

## ‘LIKE A LILY AMONGST THE THORNS’: PATTERNS OF NOBLE POWER AND VIOLENCE BETWEEN FARNESE AND ORSINI, 1378–1447

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*Violence and peace-making in medieval Italy have often been analysed in urban environments. But what happened if two powerful baronial families clashed in the countryside? This paper, by looking at the feud between the Farnese and Orsini di Pitigliano during the Western Schism, illuminates various patterns of conflict and conciliation. Such conflicts witnessed the participation of relatives, allies, and subjects who shared in the sense of community and honour of their lords. The various motivations for actors to become involved on behalf of or in opposition to barons are analysed here in detail. The events of the Farnese–Orsini feud on the micro-level are linked to wider developments on the Italian peninsula and European politics. In the second part of this paper the successful conclusion of the feud is analysed in light of the return of the papacy to Rome. The meticulous detail in which the peace agreement was hammered out then provides further insight into the strategies employed by baronial families to maintain the peace. In all, this paper therefore contributes to the study of violence and peace-making as well as of the Italian nobility during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.*

*I fenomeni di violenza e pacificazione nell’Italia medioevale sono stati spesso analizzati nel contesto urbano. Ma cosa succedeva quando due potenti famiglie baronali si scontravano nella campagna? Il presente contributo, attraverso l’analisi del caso del feudo tra i Farnese e gli Orsini di Pitigliano durante lo Scisma d’Occidente, illumina vari modelli di conflitto e di conciliazione. Questo tipo di conflitti vedeva la partecipazione di parenti, alleati e soggetti che condividevano un senso di comunità e onore dei loro signori. Le varie motivazioni che hanno spinto gli attori a intervenire in favore o in opposizione ai baroni sono analizzate in dettaglio. Gli eventi del feudo Farnese–Orsini sulla piccola scala sono connessi con i più ampi sviluppi della penisola italiana e della politica su scala europea. Nella seconda parte di questo articolo la conclusione favorevole delle vicende del feudo è analizzata alla luce del ritorno del papato a Roma. Il meticoloso dettaglio con cui il trattato di pace è stato elaborato fornisce elementi per comprendere le strategie utilizzate dalle famiglie baronali per mantenere la pace. In ultima analisi il presente studio contribuisce allo studio delle forme di violenza e pacificazione e contemporaneamente della nobiltà italiana durante i secoli XIV e XV.*

In the Patrimony [of Saint Peter in Tuscia] three houses also reign: first that of the magnificent count Bertoldo, lord of Pitigliano and Sovana, with many holdings in the Maremma of Siena; the second house is that of the lords of Farnese, nobles, amongst

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which lords there was one known in the Patrimony as the Fox, called the lord Ranuccio Farnese. (Tartaglia, 1982: 36)

The chronicler Gaspare Broglio Tartaglia, writing during the first half of the fifteenth century for the Malatesta of Rimini, provided in his *Cronica malatestiana* an alternative description of the political landscape of Italy to the one familiar to the modern eye. In his description states, territories and cities play a secondary role whereas the political landscape of the peninsula is shaped by its dynasties. The accepted historical narrative of late medieval Italian politics, where big fish swallowed up the smaller ones until five large territorial states — Milan, Venice, Naples, Florence and the Papal States — remained, has been gradually replaced by one that also includes smaller states varying from republican Lucca to feudal Monferrato to the signorial Rimini where Tartaglia wrote. However, his description of Italy shows the very limitations of that system too.<sup>2</sup> Tartaglia's emphasis on noble dynasties supports Christine Shaw's argument (2015) that their inclusion is necessary for understanding Renaissance politics. In fact, it is increasingly clear that Roman noble dynasties and families shaped politics within city factions, between neighbouring cities and between states.<sup>3</sup> It has been amply demonstrated, too, that violence played an important part in late medieval politics, yet military skirmishes in the countryside have been largely overlooked. Here then, I want to explore what happened when two baronial families clashed, in this case the Farnese and the Orsini di Pitigliano, two influential families in fifteenth-century Italy, the former donning lilies as coat of arms, the latter sporting a rose.<sup>4</sup> More specifically, I will analyse how these clashes turned violent and how they played out, what patterns are observable, what actors played a role, and how in the end matters came to be successfully resolved.

Magnate violence in the countryside was ubiquitous, yet it has not received the attention it merits in contrast to violence in the city (Davies, 2013; Lantschner, 2015; Ricciardelli and Zorzi, 2015). This can largely be explained by the city governments' interest in interfering — or not interfering — in cases of violent acts, whereas in the countryside those who were supposed to uphold the law were precisely those breaking it when magnate violence broke out.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Italian cities have left a trail of documentation that allows historians to reconstruct patterns of violence and conflict. However, unless civic magistrates had an interest in intervening or resolving crises in the countryside, such extensive records rarely survive, and historians have to rely on other types of sources such as chronicles or papal briefs. This case between the Farnese and

<sup>2</sup> Chapters in Gamberini and Lazzarini, 2012, follow this system, with the exception of the chapter by Federica Cengarle, 2012, on lordships, fiefs and small states; Lazzarini, 2003: 81.

<sup>3</sup> Carocci, 2006; Shaw, 2007; Serio, 2008; Berardozi, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Both Orsini di Pitigliano and Farnese were declared magnate families of the *contado* of Orvieto in 1322. Archivio di Stato di Orvieto (ASO), Riformagioni 81, ff. 74<sup>v</sup>–76<sup>v</sup>; for genealogical tables of both families, see digitized publication of Litta, 1819–83.

<sup>5</sup> In general on justice and the nobility: Carocci, 2010, 2016.

Orsini, however, is particularly well documented, not least by two chroniclers: Francesco de Montemarte, count of Corbara and a baron of the Orvietan *contado*, and Luca Manente, who hailed from the Orvietan patriciate. This allows us to observe in detail how noble rivalries played out on the micro-level, which in turn will further illuminate this widespread phenomenon. Simultaneously, it is possible to explore how these micro-events tied in with developments on the grander political scale of Renaissance Italy. In the Orsini–Farnese feud the opposing parties adhered to different papal camps, were supported by and supported different communes and got different actors involved, from mercenaries to local castellans and vassals.

