theory,” in *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2005) selected, edited, and with an introduction by Geoffrey Hawthorn: pp. 1-17; reprinted in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (ed), *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2019), pp. 3-12; see particularly p. 4: “I identify the ‘first’ political question in Hobbesian terms as the securing of order, protection, safety, trust, and the conditions of cooperation. It is ‘first’ because solving it is the condition of solving, indeed posing, any others...it is a necessary condition of legitimacy (LEG) that the state solves the first question, but it does not follow that it is a sufficient condition.” For an elaboration and criticism, which nonetheless retains Williams’s emphasis on the primacy of this essential point, see Charles Larmore, *What is Political Philosophy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2020).

which he celebrated the medieval Italian cities and offered them to liberals who were opposed to the French Revolution but still looking for political models of liberal republicanism.⁸² Sismondi particularly advocated, in the tenth volume of his *Histoire*, the medieval Italian (and ancient) participatory sense of ‘liberty’ which was, he believed, conducive to human flourishing and material prosperity.⁸³

Twentieth-century American historians of medieval Italy in turn developed an appreciation of how the medieval Italian republics could serve as useful examples for citizens of the United States.⁸⁴ Frederic C. Lane, for instance, giving his presidential address to the American Historical Association in 1965, exhorted his listeners to learn from the medieval Italians who transmitted Athenian and ancient Roman republican ideas to the modern age.⁸⁵ He proposed just the kind of political participation de Sismondi had celebrated: Americans, learning from their medieval Italian predecessors, should not try to merely limit government’s powers but to direct it.⁸⁶ Two decades later, John Hine Mundy, in his presidential address to the Medieval

⁸² Sismondi, *Histoire des républiques italiennes du moyen âge*. On his thought and its context see Nadia Urbinati, “Republicanism after the French Revolution: the Case of Sismonde de Sismondi,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 73:1 (2012) 95-109.

⁸³ Sismondi, *Histoire*, 10.327-332.

⁸⁴ See Anthony Molho, “The Italian Renaissance, Made in the USA,” in *Imagined Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), ed. Anthony Molho and Gordon Wood: 263-294.

⁸⁵ Frederic C. Lane, “At the Roots of Republicanism,” *American Historical Review* 71:2 (1966), 403-420. Accessed at <https://www.historians.org/about-aha-and-membership/aha-history-and-archives/presidential-addresses/frederic-c-lane#21f> [accessed 7 March 2024, 9:02 AM.] Conclusion: “Although Athens and Rome were the fountainheads of our republican heritage, we received that legacy by transmission through the Italians who lived in republics from the twelfth to the sixteenth century...Ideas born in Athens lived in Florence and are alive today.”

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*: “The politics of Florence and Venice were very different from our own, certainly. In order to understand them we should start by putting aside concern with current problems and by entering into their fears and their enthusiasms for what they perceived as liberty. Not only have material conditions and social structures changed, but the kind of lives individuals desire to live and the kind of persons they want to be have altered, with a corresponding change in the purposes for which political rights are sought. Men whose main concern is to prevent the government from interfering with their private lives can only by an imaginative effort sympathize with an insistence on rights that enabled individuals to be the government, that is, to be sometimes the persons responsible for giving orders. Perhaps that attitude will become more easily understandable if citizens now, instead of continuing on the defensive against bureaucracy, undertake an offensive not to limit but to infiltrate it.” Lane cited Hannah Arendt’s essay on ancient and modern conceptions of liberty in *Between Past and Future*.

Academy of America in 1989, approvingly outlined the theory and practice of medieval Italian republicanism, finishing with the exclamation “Two cheers for Italian democracy!”⁸⁷ Nor have recent historians abandoned the idea that the medieval Italians are the forebears of American democratic republicanism. In his popular history of Venice, Thomas Madden states that “[w]hile Europe was becoming a feudal battleground, Venice established a republic of free citizens. That republic would survive across the centuries, just long enough to inspire new generations who likewise sought to escape a crumbling world.”⁸⁸

But a more prominent attempt to inherit the political thought of the medieval Italian republicans is found in the historical efforts of the so-called “Cambridge School.” These historians of political thought have, in the last fifty years, recovered the tradition of republicanism. Sometimes, they use it in their arguments about how politics today should be conducted.

Most prominent of these latter scholars, perhaps, is Quentin Skinner. He has tried to defend what he calls a ‘third concept of liberty’, taking issue with the binary idea of ‘two concepts of liberty’ as famously proposed by Isaiah Berlin.⁸⁹ Berlin argued that the ‘negative’ concept denotes freedom from coercion, that is, being free to do as one pleases within certain constraints of law. The ‘positive’ concept refers to the freedom to do that which makes one specifically human (even if being coerced to so act).⁹⁰ Skinner associates the negative concept of

⁸⁷ John H. Mundy, “In Praise of Italy: The Italian Republics,” *Speculum* 64:4 (1989): 815-834, 834. That Mundy chose to write on medieval Italian republicanism is particularly intriguing, given that Mundy’s scholarly expertise lay primarily in medieval Toulouse; likewise, Lane is best known as an economic historian of Venice.

⁸⁸ *Venice: A New History* (Penguin: New York, 2012), 7.

⁸⁹ “A Third Concept of Liberty,” *Proceedings of the British Academy* 117 (2002) 237-268; idem, *Liberty Before Liberalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); idem, “The Republican Ideal of Political Liberty,” in *Machiavelli and Republicanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) ed. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli: 293-309.

⁹⁰ Isaiah Berlin, “Two Concepts of Liberty,” reprinted in *Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* 3rd edition (New York: Wiley, 2019), ed. Robert E. Goodin, Philip Pettit: 359-375.

liberty with Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). In his *Leviathan* Hobbes stated that “liberty, or freedom, signifieth (properly) the absence of opposition.”⁹¹ Hobbes wrote against those who supposed that ‘freedom’ could be consistent with duties to act politically. Such were the medieval Italian republicans. “There is written on the turrets of the city of Lucca in great characters at this day, the word LIBERTAS; yet no man can thence infer, that a particular man has more liberty, or immunity from the service of the commonwealth there, than in CONSTANTINOPLE.”⁹² By linking freedom to ‘immunity from the service of the commonwealth,’ Hobbes tried to assert that freedom was or should be unattached to participation in political affairs. In contrast, a ‘republican concept of liberty’ as described by Skinner and the political philosopher Philip Pettit would consist of freedom from the threat of domination or coercion: a slave may be free to do as he pleases, but he is not really free, because he is still under the threat of coercion.⁹³ Skinner believed that he found ‘republican’ political thought in the neo-Roman works of the thirteenth-century *ars dictaminis* authors.⁹⁴

Republicanism can be attached—and insofar as the position describes the authors in this dissertation, is attached—to a certain vision of the good human life. Here freedom is best conceived of as consisting of the fulfilment of a certain vision of the ethical life, in which political participation as a free citizen in a free republic is understood as constituting a fundamental part of a flourishing human life. Republicanism when joined to this ethical theory is

⁹¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) ed. John Gaskin: book two, chapter 21, p. 139.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 143.

⁹³ Skinner, “A Third Concept,” Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); see also Frank Lovett, “Republicanism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2022 Edition), Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman (eds), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2022/entries/republicanism/> [Accessed 7 March 2024 at 10:01 AM.]

⁹⁴ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics II: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 10-117.

sometimes called ‘civic republicanism’ or ‘civic humanism.’⁹⁵ This position is probably most associated with Hannah Arendt and the historical works of Hans Baron and J.G.A. Pocock.

In her writings after World War Two, Arendt advocated a recovery of the ancient sense of liberty as participation in political affairs, joined to an understanding of the good human life as active and collaborative (*vita activa*).⁹⁶ This may be associated with Aristotle’s ethical instructions in the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics*.⁹⁷ At about the same time, in *The Crisis of the Renaissance*, Hans Baron argued that the Middle Ages ended and the modern period began in the first decades of the 1400s in Florence. This is called the ‘Baron Thesis’.⁹⁸ According to Baron, when Florentine authors like Leonardo Bruni (1377-1444) defended ancient republicanism against medieval tyranny, a new historical epoch began. In the 1970s, and partly under the influence of Arendt, Pocock traced a tradition of civic republicanism from thirteenth-century Italians to the American revolutionaries. Pocock’s republicanism consisted in a vision of the human life as being best lived in the conditions of a participatory republic defended by citizen militias, able thereby to resist historical change and attain political stability.⁹⁹ Hence he showed that the so-called ‘Baron Thesis’ had missed earlier, antecedent medieval republicans,

⁹⁵ Cary Nederman, “Civic Humanism,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2024 Edition) ed. Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2024/entries/humanism-civic/> [Accessed 7 March 2024 at 10:07 AM]; James Hankins (ed.) *Renaissance Civic Humanism: Reappraisals and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁹⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958) 188-192.

⁹⁷ Hannah Arendt, *Between Past & Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: The Viking Press, 1961), 143-171.

⁹⁸ Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* 2 volumes (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955); Riccardo Fubini, “Renaissance Historian: The Career of Hans Baron,” *The Journal of Modern History* 64:3 (1992):541-574; James Hankins, “The ‘Baron Thesis’ after Forty Years and Some Recent Studies of Leonardo Bruni,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56:2 (1995):309-338.

⁹⁹ Pocock acknowledges his use of Arendt’s distinctions in *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, reprint 2016), 550-551. On its reception see Pocock’s “Afterword,” *ibid* 553-583; and Mark Jurdjevic, “Virtue, Commerce and the Enduring Florentine Republican Moment: Reintegrating Italy into the Atlantic Republican Tradition,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 62:4 (2001): 721-744.

but he demonstrated also the connection of that tradition with the later republican tradition in early modern England and revolutionary America.¹⁰⁰ Indeed Quentin Skinner's early essays on the thirteenth-century Italian republicans was partly framed as a rebuke to both Pocock and Baron for missing the 'Ciceronian' republicanism of authors who wrote before the diffusion of Aristotle's philosophical works in Latin later in the century.¹⁰¹ I discuss this argument more in Chapter Three.

Historians like Skinner and Pocock have justifiably wanted to trace broad lineages of political thought across time and space, but by doing so they have missed some of the peculiarities of thirteenth-century Italian political thinking. Especially avoiding their mention is the way that political thinkers in this era wrote as responses to the great political events and movements that they witnessed. Perhaps because of this, historians of republicanism have often ignored the role of the empire and the papacy in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century political thought, as Alexander Lee has recently demonstrated.¹⁰² In response to this fact historians like James Hankins have doubted the extent that thirteenth-century Italian thinkers may be considered to be 'republicans' at all: how can republicanism, in our modern sense of the word, be reconciled with a belief in the legitimacy of hierarchical and indeed monarchical forms of political organizations that supervised supposedly self-governing cities?¹⁰³ The answer seems for some to be that it can not be thus reconciled. Hence of late a so-called 'papalist-republican', the

¹⁰⁰ In dialogue with Gordon Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

¹⁰¹ Quentin Skinner, *Visions of Politics II*, 10-38.

¹⁰² Alexander Lee, *Humanism and Empire: The Imperial Ideal in Fourteenth-Century Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹⁰³ James Hankins, *Virtue Politics: Soulcraft and Statecraft in Renaissance Italy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2019); idem, "Exclusivist Republicanism and the Non-Monarchical Republic," *Political Theory* 38:4 (2010): 452-482; see too Clifford Ando, "'A Dwelling Beyond Violence': On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Contemporary Republicans," *History of Political Thought* 31:2 (2010): 183-220.

Dominican author Ptolemy of Lucca (1236-1327), a student of Thomas Aquinas who wrote the bulk of the *De regno* began by his teacher, can be eliminated as a ‘republican’ because he simultaneously celebrated the papal monarchy and the Italian form of republican self-government.¹⁰⁴ In this way a quintessential ‘republican’ can be cast out of the tradition, while the existence of the tradition itself comes under doubting scrutiny.¹⁰⁵

It is not the purpose of this dissertation to defend the tradition of republicanism; such a defense would require a different scope, and moreover, it is not my purpose to advocate any political orientation. I think, however, that these doctrinaire attacks on the usefulness of the descriptive phrase ‘republican’ are somewhat overstated. The fact that an individual author thought that an emperor or a pope somewhere above in the political firmament was conducive to the functional political independence and best political practices of his city does not disqualify him from being a ‘republican.’ One of the authors I discuss in this dissertation, in fact, was a papalist-republican in just this sense: Jacopo da Varagine (c.1230-1298) argued that Genoa could best retain its independence and flourishing state by fighting external enemies of the popes and thereby avoiding civil war at home. He was no less committed to the Genoese *res publica* for being loyal at the same time to the hierarchy of the Roman Church. At the same time, at least one of the authors I discuss—the chronicler Rolandino of Padua (1200-1276)—believed that the stability and flourishing of the Paduan *res publica* would best be secured if it were left well-

¹⁰⁴ Bee Yun, “Ptolemy of Lucca—A Pioneer of Civic Republicanism? A Reassessment,” *History of Political Thought* 29:3 (2009): 417-439, especially 434-439.

¹⁰⁵ See Charles Tills Davis, “Ptolemy of Lucca and the Roman Republic,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 118 (1974) 30-50; Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics 1250-1600* (Cambridge, 1992) 44-46; James M. Blythe, *The Worldview and Thought of Tolomeo Fiadoni (Ptolemy of Lucca)* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009); Cary J. Nederman and Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, “Reading Aristotle Through Rome: Republicanism and History in Ptolemy of Lucca’s *Re regimine principum*,” *European Journal of Political Theory* 7 (2008) 223-240; Cary J. Nederman and Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, “The Polybian Moment: The Transformation of Republican Thought from Ptolemy of Lucca to Machiavelli,” *The European Legacy* 17:7 (2012) 867-881.

enough alone by the pope, their legates, and agents of any other power. The Florentine Brunetto Latini (1220-1294), I show, seems to have thought similarly; indeed the papacy does not enter his substantive argument for how to maintain or restore order in a republican city. These latter authors approximate very well what we mean, in a broad way, by ‘republican.’ The reconstruction of their political thought is the subject of my third chapter. But Jacopo’s arguments, which I trace and describe in the second chapter, also qualify him as a ‘republican.’

What these critique indicate, therefore, is the fact that historians have missed an important element in the history of western political thought because they have been keen to recover traditions of republicanism conducive to their own modern idea of what republicanism should be. As much as historians today might find the ideas of the medieval republicans worth defending, those ideas were developed and elaborated in chronicles that were responses to the political situation in Italy. This situation was caused by numerous factional contests and the wars between popes and the Emperor Frederick II, all of which constituted a loss of political order. I propose to recover an episode in the history of western political thought that has been hitherto unexamined and apparently forgotten by focusing on arguments about how to restore order in this disordered time. By reinserting what is ‘medieval’—the papal monarchy and conflicts between the popes and the emperor—into discussions of what is simultaneously ancient and modern—republicanism—one discovers anew a chapter in the tradition of political thinking in medieval Europe. This reinsertion aids us in our effort to understand the way that various political thinkers understood possible ways to restore order in later thirteenth-century Italy.

Chapter Outline

In order to describe and explain the organization of the following four chapters, it is useful to imagine a line with one pole at one end. The pole is the papacy. Closer to this pole lie

arguments which are in some sense pro-papal. As we move along this line, and farther away from this pole, we approach arguments about the restoration and maintenance of political order that are more critical of the papacy. One can arrange my authors on this line to situate their understanding of the papacy's place in the restoration of political order in their own cities. In other words, the authors I begin with are closer to the papacy. The farther we go, however, the more critical of the papacy the authors become, until at last we come to outright criticism. This way of organizing the chapters permits the reconstruction of more comprehensive discussions of how to restore and maintain political order.

Chapter One is devoted to explicating the ideology of the papal curia. I do this by analyzing the biographies of the popes produced in the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries. I especially ask how they presented a unified representation of the popes as the rightful rulers of a universal empire. The primary point of this chapter, seen from the general argument of the dissertation, is to introduce the kind of view of the papacy to which the later authors whom I study in part responded. The secondary point of this chapter, still seen from the perspective of the dissertation as a whole, is to show how historical texts doubled as treatments of political thought. The related tertiary point of the chapter is to argue that the lives of the popes which I study can be considered as mirrors of popes, akin to the mirrors for princes which were written throughout the later Middle Ages.

In the next three chapters, I come to the heart of the dissertation. I discuss authors external to the papal curia. I begin with Jacopo da Varagine, an archbishop of Genoa in the 1290s who is most famous for composing the collection of saints-lives now known as the Golden Legend (*Legenda Aurea*). On our imaginary line, he is next to the papal pole. In fact, I demonstrate how Jacopo adapted papal claims to authority—and even events of papal history

drawn, it seems, from the papal biographies—to argue in his *Chronicle of Genoa* that peace in the fractious Genoese *res publica* could be recovered by fighting the enemies of the popes. For Jacopo, Genoese political order would be restored if the Genoese stopped fighting each other and started fighting external enemies. He combined this argument with a belief in the unifying faculties of the Roman papacy, with an admixture of Aristotelian political philosophy.

In Chapter Three, I discuss authors who either rejected or disregarded the papacy's role in the maintenance of political order. For Rolandino of Padua (1200-1276), the primary author under discussion in this chapter, and for Brunetto Latini (1220-1294), whom I also discuss, the independent city republic could have political stability without the aid of the papacy. The central problem for them became the mitigation of chance, which they called *fortuna*. The control of *fortuna* would allow their polities to remain stable and so maintain political order. Their visions of politics are epitomized by and constituted in the single, particular, individual city. Nevertheless, this chapter shows how beneficial it is to investigate the different political thought of these authors relative to the problem of the role of the papacy, inasmuch as this focus allows us to see the lacuna created by their diminishment of the papacy, and how hard they had to work to show that their (relatively) independent city republics could be stably maintained without the leadership of a higher authority like the popes. Their arguments resemble those of later republican authors like Leonardo Bruni (1377-1444) and Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), but I have chosen not to end the dissertation with this chapter because I do not want to give the impression that independent republicanism was characteristic or typical of thirteenth-century Italian political thought.

In Chapter Four, I turn to an author who focused on the role of the papacy in his discussions of political order and stability. Salimbene de Adam (1221-1290) was a Parman

Franciscan who composed an autobiographical *Cronica* in the 1280s. He is hard to fit on the line measuring affinities to the papacy because he is in some ways just as supportive of the popes as Jacopo da Varagine. But in other ways he is more critical of the popes than any of the other authors I discuss. I explain that Salimbene recognized papal flaws in the course of his life as a friar wandering throughout Italy from city to city. But he could not actually reject the popes because the authority of his Order depended on papal authority. His views of papal politics are inextricably tied to his understanding of knowledge, or how one can relate particular, historical phenomena to universal, general rules derived from the Christian scriptures. Salimbene saw that papal rule in the decades after Frederick II's death had been disastrous, but he discovered no way, short of reform within the papal curia or the external shock of a Mongol invasion of Italy, of changing the course of history and restoring political order in Italy.

Thinking about the role of the papacy in these arguments has helped me to situate these authors and their political thought relative to the problem of political order and stability. The historical loss of order forced them to consider how it could be recovered and, once recovered, maintained. As historians they were receptive to the demands of everyday politics. But in their histories they developed and shared more general, abstract visions of ideal polities. Because the emperors were either absent or nonexistent, their visions of political order usually did not include imperial authority; and because the popes and their legates changed political course throughout the century, some came to mistrust the papacy even while others continued to respect it. Hence when Dante advocated the imperial rule of Henry VII he broke with the tradition of political thought that I study in this dissertation. In a time of fractured polities and uncertainty these authors tried, however they could, to propose ways to restore political order and thereby to recover and sustain what they considered to be the fullest possibilities of human life.

Chapter One. A Universal Empire: The Evidence of Thirteenth-Century Papal Biography

Introduction

After the death of Frederick II in 1250, the popes alone remained of the two authorities that traditionally presided over the Italian communes. Whether in theory or in fact, the papacy still stood as a potential source of order in communities disordered by violence. Hence the chroniclers whom I discuss in this dissertation responded in various ways to the claims of the popes to rule a universal empire. For this reason, it is necessary, in this first chapter, to further explain how the medieval papacy developed a distinctively historical interpretation of its imperial role before analyzing the chronicler-political thinkers who form the main subject of this dissertation. In later chapters I will discuss how these thinkers responded to papal claims in their efforts to restore political orders in their own cities; in this chapter, I concentrate on providing an interpretation of that papal claim to authority.

The Paradoxes of Papal Power

The first time reader of the Deeds of Pope Innocent III, the work of an anonymous official at the court of Pope Innocent III (1198-1216), immediately becomes aware of apparent contradictions in the scope of papal activity.¹ Modern historians have asked whether this pope wanted to be lord of the world, but sometimes, it seems, he could hardly control his backyard.² The reader thus learns that the pope helped direct a crusade that conquered Constantinople, the capital city of the eastern Roman Empire, in 1204; that he denied the king of France a divorce with his wife; that he rapidly gained control of huge sections of central Italy in the first months

¹ Ed. David Gress-Wright (now Wright), *The 'Gesta Innocentii III': Text, Introduction and Commentary* (Dissertation: Bryn Mawr College, 1981), and translated by James F. Powell, *The Deeds of Pope Innocent III* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2004). Translations are my own unless otherwise stated.

² See the (quite useful) collection of argumentative perspectives in ed. James Powell, *Innocent III: Vicar of Christ or Lord of the World?* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1994).

of his pontificate; and that he acted as kingmaker in the tangle of German politics. But the reader will also learn that he could hardly control the city over which he supposedly presided, Rome, that Roman aristocrats built fortified towers (one called the ‘Bean Tower’) to oppose him, and that he spent years as an exile, travelling in processions throughout the Roman hinterland.

Indeed, in the biographies of the popes produced in the thirteenth-century papal curia, the humility of having to squabble with small lords in small places is juxtaposed with—and almost contradicted by—the grandiosity of contending victoriously with kings and emperors. This fact leads one to wonder: how did these authors reconcile such vastly different perspectives on the extent and quality of papal power, and what does this reveal about the corporate self-understanding of the papal officials and the popes?

Historians have long known that the popes harbored imperial ambitions. Gregory VII (1073-1085) stated that the pope alone could wear imperial insignia.³ In the same document he stated that popes could depose emperors.⁴ In his letter of advice to his former student, Pope Eugenius III (1145-1153), Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) wrote that the pope was more the heir of Constantine than of Peter.⁵ On the basis of this and similar papal claims, the modern historian Walter Ullmann argued that popes owned the kingdoms of Europe and gave them out to the kings as feudal fiefs: the pope was the imperial priest-king, *sacerdos regalis*, responsible for all human souls.⁶

Given these imperial claims, the question of the quality and kind of papal rule has much exercised historians, who have focused on instruments of communication and government such

³ *Das Register Gregors VII* (Berlin: Hahn, 1907-8), ed. Erich Caspar, 2 volumes, 1:201-208.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 204.

⁵ I.S. Robinson, *The Medieval Papacy*, 18-26.

⁶ Walter Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*, 325-333.

as councils, legates, and law.⁷ The present consensus seems to be that the medieval popes had far less power—often understood as coercion—than the language of papal empire would suggest.⁸ Hence one could say that the popes and their supporters vastly overstated themselves: their imperial words were, after all, merely words.

But it would be incorrect to infer that these words were without force. Claims to rulership effect historical actors, if in a less direct way than the creation or the maintenance of empires. They extend, or limit, the possibilities of political speech, and hence the expectations and possibilities of political actions. Moreover, medieval popes did have power, as all historians have long recognized. If Pope Innocent III struggled for the ‘Bean Tower,’ nonetheless he organized crusades, he negotiated with kings, and petitioners throughout Europe came to the papal curia to ask him to judge their cases. The medieval papacy’s unique use of its authority has long fascinated and should continue to fascinate, for it was impressive on any measure.

Their authority derived from a unique and powerful sense of history and office. Hence it is incumbent on historians to further understand the manner in which the medieval popes and their advisors understood themselves as political and historical actors. To that end, in this chapter, I join historians like Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, Alberto Spataro, and Wendan Li, who have begun to reevaluate the importance of the collection of thirteenth-century papal biographies (*vitae*) as sources for reconstructing that understanding.⁹ I am indebted to these

⁷ See the essays collected in *A Companion to the Medieval Papacy*, ed. Atria Larsen.

⁸ See Benedict Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship*; and idem, “Super gentes et regna: Papal ‘Empire’ in the Later Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” *Studies in Church History* 54 (2018), 109-122; and the essays in *Authority and Power in the Medieval Church*, ed. Thomas Smith.

⁹ Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, “La storiografia pontificia del secolo XIII. Prospettive di ricerca,” *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 18 (1976) 45-54; Alberto Spataro (ed), *Velud Fulgor Meridianus: la ‘vita’ di Papa Gregorio IX. Edizione, Traduzione e commento* (Milan: Vita e pensiero, 2018); Wendan Li, *Die Vita Papst Gregors IX. (1227-1241): Papst und Päpstliches Amt in Kurialer Sicht* (Böhlau: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021). Moreover, I have been influenced by some (relatively) recent work on royal biography: Karl Leyser, “Some Reflections on Twelfth-Century Kings and Kingship,” in *Medieval Germany and Its Neighbours, 900-1500* (London: The Hambledon Press, 2003); 241-267; Philippe Buc, “Italian Hussies and German Matrons: Liutpand of Cremona on

historians, but I depart from them by concentrating on how the papal lives were not biographies in any ordinary medieval sense. They should instead be understood as records of collective memory that were written to shape the internal understanding of the papal court, one of the most developed centers in western Europe. Thus, as I argue, they were mirrors for popes. After making this preliminary argument about interpretation—which is reliant, primarily, on analogies to other kinds of sources produced in the papal curia—I explain that the authors of the lives described their subjects as emperors of a universal empire, and thus prescribed an imperial course of action for the papal posterity.

Part 1: Prescriptive Record Keeping at the Papal Curia: Registers and Papal Biographies

Many historians have asserted that the medieval papacy was precocious in the keeping of records.¹⁰ Geoffrey Barraclough and Walter Ullmann in particular have argued that the papal curia saw the growth of a bureaucracy in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹¹ Under this interpretation, papal government could be considered one of the primary places of progress in the development of the practices of European government, especially measured in the number of documents created.¹² Barraclough, Ullmann, and their followers have further argued that the papal bureaucracy was suffused by an atmosphere of disenchanted legalism. Filling the place of spiritual visionaries such as Gregory VII were lawyer-popes who pursued the definition,

Dynastic Legitimacy,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 29 (1): 207-225; Björn Weiler, “The ‘Rex renitens’ and the Medieval Idea of Kingship, ca. 900-ca. 1250,” *Viator* 31 (2000) 1-42; Björn Weiler, “The King as Judge: Henry II and Frederick Barbarossa as Seen by their Contemporaries,” in *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2009), ed. Patricia Skinner: 115-140.

¹⁰ Andreas Meyer, “The Curia: The Apostolic Chancery,” in *Companion to the Medieval Papacy*, 239: “In the Late Middle Ages the papal chancery was the most productive office in the whole of the Christian West. The *cancellaria apostolica* probably produced more written documents than the chancery of any other ruler.” On Innocent III’s register see Othmar Hagenender, “Die Register Innozenz’ III,” in *Innozenz III. Weichensteller der Geschichte Europas* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), ed. Thomas Frenz, 91-101.

¹¹ Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*; Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*; idem, *The Growth of Papal Government in the Middle Ages*. References in the Introduction.

¹² Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*; Ullmann, *A Short History of the Papacy in the Middle Ages*.

extension, and aggrandizement of legal rights.¹³ Indeed this argument follows the well-worn lines of a modernization thesis that identifies disenchantment and bureaucratization as elements of modern societies.

Not all historians subscribe to this argument, but it remains powerful.¹⁴ My aim here is to cast further doubt on it through an analysis of the function and contents of the thirteenth-century papal biographies. The papal biographies were meant to be used within the papal curia as records that would shape future papal activity. They were not meant to convince outsiders of the justice of papal activities, but to influence the formation of a trans-historical papal sense of community and authority: hence they present a continuous sense of papal history—as it was understood within the papal curia. One reading these biographies would not think that the popes operated within different mental fields than their predecessors, in part because the authors of the lives wrote in such a way as to make each papal career seem to be a continuation of the ancient history of the papacy. In this first part of the chapter I situate these biographies relative to other kinds of texts; in the second part, I provide close readings and argue that their authors made a claim to papal empire.

1.2: The Example of Innocent III and Kalojan

The papal biographies help us understand the self-understanding of the medieval papal curia. An excellent example is the way that the Deeds of Pope Innocent III describe his efforts to extend the authority of the Roman Church. Responding to the conversation between Christ and Peter recorded in John 21 (“If you love me, then feed my sheep”), Innocent III thought he had a

¹³ Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*; Ullmann, *A Short History*; Madigan, *A Short History*; Southern, *Western Society and the Church*.

¹⁴ For other criticisms see John Moore, *Pope Innocent III*; Brett Whalen, *The Dominion of God*; idem, *The Two Powers*.

mission to spread the faith of Rome throughout the world, and he acted on this apostolic mission by encouraging the conversion of the Livonians in north-eastern Europe, organizing the Fourth Crusade in 1204, and by beginning preparations for the Fifth Crusade (both of which were meant to invade Egypt). Just as popes like Gregory the Great had long before tried to convert kings in places like Anglo-Saxon England, so too Innocent baptized and crowned the king of Armenian Cilicia and the new Bulgarian emperor Kalojan—members of ancient Christian churches that were independent of papal authority.¹⁵

For their part, these rulers sought this papal connection for very contemporary reasons. The king of Armenian Cilicia sought Latin Christian support in the face of the decline of the eastern Roman Christians and the resurgence of hostile powers in the 1190s, while, according to John Fine, the dissolution of Byzantine power in the 1190s was marked by a newly independent Bulgarian kingdom whose rulers needed political allies. This made them receptive to the claims and opportunities of an alliance with Rome, which promised the legitimacy of a crown given by the Roman pope, and to that end, King Kalojan decided to seek a crown from either Byzantium or the Roman papacy.¹⁶

In a letter to Pope Innocent III written in 1198, Kalojan requested a crown from the pope. He expressed himself in the language of supplication, but firmly asserted his right to empire. Thus he wrote that “we ask our mother, the Roman church, for our crown and honor as a beloved

¹⁵ *The ‘Gesta Innocentii III’*, ed. Gress-Wright, 116: “Si diligis me, pasce oves meas.” On Innocent’s emulation of Gregory the Great’s conversion efforts see John Doran, “The Role Models.”

¹⁶ John V. A. Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans: A Critical Survey from the Late Twelfth Century to the Ottoman Conquest*, 55-56: “During the years just before the Fourth Crusade, Kalojan seems to have begun worrying whether the self-claimed crown he received from the hands of his own Archbishop of Trnovo really had legitimacy. The great powers (the papacy and Byzantium) believed that to have legitimacy a tsar’s crown had to be granted by one or the other of them. Kalojan seems to have felt a need to have his crown confirmed by one of these two and to have decided the means to achieve this end was to play Byzantium and the papacy off against each other...finally, after prolonged negotiations and after the crusaders’ conquest of Constantinople, on 7 November 1204 Kalojan received a crown from a papal legate, a cardinal; at the time he officially recognized papal supremacy.” Trouble soon ensued over the status granted Kalojan by the cardinal who crowned him.

son in the manner that our ancient emperors had.”¹⁷ In his request Kalojan appealed to historical precedent. He named the ancient Bulgarian emperors to whom he referred and gave a vague textual source for his historical claim: “One was Peter, another Samuel, and others preceded them, as we have found it written in our books.”¹⁸

This was not quite enough to convince a pope who was probably aware, or at least suspicious, of the game Kalojan played. Pope Innocent doubted the historical relations of the Bulgarians with the popes. He first refused to condone Kalojan’s claim of Roman ancestry, writing that he sent messengers to Kalojan, “so that after we have understood the feeling of devotion you have for the Roman church,” he could send more important messengers who would be able “to feed you, who say that you have descended from the noble stock of the Romans, and the people living under your rule by word and example, and make you more certain of the good will and favor of the Apostolic See.”¹⁹ Like any doubtful legal claim presented by a petitioner at the papal court, the claim would have to be verified.

Innocent’s hesitation to confirm Kalojan’s claim was rooted in the papal awareness of history. The specificity of the knowledge possessed by the popes overrode Kalojan’s historical claims based on “old books.” Innocent informed Kalojan that “we have made a diligent search of our registers in order to be more certain of this matter, and it seems from this that in the land subject to you many kings were crowned.”²⁰ He found evidence of a relationship in the ninth

¹⁷ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 113-114.

¹⁸ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 114.

¹⁹ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 116. It is worth observing how delicately Innocent or his scribes phrased this sentence: et eos tum per legatos tum per litteras suas visitat, ut et pastor suas oves agnoscat, et cognoscat oves ovile pariter et pastorem. Hoc igitur attendentes, iampridem nobilitatem tuam per nuntium et litteras nostras duximus visitandum, ut intellectus devotionis affectus quem habes ad romanam ecclesiam matrem tuam, amiores ad te nuntios postmodum mitteremus, qui tam te qui ex nobili Romanorum prosapia *diceris* [emphasis added] descendisse, quam degentem sub se populum verbo pascere et exemplo et de benevolenti et gratia sedis apostolice redderet ceriorem.

²⁰ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 117: Nos igitur ut super hoc maiorem certitudinem haberemus, registra nostra perlegi fecimus diligenter, ex quibus evidenter apparet, quod in terra tibi subiecta multi reges fuerant coronati.

century.²¹ But he also found evidence of betrayal. When a papal envoy came to Bulgaria he found that “the Bulgars, corrupted by the gifts and promises of the Greeks, received Greek priests rather than those chosen by the Romans.”²² The “memory of such inconstancy” led Innocent to send to Kalojan his chaplain, rather than a cardinal, as his messenger.²³

The papal archives informed the pope that the Bulgarians could not be fully trusted, and this memory of past disobedience resulted in a refusal to fully honor the Bulgarian request three centuries later. Pope Innocent eventually sent Kalojan a royal scepter, a crown, and a papal banner. He denied him an imperial crown. Kalojan would continue to refer to his realm as an empire, and the relationship would soon collapse as Kalojan saw new opportunities after the dissolution of Byzantine power in the Balkans.²⁴

The end of this saga demonstrates the accuracy of Benedict Wiedemann’s assertion about the nature of papal power: “when—or if—petitioners stopped believing that the pope was the person to go to in order to get [grants], then the pope ceased to be powerful... The reach of papal government... shriveled. But when Christians across Europe looked to the pope for all such grants and rights, then papal authority could be unmatched.”²⁵ Innocent had power over Kalojan insofar as he could deny Kalojan something that Kalojan wanted. But at least part of the reason that someone as far afield from Rome (if not geographically at least culturally) as Kalojan

²¹ Pope Nicholas I (858-867) had baptized Boris-Michael (854-889); and a legate of the same king gave gifts to Pope Hadrian II (867-872), and asked him to select for his kingdom an archbishop.

²² *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 116-117: Cum idem Hadrianus illuc cum duobus episcopis quemdam subdiaconum direxisset, bulgari corrupti donis grecorum et promissionibus circumventi, romanis eiectis grecos presbyteros receperunt.

²³ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 117: Licet igitur tanta memoria levitates nos usque adeo induxerit ad cautelam, ut nullum ex fratribus nostris, cardinalibus scilicet, ad tuam presentiam mitteremus, nihilominus tamen dilectum filium Iohannem, capellanum et familiarem nostrum, apostolice sedis legatum, virum providum et discretum... ad te duximus destinandum, cui etiam comisimus vices nostras, ut in tota terra tua quoad spiritualia corrigat que corrigenda cognoverit et statuatur que secundum Deum fuerint statuenda.

²⁴ See Fine, *The Late Medieval Balkans*, 55-56.

²⁵ Wiedemann, “The Character of Papal Finances at the Turn of the Twelfth Century,” *English Historical Review* vol. 133, n. 562 (2018), 503-532, 532.

thought that he needed something from the pope was that the popes had convinced, or were the beneficiaries of a belief held by, large numbers of people that the popes had the right or authority to grant or deny petitions and to adjudicate disputes. The belief in these rights derived from an acceptance of the claim of the popes not only to represent Christ, but also from the skill with which the popes and their officials wielded history in their political and legal pronouncements. They had the ability to use history in this way from the slow but steady accumulation and use of papal records.

1.3: Registers and Biographies

Today the correspondence between Innocent and Kalojan survives in two places: the registers of Innocent III, kept in the Vatican Archives, and in Innocent's contemporary biography, the so-called Deeds of Innocent III (*Gesta Innocentii III*), which is now in Paris (BN 5140).²⁶ The author-compiler of the latter worked by setting letters from the registers into chronological and thematic order. He connected the letters with introductions. Thus he created an epistolary narrative of Innocent's first eight years as pope from 1198-1206.

The manuscript Paris, BN 5140, constitutes a collection of texts made for use within the papal curia. Besides the Deeds of Pope Innocent III it contains Ugo Falcandus's *History of the Tyrants of Sicily* (a late twelfth century history of Sicily) along with Bosone's twelfth-century continuation of the *Liber pontificalis* (the late antique collection of papal vitae). Included too is the *Life of Innocent IV* by Niccolò da Calvi, the pope's confessor. Paravicini Bagliani has argued that BN 5140 is based on an exemplary manuscript produced in 1267-68 at the papal court during Clement IV's pontificate, when Frederick II's grandson Conradin tried to take the

²⁶ For a description of Paris BN 5140 see Giuseppe Billanovich, "Il Petrarca, il Boccaccio, Zanobi da Strada e le tradizioni dei testi della cronaca di Ugo Falcando e di alcune vite di pontefici," *Rinascimento* 4:1 (1953) 17-26.

Sicilian kingdom from Charles of Anjou, the king supported by the popes.²⁷ The codex amounts to a dossier on Sicilian-papal history, stretching from the history of the twelfth century Norman kings to an account of way that the popes heroically opposed the Holy Roman Emperor and King of Sicily, Frederick II, in the thirteenth century.

Paris BN 5140 helps us see that curial officials did not only collect papal letters into the thick registers now kept in the Vatican Archives. They also compiled dossiers which contained historical texts, including the biographies of the popes. While BN 5140 contains the oldest extant copy of the Deeds, and the only extant copy of Innocent IV's Life, both texts must originally have been held in the papal curia. We know this because the author of the Deeds clearly used curial documents to construct his text. Likewise, Niccolò da Calvi wrote the Life of Innocent IV as a continuation of the Life of Gregory IX (*Vita Gregorii IX*). This latter text is today found in a separate codex in Florence (Biblioteca Riccardiana 228). At one time the texts must have been known to the same people.²⁸

As was the Deeds of Innocent III and the Life of Innocent IV, the Life of Gregory IX was at some point detached from the papal archives. But here the connection with the documentary production of the papal curia is clearer. Codex Biblioteca Riccardiana 228 contains, with Gregory's Life, a copy of the *Liber Censuum*. The *Liber Censuum* is a collection of annual payments owed to the Roman Church and a collection of charters recording its land holdings. Historians have often pointed to it as an example of the precocity of papal record keeping in the

²⁷ Moreover, Petrarch once owned the manuscript. His marginal notations in the codex generally concern the history of the Sicilian kingdom, as do the notations made by his friend, Boccaccio. See Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "Le biografie papali duecentesche e il senso della storia," in *Il Senso della Storia nella Cultura Medievale Italiana (1100-1350): Quattordicesimo Covegno di Studi, Pistoia, 14-17 Maggio 1993* (Pistoia: Centro Italiano di Studi di Storia e d'Arte, 1995), ed. Massimo Oldoni, 155-174, and Billanovich, "Il Petrarca."

²⁸ See the description of Riccardiana 228 by Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "Le biografie papali duecentesche e il senso della storia;" idem, "La storiografia pontificia del secolo XIII. Prospettive di ricerca," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 18 (1976) 45-54.

late twelfth century.²⁹ It was produced in the 1190s by the camerarius Cencius, who later became Pope Honorius III. In 1228 a new version was copied, which exists today in Riccardiana 228.³⁰ This codex also contains a twelfth-century continuation of the late antique collection of papal biographies called the *Liber pontificalis*, with a variety of letters, diplomatic reports, and other documents, including Gregory IX's Life. The author of the Life of Gregory IX was an anonymous cleric in the papal curia, who probably wrote nearly contemporaneously to the events he described in 1240. Though the text does not include excerpts of letters as does the Deeds of Innocent III, it is closely modelled on Gregory IX's letters, and this affected both the narrative and the language of the Life.³¹ Though its author left the Life of Gregory IX unfinished, as I noted, Niccolò da Calvi wrote the beginning of his Life of Innocent IV as a continuation of Gregory's Life.³² I will later discuss the implications arising from the fact that the Life of Gregory IX was copied together with the *Liber Censuum*.³³

Agostino Paravicini Bagliani has argued that the thirteenth-century papal biographies constitute a novelty of historiography, “una novità storiografica.”³⁴ This is because they exist outside of the collections of papal lives from the earlier middle ages—the *Liber pontificalis*—or that of the later middle ages—the *Vitae paparum Avenionensium*.³⁵ They were written singly, not as parts of large, continuous collections, though it is clear that the Life of Innocent IV was

²⁹ See Ian Robinson, *The Papacy*, chapter seven “Papal Finance.”

³⁰ The manuscript is described in Spataro, “Introduzione,” *Velud Fulgor Meridianus*, and in Li, *Die vita Papst Gregors IX*,

³¹ See Paravicini Bagliani, “La storiografia pontificia;” idem, “Le biografie papali;” and the introduction to Spataro, *Velud Fulgor*.

³² Paravicini Bagliani, “La storiografia pontificia.”

³³ Again, the reader should consult Spataro, “Introduzione,” *Velud Fulgor*, as well as Paravicini Bagliani, *Il Trono di Pietro*, 78-80; idem, “La storiografia pontificia;” idem, “Le biografie papali.”

³⁴ Paravicini Bagliani, *Il Trono di Pietro*, 80.

³⁵ On the late-antique and early medieval *Liber pontificalis* see the essays in ed. Klaus Herbers and Matthias Simperl, *Das Buch der Päpste—Liber pontificalis: Ein Schlüsseldokument europäischer Geschichte* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2020); and Thomas F.X. Noble, “A New Look at the ‘Liber Pontificalis’,” in *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae* 23 (1985) 347-358.

written as a continuation of the Life of Gregory IX.³⁶ At the same time, however, Paravicini Bagliani has also argued that the thirteenth-century lives present an argument about the continuity of the papal office that focuses on the Christ-like nature of the popes and their ministry.³⁷

But the first judgment is somewhat overstated. First, it seems clear that the authors of the thirteenth-century lives were aware of Bosone's collection of papal lives and felt no need to overlap with his work. Moreover (and this is more important), it is clear that the papal lives of the thirteenth century complemented and continued the late antique tradition of papal biography writing, known as the *Liber pontificalis*. They did this both in form and content.³⁸ The editors of a recent German publication on the *Liber pontificalis* and its various continuations proclaim that this collection of papal biographies is a monument of European history. Its continuous composition over many centuries indicates a chancellery with a strong sense of history and immense institutional longevity. The authors of the *Liber pontificalis* wrote consecutive biographies from the fifth to the late ninth century, when their four hundred year tradition ended. Biographies of the reforming popes of the eleventh century survive, but these belong to different traditions, though they would later contribute to the twelfth and thirteenth-century papal biographies. But these were self-conscious resurrections of the *Liber pontificalis* style.³⁹ In the

³⁶ Spataro, "Introduzione," *Velud Fulgor Meridianus*, 27-28, based on Paravicini Bagliani, "La storiografia pontificia," 47-50.

³⁷ Paravicini Bagliani, "Il biografie papali duecentesche," 64-65.

³⁸ Ibid., 82. C.f. Paravicini Bagliani, "La storiografia," and "Le biografie papali duecentesche e il senso della storia;" and idem, *Potere del papa: Corporeità, Autorappresentazione, Simboli* (Milan: Galluzzo, 2009), 57-74.

³⁹ Thus Bonizone of Sutri's *Liber ad Amicum* is a polemical history of the papacy and its conflict with the western emperors that was written as a 'letter', not as a continuation of the *liber pontificalis*: Bonizone of Sutri, *Liber ad Amicum*, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Libelli de Lite*, ed. Ernest Dümmler, 1:568-620. The *Liber* is a call to arms. Bonizone wished to encourage the supporters of Pope Gregory VII at the court of Countess Mathilda of Tuscany to fight for Gregory and the papal reform movement in general; Bonizone presented the defeat of Pope Leo IX by the Normans at the battle of Civitate as an act of martyrdom that he used as an exhortation: "Igitur pugnent gloriosissimi Dei milites pro veritate, certent pro iusticia..." ("Therefore may the most glorious soldiers of God fight for truth, may they contend for justice..."): ibid., 620.

late twelfth century Bosone wrote a continuation of the *Liber pontificalis* and brought the lives up to date to 1181 (when Pope Alexander III died).⁴⁰ Most of the lives written by Bosone resemble the lives of the earlier *Liber pontificalis* tradition: they begin with the pope's name, and then include his place of birth or origin, some information about his life before he was pope, the length of his pontificate, his primary actions as pope, including major building projects, charity, and ordinations of priests. They concluded with a brief account of the pope's death.

The authors of the *Liber pontificalis* created an ideological argument centered around the historical longevity of the papacy and its institutional continuity, constituting a potent claim to papal empire. Moreover, this claim was founded, to some extent, on the nature of the texts they wrote. As Rosamund McKitterick has discussed, the original authors of the *Liber pontificalis* adopted the form from late Roman lives of emperors and sources such as Jerome's *De viris illustratibus*.⁴¹ The authors presented the popes as the natural successors of the Roman emperors as the rulers of the city. By extension, so McKitterick argues, the popes were the successors of the emperors in their imperial mission. The Christianization of ancient Rome in the *Liber pontificalis* constituted the creation of a papal Roman empire: the popes were Christian emperors.

The authors of the thirteenth-century lives thought of these works—and their own—as archival documents that should shape the papacy's memoria and future activities. The author of the *Life of Gregory IX* made this explicit when he stated in the first sentence of his work that the lives of popes must be placed in the archives (*in archivis mandanda sunt*) to provide examples

⁴⁰ These are edited with the late antique lives in *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, volume two.

⁴¹ Rosamund McKitterick, *Rome and the Invention of the Papacy: The Liber Pontificalis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 1-96.

(exempla) of proper conduct for posterity.⁴² As Alberto Spataro has stated about the Life of Gregory IX—and the statement goes for them all—this ‘archival’ quality makes the papal lives very useful for reconstructing the self-understanding of the curia.⁴³ Their lack of ‘political realism’—once criticized by historians like Ovidio Capitani—only increase their use for the historian interested in conceptualizations of authority within the papal court.⁴⁴

But to use them in this way we must understand the possible manner in which these works were used within the curia. Though it is impossible to do this with certainty, one approach is to draw an analogy between the lives and other papal records, which were bearers of the institutional memory of the papacy. This approach is justified by the inclusion of the Life of Gregory IX in Riccardiana 228, the same manuscript, as we have seen, that contains the Liber Censuum.⁴⁵

As I noted before, historians have traditionally used the Liber Censuum as a record of papal finances and the increasingly bureaucratic nature of the papal curia.⁴⁶ Thomas Bisson has argued that the lists contained in the Liber do not describe the actual accounts of the Roman Church.⁴⁷ This is part of Bisson’s wider argument that papal government in the early thirteenth century was characterized by a curious amalgamation of shifting concepts about reform and restraint that only vaguely approximate ‘government’. Tied to this is his particular understanding

⁴² *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 1.1.

⁴³ Spataro, “Introduzione,” *Velud Fulgor*, p. 10, and *passim*. See also Li, *Die Vita Papst Gregors IX*, *passim*.

⁴⁴ See his comments in Capitani, “Gregorio IX,” *Enciclopedia dei Papi* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2000), *ad locum*.

⁴⁵ See Spataro, “Introduzione,” in *Velud Fulgor Meridianus*; Wendan Li, *Die Vita Papst Gregors IX*.

⁴⁶ The best statement is I.S. Robinson, *The Medieval Papacy*; on papal bureaucracy *per se* see Barraclough, *The Medieval Papacy*; more recently, Benedict Wiedemann, “The Character of Papal Finance at the Turn of the Twelfth Century,” *English Historical Review* 133:3 (2018) 503-532.

⁴⁷ In *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 417-421, especially 420: “It was in these para-pontifical tasks of organizing its norms and laws and settling disputes rather more than in its updated accountancy that the Roman church recovered something of its official purposes after mid-century.” Wiedemann has similarly adapted Bisson’s argument in his “The Character of Papal Finances at the Turn of the Twelfth Century.”

of ‘government,’ by which he seems to mean accountable administration for the betterment of the governed, not just their exploitation. Thus he states that “popes and cardinals had worked like a government since the 1130s, if not before, carrying forward purposes of reform,” yet he argues that it was a weak start: this ‘government’ did not really set policy, and moreover, cardinals and other curial officials still often acted as unaccountable lords, unbounded by contractual obligations of office and duty, and proud of their high status.⁴⁸

Bisson interprets the *Liber Censuum* as a prescriptive model of what papal lordship should look like. It emerges from his description as a record of the scope of papal claims and the vastness of papal pretensions. This would make it look rather like Gregory VII’s famous list of prerogatives of the pope—the so-called *Dictatus pape*, a list of statements, written in Gregory VII’s official register, in which the pope claimed immense personal powers over the church—which was less a description of practicable papal power than a statement of aspirational sovereignty.⁴⁹ In a similar vein, the authors of the papal lives described the popes as rulers of a universal empire, and, in the case of Gregory IX, as a reflection of the heavens.⁵⁰ As a prescriptive record, the *Liber Censuum* projected the past into the present and then to the future. What was once would always be; thus a description of papal dues at one time prescribed the eternal form, function, and activity of the papacy. This is what Bisson means by “prescriptive record keeping:” not ‘government’ as we understand it, but rather a quasi-ritualistic statement of

⁴⁸ Bisson, *Crisis*, 416: “...the popes were like lord-kings and -princes, in this sense, responsive to petitions, yet quite without the financial resources to ensure an independent, let alone impartial, outlook on the people for whose souls they claimed to care.” Ibid., 420: “A resources deployment of its means, the new pontifical justice was hardly an administrative system, still less a centralized one.” Again, *ibid.*, 421 (on a papal injunction of 1179 that archbishops should only be accompanied by forty to fifty horses): “Whatever the sense of this age-old injunction in the past, its meaning in the Alexandrine papacy is clear: prelates are officers, not lords, and should behave accordingly.”

⁴⁹ Gregory VII, *Dictatus pape*, in *Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. Casper, 201-208. On the concept of aspirational sovereignty, see Seth Richardson, “Early Mesopotamia: The Presumptive State,” *Past & Present* 215 (2012): 3-49.

⁵⁰ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 1.1-1.3. On the claim to empire, see below.

the status quo which the popes were duty bound to maintain. It seems plausible that, in a similar way, the papal biographies prescribed papal behavior, setting models for future behavior. Hence one should understand them as not fully intended to be descriptions of facts—though they did to this. But their purpose and value within the papal curia would also have been to shape the understanding of the correct form of a papal life. Moreover, they contributed to a strong sense of the continuity, even the eternal sameness, of the papal office and the popes.

The biographies of the popes complement documentary records such as the *Liber Censuum* because they cast each pope's career in the mold of his predecessors, thus constructing an impressive sense of history continuity. For example, the biographies sheared off the individual particularities of each pope's life. The authors thus produced papal biographies which described the official actions of the popes but left little that could be attributed to the person of the pope separable from his official persona as vicarius Christi. Because of this, despite the different historical events that occurred in every pontificate, each biography resembles the previous one to a remarkable degree. This is especially true for the earlier lives of the *Liber pontificalis* but it remains the case for the thirteenth-century lives, which resemble the previous ones less as regard form (though still here there are similarities), but remain remarkably consistent relative to thematic content.⁵¹

⁵¹ About the “laconic” formulae of the early *Liber pontificalis* see McKitterick, *Invention of Papacy*, 2-3: “The *Liber pontificalis*, in contrast to all the other texts emanating from Rome and the popes, is oddly laconic and formulaic and leaves out an extraordinary amount, known from other categories of evidence, relating to both general historical context and specific papal careers.” McKitterick proceeds to argue that this formulaic quality contributed to an ideological argument about the continuity through time of the Roman papacy as an institution, despite vast changes in historical circumstance and, of course, the succession of popes themselves: this is how the *Liber pontificalis* helped to ‘invent’ the papacy. The thirteenth-century lives took up the tradition. See, for example, Bosone's *Life of Alexander* (ed. Duchesne, *Le liber pontificalis* vol. 2.397): “Alexander III, natione Tuscus, patria Senensis, ex patre Rainutio, qui Rolandus, presbiter cardinalis tituli sancti Marci et apostolice sedis cancellarius, sedit annis XVIII.” The same formulaic beginning is here: the title of the pope, is birthplace, the name of his parents, his Christian name, and his office before he became pope. Here this formula hides a greater difference: Bosone's *Life of Alexander III* was far longer and more detailed than any previous papal life.

The lives helped to make a sense of the papal office that was remarkably and powerfully continuous. It made each pontificate conformable to a fossilized yet malleable model, based on a composite of previous pontificates. The person of the pope was transformed by the papal mantle and Peter's See into an official avatar of the papacy. Henri Frankfort long ago wrote about ancient Mesopotamian kingship that "...the office, and not the officeholder, was of superhuman origin."⁵² The authors of the papal lives met a similar situation by simply denying the popes of their individuality; this view was of course encouraged by the fact that the popes abandoned their personal names and took on papal names upon their accession.⁵³ The private personality of the pope was replaced by an ancient and official persona, helping to remake change into continuity.

1.4: Mirrors for Popes

The papal lives were mirrors for popes which shaped legitimate papal activity, as were, under this description, all papal documents stored in the papal archives. They described the form of exemplary papal lives. In that sense, they were like mirrors in which one could see ideal papal activity. In this part of the chapter, I describe the mirrors for princes genre and proleptically argue that the papal lives resemble them, thus setting out an interpretative framework which I use to analyze the texts in the second half of this chapter.

The reader might object to my use of this phrase to describe the papal biographies. After all 'mirrors for princes' generally describes texts purporting to teach rulers the way to perform official duties well.⁵⁴ Though there are earlier examples of the genre, the term first appears in Godfrey of Viterbo's *Speculum regum* (Mirror of Kings, about 1170), a poem containing the

⁵² Henri Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Religion as the Integration of Society and Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 237.

⁵³ Innocent III was born Lotario dei Conti; Gregory IX was born Ugolino dei Conti; Innocent IV was born Sinibaldo di Fieschi.

⁵⁴ Historians quibble about specifics. For a short introduction on these debates see *A Critical Companion to the 'Mirrors for Princes' Literature* (New York: Brill, 2022), ed. Stéphane Péquignot and Noëlle-Laetitia Perret, 1-17.

lives of the Roman emperors to the time of Frederick I.⁵⁵ The metaphor of ‘mirror’ is important, for “these texts are like a mirror that is held up to the addressee, so that he can examine what he should be and how he should behave.”⁵⁶ But the term usually describes advice literature for lay rulers, not clerics. Though Bernard of Clairvaux’s letter of advice to Pope Eugenius III, *De consideratione*, is known as a mirror for popes written in the twelfth century, in many ways it matches advice literature for priests, deriving from Gregory the Great’s *Regula pastoralis*.⁵⁷ Moreover, advice books for popes would soon come to be produced, in the fourteenth century, in treatises now called the ‘*de potestate papae*’ literature.⁵⁸ Thus when historians say ‘mirror for princes’, they more often mean works written for lay rulers—such as John of Salisbury’s *Policraticus*—than works meant to guide the conduct of clerics, even popes.

The reader might object still further: the biographies of the popes hardly qualify as ‘mirrors’ in the sense that they do not straightforwardly prescribe political or ethical activities, as other mirrors did. Hence an early thirteenth-century ‘mirror’, the *Pastoral Eye* (*Oculus Pastoralis*), written in about 1220 in central Italy to guide podestà in the government of Italian towns, sets out the kinds of speeches that podestà should give on certain occasions and dwells on the need for rulers to serve justice.⁵⁹ Likewise, the very popular mirror for princes written by Giles of Rome—the *De regimine principum* (*On the Government of Princes*, 1277-1279)—was

⁵⁵ Partially Edited by Georg Waitz in *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae* SS 22, 21-93.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2; see too Gundhild Roth, “Spiegelliteratur (I. Mittellateinische Literature),” in *Lexikon des Mittelalters* 7 (1995) 100-115; Roberto Lambertini, “Mirrors for Princes,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, ed. H. Lagerlung (Springer: London, 2010), 791-797; Jean-Philippe Genet, “L’évolution du genre des Miroirs des princes en Occident au Moyen Âge,” in *Religion et mentalités au Moyen Âge: mélanges en l’honneur d’Hervé Martin*, ed. S. Cassagnes-Brouque (Rennes, 2003), 531-541.

⁵⁷ Gregory I, *Regula pastoralis*, ed. J.P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* volume 77 (Paris, 1849), 0013A-0128A.

⁵⁸ Lambertini, “Mirrors for Popes,” 791; Jürgen Miethke, *De potestate papae. Die päpstliche Amtskompetenz im Widerstreit der politischen Theorie von Thomas von Aquin bis Wilhelm von Ockham* (Tübingen: Morh Siebeck, 2000).

⁵⁹ *Oculus Pastoralis: Pascens Officia et Continens Radium Dulcibus Pomis Suis*, ed. Dora Franceschi (Turin: Accademia delle Scienze, 1966). See in particular the speech of Justice (*Iustitia*) accusing a bad podestà of dereliction of duty, with the podestà’s responses, on 66-69.

organized according to precepts adapted from Aristotle: the first two books amounted to an ethical treatise drawn from the Nicomachean Ethics.⁶⁰ Indeed, Latin and later vernacular ‘mirrors’ very often consist largely of quotations from ancient Latin (and later on, Greek) authors—another characteristic lacking in the papal biographies.⁶¹

Another objection is that traditional ‘mirrors for princes’ tell more than they show. Hence Bernard of Clairvaux counselled Eugenius III to make room for spiritual, monastic-style reflection in the midst of the legal business incumbent on a pope so that the pope would not come to resent his duties.⁶² Again, Giles of Rome devoted the first two books of his treatise to the ethical development of the prince before proceeding to issues of government.⁶³ Guibert of Tournais used, in his *Eruditio regum et principum* (1250), scriptural exegesis to instruct readers about the virtues necessary to be a good ruler.⁶⁴ These texts focused first on the private lives of the rulers; by molding their ethics, the authors thought they could encourage them to pursue justice. Precepts and examples were used together to teach the prince proper behavior, traits, and dispositions.

⁶⁰ Charles Briggs, *Giles of Rome’s De Regimine Principum: Reading and Writing Politics at Court and University, c.1275-c.1525* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁶¹ See for example Giovanni da Viterbo’s *Liber de regimine civitatum*, ed. Gaudenzi, *Bibliotheca Iuris Medii Aevi* (1901), vol 2; the same tradition can be seen in sixteenth-century England: Sir Thomas Elyot, *The booke named the governour* (London, 1531).

⁶² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Five Books on Consideration: Advice to a Pope* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Cistercian Press, 1976), tr. John Anderson and Elizabeth T. Kenna, 29.