There are also deeper ingrained notions about the level and nature of violence in the city versus the countryside and about the violent nature of noble lineages and their culture of honour versus the desire for peace and order of mercantile-minded city-dwellers.<sup>6</sup> The basic premise of the first assumption seems logical — the more people live in a compact space the greater the need for regulation of violence — but on closer scrutiny it is difficult to find support for it (Zorzi, 2012). The second argument is likewise easily refuted as notions of family honour and the incentives to protect it through violent measures permeated all levels of society. That city governments were especially occupied with violence by magnates is perhaps due more to the latter's ability to amass a large following of kin and clientele, and thus inflict violence and chaos on a larger scale than would two belligerent families of bakers.<sup>7</sup> Again there seems to be little evidence supporting the thesis that barons were especially violent within a society that accepted high levels of interpersonal violence as normal and regularly witnessed feuding. I am using the term feud here, conscious of its double function as a narrative device imposed by historians, but also as a means by which actors involved deliberately imbued their actions with meaning (Sunderland, 2017: 175–212). What is unique to the conflict between the Farnese and Orsini is the success of its settlement. Two documents from 1447 show how all disagreements were smoothed out. Possession of the rights over the castle of Vitozzo became a shared and undividable property, ties between the families would be renewed through intermarriage, and the two families' political and military history would remain closely intertwined until the end of the century.<sup>8</sup> This article therefore is as much about peace as it is about war.

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<sup>6</sup> Castelnuovo, 2014; Chittolini, 2015; Ruggiero, 2015; Di Santo, 2016; Sposato, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Musto, 2003: 193–229; Bratchel, 2008: 51–2; Klapisch-Zuber, 2009; Lansing, 2010; Del Tredici, 2013; Diacciati and Zorzi, 2013; Zorzi, 2013a, 2013b.

<sup>8</sup> The documents are copies preserved in the Archivio di Stato di Napoli (ASN), Archivio Farnesiano (AF), busta 2071. The originals were burned during the Second World War. I warmly thank Philippa Jackson, who pointed me to the location of a late sixteenth-century inventory of the Farnese archive, containing summary descriptions of its contents, which allows us partially to reconstruct what has gone up in flames. The inventory is preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV), Archivio Chigi 413, ff. 124<sup>r</sup>–142<sup>r</sup>; some documents are also mentioned in Morisco, 1629.

## DEVELOPING RIVALRIES AND CONFLICTING CLAIMS

The origins of the conflict between Farnese and Orsini must be sought at the time when the area around Orvieto and Viterbo became the focus of ambitious Roman families, most notably the Orsini (Hood, 1996). In 1293 Romano Orsini married Anastasia Aldobrandeschi of Sovana and Pitigliano, and their son Guido would inherit their patrimony, firmly entrenching the family in the area, but only after Ranuccio Farnese da Scarceta had acted as guardian on behalf of the widowed Anastasia and her underage children (ASO, Riformagioni 87, f. 18<sup>r</sup>; in general: Collavini, 1998). Thus, cooperation rather than conflict initially marked Farnese–Orsini relations. Yet during this period the Farnese too enhanced their possessions and prestige. During the thirteenth century they had emancipated themselves from Aldobrandeschi comital overlordship and became independent political actors in their own right (Fumi, 1884: 54, 74–8, 192–5; Carpentier, 1986: 59). In 1302 Guido Farnese, then still underage, was named bishop of Orvieto and soon rector of the Patrimony of Saint Peter in Tuscia, whereas his lay brother Pietro obtained extensive judicial powers as Orvieto's *rector ac Defensor* (Monaldeschi, 1584: ff. 75<sup>r</sup>–77<sup>v</sup>; Diary of Laurentius Martini in Finke, 1902: doc. XXXIX). A series of castles was conquered, fortified or built by the Farnese in an area stretching from the northern fringes of Saint Peter's Patrimony in Tuscia (Fig. 1) all the way to the river Marta to the south. Furthermore, when Nicola Farnese became bishop of Castro, Ranuccio Farnese da Scarceta managed to impose his rule as signore of that city, whereas Petruccio did so in Proceno and Grotte, two communes near the county of Pitigliano.<sup>9</sup>

Initially, Guido Orsini and several Farnese could still both be found fighting for the papacy, but to avoid a clash between these two rising families would have required both an aptitude for careful manoeuvring and shrewd political dexterity (ASV, Reg. Vat. 117, ff. 45<sup>r-v</sup>; ASN, AF, busta 686, parte III, fasc. 1; *Estratti dalle 'historie'*, in RIS, tomo XV, part 5, vol. I: 418). Such qualities were not to be found in either family. In 1333 Guido Orsini conquered Sala and this was considered an unjust annexation of Church possessions.<sup>10</sup> The papal rector soon sent letters to Viterbo, Orvieto, and Farnese, who, despite internal trouble, joined the military enterprise against the Orsini (ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. Ex., 118, ff. 83<sup>v</sup>–107<sup>v</sup>). It was the first of many clashes. Not long after the conclusion of a peace treaty, however, both Farnese and Orsini raided papal territories together and both Orsini di Pitigliano and Farnese da Scarceta

<sup>9</sup> ASV, Reg. Vat. 131, ff. 71<sup>v</sup>–72<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 134, ff. 51<sup>r</sup>, 70<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 143, ff. 127<sup>v</sup>–128<sup>v</sup>; Arm. XXXV, 14, ff. 20<sup>r</sup>–25<sup>r</sup>; Cam. Ap., Intr. Ex. 264, f. 254<sup>r</sup>; BAV, Vat. Lat. 10743, f. 40<sup>r</sup>; Theiner, 1861–2, vol. II: 373, 376; Maire Vigueur, 1981: 94–5.

<sup>10</sup> ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. Ex., 118, ff. 18<sup>r</sup>–80<sup>r</sup>. According to the chronicler Luca Manente, Sala had been bought by Pepo Farnese in 1218, placed under Orvietan protection in 1222 and defended against the Bisenzi in 1279, but he is notoriously untrustworthy with such early events. *Cronica di Luca di Domenico Manente*, RIS, XV, parte V, vol. I: 289–91, 316; the 1222 document placing Sala, Castiglione and Farnese under Orvietan protection is published in Fumi, 1884: 74–8.



Fig. 1. Map of Saint Peter's Patrimony in Tuscia and Maremma of Siena (drawn by the author).

and d'Ancarano were again declared magnates and rebels by the government of Orvieto (ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. Ex., 118, ff. 108<sup>v</sup>–109<sup>v</sup>; ASN, AF, busta 686, parte I, fasc. 10). War broke out again in 1339 and the rector of the Patrimony was ordered to punish anyone participating in the fight between the lords of Farnese, Orsini of Sovana-Pitigliano, and Aldobrandeschi of Santa Fiora.<sup>11</sup> During this period the Farnese conquered Morrano and obtained Montecucuto from the Aldobrandeschi (ASV, Reg. Vat. 116, ff. 363<sup>r-v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 134, ff. 51<sup>r-v</sup>, 70<sup>r</sup>–71<sup>r</sup>; Caetani, 1925–32, vol. II: 68). In 1340, Guido Orsini still swore fealty for the castle of Sala to the papal rector. Sala, tactically located near an ancient bridge across the Olpeta, was situated between Farnese, Latera and Pitigliano and therefore a desirable castle to control. During the two subsequent decades it must have changed hands by force, as Bertoldo and Guido Farnese submitted Sala to Siena in 1361 (ASV, Arm. XXXV, 14, f. 21<sup>v</sup>; ASS, Capitoli 3, ff. 425<sup>r</sup>–427<sup>r</sup>; Capitoli 67). Plenty of reason thus for enmity and lingering claims.

That is not to say the clash was inevitable and that we must see the intermittent wars in Trecento Italy as a Hobbesian *bellum omnium contra omnes* (Breccola 2001–6). Enmity between rival Guelph and Ghibelline dynasties followed set patterns and accounted for much of the warring of the time (Gentile, 2005; Ferente, 2013). Certainly, ideological constraints grouped both Farnese and Orsini into the same Guelph faction. However, even if such denominations originated in the ancient rivalry between pope and emperor it was by no means inconceivable that Guelph families would oppose papal rule. Ranuccio Farnese da Scarceta was excommunicated on two occasions for refusing to pay tribute

<sup>11</sup> ASS, Capitoli 3, ff. 101<sup>r</sup>–104<sup>r</sup>; Capitoli 113; ASV, Reg. Vat. 116, ff. 363<sup>r-v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 134, ff. 51<sup>r-v</sup>, 70<sup>r-v</sup>, 80<sup>r</sup>.

to the Camera Apostolica (ASV, Cam. Ap., Intr. Ex., 118, ff. 81<sup>r</sup>, 83<sup>v</sup>; Breccola, 2001–6, IV: 82–3). Papal absence in Avignon reduced the effectiveness of papal power in the Patrimony, which in turn mitigated the loyalty of nominally Guelph families. In such a situation, inhibitions were removed that kept the rivalries between Farnese and Orsini from turning violent. The enmities between the two families were therefore highly contingent on the presence or absence of papal power. The introduction of a more forceful papal presence in the form of delegated power to legates therefore increased the likelihood of galvanizing the Guelph factions in support of papal pretensions. In fact, with the arrival of the stern Cardinal Gil Álvarez de Albornoz in 1353, who headed the papal campaign meant to subdue the Papal States, the Farnese and Orsini quickly overcame their differences and returned to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>12</sup> A few years later when Pope Urban V returned to Italy in 1368 and was ambushed in Viterbo by his enemies, the Farnese and Orsini rescued him from captivity (*Estratti dalle 'historie'*, RIS, tomo XV, part 5, vol. I, 465). The start of the Western Schism in 1378 then removed the papacy as a binding force, Orsini often opting for Roman obedience and Farnese for Avignon, and it was from that period on that events unfolded quickly (Rollo-Koster and Izbicki, 2009).

## THE YEARS OF SCHISM

During the years of the Western Schism the Farnese and Orsini di Pitigliano came to blows on various occasions in 1389, 1395, 1408–10, 1413 and 1416–17. During these episodes of conflict, at least four members of the Farnese perished, several castles went up in flames and the Orsini di Pitigliano came to the brink of annihilation. A variety of tactics were employed that not only provide insight into the micro-events of the Farnese–Orsini feud as an isolated phenomenon, but also situate both families and their rivalry in the broader political context. Various political actors interfered in favour of one or the other party, each with their own motives for doing so. On the micro-level, arguably, a larger group shared in the sense of honour and community than just the core group of kin and were willing to wager their very lives in support of their lord. On the other hand, internal strife could and would be exploited and vassals, castellans and even kin became embroiled in the feud, not always in support of those who were their social superiors or relatives. Such was the case among the widely ramified Farnese, when the Orsini sought to benefit from dissent over inheritance practices.

<sup>12</sup> ASV, Reg. Aven. 127, f. 554<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Aven. 238, f. 122<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Aven. 244, f. 132; Reg. Aven. 196, f. 1<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 227, f. 379<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 244, ff. 57<sup>r-v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 268, ff. 176<sup>v</sup>–177<sup>r</sup>; ASN, AF, busta 686, parte II, fasc. 15; Sáez and Ferrer 1976–95, vol. II: docs 152, 348, 481; vol. III: doc. 102.

The brothers Pietro, Puccio and Ranuccio had fathered numerous male descendants who survived into adulthood. According to contemporary practices, partible inheritance was adhered to in each generation, subdividing castles and jurisdictions equally among sons. In practice this meant that Puccio, as is stated in his will, amongst other possessions, owned only 1/8 of the rights over the fortified town and castle of Farnese. The will states furthermore that his four legitimate heirs, Leonardo, Lodovico, Mangiatino and Antonio, were to receive equal parts, thus a meagre 1/32 each. To make matters worse, Puccio's son Giulio was not yet of age. If he were to survive into adulthood, this would leave only 1/40 per inheritance (ASN, AF, busta 2071). Apart from the intractable juridical mess this created, the odds of sibling rivalry outweighing kinship bonds increased significantly. Disaffected cousins who felt that they had received less than was their due were attracted by the prospect of acquiring more by force. The presence of illegitimate offspring added further fuel to the fire. Bertoldo Orsini, one of the executors of Puccio's will, was cunning enough to realize this and had the ear of Baccino di Puccio Farnese. An opportunity presented itself in 1389 when German mercenaries, who according to chroniclers had an aversion to the Farnese, were in the neighbourhood (ASF, Capitoli, Registri, 1, ff. 174<sup>r</sup>–177<sup>v</sup>). Baccino and Bertoldo went to them to strike a deal and divide the Farnese patrimony. The plans were foiled when Farnese allies in Orvieto convinced the commune to use its army and Breton mercenaries to aid the nobles who in the past had so often come to the rescue of its ruling faction (Montemarte, 1846: 62; Manente, *RIS*, tomo XV, part 5, vol. I: 399). Indeed, the intervention of communes in noble rivalries was of such a complex nature that it merits separate attention elsewhere. Nonetheless, the episode succinctly illustrates the dangers of family fragmentation and exploitation thereof by ambitious neighbours. In this case, differences were brushed over quickly as in the autumn and winter of the same year Farnese of various branches fought alongside Bertoldo Orsini in another row between factions in Orvieto (Fumi, 1884: 587; Manente, *RIS*, tomo XV, part 5, vol. I: 399–400; Montemarte, 1846: 64). But these disputes and acts of violence were not atypical, and other Roman baronial families were less coherent. The Caetani of Maenza, Sermoneta and Fondi are a notorious example and there is little doubt that their internal conflicts cost them political influence.<sup>13</sup> The Palestrina branch of the Colonna, too, was torn apart by murder and vendetta during the early Quattrocento (Serio, 2008: 17). For the Farnese, however, the aforementioned events were a rare case of family disunity, which may be one of the reasons for their unusual success. Already in 1391 disunity seems to have been suppressed through implementation of Puccio's will (ASN, AF, busta 686, parte 3). During other rounds of brawls the various branches would form a united front against the Orsini.