⁶³ I have consulted the French translation of the *De regimine principum*, made by Henri de Gauchi in about 1285 for Philip IV of France: Giles of Rome, *De regimine principum*. Codex MS 533, Hanna Holborn Gray Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library, “El premier nous enseignerons coment [sic] les rois et les princes et chacuns du people se doiuent gouverner selon loy et raison. El secont livre nous enseignerons coment les princes doivent gouverner leurs fames et leurs enfans et leurs meisneces [?]. El tierz livre nous enseignerons comment il doivent en temps de pais et de guerre gouverner leurs cites et leur roiaumes.” 1v-2v.

⁶⁴ Ed. A. De Poorter, *Eruditio regum et principum* (Louvain: Inst. Supérieur de Philosophie, 1914); likewise Helinand of Froidmont, *De bono regimine principis* PL 212:735-746. This latter ‘mirror’ is part of a wider chronicle—one might thus compare it to Salimbene de Adam’s *Liber de prelatu* in his *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), which I discuss in chapter four.

There is nothing of this sort of straight-forward ethical instruction in the papal lives. They focus almost solely on the official actions of the popes. Though I am stretching the term slightly, however, ‘mirrors for popes’ is an apposite description of the papal lives. This is because they were written to shape the actions of the popes: in fact, they mirrored princely-papal behavior in a more concrete way than the more common treatise-style mirrors did. While the authors of these works focused on ethical precepts as a way of molding political action, the papal biographers did the same thing by describing papal activities in the past so as to shape what was considered to be proper and customary papal actions in the future. Hence the institutional memory of the papacy was to inform the activities of future popes—as we saw with Pope Innocent III, who tried to emulate Gregory the Great, and found ninth-century documents to help him. The institutional records of the papal curia, in this sense, functioned as ‘mirrors’ that shaped expectations and molded actions. The lives were simply powerfully narrated, particular instances of this type.

The papal biographies were documents of continuity and indeed of legitimacy, in the sense that recent papal history was presented as an undifferentiated continuation of ancient history. This affirmed the papal sense that the popes were in their official capacities avatars of St Peter, and, though unworthy, representatives of divine authority. The narratives thus mirrored the ideal form of a papal life. They taught the reader proper papal behaviors by reflecting the idealized activities of past popes. In this sense they were mirrors for popes that set the bounds for customary papal activities—as this was understood within the papal curia.

One might well compare the papal biographies to the royal French chronicles analyzed by Gabrielle Spiegel.⁶⁵ These chronicles helped to legitimate recent political actions by casting them

⁶⁵ Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California, 1995); and the methodological essays in *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1997), especially Chapter 5, “Political Utility Medieval Historiography:

in the same language used in the recounting of ancient and heroic deeds, which being ancient were by that fact norm setting: “It is a question not of the mindless repetition of tradition, nor of an inability to innovate or create, but of a compelling necessity to find in the past the means to explain and legitimize every deviation from tradition.”⁶⁶ It is clear that the biographies were intended to represent and to project the normative expectations of papal conduct for curial officials and future popes, as the author of the *Life of Gregory IX* suggested when he said that the papal lives were meant to provide exempla for posterity. Understood as such the papal lives were prescriptive statements of papal activity; they modelled the course of a papal life through narrative rather than by precept. They provided historical examples (exempla) which described and modelled papal behavior. In that sense again they were ‘mirrors for popes.’

1.5: Legitimacy and Continuity

One of the primary uses of the papal lives was to affirm the historical continuity and thus the legitimacy of the papal office. By creating a continuous history of the popes, the authors demonstrated that the popes were each successors of St Peter. Moreover this was a succession not only of office; it was also one of activity.

The authors of the lives exhibited the legitimacy of the popes through depictions of the papal succession. This was especially true for the *Life of Alexander III* by Cardinal Bosone.⁶⁷

The issue of succession was particularly important for Bosone because Alexander disputed the

A Sketch.” That royal biographies could be read both for entertainment and ethical instruction is the theme of Nancy Partner, *Serious Entertainments: The Writing of History in Twelfth-Century England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

⁶⁶ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, 84.

⁶⁷ On Alexander and the law, see Anne J. Duggan, “Master of the Decretals: A Reassessment of Alexander III’s Contribution to Canon Law,” in), *Pope Alexander III (1159-81): The Art of Survival* (New York: Routledge, 2012), edited by Peter Clarke and Anne J. Duggan; on Bosone’s *Life* as a model see Brenda Bolton, “Too Important to Neglect: The Gesta Innocentii PP. III,” in Brenda Bolton, *Innocent III: Studies on Papal Authority and Pastoral Care* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995) essay nine (original pagination 87-99).

legitimacy of his election with an antipope supported by Emperor Frederick Barbarossa for the first two decades of his pontificate (which ran from 1159-1181). Bosone consequently spent the early section of the life describing the circumstances of Alexander's election.⁶⁸ He tried to prove Alexander's legitimacy by describing Alexander's unwillingness to assume the papal office. The virtuous self-restraint Alexander exhibited demonstrated the kind of ethics a righteous pope should cultivate—a marked contrast with the antipope Octavian.

Tunc episcopus Hostiensis, una cum Albanensi, Portuensi et Sabinensi episcopis ceterisque prebiteris et diaconis cardinalibus, per manum prioris diaconorum, iuxta priscum Ecclesie ritum, electum suum fugientem, excusantem, invitum et omnimode reluctantem, papali manto favente Domino induerunt. Unde Octavianus, qui ad apostolicam iamdiu cathedram aspiraverat, post ubi se ipsum vidit spe concepta sic defraudari, in tantam vesaniam audatiamque prorupuit, quod mantum ipsum tamquam apprepticius a collo eius propriis manibus violenter abstulerit et secum inter tumultuosos fremitus asportare temptaverit.⁶⁹

Then the bishop of Ostia, together with the bishop of Albano, of Porto, and of Sabina, with other priests and cardinal deacons, through the hand of the superior of the deacons, according to the ancient rite of the Church, clothed the elect in the papal mantle, with God's help, [despite the fact that the elected Alexander was] fleeing, excusing himself, unwilling and in every way reluctant. Whereupon Octavian, who had aspired for a long time to have the apostolic throne, after he saw that his hopes were foiled, erupted into such madness and audacity that he violently tore the mantle from their hands and, roaring, tried to carry it off with him amid the tumult.

Bosone then told of Emperor Frederick I gathering his armies and trying to “subject” Italy to “heresy.” That heresy consisted of supporting a pope other than Alexander III.⁷⁰ So began a

⁶⁸ Bosone described himself when he stated his authorship: Actum Bosonis, presbiteri cardinalis tituli Pastoris, qui ab ipso pontifice ab exordio sui apostolatus eius camerarius constitutes et in ecclesia sanctorum Cosme et Damiani diaconus ordinatus, assidue usque ad ipsius obitum familiariter secum permansit. Ed. Duchesne, *Le Liber Pontificalis*, II: 297.

⁶⁹ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 397-398. Bosone proceeded to describe how Octavianus seized the Lateran Palace and turned the people of Rome against their ‘rightful’ pope, Alexander, who fled to the nearby town of Terracina: *Vita Alexandri III*, 397-400.

⁷⁰ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 402: Imperator autem F. conceptam iamdiu malitiam de subiuganda sibi Ecclesia Christi ad effectum posse perducere inaniter sperans, ascito ad se in Lombardiam ipso heretic, et congregates quos potuit episcopis atque aliis ecclesiarum prelatibus de terra dominationis sue, generalem celebraturus curiam cum eodem Octaviano perrexit Papiam, ibique prophanam intentionem et detestandum propositum suum callida

decades long schism whose ending—the enforced ritual humiliation of Frederick Barbarossa before a victorious Pope Alexander in Venice in 1177—would become famous long after the reality of the events were hidden by propagandistic legends.⁷¹

Descriptions of papal successions were important to prove that the pope stood in the direct line of Peter. Bound up with this was an emphasis on the continuity of official action. Hence Niccolò da Calvi, writing the *Life of Innocent IV*, included an account of the end of Gregory IX's pontificate, and mentioned that Innocent IV was elected pope after a nearly two year period during which the cardinals could not decide on a successor. In this way Niccolò yoked Innocent's pontificate to the pontificate of his predecessor, despite the fact that two years and a short pontificate (Celestine IV, pope from 25 October 1241 to 10 November 1241) had intervened and might have easily broken this sense of historical continuity between the two. Niccolò did this in order to rectify any apparent improprieties in the election of Innocent IV, and any apparent oddities in the harsh line he took on Frederick II.⁷² His narrative of Gregory IX's final years was meant to situate and justify Innocent's election and subsequent conflict with Frederick II.

This brings up a question: who was expected to read these lives? Though the manuscripts which contain the thirteenth-century lives exist today in Paris and Florence, there is little reason to think that their authors expected them to spread outside of the institution within which they worked. They instead seem to have been destined for internal use within the curia, just as the

circumvention detexit, asserens domnum Alexandrum eiusque fratres et socios inimicos imperii ac suos coniurasse cum inimicis et adversariis suis; Octavianum vero semper sibi et imperio fidelem et omnino devotum fuisse. Bosone called Octavianus the "heresiarch" and had him die a terrible death, whereupon his soul went to hell: Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 410.

⁷¹ See Griffin Ridley, "Medieval Inheritances: Papal History Writing, the Peace of Venice and the Reformation in Robert Barnes's *Lives of the Roman Pontiffs*," *Revue D'histoire Ecclesiastique* 118:2 (2023), 117-144.

⁷² Niccolo da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 261.

Liber pontificalis and Innocent III's Deeds were left in the papal camera for the consultation of curial officials. Their authors did not expect the ideological claims of the lives to be read and understood outside of the papal curia, though the letters and pamphlets spread during the conflict with Frederick II in the middle of the century often contained similar claims. Hence the lives were not intended to convince outsiders of the legitimacy of recent papal activities. They were internal documents which shaped the expectations held by curial officials for papal conduct. In this sense, they were not propaganda: propaganda must be spread.⁷³

Papal historians might wonder why I am leaving canon law out of this discussion. Surely canon law was another source of papal legitimacy: in it papal utterances were presented as authoritative and consistent with divine authority. This is, of course, true. The body of church law, in Gregory IX's Liber Extra for example, was an accumulation of statements by popes on particular issues for particular people which afterwards became law and thus gained validity for general situations and people. When the popes collected letters into collections of law, they sheared off the particular facts contained in the letters, leaving only what was deemed to be essential for understanding the legal point of the pope's pronouncement. The effect was similar to the way the papal biographers ignored the personal details of the popes when they described their lives, assimilating their careers into a template for papal activity inherited from late antiquity.⁷⁴

⁷³ For a similar argument—about sources produced long before the papal lives—see Seth Richardson, “Down with ‘Legitimacy’: On ‘Validity’ and Narrative in Royal Tales,” in *Tales of Royalty: Notions of Kingship in Visual and Textual Narration in the Ancient Near East* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2020), edited by Elizabeth Wagner-Durand and Julia Linke: 243-260; while I am sympathetic to his argument, it seems clear that Richardson's sense of ‘legitimacy’ is far too strict and constrained, and ‘validity’ poses its own issues. In respect to destined audience, however, the thirteenth-century lives differ from the late antique *Liber pontificalis*; as McKitterick has written, (*Invention of the Papacy*, 2): “[The *Liber pontificalis*] is also the text in which most people in early medieval Spain, Gaul, North African, the British Isles, and even in Italy itself, would, or at least could, have read about Christian and contemporary Rome without ever having seen it.”

⁷⁴ Atria A. Larson, “Popes and Canon Law,” in *A Companion to the Medieval Papacy*, 141: “Even though most of the texts in the collection [the *Liber Extra* promulgated by Gregory IX in 1234] had originally been penned for

But this very fact—that the canon law collections rose to a level of generality and eschewed the particular fact—makes a study of the thirteenth-century papal biographies even more important. The biographies may have portrayed each pope as exemplary, fitting the mode of all popes at all times. Nonetheless their authors were constrained to tell the biography of each individual pope. This makes the texts they produced an intriguing mixture of generality and particularity, historical continuity and change.

The papal lives were narrative claims to legitimacy. They sprang from and molded the conception of the papal office held by officials within the papal curia. They were both born of and contributed to the overwhelming sense of papal historical continuity which existed in the papal curia in the thirteenth century and which motivated or at least justified papal actions that today appear extremely ambitious. We should, therefore, wonder what curial officials reading the lives would have learned about the proper form of a papal life. They would have learned many things, of course: but as the remaining sections of this chapter will demonstrate, the authors of the lives described the customary expectations of papal rulership in terms that may be described as imperially universal. To that end, I explain, in the next three sections, some of the ways this claim to empire was made by focusing on the depictions within the lives of the relationships between popes and kings, the relationships between popes and emperors, and finally by analyzing the means whereby the authors of the lives presented papal means of communication with the outside world as though such communications were channels from an imperial center to a subordinate, provincial periphery.

specific, local circumstances, Raymundus [the compiler of the *Liber Extra*] excised nearly all details pertaining to location and person and additionally took out many references to the popes' consultation with his cardinals, making each text seem more like an abstract statement of law emanating directly from the pope and less like a judicial response to a specific case decided in consistory."

Part Two: Claims of Universal Papal Empire

2.1: Popes and Kings

People within the papal curia considered the popes superior to all earthly kings. The papal biographers emphasized relationships of hierarchy and subordination between popes and kings to demonstrate the extent of papal empire.

Historians including Walter Ullmann argued that the popes were the feudal lords of European kings.⁷⁵ Wiedemann has recently rejected this: the relationship between popes and kings was characterized not by stable legal relationships, but by negotiations responsive to political situations.⁷⁶ Even if relations of command and obedience did not in fact exist (except in some important exceptions), sources internal to the papal curia described papal activity as if they so existed.

In Bosone's *Life of Alexander III* the pope is a king of kings, a *sacerdos regalis* who oversaw and corrected the minor kings of Europe. While Frederick I supported an antipope, the other kings supported Alexander III. Along with Louis VII of France and Henry II of England,

Reges quoque Yspaniarum, Sicilie, Hierosolimorum, Ungarie, atque Grecorum imperator, cum patriarchis, episcopis, principibus, et universe clero ac populo eis subiecto, id ipsum eodem modo fecerunt. Recognoscente itaque toto mundi ipsum pontificem Christi vicarium et beati Petri catholicum successorem, solus Fredericus imperator dictus cum suis complicitibus in erroris sui pertinacia et obstantia remansit, vehementer impugnans et acriter persequens eundem pontificem et illos ecclesiarum prelatos qui cum eo viriliter stabant.⁷⁷

The Kings of Spain, Sicily, Jerusalem, Hungary, and the Emperor of the Greeks, with the patriarchs, bishops, princes and all the clerks and people subject to them [recognized Alexander as pope.] And so, while the whole world recognized the Roman pontiff as the Vicar of Christ and the Catholic Successor of Blessed Peter,

⁷⁵ Ullmann, *The Growth of Papal Government*, 332.

⁷⁶ Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship*.

⁷⁷ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 403.

only the aforesaid Emperor Frederick and his accomplices remained obdurate and perverse in their error...⁷⁸

Bosone states later that Frederick became terrified when he saw that “the orthodox kings and princes of the world exhibited honor and reverence to Alexander, just as to the Roman pontiff.”⁷⁹ Even the King of Sicily William I (1154-1166), formerly at odds with the popes due, in part, to the kidnapping of Pope Innocent II by his father King Roger II in 1144, sent two galleys to Rome to serve Alexander.⁸⁰ In this way the conflict with Barbarossa caused the reconciliation of the pope with one of its traditional enemies. Though one can certainly understand the actions of the kings as the acts of allies rather than subordinates, it is certainly the case that Bosone described them as the actions of subjects.

In Bosone, Alexander poses as the supreme earthly king who enforces justice on earth by forcing kings to obey him. Hence he corrects them as their superior. The conflict between Archbishop Thomas Beckett and King Henry II of England features as a minor version of the collision between the pope and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa.⁸¹ The end of that conflict replicated the end of the imperial-papal confrontation: Henry II offered his submission, while the pope recognized the persecuted cleric as a saint. The whole episode, which could be seen as an event in the local history of England, becomes a wider instance in the universal history of the popes. Hence Henry voluntarily submitted himself to the pope and offered atonement for the murder, as an obedient son of the pope, while Alexander canonized Thomas, and so demonstrated his connection with God.⁸² In very similar terms the author wrote of Emperor

⁷⁸ Peter Munz (tr), *Boso's Life of Alexander III* (Totowa, N.J.L Rowman and Littlefield, 1973), 52.

⁷⁹ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 405.

⁸⁰ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 412-413; Munz (tr), 72.

⁸¹ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 423; Munz, 85-6.

⁸² Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 423-424.

Frederick, “like the orthodox prince he now was,” making peace at Venice in 1177 by kissing the pope’s feet “just as if they were those of the first of the Apostles.”⁸³ By the end of the Life, the victorious Alexander defends the rights of the aged Henry II against his rebellious son and makes peace between England and France.

The pope is thus presented as the maintainer of righteous kingship.⁸⁴ But the pope himself is a king. Alexander’s activities prepared him to enter the heavenly kingdom: at the end of his life the Romans looked at him “as to Jesus Christ, whose vice-regent on earth he was,” and when he died “he solemnly took possession of his kingdom.”⁸⁵

We see a similar focus, albeit less floridly expressed, in the Deeds of Innocent III. I have already discussed Innocent’s negotiations with the Bulgarian king Kalojan, but not yet his negotiations with the King of Armenian Cilicia, Levon I (1199-1219): there the pope appears even more as the corrector of kings. Hence the pope demanded Levon to abandon certain customs of the Armenian Christian Church. In return the pope ordered his legate to crown the obliging king as a papally-recognized king.⁸⁶ The theme of hierarchy is again on display in Innocent’s negotiations with the kingdom of Sicily. After remarking that Emperor Henry VI managed to secure the kingdom of Sicily for himself in the late 1190s and ruled it tyrannically—“despoiling [the kingdom] of gold and silver and precious stones” and harming the crusaders of the Third Crusade—the author mentioned that he died, leaving his two year old son Frederick as

⁸³ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 239; Munz, 107.

⁸⁴ Henry II was blamed as well: “Two years and three months having passed since the death of the martyr, the elder son of the King of England, whom the latter had himself, out of fatherly affection, raised to the kingly power, rose against his father in a most criminal way but not, it is believed, without a judgement of divine retribution...For these reasons, there was a growth of great evil, and, their sins seeking requital, the son sought the destruction of his father, and the father thirsted for the blood of his son.” Tr. Munz, 87; Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 423-424.

⁸⁵ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 446; tr. Munz, 118.

⁸⁶ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 267-305.

titular king without power.⁸⁷ The author then related that Frederick's mother Constance had asked Innocent to grant the kingdom to Frederick "according to the form by which his predecessors had granted it to their predecessors."⁸⁸ But Innocent refused to agree to some of the grants which he felt endangered ecclesiastical liberty in the kingdom; and eventually the pope got his way over the young king's officials. A complicated history of involvement in the kingdom follows: Innocent protected Frederick from the effort of Markward of Anweiler to seize some portion of the kingdom by sending his own brother to fight him, and eventually rejected Markward's offer to rule the kingdom on the pope's behalf, without the normal privileges granted to the kings of Sicily.⁸⁹ The author of the Deeds presents Innocent as working to establish peace and justice in the kingdom in an effort to support the young king Frederick. All of this is meant to demonstrate the grand exploits of the pope, guardian of Latin royalty.⁹⁰

Likewise, we see such hierarchical displays in the description of King Peter II of Aragon's (1196-1216) visit to the pope in Rome in 1205. The author wrote that he came "so that he might receive a military girdle and a royal diadem from the same Lord Pope."⁹¹ At least as the author of the Deeds presented it, Peter's visit to Rome was a ritual coup which demonstrated the pope's superiority and guardianship of European kingship. The king was greeted by the papal court, and accompanied by them to the presence of the pope at St Peter's. Later the pope ordered the king to be anointed by the bishop of Porto, followed by a coronation by the pope himself; this was accompanied by an oath of the king in which he swore to defend the liberties and immunities of the churches in his kingdom, and to "always be faithful to my Lord Pope Innocent

⁸⁷ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 15.

⁸⁸ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 15-16.

⁸⁹ The story of Markward begins at *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 17.

⁹⁰ Thus Frederick II became the pope's ward at the entreaty of his mother Constance: *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 20.

⁹¹ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 306.

and his Catholic successors.”⁹² Peter then presented Innocent with a document in which he promised, on his own behalf and that of his successors, to give perpetual tribute to the popes, successors of “Blessed Peter [who] is vicar of him through whom kings reign and princes rules, who holds dominion in the kingdom of men...”⁹³ Having thus promised, the king was led out of the city and returned to his kingdom.⁹⁴

In marked contrast with the *Life of Alexander III* and the *Deeds of Innocent III*, the *Life of Gregory IX* is mostly concerned with the history of the papal-imperial conflict. It subordinates all contact with other kings to the narrative of the struggle with Frederick II, though the universality of papal rulership is affirmed by the presence of messengers sent by the Greek Emperor Vatatzes and the Muslim sultan of Iconium at the papal curia.⁹⁵ The author also credits Gregory IX with making a marriage between Frederick II and the daughter of King Henry III of England, through which the pope fulfills his role as leader of Europe’s royalty.

Niccolò da Calvi returned to the theme of pope as king of kings in his *Life of Innocent IV*. There the obedience of the assembled Christian kings is contrasted with the disobedience of Emperor Frederick: hence representatives of the kings of France, England, and Spain (*nunciorum regum Francie, Anglie, Yspanie*) came to the council of Lyons in 1245 to assist the pope’s judgment on Frederick.⁹⁶ In general, Innocent IV’s pontificate seems to have been marked by a growing sense in the papal curia of the papal right to interfere in royal politics by virtue of the pope’s position as vicar of Christ.⁹⁷ When Innocent deposed Frederick II in 1245, he could have partly justified it by claiming to act as the feudal lord of the kingdom of Sicily and the Holy

⁹² *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 306.

⁹³ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 306.

⁹⁴ *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 306-307.

⁹⁵ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 22.

⁹⁶ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, reprinted in Melloni, *Innocenzo IV* (Genoa: Marietti, 1990), 271.

⁹⁷ See discussion in Melloni, *Innocenzo IV*.

Roman Empire, but Innocent IV chose instead to emphasize the sovereignty of the popes over temporal rulers by reason of his ability to judge sinners and protect the liberty of the church—a rather extra legal kind of supervisory rulership.⁹⁸ Following this line, in his *Life* Niccolò presented Innocent’s deposition of Frederick II at the council of Lyons as an act of a beneficent lord (the pope) responding to the pleas of petitioners—clergy from the emperor’s realms decrying Frederick’s attacks on the church in his realms. Hence the deposition was framed purely as the administration of papal iustitia. But whereas the bull of deposition of 1245 emphasized the four crimes of Frederick for which the pope had reason to depose Frederick from his offices, Niccolò provided a list of historical precedents of popes deposing emperors, which he took from the *Liber pontificalis*. He added that Alexander III excommunicated Frederick I “until he came to a worthy satisfaction at Venice,” and that Innocent III, “almost in our days and times” (*quasi nostris temporibus et diebus*) excommunicated Otto IV “because he did not serve the faith (*fidem*) of the church.”⁹⁹ Here the historical memory of the papal curia overrode the legal arguments actually propagated abroad as the justification for Innocent IV’s deposition of the emperor.

⁹⁸ See the text of the bull in *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1990) ed. Norman P. Tanner, vol. 1, *ad locum*: “We therefore, after careful discussion with our brother cardinals and the sacred council on his wicked transgressions already mentioned and many more besides, since though unworthy we hold on earth the place of Jesus Christ, and to us in the person of the blessed apostle Peter has been said, whatever you bind on earth etc., denounce the said prince, who has made himself so unworthy of the empire and kingdoms and every honour and dignity and who also, because of his crimes, has been cast out by God from kingdom and empire; we mark him out as bound by his sins, an outcast and deprived by our Lord of every honour and dignity; and we deprive him of them by our sentence. We absolve from their oath for ever all those who are bound to him by an oath of loyalty, firmly forbidding by our apostolic authority anyone in the future to obey or heed him as emperor or king, and decreeing that anyone who henceforth offers advice, help or favour to him as to an emperor or king, automatically incurs excommunication. Let those whose task it is to choose an emperor in the same empire, freely choose a successor to him. With regard to the aforesaid kingdom of Sicily, we shall take care to provide, with the counsel of our brother cardinals, as we see to be expedient.” One of the accusations against Frederick was that he had failed to pay the annual census due from the kings of Sicily to the popes.

⁹⁹ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocenti IV*, ed. Pagnotti, Melloni 272-3; c.f. Paravicini, “La storiografia 48”; *Liber pontificalis*, Duchesne, II 363-4, sourced from Bonizzone of Sutri’s *Liber ad amicum* in *Libelli de lite*, ed. E. Dümmler, I, 1891, 608-9.

Moreover, Niccolò magnified Innocent's supervision over the European royalty when he wrote about Innocent stripping King Sancho II of Portugal's royal authority.¹⁰⁰ Practically speaking, Innocent accomplished this in his letter *Grandi non immerito* of 24 July 1245, in which the pope blamed Sancho for oppressing the clergy and neglecting the administration of the kingdom; he then gave the regency of the kingdom to Sancho's brother Afonso, count of Boulogne.¹⁰¹ Niccolò described it as a simple and justified procedure of papal government: on account of Sancho's attacks on the churches and monasteries of Portugal, and in response to the petitions of the kingdom's clergy, the pope "with the council of his brothers" (*de fratrum suorum consilio*) made the king's brother the protector and conservator of the kingdom (*coadiutorem et conservatorem regni*).¹⁰² Having already established the historical precedent for depositions and excommunications of emperors, Niccolò apparently found no reason to justify the pope's authority to apportion the government of the kingdom of Portugal.

The authors of the papal biographies depicted a relationship of hierarchy between popes and kings. In the texts Christian kings obey the pope as their leader and protector, who appears as a king of kings presiding over the Latin royalty. Whether or not the relationship really was one of command and obedience, the popes and their officials certainly cast it as one of hierarchical subordination.

2.2 Papal Suffering and Empire

How did the authors justify this hierarchy? They did so, I argue, by describing the popes as suffering avatars of Christ. Whatever the roots of their authority in law and theology, the

¹⁰⁰ The deposition of Frederick II is treated on Niccolo da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni 271-2.

¹⁰¹ Harold Livermore, *A New History of Portugal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 74-80.

¹⁰² Niccolo da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 273-4.

authors described the foundations of papal authority through literary representations of the experience of persecution. The popes had authority because they suffered as Christ had suffered.

The authors of the papal lives described the popes as universal rulers. For this reason the author of the *Life of Gregory IX* celebrated the admission to the papal court of representatives of the Greek emperor and a Muslim sultan.¹⁰³ They feature in the narrative by fulfilling an essential role in fleshing out the exact features of Gregory's imperial pontificate, while casting blame on Frederick II as an even worse persecutor of the church than those who did not belong to the church, as I discuss below. This theme is connected with a description of the pope as an instantiation on earth of the universal glory of God, a theme found through the *Life of Gregory IX*. The author tells us that Gregory's actions as pope mirror the movements of the heavens—thus he “shines like the noonday sun.”¹⁰⁴ Later he employed a similar figure of speech when he said that St Francis and St Elizabeth, both of whom Gregory canonized, mirrored the heavens on earth.¹⁰⁵ These holy people provide a conduit of divinity for others to glimpse heaven, because they manifested microcosms of the divine whole. The analogy was stronger than it at first appears.

When authors described a pope as “lord of the world,” they seem to have meant it seriously. This was especially the case during the pontificate of Gregory IX, when the papacy tried to harness the charismatic forms of religious devotion. To that end Gregory IX commissioned what is now called the *First Life of Francis* from the Franciscan Thomas of Celano—by reason of this commission, I include it here as a source for understanding papal self-

¹⁰³ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 1.3.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 1.1.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.14.

conceptions. In the second book of the *First Life of Francis* Thomas focused on the relationship between Pope Gregory and Francis.

Audit hoc, et intelligit Romanus Pontifex, pontificatum omnium summus,
Christianorum dux, dominus orbis, pastor Ecclesiae Christi domini, vicarius
Christi.¹⁰⁶

The Roman pontiff heard this, and understood—he, the highest of all pontiffs, the leader of Christians, the lord of the world, the pastor of the Church of the Lord Christ, the Vicar of Christ.

Thomas said that Gregory informed the cardinals—“the other keepers of the church...defenders of the faith, friends of the bridegroom, his supporters, the poles of the earth”—and they proceed to support the pope in his desire to canonize Francis. At the actual ceremony in Assisi, as Thomas described it, the pope personifies heaven. He wears a crown, the pontifical regalia with settings of gold and covered in jewels, and is surrounded by the cardinals clothed in bejeweled white robes. All of them offered “an image of the beauty of heaven, displaying the joy of the glorified.”¹⁰⁷ Here the logic of resemblance and mirrors suggest that the pope truly was “lord of the world.”

We return to the question with which I began this chapter: how can we reconcile such conceptions of grandeur with the evident weakness of the papacy? Paradoxically, these authors did this by focusing on how the popes suffered. This is an old subject in papal biography. The lives of the late eighth-century popes contain passages in which the popes suffer at the hands of the tyrannical Lombard kings and their Roman supporters,¹⁰⁸ while the eleventh-century history

¹⁰⁶ Thomas of Celano, *Vita prima di S. Francesco d'Assisi* (Rome: Tipografia della Pace, 1880), ed. Leopold Amoni, pp. 192-194.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 194-196.

¹⁰⁸ See the particularly the *Life of Pope Leo III* (795-816) in *Le Liber Pontificalis*, ed. Duchesne, volume I *ad locum*.

of the popes by Bonizone of Sutri—the so-called *Liber ad Amicum* (Book to a Friend)—features popes suffering at the hands of the Romans and their emperors.¹⁰⁹

This theme of suffering only grew in importance in the twelfth- and thirteenth-century lives, where it became conjoined with a developing sense of the high tyranny of the Roman people acting as persecutors of the church. As bishop of Rome—and heir to the patrimony of Peter surrounding the city—the popes could theoretically expect to be the city’s rulers. The truth was more complicated. Hence the *Deeds of Innocent III* depict Pope Innocent as an itinerant king visiting the towns and castra of the papal domain around Rome soon after he regained many of the territories of central Italy for the Roman Church.¹¹⁰ But even Innocent III met difficulty when the Roman Pierleone family rose against him. For the author-compiler, this rebellion constituted a chance for Innocent to show his aptness for the papal office through his ability to suffer as Christ had suffered: “Just as the strength of gold is proved in the furnace of persecution, God, wishing to prove the patience of his bishop in the midst of adversity, exposed him as it were as a target to arrows, causing to him to be tested with many temptations by his citizens...”¹¹¹

Here the *Deeds of Innocent III* imitated long-standing biographical practice. In his *Life of Alexander III* Bosone focused often on the way that the Romans disobeyed papal orders and so persecuted the pope. Bosone even gave a historical explanation for why the Romans disobeyed Alexander’s order not to attack Tusculum.

Quippe a tempore beati Pauli populus ipse patribus omnino dissimilis factus est et cotidie in deterius labitur. Quid enim tam notum seculis quam protervia Romanorum? Sunt enim seditiosi invicem et emuli in vicinos; subesse nesciunt et preesse non noscunt, superioribus infideles et inferioribus inportabiles; docuerunt etiam linguas suas grandia loqui cum operentur exigua.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ See footnote 29.

¹¹⁰ E.g. *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 312-317.

¹¹¹ *Deeds of Pope Innocent III*, tr. Powell, 241-2; *Gesta Innocentii III*, ed. Gress-Wright, 334; the whole conflict is related from 324-343.

¹¹² Bozone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 424.

Indeed the people themselves have become quite unlike their forefathers in the days of St Paul, and daily fall lower. For down the centuries nothing has been so well known as Roman wantonness. They are factious in their dealings with one another and jealous of their neighbors; they know neither how to be ruled nor how to rule; to their superiors they are disloyal, and to their subjects unbearable; they have taught their mouths to utter noble words while performing petty deeds.¹¹³

Bosone described the Romans acting “irrationally” and without justice when they invaded Tuscany and burned vines and other crops against the pope’s orders. On the other hand, Alexander “patiently suffered this so that his household could repel force with force and return a sad tribulation back to his enemies.”¹¹⁴ The Romans thus became irrational persecutors and clear enemies of the pope; and yet, Bosone stated that Pope Alexander pursued his apostolic mission by nonetheless serving these wretched people as their suffering but patient lord.

Huius ergo rationis debito provocatus beatus pontifex Alexander populum ipsum cuius cura sibi a Domino commissa est a cuius iniquitates atque peccata portare tanquam Christi vicarius debet, dissimulatis offensis ad rectitudinis viam et ad bonum faciendum convertere instanter pro viribus laboravit.¹¹⁵

...Alexander, making light of the injuries he had suffered, strove with all his might to convert straightway to the path of righteousness and well-doing that people whose charge had been laid upon him by our Lord, and whose wrongdoing and sins he must, as Christ’s vicar, bear.¹¹⁶

The imitation of Christ required a constant, never-ending history of persecution.

This recycling of the primordial myth of martyrdom reaffirmed the essential timelessness of papal history. The papal claim to authority relied on the apostolic succession from Christ to Peter to the popes: the popes were the “stand-ins of Christ,” *vicarii Christi*. Though the office did not logically require the popes to resemble Christ in their mode of life, this resemblance was

¹¹³ Tr. Munz, 83.

¹¹⁴ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 424.

¹¹⁵ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 425.

¹¹⁶ Tr. Munz, 85.

taken up by papal apologists, partly under the influence of Bernard of Clairvaux's statements in *De consideratione*. In that letter of advice to Pope Eugenius III, Bernard urged the pope to live like Christ by leading a life of devoted otium rather than busy negotium.¹¹⁷ According to Paravicini Bagliani, it was Bernard who encouraged the popes to think of themselves as vicarius Christi: men appointed by God to govern the saeculum and a Church diffused throughout the world (toto orba diffusa).¹¹⁸ Soon the title came to suggest more than a merely legal or official sense of representation. Paravicini Bagliani has written that the popes were said to resemble Christ even in the extent of their lives and their manners of death.¹¹⁹ As Alexander IV said in a letter meant to announce the death of Innocent IV, the life of the popes were unduly shortened through the persecutions they suffered at the hands of their enemies. In this way they resembled their heavenly lord Christ, whose life ended when his persecutors nailed him to a cross and left him to hang.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *De consideratione*, PL 182 739B-739C.

¹¹⁸ Idem, 752B-752C: Sciens Petrus quia Dominus est, in mare se misit, et sic venit ad ipsum, aliis navigio pervenientibus. Quid istud? Nempe signum singularis pontificii Petri, per quod non navem unam, ut caeteri quicue suam, sed saeculum ipsum suscepit gubernandum. Mare enim saeculum est; naves, Ecclesiae. Inde est quod altera vice instar Domini gradiens super aquas, unicum se Christi vicariu, designavit, qui non uni populo, sed cunctis praeesse deberet. On the history of the term, Paravicini Bagliani, *Il Trono di Pietro*.

¹¹⁹ Paravicini Bagliani, *The Pope's Body*.

¹²⁰ Alexander IV to Ghiberto de Gente, podestà of Parma, 22 December 1254, MGH *Epistolae saeculi XIII e regestis pontificum Romanorum selectae* 3:315: Cathedra preminetie pastoralis in hac militate ecclesia per plurimos pontifices frequenti successionis vicissitudine variato, pro eo quod illos manere diutius nature mortalis conditio non permittit. In ecclesia siquidem triumphanti, que superne patrie regionem inconcussa possessione iam obtinet, salvator noster, Dei filius, summus est pontifex, qui sempiterno fungitur sacerdotio, manens in eternum et subacto mortis imperio semper vivens. In hac autem, quam exemplarium instar celestium in consumationem sanctorum super terram Dei sapientia fabricavit, pontifices mortalitatis infirmitate circumdati, ut constituentur pro hominibus apud Deum, ex hominibus assumuntur. Hinc est, quod illa, indeficienti eterni sponsi gaudio et immortalitate beata, luctum viduitatis ignorat, hec autem, dum peregrinator in terries, corporum carceribus obligata frequenter cogitur viduitatis sue lamenta resumere ac tedia experiri. One can see antecedents to this view in Peter Damian's eleventh-century *De brevitate vitae pontificum Romanorum et divina providentia*, in *Patrologia Latina*, ed. Migne: vol. 145 471B-480C. There Peter stated that one reason popes died faster than kings was that popes had the whole world to care for, whereas there were many kings: Ad quod facile respondetur; quia cum unus omni mundo papa praesideat, reges autem plurimos in orbe terrarum sua cujusque regni meta concludat, quia quilibet imperator ad papae vestigia corrui, tanquam rex regum, et princeps imperatorem, cunctos in carne viventes honore, ac dignitate praecellit. Unde quolibet rege defuncto, administratione ejus regnum tantummodo, cui praeerat, destituitur; cum vero sedis apostolicae pontifex moritur, universus, tanquam communi patre mundus orbatur.

The papal biographies replicated this logic of resemblance and mirrors by focusing on the persecutions suffered by the popes at the hands of impious emperors. Again, this is best displayed in the Life of Gregory IX. There the pope represents heaven by “shining like the noonday sun:” he is not God (the sun), but he mirrors him. Gregory’s luster is brightened by the various attempts to hide it; Frederick II is the chief malefactor who would blind the Christian people to Christ’s light. As the author of the Life of Gregory IX describes it, the emperor should defend the church, but instead he embarked on a fraudulent crusade to the east where he acted not as an emperor but as a “pirate.”¹²¹ He made friends with the Muslim sultan of Egypt, while in the process helping to defile the Christian holy places by allowing Muslims to enter them and so “prostituted them.”¹²² This account follows a description of the rightful election of Gregory IX to fill Peter’s place as bishop of Rome. Gregory thus became the representative of Christ, and was forced to excommunicate Frederick because he had failed to fulfill the oath he made to Honorius III, Gregory’s predecessor, to go on crusade: while Gregory’s actions are grounded in papal precedent, Frederick flouts the duties of his office.

There follows a history of fraudulent peaces between Gregory and Frederick, where the author recapitulates the theme of Roman persecution. A group of Roman nobles, spurred on by Frederick, persecute Gregory even as he makes communion in St Peter’s Basilica. Gregory prepares to suffer martyrdom at their hands and they enter the church shouting, “Crucify him!” but the nobles then make peace with him—“more frightened by the pope’s earthly than heavenly

¹²¹ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 84: Quorum idem Fredericus ditatur spoliis, que fuerat innoxii sanguinis pretio solita callidate mercatus, non multo post paucorum comitatus vestigio, voti nichilominus et iuramenti transgressor, non imperator set verius pirate transivit.

¹²² *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 84: Et, templo Domini sponte tradito cultoribus Magometti, pactum iniit cum Assiriis, sancta prostituens cuilibet transeunti. Frederick’s alleged friendliness with Muslim rulers would resurface in Innocent IV’s bull of deposition of 1245, for which see Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia Diplomatica*, 5/2, 324-325.

power, [they] made solemn satisfaction to the apostolic see.”¹²³ From the beginning of his pontificate Gregory suffered difficulties with the Romans, and the author presents these as inextricably linked to the bad influence of Frederick, who corrupts the pope’s subjects with the allure and promise of his money.¹²⁴ The author laced these Roman persecutions with miraculous conversions, when the Romans again obey the pope due to his sanctity.¹²⁵ This passage replicated the persecution of Alexander III by the Romans as described by Bosone; but in the Life of Gregory IX the cycle of persecution and conversion reaches its most dramatic point, and indeed this tale of priestly heroism would be mentioned in histories through Italy for the rest of the century.¹²⁶

The author of the Life of Gregory IX told of Emperor Frederick II surrounding Rome with his armies, and bribing Roman nobles to turn against the Gregory. At this point the events of the Gospel almost replay themselves, with Gregory taking the role of Christ; but Gregory manages to persuade the Romans to suffer persecution with him, and so the pope leads the community of Christ through the near-imitation of Christ’s suffering.

Iam Sathane furentis nequitia, in Christi sponsam patenter armata, illud grande movit in Urbe discidium ut fere utriusque sexus et cuiuslibet etatis sententia pari voto et proposito simili assertionibus publicis casum Ecclesie diffiniret, incredibili errore concepta, per quam in patrum sanguinem natorum inhiabat immanitas, in cubile maternum inducere satagens alienum, ruinam generalis Ecclesie prosequentem. Set non defuit Christi sponsi presidium et fluctuani vicario adiutrix Domini dextra non defecit. Cuius beneficio Petri successor erectus, ad divina se conferens munimenta, lignum Crucis vivifice ac reverenda beatorum Petri et Pauli

¹²³ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 83-5: Qui Dei timore patris beneficiorum immemores, inter eiusdem pontificis iam anni secundi primordia feria secunda resurrectionis dominice, ad beati Petri basilicam effrenata rabie properantes, dictum patrem et presulem super corpus apostoli devotione solita missarum sollempnia celebrantem clamore valido vel latratu potius adiectis comminationibus impetebant et, dum per manus innoxias sanctissimi presulis in altaris ara verus Dei Filius mactaretur, inter sacratissima verba canonis, crucifixoribus Christi non dispares, ferinos dabant mugitus, ad celum ore clamantes et manibus: ‘Crucifige!’ Demum iidem Sathane ministri, perditionis heredes, terrenam in eo potius quam divinam potentiam formidantes, ad mandatum sedis apostolice cum satisfactione sollempni, non absque illius iniuria de cuius mandato venerant, redierunt.

¹²⁴ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro: 93; 96-7; 99; 101; 107; 109; 117.

¹²⁵ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro: 101; 115; 136.

¹²⁶ I discuss this in the next chapter.

capita exultantibus populis ad ipsius Principis apostolorum basilicam, venerabilium cardinalium et prelatorum comitatus vestigio, quo decuit honore portavit.¹²⁷

Now the wickedness of raging Satan, armed against the spouse of Christ, moved discord into the city, so that members of each sex and of every age publicly argued against the cause of the Church. With such unbelievable error conceived, through which wickedness thirsts for the blood of the born, he tried to place an alien mother in the crib, and to work the ruin of the general Church. But the guard of the spouse did not abandon her; the helpful right hand of the Lord did not abandon his vicar. The successor of Peter arose, and conferred on himself the divine defenses. He carried the cross of the living Christ and the heads of the blessed saints Peter and Paul through the exulting crowds to the basilica of the prince of the apostles, accompanied by the cardinals and prelates.

The blasphemers were immediately converted to Gregory's cause, and they took up the sign of the Cross. Meanwhile Frederick subjected the Romans to more persecution.

Sacerdos quidam vexillo Crucis venerande munitus, in alto palearum culmo ligatus expositus, Crucis suave iugum recusans deponere, igne supposito concrematur. Qui supra modum conditionis humane intrepidus: 'Te Deum laudamus' voce valida et constantia invicta decantans, ipsius ympni sequentia usque ad 'Te martirum candidatus laudat exercitus' prosecutus, undique iam flammis crebrescentius obsitus, inter ipsius versiculi verba sanctissimam animam Christo reddidit, pro cuius nomine tyrampni sevitiam et ignis incendia non expavit.¹²⁸

A certain priest, guarded in the banner of Christ, was bound on a pile of wood, but refused to abandon the cross's bond. He was cremated in a fire. The intrepid priest sang "Te deum laudamus" in a strong voice and with his constancy unconquered. He followed the sequence of this hymn to 'the shining army of martyrs praises you', and covered by the gathering flames, amid the words of this verse he gave his soul to Christ, for whose name he did not try to escape the cruelty of tyranny or the flames.

This passage reflects the precise nature of the papal representation of Christ. The claim to power of the popes is represented by their willingness to suffer persecution at the hands

¹²⁷ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 140-142.

¹²⁸ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 142.

of impious emperors and laymen. But the popes manage to convince the people to obey them through their holy example, even as they never suffer complete martyrdom. The example of their suffering proves their capacity for leadership and inspires others to imitate Christ through them, but the popes must remain at their work; they cannot fully enjoy the fruits of their persecution. Hence the Vicars of Christ remained below Christ; they represented him, and resembled him, but did not become him.

The popes lead others to the imitation of Christ by the examples they set through their lives. This chain of resemblance lay underneath the papal claim to rulership through martyrdom. When Niccolò da Calvi wrote that Frederick captured prelates proceeding to Rome in the last year of Gregory IX's pontificate, and described their suffering in the imperial prisons, he did not only emphasize the evil of Frederick. He also demonstrated how the popes and their servants suffered persecutions in the modern era just as St Paul was imprisoned for God.¹²⁹ Thus Niccolò drew a continuous line from the late antique persecutions of Christians to the thirteenth century: the past and the present were undifferentiated.

2.3: Papal Legates and Empire

The imperial role of the popes is further expressed, in the thirteenth-century lives, in the depiction of the papal legates as servants of the popes. Historians like Kriston Rennie see the papal legates as essential ligaments of the papal monarchy.¹³⁰ As one of the few means of communication besides councils available to medieval popes, the

¹²⁹ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 260: ...quibusdam prelatorum ipsorum et aliis pluribus in huiusmodi captione submersis, nonnullis etiam interemptis et aliquibus insecutione hostile fugatis, reliquis vero bonis spoliatis propriis, primo ad maiorem verecundiam deducti fuerunt Pisas, et exinde de loco ad locum ad regnum Sicilie obpropbriose seducti, ac ibidem duris carceribus mancipati, quorum aliqui macerati squalloribus et inedia pressi miserabiliter defecerunt.

¹³⁰ Kriston Rennie, *The Foundations of Medieval Papal Legation* (Basingstone: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

legates helped to link the center of the papal monarchy to its peripheries. This functionality led to the elaboration of the legatine office in legal works. By the late thirteenth century canon lawyers could count multiple kinds of papallegates with different relationship to authority: from legati missi who resembled lesser kinds of papal messengers, to legati a latere, who were said to instantiate the pope and to exercise something like the authority exercised by the popes themselves within the provincial entrusted to them.¹³¹

Historians have increasingly focused, however, on the functional independence of the papallegates. Under this viewlegates were not ‘cogs in a machine’ but forces to be reckoned with, setting their own policies and looking after their own interests.¹³² Nonetheless the thirteenth-century papal lives portray thelegates as mere servants of the imperial papacy. In this way they again affirmed the universality of papal rulership, describing the popes as possessing imperial sway.

Attention is given to somelegates in the Life of Gregory IX, where the author in his bombastic manner said that Gregory sent his legate Gregorio da Montelongo to put out the “neglected flames” of Lombardy.¹³³ This was a tacit admission that the conflict between pope and emperor was in part caused by papal interference with imperial politics in Lombardy, though the author of the Life described Gregory’s actions as an effort to “correct” the emperor.¹³⁴ Later he wrote of the same legate leading the city of Milan, “the friend of liberty,” against Frederick II’s armies. Gregorio destroyed bridges and canals

¹³¹ Innocent IV, *Apparatus in quinque libros*, 86v, in c.23 X v 33.

¹³² See the essays in *Authority and Power in the Medieval Church*, edited by Smith.

¹³³ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 114.

¹³⁴ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 114.

and restricted Frederick's approach to the city, and forced Frederick to retreat all the way to Pisa, where the emperor defiled the churches.¹³⁵ But within the *Life*, this activity in Lombardy and Tuscany is reduced to being a sideshow of the central conflict which concerned the struggle between Gregory and Frederick.

So far we see a portrait of popes served by legates, who extend papal authority and thus make possible a papal empire. A fuller picture of the tensions between popes and legates is found in Niccolò da Calvi's *Life of Innocent IV*. In this text papal government revolves absolutely around the person of the pope, with implications for the relationship between the pope and the legates; but to fully comprehend this we must first attend to the way that Niccolò argued that Rome itself was where the pope was.

While a strong sense of the centrality of the city of Rome and its geography persists in the *Life of Gregory IX*, where the central conflict relies on the ability of Gregory to convincingly use the historical memory of the city, Niccolò da Calvi shows that papal government was in fact moveable. In 1244 Pope Innocent fled Rome, which Frederick had surrounded. A Genoese galley brought him to Genoa, and then he travelled to Lyons. There he summoned the First Council of Lyons (1245) in which he deposed Frederick. But he also conducted church government there, and so made Lyons into a second Rome.

Ibi ergo curia iam quasi castrorum acie ordinate, innumeris de cunctis mundi partibus, tamquam ad Romam alteram, confluentibus, cepit apostolatus officium exercere, tam viriliter, quam prudenter, oppressos relevans et opprimentes condemnans, omnibus ac singulis exhibens iura, secundum exigentiam meritorum.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 136: Mediolanum...urbem utique patrie dominam, ultricem hostium et libertatis amicam.

¹³⁶ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, Ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 269.

Therefore he established the curia there, like an ordered line of castles, and innumerable people from the rest of the world came there, as if to another Rome. He began to exercise the apostolic office, equally manfully and prudently; he relieved the oppressed and condemned the oppressors, and gave the law to each and everybody, according to their merits.

As Paravicini-Bagliani has argued, this passage foreshadows the ease by which the papacy shifted its location to Avignon in the fourteenth century.¹³⁷ The focus on the person of the pope as the sanctifying figure which makes a place ‘Rome’—rather than the person of the pope receiving some sort of sanctity in his role as guardian of the holy places in Rome—represents an incipient revolution in thinking about the locus of holiness and papal identity. One might compare it to a scene in Bosone’s *Life of Alexander III*, where the pope’s relationship with the physical Rome is an important element in showing his authority and continuity. When a Roman faction attacked Alexander, he retired to the Colosseum where he conducted things as usual: “business was transacted and replies given.”¹³⁸ But while Bosone’s sense of papal identity is firmly Roman, Niccolò inverts this: a place is ‘Rome’ qua papal. The inheritance of Rome issued through the popes. This was a step along the way toward the creation of an imperial papacy.

With his claim that the pope made Lyons into a “another Rome,” Niccolò defended Innocent’s decision to flee Rome and do business in Lyons.¹³⁹ The point was that where the pope was, there papal government was. To that end Niccolò wrote about

¹³⁷ Paravicini Bagliani, *Il Trono di Pietro*, 79-80.

¹³⁸ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 416; tr. Munz, 72

¹³⁹ See a Roman nobleman’s complaint about Innocent IV’s absence from Rome: *Das Brief-und Memorialbuch des Albert Behaim, Monumenta Germaniae Historia* (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historia, 2000), ed. Thomas Frenz and Peter Herde, nr 36, pp 117-121.

the pope's effort to extend the bounds of the Roman Church through the commission of legates.

Interea namque ipse summus pontifex in secundo anno sui pontificatis, accensus celo lucrificandi animas gentium perditarum, misit sollempnes legatos et nuncios cum sollempnibus literis ad diversarum provinciarum barbaras nationes, gentes apostatrices, ut saltem iam in fine temporum resilirent a suis erroribus et cultibus ydolorum, et ut ad sanctam fidem catholicam plenitude gentium subintraret.¹⁴⁰

Meanwhile the highest pontiff, in his second year, aflame with the zeal of enlightening the souls of lost people, sent legates and nuncios with solemn letters to the barbarous nations of diverse provinces, to apostate peoples, so that they would abandon their errors and the cult of idols, and so that the plenitude of peoples would submit to the holy catholic faith.

There follows a list of the legates sent to peoples as diverse as the Norwegians (where the legate crowned the Norwegian king), to the Ruthenians of modern western Ukraine, the Livonians, the “sultans of Babylon,” and the Mongolians, among others. With this list Niccolò attempted to demonstrate that the pope remained “lord of the world,” and moreover, that he continued the customs of his office, just as did Gregory I or Innocent III.

Though historians have often overlooked it, it is hard to miss the way that the papal biographers modelled their descriptions of papal communications on imperial biography. Karl Leyser demonstrated that royal biography in medieval Europe followed the path set by Einhard, the biographer of Charlemagne.¹⁴¹ Perhaps it is not surprising to find similarities between Einhard and the papal biographies—though it would be unnecessary to prove such a connection, for Einhard himself emulated the traditions of ancient imperial Roman historiography and the late antique *Historia Augusta* from which

¹⁴⁰ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 269.

¹⁴¹ Leyser, “Some Reflections.”

the tradition of the papal lives sprang.¹⁴² Einhard famously stated that Charlemagne “also increased the glory of his kingdom by building friendly relations with certain kings and peoples.”¹⁴³ The king made friends with King Alfonso of Galicia and Asturias, and with certain Irish kings who “never called him anything but lord and themselves his subjects and servants.”¹⁴⁴ These “friends” thus spoke as subservient kings. Einhard then noted the envoys exchanged between Charlemagne and Harun, the Abbasid sultan, and the Byzantine emperors, who sent many envoys to Charlemagne’s court.¹⁴⁵

Einhard’s passage on imperial relations should be compared with the many descriptions of envoys from Greeks and Muslims to the papal curia in the papal biographies. But in an important way the papal biographies turn the trope of imperial relationships on their head. Charlemagne’s friendships with the foreign kings are, on his part, passive. Einhard meant to show that his fama had spread so far that distant kings sought his friendship. In doing this he reflected imperial Roman literature, at least as far back as Augustus’s *Res Gestae*.¹⁴⁶ But in the passage about Innocent IV’s legates Niccolò stressed the activity of the pope—as did all the papal biographies. The pope did not just receive envoys, he also sent them, and this itself reflected another aspect of ideas about empire descending (at least) from the Romans: the need for the ruler to go out and conquer. This sense of the imperial activity of the popes is undistinguishable from the

¹⁴² Thomas F.X. Noble, “Introduction,” *Charlemagne and Louis the Pious: Lives by Einhard, Ermoldus, Thegan, and the Astronomer* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

¹⁴³ Einhard, 25-26, tr. Noble.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Caesar Augustus, *Res Gestae Divis Augusti*, ed. Alison E. Cooley (Cambridge, 2009) c. 31-32; itself drawing of course on Hellenistic ideas of divine kingship: see Brian Bosworth, “Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis,” *The Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999) 1-18.

traditional, apostolic duty of the popes to convert peoples. The mechanism of that conquest was not armies but the commissioning of legates.

It could be objected that the papal biographies leave an ideal portrait of papal-legate relations. This is certainly true; the biographies give an impression of ideal portraits of all aspects of pontifical life. Consideration of this fact actually helps to reveal the way that the biographies made claims about the centrality of church governance around the pope. Innocent IV seems to have experienced particular difficulties with his legates, perhaps because he inherited a number of legates from the pontificate of Gregory IX, who had become used to acting independently during the long period between Gregory and Innocent's pontificates.

Though at least one of Gregory's legates offered to return to the curia when Innocent became pope—presumably so that the pope could choose a different legate in his place—Innocent kept him in place.¹⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the Life of Innocent IV shows cracks which the papal machinery were supposed to smooth over. Niccolò recorded how legates functioned in the pope's place when they crowned, “according to ancient custom,” William of Holland as King of Germany in place of Frederick II.¹⁴⁸ A rather

¹⁴⁷ Letter of Innocent IV to Gregorio da Montelongo, 1243: *MGH Epistole* 2:30-31, #39: Licet nuper per nuntium et litteras speciales instantanter petieris revocari, et nobis et ecclesie Romane tua esset apud sedem apostolicam presentia oportuna, cum tamen attente pensamus, quam sit utilis presertim hoc tempore in partibus Lombardie [presentia tua], quamque dampnosa tua existeret absentia illi terre, te adhuc in eisdem morari partibus, iniuncte tibi legationis officium exercendo, potius quam exinde revocare iusto elegimus iudicio rationis, maxime cum ad id sollicitudo laudabilis et plurimum ecclesie ac terre predictae fidelibus fructuosa, quam in eadem habuisse legatione dinosceris, nos inducat. Diligentiam itaque tuam dignis in Domino laudibus commendantes, presentium tibi auctoritate mandamus, quatinus portans humiliter impositum tibi onus et sperans in illos, qui omnibus pro impensis ei sueque sponse servitiis condigna retributione respondet, predictum officium, prout tibi a felicis recordationis Gregorio papa predecessore nostro plene commissum extitit, solleter et provide more solito exequaris, catholice fidei et ecclesiastice libertatis augmentum ac utilitatem fidelium partium earundem totius vigilantie studio procurando, ita quod exinde merearis consequi premium apud Deum, uberiores ab apostolice sede gratiam et pene homines nomen bonum.

¹⁴⁸ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 273-4.

different case was Ottaviano degli Ubaldini. According to Niccolò, Innocent commissioned Ubaldini to gather an army and take it to help the pro-papal élites of Parma survive Frederick II's siege. He gave him fourteen thousand silver marks to gather the army. But the count of Savoy, an ally of Frederic, harried Ubaldini, so that the legate had spent almost all the money in the three months it took him to depart for Italy. Finally the legate came to Italy, Niccolò says, with only his familia, having achieved virtually nothing.¹⁴⁹ This passage represents a clear disavowal of Ubaldini's record, and dovetails with a telling lacuna in Niccolò's history of the siege of Parma in 1247.

The siege of Parma constituted the great military event of Frederick and Innocent's conflict: Frederick's defeat marked the decline of his military fortunes in Lombardy. We know from many of the northern Italian annals that Gregorio da Montelongo—sent to be legate in Lombardy by Gregory IX, and remaining there under Innocent IV—helped the Parmans take Frederick's 'city' of Victoria.¹⁵⁰ For his leadership the Parmans gave da Montelongo some of Frederick's captured war gear.¹⁵¹ But instead of giving credit to the legate, Niccolò praised Innocent IV's family, some of whom

¹⁴⁹ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 275-276.

¹⁵⁰ See *Annales Placentini Ghibellini*, in *Monumenta Germaniae Historiae SS 18* (Hanover: Hahn, 1863), ed. Georgius Henricus Pertz, p. 496: Die Martis 12. exeunte Februarii dum imperator summo mane cum aliquibus militibus suis deversus fluvium Tarii venatum equitasset, cum nichil adversi suspicaretur, securitas, que semper detrimentum mater est, non modicum dampnum ei peperit. Hora eadem denique subito equitatores Mediolani et Placentie qui erant in Parma ad stratam de Colligio cucurerant. Quod quidem videns marchio Lancia, cum suis militibus ipsos equitatores insecutus ex ipsis 12 cepit. Cum autem intellexisset Gregorius de Montelongo legatus, cum militibus qui erant in Parma in glarea Parme exivit. Interea imperator Victoriam accessit. Preterea populares Parme et 600 pedites Mantue armata manu cupienti animo de civitate exeuntes, versus Victoriam per stratam de Sancto Brancaxio venire ceperunt; non enim distabat inter civitatem Parme et Victoriam ultra milliare. Set cum milites imperatoris qui cum arceriis et peditibus in magna quantitate extra Victoriam exierant, vidissent multitudinem populi Parme, in Victoriam volebant declinare. Quod quidem videntes Parmenses et Mantuani, Victoriam accedentes ignem iactantes in ipsam, spaldis prostratis in eam intraverunt. Cum autem imperator vidisset in Victoria ignem, ascendit equum qui Draco dicebatur; videns Victoriam comburentem et resistere non posse, collecta sua milicia ut potuit Cremonam properavit. Multitudo vero Parmensium Victoriam intravit; pedites et Saracenos qui in Victoria remanserant capiendo, multos ex ipsis occiderunt et iudicem Tadeum. Carocium Cremone, quod erat in Victoria, in civitatem Parme conduxerunt.