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<sup>13</sup> Archivio Caetani, 19901; Archivio Caetani, Pergamene 2609; Infessura, 1890: 108; Caetani, 1927: xiv–xv; Caetani 1927–33.

Before turning to settlements, it is worth giving further attention to strategies of sedition. The resolution of the conflict in 1389 did not spell the end of enmity. With Farnese family unity restored, other inroads had to be sought by Bertoldo Orsini and soon presented themselves. The inhabitants of Ischia, unhappy with Farnese rule, were receptive to Bertoldo's overtures. Suddenly, the town revolted against their overlords in July 1395. Montemarte wrote in his chronicle (1846: 83) how the Ischiani, though not intent on murder, nevertheless killed three Farnese, Angelo, Puccio and Francesco Pietro, who had wanted to escape to safety in Valentano. Nicola actually managed to escape, but Ranuccio di Pietro, who had thrown himself into a well to hide, was imprisoned. Crucially, after events had spun out of control, the Ischiani declared themselves loyal to Count Bertoldo Orsini, who was still in control of Ischia at the time of writing, that is to say, in 1399. Thus, not only did the vassals of Ischia revolt against their lords, but even killed and imprisoned some of them and then declared themselves loyal to Bertoldo. This adherence to a new lord precludes an analysis based on notions of class resistance, of peasants opposed to nobles. As Samuel Cohn has shown for western Europe (1999: 113–94; 2006: 25–52), uprisings in the countryside against nobles were a rare phenomenon accounting for less than 1 per cent of revolts analysed (see also Pinto, Bourin and Cherubini, 2008). The event was, however, in many ways radical and turned the feudal system upside down, vassals electing their overlord. One wonders what arguments were used and whether Bertoldo and the Ischiani would have used the imperial privilege from 1210 that Emperor Frederick II granted to Ranerio Aldobrandeschi, which included Ischia, as well as Sala, Vitozzo, Castiglione, Farnese, Morrano, Mezzano, Petrella, Sorano and Castellarsum, in the investiture of the county of Sovana-Pitigliano, as justification (Original Golden Bull: ASV, Arm. I-XVIII, 10; copies: Arm. XXXVII, 17, ff. 210<sup>r</sup>–221<sup>r</sup>; ASF, Carte Stroziane, Serie I, 321, ff. 12<sup>v</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>). Later mentions of that privilege seem to hint that it had not yet lost its utility for staking claims.

Montemarte gives a different explanation. The chronicler argued (1846: 83) that 'all these things happened, it is said, because of the many injuries they inflicted upon their men, beating them and taking what is theirs, especially their women, and inflicting a thousand abuses'. It is an interesting justification; avarice, envy and lust on the side of the overlord placed them outside the order of the *Respublica Christiana* and absolved their vassals from their loyalty and duties. But we have to remind ourselves that it is a justification written years after the event and furthermore one advanced by a chronicler who was far from disinterested. Montemarte himself had lost the castle of Piansano to the Farnese only months before the uprising and therefore had plenty of reason to entertain a personal grudge. The fact that he turns his chronicle into a moral lesson, arguing that 'this should be an example to every nobleman on earth to treat their subjects well, and not torment them and inflict injury, nor embarrassment', and juxtaposes the Farnese's conduct with his own benign rule, relating how 'because of this our vassals have always been loving towards us with every fidelity and therefore I impress on the memory of all my



descendants to treat their subjects and vassals as well as one does one's own children' (Montemarte, 1846: 58), should make the historian aware of the risk of taking his words too much at face value. Indeed, the chronicler Luca Manente provides another account (*RIS*, XV, parte V, vol. I: 405):

And in July the men of Ischia, with the favour of the Orsini, rebelled against their lords, and killed the lords Francesco, Angelo, and Puccio, in fact, and took the lord Bartolomeo, their brother, with the lord Ranuccio, son of Pietro, their nephew, prisoner in a granary. Then the aforementioned Ischiani fled to Pitigliano and Sorano with their wives, children, and goods. Therefore, at the same time, the lord Nicola, Pietro Bertoldo and Pietro, all brothers of the aforementioned, were in Valentano, who were respected and honoured by the aforementioned men [of Ischia]. And the lord Pietro was furious that his son was imprisoned with the lord Bartolomeo, his brother. Thus, hearing the tale in Orvieto, several of the Beffati and Malcorini, their kin and friends, went immediately to Valentano; similarly, the captain Berardone [de la Salle] and the Bretons entered Farnese and handed it over to the sons of the lord Puccio, son of Pietro, their cousins, that is the lords Pepo, Giovanni, and Sciarra; and afterwards he entered Ischia, and liberated the two lords, uncle and nephew, but the Orvietani executed several of the aforementioned Ischiani, against the will of captain Berardone.