¹⁵¹ On this see chapter four below.

resided in Parma. He mentioned neither Ubaldini nor even Montelongo, who accomplished so much during and after the siege.¹⁵² The marginalization of Ubaldini stands to reason given his later history. He disastrously invaded the Sicilian kingdom; the chronicler Salimbene said that people thought he betrayed the papacy, and that Gregory IX only favored him because he was his bastard son.¹⁵³ Moreover, his awareness of the critiques against him probably led him to keep a register of the letters he sent as legate in 1251—one of the very first collections of legatine letters to survive from the thirteenth century.¹⁵⁴

Be that as it may, the biography indicates a fissure between Pope Innocent and some of his legates who were holdovers from the pontificate of Gregory IX. Gregorio da Montelongo had proven especially independent during the long interregnum between Gregory IX and Innocent IV. For instance, he personally took Genoa under the protection of the Roman Church in 1242. In the boisterous celebration to mark this protection, aristocrats who made peace with Genoa promised to follow his directives in times of “living war” (*vivam guerram*).¹⁵⁵ Moreover, he had negotiated the sale of the bishop of

¹⁵² Thus Niccolo praises the ‘Macchabean’ fighting spirit of the Parmans and the way the Parmans trusted in the Virgin, but prefaced the whole account of the defeat of Frederick by the Parmans by way of stating that the Parmans were effectively led by the “nephews and relatives” (*nepotes et consanguineos*) of the pope (“among others”, *quampures alii*): Niccolo da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 276-7.

¹⁵³ As late as the early fifteenth century, Leonardo Bruni reported that Ubaldini was rumored to have betrayed the popes. His family ties aroused suspicion: the Ubaldini of Tuscany supported the Emperor Frederick against the popes. A letter in an *ars dictaminis* collection today in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana purports to be from the rulers of Florence’s *primo popolo* to Pope Alexander IV. The rulers complain that Ottaviano meddled in Florentine affairs and attempted to start a rebellion, while harassing their representatives in Rome:

¹⁵⁴ Ed. Guido Levi, *Registri dei cardinali Ugolino d’Ostia e Ottaviano degli Ubaldini* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1890).

¹⁵⁵ Bartholomew the Scribe, *Annales*, *MGH SS* 18, , ed. G.H. Pertz: 208-209: Ipso quippe anno, licet non modica quantitas pecunie daretur proinde marchionibus, composita fuit pax et conventio inter dominum Bonifacium marchionem Montisferrati, Manfredum marchionem de Carreto, Georgium et Manuelem marchioness de Ceva pro se et aliis fratribus suis ex una parte, et comune Ianue Mediolani et Placentie ex altera. Et mense Ianuarii venerunt ipsi marchiones Ianuam, quibus potestas cum militibus Ianuensibus ivit obviam usque Stellam; et cum tunc temporis partem imperatoris foverent, iuraverunt in publica contione Ianue et in consilio manutenerere et deffendere pro posse sanctam Romanam ecclesiam et dicta communia Ianue Mediolani et Placentie, inimicis ecclesie et dictorum

Vercelli's rights to the commune of Vercelli to gain the support of the commune against Frederick II in 1243 when there was no pope. But Innocent IV later revoked this action.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps a lingering distaste for the legate's independence motivated Niccolò's silence about these feats of Innocent's representatives. Their accomplishments were effaced in Innocent IV's Life, in which the legates are seen impersonally doing bidding of the pope. In this way the Life of Innocent IV presented a claim to papal empire, constituting a literary representation of a wide realm ruled by a pope with legatine helpers.

2.4 Service and Empire

It seems useful to compare the lessons of the papal lives to more orthodox mirrors for princes. I will do this by describing some of the lessons for popes contained in Bernard of Clairvaux's *De consideratione*, which is the one 'mirror for popes' that historians generally recognize.

I have argued that the papal lives made a claim to papal empire. Some might object that this claim to empire, found in the papal biographies, contradict other aspects

communium facere vivam guerram, et sub protectione sancta Romane ecclesie in manibus domini Hastachii prepositi Brixienensis delegati domini Gregorii de Montelongo apostolice sedis legati in eadem contione Ianue letanter et cum reverentia se dederunt. Et sic dictus dominus Conradus finem sui regiminis cum honore maximo feliciter terminavit.

¹⁵⁶ Innocent IV to the bishop of Vercelli, January 5, 1249, *Epistolae Selectae*, ed. Rodenburg, 2:452 #634: De Vercellensis ecclesie indemnitatis sollicitus nobis humiliter supplicasti, ut cum olim dilectus filius G. de Montelongo subdiaconus et notarius noster, apostolice sedis legatus, commune ac homines civitatis Vercellensis ad sinum matris ecclesie et devotionem ipsius revocare desiderans, F. tunc Romanorum imperatori dampnabiliter adherentes, sue auctoritate legationis eis, cum instantia hoc ab ipso petentibus, pro certa pecunie summa vendiderit et concesserit temporalem iurisdictionem, quam in quibusdam burgis, castris, villis locisque aliis et hominibus a tempore cuius non extat memoria obtinuerunt episcopi et ecclesia Vercellenses, providere super hoc paterna diligentia curaremus. Volentes igitur indemnitati tue in hac parte ac enormi dicte ecclesie lesioni auctoritate apostolica precavere, quicquid ab eodem legato per modum venditionis, donationis aut alterius alienationis seu cuiuscunque contractus de iurisdictione ipsa eiusque pertinentiis factum esse dinoscitur, de fratrum nostorum consilio revocamus penitus, cassamus, irritamus seu irritum nuntiamus, munimenta omnia exinde confecta carere omnino viribus decernentes,--non obstante quod consensus capituli ipsius ecclesie, te tunc eiusdem preposito existente, alienationi huiusmodi dicitur accessisse. Nulli ergo etc. nostre revocationis, cassationis, irritationis et constitutionis etc.

of thirteenth-century papal ideology. Benedict Wiedemann has argued, for example, that the popes did not seek an empire or a dominion over the kings of Europe because the popes were committed to an ethic of service and humility, not of domination.¹⁵⁷

Such an ethic of service was, however, fully consistent with imperial expectation of claims. Understanding this will help us to see the strange nature of thirteenth-century papal government and the thought that underpinned, justified, and motivated it. In the *De consideratione* of Bernard of Clairvaux, one finds a claim to authority based on service, and founded on resemblances with Christ, which resemble the papal lives I have here discussed.

Bernard of Clairvaux wrote the letter-treatise known as *De consideratione* as a letter of advice for his former pupil Pope Eugenius III in 1153.¹⁵⁸ Following the convulsions of the eleventh century, the popes had continued to perfect their methods of government so that by the middle of the twelfth century they stood at the head of an increasingly complicated network of communications and government.¹⁵⁹ This network centered on the popes as the highest judges in Christendom. The papal curia became an international tribunal for the hearing of property and other disputes. But this raised an issue: how could popes reconcile the spiritual duties of their office and the leisure or otium they needed to accomplish them, with the practical legal business they had to deal with (*negotium*)?

¹⁵⁷ Wiedemann, *Papal Overlordship*.

¹⁵⁸ Bernardus Claraevallensis, *De consideratione libri quinque ad Eugenium Tertium* in *Patrologia Latina* 182 (Paris: Migne, 1854), ed. J.P. Migne; engl. tr. Anderon and Kennon, *Five Books on Consideration*.

¹⁵⁹ See generally I.S. Robinson, *The Medieval Papacy*.

Bernard's advice centered on the moral development of the pope and the need for him to distance himself from some legal work. He wrote the *De consideratione* in five books: in the first four he dealt with some aspect of the papal office, and in the fifth he treated the theological problem of knowing God. In the first book Bernard wrote that the pope should not allow legal issues to dominate all his thoughts. The law is unworthy for the pope: "What is more servile and more unworthy, especially for the Supreme Pontiff, than every day, or rather every house, to sweat over such affairs as these." The pope should not listen to cases but should teach the people. The sound of Roman law polluted God's temple: "Oh yes, every day laws resound through the palace, but these are the laws of Justinian, not of the lord."¹⁶⁰ The pope's concern with legal disputes constituted his slavery to disputants, and to unworthy ones at that.¹⁶¹ While the Apostle Paul was a slave to the people as well, it means little for the pope to enslave himself to "the ambitious, the avaricious, the simoniacal, the sacrilegious, the fornicating, the incestuous, and every other kind of monstrous person crowding around him from every corner of the earth to obtain or retain ecclesiastical honors by his apostolic authority."¹⁶²

Bernard thus draws a distinction between kinds of slavery or servanthood. The pope should be a slave to the good, not to the bad. Otherwise he fails to imitate the Apostles, and so fails to fulfill the terms of his office. The apostles did not judge, Bernard writes, and Paul wrote that judging put the judge into contact with the worst kind of man (1 Corinthians 6:5). By judging, Bernard wrote, the pope "as a successor of the Apostles,

¹⁶⁰ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.4.5, 732c-732d; *On Consideration*, 31-2.

¹⁶¹ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne,

¹⁶² Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.4.5, 732c; *On Consideration*, 31.

[was] usurping a lowly, contemptible office, which is unbecoming of you.”¹⁶³ Bernard could not point to a single passage in which the “Apostles at any time sat to judge men, to survey boundaries, or to distribute lands.”¹⁶⁴ Properly speaking, judging property is not in the papal remit at all; “these base worldly concerns have their own judges, the kings and princes of the world.”¹⁶⁵ The pope should not judge property but sin, over which God gave him jurisdiction.¹⁶⁶

Bernard’s argument then takes a Platonic turn. The pope should give time to consideration. He defines consideration as “thought searching for truth, or the searching of a mind to discover truth.”¹⁶⁷ As such, it is distinct from contemplation, which is “the true and sure intuition of the mind concerning something, or the apprehension of truth without doubt.” Accordingly, the pope should spend time in consideration, which is a means to mystically draw closer to God. The means by which he is to do this is by knowing himself: “you too are a man,” Bernard tells Eugenius, and therefore Eugenius should “at least sometimes give your attention to yourself.”¹⁶⁸ Through such attention, the pope should develop the four virtues—prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice—and so learn to imitate the apostles.¹⁶⁹ By learning virtue and adhering to wisdom, he will overcome the eloquent but empty rhetoric of the lawyers who speak well but do not care for the truth.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.7, 735c; *On Consideration*, 35.

¹⁶⁴ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.7, 735c; *On Consideration*, 35.

¹⁶⁵ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.7, 736b; *On Consideration*, 36.

¹⁶⁶ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.7, 736b; *On Consideration*, 36.

¹⁶⁷ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.2.5, 745b; *On Consideration*, 52.

¹⁶⁸ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.5.6, 534a; *On Consideration*, 34.

¹⁶⁹ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.8.9, 737d-739a; *On Consideration*, 37-9.

¹⁷⁰ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.10.13, 740a-741b; *On Consideration*, 44. At ed. Migne, 740a, Bernard explains, prior to his *abusus* of advocates, that justice was now harder to effect: “Fraus, et circumvention, et violentia invaluere super terram. Calumniatores multi, defensor rarus, ubique potentiores pauperiores opprimunt: non possumus deesse oppressis, non negare injuriam patientibus iudicium.”

By learning self-mastery, the pope frees himself from slavery to legal concerns. But he does not then exercise lordship (dominium): the pope is, properly speaking, a servant. As a means to attaining self-knowledge, Bernard advises Eugenius to consider what he is in nature, who he is in person, and what sort he is in character. The abbot answers for the pope: in nature Eugenius is a man, in person he is Pope and Supreme Pontiff, and in character he is kind and gentle. This latter answer becomes determinative to ascertaining what characteristics pertain to being a pope. Bernard quotes Jeremiah 1:10 (“So that you can root up and destroy, plunder and put to flight, build and plant.”) as a means of showing that the pope was not raised up “to rule.”¹⁷¹ This represents a clever tactic: Bernard argues that the very verse which seems to demonstrate the lordship of the popes in fact demonstrates the service they are expected to exercise.

Here we come to the similarity with the lives. Bernard argues that being pope is a form of martyrdom. “[R]ealize that a ministry has been imposed upon us rather than a dominion bestowed.”¹⁷² The pope must root out, but this does not mean he should rule; it means he must labor, as a peasant in the field wielding his hoe labors to root out weeds.¹⁷³ The throne he sits in is a burden of service. “Does the throne flatter you? It is a watchtower; from it you oversee everything, exercising not dominion, but ministry through the office of your episcopacy.”¹⁷⁴ From it the pope oversees the Christian people and spies the corrections which he must impose.¹⁷⁵ To act as a lord is to fail to be pope:

¹⁷¹ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.6.9, 747a-747b; *On Consideration*, 56.

¹⁷² Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.6.9, 747b; *On Consideration*, 56.

¹⁷³ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.6.9, 748a; *On Consideration*, 57.

¹⁷⁴ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.6.9, 747d; *On Consideration*, 57-8.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard, *De Consideratione*, ed. Migne, 2.6.8, 747d-748a; *On Consideration*, 57-8.

“Therefore, go ahead and dare to usurp the apostolic office as a lord, or as pope usurp dominion. Clearly, you are forbidden to do either.”¹⁷⁶

So far we have seen that Bernard suggests to Eugenius that the pope is not a lord but a servant. This seems to cut against my reading of the imperial pretensions of the papal biographies of the thirteenth-century. However, we have seen that those texts contain the implicit argument that the popes attain their greatest glory through suffering as Christ suffered. In this way they become “lords of the world.” Constant martyrdom was a source of glory and a constitutive part of the papal claim to authority. Hence the authors of the lives do not differ from Bernard. By humbly serving the Christian people as a watchtower and a corrector—as the popes in the lives serve the Christian kings—the pope attains “the highest form of God which the Apostles and prophets chose for themselves and have passed on to you.” To be the servant is to imitate God, who said (Luke 22:27), “But I am among you as one who serves.”¹⁷⁷ Service implied greater power and glory: “Glorify your hand and your right arm and deal out vengeance on the nations and punishment on the peoples; bind their kings in chains and their nobles in fetters of iron. Do this and you will honor your ministry and it will honor you.”¹⁷⁸

Hence the actions of the pope were to affirm the rightfulness of the papal succession. By acting as a servant the pope will take his place in the apostolic lineage, and so demonstrate his fitness for office: “If you are the son of Apostles and Prophets, do likewise. Justify your place in this noble lineage by acting like them, for the nobility of

¹⁷⁶ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.11, 748b; *On Consideration*, 59.

¹⁷⁷ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.11, 748b; *On Consideration*, 59.

¹⁷⁸ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.11, 749d; *On Consideration*, 62. Bernard proceeds to enjoin Eugenius “to dominate the wolves, but not the sheep;” *domabis lupos, sed ovibus non dominaberis*.

their line results from nothing else than the uprightness of their character and the firmness of their faith. Through this faith they conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, and obtained promises.”¹⁷⁹ The popes rule an empire based on humility: “To the extent that he is raised higher than other men, humility raises him above himself.”¹⁸⁰ Mutatis mutandis, the portrayal of the suffering of Alexander III, Innocent III and Gregory IX at the hands of persecuting laymen in their lives was one means of demonstrating that the popes by reason of their humility raised themselves higher than others.

At this point we could continue to trace this ethic of service from Bernard of Clairvaux backwards to Gregory the Great’s handbook on the pastoral office, the *Regula pastoralis*, or we could proceed forward and detail the reception of Bernard’s arguments by the officials of the papal curia. But this would be besides the point, which has been to show that the ethic of service described by Wiedemann is not entirely contradictory to the claim to empire made in the papal biographies of the thirteenth century: papal authority derived from their resemblance to Christ, something emphasized by both Bernard and the authors of the papal biographies. Hence we read in Niccolò da Calvi’s *Life of Innocent IV* that the pope visited Lombardy after the death of Frederick II in 1250, and was received as a conquering hero—met by the élite of every Italian city outside of the walls of the cities, conducted inside amid rituals of civic cohesion and celebration and being treated as an emperor returning to his domain. But we can conclude that this represented, somehow, the continuation, if in different modes and perhaps contrary to our modern

¹⁷⁹ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.11, 750a; *On Consideration*, 62.

¹⁸⁰ Bernard, *De consideratione*, ed. Migne, 1.6.11, 750b; *On Consideration*, 63.

sense of humility, of Bernard's argument that the humble pope would be glorified in virtue of his humility.¹⁸¹

Conclusion

I have argued that the thirteenth-century papal lives should be understood together with the other documentary production of the papal curia, like the papal registers and collections of financial documents like the *Liber Censuum*. Their authors described history and so helped to set the expectations of papal behavior for the future. I have not asserted that they described how papal government actually worked. With the lives we are in the realm of ideas about authority and proper action. The papal biographies record the ideal form of a life as a pope, and the primary ideological claim made in these biographies is that the popes are representatives of Christ on earth through their suffering. Likewise, the authors described the popes as “rulers of the world”—imperial rulers of a potentially world-wide empire.

Within each of these thirteenth-century lives, we find an emphasis on the good relations between the popes and the cities of central and northern Italy. I would describe this connection as imperial: the pope is the sovereign and the cities are his loyal subjects; but the third element, the empire, is exalted as an institution and a bundle of political practices (law and custom) that the unworthy emperors have corrupted. Bosone thus claimed that Frederick Barbarossa sought to subjugate the Italians with oppressions (such as the theft of property and the violation of wives and daughters) that were “unheard of in the ancient law of the empire.”¹⁸² These actions—reprehensible to the memory of

¹⁸¹ Niccolo da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 279-282.

¹⁸² Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 411: *Preterea illud ad memoriam duximus revocandum quod priusquam ad colloquium regis Francorum imperator ipse accederet, post destructionem Terdone ac Madiolani et Crème totam*

Charlemagne “and all the orthodox emperors”—led the Italians to defend themselves with the famous first Lombard League, an alliance of cities amply praised by Bosone and associated by him with the leadership of Pope Alexander and the best political traditions of the empire.¹⁸³ Likewise, the anonymous author of the *Life of Gregory IX* declared that Milan was the “mistress of liberty,” the erstwhile supporter of the pope’s battle for freedom against the despotism of the “heretical” Frederick II.¹⁸⁴

But for the popes—or at least the authors of the papal lives—the defense of liberty could coalesce with a monarchical manner of behavior by the popes toward the cities. Witness Pope Innocent IV’s triumphant march through Lombard in the spring of 1251, described by Niccolò da Calvi in language redolent of sovereignty.¹⁸⁵ One might go so far as to say that the papal defense of *libertas* was a defense of ecclesiastical liberty, the watchword of the papacy since the eleventh-century reformers from Burgundy had seized command of the Roman papacy in the middle of the eleventh century.¹⁸⁶ We will later inquire whether this was enough for the citizens of the northern communes, who read of ancient Roman liberty and who grew increasingly aware of the dangers of relying on the papacy for political guidance. Our first port of call will be a great believer in the

Lombardiam in tantam servitutem redegerat ut non solum alia eorum bona violenter auferret, set etiam, quod inter paganos absque capitali pena non presumitur, ministeriales ipsius uxores et filias eorum diriperent et impune abuti non formidarent.

¹⁸³ Bosone, *Vita Alexandri III*, 411: Pro hiis ergo et aliis importabilibus malis Veneti cum Veronensibus, paduanis, vicentinis, et cum tota sibi adiacente Marchia occulte se convenerunt et super tantis oppressionibus diutius conferentes, tandem pariter iuraverunt quod, salvo imperii antique iure, nihil amplius de cetero facerent predicto imperatori nisi quod ab antiquis antecessoribus suis eius decessoribus, Carolo videlicet atque aliis orthodoxis imperatoribus, constat exhibitum. Quibus unanimiter associatis et iurisiurandi religione astrictis, ceperunt loca sua paulatim munire, Theutonicorum insolentias cohercere et quos inveniebant sibi rebelles audacious propulsare.

¹⁸⁴ *Vita Gregorii IX*, ed. Spataro, 136.

¹⁸⁵ Niccolò da Calvi, *Vita Innocentii IV*, ed. Pagnotti, in Melloni, 279-282.

¹⁸⁶ See H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII: 1073-1085* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Robert Louis Benson, “*Libertas* in Italy, 1152-1226,” in *La Notion de liberté au Moyen Âge. Islam, Byzance, Occident* (Paris: Société d’Édition Les Belles Lettres, 1985) ed. George Makdisi, Dominique Sourdél, Janine Sourdél-Thomine, 191-213.

papacy's powers of stability, which he deemed conducive to the restoration and maintenance of political order: the Dominican author, and archbishop of Genoa, Jacopo da Varagine.

Chapter Two. A Papalist-Republican: The Restoration of Order in Jacopo da Varagine

In the last chapter I argued that the authors of the thirteenth-century papal lives described the popes as universal rulers and that the core of these descriptions was the resemblance between the popes and Christ. These authors wrote before 1250, but this dissertation's primary subject is the response of various authors to the loss of political order in Italy that followed 1250. We now turn to the first of these responses to this collapse of order.¹ The role of the papacy in political thought is the leitmotif of this dissertation, holding together my discussions of otherwise disparate attempts to understand the causes of the loss of political order in Italy and its potential restoration after 1250 and before 1300. To that end, I here explain the attempt of the Dominican archbishop of Genoa, Jacopo da Varagine (1228-1298), to end factional fighting in his city. He did this by emphasizing the role of the papacy in his *Chronicle of Genoa* (1298).² Jacopo taught that the Genoese should stop fighting each other and to instead fight external enemies—under the unifying banners of the popes.³

In a secondary sense, this chapter is also concerned with the adjudication of medieval republicanism and papalism. Hans Baron argued in *The Crisis of the Early Renaissance* that civic republicanism was founded in early fifteenth century Florence on an ideological attack on monarchical regimes; John Pocock likewise associated the pursuit of temporal permanence for

¹ First not in chronology but relative to the role of the papacy.

² For a description of his life and works see Carla Casagrande, "Iacopo da Varazze," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 62 (2004), *ad locum*. Casagrande notes that "the immediate political intent" of the *Chronicle* "is to underline the importance of episcopal power in civic dynamics," a position I agree with, though here I prefer to focus attention on the complex ways Jacopo made his argument rather than on this fairly obvious observation of his self-interest in making them. The quotation comes from the *Chronicle*. I use the edition by Giovanni Monleone, *Iacopo da Varagine e la sua Cronaca di Genova dalle origini al MCCXCVII* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1941). Carrie Beneš has translated it as *Jacopo da Varagine's Chronicle of the City of Genoa (1298)* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019). Unless I indicate otherwise, all translations are my own, as they are throughout the dissertation.

³ Organizationally, this chapter is second because Jacopo is the most supportive of the papacy of all the authors I discuss in the final three chapters of the dissertation; but even Jacopo situated his description of the role of the papacy in an ideal Genoa alongside descriptions of other political and social behaviors.

republican regimes with Renaissance thinkers.⁴ If historians like Quentin Skinner have succeeded in finding republicans that predate the first decade of the fifteenth century, there is still a tendency to think that medieval republicanism should include an appeal to the independence of a republic from monarchical entities like the papal monarchy.⁵ But to make this assumption is to ignore the realities of medieval politics.⁶ To dismiss the republicanism of a medieval author because he supported the papacy in one domain and a republican form of government in another is to expect medieval political thinkers to ignore the politics that surrounded them and the world they inhabited.⁷

⁴ But see Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Renaissance*, 55: “Ptolemy [of Lucca], at that early date, had formed the clear cut judgment that the power of Rome had been built up under the consuls and free councils of the Republic, when no one among the Roman leaders wore a crown or was adorned with the purple, for his personal gratification.” I discuss the example of Ptolemy in n. 7 below. J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*.

⁵ Skinner, “The Rediscovery of Republican Values,” *Visions of Politics II*, *passim*. On the tendency see n. 7.

⁶ Especially those of thirteenth-century Italy, in which self-governing communes were still juridically and ecclesiastically under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire and the popes. On later imperial thought see Alexander Lee, *Humanism and Empire*.

⁷ Though in the next chapter, I will indeed discuss republican authors who do not seem to have thought that the papacy could aid in the restoration or maintenance of political order. For a recent example of an attempt to show the differences between medieval and Renaissance republicanism, while retaining the label as a descriptively useful way to categorize and understand political thought, see Cary Nederman and Mary Elizabeth Sullivan, “The Polybian Moment: The Transformation of Republican Thought from Ptolemy of Lucca to Machiavelli,” *The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms* 17:7 (2012): 867-881. It is true that historians like Charles Tills Davis, James Blythe, and Quentin Skinner have identified Ptolemy of Lucca (1236-1325) as a quintessential medieval republican: see Nicolai Rubinstein, “Marsilius and Italian Political Thought,” in *Europe in the Late Middle Ages* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1965), ed. J.R. Hale, J.R.L. Highfield, and B. Smalley, 54: “Ptolemy of Lucca’s reappraisal of the *Politics* constitutes the most vigorous formulation Italian communal theory had yet received by the beginning of the fourteenth century;” Charles Tills Davis, “Roman Patriotism and Republican Propaganda: Ptolemy of Lucca and Pope Nicholas III,” in *Dante’s Italy and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984), 224-253; idem, “Ptolemy of Lucca and the Roman Republic,” in *Dante’s Italy*, 254-289; a qualified agreement in James Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 108; idem, *The Worldview and Thought of Ptolemy of Lucca* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 179-205; Quentin Skinner, “The Rediscovery of Republican Values,” in *Visions of Politics II*, 10-38, esp. p. 35, idem, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the portrayal of virtuous government,” *Visions of Politics II* 39-92; idem, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti on the power and glory of republics,” *Visions of Politics* 2, 93-117; idem, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 1.54-55. In *De regimine principum*, a continuation of his teacher Thomas Aquinas’s treatise on politics, Ptolemy celebrated the republican governments of the Italian cities: he labelled their form of government a *regimen politicum*, government of law and not of will (*voluntas*), which alone permitted humans to live the best kind of life, and he opposed to it secular monarchical regimes, which he called despotic (In Thomas Aquinas, *Opusculum omnia necnon opera minora* (Paris: Lethielleux, 1949), ed. J. Perrier, 1:220-426.) Elsewhere in *De regimine*, however, and in the treatise called the *Determinatio de iurisdictione imperii*, Ptolemy asserted the superiority of the papacy as a universal monarchy which oversaw other political associations as the highest authority on earth: *Determinatio compendiosa de iurisdictione imperii* in *Monumenta Germaniae Historia*, Fontes iuris germanici antiqui volume 1 (Hannover and Leipzig: Weidmann,

This chapter therefore explores the connections between papalism and republicanism in Jacopo's political thought. Jacopo was a native of Genoa, and loyal to his city. But he also staunchly supported the universal sway of the Roman Church, serving as the head of the Dominicans in Italy in the 1260s (during which time he likely met Thomas Aquinas, another Dominican intellectual).⁸ He even led inquisitions against heretics in northern Italy. His intellectual work reflects this and demonstrates an interest in preserving the authority of the church. He combined a celebration of Genoa as a free republic with a seemingly paradoxical belief that Genoese republicanism was remarkable for its devotion to the Roman popes.⁹ By explaining this, we will better understand the way medieval republicanism could intertwine with loyalty to the papacy—which, for Jacopo, was one way to further his central and primary task of stabilizing Genoese politics and restoring order.

Jacopo's arguments were not only targeted at the Genoese. He wanted to teach his readers, whoever they might be, to mitigate or even deflect the effects of temporal change—to remain rooted in his preferred normative orders.¹⁰ Jacopo tried to show Christians in general how

1909), ed. Marius Krammer, *ad locum*. Some historians have reconciled these positions, believing that even if they are non-contradictory, they are unique to Ptolemy, as for example Tills Davis: Tills Davis, "Ptolemy of Lucca and Roman Patriotism," 231-32: "His view of Roman history and his Italian patriotism enabled him to have both a fervent belief in papal supremacy and a strong devotion to communal freedom and popular regimes. His synthesis of hierocracy and republicanism was not inconsistent. It was nevertheless unique." In an attempt to disrupt these efforts at reconciliation, however, Bee Yun has recently argued that Ptolemy's republicanism was secondary in priority to his papalism and that we should question the descriptive accuracy of calling Ptolemy a republican, in "Ptolemy of Lucca—A Pioneer of Civic Republicanism? A Reassessment." But as I stated in the Introduction, this kind of argument seems to me to rely on unnecessarily rigid modern expectations of what constitutes a republican political theory, one that would eliminate most thinkers before a fairly recent date. On the other hand, as I will show, Jacopo da Varagine certainly did not foreground the papacy; for him the popes were external agents useful for re-creating concord and order in Genoa. Genoa came first for Jacopo, at least in the *Chronicle*.

⁸ On which see Claudio Leonardi, "All'ombra di Tommaso," in *Il Paradiso e la Terra: Iacopo da Varazze e il suo Tempo* (Florence: Sismel, 2001), ed. Stefania Bertini Guidetti, 25-30.

⁹ This devotion was from afar—Jacopo never stated that the popes should directly rule Genoa. For a description of his life and works see Carla Casagrande, "Iacopo da Varazze."

¹⁰ Jacopo was interested in processes of temporal change and how to arrest them. As I will discuss below, this preoccupation is strongly tied to his political theory. On the stabilization of polities in time in medieval thought see Blythe, *Mixed Constitution*, and Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*. My approach is different from that of José Enrique Ruiz-Domènec ("I sessantatre capitula della memoria di Iacopo da Varazze," in ed. Guidetti, *Il paradiso*, 3-

to escape the corruption of time and change in his Golden Legend. In the first section I discuss this. In the second section I outline Jacopo's argument that Genoese citizens could restore and maintain political order by continuing the customary behaviors that had characterized Genoa in its time of greatness. In both works Jacopo's primary preoccupation was to halt corruption. One way to do this was to link the individual or the polity to God, whom Jacopo thought was outside time. In the Legend he made this argument for Christian individuals; in the Chronicle, he adapted it for Genoa. To further understand the way Jacopo made political arguments, in the third part of this chapter I explore Jacopo's use of exempla through a case study.

The Golden Legend's Historical-Religious Time

Jacopo's Golden Legend (*Legend Aurea*) is a collection of lives of Christian saints set into an annual time-scheme or calendar. Written in the 1260s, it soon became an extremely popular book—some thousand medieval manuscript copies survive. By the late nineteenth century, art historians suffused with romanticism like Emile Mâle thought the Legend gave them direct access to high medieval popular culture and religious folklore.¹¹ More recently, Sherry Reames and Alain Boreau have argued that the text has little to do with medieval popular

14), who focuses on how Jacopo dealt with issues of historical continuity by use of the concept of *mutatio* (mutation). While I basically agree that the year 1133 is for Jacopo the “sattelzeit” of Genoese history, linking as it did Genoese change with papal stability, I do not actually see the word ‘mutatio’ as having very much of a role in his arguments. Instead, I emphasize Jacopo's use of Aristotelian concepts of political naturalism and his way of arguing historically through the correlation of actually disparate events into one narrative, having instructive force as prescriptive *exempla* of good conduct. This latter topic is the subject of the inquiry conducted in part three of this chapter. Moreover, I connect his interest in halting political change in the *Chronicle* to his argument about how to resist historical change in the *Golden Legend*, the subject of the first part of this chapter.

¹¹ Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), translated by Dora Nussey, 273. On the *Golden Legend* and medieval folklore see André Vauchez, “Jacques de Voragine et la culture folklorique dans la *Légende dorée*,” in *Il Paradiso*, ed. Guidetti, 15-24; see as well Pierre Boglioni, “Santità e folklore nella *Legenda aurea*,” in *Il Paradiso*, ed. Guidetti, 115-134. On the early modern reception of the *Legend* see Sherry Reames, *Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985). I use the edition of Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, with Italian translation by Francesco Stella: Iacopo da Varazze, *Legenda aurea: con le miniature dal codice Ambrosiano C 240 inf.* (Florence: Sismel, 2007), two volumes; the English translation by William Granger Ryan: Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) two volumes; I do not always give references to the English translation, simply because I did not use it unless otherwise noted, and because the reader can, if inclined, easily find the sections referred to in the English.

culture, but is rather a statement of clerical supremacy; they base this claim on Jacopo's celebration of the power of the institutional church and its priests through tales of miracles and punishments meted out to unbelievers and heretics.¹²

Reames in particular emphasizes Jacopo's stories of priestly coercion were meant to teach the laity to obey priests.¹³ But this is actually to miss the complexity of Jacopo's argument, which relied on a sense of exemplarity leading to an internalization of ecclesiastical authority. He did not only teach his readers to fear the powers of priests as expressed through miracles, but to accept their authority by instructing his readers to model their own lives according to their examples. The saints and the priests, who in some way represented the saints, were "enactable characters" who demonstrated the way of life proper to the Christian: in this sense the characters in the Legend became authoritative exemplars for Christian readers.¹⁴

For this argument to work, Jacopo had to develop a seamless sense of temporal continuity connecting the life of the individual Christian to the life of the saints.¹⁵ For stories of old miracles to have force in Jacopo's here and now of the late thirteenth century, there must be a sense that the past was essentially undifferentiated from the present. Underlying Jacopo's

¹² Alain Boureau, *La Légende dorée* (Paris: CERF, 1984); Sherry L. Reames, *Legenda Aurea: A Reexamination*; recently scholars have tended to focus on variations of the *Golden Legend* produced by authors throughout Europe, as in Emma Gatland, *Women from the Golden Legend: Female Authority in a Medieval Castilian Sanctoral* (Woodbridge, UK: Tamesis, 2011); on the composition and transmission of the Legend see Giovanni Paolo Maggioni, *Ricerche sulla composizione e sulla trasmissione della 'Legenda Aurea'* (Spoleto, Italy: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1995).

¹³ Reames, *Legenda Aurea*, chapters 3 and 4; Boreau focuses on describing how Jacopo created a "universe of signs," describing a cultural world of priestly persecution: *La Légende, passim*.

¹⁴ On the term see Philip Rieff, *The Feeling Intellect: Selected Writings* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) p. 286.

¹⁵ The argument of the *Golden Legend*, as I here reconstruct it, is closely connected to the argument about Genoa that Jacopo gave in the *Chronicle*, especially relative to the construction of a continuous sense of time in both works, and the related effort to halt corruption. I begin with the *Golden Legend* because it is chronologically prior to the *Chronicle*, and because the Legend contains an argument that extends beyond a single locality like Genoa to all Christians. My overall focus, of course, is on Jacopo's discussion of how to restore political order in Genoa. His arguments in the *Golden Legend* help us to understand something more about those later political arguments.

defense of clerical supremacy, therefore, is an attempt to teach Christians to withstand historical change. The argument was based on a rejection of the force of history and the internalization of an apparently eternal Christian mode of life. In this vein, Jacques le Goff has argued that the Legend was a theoretical account of the Christian understanding of time and an attempt to re-sacralize the Christian experience, in a time witnessing an early process of secularization.¹⁶ Seen this way, in the Legend Jacopo encouraged the individual Christian to understand his own life according to different temporal schemes relating to the experience of the timelessly sacred.¹⁷

To that end, Jacopo tried to teach ordinary humans to become segments of sacred time and so escape history's corruption (much as he would show, in the Chronicle, how Genoa could resist historical change and recover political order). He made this argument in the Legend by positing a distinction between the ordinary run of time and human history. He called this error. He distinguished it from *res* (reality, truth), which is stable and enduring. As he stated at the beginning of the Legend, the Christian calendar followed not error but *res*.¹⁸ *Res* was outside time: it was God, or at least linked to God, and therefore impervious to human history and human time's corruption. The Golden Legend was Jacopo's attempt to connect Christians with *res*. Thus, Jacopo's defense of the Christian life came in the form of a denial of historical change and an emphasis on the internalization of the discipline necessary to set the Christian apart from secular error and so remain attached to divine *res*.

¹⁶ Jacques le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time: Jacobus de Voragine and the Golden Legend* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), tr. Lydia G. Cochrane.

¹⁷ The saints thus become "markers of time," people who lived somehow outside the normal processes of human biology and history by reason of being connected to God's eternity: Le Goff, *Sacred Time*, 163. Jacopo partly accomplished this by overlaying the calendar year with lives of saints. Each day in the Christian's life thereby became a re-dramatization of Christian history, making the past present in everyday life: Le Goff, *Sacred Time*, 158.

¹⁸ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda aurea*, ed. Maggioni, 3-5; engl. Granger Ryan, 3-4.

For Jacopo secular historical change threatened the structure of the Christian life as he understood it and described it throughout the *Golden Legend*.¹⁹ Under the guise of a life of Pope Pelagius I (556-561), Jacopo narrated the history of the church and particularly northern Italy to the 1250s, when Emperor Frederick II died and no ruler succeeded him for twenty-six years (the so-called Interregnum period during which Jacopo wrote the *Legend*).²⁰ (It is significant that this essential information is conveyed under the life of a pope.) Throughout the *Legend* he described the Christian experience as one of persecution, particularly by Roman emperors and other secular rulers like King Henry II of England, who ordered the murder of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury.²¹ For Jacopo, persecuting rulers were heretics who threatened the freedom of the universal Roman Church; but that persecution also structured the Christian life, giving it a connection to the heroic days of the earliest saints.

That history of persecution centered on the popes. For example, Emperor Henry VI “always dealt tyrannically with the Church of Rome.”²² Worst of all was his son Frederick II. Early on he was a good emperor, rich and successful. But “pride led him to make bad use of his gifts.”²³ He “turned tyrant,” persecuted Gregory IX to his death, was excommunicated, and then deposed by Pope Innocent IV. He then died, with the result that “the imperial throne is vacant to this day.”²⁴ The consequent vacancy of the empire marked the triumph of the popes, who could

¹⁹ The contents of the *Legend* are amply recapitulated by Reames, *The Golden Legend*, Boreau, *Le Légende dorée*, and le Goff, *In Search of Sacred Time*.

²⁰ Jacopo da Varagine, *Legenda aurea*, ed. Maggioni, 1414-1420.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 1481-1482. Such kings imitated the paradigm of the pagan Roman emperors who martyred the first Christian exemplars; against them Jacopo placed the saints, headed by the Roman popes.

²² *Ibid.*, 1438.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*: Hic super omnes divitiis et gloria abundavit, sed eis in superbia abusus fuit: nam tyrannidem contra ecclesiam exercuit, duos cardinales vinculavit, prelatos quos Gregorius ix ad Concilium convocaverat capi fecit et ideo ab ipso excommunicatur. Denique Gregorius multis tribulationibus pressus moritur et Innocentius IV natione Ianuensis Concilium apud Lugdunum convocans ipsum imperatorem deposuit. Quo deposito et defuncto sedes imperii usque hodie vacat.

depose and (it is understood) kill emperors that disobeyed them. But that victory caused some problems, too. Resisting the emperors allowed the modern Christian to imitate their antique predecessors, live like the ancient Christian saints, and so internalize ecclesiastical claims to authority. But it seemed to Jacopo that the ancient duality of Christian life had ended with Frederick's death: there was no longer a persecuting emperor. The Christian experience rested on the apparent eternity of the war between good and evil, as represented by the duality of pope/emperor. Jacopo thus asks: how could modern Christians live as ancient Christians had lived when historical circumstances had apparently irrevocably altered?²⁵

For Jacopo the only answer was an appeal to the stable *res* of God, as opposed to the transience of historical error. Jacopo asserted that each Christian could domicile God within himself and thereby escape history's error; to that end each Christian could become a "spiritual temple."²⁶ In the final chapter of the *Legend*, under the title "On the Dedication of a Church," he described the process. Christ himself would purify the spiritual temple of the individual Christian soul.²⁷ He would then write on the inside of that soul a "spiritual scripture," an inscription of the morality proper to the Christian life.²⁸ That "spiritual scripture" would partly consist of the history of Christian persecution by historical emperors. Hence the Christian believer would internalize Christian history, and in this way, he could overcome the irrational flow of human history and keep in his mind God's reality. This would prevent him from falling into the error of heresy (prodded there by a desire to have secular power and glory as did the persecuting emperors and other heretics). Early in the *Legend*, Jacopo had labelled the present time of human

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 1456, *Templum autem spirituale quod sumus nos ad similitudinem templi materialis consecrator.*

²⁷ Ibid.: *Primo enim summus pontifex, scilicet Christus, ostium cordis clausum inveniens ter circuit, dum peccatum oris, cordis et operis ad memoriam eius reducit.*

²⁸ Ibid.

life the “time of pilgrimage,” when daily life was a constant fight (*pugna*) against demonic forces.²⁹ The internalization of Christian authority in the soul would arm Christians everywhere for their daily warfare, allowing them to defeat their enemies in a manner consistent with the undifferentiated Christian past. We will see that Jacopo gave a similar argument, modified for Genoese purposes, in his Chronicle.

Moreover, the individual Christian, impervious to change, would be a subject of the universal church under the stability of the papal monarchy. In the Legend, Jacopo argued that the popes replaced the ancient Roman emperors as the rulers of a universal empire. He focused on the Roman Pantheon in making this argument. He recounted that the pagan Romans kept, as trophies of empire, the idols and images of their conquered provinces in the Pantheon.³⁰ Whenever a province rebelled, the idols of that province would move, alerting the Romans of the need to crush the rebellion.³¹ The early popes, however, converted the Pantheon into a church to honor all the saints (the origins of All-Saint’s Day.)³² This was a symbol of the way that the popes ruled a universal empire by means of which all humans were connected individually to God and to papal Rome. They ruled not through coercion but through the internalized dictates of Christian discipline. While the pagan Romans ruled their empire through force and coercion, the popes ruled theirs through the willing internalization of their authority. For Jacopo, the papal monarchy possessed a direct spiritual connection to God and to each Christian, helping the latter to come into contact with God’s res, and protecting Christians from the changes of history so that

²⁹ Ibid., 1-2.

³⁰ Ibid., 1234.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 1234-1236.

they could live as true Christians.³³ The internalization of patterns of behaviors depended on the maintenance of a sense of the continuity of past conditions into the present. Temporal change and political disorder could be overcome by recourse to God through the papacy.

Part 2: The Chronicle of Genoa as a Response to Political Disorder

In the *Legend*, Jacopo argued that individual Christians could have direct contact with the stability of God's res through a voluntary process of spiritual submission to ecclesiastical authority. In the *Chronicle*, he argued that the Genoese res publica could be stabilized and its order recovered through the inculcation in the Genoese citizenry of a devotion to the common good of Genoa under the aegis of the Roman papacy, alongside other behaviors conducive to republican harmony. His advocacy of a direct connection between Christian believer and God through the mediation of the popes in the *Golden Legend* complemented an Aristotelian belief in man as a naturally political being that flourished best in a well governed res publica.³⁴ In this way, Jacopo's political theory is closely linked to his views on church discipline.

The *Chronicle* represents Jacopo's attempt to teach the Genoese a certain set of behaviors which would help to recover Genoese political order, badly needing a restoration. After a rise to prominence in the thirteenth century—marked by the great naval victory of Meloria in 1285 over the Pisans, the traditional Genoese rivals for trading privileges throughout the Mediterranean—factional conflict broke out in Genoa in the 1290s. Jacopo became archbishop in 1292 and tried to make peace, to no avail. Civil war continued for the rest of his life.³⁵ He wrote his *Chronicle*

³³ This is partly what the medieval historian Richard Southern meant when he said that the medieval popes were supposed to rule a state with claimed powers of which not even Hegel had dreamt. Southern, *Western Society*, 18-19.

³⁴ While the *Golden Legend* is a much more famous work than the *Chronicle*, there is a continuity of interest in both works, and an emphasis on inculcating attitudes and behaviors, that tells us much about how Jacopo thought that the effects posed by the passage of time could be mitigated by recourse to God or God's papal representatives.

³⁵ Steven Epstein, *Genoa and the Genoese, 958-1528* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

of Genoa to encourage the Genoese to reorder their political actions and conceptions, in order to end this disarray.³⁶ The Chronicle consists of twelve separate books organized around such themes as the foundation of the city, the conversion of the city, the duties of citizens and rulers, the proper actions pertaining to family life, and the history of the city under its bishops and archbishops. In his preface Jacopo stated that he wrote it for the “edification and instruction of the Genoese,” and that he called it a chronicle because *chronos* is the Greek word for time. Hence the Chronicle is a book of Genoese things pertaining to time, written for the instruction of the Genoese people in a period of fractious conflict.³⁷

Carrie Beneš and Stephen Epstein have noted Jacopo’s use of Roman political advice for his particular ends of remaking peace and restoring order in Genoa.³⁸ This makes Jacopo’s Chronicle different in kind from the official Genoese Annals that had been compiled in Genoa from the beginning of the twelfth century.³⁹ Rather than a mere record of Genoese history, the Chronicle of Genoa is an example of neo-Roman advice literature. In this respect, Jacopo’s Chronicle resembles prominent works in discussions of medieval republicanism, like the *Oculus Pastoralis*, Giovanni da Viterbo’s *Liber de regimine civitatum*, and Brunetto Latini’s *Li Livres dou Tresor*, which I discuss in the next chapter.⁴⁰ These combined political language from

³⁶ As in the *Golden Legend*, he argued that the halting of time’s corruption could occur through a connection with God mediated by the Roman popes. However, Jacopo’s belief that Genoese and papal history should be intertwined must be considered as one part of his broader account of the behaviors that would help to end Genoa’s political disarray.

³⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Chronicle*, ed. Monleone, 4.

³⁸ Beneš, “Introduction,” in *Jacopo da Varagine’s Chronicle of the City of Genoa*, tr. Beneš, 21; Stephen Epstein, *The Talents of Jacopo da Varagine*, 172.

³⁹ Giovanna Petti Balbi, *Governare la città: Pratiche sociali e linguaggi politici a Genova in età medievale* (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2007), 217-224; John E. Dotson, “The Genoese civic annals: Caffaro and his continuators,” in *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007), ed. Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewis and Duane J Osheim, 55-85; Dino Puncuh, “Caffaro e le cronache cittadine del Medio Evo,” *Atti della Società ligure di storia patria* 120 (2006): 157-166; Giovanna Petti Balbi, “La cultura storica in età medievale,” *Atti della Società ligure di storia patria* 118 (2004): 147-190.

⁴⁰ See the introduction for citations.

Roman antiquity with a practical concern with the recovery of peace and order in medieval Italian cities. But to merely class Jacopo's *Chronicle* with these other works would be to miss Jacopo's inventive way of incorporating the ability of a *res publica* to remain stable despite change into his discussion about the maintenance of political order.⁴¹

Relative to the restoration of order, Jacopo's central insight was that the Genoese should fight not each other but against external enemies. He argued by means of an ancient Roman example (*exemplum*). The Roman senator Cato the Elder, he said, liked to finish his speeches in the Senate with the exhortation, "Carthage must be destroyed."⁴² For Jacopo this was an important lesson. He explained, "For," [Cato] said, "when the whole world is obedient to us and Carthage stands so often in rebellion, if Carthage is destroyed the whole world will enjoy the comforts of peace."⁴³ But as Jacopo reported, Scipio Nasica (d. 141 BC) wisely argued that without fear of an external enemy, the Romans themselves would not remain united. Without the fear of outsiders, so Scipio said, "we will without doubt have an internal war because that very security and leisure will be the cause of many evils for us."⁴⁴ The Romans followed Cato's advice. But Jacopo thought that Roman history had proven Scipio right. "For with all their wars won, domestic unrest and civil war were born in Rome that brought that City to oblivion."⁴⁵ Jacopo generalized this conclusion. Once the citizens of a city-republic turned to commerce and private gain, they would soon fight each other in civil war. So had the Romans, and, it appeared,

⁴¹ Underlying Jacopo's thesis, however, is a distinctive politics of history and time tied to Aristotelian concepts of political growth and the Roman idea of political foundations, bound together by means of an emphasis on the constitutive framework of the historical relationship between the papacy and the Genoese. In this discussion of Jacopo's political thought I attempt to gather all these factors into one interpretation about how they relate to Jacopo's central task of restoring order and peace in Genoa.

⁴² Jacopo da Varagine, *Chronicle*, ed. Monleone, 42; Beneš, 62.

⁴³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Chronicle*, ed. Monleone, 42-43; Beneš, 62-3.

⁴⁴ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 43; Beneš, 63.

⁴⁵ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 42-43; Beneš, 62-3.

so were the Genoese in the 1290s. To remain at peace and to attain political stability the citizens of a city must have external wars in order to increase the common good. Constant external warfare could protect internal cohesion; so the Roman exemplum taught.

Jacopo's argument depended on two interrelated ideas: the idea of a foundation and the notion of exempla. The idea of foundation was at the heart of the ancient Roman sense of political authority.⁴⁶ The customary 'way of the ancestors' (*mos maiorum*) authorized for them legitimate political conduct in the present. It was set during the foundation of a city.⁴⁷ Jacopo worked with a similar conception, as we will see. He also used the related notion of exempla to make his arguments.⁴⁸ For Jacopo, as for other writers of his era, examples of customary behavior (exempla) prescribed future activities.⁴⁹ The manipulation of exempla could allow for subtle shifts of expected political behavior and morality. To describe good conduct in the past was to prescribe the same kind of conduct for the present and the future. Exemplarity forms the logic of Jacopo's political argument, which primarily appears in the form of exhortatory and descriptive statements, in which the underlying concepts of political and ethical life lie hidden, needing to be discovered through interpretation and inference.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ See Elizabeth Asmis, "Cicero *Mythologus*: The Myth of the Founders in *De Republica*," *The Classical Journal* 110:1 (2014), 23-42.

⁴⁷ The *mos maiorum* of a city was set in place or at least begun when a founder founded a city. In such a scheme change was a deviation from the accepted standard set by the foundation of the city and the *mos maiorum*, and it was therefore illegitimate. Roman historians like Livy—whose *Ab urbe condita* Jacopo knew—produced histories that showcased the *exempla* of the ancestors to demonstrate what the *mos maiorum* was. Even Augustus in his *Res Gestae* claimed to merely reinstitute the ancient *exempla* no longer followed in the late Republican era that preceded his Principate. See Thomas Wiedemann, "Reflections of Roman Political Thought in Latin Historical Writing," in *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought* (Cambridge, 2000) ed. Christopher Rowe, Malcolm Schofield, Simon Harrison, Melissa Lane: 517-531, 521; see Livy's introduction to his *Ab Urbe Condita* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1919), tr. B.O. Foster: 1.1.

⁴⁸ On *exempla* in Roman historiography, see Wiedemann, "Reflections."

⁴⁹ Markus Schürer, *Das Exemplum oder die erzählte Institution: Studien zum Beispielgebrauch bei den Dominikanern und Franziskanern des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Münster: LIT Verlag, 2005).

⁵⁰ See Monleone, "Introduzione," in *Jacopo da Varagine e la Cronaca*.

As a chronicler, Jacopo was frequently concerned with change. But he did not always see it as negative. A foundation should set the standards for political behavior in a city; but he knew that Genoa had three separate foundations.⁵¹ Logically, change in the behaviors that constituted the city as a city would mark the destruction or at least the corruption of the city. Jacopo believed nonetheless that Genoa had changed much in the course of its history, and he further thought much of this change was good and natural. Hence he wrote that ancient historians (he had in mind Livy) ignored Genoa, “although now very great and powerful, [because Genoa] was in the beginning only small and modest. The historians who wrote in antiquity did not care to make extensive mention of villages and small settlements, but only exerted themselves to describe large and famous cities.”⁵² Jacopo proposed to deliver to his readers a tale of Genoa’s progress [progressus] through history, from its beginnings as a small village to its position as a “large and famous” city. But in modern days, Genoa had finally reached a “state of perfection” from which it must not deviate.⁵³

The concept of ‘foundation’ could not well allow for legitimate change. Aristotelian ideas could. ‘State of perfection’ is an Aristotelian notion that denotes the finished state (telos) of a city’s growth. In his *Politics* Aristotle stated that the polis was the highest kind of community humans could live in.⁵⁴ As Jacopo’s acquaintance and fellow Dominican Thomas Aquinas had explained in the proemium to his commentary on

⁵¹ I discuss his comments on these below.

⁵² Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 4-5; tr. Beneš, 42.

⁵³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone 7: Quinta pars continent statum triplicem, quem secundum varietatem temporis habuit civitas Ianue. Et ista pars habet tria capitula. In primo capitulo agitur quails et quanta fuit in statu sue inchoationis. In secundo quails et quanta fuit in statu sue progressionis. In tertio quanta et quails fuit et est in statu sue perfectionis.

⁵⁴ R. Mayhew, “Aristotle on the Self-Sufficiency of the City,” *History of Political Thought* 16:4 (1995), 488-502.

Aristotle's *Politics*, "that which is of the greatest complexity is perfect and complete and the end of other things."⁵⁵ Households and communities combine to form cities (*civitates*) which "are in themselves sufficient to human life." Therefore, of all human communities, "the city is the most perfect."⁵⁶ Being "perfect", or finished, the city is the most conducive to human ends of all communities, and so "the city is the principle of all other wholes which can be known and constituted by human reason."⁵⁷ The knowledge or study of cities in the state of perfection constituted "politics [*politica*], or civil science."⁵⁸ Hence when Jacopo said that Genoa had reached a "state of perfection," he asserted that Genoa was a perfected city in this normative Aristotelian sense inherited by scholastics like Aquinas. Likewise, he intimated that his *Chronicle* constituted an investigation into *politica*.⁵⁹ But from this state of perfection, Genoa must not deviate. Even if change had been good in the past, now it would only be detrimental.

Could Genoa remain in its state of perfection—which was a state of completion—and still be sufficient to human life, amid the political trouble of the 1290s?⁶⁰ Jacopo's

⁵⁵ Aquinas, *Sententia libri Politicorum*, in *Opera Omnia iussu Leonis XIII P.M.* (Vatican: Leonine Press, 1971), ed. Roberto Busa.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, *proemium* 2.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, *proemium* 4. Cum autem ratio humana disponere habeat non solum de his quae in usum hominis veniunt, sed etiam de ipsis hominibus qui ratione reguntur, in utrisque procedit ex simplicibus ad compositum. In aliis quidem rebus quae in usum hominis veniunt, sicut cum ex lignis constituit navem et ex lignis et lapidibus domum. In ipsis autem hominibus, sicut cum multos homines ordinat in unam quamdam communitatem. Quarum quidem communitatum cum diversi sint gradus et ordines, ultima est communitas civitatis ordinata ad per se sufficientia vitae humanae. Unde inter omnes communitates humanas ipsa est perfectissima. Et quia ea quae in usum hominis veniunt ordinantur ad hominem sicut ad finem, qui est principalior his quae sunt ad finem, ideo necesse est quod hoc totum quod est civitas sit principalius omnibus totis, quae ratione humana cognosci et constitui possunt.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.* Cum igitur hoc totum quod est civitas, sit cuidam rationis iudicio subiectum, necesse fuit ad complementum philosophiae de civitate doctrinam tradere quae politica nominatur, idest civilis scientia. The last stage of human settlement is "the community of the city ordered so as to be sufficient unto itself for human life. Wherefore among all human communities, this is the most perfect."

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, *proemium* 4, where Aquinas stated that the "doctrine concerning the city is called *politica*, that is civil science."

⁶⁰ The reader should remember that the "state of perfection" is not teleological in a historical sense, which would possibly suggest a kind of progressive understanding of history, but is teleological according to the dictates of

political instruction in the Chronicle is aimed to halt Genoese change by exhorting his readers to act in accordance with the behaviors characteristic of the city's various foundations. For Jacopo these behaviors were authorized vertically and horizontally: vertically, by God and the popes, and horizontally, by the weight of Genoese conduct in history which being customary was ipso facto good.⁶¹ Thus his description of the foundations of the city and of the behaviors proper to good Genoese citizens comprised his instruction on politica; if its citizens would adopt such behaviors, Genoa could retain its state of perfection, resist historical and moral decay, and restore order.⁶²

Jacopo's Aristotelian political naturalism seems to be at odds with the Roman sense of foundation.⁶³ They suggest different manners of thinking about the history of a city and the kinds of legitimate political activity conducted within it. Jacopo's concept of foundation is characterized by a desire to return to the beginning moments of a city and to stay there, in a manner of speaking. Aristotelian political naturalism points towards the telos of political associations, in particular the telos of the polis or res publica.⁶⁴ But the basic Roman sense of returning to the original foundation of a city was not available to

Aristotelian naturalism; that is, a city in a state of perfection could change, ceasing to be a site in which humans could lead lives conducive to their ends as human beings.

⁶¹ Obviously one could collapse this distinction—for Jacopo the horizontal had authority insofar as it had sanction from divine authority, and moreover, authority to be authority must in some sense be vertical, i.e., above the subject, in which case the concept of 'horizontal authority' is a contradiction in terms. But the distinction is useful for understanding the complexities of Jacopo's argument, which would otherwise be missed, as they have been by even sympathetic readers.

⁶² Clearly Jacopo's interest in the papacy as it interrelated with Genoese history, which will feature below, arose from a sense of what the papacy could do for Genoa as an intermediary between God and human political organisms, particularly that of Genoa. He evinces no interest in the papacy in itself, or papal authority as such, but only its role in human affairs. Of course a description of role or use often leads to a description of the thing; but Jacopo did not advance along this line of inquiry. This statement goes, *mutatis mutandis*, for all the major authors studied in this dissertation, with the exception of the authors of the papal lives.

⁶³ On Aristotle's naturalism see Fred D. Miller, Jr, "Naturalism," in *Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, 321-343.

⁶⁴ Of course the *telos* is not a historical end-point, but it clear that Aristotle did not teach that a city begins existence at a state of perfection and self-sufficiency. See Aquinas's explanation in n. 49. The *telos* of the city would be the state of self-sufficiency.

Jacopo for the simple reason that the original foundation of Genoa had been pagan.⁶⁵

Hence the importance of the Aristotelian narrative of civic development, notwithstanding the benefit of its added intellectual complexity. Jacopo had before him the task of Christianizing a pagan city. Genoa had three pagan foundations. But the final ‘foundation’ of the city, marking its transformation into a “state of perfection,” occurred under papal leadership: it was very Christian.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Jacopo stated that Genoa had three human founders, each of whom was named Janus, and each of whom was pagan: see Carrie Beneš, *Urban Legends: Civic Identity and the Classical Past in Northern Italy, 1250-1350* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), on the prevailing fashion in late thirteenth-century Italy to find classical founders of cities; Jacopo himself alludes to Antenor as the founder of Padua at *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 23.