In Manente's account, the Ischiani and their families fled with their goods to the Orsini territories of Pitigliano and Sorano, not, incidentally, their most imposing fortresses. In their flight, arguably, or so it is suggested here, the inhabitants showed their guilt, although their fear of reprisals was justified. Furthermore, Nicola, Pietro Bertoldo and Pietro could count on considerable support from both Orvieto's factions as well as the Bretons. Finally, the town of Latera, in support of their Farnese lords, conquered Mezzano on their own account (ASN, AF, busta 2071). If indeed the Farnese had been accustomed to take their subjects' possessions and, above all, women — and it cannot be excluded — it is doubtful they would have had such broad support elsewhere. The young Ranuccio Farnese, who had been imprisoned, nonetheless seems to have remembered the lesson well. In his will, he 'admonished his aforementioned sons to be bound to respect and treat well all their subjects and servants, in such manner so that they may deservedly be esteemed by them and they may receive their free and loyal service'.<sup>14</sup> Lords were normally expected to stand up for the conduct of their vassals vis-à-vis neighbouring potentates or negotiate their release when they were incarcerated (Della Misericordia, 2005: 301–26; Fiore, 2010). Both parties had mutual obligations to fulfil and, in this case, the events show that the inhabitants of towns who were nominally vassals were by no means passive spectators or victims in patterns of noble violence but active participants, sometimes supporting their lords, but at times willing to switch allegiance.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> ASF, Carte Stroziane, Serie I, 351, ff. 136<sup>r</sup>–141<sup>r</sup>, and ASN, AF, busta 2071, published as Lefevre, 1980.

<sup>15</sup> Other cases of vassals' involvement in defence of barons can be found in Shaw, 1992; Gamberini, 2005: 245–64.

Not only peasants could be convinced to switch allegiance, however; other potentially discontented individuals were the castellans and small lords that had submitted to their more powerful neighbours as *raccomandati*. Often these were relatives and active as captains in the bands of their companions (ASS, Consistoro 1890: 46; Consistoro 1891: 64; Consistoro 1892: 67). The conduct of two of these Farnese *adherenti*, Angelo de Sala and Angelo de Vitozzo, shows that a variety of strategic opportunities provided themselves through which they sought to maintain or enlarge their freedom of movement. Both Sala and Vitozzo had been part of the imperial investiture of the county of Sovana-Pitigliano, but Sala had been under de facto rule of the Farnese since the mid-fourteenth century (ASS, Capitoli 3: ff. 101<sup>r</sup>–104<sup>r</sup>, 125<sup>r</sup>–127<sup>r</sup>; Capitoli 67; Capitoli 113). The lords of Vitozzo, a collateral branch of the counts of Baschi, had been independent actors in Orvietan politics in their own right (ASO, Riformagioni 87: ff. 23<sup>v</sup>–78<sup>r</sup>; Manente, *RIS*, XV, parte 5, vol. I: 435). Nevertheless, nominally they were still vassals of the counts of Pitigliano, despite attempts to submit their castle to Siena (Malavolti, 1599, vol. III: 10<sup>v</sup>). Perhaps that vassalage had induced Angelo de Vitozzo to become an adherent of the Farnese, to whom he was already affiliated through ties of kinship. Angelo thus took up service in the army of Ranuccio Farnese in 1416. In return, the Farnese stationed troops in Vitozzo to provide protection, yet were unable to avoid the destruction of that castle by Bertoldo Orsini.<sup>16</sup> As if its destruction were not enough, the Baschi would in the end lose control of the castle ruins entirely.

Castellans moved in either direction, however, as is clear from the *Informatio facti super controversijs inter dominos de Farnesio et dominum Pitiliani* of 1447, with which they sought to resolve their differences. In it, the story is related of Angelo de Sala. Sala had been part of the Farnese's sphere of influence during the Trecento, although never unchallenged. In practice, this meant allowing Farnese men access to the castle, Farnese cattle access to the pasture lands, and the payment of part of the agricultural yield. Resolved to change that situation, Angelo had, possibly during the 1395 war, declared his loyalty to Bertoldo and his father Aldobrandino. Neither Orsini was able to prevent the revenge taken on Sala, yet another victim of the many wars of the Western Schism, a period of *decastellamento* as many castles and fortified towns were unable to withstand destruction through demolition and fire. In the case of Sala, the rights over its ruins, its town and territories now devolved to the Farnese. Nevertheless, they did stipulate that part of Sala's yields would go to Angelo and his descendants for the upkeep of their family. In fact, this remained the case over 40 years later, when Angelo's granddaughters were still being maintained (ASN, AF, busta 2071). Relations between castellans and baronial families would therefore be unevenly balanced, but with mutual obligations.

<sup>16</sup> ASS, Consistoro 1890: 46; Consistoro, 1891: 59; its destruction is mentioned in ASN, AF, busta 2071.

Throughout, mercenary companies have appeared that interfered and played an active role in the feud between Orsini and Farnese. Indeed, the Farnese maintained connections with Breton mercenaries, whereas the Orsini tried to sway their German rivals into attacking their opponents. Mercenary companies were something of a wild card, a vast resource of manpower and experience, yet unpredictable as local rivalries became intertwined with high politics, while companies transformed themselves from the military arm of contesting popes and princes into independent actors struggling for survival when their contracts had ended. Yet companies' unruliness should not be overstated. The Farnese maintained close relations with the Breton company of Bernard de la Salle for over two decades after initial raids into Sienese territory in 1379 (Caferro, 1998). Two decades later, in 1398, Giovanni Tomacelli, nephew of Pope Boniface IX, campaigned to reconquer that which the Farnese had taken during the preceding years. The campaign started out successfully, recapturing Marta and Valentano.<sup>17</sup> The latter, however, was quickly besieged and taken by the Breton mercenaries, who, in a rare show of altruism, handed over the keys to the Farnese (Manente, *RIS*, XV, part 5, vol. I: 407–8). Mutual cooperation between mercenaries and baronial families during longer periods therefore characterizes the period of the Western Schism. Leonardo Farnese, for example, served as procurator for Bernard de la Salle, as did his nephew Antonio (ASS, Capitoli 3: ff. 585<sup>r</sup>–586<sup>r</sup>; Esch, 1969: 71). It is therefore unsurprising that the company came to the Farnese's aid against the Orsini both in 1389 and 1395.