⁶⁶ I discuss the role of papal leadership below. Jacopo’s account of Genoa’s Christianization marked his effort to recover the value of political life for humans, which had, he showed, begun with murder, jealousy, and pride. At the beginning of the *Chronicle* Jacopo had described the origins of city life by paraphrasing Genesis. He told how Cain built the first city because people hated him after he killed his brother and engaged in largescale theft and rapine (see *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, p. 11: iste enim Caym de rapinis hominum divitias congregabat et filios suos rapere docebat. Iste Caym ex invidia fratrem suum occidit, cuius mortem Adam, pater eius, per .c. annos flevisse legitur. Et quoniam Caym omnibus erat odiosus, quia fratrem suum malitiose occiderat, tum quia rapinas exercebat, et ideo, ut esse securus, civitatem construxit et muris ipsam vallavit.) Thus the first city was born of a desire for a jealous murderer to be safe (*securus*) from those who righteously hated him. After the Flood, which destroyed these first cities, the giant Nimrod tried to build the Tower of Babel to withstand future floods and so to challenge God. In this way another famous city was born of a desire to prove that “human happiness comes not from God but that humans can acquire it through their own strength [*propria virtute*]” (ibid., 12). God of course scattered the people of Babel, causing humankind to live in particular communities separated by different languages. Thus Jacopo shows that civic life in its infancy was characterized by rebellion against God and morality, and that the dissolution of the primitive city (understood in a historical sense) constituted God’s judgment on man’s pride. As went Babel, so went Genoa. Jacopo stated that Genoa had three human founders, each of whom was named Janus, and each of whom was pagan. The pagan era marked a distinct relationship toward knowledge and politics. Idols in the pagan era had kept people under their control by giving them prophecies which sometimes proved correct. Statecraft was conducted by the aid of these prophecies. Needless to say, the prophecies often provided by the idols provided unstable counsel and illusory advice, and Genoa remained a small community at the mercy of larger polities (Ibid., 22-24). An interpretative problem looms here. If the human city is formed of pride and rebellion—indeed marked by an attempt to kill and replace the God-father—how could one reconcile civic life (which was the subject of *politica*) with obedience to the authority of a living God? Moreover, how could human *virtus*, which permitted humans to try to replace God in the rebellion at Babel, be redirected toward the sufferance of divine command and away from the assertion of pride? The overall import of these statements would be to cast political life as a degradation of God, placing Jacopo’s position near to or derivative from Augustine’s arguments in his famous commentary on Genesis and the *City of God* (On the revaluation of the value of politics by thirteenth-century political thinkers, contra Augustine, see Tills Davis, “Ptolemy of Lucca and the Roman Republic,” and the very helpful article of R.A. Markus, “Two Conceptions of Political Authority: Augustine, ‘De Civitate Dei,’ XIX.14-15, and some thirteenth-century interpretations,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16:1 (1965) 68-100.) Political life would seem to be characterized by domination (*dominium*), just as the domestic relations between a husband and his wife, and the *pater familias* and his slaves, were characterized by *dominium*. Jacopo had stated that the builders of Babel had sought to dominate (*dominari*) others, and he approved of Augustine’s statement that a husband dominating a subject wife was *pax recta* in the household (Ibid., 12). Jacopo, however, in another part of the *Chronicle*, added to

Despite its pagan origins, Jacopo had no doubt about the essentially Christian identity of Genoa. Though he could not find records of Genoa's conversion to Christianity, he was sure it had happened, that it was complete, and that Genoa was the first Italian city to become Christian and to publicly confess the faith.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Christian identity of Genoa was clear in modern days:

...civitas tamen Ianue puritatem fidei illibatam tenuit et incorruptam servavit. Nulla utique ibi esse [potuit] errori admixto, sed semper fundamentum tenuit chatolice [sic] veritatis. A seculo enim non est auditum quod aliquis natione Ianuensis unquam fuerit heretica pravitate corruptus; ymo, si aliquando aliquos hereticos de Lonbardia vel aliunde venire Ianuam contingat, mox ut sciri possunt, capiuntur et ignibus comburuntur. Et quoniam Ianuenses sic tempestive fuerunt in fide Christi consoliditi et fundati, ideo hodie inveniuntur esse et circa fidei sacramenta constantes et firmi, et circa officia ecclesiastica asidui et circa verba Dei audienda devoti.⁶⁸

For from the beginning it has been unheard of that anyone of the Genoese homeland should be corrupted by heretical depravity; in fact, if it ever happens that other heretics from Lombardy or elsewhere come to Genoa, they are taken and burnt in fires as soon as they are discovered. And because the Genoese were so opportunely united and founded in the faith of Christ, they are today constant and steadfast in the sacraments of the faith, assiduous in ecclesiastical office, and devoted to hearing the word of God.⁶⁹

this that it was better when a husband and a wife "agreed, which is peace to God and to men." (Ibid., 199, quoting Augustine, *Enarratio in Psalmum CXLIII* on the relations between husband and wife.) He thereby substituted, at the heart of human associations, the rational acceptance of authority for the coercive imposition of power. He similarly counteracted the sense of the criminality and degradation of civic life when he asserted that every city is protected by archangels, and that each city had two founders, a human one and God (ibid., 10-11: Deus, qui de nichilo cuncta creavit, cotidie novas civitates construit ministerio hominum, et constructas custodit ministerio spiritum supernorum...habet igitur civitas quelibet duplicem constructorem: unum principalem, scilicet ipsum Deum; alium secundarium, scilicet aliquem hominem terrenum.) This statement allowed Jacopo to ignore Augustine's argument that secular polities were without transcendent purpose and based on criminality, giving Jacopo space to later show that the growth of the Genoese *res publica* was based on the Christian virtue of its citizens, which could then be shown to arise not out of rebellious instinct and a desire to dominate but willing obedience motivated by love (*amor*).

⁶⁷ Ibid., 67: horum quidam [apostoli] venerunt Ianuam, verbum fidei predicantes ibidem. Tantam autem gratiam ibidem est Dominus operantes, quod civitas Ianue confregit ydolum Iani et recepit salutiferam fidem Christi. Ita quod in tota Ytalia prima civitas extitit, vel una de prioribus, que fidem Christi publice recepit et publice confessa fuit. English translation, Beneš, 76.

⁶⁸ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 77-78.

⁶⁹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Chronicle*, tr. Beneš, 81.

Jacopo here implicitly pronounced that the hunting and extermination of heretics was conducive to the highest form of human social and political life. The Genoese adherence to this pursuit marked the fact that the Genoese, in matters of faith if not politics, were uncorrupted, a fact holding promise for political matters.⁷⁰

In a sense, the conversion of Genoa to Christianity constituted a refoundation of the city. It was the ‘beginning’ to which the Genoese returned in order to perpetuate their political and civic life. Jacopo’s chronicle, we recall, was a book about things relating to time. Moreover, Jacopo’s notion of Aristotelian growth necessitated an account of historical change. The city had entered a state of progressus with its conversion to Christianity, though this state ended when it entered a state of perfection. How could such change occur without betraying the original foundation-conversion of the city? And how could deviation from the state of perfection be prevented in the future?

Jacopo found the answer in the popes, the modern representatives of God and the ancient church. By keeping a relationship with the popes, the Genoese could keep a relationship to the original moment of their conversion and their elevation to a “state of perfection,” from which they should not deviate. In that sense ignorance of the original conversion was unimportant, because what really counted was a continued relationship with the Vicars of Christ. Jacopo thought that Genoa reached its “state of perfection” through a virtual re-foundation in the year 1133, when Pope Innocent II made the bishopric of Genoa into an archbishopric.

Postquam vidimus quails et quanta fuit civitas Ianue in statu sue inchoationis et progressionis, nunc restat videre quails et quanta fuit et est in statu sue

⁷⁰ It is of course useful to separate politics from religion for the sake of simplicity and comprehension. However one should remember that Jacopo’s arguments tend to eliminate any separation between *politica* and divine things, as I show in the rest of this section.

perfectionis. In quo quidem statu fuit et est potens et maxima. Istum autem statum credimus incepisse ab illo tempore circa, quo fuit archiepiscopali honore sublimata, quod quidem fuit anno Domini .M.CXXXIII. et tunc civitas Ianue multum cepit crescere et nomen suum ubique terrarum plurimum dilatare.⁷¹

We believe that this status began about the time the city was raised to the honor of an archbishopric, which occurred in the year of the Lord 1133: at that time the city of Genoa began to expand enormously, and its fame began to spread everywhere throughout many lands.⁷²

The year 1133 was important because, as Genoa's spiritual authority (*spiritualis auctoritas*) increased (*crescere*), so too did its secular power (*secularis potestas*).⁷³ The pope's elevation of Genoa's ecclesiastical status marked the beginning of Genoa's "state of perfection."⁷⁴ The final stage of Genoese development emerged out of a confluence of divine and secular things.⁷⁵ Aristotle and the pope intermixed in Genoa, helping to prevent political and ethical corruption.

Thus, the Genoese "state of perfection" was initiated by papal activity; and it continued to be characterized by collaboration between popes and Genoese. Jacopo adduced examples of their collaboration, and these examples prescribed conduct for Genoese readers. Jacopo thus described how Genoa's magnificence in its "state of perfection" "challenges even imperial authority."⁷⁶ Whenever "kings, prince, or emperors have chosen to speak against the church," the Genoese, fearless of "the power of kings,"

⁷¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 90.

⁷² Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, tr. Beneš, 88.

⁷³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 90; tr. Beneš, 88. *Dignum enim fuit ut tunc inciperet amplius sublimari quando [honore] archiepiscopali meruit exaltari ut, sicut in ea crescere cepit spiritualis auctoritas, sic et cresceret secularis potestas, ut divitiis et potential inciperet esse gloriosior, que facta fuerat archiepiscopali dignitate sublimior.* Indeed, it was fitting that [Genoa] began to be raised up at the same time as it merited to be exalted with the honor of an archbishopric—so that, as its spiritual authority began to grow, so too its secular power increased, so that it began to be more glorious in riches and power, and these were made more sublime by the dignity of the archbishopric.

⁷⁴ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 90; tr. Beneš 88.

⁷⁵ By 'development' I mean developmental capacity for humans, not a historical progression.

⁷⁶ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 90-91; tr. Beneš 88.

always supported it.⁷⁷ The defense of the papacy against outsiders becomes one of the historical manifestations of Genoese unity. 1133 was another foundational year for the Genoese to look back on—a moment when they supported a pope against kings, and were rewarded with ‘increase’. It replaced the dim memory of an unrecorded conversion to Christianity and became the historical foundation which shaped legitimate Genoese political activity in its “state of perfection.” By the logic of exempla the collaborative relationship between popes and Genoese emerges as the proper behavior for the future, which, if pursued, would ensure the continuity of Genoese politics, helping thereby to forestall historical change and the city’s incipient corruption in the 1290s. In this way the defense of the papacy was at least correlated with Genoa’s status as a city conducive to human flourishing, and the continued prosecution of this alliance with the popes—by the fighting of wars against enemies external to Genoa—would help to keep the Genoese in a state of concord and peace, reestablishing and maintaining order in the city.

According to Jacopo, the Genoese had conquered and expanded by supporting the popes against their enemies. This implied that they had then been unified around some common, coordinating goal. The word ‘increase’—*crescere*—is noteworthy in this respect, because it in effect recruits Roman ideas of republican political development to stand beside Jacopo’s Aristotelian conceptions of organic political change. *Crescere* carried with it the conceptual freight of republican decline as the Romans understood it.

⁷⁷ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 90-91; tr. Beneš 88. This identification of Genoa with Guelf (pro-papal) ideology gratified Jacopo’s Genoese readers. It also matched the stance of the Genoese annalists, who studiously avoided criticizing popes, even when they placed Genoa under interdict or excommunication (as did Pope Urban IV in 1261 in and Pope Gregory X in 1274). Urban IV excommunicated the Genoese for making an alliance with the ‘schismatic’ Greeks against the Venetians: Annals 4.44; Gregory X was urged by the native-born Cardinal Ottobono Fieschi and Charles of Anjou to place the city under the interdict, which he did. Ottobono Fieschi removed it when he became Pope Adrian V: Annals 4.171-74. Unlike them, Jacopo constructs an idealized and purified papal-Genoese alliance.

Jacopo knew that the ancient Roman historian Sallust in his *Bellum Iugurthinum* (The Jugurthine War) had explained that “small [polities] increase (crescunt) through concord, but discord destroys them.”⁷⁸ When one describes Jacopo’s problem and its solution according to this Sallustian framework, it becomes clear that for Jacopo one of the sources of Genoese concord had been the popes. The authority of the Genoese ‘foundation’ in 1133 authorized and necessitated the unified defense of the popes against external enemies. These behaviors were constitutive of Genoese political conduct. To fall away from them would be to betray that foundation and to threaten the status of Genoa’s development as a city in Aristotle’s normative sense. Stated in Aristotelian language, Genoa could still decompose and so leave its “state of perfection.” Stated in Roman terms, Genoa had grown large because it fought external enemies. But disunity in the 1290s now threatened it in the very moment of its success.

Jacopo thought that the threat of political disorder could be withstood by the continued practice of the ethical and political behaviors which formed the dynamic impulse of the Genoese growth to greatness since 1133. The answer to political disorder lay not, assuredly, in the construction of political mechanisms or constitutional innovations. Rather, political order could be maintained through the inculcation of behaviors and dispositions.⁷⁹

Jacopo’s earlier comment about the Genoese hatred of heresy—that all heretics were immediately burned in Genoa when they were found—should draw our attention.

⁷⁸ Sallust, *Bellum Iugurthinum*, ed. John Carew Rolfe (Cambridge: Harvard, 1921), 10.3: nam concordia parvae res crescunt, discordia maxumae dilabuntur.

⁷⁹ As I discuss below, it is as a motivation for outward facing behavior that the loyalty to the papacy had importance for Jacopo’s political thought.

The fact proved to him that the Genoese may be politically fractious, but were united in devotion to the Church; this meant that all Genoese shared certain fundamental beliefs. Here it may be helpful to think about Jacopo's argument relative to 'populus'. Cicero defined a *populus* as a group of people gathered together sharing common norms, customs, and beliefs (*ius*).⁸⁰ Augustine Christianized and generalized Cicero's definition: a *populus* is a group of individuals formed into a group around some common love.⁸¹ Jacopo knew the Genoese were united in a common love for the Church, and argued that love should characterize social relations in Genoa; but he also knew that the Genoese were disunited when it came to matters of government.⁸² Jacopo alleged that Genoese political identity lay not in political arrangements but in a common love of God and his church, as they were represented by the popes.⁸³

Likewise, Jacopo removed formal, constitutional facts from his consideration of what made Genoa grow to greatness and maintain itself in concord. In part six of the Chronicle (a section entitled "On Government," or better "On the Regime"), Jacopo briefly described the various constitutional arrangements Genoa had known "according to the variety of the times."⁸⁴ Ptolemy of Lucca, as described above, would assert that the

⁸⁰ Jacopo would have known of Cicero's definition from Augustine, *De civitate dei* (Leiden: Brepols, 2014) ed. B. Dombart and A. Kalb: 2.21.2: "coetus iuris consensus et utilitatis communione sociatus." See the commentary by R.A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 64.

⁸¹ Augustine, *De civitate dei*, ed. Dombart and Kalb, 19.24: Quaecumque tamen diligit, si coetus est multitudinis non pecorum sed rationalium creaturarum et eorum quae diligit concordia communione sociatus est, non absurdus *populus* nuncupatur; tanto utique melior quanto in melioribus, tantoque deterior quanto est in deterioribus concors. This lower kind of association is contrasted with the true *iustitia* that characterizes the relationship between God and his people: *ibid.*, 19.23. For commentary see Markus, *Saeculum*, 64-67.

⁸² On familial relations, see Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 183. Cf. Blythe's discussion of Ptolemy of Lucca's use of *amor* in *The Worldview*, 163-165.

⁸³ By 'political identity' I mean that which constituted the Genoese as a coherent, harmonious *populus*.

⁸⁴ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 114-116; 'Civitas Ianuensis secundum temporum varietatem habuit rectorum diversitatem,' is on p. 114.

Italian city republics had the best form of government on earth, and that monarchies were almost always bad, excepting the papacy. But Jacopo ended his section “On the Regime” with the following judgment. “Whether the regime [regimen] will change again, we do not know; but if it must be changed at some point, we ask God that it should always be exchanged for something better.”⁸⁵ He explained that “there is no objection to the rule of consuls or podesta or capitani or abbots as long as the *res publica* is ruled well.”⁸⁶ Jacopo thought that a republic (*res publica*) was distinct from the regime (*regimen*) that temporarily ordered its political activities. Different regimes could provide good government that served the *res publica* well. What really mattered were the moral qualities of the ruler and the effects they made on the quality of governance. By focusing on the *utilitas rei publicae* Jacopo could ignore other constitutional considerations, the usual subject of works on *politica*.⁸⁷ Thus he could state that “in the judgment of the world, it is clear that the powerful and the rich would be esteemed greater than a poor man. But if a poor man rules a *res publica* better and more justly...he ought to be viewed as better with regard to the task of ruling.”⁸⁸

But Jacopo somewhat takes back some of these seemingly anti-republican statements. He asserted that rule by one man was better than rule by many—but only because many rulers are often discordant and “discord among rulers makes for the

⁸⁵ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 115-116: *utrum autem regimen ipsum mutandum sit, ignoramus; rogamus tamen Deum ut, si aliquando mutari debuerit, semper in melius permutetur*. To emphasize the mutability of Genoese government, he says that it would be too ‘prolix’ to list the names of Genoa’s rulers—for that information he refers the reader to the *Genoese Annals*.

⁸⁶ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 116-117. Jacopo’s use of terms from Roman law—*res publica*, *merum imperium*, *mixtum imperium*—permeate this section.

⁸⁷ See discussions in Blythe, *The Mixed Constitution*, *passim*.

⁸⁸ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 116: *certum est autem quod, quantum ad extimationem mundi, plus valent et plus extimantur potentes et divites, quam pauperes. Sed si pauper melius et iustius rempublicam regit quam potens vel dives, iste debet melior reputari, quantum scilicet ad officium presidendi*. English translation, Beneš, 101.

confusions of the subjects.”⁸⁹ As the soul should direct the body, a king should direct the members of a city; or as the queen bee directs the other bees; or as all numbers come from the number one, just so—because art imitates nature, an Aristotelian phrase—all humans should be ruled by one entity.⁹⁰ On the other hand, rule by the many was good when the rulers were “united in justice and willing to conserve the republic; indeed through such people, although they are many, the republic may be well governed.”⁹¹ We have already seen Jacopo’s belief that the Genoese were united in this way in matters of Christian orthodoxy; it was but a short step from there to think that they could also manage to rule themselves concordantly in a republican form of government. Devotion to God and the papacy could serve as the mechanism by which the Genoese achieved internal concord and preserved republican rule.

In a similar way, Jacopo elsewhere outlined the kinds of behavior that Genoese citizens should engage in.⁹² Jacopo expected “citizens and inhabitants of a city” to take part in political activity. To that end they needed to be wise counsellors in control of their emotions and able to speak rationally when necessary—like the Stoics.⁹³ They especially needed to control their anger, which might cause dissension with other citizens.⁹⁴ Rationally exercising virtue was part of what it was to be fully human: while beasts are

⁸⁹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 117-8: tutius tamen est regi ab uno quam a multis, ex eo quod multi rectores sepe fiunt discordes et discordia rectorum est ad conturbationem maximam subditorum.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 118.

⁹¹ Ibid., 119. Verum est tamen quod, quando sunt multi rectores, qui sunt concordēs et in iustitia uniti et in republica conservanda voluntarii, per tales quidem, quamvis sint multi, potest respublica salubriter gubernari. Jacopo’s position here has little difference from that of Ptolemy of Lucca, who also thought that republican rule was best only for those who peoples who were conditioned for it. See James Blythe, *Ideal Government and the Mixed Constitution*, p. 108: “When it comes to his native Italy, or to cities anywhere, Ptolemy is indeed a champion of republicanism. But in most places for most peoples and for large kingdoms, he favors regal rule.”

⁹² Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 127.

⁹³ Ibid., 155-6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 157.

constrained by vices, “noble and famous citizens” exercise rational virtue.⁹⁵ Such virtuous citizens would possess freedom, and like the Romans able to conquer a great empire. Jacopo finds here an admonition. When the Romans began to practice vices like avarice and jealousy, they lost their unity and began to fight each other in civil wars.⁹⁶ The citizens of other republics might also have this fate. But citizens who lived virtuously should be zealous in the defense and the promotion of the good of the *res publica* to the point of willingly suffering death for their *patria*.⁹⁷ The duty of Genoese citizens toward the *res publica* even extended to the maintenance of well-ordered households characterized by pre-political discipline.⁹⁸ Hence it is clear that Jacopo thought that active citizenship was necessary both to stabilize the republic and to live a full human life. In this way, Jacopo looks like a civic republican who thought that his city’s particular kind of republicanism was characterized by a strong devotion to the papacy, which served as a motivation for the external aggression that helped strengthen its internal cohesion and concord.

Jacopo attributed Genoa’s political successes not to constitutional arrangements (the form of the regimen), but to the actions and moral qualities that were constitutive of Genoese activity in its state of perfection. In that state, Genoa was the home of virtuous and politically active citizens who defended the popes and fought not each other but external enemies. This allowed him to reconcile the fact that Genoa had many changing

⁹⁵ Ibid., 160.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 168. Dicit autem sanctus augustinus in libro de civitate dei, ubi querit qualiter romanum imperium sic fuit dilatatum, quod Romani primo exercitaverunt se circa opera virtuosa pro libertate habenda... tandem ceperunt exercitare ad invidiam et avaritiam et ex hoc orta sunt inter eos bella civilia per que se mutuo destruxerunt.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 170.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 183: Non tantum cives debent habere ordinatam rem publicam, sed etiam rem familiarem domesticam. Que quiden tunc est ordinate quando ipsi coniuges inter se sunt ordinati et habent familiam ordinatam.

kinds of government in history with his contention that Genoa had experienced a steady progression and increase despite those changes. Jacopo's basic point is ordinary. The members of a group should not fight each other. They should fight other groups. He made the argument more intellectually interesting by incorporating in it Aristotelian and Roman political theory to deal with problems of change, and an appeal to unity outside the city, in the popes through whom God manifested.

This section on Jacopo's political theory has been necessary to explain how Jacopo thought that the relationship of the Genoese with the papacy in 1133 was correlated with Genoese success, and was partially a cause of this success. But still, he thought that Genoese behaviors were also necessary to explain that success. In fact, for Jacopo, Genoese deference toward the papacy was just one of the behaviors that powered Genoese growth since the inception of the "state of perfection" in 1133. This bears on Jacopo's positive political contribution, such as it is. The Genoese could not fix their situation by simply following the popes politically. They must also adopt other behaviors which were conducive to political stability. By continuing to defend the papacy—and the pursuit of all the other activities that led to the attainment and the perpetuation of Genoa's "state of perfection"—Jacopo taught that the Genoese could stop the corruption that inflicted Genoa, thereby restoring political order.

I would summarily state Jacopo's political thought as follows: a devotion to the papacy (even to the idea of the papacy) could help restore Genoa's political order by turning aggression towards external targets. The Aristotelian and Roman political concepts, that he used to deal with the problem of change, are subservient to this primary point. It is natural, then, to begin with Jacopo when tracing the ways that late thirteenth-

century Italian chroniclers developed their arguments about the restoration of political order.

Jacopo's argument works through descriptions of historical, exemplary conduct. Because they are exemplary, these descriptions are also prescriptions which teach Genoese citizens proper actions. Jacopo thought Genoese history proved that the popes could act as unifying agents for Genoese citizens arrayed against each other. But this argument would hardly be sufficient were it not combined with a broader attempt to define the problem of historical change with help from the vocabulary of Aristotelian political naturalism, along with the Roman understanding of foundation and its attendant senses of proper behaviors teachable through the conveyance of exempla. For Jacopo, the restoration and maintenance of political order could be attained through various behaviors and dispositions that he tried to show were constitutive of Genoese history; loyalty to the papacy was one of these dispositions, but not the only one.

Part 3

Political Argument through Historical Exempla: The Example of the Procession

The argument of this chapter has so far progressed at a fairly high level of abstraction, and it is essentially complete. Henceforth I further explain the way that Jacopo connected papal and Genoese history. I do this not because the repetition of examples will logically improve the argument I have just made, but because I think it is important to develop our understanding of Jacopo's mode of political argumentation by way of correlation and historical parallelism, undergirded by the logic of examples.⁹⁹ In so doing, one can come to see better how historical

⁹⁹ For a discussion of how Jacopo argued in his sermons see Stefania Bertini Guidetti, *I Sermones di Iacopo da Varazze: Il potere delle immagini nel Duecento* (Florence: SISMEL, 1998), in particular pp. 3-54. On exempla in thirteenth-century mendicant texts, see Schürer, *Das Exemplum*, and Brian Patrick McGuire, "The Cistercians and

narratives can function as exhortatory political tracts. If we want to take Jacopo seriously as a political thinker, even a brief illustration of his rhetorical method, that is, the way he made his arguments so that his readers would understand them, is necessary and instructive.

For the purpose of this examination, I have chosen a famous event from the conflict between Frederick II and Pope Gregory IX. I trace how various authors, including Jacopo, treated the Roman procession of Pope Gregory IX in 1240 as an exemplum of papal conduct. I do this because an examination of Jacopo's method is strengthened by the inclusion of contrasting cases. To that end I discuss the role of the procession in the works of earlier authors before I arrive at Jacopo's use of the event in his Chronicle. Throughout, I focus on how Gregory's procession in 1240 as an exemplum helps us to better understand this kind of argumentative style works.¹⁰⁰

3.1 Papal and Imperial Letters: The Immediate Context of the Procession

In this section I explain the immediate political context of Pope Gregory IX's procession in 1240. I argue that it was a calculated rhetorical move in a widely publicized argument between the papacy and Emperor Frederick II. In 1240 Rome was surrounded by Emperor Frederick II's armies. To keep control of the city, Pope Gregory IX processed through the streets holding the heads (*capita*) of the apostles Peter and Paul. It later became an extremely famous story, widely repeated by thirteenth-century chroniclers. We see here how a historical event initially became, through descriptions and representations, an exemplum, useful for political arguments.

the rise of the exemplum in early thirteenth century France: a reevaluation of Paris BN MS lat. 15912," in *Friendship and Faith: Cistercian Men, Women, and their Stories, 1100-1200* (Aldershot: Variorum, 2002), V:211-267.

¹⁰⁰ Because this is not the first priority of this chapter, I do not dwell too much on the actual logical requirements of this kind of argument. But it is hard, from the outside, to not feel that exemplary logic really proceeds by a series of resemblances that become valid merely through description. This would make *exempla* akin to strong analogies. My intent in this part of the chapter is not to offer a formal account of reasoning via *exempla*, but merely to learn about it from its use in various works and letters produced in the thirteenth century.

The first description of Gregory IX's procession of 1240 appears in letters sent by Gregory IX and Frederick II during their propaganda conflict in the late 1230s and early 1240s. Historians have noted the apocalyptic rhetoric of these letters, and have sometimes argued about whether they were written sincerely or were merely political propaganda. This reflects broader arguments that the papacy at this time 'rationalized' and lost its spiritual authority.¹⁰¹ I ignore this issue. Instead, I argue that Gregory's description of his procession of 1240 was an intervention in the debate between the pope and the emperor over each incumbent's fitness for office. While Gregory claimed that the emperor was unfit for office, Frederick claimed the same of Gregory. Gregory's response was to enshroud himself in the historical practices of the popes, which led him to propagate the news of his procession in 1240. The procession of 1240 was a discursive move meant to instantiate the claims of the pope to represent Christ on earth, and as such helps us to see how the pope and his advisors framed their conflict as one between God and Satan, and so between rival visions of universal lordship.

In 1237, Frederick II defeated the Milanese at the battle of Cortenuova. He sent their captured war wagon, or *carroccio*, to Rome as a trophy and a signal of his imperial ambitions. Gregory IX received the *carroccio* as provocation. In 1229 the pope had excommunicated Frederick for failure to fulfill his oath to go on crusade. In 1231—after Frederick returned from the crusade he undertook while still excommunicated and on his return defeated a papal invasion of his Sicilian kingdom—the pope and the emperor made peace. Both powers collaborated in ending the revolt of Henry (VII), Frederick's son and king of Germany.¹⁰² But the peace broke

¹⁰¹ Giuseppe Mazzanti, "Gregorio IX e la pubblicistica apocalittico-escatologica: convinzione esistenziale o propaganda politica," in *La propaganda politica nel basso Medioevo: atti del 38 convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 14-17 ottobre 2001* (Todi: Centro Italiano di Studi Sul Basso Medioevo, 2002), 241-260; Graham Loud, "The Missing Martyrs," for balanced accounts, Stürmer, *Friedrich II*, 470-479, and Whalen, *The Two Powers*, 96-122.

¹⁰² Björn Weiler, *Kingship, Rebellion and Political Culture: England and Germany c.1215-c.1250* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Henry (VII) is so called to distinguish him from Henry VII (1308-1313).

down amid Frederick's failure to return some of the papal lands and his aggression against the Milanese and other towns in Lombardy. Soon after Gregory excommunicated the emperor in 1239, he sent one of his notaries, Gregorio da Montelongo, as papal legate to Milan, and began to act against Frederick.

In letters to Henry III, king of England, and Richard, earl of Cornwall, Frederick claimed that Gregory was unworthy of the papal office. While a pope should endeavor to make peace, he argued that Gregory sent his legate to Lombardy to 'invade the lands of the empire.' The pope was not a peacemaker but a warlord intent on harming the empire.¹⁰³ In a letter sent to the Roman cardinals, in which he urged them to overturn Gregory's excommunication, Frederick claimed that he did not oppose the Roman Church but the person of the pope, who was unworthy of the office and who should be held accountable at a general council.¹⁰⁴ Though one can find antecedent events in earlier papal-imperial conflicts, according to Ullmann, Frederick's allegations turned upside down the "whole ancient papal system...a system which had always put into the foreground the office to which the personality of the individual pope was secondary."¹⁰⁵

Frederick's descriptions of Gregory's failures (examples of argument via paradiastole, by which trope the whole exchange could easily and profitably be analyzed) were instigated by Gregory's own assertion, in the letter *Ascendit de mari*, that Frederick was the antichrist and a

¹⁰³ The English Benedictine chronicler Matthew Paris recorded a copy of this letter in his *Chronica Majora*, fitting it into his own depiction of Gregory as an extortioner of the English church; unsurprisingly, Paris also called Frederick the "stupor mundi," wonder of the world: see *Historia Diplomatica Friderici Secundi sive Constitutiones, Privilegia, Mandata, Instrumenta quae supersunt istius imperatoris et filiorum ejus* (Paris: Plon, 1852) ed. J.L.A. Huillard-Bréholles, 5:2, 844-845.

¹⁰⁴ *Constitutiones et acta publica imperatorum et regum, Monumenta Germaniae Historia*, ed. Ludewicus Weiland (Hanover: Hahn, 1896) 2:289, nr.214.

¹⁰⁵ Ullmann, *Short History*, 258.

persecutor of the church, a lover of Islam rather than Christianity.¹⁰⁶ The primary reason the pope excommunicated Frederick was for persecuting the church in the kingdom of Sicily. Though James Powell has convincingly argued that there is little basis in this claim, it fed an evolving papal narrative in which the emperor was portrayed as a church despoiler, a closeted infidel, while the pope looked like a heroic sufferer, even a martyr.¹⁰⁷ This claim to primordial roleplaying—in which the pope reprised the role of the ancient Christian martyrs, possessing their charismatic authority, and in that role confronted the persecuting Roman emperor—was an effort to demonstrate the pope’s fidelity to his office and a response to Frederick’s allegations of Gregory’s unfitness for office. It represented, moreover, the use of exempla describing conduct for prescriptive purposes in political argumentation.

When the emperor surrounded Rome in 1240, the pope responded by reprising his role as ‘stand-in’ (vicar) for St Peter, and so for Christ himself. When Gregory held the heads of the apostles of Peter and Paul and processed through Rome, he visually reiterated the textual claims of papal authority. By processing through the ancient papal processional route to St Peter’s Basilica the pope reminded the Romans of not only centuries of papal rulership in the city, but of the fundamental papal claim to authority through the representation of the apostles. By holding the heads of the martyred saints, he reminded the Romans of the ancient Christian connection between holiness and martyrdom, and laid claim to the charismatic authority of one who would suffer martyrdom on behalf of the church. Underlying all this was an attempt to redescribe and reaffirm the pope as the representative of Christ through the analogical logic of exempla.

¹⁰⁶ Gregory IX, *Ascendit de mari bestia blasphemie plena nominibus*, in *Epistolae Saeculi XIII e regestis Pontificum Romanorum in Monuementa Germaniae Historia*, ed. Carolus Rodenberg, 1:646-654.

¹⁰⁷ James Powell, “Frederick II and the Church: A Revisionist View,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 48:4 (1963), 487-497.

However, the earliest evidence for this procession appears only in papal and imperial letters. This fact alone helps us to understand how the event existed primarily, for political argument at least, as an exemplum. It was meant, of course, to inspire action. Gregory thus sent one letter in which he described his procession to the Lombard cities, and with it attempted to urge them to consider their war against Frederick to be a crusade. This letter does not survive in the papal registers but in Cardinal Thomas of Capua's *Summa dictaminis*, which he compiled least before 1268, when he died.¹⁰⁸ Thomas's inclusion of the letter in his collection, which was meant to teach readers how to write letters, suggests that it was already seen as exemplifying a certain type of papal speech: this was the kind of letter to write in that kind of situation.

As we would expect, at least since Philippe Buc wrote about it in *The Dangers of Ritual*, a medieval description of a ritual was an inherently political speech act inseparable from its rhetorical uses.¹⁰⁹ Gregory's description of the procession was a strategic statement made in a political debate. He claimed, as we have already seen, the mantle of ancient papal practice in an effort to rally first the Romans and then the Lombards to fight a crusade on his behalf. It was an attempt to legitimize his actions by connecting them with the ancient practices of the popes, and carried with it the implication that Frederick was not his personal enemy but the public enemy of Christendom, personified by the pope in his official role. The procession became an exemplum that efficiently demonstrated the papal identification with Christ, not just in formal matters of succession but in the more important domain of behavioral consistency. It is obvious that contemporaries understood this. Frederick II attacked the validity of the procession in a letter

¹⁰⁸ The letter, *Attendite ad Petram*, was recorded by Thomas of Capua in his *Summa dictaminis*, ed. Matthias Thumser, Jakob Frohmann, *Die Briefsammlung des Thomas von Capua* MGH (2011), 1.64, pp. 47-48; edited also in Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia diplomatica* 5 p. 776-79, p. 778:

¹⁰⁹ Philippe Buc, *The Dangers of Ritual: Between Early Medieval Texts and Social Scientific Theory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

which he sent to the English king Henry III. There he asserted that Gregory was a frightened old man who put on only the apparel, rather than assuming the substance, of papal rulership; the procession convinced no one but a few children, widows, and old men. By defending himself, Frederick defended not only the empire but the dignity (*decus*) of all Christian kings and princes.¹¹⁰ According to Frederick and his publicists, the procession was theater emptied of spiritual import.

Hence the argument proceeded as exercises in the rhetorical trope of *paradiastole*, which constitutes redescription of key terms along positive and negative valences. Each contested description had the aim of shifting the status of the procession as an *exemplum*; moreover, by describing the event, one could describe the papal cause as a whole. The efficiency of this debate through redescription depended on the economy of using the representation of a single event as an *exemplum* that told of wider things than the event alone, a usage that worked not just on the level of drawing analogies with previous actions (i.e., Christ's suffering) but also on the level of using an event as if it were a part that stood (supposedly) for the whole.

3.2 The *Exemplum* in Papal Historiography

In the *Vita Gregorii IX* (Life of Gregory IX), the procession of 1240 appears as the pope's final triumph on earth. I here reprise some arguments I gave in the previous chapter so as to more clearly elucidate the method of argumentation in which the procession had meaning and significance as an *exemplum*. One may of course pass over these repetitions if desired; but they are significant in showing that the logic of *exempla* presupposed an undifferentiated past in which historical actions occurred, which validated the remarkable use of analogies (which is what *exempla* at bottom are), drawn from the past and directed toward the future, as if they were

¹¹⁰ Huillard-Bréholles, *Historia Diplomatica* 5/2, p. 845-6.

stronger than mere analogies. Hence descriptions of conduct could become prescriptive of future conduct. But this shift of 'is' to 'ought' occurred on a stronger foundation (apparently) than the term 'description' might at first suggest. Moreover, the elucidation of how the author of the *Life* used exemplary logic to teach his readers about the proper conduct of a pope helps us to understand how Jacopo made his own arguments about political conduct in the *Chronicle*, preparing the reader to better understand how Jacopo's historical descriptions and correlations might be well categorized as instances of political thought.

An anonymous author working in the papal curia wrote the *Life of Gregory IX* around 1240/1241. The author was privy to the letters produced in the papal curia and adapted them, sometimes word for word, into his narrative. In this way the text resembles the memorial and archival writings which became common in the papal curia in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.¹¹¹ These followed the tradition of papal biographical writing which began with the compilation of the *Liber pontificalis* in the fourth century. The authors of the *Liber pontificalis* wrote short notices of a pope's life and tenure, and emphasized his building record and the churches he consecrated. The tradition was reborn in the twelfth century.¹¹² The *Lives of the popes* functioned as narrative complements of these archival projects. As historical narratives

¹¹¹ The earliest manuscript of the *Life of Gregory IX*, *Biblioteca Riccardiana* 228 in Florence, survives with a copy of the *Liber Censuum*, which has been cited as an early work of 'rationalizing' papal finances and lordship. Spataro proposes that this manuscript was compiled during the pontificate of Alexander IV: *Velud Fulgor Meridianus: La 'Vita' di Papa Gregorio IX: Edizione, traduzione e commento*, 23-24.

¹¹² See the edition of David R. Gress-Wright, *The Gesta Innocentii. Text, Introduction and Commentary* (PhD Dissertation: Bryn Mawr, 1981); James M. Powell (tr), *The Deeds of Innocent III by an Anonymous Author* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of American Press, 2004); Brenda Bolton, "Too Important to Neglect: The *Gesta Innocentii PP. III.*" in *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to John Taylor*, ed. Ian W. Wood, Graham Loud (London: Hambledon Press, 1991), 87-99. On thirteenth-century papal biographical writing in general see Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, *Il Trono di Pietro: L'universalità del papato da Alessandro III a Bonifacio VIII* (Rome: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1996), 80-82; Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "La storiografia pontificia del secolo XIII. Prospettive di ricerca," *Römische Historische Mitteilungen* 18 (1976), 45-54; Agostino Paravicini Bagliani, "Le biografie papali duecentesche e il senso della storia," in *Il senso della storia nella cultura medievale italiana (1100-1300)*, (Pistoia: Viella, 1995) 155-173.

they furnished exempla of past papal conduct which should be imitated, to be stored in the papal archives, as the author of the *Life of Gregory IX* wrote: “The deeds of venerable pontiffs should be stored in the archives for the faithful, so that they can, by reading them, inspire their faithful zeal, and so that posterity can attain from these customs (mores) of their predecessors better examples for life.”¹¹³ This life of a pope acted as a manual for papal conduct and helped to maintain the illusion of the eternal continuity of the papal office in times of rapid change.

This argument worked according to a logic of exemplarity. Expressed economically, each papal life constituted an exemplum of a papal life. Each life also stood for the whole of papal history according to a logic of synecdoche. I make this latter inference based on the fact that the point of the lives was to demonstrate the continuity of formal office and behavioral customs from the beginning of the papacy through to the life of whatever pope the author happened to describe. Each pope was pope insofar as he held the papal office and acted as a pope. A process of historical levelling thereby occurred: to create the category of ‘proper papal activity’ (and no pope came under criticism in these texts) was by necessity to make each papal life a part of the larger whole of papal history, a part that stood for the whole.

The whole edifice of the *Life of Gregory IX* rests on a fundamental identification of Gregory with Christ, and Frederick with Satan. Gregory and Frederick thereby become exempla by themselves acting out repetitions of the greatest Christian exempla. The first order of Gregory’s business is to solemnly excommunicate Frederick II for failing to observe his oath of embarking on a crusade. Immediately thereafter, it is written that Gregory is interrupted by a group of Judas-like Roman nobles who were turned against him by Frederick’s money and

¹¹³ *Life*, ed. Spataro, 78: Venerabilium gesta Pontificum archivis sunt mandanda fidelibus, ut ea digesta per ordinem lectorum studia in vota gratiarum exerceant et capiat de priorum moribus secutura posteritas vite felicioris exemplum.

promises.¹¹⁴ While he preached on the Resurrection of the Savior, the noblemen advanced into the Basilica of St Peter and attacked with threats the pope “who celebrated with accustomed devotion over the corpse of the apostle.”¹¹⁵ The vicar of Christ here imitated Christ and invites martyrdom, though his ‘earthly power’ dissuaded the persecutors.¹¹⁶

This sets the stage for the author’s depiction of the procession of 1240. Here, with another near-enactment of Christ’s passion, the author’s argument comes to fruition. This final claim to universal papal sovereignty fittingly appears when the author describes Gregory as at his weakest, his plans for a church council foiled by Frederick’s capture of the Genoese vessels, and Rome surrounded by Frederick—in other words, at his most Christ-like. Exactly then “the wickedness of the raging Satan, openly armed against the spouse of Christ,” moved a “grave discord” in the City, in which all people, of both sexes and all statuses, “conceived a terrible error”—they proposed to become parricides and turn against their mother, the church. Rather than suffer crucifixion, Gregory now visually reenacts the textual claims of the papal office, when “conferring on himself the divine defenses, [he] carried the wood of the life-giving Cross and the reverend heads of Peter and Paul...to the basilica of the Prince of the Apostles, accompanied by the remaining cardinals and priests, as honor required.”¹¹⁷ An enraged Frederick meanwhile martyred a priest.¹¹⁸

Gregory becomes an exemplum of Christian conduct within the text and as such convinces the Romans to become crusaders and endure Frederick’s persecutions. By reminding them of Christ (the cross) and the Apostles (the heads of Peter and Paul), he

¹¹⁴ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 84.

¹¹⁵ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 84.

¹¹⁶ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 84.

¹¹⁷ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 142. This language is nearly the same as that of *Attendite ad Petram*.

¹¹⁸ *Life of Gregory IX*, ed. Spataro, 142.

brought to bear his special quality as a mirror of the divine on earth. The logic of the persecution then leads to the account of the martyrdom of the unknown priest. Through these devices the author demonstrates the validity of the papal claim to divine representation, and by its power, the now nameless Frederick is forced to depart Rome and leave for Apulia. This inversion of the crucifixion narrative—Gregory does not suffer martyrdom but instead puts his persecutor to flight—only intensifies the papal claim to a quasi-identity with Christ by drawing attention to their differences. The exemplum works in conjunction with other exempla.

The logic of example and resemblance is paramount here if we are to understand how this argument proceeds. The papal claim to universal sovereignty is made and then sustained through the deployment of exempla and resemblances drawn from earlier Christian and papal history, which are then shown to recur in Gregory and his pontificate. As a repetition of Christ, the pope is universal ruler because of, not despite, his temporal weakness. His pontificate thus appears as another episode in the history of popes persecuted by imperial tyrants, part of the continuous history of Christian persecution initiated by Christ.

This section has been necessary, if somewhat repetitious (as I mentioned), because the argument of the *vita* advances according to a logic of exemplarity, which I am briefly investigating in this latter part of the chapter so as to better understand Jacopo's argumentative method. In the *Life of Gregory IX*, descriptions of papal conduct (exempla) become prescriptive of future conduct. For the author, this is how history or the recapitulation of described past events held political lessons for posterity. To be instructive in this way the reader had to accept that the past was essentially

undifferentiated, so that past actions that were good and effective would also be good and effective in the future, because events and situations would (essentially) repeat. To return to Jacopo, as I do in the next section, we must recognize that as much as he learned his political theory and distinctions from Aristotle, he retained this sense of the instructional quality of the past, which depended on the belief in the recurrence of events and situations according to the logic of exempla. His effort to teach his readers how to restore order in Genoa partially relied on using examples in political debate, turning history into political theory.

3.3 Jacopo and the Procession

We see argument via exempla everywhere in Jacopo's Chronicle, but in some places it is combined with an associative logic of correlation which serves to connect Genoese and papal history. This was accomplished by exhortations contained in historical descriptions of exempla of Genoese behavior. Clearly, for Jacopo accounts of Genoese history were not just descriptions of past behavior but were prescriptions for future action. This is especially the case given that the events of 1240 occurred during Genoa's 'state of perfection', and thus inhabited a historically and politically undifferentiated space from that of Genoa in the 1290s.¹¹⁹ In this concluding section I trace how Jacopo

¹¹⁹ Moreover, it could well be said that the logic of exempla is a species of reasoning by synecdoche, or taking a part to stand for the whole. Understood this way, one *exemplum* of good political conduct stands for the whole range of legitimate political conduct that could be considered legitimate. This goes for the case of Gregory IX's procession, which shows not only how to respond to a persecuting emperor in a specific instance, but describes and so prescribes the proper activities of popes for all time in all situations by defining, through the description of the proper activity of the pope in a moment of duress, the proper activities of the papal office in its entirety. By doing so it also describes the justifications and reasons behind those activities. The same process is at work in Jacopo's thought, where a few instances of, for example, Genoese-papal collaboration—and even just instances of correlation of such Genoese and papal behavior—could be taken to describe the proper activities of the Genoese citizenry generally. Of course such descriptions—to take a single *exemplum* or even a series of linked *exempla* as a description of a range of proper conduct—should not be taken to be mutually exclusive of other descriptions. Many *exempla* could be described and deployed, all of which could include different actions, and different understandings of those actions and the justifications behind them.

linked papal and Genoese exempla so as to encourage certain behaviors that would be conducive to the restoration of political order. Then, to observe Jacopo's difference with other Genoese authors, I trace how Jacopo's account of the Genoese-papal relationship differs from their accounts.

The reader must recall that Jacopo reframed Genoese history as a rise to neo-Roman greatness in the service of the papacy, claiming that distinctions between Genoese friend and Genoese foe were determined by the popes. He did by arguing that the defense of the popes was rooted in the 'refoundations' of Genoa when it became Christian and then became the seat of an archbishopric in 1133—the event which marked Genoa's rise to its "state of perfection." One should interpret the inclusion of the procession of Gregory IX in Rome in 1240 according to this understanding of Jacopo's argument. His account of the procession occurs in his description of the episcopate of the fifth archbishop of Genoa, Giovanni da Cogorno, whom Jacopo immediately connected with Gregory IX. Jacopo mentioned how Pope Gregory IX so honored Archbishop Giovanni and the commune of Genoa that Gregory IX granted him consecration to his office within three days of Giovanni requesting it.¹²⁰ Just before this, as Jacopo related, Frederick II had declared the Genoese rebels against the empire because they had disregarded his order not to elect a certain man as their podesta.¹²¹ Then in 1240, a pro-imperial Genoese faction left the city while Frederick II chose one of their number, Ansaldo de Mari, as his chief admiral. Gregory IX summoned a church council in Rome "against Frederick, the persecutor of the church," who in response sent a Pisan fleet to capture the Genoese fleet

¹²⁰ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 379.

¹²¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 377-378. Jacopo emphasizes how the Genoese tried to retain Frederick's favor by sending ambassadors to his court, but to no avail.

bearing prelates to Rome for the council.¹²² When the Genoese heard this, they immediately sent a fleet of galleys to search for their enemies; meanwhile

Deinde dictus Fredericus Romanos peccunia [sic] sic corrupit, quod ipsi papam de Urbe volebant expellere et imperatorem introducere. Quod cernens papa capita Apostolorum in gremio cepit et nudis pedibus cum cardinalibus ea ad ecclesiam Sancti Petri apostoli deportavit et illuc populum Romanum convocavit. Ibique capita Apostolorum nuda populo cum lacrimis multis ostendens, in tantum eos verbis ferventibus animavit, quod fere omnes contra imperatorem cruce signati fuerunt.¹²³

Frederick so corrupted the Romans with money that they sought to expel the pope from the City and bring in the emperor. Learning of this, the pope gathered the heads of the apostles to his bosom; in bare feet and accompanied by the cardinals he carried them to the church of Saint Peter the Apostles, where he convened the Roman people. There he displayed the uncovered heads of the apostles to the people with many tears, so rousing them with his fervent words that almost all had themselves marked with the cross against the emperor.¹²⁴

When the emperor approached Rome, he heard of the events and retreated. But in Genoa, the imperial and Pisan galleys came often to the Riviera and scoured the shore, until the Genoese armed ninety-six galleys and with them chased the Pisans away.¹²⁵

This description of separate papal and Genoese events becomes an argument of connection through a process of correlation. Jacopo implicitly suggested that these accidents of parallel occurrence were not accidents at all. Both pope and Genoa receive defeats from the Pisans and the emperor, and both respond successfully: Gregory through a procession, the Genoese through naval actions. By tackling their enemies in an adverse time they achieve their shared greatness.

¹²² Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 380; tr. Beneš 236.

¹²³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 380-381.

¹²⁴ Tr. Beneš, 236.

¹²⁵ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 381.

Thus, Jacopo portrayed the city of Genoa as the partner of the popes, making the pattern of its history match that of papal history. He made Genoa into a microcosm of Christendom, labelled its friends the friends of the popes, its enemies their enemies. In this way he showed the Genoese as acting under the umbrella of the papacy. Even in his discussion of the 1290s, when Genoa, wracked by internal conflict, had a great war with the Venetians, Jacopo stated that Pope Boniface VIII favored the Genoese in his attempt to make peace between the two Italian maritime cities.¹²⁶

The lesson was rather clear. The pursuit of Genoese stability, which consisted of external aggression and internal unity, would be at least partly vouchsafed by listening to the popes and fighting their enemies—who happened to also be Genoa’s enemies—just as it had been vouchsafed in the past. If the argument is not quite consistent—Jacopo cannot really show that fighting for the popes will always be in the self-interest of the Genoese (he must rather accept it as an article of faith), nor can he show that this course of action was a viable solution in the 1290s—this is of no concern for our purposes. That it is made, in his historical narrative, by sheer correlation, through showing that Genoese victories came at the same time as their ally the pope prevailed, is the point; as is the fact that Jacopo uses the description of an event in the past to prescribe future conduct by turning events into instructive exempla. Exhortation through description, not straightforward pronouncement, was (usually) the mode of Jacopo’s political argument.

One might think that Jacopo followed Genoese tradition by interweaving these narratives. In fact, he did not, and a discussion of other Genoese sources that mention

¹²⁶ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 102-3; as archbishop Jacopo actually went to the Roman curia to negotiate the peace, as he himself states.

these events will show how Jacopo inventively reinterpreted Genoese history. Jacopo's main source, the official Genoese Annals, reflect the Genoa-first perspective of the city's rulers and did not mention Gregory's procession. The authors of the Annals explained that the Genoese disobeyed Frederick II because he acted like a tyrant—he did not support Genoese territorial aggrandizement, and tried to interfere in 'internal' Genoese political activities.¹²⁷ Because Frederick did not recognize Genoese claims to Sardinia (instead making his son the King of Sardinia), the communal leaders made an alliance with Pope Gregory and the Venetians against him.¹²⁸ The authors of the annals noted that the papal legate Gregorio da Romagna proclaimed a crusade against Frederick in Genoa.¹²⁹ The Annals do not contain a reference to Gregory's procession.¹³⁰ They do report that the citizens heard of Gregory IX's death, and that the news was greeted with public lamenting and renewed determination to destroy the enemy fleet, but this is understood as the death of a great ally and nothing more.¹³¹

In fact, Jacopo's stance on the empire differs drastically from the narrative contained in the Genoese Annals as a whole. While he described an eternal antipathy between Genoa and the emperors, the various authors of the Annals suggested that Genoa

¹²⁷ Frederick proclaimed that any city which had as its podestà a Lombard from a city in rebellion against him should count itself as a rebel against him. Genoa in 1231 had already chosen for its podestà a Milanese. The commune's envoys argued with Frederick at a court in Ravenna, claiming that the communal citizens could not break their oath to obey the new podestà, and that breaking such an oath would harm the commune's honor. When Frederick refused, the commune defended itself against what the Genoese considered his 'invasions': *Annali Genovesi de Caffaro e de'suoi Continuatori dal MXCIX al MCCXCII.*, ed. Luigi Tommaso Belgrano (Genoa: Tipographia Del R. Istituto sordomuti, 1929), 3:58-62.

¹²⁸ *Annali Genovesi* 3:88-91

¹²⁹ *Annali Genovesi* 3:98.

¹³⁰ The citizens worked day and night, by candlelight, to fit out new galleys to replenish the fleet, even as they warded off conspiracies from Genoese friendly with Frederick, and found letters written by Frederick which he secretly sent to his supporters: *Annali Genovesi* 3:101-120.

¹³¹ *Annali Genovesi* 3:120, "Ipso quidem mense augusti dominus Christianorum et pater beatissimus summus pontifex dominus Gregorius diem clausit extremum. quo audito, dolor et angustia fuerunt in civitate Ianue et extra. et licet dolore perfusi, fortitudine tamen et vigore Ianuenses roborati, ad destruendas galeas inimicorum viriliter..."

rebelled against the emperor, not the empire. For them, the empire remained the political association in which Genoa must operate and through which legitimate authority was expressed. Even Caffaro had recounted how Genoese envoys to Frederick Barbarossa in the 1150s argued that the commune should not be required to pay tribute (*fodrum*) to the emperor, because the commune fulfilled essential tasks for the preservation of the empire by defending the ‘imperial’ coastline from attacks by Saracens.¹³² The Genoese Annals could support the conclusion that Genoa was an exemplary imperial city. Its citizens were more devoted to the empire than were many emperors. Jacopo avoided mentioning such an outright expression of loyalty to the empire when he said of this episode that Frederick Barbarossa acted ungraciously to the Genoese envoys.¹³³

Jacopo’s difference from prevailing Genoese opinion on the empire is confirmed by Urso the Notary, who wrote an epic poem celebrating Genoese victories over Pisa in 1251. Urso presented the struggle as against a “second Nero” who tyrannized the empire.¹³⁴ Hence, at least in the view of some elite Genoese, the Genoese fought to restore the empire against an emperor who had corrupted it. The request of 1312 that Emperor Henry VII directly govern the city, though strange if one only read Jacopo’s Chronicle, is not unexpected in light of the other sources of Genoese history and political thought. But writing in the 1290s, when an imperial presence in Italy was a distant dream even for vociferous imperialists, Jacopo placed the locus of Genoese identity and ultimate

¹³² Caffaro, *Annali Genovesi de Caffaro E de’suoi Continuiatori, dal MXCIX al MCCXCII* nuova ed., Luigi Tommaso Belgrano (Genoa: Tip. Del R. Istituto sordo-muti, 1929), 1:49.

¹³³ Beneš, 89. Monleone, 375.

¹³⁴ Urso Notarius, *Historia de victoria quam Ianuenses habuerunt contra gentes ab imperatore missas ut subderent sibi Ianuam urbem et loca ipsius*, in *Historiae Patriae Monumenta* 2:6 (Turin: Regia Tipographia, 1853), 1745; in the same breath Urso describes the Pisans as “gens oblita Dei,” a people forgetful of God; the dualism of Pisans and emperors, Genoese and the popes, is here placed under the umbrella of the empire.

authority in Genoa with the popes, not the emperor, and in behaviors internal to the Genoese people.

Nor is Jacopo's pro-papal stance found in the official Genoese Annals, his primary source for much of the Chronicle. While the annalists avoided criticizing popes even when they excommunicated Genoa in the later thirteenth-century, Jacopo purified the relationship in a way that the authors of the Annals did not. Other sources demonstrated that Genoese-papal relations were characterized by the give and take of service, reward, and bribery; Caffaro deposited a memorandum in the communal archives in which he described the many bribes he gave to curial officials in the 1140s. The delegation succeeded in turning the pope against the Pisans.¹³⁵ Give and take was the rule. The many privileges given by Innocent IV to reward the commune's loyalty to the church were inscribed in the commune's Book of Laws (*Liber iurium*).¹³⁶ On the papal side, the registers of Gregory IX meticulously record the financial deals he made to fund the ships which Genoa loaned to the prelates coming to his council in 1240.¹³⁷ The Genoese knew how money helped at the papal curia, and the popes knew that the Genoese would help them, if they were paid and rewarded for their loyalty.

But Jacopo, who had been to the papal curia multiple times, idealized the papal curia, at least in the Chronicle. The relationship between Genoa and the papacy appears

¹³⁵ Caffaro, *Annali Genovesi de Caffaro*, ed. Belgrano, 1:20-21.

¹³⁶ See Epstein, *Genoa*, 128, and *Historiae Patriae Monumenta: Liber Iurium Reipublicae Ianuensis* (Turin: Carolus Albertus, 1854) nos. DCCXCV-DCCCIX.

¹³⁷ Gregory IX, *Epistolae Saeculum XIII*, ed. Rodenburg: no. 784; no. 785; no. 791, recording the agreement between the papal legate Gregorio da Romania and Henry, syndic of Genoa, and the councilors of Genoa, as to the number and type of ships to be provided for the travelling prelates and the amount of payment expected; no. 792; no. 793; no. 805; no. 806; no. 808; no. 812 (news about the capture of the prelates from Spanish bishops); no. 813, in which the podesta of Genoa announces the bad news to Gregory and promises that the Genoese will fight as hard as ever against the 'tyrant' Frederick II.

in his Chronicle as one between perfect (and helpfully distant) ruler and loyal subject.¹³⁸ Moreover, this idealized relationship was informed by personal experience. Although it is possible that Jacopo learned of the procession by reading the so-called Ghibelline Annals of Piacenza, it is just as likely that he had learned of it at the papal curia.¹³⁹ As head of the Dominicans in Lombardy, Jacopo was in the papal curia when the last Hohenstaufen claimant to Sicily, Conradin, invaded Italy in 1268, and he heard Clement IV himself announce the news and predict Conradin's failure.¹⁴⁰ Later he came to the papal court of Boniface VIII as an emissary of Genoa when Boniface negotiated a peace between Venice and Genoa in the 1290s.¹⁴¹ The pope failed to make peace—though he imposed a truce between the two cities—and Jacopo died as the Genoese fleet left to make war on Venice.¹⁴² Boniface VIII, keenly aware of earlier papal precedent, reminded a group of Romans of Gregory's famed procession on at least one occasion, and it seems likely that Jacopo learned of the procession in this atmosphere of charged erudition. It seemed to Jacopo that Gregory's procession in 1240 exemplified the processes of papal, Genoese and Christian history. It was a reminder that the papacy reflected the divine and in some ways was even more than its reflection. In late 1294 when Jacopo himself, as Archbishop of Genoa, processed through the streets of the city to celebrate and solidify the peace between the Rampini and Mascherati factions—an act which rhymed with Gregory's 1240 procession—he exemplified the way one should read exemplary histories: learning to imitate that which was a praiseworthy exemplum.¹⁴³

¹³⁸ Epstein, *The Talents of Jacopo da Varagine*, 196-197.

¹³⁹ See the description of the procession in these annals: British Library Harley MS 3678, 26v.

¹⁴⁰ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 495-6; engl. tr. Beneš, 242.

¹⁴¹ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 377-384; engl. tr. Beneš, 92-99.

¹⁴² Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 384; engl. tr. Beneš, 99.

¹⁴³ Jacopo da Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone, 502; engl. tr. Beneš, 252.

Part 4: Conclusion

In this chapter I have reconstructed and interpreted the manner by which Jacopo tried to teach his readers to resist historical change. I have focused on this issue because this is how Jacopo thought about how to restore order. His argument in the Chronicle, as in the Legend, depended on the inculcation of behaviors and attitudes rather than formal institutions. In his Chronicle he exhorted his readers to continue the practices that had propelled Genoa's rise to a "state of perfection," from which deviation would be corruption. He alleged that the unified Genoese love for the Church, the popes, and God had given the Genoese citizens the unity necessary for (in Sallust's words) small things to increase into big ones. With this argument via description, made in part through the strategic use of exempla, he aimed to inspire social harmony and restore political order. His political instruction consisted, finally in this: the Genoese should fight not each other but their enemies.

In making this argument Jacopo combined elements of republicanism and papalism. In the next chapter, I discuss republican political thinkers who strictly relegated the papacy to the sidelines of their ideal polities; for them, the restoration or maintenance of political order could and should bypass the papacy entirely. But even for such republicans, the legitimization of particular republics, and their political stabilization, could be accomplished in sundry and diverse ways.

Chapter Three. The Papacy on the Sidelines: Republicanism and Fortune in Rolandino of Padua and Brunetto Latini

As I discussed in the last chapter, Jacopo da Varagine thought to encourage political stability through a papal alliance. The Genoese would ideally stop fighting each other and fight their enemies—and the enemies of the popes. The authors I discuss in this chapter did not share Jacopo’s rosy picture of papal leadership. But they knew from experience that the future might be as disordered as was the past. Their ideal polities were republics able to withstand that disorder without recourse to the superior authority of the papacy. The central problem for them was chance, which they called *fortuna*; by controlling *fortuna*, they thought their polities could remain stable and so maintain political order.¹ Their visions of political order are contained in and epitomized by the single, particular, individual city. For Rolandino of Padua (1200-1276), a Paduan chronicler and notary who studied under the noted grammarian Boncompagno da Signa in Bologna, the primary author under discussion in this chapter, and for Brunetto Latini (1220-1294), whom I also discuss, the independent city republic could withstand *fortuna* without the aid of the papacy.

The independent position of the authors whom I discuss in this chapter would be inherited or emulated in later political thought by Renaissance authors like Leonardo Bruni.² Having distanced themselves from superior authorities, including the papacy, Rolandino and Latini had to show that their ideal polities could be stable without the assistance (external or internal) of the popes. In a certain sense, the view compassed in this chapter is the logical

¹ Intellectually speaking, their efforts to show how their polities could withstand and control fortune is the most interesting part of their thought. With it they bypassed any appeal to higher authorities like the pope or the nonexistent (for they wrote in the early 1260s) emperor. I discuss their strategies of mitigation in the final two parts of this chapter, but they should be regarded as its central intellectual focus.

² In his *History of the Florentine People*, Bruni argued that the papacy made internal trouble for independent republics, and that it should be ignored relative to internal problems: I briefly discuss this in the Conclusion.

termination of the dissertation; moreover, it demonstrates the usefulness of organizing disparate visions of politics according to the role of the papacy in them, because by observing the lacuna left by the absence of the papacy, we see how hard both Rolandino and Latini worked to show that their cities could be stable without that external authority. I have chosen not to finish the dissertation with this chapter, however, so as not to give rise to the illusion that their positions are characteristic of the thirteenth century. To do otherwise would be to indulge in a teleological account of the history of political thought that would amount to little more than a just-so story. In the next chapter I return to an author who assumed the centrality of the papacy in questions of political order throughout Italy.

Inasmuch as the papacy is mentioned in the texts under discussion in this chapter, it is as a destabilizing factor in republican politics. I begin with this instability of papal leadership as described by Rolandino of Padua. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss thirteenth-century republicanism more generally. The third and fourth parts of the chapter are explorations of how the Florentine Chancellor Brunetto Latini and Rolandino wrote about how to restrain the chaos of history (*fortuna*) without need for higher authorities like the papacy or the empire. These authors had no time for Jacopo's argument that internal peace within a republic could be protected or encouraged by the salubrious but far-away authority of the popes. Turning their eyes from papal Rome, they looked elsewhere, devising their own solutions to the problem of political order.

Part 1: How Rolandino of Padua Discredited the Papacy

1.1 Padua, Second Rome: Rolandino as a Political Thinker

Somewhat uniquely, the Paduan chronicler Rolandino's concern was not the loss of political order per se. It was the loss of a certain kind of political order. His discussion of political

phenomena focuses on the ills of tyranny and how good political order could be reestablished. For him, the image of tyranny was Ezzelino III da Romano (1194-1261), ally and subordinate of the Emperor Frederick II, who ruled the cities of the Trevisan March (the region of Italy just inland from Venice) in the middle decades of the thirteenth century.³ While some contemporaries praised the Roman Church for vanquishing him, Rolandino thought his history of Ezzelino's tyranny demonstrated the rightful independence of the city of Padua, freed from external authorities, including the papacy.

Rolandino's interpretation of these events was not the only one. In 1256 the crusading papal legate Filippo of Ferrara captured Padua from Ezzelino.⁴ The event became an occasion for chroniclers to offer differing interpretations of history and politics. For instance, Salimbene de Adam enthusiastically described how the crusaders captured Padua in his *Cronica* (1280-1288).⁵ For Salimbene—who was a Franciscan—the taking of Padua marked the success of a Roman Church, which acted for righteousness in conjunction with the Franciscan Order, and derived its

³ Remy Simonetti, "Ezzelino III da Romano," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 88 (2017). Ezzelino prefigured the so-called *signore* who in the fourteenth century became the rulers of many Italian cities. Soon after his death he became a mythical figure. Giuseppe Bacchichetto, *Il Cavaliere che voleva farsi re: dal Medioevo profondo la saga degli Ezzelini* (Venice: Marsilio, 2012); *Nuovi Studi Ezzeliniani* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1992); *Studi ezzeliniani: Convegno su gli Ezzelini nella storia e nella poesia (1960: Bassano del Grappa)* (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo, 1963). Girolamo Arnaldi, "Il Mito di Ezzelino," in *Nuovi Studi Ezzelini*. The Paduan humanist of the early fourteenth century, Albertino Mussato, described Ezzelino as the literal son of the devil who tormented the people of Padua with his tyrannic ways, motivated by a satanic appetite for blood. Albertino Mussato, *Ecerinis* ed. and trans. Gary R. Grund, *Humanist Tragedies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2-47. David Lummus, *The City of Poetry: Imagining the Civic Role of the Poet in Fourteenth-Century Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), chapter 1. In the nineteenth century the British author Dillon-Lee wrote an epic poem about Ezzelino's tyranny: Dillon-Lee. Chronicle descriptions of Ezzelino have garnered a fairly significant scholarly literature; see Gherardo Ortalli, "Fra leggenda e realtà: la lunga vita del mito ezzeliniano," in *Ezzelino: Signori della Marca nel Cuore dell'Impero di Federico II*, ed. Bartelli and Maradella, 215-219; idem, "Ezzelino: Genesi e sviluppi di un mito," in *Nuovi Studi Ezzeliniani*, ed. Cracco 2:609-25; Marino Zabbia, "Il Mito di Ezzelino. Le cronache," in *Ezzelini: Signori della Marca*, 227-231; Louis Green, "The Image of Tyranny in Early Fourteenth-Century Italian Historical Writing," *Renaissance Studies* 7 (1993) 335-51; Gherardo Ortalli, "Ezzelino Crudelissimo Tiranno: Genesi e Sviluppo di un mito," *La Ricerca Folklorica* 25 (1992), 89-98; Girolamo Arnaldi, "Il mito di Ezzelino da Rolandino al Mussato," in *La Ricascita della Tragedia nell'Italia dell'umanesimo* (Milan, 1980), 85-97.

⁴ For an account see Norman Housley, *The Italian Crusades: The Papal-Angevin Alliance and the Crusades against Christian Lay Powers, 1254-1343* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁵ For more on Salimbene, see chapter four below.

authority directly from God. He therefore linked Ezzelino's subsequent death to these events in 1256 and attributed it all to God acting through men.⁶ He thought the outcome was generated by the confluence of crusading forces and the persuasive authority of the papal legate and the Franciscans.

But for Rolandino of Padua, writing in the early 1260s for Paduans who suffered the pillaging of their homes by the papal legate's soldiers, the legate's leadership was flawed. In contrast to Salimbene, Rolandino did not attribute the recovery of Padua's customary form of government to the popes or their ministers. Instead, he gave most of the credit to Paduan citizens. Near the end of his twelve-book epic *Chronicle*, Rolandino made a remarkable comparison between his own Paduan commune and Rome itself.

Bene providit itaque divina benignitas tunc temporis, cum prope malorum vindicta erat, in exhibendo rectorem talem civitati catholice paduane, que Romam ipsam est imitata in multis, in fide videlicet et in illatis sibi multis iniuriis per diversa genera tyrampnie. Numquid Padua condam est ab Antenore constituta, egressa civitatem troianam eadem hora cum Enea, conditore romano? Numquid passa est multas tribulaciones et werra [sic], ut ipsa Roma? Numquid in suis civibus est offensa crudeliter, turribus et palaciis, domibus et decoribus suis dirutis et prostratis? Nempe, si michi parcat romana Curia [sic], iam Padua dici potest quasi secunda Roma....⁷

The divine kindness showed, in a moment when the punishment of evil was near...that this city imitated Rome herself in many ways, namely in faith and in the injuries she suffered through many kinds of tyranny. Was it not the case that Padua was founded by Antenore, who fled the Trojan city at the same time as Aeneas, the founder of Rome? Had she not suffered as many wars and tribulations as had Rome? Had not her citizens suffered cruelly, after her turrets, palaces, houses and decorations were destroyed and torn down? Indeed—begging pardon of the Roman Curia—it may be said that Padua is as a second Rome...

⁶ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 559. The statement follows Salimbene's note that Ezzelino did not return to God before his death, the implication being that he would suffer eternally: *Verumtamen in morte Albricus optime fuit contritus. Icilinus vero nunquam est reversus ad Deum, ut verbum Domini impleretur quia unus assumetur, et alter relinquetur, Mat. 24. In quo magna Dei misericordia est ostensa, dum talem hominem etiam in morte suscepit.* Cf. his judgment on God's killing of Frederick II, *Cronica*, 365. For bibliography on Salimbene see chapter four.

⁷ Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, xii.1, 522-524; all translations of Rolandino are my own, unless otherwise noted.

By dint of its suffering Padua had become a *secunda Roma*, with all that entailed for its relationship to external authorities. As I will argue throughout this chapter, Rolandino showed his readers that Padua would remain free if and only if the Paduan *populus* remained united to the common good and elected its rulers according to reason (*ratio*) and justice (*iusticia*).⁸

The comparison with Rome tells us something of Rolandino's aspirations for his *Chronicle* as a document of political thought and its relationship to the burgeoning Paduan interest in antiquity. In 1275 the body of a male warrior was disinterred in Padua and identified by the pre-humanist poet Lovato di Lovati as Antenor, the mythic Trojan founder of Padua. According to Ronald Witt, the body reflected "the widespread awareness in the city of an ineffable link between themselves as Paduans and an undifferentiated ancient world."⁹ Rolandino's analogy between Padua and Rome did something to affirm that "ineffable link." Albertino Mussato based his neo-Roman tragedy, the *Ecerinis* (the *Ezzelinead*), on Rolandino's *Chronicle*.¹⁰ In the 1340s the Paduan annalist Giovanni de Cortusiis referred to Rolandino's *Chronicle* as an exemplum of why tyranny must be avoided.¹¹ Ancient history, neo-Roman concepts of public utility, and Paduan history were combined in the *Chronicle* and continued to seep into Paduan culture through it.¹² Thus, Rolandino stated in the *Chronicle* that the text was

⁸ How could the papacy fit into this biconditional statement? It could not; indeed, Rolandino thoroughly diminished the authority and the efficacy of the papacy in his account of how the Paduan *respublica* was restored after Ezzelino's rule, as I discuss below.

⁹ Witt, *The Two Latin Cultures*, 463.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Guglielmo de Cortusiis, *Chronica de novitatibus Padue et Lombardie* (Bologna: N. Zanichelli, 1941), ed. Beniamino Pagnin, 1.7, p. 9: *Licet de gestis illorum de Romano scribatur plenius in chronica Rolandini, tamen placuit aliquam facere mentionem in exemplum quod pravum dominium sit vitandum, et ad evidentiam infrascriptarum novitatum, que post adventum imperatoris Henrici meo tempore occurrerunt.*

¹² Rolandino's *Chronicle* resembles ancient Roman literature. Was this just for cosmetic purposes? As Rolandino stated in his preface, he chose to write his history in Latin rather than the vernacular because the erudite would find

publicly read and “authenticated”, much like other official documents. The Chronicle can very well be understood as the public, neo-Roman history of the restored Paduan commune.¹³

Moreover, Rolandino’s history doubled as a political instruction for republicans beyond Padua (at least in aspiration). The author of the prologue to the earliest extant manuscript of the Chronicle (from 1272) stated that the history provided an exemplum of the restoration of liberty to a civitas which had been under the rule of a tyrant, an exemplum meant not only for the people of Padua but for all Italians.¹⁴ This suggests that the Chronicle was already, ten years after its composition, read as a theoretical analysis of the life cycle of a city and the threat to the political life.¹⁵ Rolandino himself described his history of Ezzelino’s tyranny as a monicio, or admonition, for citizens of all cities, who on reading it would become so frightened of tyranny that “in every way [they would] defend liberty even unto death.”¹⁶ For Rolandino, the loss of liberty and the

Latin more pleasing than the vernacular (Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 8). It seems, however, that the choice was more important than that statement would suggest. In fact Rolandino thought about politics by means of ancient Roman concepts of community. When he explained how he started writing the *Chronicle* he mentioned two essentially Roman ideas: the ‘way of the ancestors,’ *mos maiorum*, and the ‘fatherland,’ *patria*. Hence he told how his father gave him his notes on history and enjoined him to continue them (thus he followed the *mos maiorum*), but Rolandino wrote that he was also motivated to help his *patria*: “I propose to note the memorable deeds of this March so that they may be useful documents to my *patria*, God willing,” (ibid., 8: Et ego propono pocius facta huius Marchie memoranda notare, ut sint favente Domino huic mee patrie, cui teneor, utilia documenta.) A Roman sense of public work, ancestral custom, and honor for the *patria* suffuses the *Chronicle*.

¹³ Ibid., 570: Qui ad hoc specialiter congregare predictum librum et opus sive cronicam sua magistrali auctoritate laudaverunt, approbaverunt et autenticaverunt solempniter in claustro sancti Urbani in Padua, corrente anno Domini millesimo ducentesimo sexagesimo secundo, indictione quinta, die tercia decima intrante mense aprilis. “These gathered men praised, approved, and authenticated this book and work or chronicle by their magistral authority in the cloister of Saint Urban in Padua, in the year 1262, in the fifth indiction, the 13th of April.” The important word here is *autenticare*. The assembled learned men are described as approving and sealing Rolandino’s *Chronicle*, thus making it into the notarized, legal, and official document of the Paduan commune. See G. Arnaldi, “‘Cronache con documenti, cronache ‘autentiche’ e pubblica storiografia,” in *Le scritture del comune: amministrazione e memoria delle città dei secoli xii e xiii*, ed. G. Albini: 121-140, and Arnaldi’s study of Rolandino as notary-historian in *Studi sui cronistic della Marca Trevigiana nell’età di Ezzelino da Romano*.

¹⁴ *Biblioteca Palatina di Parma*, Codex 711. The prologue is usually printed at the beginning of editions, as in Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 7-10.

¹⁵ That the *exemplum* provided by Rolandino could generalize beyond Padua presupposed that similar *res publicae* existed elsewhere, and that they shared an essentially similar political experience to Padua. The collapse into tyranny to the restoration of good government told of in the *Chronicle* could be the history not so much of Padua alone—or even the particular history of the Trevisan March—but a history of the political life of republics.

¹⁶ Ibid., 350.

rise of tyranny encompassed moral and behavioral decline, and poisoned republican polities. In the time of Ezzelino, for example, “vigor vanished, faith and truth grew tepid, prudence got cold, charity, rectitude, wisdom and courtliness were corrupted.”¹⁷ Wars, once fought in a knightly, friendly way had become under Ezzelino battles of extermination.¹⁸ The recovery of communal government after Ezzelino’s death was a miraculous event constituting a moral reformation. It therefore was necessary to thank God that “the memory of the evil-doers perished from speech,” and that the Paduan commune, “reformed by divine and apostolic grace,” was now protected in its liberty.¹⁹

This statement recalls that Rolandino discredited the papacy (the means by which “apostolic” grace was conveyed) as the mechanism by which Paduan liberty was truly recovered. Explicitly, he here attributed that recovery to “divine and apostolic grace,” but implicitly, he

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 22: Ha, Deus! Tunc erant werre [sic], si licitum est dicere, bone werre, dum unus alteri viriliter inimicans, captus tamen aliquando, non morti tradebatur continuo, non in vincula mittebatur, non sententia protinus ferebatur in eum ferre horribiliter mutilandum; mittebatur imo laudabiliter et honorifice quo volebat... “Oh, God! Then were wars, if it is right to say, wars which were good, when one man fought another courageously, and if he was captured, he was not immediately executed, nor placed in chains, nor suddenly and horribly mutilated; but he was sent laudably and honorably where he wished to go...” Maire-Vigueur has argued that it should be understood as an official document which legitimized the reactionary claims of the government of Padua that succeeded Ezzelino’s regime. This government was composed of members of the civic aristocracy, known in thirteenth-century Latin as the knights (*milites*). The individuals of this class, organized into aristocratic lineages called *consorterie*, fought endless battles for wealth, castles (*castra*), clients, and friends (*amici*). When Ezzelino first displaced these men and subordinated them to his own ends, so argues Maire Vigueur, he broke the customary activities of the *milites* class by enforcing a new, and rigid, form of military discipline—and so earned their hatred. See Maire Vigueur, *Cavalieri e cittadini*, 52; 58-61; on Ezzelino’s military organization see A.A. Settia, “Uomini e armi nella Marca di Ezzelino,” in idem *Comuni in guerra: Armi ed eserciti nell’Italia delle città* (Bologna: CLUEB, 1993), 157-198; as Maire-Vigueur notes, Ezzelino did not personally lose a single recorded battle—see Maire-Vigueur, 50: “Per fare ciò, Rolandino procede con metodo e rigore; nell’abbondante materiale raccolto e fra tutti I ricordi personali, egli effettua una selezione che si vuole conforme al disegno assegnato all’opera. Tutti gli episodi riportati, compresi quelli più remote, rispondono a questa finalità e s’inseriscono in una prospettiva unitaria, ribadita peraltro dalla divisione del racconto in dodici capitoli.” I prefer parable to ‘myth’, a word that Arnaldi made common in discussions of medieval representations of Ezzelino, because Rolandino clearly meant for his *Cronica* to be a work of teaching—a “monicio.” C.f. Frances Andrewes, “Albertano of Brescia, Rolandino of Padua and the Rhetoric of Legitimation,” in *Building Legitimacy: Political Discourses and Forms of Legitimacy in Medieval Society* (Brill: Leiden, 2004), ed. Isabel Alfonso Antón, Hugh Kennedy, and Julio Escalona Monge, 319-340.

¹⁹ Rolandino *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 22.

elsewhere denied that external, papal leadership could serve as the key to internal Paduan concord, a lesson that generalized to other republican polities.

1.2: The Failure of the Papacy in Rolandino's Chronicle

Hence the growth and decline of tyranny and the consequent restoration of Paduan liberty and of republican government in Padua were the primary subjects of Rolandino's Chronicle. The loss of order was constituted by the rise of a regime that exercised too much control.²⁰ The reconstitution of order was for him the recovery of customary Paduan republican governance. Though he recognized the preliminary role of the papacy in that recovery, he emphasized that Paduan liberty was finally re-achieved through the internal reformation of the Paduans and their moral reconstitution as a unified *populus*. In other words, Rolandino distanced the restitution of Paduan order from the leadership of the papacy. In fact he provided a narrative, which I piece together in this section, which showed that the papacy could not act as the agent of concord and thus of order in a republic.²¹

In the eleventh book of the Chronicle Rolandino told a peculiar story intended to deal with the memory of the pillage of Padua by the army of the papal legate. Ezzelino had captured the papal legate in 1258. Rolandino stated how Ezzelino "wished to glory in his triumphs," and so "wanted to hold a conversation with the legate, his prisoner."²² At dinner Ezzelino asked the legate about the conquest of Padua.

Dompne mi legate, dudum meus animus sub ingenti dubitacionis articulo pendet,
qualiter scilicet et quomodo sancta mater Ecclesia substinet quod sub umbra
alarum eius inferat christiano christianus iniuriam aut nitantur et ad rapinas. Scitis

²⁰ I discuss, in the second half of the chapter, how Rolandino conceptualized tyrannical or monarchical rule as the rule by *fortuna* and thus by ungovernable chance.

²¹ The argument generalizes beyond Padua because, as I discussed above, the *Chronicle* was supposed to serve as a *monicio* or an *exemplum* of the rise and defeat of tyrannies in republics beyond Padua.

²² Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese 504: Post marchionis Pellavicini et Bosii Dovarensis recessum de Brixia, cum Ecelinus plenum habeat ibidem dominium, potuit et voluit in suis gloriari triumphis et cum legato prexonerio suo voluit aliquam collacionem habere.

enim quod illa die, qua Paduam introistis, hii qui vobiscum crucem Domini baiulabant, dicentes se christianos et milites sancti Petri, christianos bonis propriis spoliatis quosdam interfecerunt, extorserunt exactiones ab aliis et alios, utpote pupillos et orphanos ac viduas, compulerunt ad mendicandum. Et est mirum quod manifeste confitebantur se ab Ecclesia hoc habere mandatum, et erant a Sede apostolica absoluta, nec debent unquam predam illam restituere vel ablatum, quamvis et ipsi videant quod aliquando manus Domini extenditur ad vindictam.²³

My lord legate, my soul doubts exceedingly, namely as to how and why the holy mother church permitted, under its banners, Christians to harm other Christians, struggling both for goods...and for plunder. For you surely know that on that day when you entered Padua, those who carried the cross of the Lord for you, calling themselves Christians and soldiers of St Peter, killed Christians and despoiled them of their property, extorted exactions from others, even orphans and widows, and compelled them all to live by begging. It is marvelous that they claimed to have the mandate to do this from the Church and were absolved by the Apostolic See, and that they were not expected to restore the plunder...²⁴

In his answer, which I discuss below, the legate would not deny the truth of Ezzelino's descriptions. For Rolandino, the pillaging of Padua by the legate's army helped to illuminate the limits of papal leadership in the internal affairs of a republican city. The legate appears in the Chronicle as a subsidiary character, emerging in the middle of the action and then disappearing. He is a supporting character in a larger drama.²⁵ Specifically, this representative of God's representative receded from the narrative after his discussion with Ezzelino, following, his reconquest and subsequent destruction of Padua. Dramatically, then, the legate is an ancillary

²³ Ibid., 504-506.

²⁴ Ezzelino's capture of the legate might well be seen by Paduan elites whose property had been taken in the pillage as God's just judgment on his wayward minister, the legate. Putting this thought into the mouth of the tyrant was likely Rolandino's way of delegitimizing it.

²⁵ The primary character, of course, was Padua itself. Rolandino described the legate as coming in response to the appeal of the people of the Trevisan March: see Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 354: Ipse igitur legatus, congregantibus gentibus undecumque et predicans crucem Christi, prima fronte ad partes Veneciarum descendit in dicto anno Domini MCCLVI, mense marcii.

character who moved the plot along but did not affect the final solution; Ezzelino died long after the legate departed the stage.²⁶

Rolandino further diminished the papal legate's importance. This takes us to consider Rolandino's political vocabulary. The legate failed to properly cohere his army into a *populus*.²⁷ In ancient Roman thought, as I discussed in the last chapter, *populus* marked the union of disparate individuals around some sense of law (Cicero), or love (Augustine). Without using the word 'common good', both authors suggest that the union of individuals into a *populus* is formed around their adoption of common ends, or a sense of the common good which each person desires and acts towards. The pursuit of this shared common good made a *res publica* (the *res populi*). Rolandino used the concept of the *populus* in his arguments and descriptions in order to discredit the leadership of external authorities: Ezzelino, his lieutenant Ansedisio, and the papal legate. For instance, when Ansedisio, Ezzelino's lieutenant, tried to reinforce his authority in Padua by making a public speech, he reminded his listeners: "If I remember aright, for some forty years or more, I have heard the *populus paduanus* named before all other peoples (*gentibus*) as the defender of liberty."²⁸ The wording is again important. The *populus paduanus* is distinct from other people (*gentibus*) because it shares a common good which structures social relations

²⁶ Though Ezzelino would die by the hand of God, making the solution a kind of *deus ex machina*, the legate is not the *deus*. He represents failure and prolongation, not success and completion. The final victory over Ezzelino was accomplished, moreover, directly by God. The second-hand representation of the legate, two-times removed from God, is finally seen as ineffective compared to the direct role of God in human affairs.

²⁷ Observe, for instance, how Rolandino described lamentations about the essential discord of the Paduans under Ezzelino: procurators, who after being ordered to harshly tax the Paduans refused to do so, lamented the internal dissensions of the Paduan *populus* caused by Ezzelino's tyranny (Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 368-370.) Rolandino narrated how Ezzelino's brother-in-law Ansedisio ordered twenty-five procurators to plunder the Paduans and the Paduan district of anything that the procurators "could think of." Unless the procurators did this, they would be placed in prison; Rolandino reported a late night conversation between two procurators who were kept "in the chamber of the palace, sad and anxious," bound by iron—they had refused to plunder their own co-citizens—lamenting the divisions in the Paduan *populus*: *ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 370: Si enim bene memini, transacti sunt anni XL et ultra, quod nominari audio populum paduanum pre cunctis mundi gentibus defendere libertatem.

(the defense of liberty). Ansedisio urged the Paduan *populus*, united to defend liberty, to consider the defense of its *patria* as a rational activity (*racio*).²⁹ Thus, Rolandino associated rationality and unified social and political action.

‘*Populus*’ features in Rolandino’s account of the legate’s failure. Under the legate individual crusaders were united in one *christianus populus*, whose common end was the salvation of all mankind under papal leadership.³⁰ Essential to the legate’s victory was the cohesion of his *populus*. This cohesion was partly achieved through the activity of giving and taking council:³¹ “The legate spoke few words, while the wise spoke many to him.”³² Before the taking of Padua, some urged the legate to destroy Padua; others wanted him to show mercy. The legate took a middle way: “And the words of the legate concorded [*concordaverunt*] all of them [in agreement] so that the city [*urbs*: underlining Padua’s *Romanitas*]...should not be laid waste or devastated but that its enemies, who deformed Padua, should be expunged.”³³ But the legate

²⁹ Ibid., 372. However, Rolandino reported that a Paduan man was afterwards heard urging the Paduans to arms. Ansedisio had the man seized, his tongue mutilated, his eyes blinded, and his feet cut off, but the man kept speaking, and finally he was executed (Ibid., 372-374.) The man’s perseverance belied Ansedisio’s self-proclaimed defense of liberty, while yet reinforcing Ansedisio’s characterization of the *paduana populus*: it was, indeed, a *populus* formed to defend liberty, but it was not Ansedisio or Ezzelino who led it toward that end, and in fact, their rulership tended to increase the rate of its dissolution. The point was that whatever may have been said by Ezzelino and Ansedisio, they used the customary words of Paduan republicanism, but for their own particular good.

³⁰ Ibid., 376: ...de Veneciis scilicet, de Ferraria, de Padua, de comitatus Rudigii et aliunde, tam de civitatibus quam de villis; et constituta gente qualibet sub suis capotaneis [sic], rectoribus et vexillis, ponderata sunt plaustra armis, victualibus, gratis et aliis paramentis ad pugnam. Rolandino emphasizes how those gathered to fight for the legate were not merely preparing to fight against ‘heretical’ Christians in north-eastern Italy; their battle was fought as if against Saracens and the other international enemies of the Christian community. Ibid., 374: Et ecce multi habitatores villarum, non solum affinium, verum etiam existentium a remotis et usque ad Pedevenda, veniunt ad legatum; et quasi deberent ire contra barbaras naciones et pugnare cum Sarracenis, signaculo sancta crucis se muniunt et audent amodo se fateri Christi pugiles et milites sancti Petri. Out of the many *gentes* emerged one *populus*. Ibid., 386: Equitat nunc et ordinate incedit populus christianus, quasi, ut recte dicas, nunc populus israeliticus vadit obviam Phylisteis; “Now rode and in order set forth the *populus christianus* just as, to speak rightly, the Israelite people marched against the Philistines.”

³¹ So long as everyone agreed on the common end of the ‘people’ this was not a necessarily difficult task: all knew where they were going; they just did not agree on how to get there.

³² Ibid., 386. Quibus legatus pauca verba exposuit, que sapientes aliqui loquebantur eidem. Rolandino thus describes the legate as a good taker of council, one who listened well, spoke little, and decided decisively in a way that garnered the unified support of his followers.

³³ Ibid., 386. All then approved the legate’s suggestion “with one voice,” *una voce*.

could not lead the group well for long. The dissolution of the legate's *populus* was the result of the pillage of Padua.³⁴ The pillaging led each person to think of his own riches, rather than the common good.³⁵ Rolandino made this explicit when he stated that "they began to think only of what they should do in the event that Ezzelino was victorious over them. It is not a good indication when in expeditions of cities and in wars those, who should council the community, look to their own good, not the common good."³⁶ The legate's authority thus collapsed. His leadership depended on the existence of a *populus* formed around the pursuit of a common good. The pursuit of each person's individual good destroyed the premises of his leadership. The members of the *christianus populus* accordingly scattered to mind their own interests. The legate's personal followers alone remained with him,³⁷ and Ezzelino easily captured him.³⁸

Rolandino made his description of the legate's failure to keep his group intact into a demonstration of deeper problems with papal leadership, an argument connected to his sense of the essential fractiousness of most human groups.³⁹ In discussion with Ezzelino, the imprisoned legate excused his failure to contain the pillaging on the grounds that his authority was limited: he had the authority to command, but not the power to force his men to consent to his commands. "For we know that it is one thing to order (*percipere*) and another thing to consent

³⁴ Moreover, the pillage happened against the common decision of the *populus* reported above. This underscored how the mistreatment of Padua by the legate was connected to his ultimate failure, as we see below.

³⁵ Ibid., 400: *Quamvis autem in rapiendis rebus mobilibus solitum sit ut plurimum discordias et cedes...*

³⁶ See, e.g., ibid., 422-424: *Inde timor et tremor aliquos de gente legati perterrituit, et ceperunt cogitare solum de suo facto quid foret eis in tali articulo faciendum. Est autem non bonum indicium in expeditionibus civitatum et verris, cum hii, qui debent communitati consulere, utilitatem spectant propriam, non commune.*

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., 496: *...illic retulit sinistrum eventum, qui scilicet totam Marchiam contristavit, Lombardie magnam partem contreruit, fecit trepidare Romagnam et, quod plus est, sanctam Sedem apostolicam condolare.*

³⁹ Ibid., 506. That these would be problems for any leader of a *populus* is clear enough; the problem was that the *populus* created by the legate was made even weaker by the legate's official incapacities. The problem with the legate's *populus* might be linked to the fact that it was a *christianus populus*, a particular instantiation of a universal phenomenon, and weaker therefore than assemblages of people centered on more local and particular customs and shared beliefs.

(consentire).”⁴⁰ The legate explained that he had authority because St Peter had passed his authority to the pope and the pope had given to the legate the authority “to chastise people who are known rebels against ecclesiastical liberty.”⁴¹ But it was not the fault of the ministers of the Church if gentes “persevere in contumacy, despite being warned.”⁴² The legate would be pleased, he went on, if each plunderer would return what he stole, especially the property of orphans and widows.⁴³ But he had no real power to compel such an activity absent an obliging populus, a populus that obviously no longer existed. The legate’s own defense of his record demonstrated the limits of papal leadership in cities like Padua; papal leadership depended on the existence of groups that the popes and legates could not themselves maintain, leading to the conclusion that the recovery of order would have to be accomplished by the individuals of a populus first.⁴⁴

The generalizing tendencies at work in Rolandino’s Chronicle made this description of legatine, and by extension papal, inconsequence applicable for other republics. For them as for Padua, papal and legatine leadership was not only ineffective but potentially destructive. The legate came to recover Paduan liberty—and in a sense helped the process along. But he ended up in captivity, after a destructive adventure. The problem was clear enough. The externally imposed unity of the papacy could not in the end serve as a lasting means of maintaining

⁴⁰ Ibid., 506.

⁴¹ Ibid. Even here, the legate seems to recognize his limits. Chastising is a single act; reconstituting a political order is momentous and requires sustained activities and the adoption of new attitudes.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Through this discussion Rolandino asks: How could a battered Paduan *res publica* be reformed by a legate like this? Without a *christianus populus* at his disposal (a *christianus populus* which might splinter at any moment) the legate had little ability change anything. The legate could not restore Padua to liberty, nor could any papal representative, because the papacy could not force people to consent (*consentire*) to its orders. The reader would ask: how then could Padua be restored? Rolandino’s answer was: by the efforts of the Paduans. The reconstruction of Padua would be achieved by the reformation of the same Paduan norms of liberty that Ezzelino had damaged. This reformation would have to be accomplished by the Paduans for Padua—they could not expect the now powerless legate to help. External authorities could not restore what the Paduans should do themselves.

concordance within a human group, nor could it sustain the kind of reorientation of attitudes necessary for the recovery of republican self-rule. If Padua was “reformed” by apostolic grace, nonetheless the Paduans had to supply the means whereby their restored republican regime could maintain its own order. The Paduans should prefer and emphasize the deeper, older ties of culture and custom. For the citizens of an Italian *civitas*, these older customs were at hand in symbols like the republican *carroccio*, the civic war-wagons around which Italians fought in battle. Republican liberty would have to be recovered not through salvation delivered by the popes or their legates but through the inheritance and development of the traditional customs of republican self-rule.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ For Rolandino a process of civic reformation began immediately after the conquest of Padua in 1256; it came from the resurrection of Paduan customs, not the imposition of universal papal leadership. Indeed Rolandino juxtaposed his account of the pillage by the legate’s army with a tableau of communal, republican liberty waiting to be recovered. A brief reading of this tableau helps to show, at this early stage, Rolandino’s preference for republican self-rule, serving as a useful segue way into a discussion of thirteenth-century republicanism generally. It is found on Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 402-404. The year 1256 found the Paduan *carroccio*, the war-wagons around which medieval Italian communal armies fought, in a sorry state. For Rolandino it was a metaphor for the obsolescence of Paduan liberty. Rolandino described a Paduan exile, returned to the city, walking with his son across the square before the Paduan communal palace. The boy saw the *carroccio* “putrid and deformed, destroyed and despised, unused and broken.” He told his father: “Now what sort of edifice [hedificium] do I see now, my father and lord?” The boy expounded on the size of the unknown conveyance: it was so big that not even two bulls could drive it, “unless it were true, as I have heard, that animals used to be larger and men could make more use of them.” The question, and even more so the ignorance from which the question arose, was to mark the disrepair of the stories and hence the norms of Paduan republicanism—so unknown as to be a mythological period when humans and animals were larger than they are now. It signified the need for a historian to retell the Paduans their own history and their old customs. The father responded: the wagon was the Paduan *carroccio*, a castle (*castrum*) on wheels which Paduan *milites* would fight to death to protect, “for in it hung the honor, vigor and glory of the Paduan commune.” Its state of disrepair and neglect demonstrated how the “enemies of the Paduans, namely the da Romano people [*illi de Romano*], wished to crush the city and its honor.” For in its days of glory, when the Paduan army of *milites* brought the *carroccio* to battle, enemies fled from it, “and all the earth trembled wherever it went as if it were a hovering dragon or a thundercloud.” For Rolandino the Paduan *carroccio* was a metonymy of the Paduan *res publica*. If the legate freed Padua, the Paduans would need to rebuild it, though church and *res publica* were intertwined. Hence Matteo da Correggio, who became podestà in 1258, was chosen by the assembled Paduan citizens (*cives*) in a public assembly (*contio*) in the communal palace. “He was trustworthy and wise, generous, courtly and good, and with all his thought (*tota intentione*) was concerned to purge from Padua and the Paduan district all the enemies of the Church, to punish the evildoers, to conserve justice, to increase the honor of the holy mother Church, and to augment the Paduan *civitas* from good always to better.” The goals of the Holy Church were combined with the political aims of the *res publica* (justice and Padua’s augmentation) and became nearly unbeatable. Hence Paduans fighting for Padua easily defeated the mercenaries who fought for Ezzelino’s money. The restoration of the Paduan *respublica* had begun—and it was initiated by the Paduans, who might become the giants their ancestors had been.

Part 2: Republicanism and Fortuna

2.1: What was Republicanism?

In making this argument about the possible ways to restore order without the (initially helpful, perhaps pernicious, but certainly ambiguous) leadership of the popes or their legates, Rolandino drew on and contributed to the political language of republicanism. The study of this tradition of political thought is perhaps most indebted to Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli.⁴⁶ For Skinner, historical scholarship has been less important at least recently than using history to make political arguments, particularly about what ‘civic republicanism’ is and how it might be useful in modern political philosophy; his work nonetheless contains useful recapitulations of republican political theory in thirteenth-century Italian authors.⁴⁷

For Skinner civic republicanism is best understood as centering on a ‘third concept of liberty.’⁴⁸ This is liberty considered as freedom from domination or the threat of domination.⁴⁹ He alleges that medieval and modern advocates of this third concept of liberty found it in the works of the ancient Romans who discussed how emperors came to rule the free Roman

⁴⁶ Skinner, *Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, volume 1; *Visions of Politics: The Renaissance* volume 2; Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*. Though I will use their accounts (particularly Skinner’s) for this summary, the rest of the chapter could be read as a critique of both Skinner and Viroli for not adequately relating this political thought to the historical conditions in which it was born.

⁴⁷ Ando, “A Place Beyond Violence” goes at Skinner from the perspective of deficiencies in legal scholarship; in the rest of this chapter I criticize from the angle of the inadequacies of historical scholarship. See Nederman’s critique in “Civic Republicanism.” From my perspective, Skinner’s error as a historian was to forget to adequately relate his account of republicanism to the historical context of thirteenth-century Italy, specifically the failure of the medieval empire and papacy which led to a problem of how to contain and control *fortuna*, as I will explain and rectify in the next sections on Brunetto Latini and Rolandino.

⁴⁸ See Cary Nederman, “Civic Republicanism,” and Frank Lovett, “Republicanism,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (June 2006, revised June 2022).

⁴⁹ Quentin Skinner, “A Third Concept of Liberty,” 247: a “freedom...restricted not only by actual interference or the threat of it, but also by the mere knowledge that we are living in dependence on the goodwill of others.” Isaiah Berlin famously identified two concepts of liberty: the first, which he called positive liberty, denotes a conception of freedom in which humans become free through the unlocking of their potential. The second, negative liberty, is a freedom from constraints, unlimited only in so far as the actions undertaken by the power of that freedom do not harm another person’s ability to exercise his own freedom. Skinner has argued that the tradition of civic republicanism, which found its first ‘modern’ expression in twelfth and thirteenth-century Italy, is based around a third concept of liberty.

Republic: hence the elaboration of this concept of liberty was originally made in negative accounts of its loss.⁵⁰ Moreover, Skinner asserts that medieval Italians stumbled into this vocabulary of politics, using it as a way of justifying their political associations. Hence the oligarchical towns of central and northern Italy “rediscovered republican values” when their ruling classes needed to find some legitimacy for their form of government.⁵¹ In the first instance the re-employment of Roman republican language filled a need to justify otherwise illegitimate political associations; phrased slightly differently, it constituted one way of describing a certain kind of political order.⁵²

These ideological defenses of the Italian way of government were made by Italian grammarians who composed *ars dictaminis* handbooks. In these, authors taught rhetoric through model letters and speeches. These texts were intended for the notaries and other learned men who directed the public life of the towns. The authors of the *ars dictaminis* were not prone to humility. Ernst Kantorowicz reported how Guido Faba (c.1190-c.1243) began his instructional text the *Nova Rota* as a pronouncement *a la sacred scripture* “which is received and hailed by the cosmos, by Heaven, Earth, and Sea, and the Christian people are supposed to hold their breath while listening to the good news

⁵⁰ Ibid., 249. One can compare this to Rolandino’s elaboration of republican political thought in an account that partly focuses on its loss (before he came to describe its recovery).

⁵¹ This is the title of Skinner’s summary of thirteenth-century Italian republicanism in *Visions of Politics* II pp. 10-38.

⁵² The Italian communes were born in the late eleventh century when a number of people in them “took it upon themselves, in defiance of papal and imperial suzerainty, to appoint their own ‘consuls’ and invest them with supreme judicial authority.” (Ibid., 10.) By the beginning of the thirteenth century they “acquired the status of independent city-republics.” (Ibid., 10-11.) Yet they were buffeted by the attempts of the Holy Roman Emperors to re-subjugate them by force and by law. The emperors and their legal theoreticians used Justinian’s Code to provide them with the ideology necessary to do this: they understood the Code to state that the Roman *imperator* was sole *princeps* and ‘lord of the world’, the bearer of *imperium*, “the one authority capable of making laws and commanding obedience.” (Ibid., 12.) The communes thus appeared to lack legal legitimacy. The communes were also strange in their method of governance: all the best authorities of the twelfth and early thirteenth-centuries—John of Salisbury, Gerald of Wales, and Helinandus of Froidmont—considered republics to be inferior to monarchy, which resembled the way that God ruled created things and was *ipso facto* superior to rule by many or by few.

addressed to every rational creature.”⁵³ In thirteenth-century Italy, education in language rose to the status of divine education; many of these authors composed treatises on city government, drawing a connection between heaven and politics. These men were often notaries whose works were not as distinct from the *ars dictaminis* handbooks as Skinner alleged. In these texts—like the *Oculus pastoralis* (1220), Orfino da Lodi’s *De Sapientia Potestatis*, and Giovanni da Viterbo’s *Liber de Regimine Civitatum* (1230-1255)—the authors tried to instruct the *rectores*, rulers of city chosen annually, how to speak in certain situations and how to write letters in others. Speaking and writing were understood to be one of the primary tasks of the ruler.⁵⁴

Skinner calls these authors republicans. This was because, as he summarized, these authors thought that “if a city was to have any prospect of attaining its highest goals, it is indispensable that its administration should remain in the hands of elected officials whose conduct can in turn be regulated by the people and their established customs and laws.”⁵⁵ The magistrate’s primary task was to increase the republic

⁵³ Ernst Kantorowicz, “An Autobiography of Guido Faba,” *Selected Studies* (Locust Valley, NY: J.J. Augustin, 1965): 194-212, p. 199; on how the teaching of rhetoric was thought to be adjacent to the divine see Enrico Artifoni, “Dal Dio del linguaggio al Dio dei buoni costume. Ausilio divino e gruppi intellettuali nella cultura retorica e didattica del Duecento italiano,” in *Il favore di Dio: Metafore d’elezione nelle letterature* (Mosetti: Alessandria, 2017), 511-528.

⁵⁴ The means to govern a city well was thought to consist, in large part, in speaking and writing well in combination with the exercise of the virtues. The Italian historian Enrico Artifoni has discussed how these authors understood politics as centering on the Italian words *rettore/rectore* (rhetor/ruler). See Artifoni, “Didattiche della costumanza nel mondo comunale,” *Responsabilità e creatività: Alla ricerca di un uomo nuovo* (Milan: Andenna, 2015) 109-127; idem, “La politique est ‘in fatt’ et ‘in detti’. L’éloquence politique et les intellectuels dans les cites communales au XIIIe siècle,” in *Le pouvoir des mots au Moyen âge* (Brepols: Turnhout, 2014), ed. Nicole Bériou, Jean-Patrice Boudet, Irène Rosier-Catach: 209-224; building on his earlier work, idem, “Sull’eloquenza politica nel Duecento italiano,” *Quaderni medievali* 35 (1993), 57-78; idem, “I podestà professionali e la fondazione retorica della politica comunale,” *Quaderni Storici* 21 (1986), 687-719. I discuss below how Rolandino shared this conception of speech and rule. Viroli argues that the same authors were important for rediscovering ‘politics’ as a distinct kind of human activity: Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, chapter 1.

⁵⁵ Skinner, “Republican Values,” 19.

(*respublicam crescere*).⁵⁶ Magistrates were to grow republics by keeping peace within them.⁵⁷ As Jacopo da Varagine knew, discord was the cause of republican decline.⁵⁸ Concord could be achieved only if the ruler led the people toward the pursuit of the common good. As Cicero had stated in *De officiis*, “anyone who looks after the interests of only one part of a citizen body, while neglecting the rest, introduces into the government of a city the most pernicious element of all, namely sedition and discord.”⁵⁹ How was one to actually achieve this concord? First, the ruler must deliver justice, which, as Giovanni da Viterbo defined it in the 1250s, was “to render to each person their due, in order that the city may be governed in justice and equity.”⁶⁰ But how should one find rulers who would deliver justice? The answer was election. As the Florentine proto-humanist and chancellor Brunetto Latini stated in the 1260s in his encyclopedia, the *Livre dou Tresor*, the citizens of the Italian cities (whom he thought alone had political regimes) “are able to elect, as podestà or signore, those who will act profitably for the

⁵⁶ They drew inspiration for this from Sallust’s *Bellum Catilinae*, where Sallust argued that the Roman republic grew to greatness, and his *Bellum Iugurthium*, where Sallust has the king of Numidia congratulate Jugurtha and admonish him to remember how small communities grow to become great ones (*parvae res crescunt*). Skinner, *ibid.*, 20. Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, X 1; *idem*, *Bellum Iugurthium*, X.6.

⁵⁷ Skinner, *ibid.*, 22, citing of all Brunetto Latini, *Li Livre dou Tresor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948) ed. F. Carmody, p 292: “pais fait maint bien et guerre le gaste,” “peace brings very great good, while war lays it waste.”

⁵⁸ Giovanni da Viterbo, *Liber de regimine civitatum*, in *Bibliotheca Iuridica Medii Aevi* vol. 3 (Bologna: Bottega d’Erasmus, 1901), ed. Augusto Gaudenzi, pp. 215-280, p 221, cols 1-2: *Nam cum civitates omnes hodie sunt divise...cesset bonus effectus regiminis*. The Florentine chronicler Dino Compagni gave an unforgettable and famous statement of the effect of factionalism and its Roman antecedents in Florence (Dino Compagni, *Cronaca*, tr. Bornstein (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 2.1., 33): “Arise, wicked citizens full of discord: grab sword and torch with your own hands and spread your wicked deeds...Go and reduce to ruins the beauties of your city. Spill the blood of your brothers, strip yourselves of faith and love, deny one another aid and support...Do as did Sulla in the city of Rome. Yet all the evils that Sulla achieved in ten days, Marius avenged in a few days: do you believe that God’s justice has faltered since then?”

⁵⁹ Cicero, *De Officiis*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), tr. Walter Miller, I.XXV 85.

⁶⁰ Giovanni da Viterbo, *Liber de regimine*, p. 220.

common good of the city and all their subjects.”⁶¹ Cities ruled by rulers chosen by elite citizens could protect the *libertas* of their citizenry.⁶²

In the senses described above, Rolandino was, more or less, a ‘republican.’ But the elucidation of Rolandino’s republicanism requires a deeper view as to the question of the stabilization of polities in history, understood as controlling the irrational goddess *fortuna* in political affairs. This is because republicanism was not only a response to a crisis of legitimacy but an attempt to conceptualize how (relatively) independent cities could rule themselves in a stable manner without the help or assistance of the papacy or the empire. This was a problem for thinkers who denied the role of superior authorities in their ideal polities.⁶³ Without the supervisory role of individuals or institutions possessing a close connection to God’s stability, by which someone like Jacopo da Varagine thought politics could be tempered and order restored and maintained, republican authors like Rolandino had to show that their ideal republics could resist *fortuna*. The reconstruction

⁶¹ Latini, *Livres dou Tresor*, p. 392: “en Ytaile...li communauté des viles eslisent lor poestè et lor signour tel comme il quident qui’il soit plus proufitable au commun preu de la vile et de tous lor subtès.”

⁶² Skinner, “Rediscovery of Republican Values,” 29-30. Indeed, the very sense of what a city was included such freedom. So, for Giovanni da Viterbo, a *civitas* was “a dwelling beyond violence,” in which neither the powerful nor the weak could coerce their co-citizens with force; and such freedom from violence was “the liberty of the citizens,” another meaning of city, *civitas*. Giovanni da Viterbo, *De regimine*, p. 218: *Civitas autem dicitur civium libertas sive habitantium (im)munitas, sicut in opido dicitur...Et est sincopatum hoc nomen civitas, et sic supradicta interpretation fit a tribus sillabis, quas in se continent civitas, scilicet ci et vi et tas; ci idest citra vim habitas. Habitatio enim est ibi sine vi, quoniam preses civitatis, quia ‘potentioribus pares esse non possumus, tuebitur humiliores viros ne a potentioribus viris iniuriis afficiantur.*

⁶³ Not all republicans rejected imperial authority. The thirteenth-century communal governments often had imperial sanctions deriving from the Peace of Constance, a treaty between Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and the Lombard League, and Ando has demonstrated how authors like Giovanni da Viterbo reconciled elected city government with imperial rule, or in fact saw no need to reconcile what appeared to them as an obviously natural coexistence. See Ando, “A Place without Violence.” On the imperialism of authors through the fourteenth century see Alexander Lee, *Humanism and Empire*. If we could ask them, Rolandino and Latini would both state that their cities were juridically imperial. Moreover, both would be quick to affirm the role of the papacy ecclesiastically. However, neither saw fit to argue that the internal stability of their cities relied on either the empire or the papacy. The reconciliation of modern and medieval republicanism requires us to see that, of course, medieval Italians understood the legal implications of being part of the empire.

of Rolandino's republican thought requires us to understand how he tried to show that politics could be stably conducted without the interference of the popes.⁶⁴

In the last part of this chapter, I reconstruct the way that Rolandino argued that republican polities could attain and maintain stability despite the instability of earthly events. But first I include an analysis of the Florentine chancellor Brunetto Latini's theory of republican rulership in his *Livre dou Tresor*, written in 1263 when Latini fled Florence to France after a Ghibelline take-over of the city.⁶⁵ This elaboration of a contrasting though broadly similar example helps to explicate how republican political thinkers in the middle of the thirteenth century tried to show that their polities could attain stability and maintain political order without need of the pope or other superior terrestrial authorities.⁶⁶

2.2 Fortuna's Challenge

So far I have used 'fortune' without properly defining it. In this section I indicate what fortune meant and how some prominent historians have discussed it, especially since historians like John Pocock have argued that late medieval and early modern republicanism can be considered as a response to the challenges of fortuna.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Whether real or in the form of attitudes, as Jacopo would prefer.

⁶⁵ In a sense Latini, who was not a chronicler, does not fit my effort to reconstruct political arguments found in chronicles. I reconstruct his argument about *fortuna* because his *Tresor* is very famous, while Rolandino's *Chronicle* is not (in Anglophone scholarship, at least), and because Latini actually framed his political arguments historically, and included a chronicle with information about the past that he deemed necessary for his ideal judge-ruler to know.

⁶⁶ I begin with the account of *fortuna* and rulership contained in Latini's *Tresor* for two reasons. First, the analysis of Latini's *Tresor* will strengthen the range of comparisons I can use to analyze and so show how Rolandino used republican concepts to make sophisticated political arguments in his *Chronicle*. Second, the *Tresor* is famous for its republicanism, but few have analyzed it as a historical response to a historical problem. This is the case despite the fact that Latini wrote the *Tresor* when he fled into exile in France after a pro-imperial Ghibelline faction regained control of Florence in 1260. But see too David Napolitano, "Brunetto Latini's *Politica*: A Political Rewriting of Giovanni da Viterbo's *De Regimine Civitatum*," *Reti Medievali Rivista* 19:1 (2018) 1-21 and for bibliography. The reader should at least be aware that the anti-imperial views of Rolandino and Latini are rather new to the middle of the thirteenth century.

⁶⁷ Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*. This second half of the chapter is clearly indebted to Pocock's book.

In his *Newest Rhetoric*, the early thirteenth-century grammarian Boncampagno da Signa (1170-1250) argued that imperial law was superior to the law of the Italian communes. (Boncampagno happens to have been Rolandino's teacher in *ars dictaminis*.) Boncampagno's positive evaluation of imperial law rested on its stability; his negative evaluation of communal law rested on its instability, which he perceived to be a consequence of the freedom possessed by communal regimes.⁶⁸ In other words, for Boncampagno imperial law represented heaven's order and stability, and the communal law represented the nearly untrammelled rulership of *fortuna*—a varied and everchanging reality, impossible to constrain, and thus, from the stand-point of reason, inferior. Yet as Latini would state in his encyclopaedic *Livre dou Tresor* written in 1261, God made man to stand up and face the stars, unlike other animals who live with their faces to the ground. Humans can live according to reason, not merely their wills, as do the other

⁶⁸ Boncampagno da Signa taught rhetoric in Bologna in the early thirteenth century (see Virgiliio Pini, "Boncampagno da Signa," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 11 (1969)). Boncampagno was Rolandino of Padua's teacher in rhetoric. For this reason, but also because of Boncampagno's prominence, his views on the empire are helpful for situating what Rolandino and Latini say about it. In his *New Rhetoric* Boncampagno described the fourteen kinds of law and whence they came: see, on Boncampagno's rhetorical works see Mary Carruthers, "Boncampagno at the Cutting-edge of Rhetoric: Rhetorical 'Memoria' and the Craft of Memory," *The Journal of Medieval Latin* 6 (1996) 44-64; Boncampagno, *Rhetorica novissima*, in *Bibliotheca iuris medii aevi*, ed. Augustino Gaudenzi, 352. As the tenth kind of law he denoted the Code promulgated by Justinian, "who was the very origin of this law; because just as God divided the primordial elements and brought them into the light, so Justinian clarified the confused origins and materials of the laws for the illumination of learned men and the glory of the civil and canon law." (ibid., 352). His law was so perfect that no one could change it except the emperor, and any defect had already been corrected in the *Pandects* which were held in Pisa (ibid.) The thirteenth kind of law, on the other hand, was the municipal law "which today Italy specially imitates [*imitatur*] according to every kind of liberty [*omnimodam libertatem*]," (ibid.). For Boncampagno this kind of law paled before Justinian's eternal, unchanging law: "But these municipal laws and plebiscites vanish just as the lunar shadows vanish, because these laws grow as the moon grows and vanish according to the wills of their founders [*secundum arbitrium conditorum*]," (ibid.) Boncampagno was no supporter of Frederick II. According to Salimbene he sought a job at the papal curia at the end of his life, and he has become famous for calling Italy the mistress of provinces in his *Liber de obsidione Ancone*—in which text he celebrated the successful resistance of Ancona to the armies of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in the late 1170s (see below). He preferred the *libertas* of the towns to the *dominium* of the emperors; but even he could not help but celebrate the stability of imperial law as a positive good over the unstable variability of the laws of the towns.

animals.⁶⁹ Latini thought that by means of reason humans could choose their actions, deliberate with words about the best actions, and so escape the imprisonment of the passions. They could thus defeat fortuna, the goddess whose turning wheel irrationally and without cause flung worthy and unworthy alike to the heights of achievement and the depths of loss. The defeat of fortuna would encompass also the attainment of a rational, orderly republican polity.

This means that an account of how Latini (and I will later argue, Rolandino) dealt with fortuna in politics should mitigate common scholarly misconceptions. Hannah Pitkin and Pocock *inter alia* have argued that medieval authors thought that the goddess fortuna was a mere contrivance of the Christian God to be meekly accepted. Because fortuna was God's means of effecting change in the world "all fortune is [*ipso facto*] good fortune."⁷⁰ Ernst Cassirer stated that medieval people were bound to passively accept change, and he asserted that only the upsurging activity and vigorous optimism of the Renaissance changed this situation:

In the medieval doctrine of two worlds, and in all the dualisms that derived from it, man simply stands apart from the forces that are fighting over him; he is, in a sense, at their mercy. Though he experiences the conflict of these forces, he takes no active part in it. He is the stage of this great drama of the world, but he has not yet become a truly independent antagonist. In the Renaissance a different image emerges ever more clearly. The old image of Fortune with a wheel, seizing men and dragging them along, sometimes raising them, sometimes throwing them down into the abyss, now gives way to the depiction of Fortune with a sailboat. And this bark is not controlled by Fortune alone—man himself is steering it.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Latini, *Tresor*, 1.16.30: mais entendemens de raison n'est mie en nul autre animal se en home non...pour demoustrer l'abaisance de lor condition qui ne font se ensivre lor volente non, sans nul esgardement de raison. I have used the following translation (often modifying it and sometimes disregarding it): *Brunetto Latini: The Book of the Treasure (Li Livres dou Tresor)* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), translated by Paul Barrette and Spurgeon Baldwin.

⁷⁰ Pitkin, *Fortune Is a Woman: Gender and Politics in the Thought of Niccolò Machiavelli* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 140; Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, 39.

⁷¹ Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (New York: Harper, 1963), 76-7.

We are not so far away here from Machiavelli's famous metaphor for fortuna. In the sixteenth century, he compared fortune to a raging river that overtakes and scatters humans but which manmade defenses and barriers can divert and channel into controlled and maintained streams.⁷² But it seems to me that these judgments are overstatements: medieval authors too tried to grapple with fortuna. There is not so much distance between some of them and this later "civic activist" attitude embodied by Machiavelli.⁷³ Indeed, Latini and Rolandino both proposed to show how humans could work with fortune as steersman of their ships, that is, as political leaders of their own regimes, able to in some sense constrain fortuna and maintain political order.

Given the otherwise papal focus of this dissertation, it might be surprising to attend to authors who mostly ignored the papacy. But presently we will see how hard they had to work to provide political theories in which order could be maintained without recourse to the superior authority of the papacy. It was far easier to think of political order as being maintained or somehow affected by the earthly representatives of God on earth than to show how city republics could altogether bypass the papacy in the effort to create stable political orders.

2.6 Brunetto Latini's Republicanism as an Answer to Fortune

In his *Livre dou Tresor*, Latini gave an example of such an attempt to harness and contain fortune in republican politics. His question is: How do you make a rational regime, despite the fact that lordship itself is something irrational and fortune dependent?

⁷² Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, 25.

⁷³ To adapt a phrase from Justin Steinberg, *Spinoza's Political Psychology: The Taming of Fortune and Fear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

His is a sophisticated framework for beating fortuna's rule in politics, denigrating dynastic politics as irrational and upholding the republican selection of rulers by election as conducive to political stability. His account of the ideal judge-ruler of a republican city allows us to see how he employed Aristotelian theory to explain how an independent city could possess rational order and stability.⁷⁴

In 1261, in exile after the Florentine Ghibellines had expelled the Guelfs who ruled Florence in the 1250s, Latini wrote of fortuna's gifts in the *Tresor* (written in French, the language of the land of his exile).