Presumably, close connections to companies could be very advantageous and the Farnese seem to have fared better in this respect than the Orsini. Although they likewise maintained links to the Bretons, their demise left the Orsini devoid of an important source of military support. Hence their largely futile attempts to persuade King Sigismund and King Ladislaus to enter into alliances, although connections with Florence did last. The Farnese, by contrast, maintained close connections to captains of mercenary bands, as is shown by an agreement between Muzio Attendolo Sforza and Braccio da Montone dated 2 September 1414 in which they mutually promise not to offend the territories of each other or of the Farnese (Fumi, 1884: 661). In return, during the war with the Orsini in 1416 the Farnese held Sforza's lands in the Papal States when he was imprisoned in Naples (ASS, Capitoli, 41, f. 107<sup>r</sup>). Angelo Tartaglia, father of the chronicler Gaspare, married two of his daughters into the Farnese, too (Chiatti, 2011: 32). In return, both Pietro Bertoldo Farnese and Tartaglia diverted their troops and ravished Orsini lands when invading the Papal States with an army in the service of Perugia in 1413 (Fumi, 1884: 620–1; Manente, *RIS*, XV, part 5, vol. I: 412–13). Likewise, Tartaglia followed his Farnese relatives when they led the Sienese armies against the Orsini in 1416

<sup>17</sup> The Farnese had obtained the investiture of Valentano first in May 1353, then on 13 November 1367; 3 February and 31 August 1370; 10 October 1391. ASV, Reg. Aven. 129: f. 126<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 228: ff. 11<sup>v</sup>–12<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Aven. 166: f. 473<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 257: f. 4<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Aven. 171: ff. 405<sup>r</sup>, 515<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 301: ff. 131<sup>v</sup>–132<sup>v</sup>.

(ASS, Manoscritti A 135, f. 48<sup>v</sup>; Consistoro 1889: 32). Once again one sees how local conflict and larger politics became intertwined, mercenary captains following the orders of their superiors as well as pursuing their own interests in Tuscia, safeguarding them through establishing dynastic links to powerful baronial families and being willing to invest substantial military effort to sustain their newly gained allies. It seems likely these dynamics were not unique to Tuscia, but they did significantly influence and shape the feud between Farnese and Orsini di Pitigliano, tipping the balance in favour of the former.

## THE PAPAL PRESENCE AND THE ATTRACTIONS OF PEACE

Although the period of the Western Schism may come across as one of intermittent war between Orsini and Farnese, it is essential to stress the extent to which the feud and peace were intertwined. This has been acknowledged since anthropologist Max Gluckman (1955) published his article on peace and feuds among the Nuer of Sudan. Historians of medieval and early modern Europe have followed suit and, although arguments for the structural self-limitation of feuds have been criticized, the current consensus maintains that feud and peace were intrinsically linked; nor was a tendency to feud opposed to recourse to official channels of justice and law.<sup>18</sup> The feud between Farnese and Orsini was no different. Despite their rivalry, both families shared political ideas as well as a network of kin and allies that largely overlapped, and, when different fault lines and more pressing dangers surfaced, cooperation between both families could arise and the feud would be temporarily halted. Such was the case when the northern area of Saint Peter's Patrimony became a cherished objective for Pope Boniface IX's train of ambitious Neapolitan nobles (Esch, 1969). Boniface decided to woo the Orsini of Pitigliano: in 1402 he invested them with the strategic fortress of Abbazia ad Ponte (ASV, Reg. Vat. 320: ff. 50<sup>r</sup>–56<sup>v</sup>; Arm. XXXVII, 40: f. 277<sup>r</sup>). But when discontent with Giovanni Tomacelli's rule in Orvieto spilled over in rebellion after the death of his papal protector in 1404, both Farnese and Bertoldo Orsini led a large coalition that quickly evicted the Neapolitan newcomers (Manente, *RIS*, XV, part 5, vol. I: 410). Predictably, the Orvietans soon fell out over which pope to adhere to anew, but both Orsini and Farnese fought in the armies of Pope Innocent VII against Ladislaus of Naples in 1406 (ASV, Reg. Vat. 334: ff. 246<sup>v</sup>–250<sup>r</sup>). Finally, when a celebrated Spanish hermit visited Orvieto on his way to Rome it was Lodovico and Nicola Farnese, flanked by Iaco Orsini, Bertoldo's half-brother, who accompanied the holy man during his entrance (Manente, *RIS*, XV, part 5, vol. I: 407).

Resolving the conflict was thus never inconceivable, but I would argue that two determining factors played a decisive role in the settlement of differences. A display of mercy and effective mediation by Ranuccio Farnese at the end of

<sup>18</sup> Carroll, 2003; Wray, 2009; Zorzi, 2009; Kumhera, 2017: 16–58.

the conflict of 1417 opened up the road to rapprochement. A small gesture such as alleviating the famine in Orsini towns by sending grain could speed up the re-establishment of friendly connections (Malavolti, 1599, vol. III: 12<sup>v</sup>). Then the end of the Western Schism altered the political context by reintroducing a single uncontested papacy seated in Rome. However insecure Pope Martin V and Eugenius IV's position initially, the pope remained a force to reckon with and, more importantly, a potential fount of honours, offices and titles.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the Farnese quickly grasped the potential benefit for themselves, declaring their resolve to restore the papacy to its former glory (ASS, Concistoro 1892: 37). Both Martin and Eugenius relied heavily on the Roman nobility to rule the Papal States, and the Farnese could, thanks to their family connections to the Colonna and loyalty towards Eugenius, support both popes in their political adversity. In turn, the Farnese received confirmation of all their possessions, were given numerous castles, and Ranuccio Farnese, the sly fox, was made rector of Campania, senator of Rome, commissioner in the Patrimony of Saint Peter in Tuscia, as well as captain of a papal army sent to aid Queen Joanna II of Naples both under Martin and Eugenius.<sup>20</sup> The main difference between the two popes, however, lay in their attitudes towards the Colonna family, and hence also towards their arch-nemesis, the Orsini. Hailing from the Colonna, Martin naturally preferred his natal kin, whereas Eugenius was relentlessly opposed to their influence in the Papal States and used the Orsini as counterweight. Whereas the Farnese supported both popes, the Orsini di Pitigliano remained aloof during Martin's papacy (ASC, Archivio Orsini, I Serie, Pergamene, n.inv. 316 & 330). Eugenius's excommunication of and wars against the Colonna, however, further galvanized the Guelph faction in the Papal States (Bulls in ASC, Archivio Orsini, Serie I, Pergamene, n.inv. 386 & 2293). With Guelph and Ghibelline factions opposing each other again, both Orsini and Farnese fought against the Colonna and their allies, the Savelli, Prefetti di Vico and Siena, in 1432 and 1433 (Ciampi, 1872: 118–33). Orsini and Farnese, furthermore, maintained close connections with Francesco Sforza, the powerful *condottiere* in papal service (ASS, Capitoli, 41, f. 107<sup>r</sup>; Capitoli 160). Papal presence had reintroduced if not an over-imposing new element, then at least a new political factor that could not be left out of the equation. Crucially, the Farnese also married into the Orsini of Bracciano, and established relations with the Conti (ASN, AF, busta 2071; ASV, Reg. Vat. 383: ff. 6<sup>r</sup>–11<sup>r</sup>; ASF, MAP, XI: 404<sup>r-v</sup>). To solidify the ties with the latter family further, and no doubt also to avoid potential contention over the possessions of which both families shared ownership, a pact was made in 1445, sealed by a double

<sup>19</sup> In general, Partner, 1958; Chambers, 2006. On the artistic revival of Rome, Richardson, 2009; Dempsey, 2012; McCahill, 2013.