Li bien de Fortune sont .iii., richece, signourie, et gloire. Et vraiment sont il bien de Fortune, car il vont et vienent d'eure en heure, ja n'auront point de fermeté; car Fortune n'est pas chose raisnable, ne son cors n'est mie par droit ne par raison, si comme ele moustre tozjours de maint home ki sont noient de sens ne de valour, et si montent en grandisme richece our en grant dignité de signorie, ou en loenge de grant pris; et un autres, ki sera li plus vaillans hons del monde, ne poroit avoir .i. seul petit bien de Fortune. Por ce dient li plusor que fortune est avuglee, et qu'ele tournoie tousjours sa roe en non veant. Mais nous en devons croire ce que li sage

⁷⁴ The other argument of this section, more ancillary, is simply to show how Latini blended modes of political thought to make his *Tresor*. Historians of political thought—again Quentin Skinner and Maurizio Viroli—have written much about Latini and his *Tresor*. But, once more, both err when they assert that Latini was mostly a Ciceronian, as opposed to an Aristotelian. This claim derives from the fact that much of the third book of the *Tresor* is a translation of Giovanni da Viterbo's *De regimine civitatum*, and therefore contains a Ciceronian account of the beginning of political society and the need for rulers to deliver justice. But as I will argue in the following pages, however, Latini's conception of rulership in the *Tresor* was Ciceronian (and practical in a medieval context) insofar as it was directed toward the administration of justice in the basic medieval sense of a ruler acting as judge, and in the secondary sense identified by John Pocock in which authors of a Ciceronian bent are more concerned with society as a whole. But the *Tresor* is Aristotelian in its framework and much of its content, specifically in the way Latini tried to teach the judge-ruler to apply general precepts to particular cases through the cultivation of the virtue of prudence. Latini's 'Ciceronian' political advice is founded on an Aristotelian account of why it is rational to be virtuous, which included for Latini the administration of justice. Skinner (somewhat surprisingly) placed Latini in his discussion of pre-Aristotelian republicans in thirteenth-century Italy in *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, "The Rediscovery of Republican Values." Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, 26-30, and particularly 26-27, shows an awareness of Latini's general Aristotelian stance but finally emphasizes Latini's Ciceronian way of trying to educate the ruler rather than discussing the best kind of political regime. On justice as a theme in Ciceronian political thought and the resulting broader interest in society as a whole (and not just with political forms) see the "Afterword," to Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*. One can easily dispute Pocock's distinction here. Clearly Aristotle conceived of a certain kinds of society as fitting together with certain kinds of political constitutions, and the beginning of the *Politics* is an account of how humans must first attain economic self-sufficiency before they can be rulers among rulers, a point Hannah Arendt makes throughout *Between Past and Future*, though the general point about justice is correct.

en dient, que Dieus abaisse le puissant et enhauce le foible. Et toutefois en dira li mestres aucune chose, tant comme il en convient a bon home.⁷⁵

The blessings of fortune are three: wealth, lordship, and glory. Truly they are indeed blessings of fortune, for they come and go from one hour to the next; and they will never have any stability, for fortune is not a reasonable thing and its course is neither just nor reasonable, since it continually shows us men who are worthless in sense and valor, and who rise to very great wealth, or great dignity of lordship, or are praised for their great worth, and another man, who might be the best man in the world, would not be able to have a single little blessing of fortune. For this reason many say that fortune is blind, or that it always turns its wheel without seeing; but we must believe what the wise men say, that God lowers the powerful and raises the weak.

Latini seems to suggest that the gifts of fortuna should not be valued highly, because they are neither stable nor rationally unstable, and come and go seemingly arbitrarily. But he also states that we must believe that God directs fortuna in accordance with justice: what appears to be random chance will work out in accordance with God's righteousness in the end. This seems to suggest the very same passive medieval attitude Ernst Cassirer described above.

But it is wrong to see Latini as another embodiment of this passive attitude.

Latini's conception of the relative merit of things given by fortuna's irrational gift is more sophisticated than the more pedestrian passivity. Latini proceeds to state that

Segnorie est uns des biens ki vient par Fortune. Et ja soient signories de maintes manieres, sor les autres est la plus digne cele des rois et de gouverner cites et gens; c'est li plus nobles mestiers c'on puisse avoir au monde, et entour ce est la tierce science de pratike, si comme lis mestres devise ça en ariere ou conte de philosophie. Et de ceste science ne dira ore li contes plus, se ce non k'a moralité s'en apertient.⁷⁶

Lordship is one of the blessings which come from fortune, and although there are lordships of different sorts, the worthiest of all is that of kings and of governing cities and peoples; this is the worthiest profession there can be in the world, and it

⁷⁵ Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 2.115.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.119.1.

is with these things that the third practical science deals...The narrative will limit itself here only to what has to do with morality.

What Latini emphasizes by relegating lordship to one of the gifts of fortuna is that the lord should remain humble and aware of his lack of merit. Latini quotes Seneca's statement, "Ha! Fortune, you are not good forever," as a reminder of this instability. From a positive angle, a consciousness of the irrationality of historical events could help a lord realize that he does not rule for his own good, but for the "common profit." If a lord comes to be hated, he might well be killed. It is therefore better for the lord "to remember that he was without high position," that he rose to high position purely by fortuna's whim, and that he should act with justice and with reason, lest others punish him when he is at the low point of fortune's wheel.⁷⁷

But all this does not imply that humans should not try to seek to regulate fortune. Lordship is after all a blessing, not a curse; since the *Tresor* was concerned with teaching readers how to do politics (and so be good lords), it was also concerned with teaching them to control the gifts of fortuna so as to create rational political orders. The *Tresor* was divided into three books meant to teach the reader how to conduct themselves as a rational ruler-judge. Latini dedicated the first book to what he called theoretical knowledge. He likened its contents "to cash money, to spend readily on necessary things; that is, it describes the beginning of the world, and the ancient times of the old histories, and the establishment of the world, and the nature of all things...just as without money there would be nothing to facilitate transactions between people, likewise no one can

⁷⁷ Ibid., 2.119.5-7.

possess fully the other things if he does not know this first part.”⁷⁸ In the second book he taught his readers ethics; at least half of it is an extremely loose translation of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*. He compared this book to “precious stones which give man delight and virtue.”⁷⁹ The third part, however, was “like fine gold, that is to say it teaches how one should speak according to proper rhetoric, and how a lord should govern the people who are under his jurisdiction, according to the customs of the Italians...For just as gold surpasses all metals, so also is the science of speaking well and governing a people more noble than any other in the world.”⁸⁰ To Latini politics was the highest human art: a broadly Aristotelian evaluation.⁸¹

From the very beginning of the *Tresor*, Latini thus offered his book as a primer on politics. His encyclopedia had a definite political edge—it offered its readers a *cosmos politicus*, as Christel Meier has argued.⁸² The first section of the *Tresor*, that on theoretical knowledge, which strangely (given its name) also provided an Italian-centric historical narrative from the foundation of the world to the 1260s, served not just to fill the reader’s head with facts before imparting to him an ethical framework by which he could use his theoretical-historical knowledge in the making of political order. It also

⁷⁸ Ibid., 1.1.1.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 1.1.3.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 1.1.4.

⁸¹ See Viroli, *From Politics*, 26.

⁸² Christel Meier, “Cosmos Politicus: Der Funktionswandel der Enzyklopädie bei Brunetto Latini,” *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 22:1 (1988) 315-356. Indeed it resembles the mirrors for princes which Latin Christians started to produce in increasing numbers in the thirteenth century. The most popular of these, Aegidius Romanus’s *De regimine principum* (produced between 1277-1279 at the request of King Philip III of France), was similarly divided into three sections discussing ethics, economics, and politics, and similarly adapted Aristotle’s moral philosophy for practical political ends (discussed in chapter one above). Two salient features of Latini’s *Tresor*, however, serve to differentiate it from Aegidius’s more popular political handbook. The first is one we have already seen: Latini’s focus is not on instructing his readership on the act of ruling in general, but of informing Italians how best to govern their towns according to the customs of Italy and the rhetoric of Cicero. The second is connected to the particularistic aims of the first: Latini in fact lodged his instruction on theoretical, practical, and political matters into a historical scheme most useful for Italians, as I discuss below.

served to situate and to motivate the ethical-political instruction of the later books.⁸³

History was thus intimately connected to Latini's political instruction, intimating how he purposed to show that fortuna's gift of lordship could be constrained into order by reason.

In his historical narrative, Latini described how after humankind became prone to doing evil, God created law (loi) to restrain the evil humans committed against God. Law appeared in two forms: divine and human. The scriptures contained the divine law, whereas the first human law came to Moses, and then was passed down through the centuries until it came into the possession of the Romans. Finally, Justinian "arranged and organized them better and more completely than all the other emperors before him, and fixed them just as they are now."⁸⁴ The laws, human and divine, were thus established, eternal, rational, and unchangeable. But law did not escape the historical change of political conditions. This was "because commanding or establishing law is of little value among men unless there is someone who can make them obey the law, in order to promote justice and punish wrong." Therefore "kings and lords of many kinds

⁸³ Hence, those authors who have written about Latini's *Tresor* as if it were not written in response to historical events have been mistaken in emphasis. See e.g. Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*, and Skinner, *Visions of Politics*, "Rediscovery of Republican Values"; but see David Napolitano, "Latini's *Politica*," where a somewhat granular argument about political context is made. That said Napolitano does not do much more than contextualize the *Tresor*, which is indeed important, but it misses the ways that Latini responds to that historical context within the *Tresor*, and this is what should most interest the historian of political thought. Moreover, it should not surprise us that Latini emphasized that rulers of cities should know about the decline of the Holy Roman Empire and the tumultuous career of the Emperor Frederick II in the thirteenth century. To Latini these events had their proper place under the rubric of the characteristics of law that a good judge must learn before he can judge cases and make peace in communities. Latini focused on the characteristics of law because Latini (like most medieval European intellectuals) thought that rulership was primarily the administration of justice, and the apprehension of the history of that administration of justice, which would help one to understand better the characteristics of law, would help one to understand the purpose of law and so of government and so to judge and thus to rule well. His discussion of Frederick II's reign falls into this wider explanation of law. That this section may also be termed a 'universal chronicle' does nothing to mitigate this argument about its place in the *Tresor* as a whole, unless someone somehow thinks that to label something is to fully comprehend its historical significance.

⁸⁴ Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 1.17.2.

were established.”⁸⁵ The actual content of the law was secure, stable, and rational, since it comes from God. The challenge was in making people obey it. This required virtuous and wise rulers. Hence after his consideration of the nature of law, Latini immediately proceeded to the practical considerations of rulership. Latini needed to describe how a ruler can make his people accept his judgments as legitimate. They could translate their ability to speak the law into an effectual politics of maintaining peace and order conducive to God’s eternal justice, in their respective and particular jurisdictions.⁸⁶ For Latini rhetoric constituted the science of governing cities, because rhetoricians can speak such that what they say is accepted by those who hear it said; Aristotelian ethics would help to form a ruler who could thus make and maintain order.⁸⁷ The ethics of lordship combined with the practice of rhetoric thus constituted the essential elements of instituting effectual lordship.

Latini cautioned readers against hereditary rulership, viewing it as a factor in instability. Thus he described how Roman emperors had in recent days fallen away from the task of instituting order and meting out law.⁸⁸ Claiming the throne by reason of

⁸⁵ Ibid., 1.18.4.

⁸⁶ I adopt this term from Harvey Mansfield, *Machiavelli’s Effectual Truth: Creating the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023). Latini’s ruler was actually to effect peace within the city, the highest good of social concord and the very purpose of lordship. And by making peace in such a way the lord could rule in accordance with reason. Thus even if he had his position, in some way, due to unreasonable *fortuna*, he could maintain it—or at least use it—in accord with reason and law, both of which were divine features. In this way humans could come to resemble God. This was the end or purpose of cities and human associations, as Latini understood things.

⁸⁷ In modern language we might describe it as a mechanism for the creation of legitimate authority to which people willingly consent.

⁸⁸ Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 1.87.4-1.89-92. Latini provided a historical narrative of how the Holy Roman Empire came to be ruled by emperors who were no longer bound by law and reason, and who therefore threw the empire into fortune’s realm. This account draws attention to the difference between the stability of imperial law and the instability of imperial rulership. From the outset, Latini says, the pope and the empire were bound together in dignity but not in concord. Indeed emperors persecuted Christians until the time of Pope Sylvester, who converted the Emperor Constantine. The confrontations briefly ended, but “then began the errors of the heretics who turned against Sylvester, for which reason many an emperor and many a king of Lombardy were corrupted by wrong belief, until the time of Justinian...” It was Justinian who, counselled by Pope Agapetus, promulgated the Roman law,

inheritance, which was merely a gift of fortuna, they failed to remember that fortuna raised them and could lower them in an essentially irrational manner, irrespective of their personal qualities. Thus “justice required” accession by election to the throne, “in such a way that the emperors would be elected for their goodness and prowess, not for reasons of heredity...”⁸⁹ This was particularly the case for Frederick II, who was the most gifted of emperors but who sought to make the empire a fully hereditary piece of property and thereby descended into tyranny and instability.⁹⁰ At least as Latini saw it, in the early 1260s Frederick’s actions led to the end of the empire.⁹¹ Heredity meant raw, irrational fortuna; rulership by election signified something more rational, effective, and therefore stable. “[Frederick] thought that he and his sons could take control of the empire and of the whole world so that it would never be out of their control. But we think one thing, and God thinks a completely different thing, for when he wants to trouble someone, he takes away his vision first of all, that is, his sense and good foresight.”⁹² As far as Latini could

whereby the Church prospered even as the empire was transferred to the French, the Italians, and then to the Germans. Hence the imperial law remained stable, despite changes of personnel. But that was not the end of the story. The German emperors ruled the Empire against the Church: so began the descent to imperial tyranny and the corruption of the law. See *ibid.*, 1.92.7.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.93.1.

⁹⁰ First, the good: “This Frederick had a heart greater than all other men’s, and he was marvelously wise and articulate, and he was very learned and knew all languages.” Second, the bad: “his heart’s only desire was to be lord of the world” (*Ibid.*, 1.95.1). To that end he had huge numbers of children by his three wives and by other women: explicitly abandoning the rule by election, he tried to make his dynasty inhabit the thrones of Europe by blood right (*Ibid.*, 1.95.1). The upshot was his death by his own illegitimate son Manfred, who, Latini says, strangled him (*Ibid.*, 1.97). For Latini, self-promotion eradicated the natural affection between family members.

⁹¹ The conflict between the popes and Frederick’s family was only solved by the deaths of the imperial family. The execution of Frederick’s grandson Conradin in 1268 marked how “the lineage of Emperor Frederick came to an end, so that from him or from his sons no seed remained on earth,” (*ibid.*, 1.98.9). But these deaths had a cosmic significance; it conjured a startling confusion: “...from the time of the first emperor of Rome, that is Julius Caesar, there had been, down to his Frederick II, ninety-five emperors and no more. If Merlin or Sibyl tell the truth, one finds in their books that in this reign the imperial dignity must come to an end, but I do not know if this refers to his lineage alone, or to the Germans, or if it means everybody,” (*ibid.*, 1.94.3). This greatest and worst of emperors had destroyed the lineage of empire itself.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 1.95.1-2. In fact what Latini proposes in his book is a veritable *translatio imperii*—not to another German family, but to the Italian towns and communes who ruled themselves along rational lines conducive to order. A stunning argument, given the disorder of the Italian towns.

see, the only places which were in fact ruled in conjunction with election and with the rational, eternal Roman law were the Italian towns, making the communal way of government the best.⁹³ That the popes, chosen by election of the cardinals, go unmentioned here demonstrates quite clearly the way that Latini dismissed the papacy as a model or a recourse for the maintenance of rational political order.⁹⁴

For Latini the purpose of the ruler was to make justice and order in the city; he thought that the elected Italian rulers did that best of all. In book three of the *Tresor*, when Latini came to write his treatise on how to govern the city—"the highest science and the most noble office there is on earth"—he described the origins and ends of government.⁹⁵ "Politics" to Latini included all arts necessary to achieve community life, but here he relegated himself to a discussion of the actions of the lord.⁹⁶ Lords had to rule and administer law to correct the evils of people who "through their pride subjected the weaker ones to the yoke of servitude."⁹⁷ People fleeing servitude came to live "in one place and in one order." Communal spaces arose at the same time as the moral notions conducive to communal life.⁹⁸ Latini's emphasis on the formation of place and of normative frameworks for communal life lead him to give an account of the diversity of different kinds of rulership.⁹⁹ What really interested Latini, however, were those who

⁹³ Ibid., 2.43.1: "There are three types of lordship: one of kings, the second of men, and the third of communes, which is the best of all."

⁹⁴ But see below, n. 97.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.73.1.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 3.73.2.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 3.73.2-3.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 3.73.3-4: "...and just as the people and dwelling are different and the customs and the rights are different throughout the world, so too do they have different types of rule." These diverse forms follow the diversity of geography and history. Some lords "were rightfully elected and others took power by force."⁹⁹ A diversity of lords, kings, castellans, dukes and others arose. A more significant way to differentiate these rulers, however, was by the terms of their tenure in office: some are "perpetual forever through themselves

ruled cities for one year in the Italian style. “These are of two types.” First, those who buy their office by kings or other lords; the problem with them is that the lords who sell these offices “are little concerned with their goodness or the advantage to the city dwellers.”¹⁰⁰ The best kind of government, therefore was of the second Italian kind, “for the citizens and the city dwellers and the communities of cities elect as magistrates and lords those they consider to be better and more profitable to the common good of the city and all its subjects.”¹⁰¹

Fundamentally what made the elective rulership of the Italian communes the best in Latini’s estimation was that it was the sole form of government that resisted the “cheance de fortune.”¹⁰² In order to choose a lord who will lead the city towards its telos (a state of civic sufficiency in which citizens could pursue the best life),

Il ne le doivent pas eslire par sors ne par cheance de fortune, mais par grant porveance de sage conseil, en quoi il doivent consirer .xii. choses.¹⁰³

they must not elect him by drawing lots or by leaving it up to chance [cheance de fortune], but rather they should do it with great deliberation and wise counsel, and they should consider twelve things when they choose.

and their heirs,” and some “are in office for all the days of their lives, as are the pope and the emperor in Rome and the others who are elected for life, or for years, as are mayors.”

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 3.73.5.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 3.73.6. Latini bases his judgment on the superiority of the ‘Italian’ system of government on a positive evaluation of the way its institutional framework of the Italian towns induced the pursuit of the common good. To him the electoral practice of choosing a lord for a year to rule a city led the lords to privilege the common good. This was not a bad constitutional argument for an author who knew Aristotle’s political theory only from the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

¹⁰² His evaluation of how electoral lordship leads to a better pursuit of the common good did not end there, for with this argument Latini sought to harmonize the destabilizing force of *fortuna* with the stability of deliberative reason. This is, however, an implicit argument which requires some interpretative analysis. Here we finally come to the primary interest of this section, which is to show how Latini thought that the Aristotelian judge-ruler could decide cases in such a way so as to restrain or mitigate *fortuna* in human affairs. Latini argued that the Italian form of government best harnessed *fortuna* by entwining it with *ratio* and law through the regulative function of speech. He contended that the electoral politics of the Italians—if practiced as they should be practiced—were grounded on the ability of the citizens to rationally choose their new lord.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 3.75.1.

Thus, for Latini, election of rulers was a means of counteracting chance and replacing it with reason. His twelve considerations are meant to show how to counteract the irrational tumble and churn of *fortuna*.¹⁰⁴ One of the problems with a ruler chosen according to *fortuna* was that he would end by destroying the internal harmony of the city.¹⁰⁵ Well-chosen and elected rulers might, on the other hand, protect that harmony.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 3.75.3-4: Some of these considerations are extremely practical, but they all tend toward limiting the criteria of selection to elements which demonstrate the rational, controlled morality of the candidate. Latini states that they should not choose a lord based on his family connections; rather they should look at his moral mores, “the nobility of his heart and the honorableness of his customs and his life and his virtuous works.” The ethical component of the selection thus becomes the paramount theme of the considerations. Among them Latini cautioned his readers that they should not choose a young lord because a young man can not have developed the practical wisdom necessary to be wise: “...Aristotle says that through a long period of being tested by many things a man becomes wise, and long testing cannot take place in anyone without a long life.” A similar consideration must be that the lord chosen has a healthy regard for justice, without which there is no normative scheme, and no meaning in communal life: “for Cicero says that sense without justice is not sense, but malice, and nothing can have value without justice.” Indeed the choice of a bad lord will lead to certain ruin and the destruction of cities, as Latini demonstrated by presenting the evidence of the general conditions of Italy. The criteria he described would lead to good lordship, but “...most people do not consider habits or virtues as much as they do strength of family or inclinations or love for the city in which he is born.” But these people do themselves an injustice and limit the possibilities of their lives, “for because war and hatred have so increased among Italians nowadays, and throughout the world in many lands, there is division in all the cities and enmity between the two factions of the citizens; indeed the person who acquires the love of one group acquires automatically the malevolence of the other.” (Ibid., 3.75.14-15.) It was likewise Frederick, in his drive to be “lord of all the world” stirring up trouble throughout Italy, who caused the two factions of Guelf and Ghibelline to arise. In other words the ill-effects of mistakes of election in the Italian cities were homological in function and perhaps evolved from the bad example of Frederick II. Latini thus observes a general reliance on *fortuna*, who reigned through hereditary succession, instead of the reasoned and deliberative discussion necessary for the good election of lords and conducive to stable governments; and Latini connected this desultory state of affairs to the effects of the reign of Emperor Frederick II. In this sense, then, Latini’s ‘republicanism’ is a response to the reign of Frederick II, because by it Latini tried to stabilize polities thrown into confusion, so he thought, by the wars and the moral failings of the former emperor.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 3.75.8: As one of the other considerations to use to choose a lord, Latini cautioned that the lord should be a good speaker who does not speak too much, “for excessive speaking cannot be without error, and just as one single string can cause a whole musical instrument to be out of tune, similarly by one bad word one’s honor and one’s speech can suffer.” The figure of speech was well chosen. The metaphor of musical harmony was famously used by Cicero in his *De re publica*, which came, as we saw earlier, to medieval readers through Augustine’s *De civitate dei*, to describe the status of a well-functioning *civitas*. Cicero had written,

Ut enim in fidibus aut tibiis atque ut in cantu ipso ac vobis concentus est quidam tenendus ex distinctis sonis...isque concentus ex dissimillarum vocum moderatione concors tamen efficitur et congruens, sic ex summis et infimis et mediis interiectis ordinibus ut sonis moderata ratione civitas consensus dissimillimorum concinit; et quae harmonia a musicis dicitur in cantu, ea est in civitate concordia, artissimum atque optimum omni in re publica vinculum incolumitatis, eaque sine iustitia nullo pacto esse potest.

Just as in the case of string instruments or flutes or the song of voices, a certain harmony (*concentus*) must be maintained out of distinct sounds...and this harmony, arising out of a

For Latini the bad speech of an ill-chosen ruler could cause the end of the harmony of the city, and even imperil, at least temporarily, the existence of the city, understood as a harmony of its citizens. At the same time, good speech in accordance with reason and memory—the two qualities of mind which distinguished humans from other beasts—signaled humankind’s resemblance with the deity, which was stability itself.¹⁰⁶ Dante perhaps recognized this when he says to Latini in the *Inferno* that “you taught me how a man makes himself eternal.”¹⁰⁷ For Latini the stability of human life was attainable only through reasoned speech in consultation with others (taking council) which produced actions taken not just because of will (*volonté*)—this animals could do too—but because of rational choice and deliberation, tending toward the institution of law. The rational faculty to deliberate about what to do in accordance with virtue and not just to will actions made humans able to overcome irrational *fortuna* and to exert some decisive effect on the course of their own lives.¹⁰⁸ For it was only through such

blending of most dissimilar notes, is nonetheless made concordant and in agreement, so a state (*civitas*) is made harmonious by the common agreement (*consensu*) of the most dissimilar elements through a blending of the highest, lowest and intermediate orders (*ordines*) as if they were musical notes. What the musicians call harmony in a song is concord in the state (*in civitate concordia*), and it can in no way exist without justice.

Cicero used the metaphor to describe how the Roman *civitas* would be if it were ruled by his ideal formal arrangements (roughly a strong Senate with a powerful executive). Latini and his readers would not have known this, because the quotation came to them through Augustine’s text. There Augustine argued that by Cicero’s own definition the Romans never had such an ideal *civitas*; they were too riven by internal conflict to match Cicero’s equation of a *civitas* with a *concordia omnium*. The text and translation are from Elizabeth Asmis’s translation in “A New Kind of Model: Cicero’s Roman Constitution in ‘De republica,’” *The American Journal of Philology* 126:3 (2005), 377-416, 405.

¹⁰⁶ Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 1.16.3.

¹⁰⁷ Dante, *Inferno*, XV:85. The divinity of human speech as described by Latini even found itself repeated, centuries later, in Thomas Mann’s novel *The Magic Mountain*, when Mann’s protagonist Hans Castorp is told by his Italian mentor Settembrini about Latini: “Have you heard of Brunetto Latini, chancellor of Florence around 1250, who wrote a book on the virtues and the vices? This Master first gave the polish (*Schliff*) to the Florentines, and taught them Speech as an art, in order to link their republic with the rules of politics.” Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg* (Berlin: S. Fischer, 1924), 243: Ob, fragte Settembrini, seine Zuhörer je von Herrn Brunetto gehört hätten, Brunetto Latini, Stadtschreiber von Florenz um 1250, der ein Buch über die Tugenden und die Laster geschrieben? Dieser Meister zuerst habe den Florentinern Schliff gegeben und sie das Sprechen gelehrt sowie die Kunst, ihre Republik nach den Regeln der Politik zu lenken.

¹⁰⁸ This Aristotelian argument is made throughout the second book of the *Tresor*.

deliberative choice that humans could maintain justice and so resemble God.¹⁰⁹ By maintaining justice, humans could replicate in some small way the divine stability of heaven amid the tragically transient tumult of terrestrial life.¹¹⁰

For Latini, justice was the virtue that would allow men to live together and so attain the formal end of humankind.¹¹¹ Hence justice was a mediating virtue that helped men to resolve disputes; for this reason money itself seemed to Latini to be just, as Cary Nederman has shown.¹¹² Indeed, the judge who makes order and harmony was for Latini like money.¹¹³ The lords or judges of cities are “those who maintain just equality and give

¹⁰⁹ Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 2.29.9: “True justice is not the one which is in the law; rather it is God our Lord, and it is given to man, and through justice man resembles God.”

¹¹⁰ This is why for Latini what he calls politics was the highest human art which “gives order and direction” to all other human activities, “and its end is also the end and fulfillment of the others; therefore, the good produced by this science is man’s good, because it constrains him to do good and to avoid evil.” Ibid., 2.3.1.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 3.28.

¹¹² Cary J. Nederman, “Commercial Society and Republican Government in the Latin Middle Ages: The Economic Dimensions of Brunetto Latini’s Republicanism,” *Political Theory* 31:5 (2003) 644-663. Latini showed that when a commercial transaction takes place, some debate—haggling—over the value of the goods is made. Ideally the two parties come to an agreement—achieve concord—about the value of the goods. Money itself thus occupied a more than economical place in Latini’s thought:

Por ce fu deniers trovès premierement, por çou k’il igaillassent les choses ki desigaus estoient; et deniers est ausi comme justice sans ame, por ce k’il est un mi par quoi les choses desigaus tornent a igaillité; et pet puet on baillier et prendre les grans choses et les petites par deniers. Et il es tuns estrumens par qui li juges puet fere justice, car deniers est loi sans ame, més li juges est loi ki a ame, et Diex glorieus est loi universal de toutes choses.

It was for this reason that money was first invented, because it is a middle ground through which unequal things become equal. A person can give and take great things and little things through money, for it is an instrument by which a judge can bring about justice; for money is law without a soul, but the judge has a soul, and God the glorious is the universal law of all things.

A surprise—money does what God does—or even, by making justice, brings God to earth. Not only does money encourage peace; more profoundly, for Latini it encourages the conditions that make peace possible by creating a mechanism through which common apprehensions of the value of commodities may be maintained.

¹¹³ The lord, who is justice with a soul, is similarly an equalizer whose chief instrument to making justice is ensuring equality (*ygaillance*). This exercise brings material prosperity to the city—the civic *grandezza* mentioned by Skinner and which would be most famously expressed in Leonardo Bruni’s *In Praise of the City of Florence* in the first decade of the fifteenth century. As Latini stated a century and a half before Bruni (*Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 2.29.3): Le jugeour d’ygaillance juge en fermeté por le maintenement de la loi, et croissent li citein, et multiplient li abiteour en champ et laboureur et terres et vignes. Et pour les mauvaistés ki sont fet es cites avienent li contraire, et a la fin torment iaus et lor choses a deserts et a bois. “The judge of equality remains steadfast in maintaining the law, and the citizens increase, and the landholders in the countryside multiply, as do the workers of the land and of the vineyards, and through the evil deeds which take place in the cities the opposite occurs, and finally they become deserts and woods.”

of the common good no more to the ones than to the others.”¹¹⁴ To be an effective lord, one must therefore be more than usually virtuous. The attainment of virtue would require an instruction in the general theoretical, ethical and rhetorical knowledge which the three books of the *Tresor* should teach the prospective signour. But clearly the actual prosecution of justice or equality would require a knowledge of particular things and particular laws, and how to relate general categories of reason to particular problems and situations. The faculty of mind and habit which, according to Aristotle, would allow the judge to align his general and universal concepts—his eternal reason—with the particularities of actual human experience—another nod to the variability of life in contrast to the supposed universality of mental categories—was what we translate today as equity; Brunetto Latini too required his judge or lord to have this faculty.¹¹⁵

Especially for this reason, Latini required his judge or lord to take council when he decided his cases. This was partly a reflection of the fact that rhetoric was an instrumental skill: it constituted speaking “thoughtfully in such a way as to make others

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 2.29.4.

¹¹⁵ Nicomachean Ethics, 5.10. Latini, *Tresor*, ed. Carmody, 2.49.1: Li plus conveable governemens ki soi ten la vie de l’ome, et a mains de paine et de travail, est celui ke l’om consire de maintenir soi et sa mesnie et ses amis. Et cil puet covenablement maintenir gens ki a la science de cest livre, por çou k’il sauura joindre les enseignemens universes avec les particulers, car citainnance commune est diverse de la particulere, aussie come en tous mestiers; car en cescune chose convient il conoistre les particuleres et les universaus choses, pour çou que seule esperiance n’est mie souffissans en ce. “The most noble government we have, and with less pain and grief, is the one we choose in order to maintain ourselves, our household and friends. The person who has knowledge of this book can govern people in a satisfactory way, because he will know how to unite universal teachings with particular ones; for common government is different from particular government, as is the case in all trades; in all things it is necessary to know particular and universal things, and experience alone does not suffice in the latter.” Universal things, he proceeds to explain, can be known only through a combination of experience in particular things and the general and universal teachings of philosophy. “The person who knows particular things through experience as well as the universal ones will be a perfect master of the law,” (Ibid., 2.49.3). The universality of Roman law needed to be reconciled with the ideals of justice, the customs of the city which the lord ruled, and the particular situation that confronted the judge-lord (Ibid., 2.119.1). Here Latini brings his theory down to the level of the individual, particular city republic.

believe what we say.”¹¹⁶ But the taking of council was not merely meant to convince listeners to obey the decision of the people by convincing them that the decision was a verbalization of communal reason. It actually was supposed to be rational, in touch with eternal law: it was therefore characterized by prudence. Prudence “is nothing but sense and wisdom.”¹¹⁷ Prudence, in other words, is the perspicuous apprehension of the real value of things; its attainment and exercise required the judge to not be transient in his judgments—a reed bending in running water—but to “remain the same in all places.”¹¹⁸ Prudence therefore would reproduce the rational stability of God and his law, and a corresponding eschewal of the effects of fortuna in matters of politics.

The problem of fortuna in political affairs was the problem of unpredictability. The constraint of fortuna was necessary for the maintenance of stable political orders conducive to justice and law. For Latini the stabilizing faculty of prudence was tied inextricably to the predictive powers it permitted and made possible. Prudence allowed humans to prepare for future events so as to affect and hopefully control them.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 3.2. He illustrated this dictum with the following account of how the lord should comport himself in judicial cases:

Et quant li sires a oïes le parties, lors de doit molt apenser comme il responde, ne il ne doit rien dire comme fols, mais sagement et penseement; et tout ce k’il commande et k’il establist soit par conseil, et soit estables, si k’il samble drois et sages en oevre et en parole, autrement son dit seroit en lieu de mokerie, et chacuns le tendra par noient (Ibid., 3.90.3).

When the lord has heard both sides, then he must think well of how to reply; he must not say anything foolishly, but wisely and thoughtfully, and everything he orders or decrees must be by counsel and sound, so that he seems just and wise in deed and in word; otherwise his decision will give rise to derision and everyone will consider it to be worthless.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 2.57.1. Prudence permits a person to “set things in order according to the dignity of their nature, not according to what many men think, for there are many things which appear to be good and are not, and others which are good and do not seem to be,” Ibid., 2.58.1.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 2.58.2. This insight would be necessary for the judge who must mediate between disputants: otherwise they would likely not accept his judgments. Furthermore, prudence is grounded in the taking of council and the receptivity to advice: “The nature of a wise man is to take thoughtful counsel before running after a false thing on a sudden whim.” Ibid., 2.58.3.

¹¹⁹ A man with prudence must dispose his “heart according to three times, as follows: organize those things which are present, prepare yourself for those things which are to come, and recall those which are past.” It is necessary to thus reflect because “the one who does not think of things gone by and past loses his life, like an unwise person,”

Preparation in particular interested Latini, for it was that which dealt explicitly with the attempt to anticipate events, as every lord of a city must do to control fortuna and maintain order.¹²⁰ It was through the exercise of prudence, and in particular its sub-faculty of preparation, that Latini thought a well-chosen and well-educated lord of a city could overcome fortuna and so maintain order in the city he ruled. Crucially this was because the prudent man would be aware of the difficulties of anticipating whatever fortuna would throw his way; hence he would prepare for any possible outcome. As Latini states, the prudent man would remember Seneca's exhortation "to abandon the foolish belief that his power will last forever," and recall "that all the things fortune has given him can be removed and that they flee faster than they come, and that one descends the same stairs by which one rose to great importance, and that there is no difference between the highest and the lowest fortune."¹²¹ Or as Latini earlier stated, "You should seek counsel when your life is prosperous; if you do, your prosperity will remain solidly in place. Do not move too hastily, but study the place to which you must go and the distance there."¹²² Like a *memento mori*, the recollection of fortuna inspired the seriousness to confront reality. The prudent ruler who could deliver justice could beat

while "the one who does not prepare himself for future things fails in all things like an unwise person and like a man who is not on his guard." Ibid., 2.58.6.

¹²⁰ Latini stated that preparation "is a present sense, and it seeks the arrival of future things"—therefore "it exists in two ways and has two functions." The first is that it sees presents things "and considers them carefully," and by thus acting it "prepares for all that can happen, and whether the result will be good or bad." This individual prediction must be complemented by the wisdom of the community—the common normative framework which makes a group of individuals into a *populus*: "After it has done this, it takes counsel and prepares itself through its wisdom against future misfortunes; for this reason one must see the evil which can happen, for if it does come, he will more easily be able to pass through it and bear up under it." Ibid., 2.60.1.

¹²¹ Ibid., 2.60.3.

¹²² Ibid., 2.58.8.

fortuna and resemble God; at least, he could maintain his city in stable political order and execute justice within it.¹²³

Latini taught his readers to control events. For Latini politics was the highest art that humans could practice because it enfolded all other human activities, and of all practices it brought humans closest to God through the mechanism of justice.¹²⁴ Latini sought to stabilize polities thrown onto the unmerciful whims of fortuna's wheel—and crucially, for the purposes of this dissertation, it must be noted that he did not once consider that the popes or their legates could meaningfully mitigate this state of affairs. Instead the route to heaven, the way to reform man once more into the image of God which God intended when he created humankind, was through republican self-government in accordance with universal reason and universal justice within the particular bounds of a particular city. Brunetto Latini's political theology (his 'republican' theory) bypassed the papacy and headed straight to God. If his argument seems convoluted, this only shows how complicated it was to develop a political theory in the 1260s that ignored the papacy.

Part Three: The Taming of Fortune's Tyrant: Rolandino the Republican

3.1: Fortune's Tyranny

Latini explained how republican polities could be stably ruled by virtuous judge-rulers, learned in Aristotelian ethics and imperial law. Rolandino had a rather different

¹²³ Recall that *fortuna* for Latini irrationally raised and lowered men irrespective of their abilities. But the justice of God raised the weak and lowered the proud according to their merits (ibid., 2.114). Thus, the earthly judge-ruler who controlled fortune and gave to each what he deserved (*suum cuique tribuere*) in service of rational justice did the work of God. The judge's combination of universal and particular knowledge, abstracted and experienced, channeled God's law and made of his city a tiny microcosm of God's stable and universal kingdom.

¹²⁴ On this point c.f. Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State*.

vision of how particular republican governments related to law and could remain independent without recourse to the superior authority of an emperor or a pope: Rolandino asserted that the Paduan *res publica* could be stabilized through the cultivation of communal reason, expressed in speech. Unlike Latini, Rolandino had not read Aristotle. His arguments depend on the notions of custom, memory, and reason. Nonetheless, it is a sophisticated explanation of how shared communal histories could help integrate disparate individuals into a community. Such a group could stand unified against tyranny, understood as the unstable rule of irrational *fortuna*. The instability of politics could not be mitigated by a reliance on the external authority of the Roman papacy. Peace and order must come from within the independent city republic.

A short reading of an important section of the Chronicle helps clarify how Rolandino understood the instability of history. Rolandino described how Emperor Frederick II “rode to Padua, accompanied magnificently” in 1239, the 25th of January.¹²⁵ He brought with him followers from his wide empire: not just ambassadors from Cremona, the Lombard city he held in highest regard and whose citizens fought “for the honor of the emperor,” but also Germans, Apulians from his southern kingdom, Saracens, “certain barbarians—and even certain Greeks.”¹²⁶ The world thus came to Padua; and Padua went to meet the world, when Ezzelino, the emperor’s representative in the Trevisan March, rode out with a suitable honor guard of Paduan milites to meet the emperor five miles outside the city.¹²⁷ According to Rolandino, the Paduans met their beloved emperor “with much joy, both milites and pedites [foot] sounding cymbals and citharas and instruments of diverse kinds; and they led out their carroccio decorated

¹²⁵ Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 4.9.

¹²⁶ Idem: . “...barbari quidem et eciam quidam Greci.”

¹²⁷ Idem.

with copious adornments.”¹²⁸ One of the Paduans climbed to the top of the carroccio, took down two of the communal banners, and set them into the emperor’s hands even as he hopefully asseverated: “May this represent to you, most potent lord, your commune of Padua, and by the crown on your head may you conserve Padua in justice.”¹²⁹

Here in Rolandino’s narrative are all the elements of a positive view on imperial rulership as an earthly facsimile of God’s heavenly stability.¹³⁰ But Rolandino’s task in this the fourth book of his Chronicle was to demonstrate how the corrupt rulership of Frederick and Ezzelino threw the city of Padua out of synchronicity with the divine and stable ideal order of things, embodied in reason and justice (*ratio* and *iustitia*), and into the floodwaters of fortuna’s irrational and changing kingdom. Here again, just as we saw with Brunetto Latini, we find that republicanism is proffered as the best means of securing a stable and firm city, even as the imperial rulership of Frederick and then the tyranny of Ezzelino is equated with a kind of molten river of chance that burned away the normative practices of the semi-divine Paduan civitas.

Rolandino continued his narrative of Frederick’s imperial visit to Padua, whereby he demonstrated that Frederick’s failed rulership was characterized by the rule of fortuna—that is, that the emperor was subject to variability and change. After visiting certain castles (*castra*) in the vicinity, Frederick returned to the city to observe and take part in an important imperial spectacle which illustrated how the emperor was the tangible liminality connecting divine justice

¹²⁸ Idem. The emperor spoke to Ezzelino as if he were his equal (*pariter*) and expressed that “he never had seen, on this or that side of the sea, nor in any other part of the world, a people (*gentem*) so communally (*communiter*) accomplished, marked by such good customs, and so courtly...”

¹²⁹ Ibid., 4.9.

¹³⁰ The emperor is lord of the world and the font of justice, *iustitia*, as proclaimed in the text of Justinian’s ancient law code. The city of Padua hosts the emperor and so becomes the site of the world’s people and the seat of the world’s ruler, however briefly; meanwhile the emperor intimates his friendship by speaking not just familiarly, *familiariter*, but even equally, *pariter*, with the city’s lord, Ezzelino. Thus Rolandino merged the quotidian practice of itinerant imperial lordship with the normative claims of a world-wide, neo-Roman, heaven-bound imperial ideal.

and the world. On Easter Sunday, the emperor showed himself crowned, sitting on a throne, while his scribe Pier della Vigne spoke of the federation of mutual love (*amor*) between the Paduans and the emperor.¹³¹ But if the Gospel crucifixion elevated a self-humbled god, the emperor's turn of fortune at this point showed his abject failure to approximate the stability of heaven. Immediately after he acted like a representative of God on earth, it was learned that he had been excommunicated by the pope in Rome, proving to Rolandino that "the time of one hour contains hardly any stability."¹³²

The sudden failure of the emperor's fortunes begins to indicate the stakes of these political problems as Rolandino understood them.¹³³ The emperor was defeated by *fortuna*, which revealed God's justice; at the same time, his record as ruler was equated or at least aligned with the rule of *fortuna*.¹³⁴ Moreover, Rolandino described Ezzelino's tyranny as simply an

¹³¹ Ibid., 4.9. Set sequente solempnitate de ramis palmarum, totus quasi populus paduanus convenit in Prato Vallis, quoniam mos est in tali die quod paduana gens illic totaliter congregata. Ibi dompnus imperator, sedens in emincenciori loco in suo throno, se cuncti hostendit hylarem et iucundum. Et Petro de Vinea apulo, eius iudice, pro ipso dompno sapienter locuto, inter dompnum imperatorem et paduanum populum federavit quodammodo multam benivolenciam et amorem. Secutum est potmodum festum Pasce et dompnus imperator, audita sollempnitate missarum in maiori ecclesia, propter honorem diei, dum ad Sanctam Iustinam redirect, hostendit se cunctis videntibus capite coronato.

¹³² Ibid., 4.9: Hic autem potuit manifeste notari quod divina potencia ludit in rebus mundi et tempus unius hore vix continent certam fidem. Nam ante septem dies in Padua murmuratum est per populum paduanum quod Rome papa Gregorius, in die de cena Domini nunc transacta, Fridericum ipsum imperatorem excommunicatum pronunciaverat, cunctis gentibus congregates ibidem propter indulgenciam, quam annuatim facit apostolica Sanctitas tali die.

¹³³ They were not just questions of who would prevail, pope or emperor, in a political spat over issues relating to the relative valuations of official honors; they were issues whose results were inextricably connected with the profoundest problems of fate, divine providence, and the human ability to limit the sway of *fortuna* in human affairs. The events related above proved that the emperor did not have a monopoly on the execution of God's justice. Though Rolandino attributes Frederick's fall to a revelation of divine justice, its suddenness marked it as an appearance of *fortuna*; the two concepts are for him clearly correlated.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 4.10. After the excommunication Frederick's true nature was soon revealed, and the divine claims of his regime stripped bare, becoming mere assertions of human power. In the next scene Rolandino described how Pier delle Vigne, Frederick's eloquent judge, convened the people of Padua to convince them that Frederick's excommunication was undeserved, the product of a rivalrous pope, while Frederick ruled as emperor just as all emperors had ruled since Charlemagne. But the emperor's failure to rule in favor of the common good soon became apparent when he convened a secret council and then, "pretending to act to confirm concord," sent a number of Paduan *milites* as hostages of good behavior to his kingdom in Apulia. Soon thereafter Emperor Frederick entrusted *castra* in the Paduan district not to local allies but to Saracens dependent on him—prudent but abrasive to local sentiment. The emperor cultivated favor with the Paduans by giving them trusteeship of spread of land near the rebellious town of Treviso, affirmed by a gold-bordered bull of imperial privileges (Ibid., 4.12). Thereafter the

intensification of this irrational rule of fortuna, making the downfall of that tyranny the chance to restore stable and rational political order.¹³⁵ All this fit into Rolandino's conception of how the phenomenal world was dangerous and unstable, needing to be brought partially to heel through methods of prediction. As Rolandino commented on the events of 1230: "Whatever is engendered in this world is utterly perishable and lasts for only a moment."¹³⁶ This instability was connected to fortuna, a deity indifferent to the reasonableness or morality of human affairs: "Behold, now the times themselves were signaling that the circle of Ezzelino's fortune had turned around and a different fate was threatening him from the occurrences of his past life."¹³⁷ Fortuna was a two-faced goddess indifferent to human pleas, its course impossible to predict, elevating some people and not others.¹³⁸

It was partly the difficulty of prediction which linked fortuna with tyranny for Rolandino. The victories of the tyrant Ezzelino were impossible to predict, and news of them destabilized settled centers of power.¹³⁹ Likewise Ezzelino's injustice seemed two-faced and unknowable. In part this was the result of Ezzelino's deliberately closed governing style and his replacement of the public places of the commune with the private spaces of the tyrant, particularly symbolized by Ezzelino's building of a rival city underneath Padua, which constituted the prison he

emperor left for Lombardy, the sun was obscured as he left, and the fruits of his rule were soon revealed in Ezzelino's brutality. Thus the news of the excommunication of the emperor revealed his essential perfidiousness. The sense of the irrationality of *fortuna*, which I discuss below, sits uneasily in Rolandino's conceptions with his apparently contradictory sense that all events are ordained by God in the pursuit of justice; see e.g. *ibid.*, 4.10 above.
¹³⁵ As I discuss below; on Rolandino's understanding of *fortuna* and the prediction of events, see Arnaldi, *Studi sui cronisti*, *passim*.

¹³⁶ Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 3.1. It continues: "For in the following year, 1230, error and dissension spread in the March, which had been so quiet a little earlier."

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.5.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.23.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.9: *Constristatus vero medullitus Manutam properans, illic retulit sinistrum eventum, qui scilicet totam Marchiam constristavit, Lombardie magnam partem conterrui, fecit trepidare Romagnam et, quod plus est, sanctam Sedem apostolicam condolare.*

established to hold the political prisoners of his regime.¹⁴⁰ Just like the tyrant he was, Ezzelino trusted in “towers and gates” more than he trusted his own people to guard him; from his lair uncaused orders for executions emerged.¹⁴¹ Furthermore, the creation of a new city meant that Ezzelino had no respect for the old city of Padua, whose customary ways he denigrated and corrupted, linking his record as ruler to change and thus to instability.

If political order was to be restored and then maintained, fortuna would have to be controlled through the prediction of events. One of the ways that people could try to do this was through astrology, but Rolandino mistrusted it and aligned it with tyrants like Frederick and Ezzelino. Astrology offered the promise of a direct understanding of history, an inner look at the logical necessities of historical events, ordained by the movements of the stars themselves following the primal movement of the ‘first mover.’¹⁴² Astrologists populate the pages of the Chronicle, but Rolandino showed that their predictions seldom matched outcomes. For instance, Rolandino described how Frederick II trusted the predictions of Theodore, his imperial astrologer. But even the imperial astrologer erred when advising Frederick:

Et horam mocionis elegit per consilium magistri Theodori, sui astrologi, qui stetit cum astrolabio sursum in turri communis expectans, ut dicebatur, quod ascenderet prima facies vel horoscopus Leonis, cum diceret Iovem esse in illo.¹⁴³

[Frederick] chose the hour of departure [to proceed with military force against a rebellious town] with the advice of his master Theodore, his astrologer, who stood aloft in the tower of the commune waiting, as it was said, for the ascent of the first face of the horoscope of Leo, since he said that Jupiter was in it.

¹⁴⁰ This was the “Tartarus” built by the tyrannical builder, the vile artifex: *ibid.*, 5.10.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 5.13.

¹⁴² In the Trevisan March there were few in 1259 who could read the stars and so predict the restoration of the superior order of justice, according to Rolandino; see e.g. *ibid.*, 4.11: *Dici namque potest veraciter quod hic erat annus ille, quo gens fidelis in imperio Romanorum gaudere debebat in summo, utpote si angelica previo reserasset aliquibus sanctis viris vel revolutio planetarum docuisset astrologos quod hoc anno futurum erat, quia nempe malorum innumerabilium finis, servilis catene confractio, initium libertatis, mortis et tormentorum exempcio et totius humani generis consolamen, ut in sequentibus, Domino concedente, dicetur.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 4.12.

But, Rolandino explains, the sky was overcast, and so Theodore made a fatal mistake, predicting a victory when the stars in fact informed him of an imperial defeat: thus was the consilium offered by an astrologer. Indeed, the final defeat of Ezzelino occurred after an astrological misreading.¹⁴⁴ For Rolandino, Ezzelino's reliance on astrology demonstrated that he was a heathen and an idolater; astrology did not help him to predict events or maintain his own kind of political order, it only showed his infidelity to God.¹⁴⁵

Rolandino preferred other ways to control fortuna, which were more conducive to free republican modes of living. Unlike the astrologers, Rolandino seemed to think that the historian had a privileged access to prediction, undergirded by a kind of communitarian rationality. The morality of this knowledge was bound to its condition of being known after the fact, from the history of one's community. This becomes clear when we read how, after Ezzelino suffered a defeat on the banks of the river Adda, Rolandino realized that the name 'Adda' was prophetic.

Et, si liceret futura prenoscere, per totam Ytaliā poterat fluminis Adde transitus desiderari, non aliter quam per sanctam Christi crucem et passionem Adde primi hominis restauratio sive remedium poterat expectari. Quare puto forsitan quod pura bonitas antiquorum pronosticatione, licet non editate, imposuit illi fluvio nomen Addam, ut nos Adde filii, protoplasti nostri primarii, simus illic ad Addam exempti et liberate de baratro et voragine insaciabilis Ecelini.¹⁴⁶

And, if it were right to foretell the future, the river Adda would be wished to flow through all Italy, as if the restoration or remedy of the first man Adam could be expected through the holy cross and passion of Christ. So I believe that the pure goodness of our ancestors, although not consciously, by prognostication gave that river the name Adda so that we sons of Adam, formed from him, would, at the Adda, be freed and liberated from the yawning chasm of the insatiable Ezzelino.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 12.12.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid. Rolandino also likened astrology to magic: "But let us now leave this material, so that we may not seem to claim magic charms for these things, in which we have never trusted." In the next line he gives an explanation for his own knowledge of astrology: "Nor do we want to waste our time, although we should not criticize anyone who as far as he can tries to have a smattering of every branch of learning."

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 12.7.

For Rolandino the best way to predict events, contain fortuna, and thus maintain political stability was to study history, because history was the study of signs revealed to be such by God, recollected and repurposed for the future. The “unmeditated foreknowing” of the Paduan ancestors named the Adda river: the past, present, and future of Padua were interlinked and somehow intelligible. Here are the elements of Rolandino’s epistemology of republicanism. It is characterized by the communal type of knowledge gained through speech in open council that would permit the rulers of a republican city to predict events through the knowledge of the past. By so doing, they could control events and so (temporarily) defeat fortuna—a feat necessary for the maintenance of order in a republican polity.

3.3: Rolandino’s Communal Reason as a Response to Fortuna

I have just shown how Rolandino, at one level of argumentation, framed his political exemplum as a response to the reign of fortuna, symbolized by the tyrannical rule of Frederick II and Ezzelino da Romano in Padua. In general, Rolandino’s attempt to contain fortuna was an effort to show how political order could be maintained in a city republic independent of the emperor and the papacy. Fundamentally, this dissertation’s interest in outlining and reconstructing disparate arguments about how to restore political order extends to the arguments of Rolandino and Latini in the way that they sidelined that papal role, undergoing contortions of argumentation to do so.¹⁴⁷ In the case of Rolandino, predictive powers of the Paduan ancestors when they named the Adda river emerges as a sign of his general if implicit sense that the

¹⁴⁷ Of course, the evaluative valences of the empire and the papacy advance along differing paths in Rolandino. He shows that the emperor is untrustworthy, needing to be jettisoned if the city is to have freedom from tyranny and *fortuna*. On the other hand, the papacy is in some sense the agent of Padua’s restoration; only, as I showed in the first section of this chapter, it can not be trusted to actually effect that restoration, which must come from within, specifically through the recovery of the traditional and customary symbols and forms of Paduan republican life.

prediction of political events, the taming of fortuna, and the maintenance of political order could be accomplished via the proper harnessing of the communal reason of the Paduan people. All this could be achieved without the leadership or the interference of the papacy.¹⁴⁸ The reconstruction of that conception of the independent predictive powers of a free republic now concerns us; because Rolandino's account of the decline of that reason lies in his narrative of the rise of Ezzelino's tyranny, his positive account of community rationality can best be reconstructed by paying attention to that narrative.

As we have seen, a common theme in thirteenth-century Italian texts on politics is the connection between language, reason, and peace, a theme that emerges also in Rolandino's conception of rational prediction and the ability to maintain political order in the face of fortuna.¹⁴⁹ The concern with the benefits and dangers of rhetoric descended from Cicero's rhetorical handbook, the *De inventione*, where Cicero observed that eloquence, combined with reason, was the maker of civilization—it created law, which created rational political order without any imposition by violence—but that eloquence without reason constituted demagoguery, which led to the decline of law and good political order and the rise of politics by

¹⁴⁸ With all due respect to the role of the legate in the preliminary freeing of Padua from Ezzelino's rule.

¹⁴⁹ For example, In his *De arte loquendi et tacendi* (1244), Albertano of Brescia taught his readers that language, as the instrument of communication between people living together in society, was a powerful tool for politicians good and bad. Albertano based his argument on the opening chapters of Cicero's *De inventione*, and our friend Brunetto Latini produced a Tuscan translation of the *De inventione* about fifteen years after Albertano wrote. As we have seen, Enrico Artifoni has argued that the cultivation of rhetoric in thirteenth-century Italy marked the development of a new "technology of power." With this 'tool' the enterprising politician could be a demagogue, or he could be an orator working for the common good of the community. Rolandino's ideas about peace, reason, and language are substantially similar to Cicero's positions, making a short summary of them useful. On Albertano of Brescia see Marina Gazzini, "Guides for a Good Life: The Sermons of Albertano da Brescia and other Instructions for Citizens and Believers in Italian Medieval Confraternities," in *A Companion to Medieval and Early Modern Confraternities* (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 157-175; and James F. Powell, *Albertanus of Brescia: The Pursuit of Happiness in the Early Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992). On language and politics, see Enrico Artifoni, "Retorica e organizzazione del linguaggio politico nel duecento italiano," 157-82, p 159; Idem, "Gli uomini dell'assemblea, l'oratoria civile, I concionatori e i predicatori nell società comunale," 144-88.

coercion.¹⁵⁰ For Rolandino, of course, Ezzelino was just such a demagogue. In Rolandino's estimation, governments (regimentes) were designed to make peace in accordance with reason in cities. The words of a peace-maker in Rolandino's Chronicle are informative.

De summa Dei Providencia creditur processisse quod sunt in civitatibus regimina constituta, ut scilicet violencie refrenentur, prohibeantur rapine, iura conserventur illesa, maleficia et superbie retundantur.¹⁵¹

Our belief is that it was by the supreme providence of God that governments were established in cities to check violence, to prevent robbery, to preserve the laws unimpaired, and to control evil-doing and arrogance.

Just as Brunetto Latini blamed the civic chaos of Italy on Frederick II's dynastic ambitions, Rolandino showed that the political order of the Trevisan March was first broken by aristocratic groups (including the family of Ezzelino da Romano) engaged in murderous marital disputes.¹⁵² For Rolandino this intrusion of private matters into public affairs poisoned public language, rationality, and the possibilities of peace and order. It threw politics out of joint with reason, and into the realm of chances of fortuna while destroying the essential humanity of the people

¹⁵⁰ Cicero (in *De inventione*, 1.2) began the text by asking whether eloquence has had good or bad effects. On one hand it appeared that the danger to the Roman Republic was caused by "men of eloquence." Yet historical records demonstrated that many wars ended "not only by the use of reason but also more easily by the help of eloquence." But, Cicero argued, it need not be so: for communal life itself was established by a man of great eloquence, an orator who established the values of communal life through the persuasion of his speech. As Cicero tells it, men used to live without *ratio* and law, but relied like beasts on physical strength to dominate their neighbors. But a lawgiver gathered these people living as beasts together and turned them into social humans "through reason and eloquence" (*propter rationem atque orationem*). Eloquence inspired law, understood as customary and communal morality and norms, which induced the stronger man to bend to the weaker in matters of law and "to be accustomed willingly to obey others, and to think it right not only to encounter toil for the sake of the general advantage, but even to run the risk of losing their lives." Hence, good speech created authority. According to Cicero oratory was not at fault for the political anarchy of late republican Rome. Instead he blamed it on eloquent men who lacked reason. Eloquence combined with wisdom formed moral and political languages and thus made possible the communal life of cities, but eloquence without reason was demagoguery and corrupting. Cicero, *De inventione* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), translated by R.M. Hubbard.

¹⁵¹ Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 3.2.

¹⁵² On which see Diana C. Silverman, "Marriage and Political Violence in the Chronicles of the Medieval Veneto," *Speculum* 86:3 (2011): 652-687.

engaged in it.¹⁵³ Moreover, this intrusion of the private into the public damaged not just law but the social customs of the group. Hence, under the effect of Ezzelino's demagogic tyranny, warfare became bloodier and more murderous.¹⁵⁴ This fact again intimates the general loss of an essential human attribute, "the root of natural affection," which permitted human communal life.¹⁵⁵ The contributing decline of the judgment necessary to perceive the truth behind utterances was of course propelled by Ezzelino's own consummate skill as a speaker, contributing to a consequent decline in rational decision making on the part of the tyrannized Paduans.¹⁵⁶

The rise of Ezzelino constituted the destruction of the commune, which entailed the destruction of the community and the rational life it encouraged. For Rolandino the commune was not merely a power-sharing device for aristocratic lineages, but the customary political mechanism through which was expressed human rationality; in this conception, humans are understood as social beings whose reason is expressed and manifested in speech and social actions like warfare.¹⁵⁷ For example, Rolandino says that Ezzelino attained prominence in Padua

¹⁵³ Even the efforts of one Gerardo, "a man revered for his deeds and speech" who "proceeded to the army of each faction, and like a holy Orpheus, who is said in the fables of poets to calm tigers, to have soothed raging lions, interposed his person with his sweet and holy words," was unable to ultimately make peace between the warring factions organized around the da Romano and the Camposanpiero families: Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 1.4. In other words, the feuding aristocrats resemble the animals whom Orpheus calmed, but they are even more bestial than them because they are not pacified by Gerardo's eloquent *ratio*. In fact they resemble the ancient tyrants who have "been sent to hell, delivered by eternal damnation, mangled by the whips of demons and torments," (ibid., 1.5).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 1.9.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 1.9: *Iam ecce devenit ad tantum, quod non solum inimicus ab inimico, set nec hospes tutus ab hospite reperitur, non est fratri frater innocuus et vix adhuc filius diligitur a parente, nec sumus equidem bene certi si hec radix naturali affectus, que adhuc filo tenui retinetur, durare poterit in futurum.* Compare ibid., 1.13, where the peoples of the Trevisan March gather in a festival of love revolving around bloodless contests of chivalry.

¹⁵⁶ Commenting on its effects, Rolandino stated "So I have seen a fish at times deceived by hook, birds taken by reeds, the wolf by food." (ibid., 2.17). Here the dehumanizing effect of demagoguery are again affirmed and emphasized.

¹⁵⁷ Rolandino says little about the meaning of the 'commune', but we know from the Vincenzan lawyer Gerardo Maurisio, who twenty years before Rolandino's composition wrote the chronicle now known as the *Chronicle of the Lords Ezzelino and Alberigo* (*Cronica dominorum Ezelini et Alberici*), that the commune could be understood as a power-sharing device devised to facilitate peace between aristocratic factions and the elite citizens of the towns of the Trevisan March. In Gerardo's text the brothers Alberigo and Ezzelino appear as the chivalrous lieutenants of a just emperor. Gerardo's sense of what a 'commune' was helps us to understand Rolandino's political thought. For Rolandino, Ezzelino was the embodiment of tyranny precisely because Ezzelino monopolized power for himself; this monopolization of power gradually corrupted political speech. This led to the decline of the "root of natural

through the legal legitimacy of the emperor Frederick II; but soon he abandoned the normative restraints of Paduan rulership and “openly spewed forth the venom of his heart.”¹⁵⁸ At the same time he instituted a spy network whose purpose was to silence speech in Padua.¹⁵⁹ This limiting of speech constituted a limitation on human rationality, a limitation which reflected the rise of Ezzelino’s bestial tyranny and the decline in Padua of its traditional public reason.¹⁶⁰

affection” which made possible coexistence and peace. Maurisio thought the commune must be ruled “in common” (*communiter*) between aristocratic lineages who tried to dominate the entire March. For Rolandino such a situation represented the degradation not only of the regime but of humanity as such: the commune should not be the possession of a coven of aristocrats. The difference between the two contemporaries lay in completely different conceptions of what a ‘commune’ is and what politics within it should be. See Gerardo Maurisio, *Cronica Ecelini et Alberici Fratrum de Romano* (Città di Castello: Tipografia della Casa Editrice S. Lapi, 1937), ed. Giosue Carducci and Vittorio Fiorini: 19: Istis potestatibus successit dominus Rambertinus de Bononia; hic se regebat secundum voluntatem cuiusdam comitis, noviter facti in civitate Vincencie in odium domini Ecelini et sue partis. Cuius comitis tanta erat potencia quod, cum partes consuete fuerint per medium officiales habere, tunc sibi terciam partem omnium officialium adsumebant, quod in potestaria Comitis et domini Guidonis precedentium primo fuerat illi communi concessum, et favebat commune predictum parti comitis in totum, quamvis se commune faceret ficticie nominari, et sic pars domini Ecelini non habebat nisi partem terciam et pars comitis duas...” Maurisio lost most of his fortune in 1237 when Emperor Frederick II sacked Vicenza. He partly wrote the *Cronica* to persuade Ezzelino and his brother to ask Frederick to restore his property to him.

¹⁵⁸ Rolandino, *Cronica*, ed. Fiorese, 8.1 Rolandino thought that the decline of “natural affection” was reflected in Ezzelino’s disloyalty to the Emperor Frederick II, a betrayal, moreover, which reaffirmed how the rule of Frederick had been marked by the rule of unpredictable *fortuna*. Frederick II made Ezzelino his vicar of the Trevisan March (*ibid.*). At first Ezzelino, ruling Padua as the “representative of the Roman name” (*nuncium Romani nominis*) refuses the office of Paduan *podestà*, and maintained a regime “under a good appearance,” (*ibid.*) This represents Ezzelino’s adoption of the normative political vocabulary of the Paduan commune and his ability to disguise his dominion behind the traditional forms of rulership. Such extra-judicial executions as happened were disguised as accidents. See *ibid.*, 3.12, 4.1, 4.3.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.11; 5.9.

¹⁶⁰ Ezzelino’s disguise vanishes entirely with the accession to rulership in Padua of his nephew Ansedisio dei Guidotti, who ended the possibilities of communal speech, and thus of the *ratio* and *pax* which well-ordered speech could offer. In *Chronicle*, edited by Fiorese, 6.4, Rolandino states that everyday in Padua “many knights and burghers gathered in the hall of the *podestà*’s palace and conversed.” At one of these gatherings a sparrowhawk reminded someone of a verse by Aesop. The man set the poem to paper; the verses were read to the judge of the *podestà* in appreciation of their charm. Then they were relayed to the *podestà*, and “finally the content of these verses was given a bad interpretation.” They served as pretext for Ansedisio, who “had been spending his nights and days diligently looking for an excuse to scatter the people of Padua.” On the basis of the verses he ordered his own judge and a number of notaries arrested. The arrests led to an outcry, and Ezzelino came and tried to soothe people in an assembly, but it was no use, for the people now “saw and understood quite clearly the evil purpose, the base will, and the wicked designs of Ezzelino.” Now bereft of their speech (only Ezzelino and Ansedisio could speak in the assembly), the Paduans became accustomed to domination: “they gradually learned to endure the harshest of experiences,” as when someone “terrified of a grievous ulcer, will let the sharp steel cut even to his bowels.” Fear and the subversion of language established irrational servility as the distinguishing marker of the new Paduan way of life. “Public reason” is of course a phrase taken from John Rawls, on which see “The Idea of Public Reason Revisited,” *The University of Chicago Law Review* 64:3 (1997), pp. 765-807; I use it only in a very attenuated manner, owing to the sense that Rolandino gives that good republican life was marked by a shared harmony of speech and action among the citizens of the republic, which amounted to rational agreement (being shared in speech, and having reasons for it) about the best way of life.

The defeat of Padua's customary public reason—symbolized by the decline of open speech and other shared activities under Ezzelino's tyranny—led to the subjection of the Paduans to the rule of irrational and unstable fortuna. If the independent and restored Paduan *res publica* were to last long without succumbing once more to a tyrant like Ezzelino—given Rolandino's belief that the papacy could not provide adequate leadership even to the restored Padua—it would need to be able to withstand fortuna and to continue in the concordant ways that were conducive to public order. This is where the Chronicle of Rolandino appears as a salvation for independent Paduan republicans. History for Rolandino would protect the communal reason that was necessary for the correct prediction of events that was itself necessary to defeat fortuna and so maintain political order. Rolandino's teacher Boncompagno da Signa helps to show how history was related to human rationality and the maintenance of order for Rolandino. In his history of the siege of the city of Ancona (*Liber de obsidione Ancone*), Boncompagno wrote that before humans had historical narratives (*memoria*) and good speech, they lived like irrational beasts and could not speak about law (*lex*) or their customs (*mores*).¹⁶¹ History, understood as

¹⁶¹ Boncompagno da Signa, *L'assedio di Ancona: Liber de obsidione Ancone* (Rome: Viella, 1999) edited and Italian translation by Paolo Garbini, 112-114: "Quantum omnis rerum gestarum memoria conferat utilitatis, ipse rerum effectus manifestius indicat, quoniam nullus hoedie res arduas facere attemptaret, si ea sub silentio forent penitus pretermessa, que ab antiquis ommendabiliter esse acta noscuntur. Viverunt siquidem homines tanquam animalia irrationabilia et passim bestiarum more vagarentur nec uterentur aliqua ratione animi, si corporis tantummodo satisfacerent voluptati. Sic ergo esset humana conditio in partem reflexa, ut nichil fieret equabili deliberation, nichil tractaretur lege vel moribus, set quorumlibet potentium voluntas pro iure haberetur, et imbecilles pati solummodo, non agree oporteret. Fieret autem quilibet orbicularis circa revolution, et dum hinc inde mortua oppinio resultaret, multiplex de novo consurgeret error, qui diverso libramine in ceca penderet statera; et dum librarentur plurima, inveniretur idem a quo natum fuerat et progressum, quod reperit primus. Redacta fuerunt igitur in scriptis facta maiorum, ut humana propago successivis uteretur exemplis, et cum audit quantam victoriosi gloriam reportabant, de virtute in virtutem ascendat; et dum intelligit quanto ludibrio criminosi et pusillanimes respergebantur, a similibus caveat, ne parem infamiam ex post facto incurrat. Nam cum reste ges et maiorum acta recoluntur, ad eadem facienda passibus tenditur affectuosis, ut de re consimili similis valeat gloriari." Boncompagno proceeded to describe developments in human history as resulting from men being inspired by *exempla* of their ancestors, and he includes in this historical theory Ancona's experience in 1176 which was itself, he says, an *exemplum* (p. 116). He continued to give a vivid description of the city of Ancona and its geography that is justly famous on p. 116. For Boncompagno, a shared history was constitutive of communal life, which was constitutive of human rationality. Boncompagno made this argument by way of introducing his own examples of the glorious deeds of the ancestors (*antiqui*) of the Anconans in the *Liber*, in which he celebrated the victory of the self-governing and liberty-loving

the ordered conveyance of exempla demonstrating how to live well, was the means whereby humans attained rational communal life—shared behaviors and speech that were agreed to be good by the members of the community. Similarly, Rolandino’s *Chronicle* was, in his own words, a monicio meant for the citizens of all republics containing exempla of why tyranny, which was rule by fortuna, was bad and how to ward it off in the future. The communal memoria contained in his chronicle would reinforce rationality, helping thereby to defeat tyranny and fortuna and to maintain political order.¹⁶² In a sense, Rolandino’s *Chronicle* was to provide exempla for speeches in the public assemblies of the Italian towns. But far from being a mere book of examples, it was meant to teach readers how to rationally defend the independence of their republics by teaching them how to recognize a tyrant and how to deal with him in the future.

Conclusion

The subject of this dissertation is how late thirteenth-century Italian chroniclers thought about how to restore political order; I use the role of the papacy in their political thought as the theme around which to organize their arguments. In this chapter I have discussed authors who either rejected or disregarded entirely the papacy’s role in the

Anconitans over the imperial forces of Frederick Barbarossa. The *Liber* is characterized by the vast number of speeches spoken by the Anconitan protagonists, in which they proclaim their love for liberty and hatred for lordship, and by the recounting of great exploits, as when an Anconitan priest swam into the harbor and set fire to the ships which held his city under blockade in order to “increase the honor of the *civitas* and to harm its enemies.” See *ibid.*, 124: *Preterea hoc memorabile factum non est sub silentio relinquendum. Presbiter namque Iohannes, anchonitanus Canonicus, dum quadam die sederet iuxta mare, cogitavit in animo si aliquid ad civitatis honorem et inimicorum incommodum facere posset.*

¹⁶² Girolamo Arnaldi, *Studi sui cronici*, 222, has argued that Rolandino’s *Chronicle* differs from Boncampagno’s *Liber* precisely relative to this issue of *memoria*. This is true in an explicit sense. Rolandino does not theorize about *memoria* and *ratio* à la Boncampagno. But if Boncampagno offers *memoria* to his readers so that they will learn how to attain communal reason through speech, then we find that the gap between the two authors is not so wide. For what both authors provided was a model of how communal life could be achieved. Each offered such a model in the guise of a historical text, which was really no guise at all, for the telling of this common story was necessary to reestablish a communal life in accordance with reason and justice, impervious to sudden change.

maintenance of political order. For Latini the problem could be resolved through the practice of a well-educated Aristotelian judge-ruler. For Rolandino, an independent city republic could avoid tyranny through the inculcation of public reason relayed in speech structured by historical exempla.

Perhaps these arguments seem to require more effort than did Jacopo's relatively straightforward argument that Genoese stability could be maintained through the practice of a certain set of behaviors, of which loyalty to the papacy was an important one. It is clear that an avoidance of the papacy in their political thought closed off certain easy answers for both Latini and Rolandino. Their route would nonetheless be the one more often taken in the future; arguments like theirs would later be found in the republican political theories of authors like Leonardo Bruni and Machiavelli. In part to avoid the misunderstanding that these republican arguments were dominant or even typical of the thirteenth century, however, in the next and concluding chapter we turn to consider a chronicler who thought mostly about the papacy when he considered the causes of Italy's political disorder and the means by which it could be restore.

Chapter Four. A Troubled Appeal: Salimbene's Cronica

"I have been in this Order for many years as priest and preacher: I have lived in many provinces, seen many things, and learned much."¹ These are the Odyssean words of Salimbene de Adam (c. 1220-c.1290), in his autobiographical *Cronica*. There we learn from him of thirteenth-century *joie de vivre* through his quotation of poems explaining why wine should not be mixed with water,² of a papal legate's talking crow that liked to play tricks on pilgrims,³ of the way ancient mythologies of royalty intermixed with science experiments conducted at the imperial court of Frederick II,⁴ and of enduring uncertainties surrounding power and authority.⁵ Because of the *Cronica*'s autobiographical elements, any interpretation of the *Cronica* must contain an interpretation of Salimbene, and it must especially contain an interpretation of what Salimbene thought he had learned and how he thought he had learned it. To that end, I will explain how Salimbene's *Cronica* gives us a glimpse into the convoluted way that a late thirteenth-century Italian friar was convinced of the ultimate authority of the Roman Church and its responsibility for the maintenance of peace and order in Italy.

Salimbene celebrated the papal victory over Frederick II in 1250; nonetheless, when looking at Italy in the 1280s, he perceived the papacy's flaws, he felt them to be personal affronts, and he came to advocate the reformation of the papal curia as a means of reestablishing

¹ In quo multis annis vixi sacerdos et predicator existens, et multa vidi et in multis provinciis habitavi et multa didici: Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia, two volumes (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998-1999); this is a revision of the more commonly used edition of the *Cronica*, edited by Giuseppe Scalia, two volumes (Bari: G. Laterza, 1966). For this quotation I have used the translation of Baird and Baglivi, *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam* (Binghamton, New York: Medieval and Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1986), 1. Other than this quotation, all translations of Salimbene's Latin are my own.

² Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia, 649.

³ Ibid., 591.

⁴ Ibid., 535.

⁵ Ibid., *passim*, but especially see Salimbene's long diatribe against Elias of Cortona, Minister General of the Franciscans from 1232-1239; Salimbene called this section the *Liber de prelatu*, or *The Book of the Prelate*: *ibid.*, 146-252.

peace and order throughout Italy, if not the entire world.⁶ Strangely, then, Salimbene's political thought is focused on the Roman popes; and remarkably, the elucidation of this political thought must contain an interpretation of how he thought his understanding of reality allowed him to justly criticize them. This is why I begin this chapter with a description of his sense of reality and authority (*auctoritas*) before proceeding to his critique of the Italian political situation in the second half of the chapter.

This dissertation's primary interest lies in how the authors under discussion thought about how to restore or maintain order in late thirteenth-century Italy. It uses the question of the papacy's role in these different political schemes as a means of organizing them and as a preliminary route of analysis by which to develop a sense of their arguments more generally. The papacy is the key through which to open doors to hidden worlds waiting to be reconstructed. For Salimbene, the primary means by which to restore order was the papacy; but he blamed the papacy also for the collapse of that order.⁷ In that sense, Salimbene was both the most supportive and the most critical of the papacy of the authors I discuss in this dissertation. His critique of the

⁶ While it is not my purpose in this chapter to do so, Salimbene could very easily be included in histories of the rift between the so-called spiritual Franciscans and the Franciscans who remained close to the Roman popes into the fourteenth century; from a vast bibliography see David Burr, *The Spiritual Franciscans: From Protest to Persecution in the Century after Saint Francis* (Philadelphia: Penn State University Press, 2003); and André Vauchez, *Francis of Assisi: The Life and Afterlife of a Medieval Saint* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), tr. Michael F. Cusato, pp. 185-228

⁷ Salimbene's evaluation of the role of the papacy in Italian politics does not fit neatly into the kind of gradient or scale which can organize the other authors in this dissertation. He could be described as both the closest to the papacy and the most distant from it. Moreover the way Salimbene thought about the papacy is also distinctive from the other authors, in part because he took as his subject and his focus all of Italy, not just one city, but also because his autobiographical claim to the knowledge that allowed him to criticize the papacy complicates his picture. Jacopo da Varagine argued that Genoese political order could be recovered and maintained, in part, by encouraging the Genoese to fight, under the banners of the popes, not each other but other external enemies. Brunetto Latini and Rolandino of Padua adapted the language of republicanism, implicitly showing in the process how the popes had no role in the governance of city republics that could resist *fortuna* and maintain stability. In contrast, Salimbene thought papal authority could, and needed to, stabilize politics by encouraging proper attitudes of obedience in the Italian people. But it also seemed to him that the popes themselves had come to doubt their own authority and to have stopped living as befitted representatives of God, causing thereby the destruction of Italy's former peace and stability. He lodged this critique in an epistemological framework that runs throughout the *Cronica*, but which necessarily forms the preliminary discussion of this chapter.

papacy, moreover, relied on his sense of his own authority as a privileged observer of reality. This understanding of scriptural authority and the conditions of his own knowledge led him to think that the best or even the only answer to restoring order was the reformation of the papal curia. By focusing first on Salimbene's epistemology and autobiography, it is possible to show why he could ultimately think that the papacy was both to blame for the dissolution of order in Italy, and could also be the means by which to restore it.

Part 1: Salimbene and Knowledge: The Grounds of the Critique

1.1: Modern Historiography

Modern historians agree that Salimbene's *Cronica* is important, but they do not always agree about why. It is not important because of its influence: it survives in only one manuscript, today held in the Vatican Archives (a manuscript which is Salimbene's own autograph).⁸ Some have argued that the *Cronica* is important as the autobiographical statement of a medieval person who seemed to exhibit a split personality disorder.⁹ Others have argued that the *Cronica* shines in virtue of the evidence it contains about belief in prophecy.¹⁰ Furthermore, a number of Italian

⁸ For what there was see Armando Bisanti, "La fortuna della *Cronica* di Salimbene de Adam fra Trecento e Quattrocento," in *Salimbene de Adam e la 'Cronica'*, (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 2018): 167-218; on the manuscript see Nicoletta Giove Marchioli, "Il manoscritto della *Cronica* di Salimbene de Adam," in *Salimbene de Adam e la 'Cronica'*, 43-68.

⁹ Ionut Epurescu-Pascovici, "Conversion and Autobiography: The Case of Salimbene of Parma," *Medieval History Journal* 17:1 (2014) 27-55. But see Baird and Baglivi, "Introduction," in *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, xi: "Only if the term *autobiography* were used in the same breath to apply to the work of those later, greater works of Dante and Boccaccio (with whom Salimbene has so much in common) could one be completely happy with such a designation." Thus see how Brentano refers to "the often sudden dominance of one element in a checkered psyche" when describing how Salimbene strung together people, events, and scriptural texts in *The Two Churches*, 338. I will argue that the autobiographical elements in Salimbene's *Cronica* are important insofar as they reveal how Salimbene understood the world as a collection of phenomenal events tied together through the authority of scriptural texts.

¹⁰ Delno C. West, "The Reformed Church and the Friars Minor: The Moderate Joachite Position of Fra Salimbene," *Archivum franciscanum historicum* 64:1 (1971) 273-284; idem, "Between Flesh and Spirit: Joachite Pattern and Meaning in the *Cronica* of Fra Salimbene," *Journal of Medieval History* 3:1 (1977) 339-352; idem, "The Education of Fra Salimbene of Parma: The Joachite Influence," in *Prophecy and Millenarianism: Essays in Honour of Marjorie Reeves* (New York: Longman, 1990), ed. Ann Williams: 191-215; on prophecy generally in the *Cronica* see Marina Montesano, "'Prophetie (...) que non cognoscuntur, nisi cum fuerint iam complete.' Rivelazioni e profezie nella *Cronica*," in *Salimbene de Adam e la 'Cronica'*, 305-320.

historians have used the *Cronica* to understand matters of practical history, for which it is an excellent source.¹¹ Still other historians have argued that the *Cronica* barely records history at all, but that through it Salimbene tried to teach friars how to preach well by interweaving exempla and scriptural authorities.¹²

Perhaps the strongest statement about Salimbene's historical work—and certainly the most famous in Anglophone scholarship—is Robert Brentano's:

Salimbene is involved in a sort of intellectuality of magic. Sometimes he seems aware of divine purpose in the universe; sometimes he seems only to be playing a game with texts he has heard more learned men speak...sometimes he seems to be searching for classical reformation, real conversion; sometimes he seems only an alchemist watching the external manifestation of the disparate parts of the brain. But he is almost always personal, and his *Chronicle* is a group of men and texts floating fairly freely in an observed universe—their connection, when it exists, a sort of magical-spiritual assumption about reality, Joachimite-Franciscan.¹³

Brentano celebrated what Baird and Baglivi, in their introduction to their translation of Salimbene's *Cronica*, called “the most disruptive, at times downright annoying, element in the *Chronicle*”: namely, the way that Salimbene quoted Scripture “at every possible opportunity.”¹⁴ But the two translators proceed to state that for Salimbene the Bible had a “full living quality.”¹⁵ Salimbene, they say, used the Bible rhetorically, as an aid in

¹¹ Aldo Angelo Settia, “‘Ista Maledictio Guerrarum’: Il fenomeno bellico nella ‘Cronica’ di Salimbene da Parma,” in *Salimbeniana: Atti del Convegno per il VII Centenario di Fra Salimbene (Parma, 1987-1989)* (Bologna: Radio Tau, 1991), 229-239; among other essays collected here, see Adriano Gattucci, “Parole, figure, e infelssioni gioachimite nella ‘Cronica’ di Salimbene,” in *Salimbeniana*, 95-116; Roberto Greci, “Salimbene e la politica parmense del Duecento,” *Salimbeniana*: 117-132; and Giuseppe Scalia, “Coscienza storiografica e cultura biblica nella ‘Cronica’ di Salimbene,” *Salimbeniana*: 209-220.

¹² The classic statement is Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, “Cronache, morale, predicazione: Salimbene da Parma e Jacopo da Varagine,” in *Studi medievali* 3:30 (1989) 749-788; see too Stefano Brufani, “Salimbene de Adam frate Minore. L'utilitas nella *Cronica*,” in *Salimbene de Adam e le ‘Cronica’*, 21-42.

¹³ Brentano, *The Two Churches* (reprint: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 338.

¹⁴ Baird and Baglivi, “Introduction,” in *The Chronicle of Salimbene de Adam*, xvii: “The most disruptive, at times downright annoying, element in the *Chronicle*, however, is Salimbene's inveterate habit of quoting Scripture at every possible opportunity.”

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xvii.

arguments ad hominem; but also, he used it as a tool for the task of the interpretation of reality.¹⁶ Hence Brentano stated that for Salimbene the scriptural verses which he quoted so often and at such length were “keys in a drawer full of keys, the sacred truth of the past, to be chosen for the individual case; it is a drawer that is opened in moment when Salimbene feels some desire for spiritual enthusiasm. The elevation of enthusiasm and the sacred memory are all the connection that the individual incidents demand.”¹⁷

Brentano, one could say, thinks Salimbene held a triangular model for questions of truth: it ran from scriptural verses to his sense of his own life to the perceived event, and back and forth again in various directions.

But Brentano does not emphasize that Salimbene was a chronicler. Salimbene’s epistemology affected his historical work, making his *Cronica* into the strange and fascinating work that it is. In the pages to follow I will offer my own interpretation of how Salimbene understood history and scripture as together constituting knowledge. Salimbene called the scriptural verses he quoted authorities (*auctoritates*). These were the words that were anchored to the reality of God and that allowed Salimbene, so he thought, to understand the events he saw, heard of, and wrote about in his *Cronica*. But the pope was himself an authority (*auctoritas*).¹⁸ In the course of this chapter we will see what happened to Salimbene when the *auctoritas* of the pope clashed with the *auctoritates* of scripture, on which papal *auctoritas* was founded. Politics and knowledge were

¹⁶ Ibid., xviii.

¹⁷ Brentano, *The Two Churches*, 338.

¹⁸ Jan M. Ziolkowski, “Cultures of Authority in the Long Twelfth Century,” *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 108:4 (2009): 421-448.

intertwined. To understand Salimbene's political critique, we must understand his conceptions of knowledge and history.

1.2: Salimbene on History

In this section I present some of Salimbene's own statements about what history was and how he worked as a historian. Salimbene thought that the task of the historian was almost akin to the task of the prophet. Both led to the knowledge of God. Ultimately, this discussion is intended to provide an interpretation of Salimbene's epistemology, which allowed him (so he thought) to judge the papacy for Italy's disarray.

Salimbene thought historians played a necessary role in the cosmic order inasmuch as they informed the reader of the proper order of historical events as ordered by God; in fact, the historian stood in the place of Moses, but for moderns.¹⁹ To Salimbene, history—the record of apparently accidental things—was essential because it stood in place of the revelation of future things or the celestial secrets which God gave to his chosen prophets. The historian made history intelligible as a reflection God's intentions for the world. There could be few intellectual tasks

¹⁹ See, for example, Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed, Scalia, 43: Amodo incurrimus verba inculta et rudia et grossa et sperflua, que etiam in multis locis gramaticam non observant, sed ordinem ystorie habent congruum. Et ideo oportebit nos amodo ordinare et meliorare et addere et demere et gramaticam bonam ponere, cum fuerit oportunum...Et hoc ideo fecerunt, vel propter laborem vitandum, vel forte quia ystoriarum periciam non habebant. Et [tamen] melius fuit quod aliquid scriberent, quamvis [simpliciter], quam quod omnino dimitterent, quia [saltem] millesimum annorum incarnationis Dominice sub quo hec vel illa facta fuerunt habemus ab eis, et aliquam veritatem ystorie et rerum gestarum et negotiorum accidentium, quam forte non haberemus, nisi Deus revelare vellet, sicut revelavit Moysi...et multis aliis quibus revelata fuerunt futura et secreta celestia. "Until now we have run over uncultured, rude, coarse and superfluous words, which do not even observe the laws of grammar in places; but they have the proper order of history. Therefore it is necessary that we have, until now, ordered and bettered and added and subtracted and put [them] into good grammar, when it was necessary...And they did these things, either to avoid the work, or perhaps because they did not have historical skill. And [however] it was better that they wrote something, even if it were simply written, than that they should have omitted everything, because [at least now] we have the things done for the thousand years from the incarnation of the Lord, [as they were written] by them, and another truth of history and of deeds and of accidental business, which we would not have unless God had wanted to reveal it, just as he revealed [things] to Moses...and to many others to whom were revealed future things and celestial secrets."

more important than the writing of history, which properly understood constituted the discovery of truth and God. It seems Salimbene spent much of his life writing chronicles which did not survive, in his own self-described simplex and intelligibile style, about the people and places he discovered or heard about it in his fifty-odd years of life from the 1222 to the late 1280s.²⁰

The trouble is that the *Cronica* appears to be neither chronological nor easily intelligible. It is marked throughout by lengthy digressions, though he tried to argue that the digressions were essential to the historian's task.²¹ For Salimbene the narration of history permitted the historian to accomplish his ultimate task, which was to relate the truth about times and places left unmentioned by God in his scriptural revelation.²² History was for him theological. He would have agreed with Jacopo da Varagine's statement in the beginning of the *Golden Legend* that truth does not necessarily follow the sequencing of history as humans observe it.

Moreover, for Salimbene history was also personal and autobiographical. The triad of history, God, and first-hand experience structured Salimbene's life as a Franciscan. Salimbene's

²⁰ Ibid., 284: Ego quoque scribendo diversas cronicas simplici et intelligibili stilo usus sum...

²¹ Salimbene was aware of this problem. Hence he gave (ibid., 281) three reasons for his apparent lack of regard for historical sequence: the first was that he thought it necessary to go "where the Spirit wills," as he quoted John 3:8—in other words, to embrace spontaneity and make of it a theological virtue. The second reason was for the practical didactic value of the information conveyed in his many asides, whereby he followed the historians' task of relating the good, the useful, and the worthy (*bona et utilia et digna*). But his third excuse was in many ways the most important: "because we return afterwards to the matter which he already began, and because of this, we omit nothing from the truth of the original narration of history." Many times in his *Cronica* he follows a digression. When he thinks it is time to end the digression with a curt expression: "it is time to return to the order of the history," or to the "course" of the history, or as he will say at other times, "may this suffice on this subject." Ibid., 284. These diffuse, frequent, and sometimes quite long digressions have lured a number of Italian scholars into arguing that Salimbene's *Cronica* is no chronicle at all, but rather a source book of *exempla* (examples used in arguments) useful for Franciscans learning how to preach (e.g., Casagrande and Vecchio, "Cronache, morale."); but this interpretation cannot be right if we follow Salimbene's own descriptions of the *Cronica* as a history written according to a historical methodology.

²² Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 282. Verumtamen sciendum est quod, secundum diversa tempora, unum tempus pulcriorem habuit historiam ad narrandum, quam habuerit aliud, et nos aliter historias narrare non possumus, nisi sicut de facto fuerunt et vidimus oculis nostris tempore imperii Friderici et post mortem eius annis multis usque ad dies nostros, in quibus scribimus hec, anno Domini MCCLXXXIII. "But it is necessary to know that, according to the diversity of times, some historians have a more beautiful time to narrate than others; and we are unable to narrate this history differently, for we have seen it with our own eyes in the time of Emperor Frederick and after his death until these days in which we write, the year of the Lord 1283."

most recent editor, Giuseppe Scalia, has written that the *Cronica* is indeed a history, but that it is an *historia aperta*: a history open to the impressions and excitements of a Franciscan from Parma who twice travelled through France, lived throughout Italy, talked to people everywhere he went, and never called a single place home for longer than a few years after his decision to join the Franciscan Order.²³ The *Cronica* is the record of a life, but to correctly interpret it, one must understand how he related the content of *auctoritates*—linguistic representations of truth, paradigmatically scriptural citations and other authoritative statements—to the chaotic world he beheld.²⁴

I begin this chapter with a discussion of Salimbene's understanding of history and reality because that is the best way to open up his political thought. Salimbene's historical methodology leads us to his epistemology. Together they determined or at least shaped his political judgments. The significance of Salimbene's *Cronica* for this dissertation's interest in thirteenth-century Italian responses to the crisis of order lies in the way that Salimbene's attitudes towards intellectual and religious authorities tied in with his obedience toward the institutional and political authority of the Roman Church and the popes. But these premises toward intellectual and institutional authorities—which provided the rules that structured his life—were themselves formed by Salimbene's autobiography, contained throughout the *Cronica*, which tells the story of the life of a civic aristocrat from Parma, a member of the knightly (*miles*) class, whose journeys throughout Italy and France accompanied and contributed to an intellectual and cultural transformation in his way of interpreting phenomena. We see, in Salimbene de Adam's *Cronica*,

²³ Scalia, "Introduzione: Vita e Opere di Salimbene," in Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Scalia: xx.

²⁴ One must see how underneath the apparent chaos of the *Cronica*'s organization lies a stable and enduring sense of how to come by an authoritative knowledge of the world and the God who was outside it. Moreover, to understand his political thought it is incumbent to first understand how he thought he knew reality in such a way that he could criticize higher authorities like the popes.

how the deepening and widening institutional structures of the thirteenth-century Roman Church facilitated the physical and intellectual journeys of a single friar—and how these same journeys led this same friar to vigorously critique the popes and cardinals who permitted his journeys. Here is an incipient Franciscan critique of a papacy corrupting itself in its triumph: a critique lodged from the perspective of one who believed in the imperial mission of the papacy but thought that the papacy itself could not alone accomplish what it was meant to accomplish. Indeed it is possible to see in Salimbene the beginnings of the fourteenth-century clashes between radical Franciscans and the popes.²⁵

1.3: Why Salimbene Thought He Could Judge the Popes

Here I describe Salimbene's narrative of his entrance into the Franciscan Order as a disquisition of how (so he thought) he learned to know things in a universal way, permitting him (as I show in the next part of the chapter) to critique the popes. Salimbene contrasted this universal manner of knowing things with the particularistic kind of knowledge possessed by his aristocratic family in Parma, which he eschewed. His narrative of his conversion to the Franciscan Order constitutes an account of epistemological transformation. In the next part of the chapter, I explain how Salimbene used this knowledge of reality to think about the relationship between the papacy and the loss of order in Italy.²⁶

²⁵ I have in mind particularly William of Ockham's attacks on the papacy, for which see Arthur McGrade, *The Political Thought of William of Ockham: Personal and Institutional Principles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Takashi Shōgimen, *Ockham and Political Discourse in the late Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

²⁶ This section's reconstruction of Salimbene's intertwining of epistemology and autobiography constitutes a preliminary step necessary to take before reconstructing that political critique, especially because it depended, so I argue, on a notion of scriptural *auctoritas* and its relation to the apprehension of reality.

Early in the *Cronica* Salimbene reflected on the effects of joining the Franciscan Order.

Porro ego frater Salimbene et frater Guido de Adam domum nostram destruximus in masculis et feminis, religionem intrando, ut eam in celis edificare possemus. Quod nobis prestare dignetur qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.²⁷

We, brother Salimbene and brother Guido de Adam, destroyed our house in the male and female lines by entering religion, so that we would be able to build it in heaven. Praise be to him who deigned to allow us to do this—He who dwells with the Father and the Holy Spirit and reigns in secula seculorum. Amen.

As I aim to show, Salimbene felt he had to justify his choice to break the deepest bonds of his world—that of the family, tied to that of the city—and exchange it for the universalistic knowledge of the Church and the Franciscan Order. At a different level, the choice between these two poles represented a struggle between two kinds of authority: the local authority of the family and the secular city contrasted to the universal *auctoritas* of God as manifested through the Church and the Franciscan Order. This universalistic authority was Salimbene’s primary subject matter.²⁸

Salimbene focused on the limits of particulars and local knowledge in his narrative of his conversion to the Franciscan Order. His negative evaluation of their worth paved the way for the positive evaluation of more lasting things, e.g. God, and

²⁷ Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia 81.

²⁸ Salimbene’s interest in the relationship of particular fact with universal reason is seen even in the way he thought he had to defend including genealogical histories in his *Cronica*, especially in the reasons he gave for why a genealogical section would serve the interests of universal historical truth. Ibid., 81: Ecce, genealogiam parentele mee propter intentionem meam descripsi, et multos dimisi et multas, causa brevitatis, tam antiquos quam modernos, quos non descripsi. Ex quo autem inchoaveram eam, visum fuit michi eam congruum esse perficere propter quinque. The first reason was, indeed, familial: he wrote the history to inform his niece Agnes, now a nun in Parma in the Order of Clare, of the parentage of which she was ignorant. Relatedly he did this in the interests of traditional Christian *memoria*: his written genealogy could double as a necrology from which his niece could learn for whom she should pray to God. The fourth reason was that it was the “custom of the ancients” to write genealogies—a custom not backed up by the provincial Parman conventions but by the Hebrew Scriptures, and the fifth was that the genealogy would provide mysterious and unmentioned “good and useful things” to its reader (*aliqua bona et utilia*).

ways of living that allowed one to come closer to God's eternal reality, e.g. life as a Franciscan. His conversion to the Franciscan Order represented for him a closer relationship to God and thus a clearer apprehension of real, eternal things. Hence his description of how he became a Franciscan contains a genealogy of his family, and this genealogy emerges as a rumination on how terrestrial things are finite, perishable, and therefore less valuable compared to that which lasts forever. The value of one's life, Salimbene wrote, is only vapor that soon vanishes.²⁹ The same goes for terrestrial families. "For within the space of 60 years all those whom I placed in the genealogy I have seen die, excepting a few."³⁰ This evaluation posed an epistemological challenge. From the extinctions of aristocratic families Salimbene claimed he learned an important lesson: one should value what is eternal and stable—God and his universal knowledge—over the particularistic facts and phenomena of family life. Salimbene's conversion narrative emerges as an epistemological journey. From a particularistic kind of knowledge tied to accidental phenomena, Salimbene journeyed toward something more general, proven to be valuable by the universally valid words of scripture and condoning visions of and from God.

Breaking apart the family was very Franciscan; for Salimbene it was also personal, leading him from particular, unstable facts to the general truth of God.³¹ Like a

²⁹ Thus he stated that his genealogy proved the veracity of St James, who said: *Que est enim vita vestra? Vapor est ad modicum parens, et deinceps exterminabatur.* For what is your life? It is a vapour which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away. *Ibid.*, 82.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Jacques le Goff has stated that the Franciscan ideal conformed "to the commonplaces of hagiography that dwell on the contrast between the life of the saint before and after his conversion and the breaking of the earthly bonds represented by the family." Jacques Le Goff, *St Francis* (engl. Edition New York: Routledge, 2004): 85. Salimbene, however, makes himself the hero of his own quest; and moreover, he tells his own story—the autobiographical element is essential here; Daniel Foote (D. Foote, "Mendicants and the Italian Communes in Salimbene's *Cronaca*," in *The Origins, Development and Refinement of Medieval Religious Mendicancies* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), ed. Donald Prudlo: 197-238), has noted how Salimbene tried to show

questing knight, Salimbene left home to seek something.³² He tried to find a universal understanding of reality, bound together by his personal experiences, and justified by the truth-bearing words of God (scriptural auctoritates) that gave history and transiently passing life an enduring meaning. Thus the *Cronica*, which began as a universal chronicle, turned into a local chronicle of Parman happenings, and then became, briefly, a genealogical history of Salimbene's kin, before it again broadens into something more general.³³

that his conversion was a heroic fight in which he transformed himself from a member of a civic aristocracy marked by dreams of knighthood but tied to the particular place of Parma, into a 'brother' of a universal order, permitted thereby to interpret the deepest of God's truths. Foote further noted how many of Salimbene's relatives possessed French, knightly names such as Roland. Salimbene's tale of his own conversion follows the traditions of hagiography but also those of chivalry, on which see Le Goff, *St Francis*, 147-148.

³² Epurescu-Pascovici, "Conversion and Autobiography," *passim*.

³³ The immediate departure point for Salimbene's genealogical history was his description of a war between Parma and Bologna that occurred in 1229. The report of the death of his father's cousin, a *miles* (knight) but also *famosus iudex et probus in armis* (renowned judge, skilled in arms) became the spark of his genealogical memory. The report underlines the local horizons of Salimbene's early mental field. Thus one Bernardus de Adam, of Parma, died and "his body was carried and placed in the baptistry of Parma, which adjoined his home...and there mourned him many relatives and friends." Afterwards his corpse was placed in the primary chapel of the city of Parma, the church of Santa Agatha: "and he was the half brother of my father. For they were sons of two brothers." The report of a local communal war ties into the remembrances of communal places and thence to familial relations; Salimbene would proceed to describe how he had family displaced by the building of the baptistry, and so on: Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 50-55. Universal reason and particular, civic places combined in his imagination. Hence the third of Salimbene's *memoranda* concerning his father marks a return to Parman geography, architecture, and civic growth. Roberto Greci has emphasized that the thirteenth century as a whole witnessed a massive increase in the size of the Parman population and its economic activity (Roberto Greci, *Parma* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sull'Alto Medioevo, 2017), 46-47; Roberto Greci, "Salimbene e la politica parmense," in *Salimbeniana* 117-132, 120-121 discusses the *compagnie* of merchants formed in Parma in 1211.) For Salimbene this increase of the city caused the destruction of some part of his family, while at the same time implanting the local history of Parma into the universal history of humanity as described and predicted by the *auctoritas* of the Christian scriptures: "I also heard from my father that, when the baptistry of Parma was founded, he placed stones in the foundation as a sign of memory; and I heard that, where the baptistry was built there used to stand the house of my relatives, who after the destruction of their house went to Bologna and there became citizens. They are called the de Cocca." Item audivi a patre meo quod, quando fundabatur baptisterium Parmense, posuit lapides in fundamento, in recordationis signum, et quod, ubi edificatum est baptisterium, fuerunt domus propinquorum meorum, qui post destructionem domorum suarum iverunt Bononiam et facti sunt cives ibi, et appellantur illi de Cocca. Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 55.

Salimbene accomplished this via a description of two fathers, the earthly one he rejected and the heavenly one, God, whom he affirmed. The choice was more than ethical; it was also epistemological. The earthly father represented particular, unstable things in Parma and the transience of terrestrial life generally. God, of course, offered something more stable. Salimbene builds up Guido, his father, only to tear him down; hence he called him *potens miles*, strong knight, describing how, as a crusader he sailed under Baldwin of Flanders on the Fourth Crusade and stayed true to God when others strayed, scorning human fortune-tellers and staying true to God.³⁴

But complete salvation required the eschewal of the lifestyle of even the righteously knightly, which remained absurdly proud and vainglorious. Thus the first action of Salimbene, after entering the Franciscan Order and running away from home, was to change his name. The boy who was Ognibene, ‘Good-at-everything,’ became Salimbene at the urging of an elderly Franciscan.³⁵ “He, hearing that I used to be called Good-at-everything, marveled and said to me, ‘Son, no one is good except God [Luke 18:19]. May your name now be Salimbene, because you have leapt well [*bene salisti*] by entering the order.’”³⁶ This name-change ushered with it a changed relationship to success and authority; no longer incredibly vainglorious, but humble and (therefore) more

³⁴ Salimbene mentioned with pride how Guido comported himself: “And I heard from my father that, when other Lombards inquired from the divines about the status of their houses, my father refused to inquire; and when they returned he found all things in his house consolatory and peaceful, but the others who asked of the divines found theirs sad (*tristia*). I also heard from him that his destrier, whom he took with him to the Holy Land, was commended above all others on account of its beauty and goodness.” Et audiui a patre meo quod, cum alii Lombardi in ultramarinis partibus inquirerent a divinis de statu domorum suarum, pater meus ab eis inquirere noluit; et cum rediit, omnia in domo sua inventi consolatoria et pacata, alii vero tristia, ut a divinis acceperant. Item audiui ab eo quod de pulcritudine et bonitate commendatus fuit dextrarius patris mei, quem secum ad Terram Sanctam duxit, super omnes qui de sua societate fuerunt. Ibid., 55.

³⁵ Ibid., 56.

³⁶ Ibid.

knowledgeable, Salimbene could appreciate the suggestion: “And I rejoiced, knowing that he was moved rationally, and seeing that a name was given me by such a holy man.”³⁷ Yet Salimbene retained his own thoughts.³⁸ As a young Franciscan, he was independent, obedient to the reason of God not to the authority of earthly men like his father or the elderly Franciscan. He had many teachers, and he took from them what they had to teach.³⁹ He was well on his way to self-sufficiency in matters of intellectual judgment, and hence in matters of political judgment too.

Salimbene gained independence from his earthly father, and from other earthly father-figures, because he had entered into a better relationship with God. This is alluded to in Salimbene’s discussion of his father’s attempts to restore his power over his son. His father protested in vain against his son’s rebellion; Salimbene sustained the rebellion, thinking himself protected by the higher authority of God, his true father and teacher.⁴⁰ Salimbene’s father Guido came to the Franciscan priory at Fano, to where Salimbene had absconded. His father’s knights and the friars then beheld “what to them was a spectacle, but for me was the business of my salvation.”⁴¹ The friars asked Salimbene if he wanted to go. Salimbene said no; he quoted scripture. His father accused him: “You do not care for your father or mother, who are afflicted because of you.”⁴² In response Salimbene

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.: “But I would rather wish that my name were Dionysius, not only on account of my reverence for that excellent learned man, the disciple of Paul, but also because I was born on his feast day.” Baird and Baglivi’s comment that here Salimbene referred to the ancient god Dionysius and his bacchanalian ethos founders on Salimbene’s referent for Dionysius: not to the God, but to Pseudo-Dionysius, the late antique theologian.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “The entirety of his life,” Salimbene wrote, “my father lamented my entrance into the Order. He received no consolation, because he now had no son who would succeed him.” Ibid., 57.

⁴¹ Ibid.: Venerunt itaque plures milites cum patre meo ad locum fratrum de civitate Fanensi, ut finem negotii mei viderent; quibus factus fui spectaculum, et ipsi michi causa salutis.

⁴² Ibid., 57-58.

quoted more scripture, turning Guido away.⁴³ The eternal wisdom of the heavenly father, in the mouth of the adopted son, defeated the earthly urging of the terrestrial father.⁴⁴

We can infer Salimbene thought he had grown closer to God after he became a Franciscan and could miraculously speak the words of scripture, and relate those general truths to the particular event of his conversion. Hence Salimbene's sudden acquisition of a new epistemological dominance resulted, so it seems, from the conversion; but this mystic transference of wisdom and speech foreshadowed how Salimbene had even gained entrance into the Holy Family itself by entering the Franciscan Order. This became explicit when he had, he says, a vision the night after his debate with his father.⁴⁵ In his vision, Salimbene saw himself prostrate before the altar in the Franciscan church in Fano; the Virgin appeared, holding the Child, and Salimbene embraced them both.⁴⁶ But perhaps most remarkable about Salimbene's remembrance of this miracle, considering it as his own claim to authority, was that he recalled that the Virgin stated that the sight of this embrace filled her heart with sweetness. "I am not able to state it in words," she said, for "I confess truly that never in the saeculum have I had such sweetness."⁴⁷ Though the

⁴³ Ibid., 58.

⁴⁴ By his own account Salimbene's scriptural pyrotechnics amazed the friars. But his father accused them of perverting his son's mind against his family (Ibid.). So as to take credit for his heroism and scriptural perspicacity, Salimbene then asked to speak in private with his father. The chief friar speedily granted the request. Again Salimbene quoted scripture; and again his father attributed this to someone else—this time to demons who held his son under their control (Ibid., 58-59. His father prostrated himself and begged his son to renounce the Order and return to his family, to no avail. Through this performance Salimbene underwent a transformation from the student to the teacher: "The secular brothers left, edified by my constancy. But even the brothers rejoiced exceedingly, because the Lord manfully had led through me his little boy, and they knew that the words of the Lord were true, which say [Luke 21:14-15]: 'Lay it up therefore into your hearts, not to meditate before how you shall answer: For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay.'" Ibid., 59.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.: Fateor vere quod nunquam in seculo tantam dulcedinem habui.

Virgin could not express her delight in words, Salimbene could; in a sense he comes to play the role of the son to the heavenly mother, marking his identification with Christ.⁴⁸

This entrance into God's family becomes even more explicit slightly later in the *Cronica*; so too does its implications for how Salimbene thought he learned to think about things relative to eternal stability rather than earthly transience. While begging in Pisa, Salimbene described how he began to doubt whether he wanted to continue begging the rest of his life, when he could be at his Parman father's home.⁴⁹ But then, "as I descended from the side of the Arno through the borgo San Michele, behold suddenly I saw that the Son of God came from one house and carried bread and put it into a basket."⁵⁰ He saw as well the Virgin and Joseph, the vision constituting the universal figures of the divine history coming down and adapting themselves to the particular locality.⁵¹ Then Christ turned to Salimbene himself and announced himself and his family—Mary and Joseph, "who is called my father."⁵² Just as Christ had a faux-earthly father in Joseph, so

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 65: While in Pisa, a "certain man, whom I did not know, came to me, and said that he was a Parman; and he began to hold me and bitterly to attack me and to villainize me." A specific claim was that Salimbene betrayed the cultural dictates of his kin. "For now you should ride through Parma on a destrier and make women sad, being a spectacle to the ladies and a consolation to the youth." Indeed the man reminded Salimbene of his chivalric potential and made him feel its loss. Though Salimbene turned the man away with yet more scriptural displays, the exchange set him to worrying: *Completa itaque circa nostra, cepi ego illo sero omnia que videram et audieram in mente mea revolvere, et cogitare quia, si vixero quinquaginta annis in Ordine taliter mendicando, non solum grandis erit michi via, verum etiam labor erubescibilis et intolerabilis ultra vires.* "After this was completed, that evening I seized all the things I had seen and heard and revolved them in my mind, and I thought that, if I should live fifty years in the Order begging in that way, not only would life be to me a long road, but it would even be a shameful labor and intolerable beyond my strength." Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.: *Cum autem ex parte Arni per Burgum Sancti Michaelis descenderem, ecce subito prospexi et vidi quod filius Dei veniebat ab una domo et portabat panem et ponebat in sporta.*

⁵¹ The Holy Family begged for its bread, an affirmation of the Franciscan mendicant ideal, in the style of the brothers in Pisa: *Est autem consuetudo in partibus illis quod sporta ponitur inferius panno cooperta et frater ascendit domos, ut panem petat et portet et ponat in sporta.* "For it is the custom in those parts that a basket is placed below with the bread covered and a brother goes up to the houses, to seek bread and carry it and put it in the basket." Ibid., 66.

⁵² Ibid.

Salimbene had a faux-earthly father in Guido; the revelation that God above was the ‘real’ father marked Salimbene’s ascension to exaltation, allowing him to recognize himself as a member of the Holy Family, with all that entailed about a new apprehension of the nature of things.

Henceforth some part of his understanding of reality came from God. It was therefore stable and eternal. For example, Salimbene wrote that in this vision at Pisa, Christ proved to Salimbene why begging was necessary for salvation. In his discourse Christ’s mode of argument was the quotation of scripture.⁵³ But he also quoted the Rule of St Francis, demonstrating thereby that the Franciscan Order was founded on divine reason.⁵⁴ So the conversation continued: Salimbene asked questions of Christ, and Christ explained to him why the way of life enjoined by Francis was essential for salvation. After this lengthy lecture, Salimbene found himself comforted and confirmed in his way of life, able to easily turn away his father’s emissaries.⁵⁵ Indeed, his doubts were countered by God. His Order was demonstrated to have a direct connection to God’s eternal reason. Thus he revealed his belief that he possessed a direct connection with God’s reason through his conversion to the Franciscan Order.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁶ Salimbene is confirmed in his quest and has attained the prize of wisdom. In this way the powerful psychological and social forces freed by Salimbene’s renunciation of his family were bound by the ordering authority of the Rule of Francis, underlain by a direct and untrammelled connection with the Holy Family. Furthermore, these dislocating forces contribute to the remaking of Salimbene—in his own description—as a powerful, eloquent, wise friar, able to interpret unstable and changing earthly phenomena through the eternal and divine words of Scripture, conveyed to him from reading the Bible and in direct conversation with the deity in visions. I will discuss in the next part how for Salimbene this transformation made him able to critique the popes whose own authority derived from the universally valid knowledge contained in the scriptures. It was his conversion to a new way of knowing—one that came directly from God—that made Salimbene think that he could sit in judgment on the popes.

My goal in this chapter is not merely to outline Salimbene's descriptions and judgments of political phenomena, but to show where these descriptions are coming from and how he thought they were justified. To this end, in part indebted to Brentano, I have discussed Salimbene's self-described epistemological transformation. I have begun to argue that the interpretative reconstruction of Salimbene's political thought depends on an awareness of Salimbene's epistemology of history, autobiography, and scriptural authority, and will show how this bears fruit in the next several sections. Salimbene believed his successful attainment of a special way of knowing gave him the standing to criticize what we would call power, including papal power, which was, after all, a strange brew of human and divine things; I have therefore focused on providing a sense of how Salimbene described his own greatness in relation to the worldly great people he wrote about and often inveighed against. This properly forms the second part of this chapter. For Salimbene, the papacy was at fault for the collapse of Italian political order; and he attributed this fault to an inability to apprehend properly the eternal truths of God of which his own conversion had made him aware.

Part II: The Political Critique

2.1 Popes and Emperors: Rebellions against Auctoritas

For Salimbene, knowledge was inextricable from political judgment. He thought that political action was motivated by what one knew or wanted to know. I will here explain how Salimbene attributed Italy's political and social issues to a general failure to apprehend the truth of things as he had learned to do when he became a Franciscan. Surprisingly, he blamed the popes most of all, though he accused the Emperor Frederick II of being the proximate cause of the collapse of order and peace in Italy.

Salimbene knew that things were wrong in Italy in the 1280s, and indeed, throughout the thirteenth century. Too many people had an appetite for domination (or ‘lordship’: dominium); even some Franciscans tried to subject their brothers to “violent domination.”⁵⁷ This could be seen as naturally bad human behavior. In fact Salimbene described five types of people who try to lord it over others in excessively cruel ways (the categories were women, servants, the foolish, children, and enemies).⁵⁸ Ultimately, however, Salimbene blamed this state of affairs on both the Emperor Frederick II and the popes who opposed him and his successors.⁵⁹ As I will explain, Salimbene thought the situation in Italy was caused by historical events, amounting to a crisis of knowledge and authority.

Late in the *Cronica*, Salimbene observed that the people of northern Italy were everywhere at war. Salimbene blamed the Lombards themselves, who played at peace just as, apparently, Italian boys of the time played games: by placing their hands on their knees, and, whenever a victor emerged, leaving one hand on the knee and striking the victor with the other.⁶⁰ No one would respect victory. He had a ready and illustrative example. “What I say is obvious. In my days I saw Parmans of the party of the empire who were in Borgo San Donnino ask the Parmans of the party of the church within Parma to make peace with them.” The Parmans of the *pars ecclesie* let the exiled Parmans back

⁵⁷ Ibid., 232; ‘appetite for domination,’ *ibid.*, 502.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 92-96: Salimbene criticized his mother for leaving him inside a house during an earthquake when he was an infant. She took his sisters with her instead. His critique rested on the fact that as a male his life was more valuable than the lives of his sisters.

⁵⁹ For a brief summary of Salimbene’s thoughts on the moral and political (they are inseparable for him) relationships between the communes and the universal powers see Mauro Ronzani, “Salimbene tra poteri universali e realtà comunali,” in *Salimbene de Adam e la ‘Cronica’*, 251-266.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 885-886: Verumtamen de pace Lombardorum parum confido, quia sic est de pace eorum, sicut de ludo puerorum, quando ponunt et superponunt manus super genua sua, quia, dum quilibet vult victor existere, extrahit manum de inferiori parte et superponit alterius manus percutiendo, et sic se existimat habere victoriam.

into the city after a series of written agreements were made. But then a new fight broke out and the party of the empire was again expelled—and just the same had happened in Bologna, Mantua, Reggio, “and even among the Cremonese.”⁶¹ In this way it seemed that civil wars became worse after Frederick II’s death. Meanwhile vicious wars between the Pisans and the Genoese should lead Italians, Salimbene declared, to weep in horror when they see the rich citizens of two great cities kill each other.⁶² Elsewhere, hatred caused cities to make war on other cities.⁶³

Moreover Salimbene thought that the Italian system of governance—marked by the annual election of a podestà to rule a city—was weakening. He thought that the Italians excelled all other European peoples in the art of government, but events led him to think this art was in decline.⁶⁴ Salimbene gave many examples of this trend, but perhaps the best one to cite here is that of Reggio. In the middle part of the century, he celebrated how he himself “was empowered to select a competent arbitrator to draw up a peace between the cities of Bologna and Reggio.”⁶⁵ In 1242, the people of Reggio chose a man whom Salimbene thought was a truly praiseworthy podestà—Lambestesco de Lamberteschi of Florence. He administered justice so well that the council of Reggio granted him the freedom to do whatever he wished in the city, “so that all would remain in concord.”⁶⁶ At this time, Reggio was exemplary in government. After the midpoint of

⁶¹ Ibid., 886.

⁶² Ibid., 805-809.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Salimbene explains why Franciscan Ministers General often hail from Italy: “Et hoc propter tria: prima, quia beatus Franciscus de Italia fuit; secundo, quia prevalent voces istorum qui de Italia sunt; tertio, quia melius de regimine sciunt. Timent enim Italici ne, si Gallici haberent dominium Ordinis, quod nimis de religionis rigore laxarent.” Ibid., 870. The third reason most concerns us: “because the Italians know better about rule (*regimen*).”

⁶⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 265.

the century, however, things began to slide. In 1280, “discord” erupted between the bishop of Reggio and the captain of the popolo, who wished to limit the payment of the tithe to the church. The bishop laid the town under interdict, and in response, the civic government issued a series of statutes which laid heavy fines on citizens who paid the tithe to the church or who even gave bread to priests. The statutes were strictly enforced.⁶⁷ Later, the people of Reggio elected as their podestà a youth who spoke with a stutter. The people of the city ridiculed his judicial statements and drove him out of town.⁶⁸ The election of this physically impaired man followed their dismissal of a podestà who had subjected them to harsh sentences, “which displeased them.”⁶⁹ Salimbene’s judgment was scathing: “But the people of Reggio should be derided more than the men whom they chose for the lordship, who were worthless. For it is a sign that similar things rejoice in similar things, and that they are governed by private love and they care little for the common utility.”⁷⁰

What the people of Reggio lacked—and what all the people of Italy lacked—was a proper respect for authority. Even the popes, whose power was based on the *auctoritas* of scripture, had led the people of Italy astray. The popes spoke the scriptures just as the emperors spoke the law. But just as Frederick II rejected the law, Salimbene noted that the popes seemed to themselves mistrust the knowledge on which their authority was based. His example was Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). With the benefit of hindsight, Salimbene reports that Innocent tried, at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, to correct

⁶⁷ Ibid., 766. Cf. another example of discord between a town government and the church, ed. Scalia 770.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 802.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

the ecclesiastical rites, but that these efforts of the rector to be a corrector failed.⁷¹ But Salimbene thought that this failure may have resulted from Innocent's own failings. One day, Innocent was in Rome preaching to a crowd of people when a necromancer in the audience caught Innocent's attention. The two men had a short disputation about the power of their respective words: the necromancer claimed that "the words that Innocent spoke, were mere words; but he himself knew how to demonstrate works, so as to raise the dead and preach to the demons."⁷² Intrigued by the suggestion of the weakness of his language, which was that of scripture as interpreted by the Church—thus evincing a strange lack of trust in his own *auctoritas*—Innocent arranged to secretly meet the necromancer in a deserted alley in Rome. Pope Innocent met the scholar-necromancer, who summoned one of Innocent's friends, a dead archbishop who used to frequent the Roman curia in grand style. The archbishop stated that God damned him to Hell for his vanity and pomposity.⁷³

Hence Salimbene questioned the extent that even so famous a pope as Innocent III actually believed in his own *auctoritas*. This decline in respect for authority had effects in politics. It was Innocent who destroyed the golden age of papal hegemony:

Floruit et vigit Ecclesia suo tempore retinens principatum super imperium Romanum et super cunctos reges et principes universe terre. Verumtamen principium maledictionis et dissensionis inter Romanum imperium ipse fuit cum suis imperatoribus Octone quarto et Friderico secundo, quem exaltavit et filium nominavit Ecclesie. Ipse vero Fridericus fuit homo pestifer et maledictus, scismaticus, hereticus et epycurus, corrumpens universam terram, quia in civitatibus Ytalie semen divisionis et discordie seminavit, quod usque hodie durat...Omnia ista in Friderico impleta fuerunt, ut vidimus oculis nostris, qui

⁷¹ Ibid., 45: Hic etiam officium ecclesiasticum in melius correxit et ordinavit et de suo addidit et de alieno dempsit; nec adhuc est bene ordinatum secundum appetitum multorum et etiam secundum rei veritatem, quia multa sunt superflua, que magis tedium quam devotionem faciunt tam audientibus quam dicentibus illud...

⁷² Ibid., 47: Et respondit scholaris quod verba que dixerat, verba erant; ipse vero opera demonstrare sciebat, ut mortuos suscitare et demonibus [predicare].

⁷³ Ibid., 47-8.

nunc sumus in MCCLXXXIII, quo hec scribimus, in vigilia Magdalene. Verumtamen excusari potest Innocentius papa, quia bona intentione Octonem deposuit et Fridericum exaltavit, iuxta illud Ps. Hunc humiliate et hunc exaltat.⁷⁴

For the church flourished and was vigorous in [Innocent III's] time. It held primacy over the Roman Empire and the other kings and princes of all the earth. But the beginning of malediction and dissension between the Roman Empire [and the papacy] [arose from] his own actions toward the Emperor Otto IV and Frederick II, whom he exalted and named a son of the Church. This Frederick was a pestilential man, and cursed, a schismatic, a heretic, an Epicurean, who corrupted the whole Earth, because he sowed the seed of division and discord in the cities of Italy, which endures even to now...

Salimbene thus blamed Pope Innocent for unleashing the man who destroyed the golden age, though "Pope Innocent may be excused," because he elevated Frederick to the throne "with good intentions."⁷⁵ But doubt's seed was planted. Innocent was fundamentally ambiguous. Indeed, Frederick II, whom Innocent III raised to the empire, was the snake who entered the Garden of Paradise:

Igitur istas partes et divisiones et maledictiones Federicus imperator in Italia seminavit, que usque hodie durant, nec finiri nec terminari possunt propter hominum pravitatem et diaboli iniquitatem.

Emperor Frederick seeded (seminavit) the parties, divisions, and maledictions in Italy. They last even today, nor can they end or be limited because of the depravity of man and the iniquity of the devil.⁷⁶

Frederick was the great enabler of human vice, contributing to the ungovernable condition of the Italians. This was because Frederick sowed distrust in traditional forms of authority, especially the authority of scripture; but a pope who doubted the authority of scripture originally elevated him to the throne. The ultimate blame fell on him.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 46.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 888.