<sup>20</sup> ASV, Reg. Vat. 347: ff. 161<sup>r-v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 348: ff. 172<sup>v</sup>–173<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 349: ff. 93<sup>r-v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 354: f. 183<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 365: ff. 3<sup>v</sup>–4<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 370: ff. 153<sup>v</sup>–154<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 371: f. 99<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 372: ff. 18<sup>v</sup>–19<sup>v</sup>; Reg. Vat. 373: ff. 200<sup>v</sup>–201<sup>r</sup>, 306<sup>r</sup>–307<sup>r</sup>; Reg. Vat. 383: ff. 6<sup>r</sup>–11<sup>r</sup>; BAV, Archivio Chigi 413: ff. 124<sup>r</sup>–142<sup>f</sup>.

marriage (ASN, AF, busta 2071; BAV, Archivio Chigi 413: f. 125<sup>r</sup>; Archivio di Stato di Roma, Archivio Sforza-Cesarini, buste 840, 841 & 842). This pact is important for two reasons. First of all the Conti, too, were a Guelph family extensively related to the Orsini di Pitigliano. Secondly, the combination of marriage alliance and shared possessions would become a template for the near-contemporary deal between the Orsini and the Farnese. It is, in that respect, important to note that, as much as perhaps the papal presence had changed the dynamics of political power in the Papal States, baronial families were nonetheless accustomed to settle matters amongst themselves (Shaw, 2009).

Various familial interconnections — Ranuccio Farnese and Aldobrandino Orsini were by now brothers-in-law — greatly aided in settling disputes through a mutual agreement (ASS, Manoscritti A 135: ff. 118<sup>v</sup>–147<sup>r</sup>; ASF, MAP, XI: 303<sup>r-v</sup>; MAP, XII: 134<sup>r-v</sup>). Even for those nobles whose prosperity and identity were rooted in military prowess, peace played a central role not just as the opposite of a state of war but as an alternative strategy towards successfully enlarging or consolidating territorial possessions. Hence the occasional effectiveness of intermediaries in breaking the dynamics of violence. Even if papal intervention was avoided as much as possible by the Roman nobility, it is possible that other clerics offered their services. Franciscans, for example, were likely candidates who through their preaching and diplomatic activities could effect rapprochements.<sup>21</sup> At other times, cities could offer mediation. In 1389, as Montemarte (1846: 58) tells us, his war with the Farnese ended with the city of Perugia offering succour for its resolution on his behalf, whereas Siena did so for the Farnese (BAV, Barb. Lat. 1401, f. 145<sup>v</sup>). Casuccio di Leonardo Farnese was likewise a suitable candidate as intermediary, as he had been in the service both of the Orsini as well as his Farnese relatives. He is one of the testifiers of the *quietantia* (ASN, AF, busta 2071; ASS, Consistoro 1892: 67; ASF, MAP, XI: 575<sup>r-v</sup>). No intermediaries are explicitly mentioned, however, and it is equally possible that an ending to violence was the more politically propitious course to follow. In fact, the Quattrocento saw many peace settlements between the Papal States' baronial families, though not all equally successful (ASC, Archivio Orsini, Serie I, Pergamene, n.inv. 293; Archivio Caetani, 96490, 119857, 186302, 127723; ASV, Registri Vaticani 317: ff. 125<sup>v</sup>–134<sup>r</sup>). What set this act apart was its effectiveness in not only solving many conflicting issues, but in creating a tie between the two families that would last for the remainder of the Quattrocento. Another part of the explanation of its success probably lies in the detailed settlement of conflicting claims.

The 1447 *instrumentum pacis*, although mentioned in the inventory of the Farnese archive, has not survived (BAV, Archivio Chigi 413, f. 136<sup>r</sup>). However, Ranuccio and Aldobrandino also stipulated that no claim to repairs for damages could be made from either side as part of a *quietantia* and *refutatio*, this to avoid any future conflict over such payments and the litigation it often

<sup>21</sup> Polecritti, 2000; Pellegrini, 2013; Roest, 2015: 132–96; Kumhera, 2017: 156–74.

involved (ASN, AF, busta 2071). In an *informatio*, furthermore, it was expressly mentioned that Orsini claims to Farnese, Ischia and Castiglione, as well as any other of their possessions based on the imperial investiture of Pitigliano-Sovana, would be null and void. The Farnese's possessions would remain free and under direct rule of the Church and this is significant. It resolved the prickly issue of Farnese territories being explicitly mentioned in the imperial investiture. This document clearly still had enough power to stake claims that only papal overlordship was of sufficient authority to overrule. It is significant that this emphasis on direct papal rule returned both in peace settlements as well as *accomandigie*, formal alliances between the Farnese and Siena (ASS, Capitoli 4: ff. 126<sup>r</sup>–127<sup>r</sup>; Capitoli 41). No higher worldly authority could be recognized but the pope, and no intermediate actors could interpose themselves to mediate it, arguments the pope himself was accustomed to use to dismiss rival claims of communes and signori. For the Farnese, however, its importance lay in the fact that it provided significant freedom as papal power was weak and distant. Finally, it also removed, ideally once and for all, the potential for conflicting claims between two dangerously powerful baronial families and established, for the time being, a clear division of lands and rights. In fact, the divisions were hammered out in an astonishing degree of detail.