This brings us to Frederick II, an emperor who haunts the *Cronica*, appearing when you least expect him. Writing in the *Harvard Theological Review* in 1915, Ephraim Emerton asserted that Salimbene considered Frederick II to be the “embodiment of all evil.”⁷⁷ Emerton described how Salimbene came to believe the prophecies of Joachim of Fiore, the Calabrian abbot whose prophecies of evangelical change fired generations of Franciscans. The Joachimite-Franciscans thought that Frederick II was the antichrist, whose death would herald the passing of the institutional church of prelates and the arrival of a new era of evangelical perfection, marked by the preaching of the propertyless friars.⁷⁸ In this way Salimbene associated the phenomenal Emperor Frederick with the reality behind and underneath events which Salimbene tried to apprehend as a Franciscan. His appreciation of Frederick’s significance as a symbol developed apace with the transformation of his epistemological commitments. As a new Franciscan, still closely aligned in spirit with the Parman milites class, Salimbene rejoiced and bragged that he had some physical connection with the dispenser of law and title in the empire; but as a Franciscan he came to see Frederick as the symbol of the end of times and an incarnation—in a loose sense—of the great serpent himself.

Frederick II primarily disconcerted Salimbene because he seemed to be a symbol of a general disrespect for scriptural auctoritas. After describing Frederick’s death in

⁷⁷ Ephraim Emerton, “Fra Salimbene and the Franciscan Ideal,” *Harvard Theological Review* 8:4 (1915): 480-481. Emerton continued: “He loses no opportunity of describing, often in considerable detail, this plague of Italy, this implacable enemy and ultimate victim of the sacred Papacy.” In fact, as we just saw, Salimbene’s judgment of Frederick was much more nuanced than this.

⁷⁸ Emerton, “Fra Salimbene,” 488-489; on Frederick as the last emperor, see Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 534. “Quod in Friderico Romanum finitur imperium.” Salimbene quoted the Sybilline prophecies: “ ‘In ipso quoque finietur imperium, quia, et si successores sibi fuerint, imperiali tamen vocabulo ex Romano fastigio privabuntur.’ Verba sunt ista cuiusda [sic], Sibille, ut dicunt...Quam verum sit hoc vaticinium, satis patet tam ex parte Ecclesie quam ex parte imperii.” Hence the idea that Frederick would be the final emperor engaged both parties to the conflict and did not derive solely from Joachimite speculation. On Salimbene’s Joachimite tendencies, the work of Delno C. West is still fundamental; see n. 10 above.

1250, Salimbene came to describe the ten misfortunes of the late emperor. As the second misfortune Salimbene described the emperor's rebellion against the church:

Secundum eius infortunium fuit quia voluit suppeditare Ecclesiam, ut tam papa quam cardinales ceterique prelati pauperes essent et pedites irent; et hoc non intendebat facere zelo divino, sed quia non erat bene catholicus; et quia multum erat avarus et cupidus, volebat habere divitias et thesauras Ecclesie sibi et filiis suis; et quia volebat potentiam eorum deprimere, ne contra eum aliquid attemptaret.⁷⁹

His second misfortune was that he wanted to take the property of the Church, so that even the pope and the cardinals and the other prelates would be poor and go on foot; and he did not seek to do this with divine zeal, but because he was not a good Catholic; and because he was very avaricious and greedy, and he wanted to have the riches and treasures of the church for himself and his sons; and because he wanted to curb their power, lest they try to do something against him.

All this was known because Frederick told it to some of his secretaries, who then betrayed him. Hence Frederick's betrayal of the church initiated an ethos of betrayal.⁸⁰ His betrayal of the Church spawned betrayals down the line, so that Frederick could hardly trust anyone later in life; and for Salimbene Frederick's inconstancy infected other Italians who came to lack the constancy to govern themselves in a stable manner later in the century.

But for Salimbene, Frederick's rebellions were more than political and caused by deeper movements than greed. His political rebellion against the Church was also an epistemological rebellion. As Emerson long ago asserted, "To this Franciscan mind the greatest of moral aberrations was what we should call 'originality' or, to come nearer to

⁷⁹ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 524.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 524-526: thus the 'first misfortune' was the rebellion of his son Henry (VII); the sixth was the rebellion of Parma, "which was the cause of all his ruin," the eighth was that a number of powerful princes and confidants rebelled against him, including his chancellor Pierre della Vigne (ibid., 526-7); and the tenth misfortune was that his onetime subject, Uberto Pellavicino, became mightier than him in Lombardy, ibid., 527.

Salimbene's vocabulary, 'curiosity.'"⁸¹ Emerton continued, "[o]ut of such a quality was sure to come a search for novelty, and this—to us the indispensable motive toward all valuable activity—was to the thirteenth century churchman the inevitable starting-point for every kind of disturbance in the divine ordered scheme of things."⁸² This is an overstatement, though it captures something important. Salimbene thought that Frederick's rebellion against the church marked the rise of an ethics of investigation of physical phenomena and a corresponding trust in knowledge derived from sources outside the Christian scriptures. This roving curiosity amounted to a rebellion against what Salimbene deemed to be customary Christian sources of knowledge.⁸³

One finds evidence of Frederick's attitudes toward scriptural authority in Salimbene's list of Frederick II's 'superstitions'. Frederick, who composed a manual on falconry, was in fact keenly interested in science and astronomy.⁸⁴ These ranged from the nominally numinous to the cruelly experimental. Thus Salimbene says that Frederick cut off the thumb of a notary who misspelled his name (putting an 'e' in place of the first 'i' in 'Fridericus'). Was this because Frederick wanted to maintain scribal competency, because he attached some extra significance to his name, or just plain cruelty? The second 'superstition', which Emerton glosses as scientific curiosity, involved something

⁸¹ Emerton, "Fra Salimbene," 501.

⁸² Emerton, "Fra Salimbene," 501.

⁸³ One may also see how Salimbene associated dominating individuals such as Innocent III, Filippo of Ferrara, and Frederick II with the search or the greed for kinds of knowledge besides the Christian scriptures and 'customary' sources of Christian knowledge. Of course, the Franciscan Order itself was something of a novelty, and cognizance of this might have led Salimbene to focus so much of his attention on pointing out the unc customary activities of prelates and other rulers.

⁸⁴ See the articles collected in *Federico II e le scienze* (Palermo: Selerio, 1994), ed. Pierre Toubert and Agostino Paravicini-Bagliani.

stranger still (Jacopo da Varagine mentioned something like this in his Chronicle of Genoa).⁸⁵

Secunda eius superstitio fuit quia voluit experiri cuiusmodi linguam et loquelam haberent pueri, cum adolevissent, si cum nemine loquerentur. Et ideo precepit baiulis et nutricibus ut lac infantibus darent, ut mammas surgerent, et balnearent mundificarent eos, sed nullo modo blandirentur eis nec loquerentur. Volebat enim cognoscere utrum Hebream linguam haberent, que prima fuerat, an Grecam vel Latinam vel Arabicam aut certe linguam parentum suorum ex quibus nati fuissent. Sed laborabat incassum, quia pueri sive infantes moriebantur omnes. Non enim vivere possent sine aplau et gestu et letitia faciei et blanditiis baiularum et nutricum suarum.⁸⁶

His second superstition was that he wanted to experiment [to see] what language and speaking ability children have when they grow up without anyone to speak to. And therefore he ordered servants and nurses to give milk to the infants, as mothers would give, and they [washed] them, but in no way would they comfort or speak to them. For Frederick wanted to know whether they would speak Hebrew, which was the first language, or Greek, Latin, or Arabic, or even the language of their parents who gave birth to them. But he labored in vain, because the children or infants all died. For they were unable to live without the services of the stewards and the nurses.

In this experiment with ancient imperial antecedents and early modern parallels, Frederick demonstrated that he valued abstract experimental knowledge over the lives of his own subjects, even children whom he swore to defend.⁸⁷ Hence it is revealed that Frederick impiously entertained the speculation that the original language of humanity was not Latin, Greek, or Hebrew, but Arabic, the language of Islam.

⁸⁵ Emerton, "Fra Salimbene," 502.

⁸⁶ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 535.

⁸⁷ For the ancient antecedent, see Herodotus's report of the experiments of the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus I. The pharaoh wanted to determine whether human beings have an innate capacity for speech, and so ordered two infants reared by a shepherd who could not speak to them: Herodotus, *The Persian Wars* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1920), 1:2.2; apparently people said that the infants came to speak a Phrygian language. For the early modern parallel, see Douglas Guthrie, "The Medical and Scientific Exploits of King James IV of Scotland," *British Medical Journal* 30:1 (1953), 1191-1193, 1193: this Renaissance Scottish king ordered two children reared in an isolated region on the island of Inchkeith by a woman who could not speak. He wanted to see what, if any, language they would speak. Apparently some thought the children spoke Hebrew.

Perhaps even more shockingly, Salimbene asserted that Frederick displayed a wanton disregard for scriptural and cultural pieties. Frederick declared that he preferred his own kingdom of southern Italy and Sicily to the Holy Land: “When Frederick saw the land beyond the sea, which was the land of promise, which God so often praised, calling it a land flowing with milk and honey and excellent among all lands, [Frederick] did not care for it, and said the God of the Jews had not seen his land, the Terra di Lavoro, Calabria, and Sicily, or He would not so often have praised the land which He promised and gave to the Jews.”⁸⁸ The most remarkable aspect of this story is the implication: Frederick suggested that the God of the Old Testament had not seen the entire world. Salimbene thereby alleged that Frederick denied that the scriptural God was the creator of all things: he was the god of the Jews, not the god of all creation. Furthermore, through this denial Frederick also denied that the Christian scripture had universal authority—if their auctor were not universal, then the auctoritas of scripture was likewise not to be considered universal. Salimbene held that Frederick’s curiosity tended to deny that all wisdom and knowledge came preserved in the Scriptures. For Salimbene scriptural wisdom waited to be found, like Michelangelo’s marble sculptures, in already extant material; it just needed a skilled craftsman to see it. Scientific experiments were superfluous.⁸⁹ Frederick’s political rebellions were inextricably tied to this epistemological rebellion against auctoritas.

⁸⁸ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 536.

⁸⁹ Salimbene casts doubt on Frederick’s commitment to finding the truth through experiments by noting that he played games on his court astrologer: *ibid.*, 541-2; on the murder of human subjects, see *ibid.*, 540, where Salimbene describes how Frederick tested the workings of the human digestive tract by giving the same dinner to two men, and then had one go to sleep and the other go hunting. Then he had both cut open that night to see which had better digested their food.

All this signified to Salimbene that Frederick's initial rebellion against the Church had gathered itself into an ethos of scientific investigation, cruelty, and perversity, undergirded by an epistemology that was at the least unbiblical and inconducive to scriptural auctoritas. He seemed to further think that these values corrupted the virtue of the Italian people. Salimbene even wrote an entire libellus, now lost, on the subject of Frederick's curiositates, his inquiries, which Salimbene equated to perversitates, perversions.⁹⁰ And yet we know from Salimbene's comments on Pope Innocent III that Salimbene thought that this questioning of scriptural authority preceded Frederick's reign in the papal curia. Hence one must conclude that Salimbene considered the papacy as the ultimate culprit responsible for spreading the "seed of dissension" in Italy.

What the papal curia needed was reform. Salimbene saw little chance that such a redemptive reformation would take place; and yet he could not shake the authority of the papacy which undergirded the authority of his Order. We can see this, as I discuss later, from the fact that he never rejected papal authority in any ultimate or final sense. His own epistemological-political commitment to the universal auctoritas of the Roman Church kept him in an apparently inescapable quandary.

2.2: Salimbene's Knowledge of Papal Decline

In this section I explain further how Salimbene came to measure the corruption of the papacy against the ideals it stood for. In the next section, I will conclude the chapter by arguing that Salimbene's belief in the privileged access of the popes to 'true' knowledge made him unable to reject papal auctoritas. In the end, Salimbene's political

⁹⁰ Ibid., 537: Porro alias superstitiones et curiositates et maledictiones et incredulitates et perversitates et abusiones habuit similiter Fridericus, de quibus aliquas in alia cronica posui...

thought was caught between his acceptance of the role of the papacy in a hypothetical restoration of order, and his uncertainty that such a restoration could ever occur.

Simon de Brion (c.1210-1285) came from the Île-de-France and served as chancellor for King Louis IX from 1260-1261. The French Pope Urban IV elevated him to the cardinalate in 1261, whereupon he served as papal legate for France for Urban and then for another Frenchman, Pope Clement IV, from 1264-1268, and then again during the 1270s, during which time he raised funds to aid the crusade of yet another Frenchman, Charles of Anjou, Louis IX's brother, who captured the kingdom of Sicily from the remaining descendants of Frederick II in the 1260s. Eventually Simon succeeded Pope Nicholas III, and became Pope Martin IV. As pope he pursued a Francophile policy, even declaring a crusade on the king of Aragon to aid Charles of Anjou—which J.R. Strayer once called “a mile-post in the decline of the leadership of the Church.”⁹¹ Salimbene remarked about Martin's accession that he was a great friend of the Friars Minor, and gave to them numerous privileges; but he would have agreed with Strayer that Pope Martin contributed to the decline of the papacy.⁹²

Ordinarily, for Salimbene, Pope Martin's support of the Franciscans alone would save the soul of the pope—witness the contrary case of the death of Innocent IV—but Salimbene recognized extenuating circumstances in Martin's case. For Martin “many times sent an army against Forlì, and this made the party of the Church there pass away,

⁹¹ Simonetta Cerrini, “Martino IV, papa,” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 71 (2008), *ad locum*; on the crusade against Aragon see still J.R. Strayer, “The Crusade against Aragon,” *Speculum* 28:1 (1953), 102-113; the quote is on 102; c.f. too 103,”Deprived of the steady support of the French king [a result of Philip IV's reign following the death of Philip III on crusade], the pope was in poor position [sic] to combat the rising tide of secularism and indifference.”

⁹² Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 769.

because they were defeated, captured, killed, and put to flight.”⁹³ These acts of war, and their desultory results, paralleled the corruption on display in Martin’s attempt to subjugate the Italian province of Romagna to his temporal dominance. Whereas the papal war against Frederick II was holy, the popes had managed, in Salimbene’s view, “to swindle” (*emungere*) the Roman Empire out of the Italian region of Romagna by buying it from the newly crowned Rudolf I (1273-1291), whom Salimbene regarded as emperor, a man who stayed out of Italy and so could not restore the order someone like Salimbene desperately hoped for. Salimbene stated that the popes ever tried thus to swindle the emperors, and that the emperors, from an excess of courtliness but also from good sense (they did not want to anger the popes), often acquiesced—a judgment that feels almost schizophrenic when one considers Salimbene’s anti-imperial discourses on Frederick II.⁹⁴

Pope Martin’s acquisition of a legal title to Romagna led to a dramatic scene that tells us something of the decline of papal authority and its link to the collapse of order.

Item eodem anno [1282] Perusini preparaverunt se, ut irent ad devastandum Fulignum. Et misit papa dicendo quod nullo modo irent, alioquin excommunicaret eos. Erat enim Fulignum ex orto sancti Petri. Et non dimiserunt Perusini propter hoc quin irent. Iverunt igitur et destruxerunt totum episcopatum illius civitatis usque ad foveas. Excommunicati ergo fuerunt. Sed indignati ex hoc fecerunt papam et cardinales de paleis et traxerunt eos per totam civitatem opprobriose, et traxerunt eos ad quemdam montem et in cacumine illius montis combusserunt papam indutum de rubeo et cardinales combusserunt similiter, dicendo, ‘Iste est talis cardinalis, et iste est talis.’⁹⁵

Also in that year the Perugians prepared themselves to go to destroy Forlì. And the pope sent [to them] saying that in no way should they go; otherwise he would excommunicate them. For Forlì was a place of St Peter. And the Perugians did not stop going because of this. For they went and they destroyed the whole bishopric of that city up to its walls; therefore they were excommunicated. But indignant [at the pope’s threat and the excommunication] they made the pope and the cardinals

⁹³ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 769.

⁹⁴ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 773.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 774.

from wood and they carried them shamefully through the whole city, and they carried them to a certain mountain and on the peak of that mountain they burned the pope clothed in red and the cardinals, saying ‘This is that cardinal, and this is another.’

Pope Martin’s ethereal authority could not match the natural animosity and rebelliousness of the people of Perugia. Salimbene explains that the Perugians wanted vengeance on the people of Forlì because the previous year the two groups fought each other, and the people of Forlì defeated the Perugians so badly that “an exceedingly old woman with a cane captured ten Perugians, and led them to the prison.”⁹⁶ Honor and shame necessitated a response. The persuasive authority of the pope, operating in a polycentric political environment, could not compare to the bristling cohesion of a particular polity.

For the Perugians, vengeance was sweeter than the threat of the pope’s authority was bitter, but the Perugian activity also signaled the result of papal war-making: a huge loss of authority, and a consequent rise in disorder. This was partly the result of Pope Martin’s Italian wars. Salimbene thus says that Pope Martin killed many men attempting to capture the town of Meldola in Romagna, near Forlì, and spent “many thousand gold florins” on the effort.⁹⁷ He also indicates that Martin spent men and money on a bloody effort to take a castrum near to Bologna. When “the city had come to the order of the Church, the walls of the city were destroyed, the gates demolished, the houses and palaces torn down and the best buildings were ruined.”⁹⁸ The important men of the city

⁹⁶ Ibid., 774.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 777: ...papa Martinus quartus misit exercitum in Romagnolam, in quo fuerunt Gallici, Lombardi et Tusci et Romagnoli, et fecit obsideri Meldulam pluribus mensibus, et non potuit capi, sed mortui sunt hinc inde homines multi. Et expendit ibi papa Martinus multa milia florentinorum aureorum.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 783: Cumque civitas illa ad precepta venisset Ecclesie, fuerunt fovee civitatis replete et porte dirutae, et domus et palatia sunt destructa et precipua edificia dissipata.

then wandered as exiles.⁹⁹ For these reasons Salimbene calls Pope Martin—along with Charles of Anjou and Peter of Aragon, whose wars between them threatened the wider peace of Italy—one of the “mighty hunters before the Lord, that is, the oppressors of men. For Pope Martin obstinately wanted to subjugate Romagna, and he achieved what he wanted. But in achieving it many were killed by the sword [Ecclesiastes 28:22] and many gold denarii were spent.”¹⁰⁰ Augustine in his *City of God* used that same phrase—‘hunters before the Lord’—to describe Nimrod and others who tried to build the tower of Babel.¹⁰¹ Hence Salimbene described a pope by means of the quintessential symbol of human pride and disrespect for God.

But Pope Martin was not wholly to blame; the popes had long dabbled in warfare too often for the tastes for someone like Salimbene. He quotes John of Parma, a Joachimite Minister General of the Franciscan Order and probably Salimbene’s favorite leader, as declaring to the assembled cardinals under Pope Innocent IV that they all spoke much more about war than about peace.¹⁰² But Salimbene has John also accuse the cardinals of debauchery, greed, and nepotism: they were not *cardinales* but *carpinales* (thieves). When Salimbene states that upon his accession, Pope Honorius IV, who succeeded Pope Martin IV, gathered the cardinals to him and spoke with them “about a universal peace,” the promise of a papally achieved peace rang false indeed.¹⁰³ Pope Martin’s vices stemmed not just from individual failings but from a culture of war, deceit, and corruption bemoaned by Salimbene.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 783: *Homines vero civitatis illius qui erant principalis et precipui exiverunt de civitate et iverunt ad diversa latibula, ut darent locum ire* [Romans 12:19].

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 899-900.

¹⁰¹ Augustine, *De civitate dei*, 16.4.

¹⁰² Franco Bacchelli, “Giovanni da Parma,” in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* (56) 2001, *ad locum*.

¹⁰³ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 850.

A sense of doom and warfare pervades the latter portion of Salimbene's *Cronica*, combined with the growing knowledge that he would not live long enough to see how events would come to fruition, or even if they would come to fruition. Prophets predicted events, but Salimbene no longer trusted them and even derided the citizens of Modena for making war based on the recommendations of the city's publicly employed astrologer.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, he wondered whether the popes would continue to support the Franciscan Order. The reason for this was that nepotism damaged the quality of the cardinalate, and the cardinals usually became popes. Thus, though Salimbene remembered that Gregory IX early in the century had made the church's law rational (by promulgating the collection of canon law in the 1230s), canonized Francis as a saint, and heroically excommunicated Frederick II, he seriously doubted that later popes would continue to support the followers of Francis in the proper way. Under the year 1277 Salimbene wrote that Pope Nicholas III ascended Peter's Throne.

Hic, dum adhuc esset cardinalis, erat Ordinis fratrum Minorum gubernator et protector et corrector. Et postmodum factus papa regulam eorum exposuit et declaravit quedam que intellectu difficilia videbantur. Et nota quod omnes cardinales qui fuerunt Ordinis fratrum Minorum gubernatores, protectores et correctores, postmodum facti sunt summi pontifices, sicut dominus papa Gregorius nonus et dominus papa Alexander quartus et dominus Nicholaus tertius. Et hoc factum credimus divina gratia faciente et beato Francisco adiuvante et eorum bona vita non impediante. De cetero quid futurum sit, Deus novit.¹⁰⁵

While still cardinal, he was the governor of the Order of the Friars Minor and their protector and corrector. And after he became pope he propounded a rule for them and he declared certain things that appeared difficult to understand. And note that all the cardinals who were governor, protector, and corrector of the Friars Minor, afterwards became pope, such as Lord Pope Gregory IX, Lord Pope Alexander IV, and the Lord Nicholas III. We believe this was done by God's

¹⁰⁴ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia: 812-3; and on the difficulties surrounding the interpretation of prophecy, see *ibid.*, 825.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 755.

grace with the help of Blessed Francis, while their good lives did not impede it. But as to what will happen, God knows.

The situation of the cardinalate gave Salimbene a certain hesitancy about the future.

Nicholas III made his own nephew the cardinal-protector of the Franciscans based on the family connections of the appointee, not the wishes of the friars themselves.¹⁰⁶ But Salimbene thought that the papacy could not fulfill its mission without the aid and assistance of the Franciscan Order.

Late in his life Salimbene became uncertain. How different all this was from the glorious and straightforward days of the dispute between the popes and the Emperor Frederick II, in which Salimbene was sure of what he knew and how he could apply it. Then he could fully trust the authority of the popes who spoke the scriptures and believed their *auctoritas*; it was a time of stability and widening horizons despite the dangerous warfare fought against Frederick. Indeed, Salimbene's emotional formation during that time prevented him from fully criticizing the papacy later in his life, when the promise of the years of conflict had evaporated. I therefore return now to Salimbene's account of those years and his sense of the superiority of the church at that time, which is necessary for later explaining why the later corruption of the papacy stabbed Salimbene's conscience so deeply, but left him unable to fully criticize its foundations, as would later radical Franciscans such as William of Ockham.

2.3 Salimbene's Political Dualism

In this penultimate section I show that Salimbene treasured his memories of the times when the popes and their papal legates fought for good against the evil of Frederick

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

II and his supporters. I do this to further explain how Salimbene's acceptance of the privileged access of the popes and the papal legates to 'real' knowledge through their proximity to God led him to accept papal political authority, and prevented him from finally rejecting it. He could only hope that the popes and their cardinals would be reformed by themselves or by God's actions.

One of the best ways to explain Salimbene's attachment to the papacy is through an observation of his descriptions of the papal legates to Lombardy. These men had an assortment of vices and virtues. For instance, Filippo of Ferrara liked to drunkenly sing to the Virgin as he drank chilled wine on his estate, and rejoiced to hear that a pope had died because he expected to fill the newly vacant position; yet he captured Padua from Ezzelino da Romano in a rare moment of post-Frederician moral clarity. They were men devoted to a higher cause. For Salimbene, the papal legates were emblematic of papal government: in this time of fraught communications, the presence of a representative of the pope in Lombardy proved essential for the eventual defeat of Frederick II, and Salimbene knew a number of these representatives personally. Their vices came to symbolize the defects of papal government; but their cause was, for Salimbene, the great moral adventure of his life.

At first glance Salimbene's judgment of Gregorio da Monte Longo, notary of Gregory IX and papal legate in Lombardy throughout the 1240s has a different conclusion than his judgment of Filippo.¹⁰⁷ Salimbene wrote how Gregorio was there

¹⁰⁷ On the well-attested and important Gregorio see Maria Pia Alberzoni, "Gregorio da Montelongo," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 59 (2002), *ad locum*; M.P. Alberzoni, "Le armi del legato: G. da Montelongo nello scontro tra Papato e Impero," in *La propaganda politica nel Basso Medioevo. Atti del XXXVII Convegno* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi Sul Altomedioevo, 2002): 177-240; M.C. Ferrari, "1243: l'operato di G. da Montelongo a Vercelli," in *Studi di storia medioevale e di diplomatica* 17:1 (1998): 109-118.

when the party of the Church captured Ferrara from Salinguerra, an ally of Frederick II, and that he was at the siege of Parma in 1247 and placed his tent directly opposite Frederick II's tent.¹⁰⁸ Further, Gregorio knew the art of war: "For he was a man with a great heart, and learned in war. He used to have a book on shrewdness (*de sagacitate*) and the art of fighting. He knew how to assemble formations and command battles."¹⁰⁹ He must have learned some of this from hard experience, but for Salimbene, Gregorio's knowledge derived properly from God's word: "He knew when to lay quietly and when to overrun the enemies, just as it is written in Scripture, Ecclesiastes 8:5-7, 'The heart of a wise man understandeth time and answer. There is a time and opportunity for every business, and great affliction for man: because he is ignorant of things past, and things to come he cannot know by any messenger.'"¹¹⁰ Gregorio's scriptural knowledge—and thus his reliance on *auctoritas*—ensured that he was not ignorant of the past or things to come, and therefore the words of Wisdom 8:8 applied to him: "[divine knowledge, *sapientia*] knoweth things past, and judgeth of things to come: she knoweth the subtilities of speeches, and the solutions of arguments: she knoweth signs and wonders before they be done, and the events of times and ages."¹¹¹ Gregorio's obedience toward divine knowledge (never taking credit for a battle but recognizing that his victories were God's victories) contributed to his great feat when he saved Parma by pretending that he had news that salvation came to the city in its period of deepest despair in 1247, during which Frederick besieged pro-papal forces within it. He thereby succored the spirits of the

¹⁰⁸ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia, 586.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

defenders and later led its forces out to take Frederick's city of Victoria and so broke the siege. In recognition, the people of Parma gave Frederick's captured war gear to the victorious legate.¹¹²

Salimbene praised Gregorio's fidelity to the papal cause.¹¹³ But Gregorio exhibited vice, too. For instance, Gregorio kept a talking crow, which he liked to entertain himself with. But when it got injured, he promptly sold it. For Salimbene this symbolized how lords kept their servants. They used them harshly, but when the servant came into ill fortune, the lords forgot and abandoned them.¹¹⁴ Salimbene likewise described how Filippo liked to beat his servants and dragged them through salt flats as punishment; Filippo also collected a bodyguard of giant men whom he used to threaten people.¹¹⁵ This behavior was reminiscent of the behavior of Frederick II and his lieutenants. Similarly, Salimbene described how Filippo was a failed necromancer whose teacher had urged him to join the church instead, as he seemed to have more aptitude for that sort of activity.¹¹⁶ Worse even than the fact that Gregorio de Monte Longo had numerous amorous affairs and illegitimate children, however, was the fact that as Patriarch of Aquileia Gregorio held a "familiar" conversation with Ezzelino da Romano, who was, for Salimbene, a symbol and embodiment of evil.¹¹⁷ The behavior and habits of the legates disconcerted him deeply.

¹¹² Ibid., 586-590. It is important to note here that Gregorio accomplished his sleight of hand by enlisting the support of two Franciscan brothers who had just arrived in Parma.

¹¹³ Ibid., 589.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 591.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 601-602.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 594-595.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 591.

Ottaviano degli Ubaldini served as legate in Lombardy in the late 1240s and early 1250s; part of his register for the late summer of 1251 survives, in which the reader beholds him laboring to gather soldiers to aid fraught allies of the Church around Bologna.¹¹⁸ But Salimbene remembered how Ottaviano exhibited shrewdness (*sagacitas*) in the pursuit of money and fame. Ottaviano's troubles derived from the fact that "many reputed him to be friendly towards the party of the empire, but he always worked for the honor of the church, knowing that was why he was sent [as legate]." ¹¹⁹ Salimbene himself beheld, at the papal curia, the nephew of Innocent IV gleefully hear that people doubted Ottaviano's sincerity in his effort to relieve the pro-papal defenders of Parma. The reason for this was jealousy between and among the cardinals:

Tunc consideravi verum esse quod de cardinalibus dicitur, quod aliquando aliqui eorum non se diligere corde, et tamen propter honorem suum mutuo se defendant et ostendunt se diligere coram extraneis. Cognovi igitur tunc hoc quod audieram verum esse. Astantes, autem, in tanta multitudines erant, ut unus super scapulas iaceret alterius, volentes de Parma audire rumores. Nam ibi dependebat totum negotium Romane Ecclesie et omnium clericorum sicut in aliquo duello, cum ex qualibet parte victoria expectatur.¹²⁰

Then I knew that it was true what is said about the cardinals, that they do not love each other diligently in their hearts, but still they defend each other for their own honor and act as if they love each other. And they stood there in a multitude wanting to hear news (rumores) of Parma. For on this depended the entire business of the Roman Church and of all clerics in the war, whichever party expected victory.

Salimbene dined with Ottaviano years later, and stated that "then I began to love the cardinal," because he seated them at the same table, as a gesture of humble fraternity.¹²¹

¹¹⁸ *Registri dei cardinali Ugolino d'Ostia e Ottaviano degli Ubaldini* (Forzani: Rome, 1890), ed. Guido Levi.

¹¹⁹ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia, 580.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 581.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 582.

But the cardinal put himself through pains to hide disfavor in the papal court. Thus for Salimbene Ottaviano was truly a “most shrewd (sagacissimus) man.”¹²² As illustration he cited the fact that once, when the cardinal advanced through a procession, a certain minstrel cried out that Ottaviano betrayed the church to the emperor Frederick. Ottaviano said nothing, but sent his agents to give the man a certain quantity of gold. The gold convinced the minstrel to praise Ottaviano, “saying that there was no cardinal better than him and that he was worthy of the papacy.”¹²³ Ottaviano indeed knew that “money conquers all things.”¹²⁴

But was this behavior worthy of a papal legate and a cardinal? Salimbene describes how Ottaviano, out of the pope’s favor, acted as if he held a private conversation with the pope. In this way he tried to convince petitioners to give him their money in return for an appointment with the pope, which he was supposed to be able to procure.¹²⁵ The anecdote put Salimbene in mind of “a certain man” who went to “a certain king’s court” and there made a deal with the king: for years he would allow the king to treat him as his fool, and at the end of the allotted time, the king must give him a quantity of gold. As cardinal, Ottaviano aided the representative of Christ; but he acted the fool to accumulate wealth.¹²⁶

Two factors extenuated Salimbene’s judgment of the legates. First, they had close proximity to him, treated him well, and favored the Franciscan Order.¹²⁷ Filippo was perhaps the most morally tainted of these legates, who, Salimbene says, “knew more

¹²² Ibid., 584: Item dominus Octavianus fuit sagacissimus homo.

¹²³ Ibid., 584.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 584-5.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 585-586.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 600-601, 603-604, on Filippo’s favor for the Franciscans.

about war than about sacred things.”¹²⁸ But even he favored the Franciscans extensively in Germany and Italy and captured Padua with their help. Moreover, he once leaned on Salimbene’s shoulders as he walked up a staircase, as a sign of his favor for Salimbene and the Order.¹²⁹

The second factor, connected with the first, was that the legates fought not for themselves but for the entire church in the war against Frederick II. Salimbene in fact listed legates who came to Lombardy long after Frederick had died, but he summed up his miniature treatise on the legates with this comment:

Isti supra positi fuerunt XII nobilissimi ecclesiastici principes et legati, quos in Lonbardiam [sic] et Romagnolam misit Ecclesia, non solum pro animarum salute, verum etiam et contra draconis astutiam, Fridericum scilicet, qui cum suis principibus et sequacibus conabatur subvertere ecclesiasticam libertatem et corrumpere fidelium unitatem. Et sic verum apparet verbum Eccli. XXXIII: Contra malum bonum est et contra vitam mors. Sic et contra virum iustum peccator et sic intueri in omnia opera Alissimi, duo contra duo et unum contra unum.¹³⁰

These were the twelve most noble ecclesiastical princes and legates, whom the Church sent into Lombard and Romagna, not only for the salvation of souls, but also against the cleverness of the Dragon, namely Frederick, who with his princes and followers tried to subvert the Church’s liberty and to corrupt the unity of the faithful. And thus the word of Ecclesiasticus 33 appears true: Good is set against evil, and life against death: so also is the sinner against a just man. And so look upon the works of the most High. Two and two, and one against another.

Thus Salimbene held that the legates stood in direct contrast, physically and symbolically, with the men against whom they fought: these were not only “the dragon,” Frederick II, but the men, “his princes and followers,” whom he raised up and who

¹²⁸ Ibid., 603.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 603–4.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 661.

thereafter held power in Lombardy.¹³¹ The legates fought for good in the battle of good and evil; thus their moral laxities were forgiven because of the role they played in what Salimbene considered the dualistic conflict of the mid thirteenth century. Despite Salimbene's criticisms of the popes and the papal curia, he could not quite relinquish this memory of papal victory. It was this battle between good and evil, symbolized by the battle between the popes and the emperors, that ultimately saved the legates and the popes.

This era of conflict was also the time of Salimbene's greatest heroics, when his particular experiences melded into the events of universal history: he had a direct hand in conquering the 'dragon'. Immediately after describing his conversion narrative, Salimbene noted that in 1247 he travelled from Tuscany, where he had spent eight years as a friar, to Bologna and then to Cremona. While living there, he heard that Frederick marched toward Lyons to seize Pope Innocent and the cardinals.¹³² He also heard, however that

Civitas mea Parma (id est ex qua natus eram) rebellavit imperio et fuit totaliter cum Ecclesia, anno Domini MCCXLVII, die Dominico XVI intrante mense Iunii. Et tunc veni et habitavi in civitate Parmensi, in qua erat Gregorius de Monte Longo legatus, qui postea multis annis Aquilegiensem rexit ecclesiam. Et eodem anno, cum esset obsessa civitas mea a Friderico deposito, ivi Lugdunum et in festo Omnium Sanctorum perveni illuc. Et statim papa misit pro me et familiariter locutus est mecum in camera sua, siquidem a recessu meo de Parma usque ad illum diem nec nuntium viderat nec litteras receperat aliquas. Et multas gratias contulit michi, id est petitiones meas exaudivit, quia curialis homo erat valde et liberalis.¹³³

My city, Parma (which is to say, where I was born) rebelled against the Empire and was completely with the Church...and then I came and I lived in Parma, where Gregorio de Monte Longo was legate...and that same year, when my city

¹³¹ Ibid., 553-574.

¹³² Ibid., 78.

¹³³ Ibid.

was still besieged by Frederick, I went to Lyons and I came there on All Saint's Day. Immediately the pope [Innocent IV] sent for me and he spoke familiarly with me in his chamber, because from the time I had left Parma until that day he had not received letters or messengers [from there]. And he thanked me many times, and he heard my petitions, for he was a courtly and generous man.

This short account appears in the midst of Salimbene genealogical account of his Parman kin. But here he still calls Parma "my city," went there immediately upon hearing that Frederick held it under siege, and made it part of his Franciscan identity by showing that Pope Innocent IV gave him special favor on account of the Parman news he brought to the papal curia in Lyons.

The conflict between papacy and empire came to Parma, and propelled Salimbene to a moment of glory. He returned to redescribe it later in the *Cronica*. Thus, in his account of Ottaviano degli Ubaldini as legate, Salimbene described how the assembled cardinals in Lyons clamored to hear the news that he, Salimbene, brought from Parma, where Innocent IV had sent the maligned Ubaldini. Salimbene remembered that he stood in the middle of the cardinals and that they marveled to hear his answers to their questions, just as his own father marveled to hear how Salimbene rebuffed him when he demanded that Salimbene exit the Franciscan Order.

Cum igitur astantes audivissent me talia perorantem, mirati sunt et me audiente dicebant adinvicem: 'Toto tempore vite nostre non vidimus fratrem aliquem ita securum et secure loquentem.' Hoc ideo dicebant, quia videbant me inter patriarcam Constantinopolitanum et cardinalem sedentem, quia cardinalis me invitaverat ad sedendum, et ego oblatum honorem respuendum et contemnendum non reputavi. Item quia videbant et audiebant me de tali homine et coram talibus

talía proloquentem. Ego vero eram tunc temporis diaconus et iuuenis annorum XXV.¹³⁴

When they, standing, heard me saying such things, they marveled and they said among themselves (while I listened): ‘All our life we have not seen such a confident brother speaking so confidently.’ And they were saying this, because they saw me sitting between the patriarch of Constantinople and a cardinal, because the cardinal had invited me to sit, and I did not think that an honor offered should be spurned or despised. And so it was they saw and heard me from such a man speaking such things among them. And I was then a deacon and twenty-five years of age.

Yet Salimbene had learned, in the years between enjoying this glory as an audacious young friar and writing it down in his *Cronica*, that the words of Job 21:6 applied to this memorable event: “As for me, when I remember, I am afraid, and trembling taketh hold of my flesh.”¹³⁵ This was because Salimbene had learned to recognize how the rivalries, greed, lust for power, and other vices among the cardinals, papal legates, and propertied prelates more generally corrupted the mission of the Church. What it needed was reform, driven by the Franciscans from below.

For Salimbene the popes were still essential, despite their corruption, though they needed to accept the reforming guidance of the Franciscans. The authority of the popes could still override the authority of other, less privileged observers of reality. For Salimbene the divine *auctoritas* secured the *auctoritas* of the popes, so that if Salimbene accepted scriptural authority, he must also accept papal authority. It was by reason of this papal authority that Salimbene claims he rejected the prophetic doctrines of Joachimism. Like many Franciscans, Salimbene was a devotee of Joachimite prophecy. When the emperor died in 1250, instead of 1260 as the

¹³⁴ Ibid., 582; cf. another report of his activities in Lyon and the great favor Innocent IV showed him, *ibid.*, 270-1. Salimbene liked to write about Franciscan holy men confronting the cardinals of Rome: see the examples in Amanda Power, “Franciscan Advice to the Papacy in the Middle Ages,” *History Compass* 5:5 (2007): 1550-1575.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 582.

Joachimites predicted, Joachim's prophecies seemed proven wrong. But Salimbene asserted that he could not accept this judgment until he heard Pope Innocent IV pronounce the news:

Nam et ego ipse usque ad multos dies vix potuis credere quod mortuus esset, nisi cum auribus meis ab ore Innocentii pape quarti audivi, cum in pleno populo Ferarie predicaret in suo reditu de Lugduni. Eram enim iuxta eum et semper eum tangebam, cum in predicatione dixit: 'Dominus ille condamnatus imperator, adversarius noster et Dei et Ecclesie inimicus, ultimum diem clausit, ut firmiter nuntiatum est nobis.' Horrui, cum audirem, et vix potui credere. Eram enim Iohachita et credebam et expectabam et sperabam quod adhuc Fridericus maiora mala esset factururus quam illa que fecerat, quamvis multa fecisset.¹³⁶

For I myself could not believe for a long time that the emperor was dead. I couldn't believe it until I heard it with my own ears from the mouth of Pope Innocent IV himself when he preached to the people of Ferrara on his return from Lyons. For I was near enough to touch him when he said in his sermon: 'It has been fully confirmed to us that that lord, that sometime emperor, is now dead—our enemy and the enemy of God and of the church.' When I heard this I was horrified and could scarcely believe it. For I was a Joachite, and I fully believed and even hoped that Frederick would do even greater wicked deeds in the future than he had yet done, numerous as his past evils had already been.¹³⁷

This statement occurs in a list of false reports of deaths. Adnan Husain has argued that, for Salimbene, the real importance of this anecdote was not the report of Frederick's death but that

it allows him to report the odd, stray, seemingly trivial detail that Salimbene was at Ferrara in 1250...[and] that he was near enough to touch Innocent IV...and in insisting on including it, in reveling in the memory of it, Salimbene reveals suddenly what replaces Joachimism as the articulation of his self-identity and its inseparable relationship to what he understands and constitutes as history when he writes his chronicle in the 1280s—namely, the memory of his visible, palpable experience as an itinerant friar.¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Ibid., 264.

¹³⁷ Translation by Adnan Husain, in "Writing Identity as Remembered History: Person, Place, and Time in Friar Salimbene's Autobiographical Prose Map," *Viator* 36 (2005) 265-292, 268.

¹³⁸ Husain, "Writing Identity," 367. Even within the constraints of own argument Husain overstated his case. Husain later recognized how Salimbene's understanding of scripture affected the way Salimbene understood and wrote about reality. He proceeded to describe the importance of scriptural references in Salimbene's historical epistemology, especially in the conversion narrative: Husain, "Writing Identity," 273-292.

But what Salimbene really demonstrated in this passage was his conviction that to not believe the pope's pronouncement would constitute a rebellion against papal authority in favor of the prophetic utterances of Joachim.¹³⁹ Contra Husain, the identity of the speaker is very important. The pope expressed the news with all the authority of the papal office.¹⁴⁰ Empirical evidence was thus supplemented by the privileged propositional content relayed by the pope—a facsimile of divine speech (the scriptures) and so superior in *auctoritas* to Joachim's prophecy. Indeed the episode mimics the transmissions of divine language Salimbene received following his conversion, wherein visions of the Holy Family, and conversations with the Virgin and with Christ, superseded the local, particularistic knowledge relayed to him from the confines of Parma and his Parman family. Just as the universalistic knowledge of the scriptures superseded that particularistic knowledge linked to the life of a civic aristocrat, the universalistic knowledge of the popes defeated the supposedly universalistic knowledge offered by Joachim's interpretations of scripture. The popes still spoke authoritatively. They were thus legitimate rulers—even if papal ethics needed some reformation. Authority derived from a certain understanding of what real knowledge was. Both were contained in the word 'auctoritas'.

To judge by the evidence of the *Cronica*, Salimbene's interest in prophecy never waned. Likewise, history to him never lost an eschatological dimension nor its interpretable correspondence to scripture. But in this passage the divine *auctoritas* is channeled by the pope, marking him as a conduit not only of divine speech but a reflection of the *imago Dei*, and under this description, deserving of obedience: the papacy trumps prophecy, and is, for now, the earthly

¹³⁹ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia, 750: *Vide in libro abbatis, quia pulcherrima et delectabilis exposition est ac veritate plena.* "See the book of the abbot [Joachim], because it is a most beautiful and delight book, full of truth."

¹⁴⁰ Salimbene was doubtless aware of Innocent III's condemnation of some of Joachim's teaching in Canon Two of the Fourth Lateran Council, a fact whose notice further strengthens his obedience to 'authority'.

repository of divine language.¹⁴¹ These divine irruptions into Salimbene's life attended his access to divine knowledge, making him eloquent. It also made his life into an exemplum and raised his experiences onto a universal, thus educational, level. Adnan Husain argued that Salimbene's life as a wandering friar—his own observations—replaced Joachimism as the epistemological foundation for his historical method.¹⁴² This is true only insofar as Salimbene viewed his own life as taking the shape of an exemplum with authority, and consistent therefore with the best of *auctoritates*.¹⁴³ All humans, Salimbene stated, must obey authority. This was not only the authority of a ruler but the authority of the word, through which “man is taught what man is”—and as David Foote noted, Salimbene adopted this quotation from Augustine, one of the most authoritative of *auctores*.¹⁴⁴ Through quotation and his education, Salimbene's *Cronica* itself became authoritative.

At the end of Salimbene's intellectual and physical journeys, then, he concluded that the popes overrode Joachim, but that the scriptures overrode the popes by their universal authority. In turn, Salimbene interpreted the scriptures as the basis of the Franciscan Order's way of life and the teachings of St Francis. For Salimbene, obedience to the scriptures implied, in some way, obedience or acceptance to the Rule of Francis. Salimbene eschewed the particularity of his Parman life and rejected his earthly family, but his attachment to these things and places remained—witness his genealogical history and his frequent remarks late in the *Cronica* about building projects occurring in Parma—and in a sense they propelled him to brief glory at the papal curia in the momentous year of 1247. Salimbene climbed to the summit of things and

¹⁴¹ Thus note the importance of the office of preaching which Salimbene mentions, on three different occasions, that he received from Pope Innocent IV.

¹⁴² Husain, “Writing Identity,” 268.

¹⁴³ It is wrong insofar as Salimbene's sense of reality still derived from scripture and the brew of other *auctoritates* he had in his mind when he thought about the ways that historical happenings interrelated with each other.

¹⁴⁴ Foote, “Mendicants,” 197-198.

entered into a kind of general way of knowing things by referring phenomenal events to authoritative Franciscan interpretations of the Christian scriptures. From this summit, he gained a double-vision: he saw papal infidelities, and could diagnose papal weakness. But he could not reject papal authority—though he wished he had the power to do things his own way.¹⁴⁵ This is the quandary of Salimbene’s political thought: peace and order could emerge only if the highly improbable were to occur.

Conclusion: A Troubled Appeal

Thus Salimbene came to learn that the highest authorities in his world—the papacy and the empire—were corrupt. He espied the fact that these internal ailments threatened complete catastrophe from the outside. He meant this quite seriously. When he visited France after first visiting the papal curia in Lyons in 1247, he met the Franciscan brother John of Plano Carpini, who had just returned from his remarkable and famous journey to the court of the Mongol Khan Güyük, to which Pope Innocent IV had dispatched him. Salimbene calls John “a familiar, spiritual man, learned and a great speaker, expert in many things, and later provincial minister in the Order,” and praised him as a rare papal legate who did not plunder the territories under his jurisdiction.¹⁴⁶ John told the friars that the Tartars “ate horse meat and drank mule milk,” that he had seen almost all the peoples of the world gathered before the Mongol khan, and that none could appear before the khan unless he were dressed in purple.¹⁴⁷

The Mongols were threatening, too. Salimbene wrote that John described how the khan asked him who ruled in the western parts of the world, to which John had said that “there are

¹⁴⁵ Salimbene, *Cronica*, ed. Scalia, 760: when describing public works at Parma in the late thirteenth century, Salimbene wrote that “I would know better how to order things for the utility of the Parmans, if I had complete lordship.” *Melius ego scirem navigium ordinare ad Parmensium utilitatem, si haberem dominium totum plenum.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 312.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

two, the pope and the emperor, and from these all others hold their lordships. And the khan asked which of these two was the greater. And when John said that the pope was greater, the khan produced letters for the pope and gave them to John.”¹⁴⁸ John then showed to the assembled friars, Salimbene among them, the letter the khan Güyük wrote for Pope Innocent:

Habito consilio pro pace habenda nobiscum, tu papa et omnes Christiani, nuntium tuum nobis transmisisti, sicut ab ipso audivimus et in tuis litteris habebatur. Igitur, si pacem nobiscum habere desideratis, tu papa et omnes reges et potentes, pro pace diffinienda ad me venire nullo modo postponatis, et tunc nostram audietis responsionem pariter atque voluntatem.¹⁴⁹

You, Pope, and all the Christians, sent your messenger to us for the purpose of having a council with us about peace, as we heard from the messenger and [as] it was said in your letters. Therefore, if you want to have peace with us, you and all the kings and powerful men [in your domain] should come to me and not delay at all in order to work the peace out. Then you will equally hear our free response.

Güyük Khan noted that Innocent wanted him to be baptized as a Christian. But he observed that surely God had already showed his favor by exalting His chosen people—the Mongols. “For by adoring God, through God’s strength we have destroyed all the earth from the east to the west.”¹⁵⁰ Therefore, if the pope and his advisors truly wished for peace, they should hasten to the Mongol court as soon as possible; only then would Güyük Khan know “for sure whether you

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 313.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 314.

want peace or war with us. For what the future holds, we do not know, only God.”¹⁵¹ Salimbene then listed the nomadic groups that ravaged Italy throughout its history, from the Vandals through the Huns to the Magyars of the tenth century.¹⁵² Would the past repeat? The historical logic of scriptural *auctoritas* seemed to suggest it.

Salimbene knew that if the popes did not reform themselves, reform the Italian people, and so purge Italy of the malingering effects of the reign of Frederick II, God would send avenging armies to punish and correct them all, as had happened long before. Unlike Rolandino of Padua or Brunetto Latini, Salimbene as a chronicler could not deny or sideline papal authority, but he could still lament the effects of papal rulership in Italy. He lauded the papacy for destroying a vicious emperor in Frederick II. But he accused it of preventing peace and order. For Salimbene, the knowledge of reality was enmeshed with political conceptions. He assumed, based on his identification with the Roman Church and his understanding of the nature of knowledge, that the popes were the highest human authorities. His political thought therefore focused on the popes. Their good rule could maintain stability and peace in Italy. But there was little of either in the Italy of his time. Salimbene understood the issue this way: the popes had begun to lose their belief in the very scriptural authority that undergirded their own authority—without which they were but warlords with bishop’s croziers. Salimbene’s concepts of authority forced him into an apparently untenable situation, in which, it seemed, only God himself could hold power to account. A troubled appeal for reform and peace, Salimbene’s voice comes to us as clouds of smoke from a thirteenth-century altar

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Ibid., 314-317.

Conclusion

In Freud: The Mind of the Moralist, Philip Rieff described his method in the following way:

To follow the many little lines of fracture in Freud's massive hardness, to see through its own intricate faceting of what is seen but darkly in every mind's eye—so much for my method and its purpose, so far as I pretend to understand them.¹

This dissertation has pursued something similar. The papacy has been the fracture in the small but mysterious hardness of medieval political thought which I have here compassed. My tracing of this line in medieval chronicles has involved the reconstruction of arguments left tacit and implicit. Medieval chronicles reveal to the inquiring reader the practical and theoretical political inclinations of a person and (intersubjectively) a time—the expectations, the ends, the circumstances of politics, and the lessons that history held for those people. The chroniclers I have studied here described the political happening and concerns of their world. Hence they described visions of politics. Those deeper descriptions must be reconstructed by the interpreter; they are not 'given', though they are indeed there—not simply conjured, but grounded in reading and redescription.

Thus, the authors of the papal lives considered the world to be continually re-sanctified by the lives of popes who resembled Christ, who gave their world its meaning and its history its direction. Jacopo da Varagine thought his fellow Genoese could restore political order by fighting external enemies. They should also remain allies of the popes, through whom they were connected to God. Brunetto Latini and Rolandino of Padua thought that independent republics would only be protected by citizens ruling themselves harmoniously and concordantly, and able

¹ Philip Rieff, *Freud: The Mind of the Moralist* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, reprinted 1979), 359.

thereby to defeat the irrationality of importunate fortuna. But Salimbene, thinking that reality was best understood through scriptural bites and other morsels of auctoritas, blamed the papacy for Italy's collapse of order, all the while hoping that order could be restored through a papal reformation that would elevate his own brotherhood of Franciscans.

In this dissertation, the papacy is a leitmotif. Its appearance or absence reveals much about the different conceptions of politics and of the world held by these authors. I have offered an interpretation of how they thought about the relation between the papacy and the restoration or maintenance of political order. My focus on the papacy is partly historically contingent.² After the apparent end of the empire with the death of Frederick II in 1250, the popes remained in Italy, appearing (to some) to link an apparently shattered and transient world to God's eternal stability. The papacy offered a helpful vertical authority, deemed necessary by the clerics Jacopo and Salimbene. But the laymen Rolandino and Latini stepped over the bishops of Rome. They preferred to devise their own solutions relying instead on rhetoric or Aristotelian virtue.³

From a certain perspective, one might describe the political history of medieval Europe after the fall of Rome as the successive reconstitutions of broad political associations, followed by their disintegration into local, particularistic polities like cities or sub-polities like lordships.⁴ The study of the relation of a broad political-religious association, like the church, and more thoroughly local polities, like the Italian cities, fastens attention to this dynamic tension in medieval Europe. Every locality was a 'center.' Every 'center' was somebody else's 'periphery.' Mental reflexes followed similar lines. The roving Salimbene related everything to the truth of

² On this see Michael Oakeshott, *Lectures in the History of Political Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Imprint Academic, 2007), ed. Luke O'Sullivan.

³ On vertical and horizontal authority see Hannah Arendt, "What is Authority?" in *Between Past & Future* (New York: The Viking Press, 1962).

⁴ For comments on this dynamic in medieval history see John Watts, *The Making of Polities: Europe, 1300-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), especially 1-42.

Scripture. Even Rolandino, who likely never left his small corner of north-eastern Italy, thought his history of Padua generalized to other republics as a monicio constituting a general model. Whether through everyday contacts or literature Rome remained a powerful idea, and Rome was papal. Besides its practical effects, the papacy functioned as a set of symbols and shared stories by which the elite in Italian localities understood themselves as connected to the vertical authority of God.⁵ Indeed, even in the fourteenth century, ideas about power and authority would best be expressed by authors when thinking of the nature and source of political authority in relation to the papacy. The highest authority was papal, which was universal. Somehow, particulars had to relate to universals.⁶

My concentration on the restoration of order is not only historically contingent, however. It proceeds from my understanding of political thought. In *Politics and Vision*, Sheldon Wolin averred that political thinkers in a time of disorder are “encompassers of disorder.” Such thinkers are not constrained to “criticism and interpretation,” but “must reconstruct a shattered world of meanings and their accompanying institutional expressions; [they] must, in short, fashion a political cosmos out of political chaos,” which would amount to a (theoretical, though hopefully more than that) restoration of order understood as peace, stability, harmony, or any number of

⁵ Clifford Geertz, “Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Symbolics of Power,” in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 3rd edition, 124: “At the political center of any complexly organized society (to narrow our focus now to that) there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms expressing the fact that it is in truth governing. No matter how democratically the members of an elite are chosen (usually not very) or how deeply divided among themselves they may be (usually much more than outsiders imagine), they justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances that they have either inherited or, in more revolutionary situations, invented. It is these—crowns and coronations, limousines and conferences—that mark the center as center and give what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built. The gravity of high politics and the solemnity of high worship spring from liker impulses than might first appear.”

⁶ James Canning, *Ideas of Power and Authority in the Later Middle Ages, 1296-1417* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

similar words.⁷ Likewise, according to Bernard Williams, the question of the establishment and maintenance of order is the “first political question” that precedes questions of morality.⁸ But thoughts on the best way to restore or maintain order are not inseparable from broadly moral concerns. Long ago Polybius (c.200-c.118 BC) discussed how group morality emerges from the forms and customs of particular political associations.⁹ Both thinking about political order and thinking about morality presuppose thinking about the world and the way humans relate to it. My reconstruction of the political thought of the authors studied in this dissertation includes more than bare descriptions of political phenomena for the reason that those descriptions are logically supported by a vast array of other assumptions about the world, humans, and history.

⁷ Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) 8-9: “Although the task of political philosophy is greatly complicated in a period of disintegration, the theories of Plato, Machiavelli, and Hobbes, for example, are evidence of a ‘challenge and response’ relationship between the disorder of the actual world and the role of the political philosopher as the encompasser of disorder. The range of possibilities appear infinite, for now the political philosopher is not confined to criticism and interpretation; he must reconstruct a shattered world of meanings and their accompanying institutional expressions; he must, in short, fashion a political cosmos out of political chaos...Although conditions of extreme political disorganization lend an added urgency to the quest for order, the political theorist writing for less heroic times has also ranked order as a fundamental problem of his subject-matter...In its most elemental meaning, order has signified a condition of peace and security that makes civilized life possible...Words like ‘peace,’ ‘stability,’ ‘harmony,’ and ‘balance’ are encountered in the writings of every major theorist. Similarly, every political inquiry is, in some degree, directed at the factors conducive to, or militating against, the maintenance of order.”

⁸ Bernard Williams, “Realism and Moralism in Political Theory,” 4: “I identify the ‘first’ political question in Hobbesian terms as the securing of order, protection, safety, trust, and the conditions of cooperation. It is ‘first’ because solving it is the condition of solving, indeed posing, any others. It is not (unhappily) first in the sense that once solved, it never has to be solved again. This is particularly important because, a solution to the first question being required *all the time*, it is affected by historical circumstances; it is not a matter of arriving at a solution to the first question at the level of state-of-nature theory and then going on the rest of the agenda. This is related to what might count as a ‘foundation’ of liberalism...If one disagrees with Hobbes, and thinks that more than one set of political arrangements, even in given historical circumstances, may solve the first question...”

⁹ For a critique of Williams that purports to show that questions about order are inseparable from questions about right and wrong, see Charles Larmore, *What is Political Philosophy?* 105: “Instead, political philosophy must start with what I earlier called the circumstances of politics: the need for social cooperation and the various kinds of conflicts, including not least disagreements about the good and the right, that stand in its way.” On Polybius’s notion of *anakuklosis* and the link between political forms and public morality see *The Histories, Volume III: Books 5-8* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), translated by W.R. Paton, revised by F.W. Walbank and Christian Habicht, bk. 6.

Though medieval historians hardly need to be reminded of the diversities, complications, and complexities of their field of study, still it needs to be said that this dissertation's treatment of even a short period of time in a relatively cordoned geographical region supports an anti-monolithic view of the Middle Ages. The two intellectual poles that I have studied may be said to have been that of the particular city or place and that of the universal idea—understood as rationality and God, connected to the papacy, but inhering sometimes (in Jacopo, for example, and Rolandino) in particular places, too. History was the mode of thought by which these thinkers ordered their sense of reality, shared it with others, and hoped to restore political order. Freud long ago noted that order itself denotes something habitual and predictable.¹⁰ All of this may be summed up as being, in a traditional society, the ideally historical and customary; in that sense, the study of how historians—who impose linguistic order on past human actions—thought about how to restore and then maintain political order is a natural avenue of research.

A dissertation like this could proceed to study any time or place in which disorder was the rule and people dreamed of restoring peace. For that reason, it makes sense to leap from the thirteenth century to a new world, though it was one with similar questions. I have mentioned that the answer to the thirteenth-century chaos with the most historical staying power is, in many ways, the republicanism of Rolandino of Padua and Brunetto Latini, in which the individual city could be seen as connected to universal reason through the customs of the community or the rational virtue of the judge-ruler. Their answer to the tension between the particular and the universal would be elevated to the level of a philosophy of history in the thought of Leonardo Bruni, the early fifteenth-

¹⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1961), translated by James Strachey, 40.

century Florentine humanist. In his *History of the Florentine People* (1414/1415-1444), Bruni showed that the republican regime of renaissance Florence was the revitalization of ancient Etruscan freedoms, which had been distorted and stamped on by the ancient Romans and then the medieval wars between popes and emperors.¹¹ For him the final block on Florence's attainment of a state of self-sufficiency was an adherence, in political affairs, to the papacy and the morality it represented. Even for Bruni this independence was a dream, telling us more about his sense of the politically ideal than the political world he in fact inhabited. But Bruni and others had their effect. We now assume that a country is naturally free of external constraints.

We find in the history of political thought many individual responses to the loss, maintenance, and restoration of order; responses which reveal to us visions of the world formed by the confluence of political experience and ideals of one kind or another. The responses are perennial, but varied, forcing new formulations in every time and place. They await the imaginative but responsible reinterpretation of historians. Fundamentally, a vision of politics is a vision of the world. It constitutes more or less idiosyncratic but culturally shareable views of how humans in groups relate to each other, to history, and to their environment. If the attempts to restore order that I study here constitute lapidary, marmoreal visions of the world—made into stone because they are now unchangeable—the role of the papacy within them may be seen as a traceable fracture that allows us to better see and so understand them.

¹¹ As I discuss in "Political Obligation and Self-Sufficiency in Leonardo Bruni's *History of the Florentine People*," *Austrian History Yearbook* (2024), 1-13.

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