The first castle mentioned is that of Ischia. As the *informatio* states, this ancient Farnese castle had become an Orsini possession after the revolt of its vassals and remained so for eighteen years until its reconquest. Interestingly, the sentence stating that the Farnese subsequently sought papal approval through a vicariate was struck through (ASN, AF, busta 2071). Obviously, this would have introduced a measure of papal control and say in its inheritance, whereas the Farnese regarded it, probably rightfully, as an allodial possession that had been theirs since time immemorial. Secondly, the castle of Mezzano, an ancient Orsini possession that had been conquered by the inhabitants of Latera and had remained under Farnese lordship for over 55 years, now rightfully belonged to the Farnese according to custom. Thirdly, the rights over the aforementioned castle of Sala would remain in the hands of the Farnese, having devolved to them when Angelo de Sala had made peace, solving the over-a-century-old issue. Finally, it was stipulated in the deal 'that the castle of Vitozzo and its territory ... should be bound to be indivisible with half pertaining to the aforementioned lord Ranuccio and half to the aforementioned lord count' (ASN, AF, busta 2071). The lords of Vitozzo thus lost their rights over the castle and its lands, although they too received a pension from its yields. Rights and responsibilities became shared and, indeed, any major building-work on the defensive walls would have to be carried out with the agreement of both parties, as would its sale. Shared ownership thus formed a bond establishing a lasting connection. This was doubtless a risky departure, as future disagreements could easily have sprung up over Vitozzo, yet it seems to have been a more widely used contemporary strategy, not without its merits and successes. To ensure its success, the deal with the Orsini was likewise followed up by a marriage alliance, adding further emotional depth to the preceding understanding.

## CONCLUSION

An analysis of the Farnese–Orsini feud has shown how such feuds between baronial families played out in the countryside. Fought as a series of skirmishes, they resembled more the recurrent modes of warfare than the private civic conflicts so often analysed by historians. The many conflicting claims were exacerbated by new conquests providing ample excuses to initiate a new round of brawls. Documents as ancient as the investiture of the county of Sovana-Pitigliano provided fuel for conflicting noble jurisdictions and lordship, as can be assessed from the attempts by the Farnese to circumvent it and their insistence on placing their lordships under direct papal rule. Intermittent cooperation, however, shows that these feuds were never conceived as part of an all-encompassing enmity and fight to the death. Surely, for those nobles whose lifestyle was fully militarized, whose identity was tied up with the possession of land, castles and noble jurisdictions, and who accepted few higher authorities but distant emperors and popes, disputes were habitually settled by the sword, not in court. Unlike the situation elsewhere, where private warring came under increasing although never entirely effective pressure from princes, the barons of the Papal States seem to have regarded themselves as fully in possession of the *ius ad bellum* (Gamberini, 2009; 109–31). During such conflicts much was allowed, including using disaffected cousins or bastard offspring, but, as the 1417 conflict shows, the Farnese shied away from fully annihilating the Orsini di Pitigliano. A private settlement, furthermore, removed the incentive for feuding entirely.

On the local level the active participation of castellans and vassals shows that they should not be regarded as passive victims of magnate violence, but seems to suggest rather that they shared in the honour and fate of their lords, to which they were linked through ties of mutual obligation and direct personal relations. As participants castellans and vassals had significant agency and could switch allegiance, depending on circumstances, just as readily as disaffected family members could oppose their kin. It is a challenge for historians that so little direct information survives about them, and particularly what motivated and justified their actions, but the surviving source material is too coloured and at times politically biased to be taken at face value. Nevertheless, the same material has made these participants visible if not audible, forcing us to rethink the simplified scheme of noble perpetrators of violence on the one hand and a countryside populace suffering at their hands on the other. In this respect, the countryside might not differ so much from the city, where noble families could also rely on a large following among the town population.

As much as these rivalries were local and interfamilial, the feud invariably came to involve a multitude of other political forces and entities as both sides sought help or became enmeshed in the wider political troubles of the Italian peninsula. Relations with mercenaries, both foreign and Italian, were long-lasting, which raises questions about conventional ideas of mercenaries' inherent untrustworthiness and violent nature (Parrott, 2012: 6–8). Both Breton



mercenaries and newcomers to the area such as Sforza and Tartaglia were effectively integrated in the local political situation and intervened on their allies' behalf, violently so, if required, but hardly more so than local dynasties. Cities likewise had many reasons to interfere, not merely because they considered the countryside their backyard. Ties between feudal noble families and the city magistrate, factions and civic noble families established connections that were more dynamic and symmetric than the dictum the city and its hinterlands — *la città e il suo contado* in Italian — allows for. Furthermore, the Orsini–Farnese feud involved multiple cities. Siena and Orvieto both interfered, while Florence and Perugia also took an interest, sometimes by siding with one family, sometimes interposing themselves to stop the bloodshed. In the background, the struggle of the popes during the Western Schism at once removed papal presence as a binding force and introduced a new matter of contention. The end of the Council of Constance and the resolution of the schism therefore altered the situation.

Various factors played a role in why the peace between Farnese and Orsini di Pitigliano lasted. There can be little doubt that the permanent presence of the papacy in Rome introduced a new political point of reference for both Guelph families, especially after the coronation of Eugenius IV, that, although not of overwhelming significance, would always have to be taken into account and more importantly that functioned as a fount of favours and rewards. Crucially, various connections of the Farnese with the Conti, dell'Anguillara and other branches of the Orsini had brought the families closer together, allowed for the hammering out of a deal in meticulous detail including the shared possession of Vitozzo, and presaged the eventual marriage of Gabriele Francesco Farnese to Lella Orsini di Pitigliano. Shared ownership coupled with marriage ties, a practice going back to the period before the Western Schism, seems to have been a common approach for uniting families, and one that could be much more successful than may intuitively be expected. In the case of the Orsini and Farnese, the outcome was certainly positive and both families would continue to intermarry on various occasions, correspond extensively and maintain cordial relations (Luzi, 1990; Luiten, 2018). In 1454, although not yet openly due to their existing ties with Siena, the Farnese nevertheless clandestinely supported their Orsini relatives vis-à-vis that commune, not least by allowing their cattle to graze on their lands, out of reach of Sienese raiding parties.<sup>22</sup> In 1461, again both families acted as a united front, this time threatening Orvieto (ASN, AF, busta 686, parte II, fasc. 6; Fumi, 1884: 720–2). New differences or old border issues were resolved peacefully and diplomatically in a series of deals between 1472 and 1474, and when the young Ranuccio Farnese took up service with Florence shortly after this, he was given a position in the company of his uncle Niccolò Orsini di Pitigliano (BAV, Archivio Chigi 413: f. 126<sup>v</sup>;

<sup>22</sup> Tartaglia, 1982: 189–96; Malavolti, 1599, vol. III: 45<sup>r</sup>; the Farnese were major property owners in Siena, being taxed for 6,250 florins in 1453. ASS, Lira 57, f. 4<sup>v</sup>; I thank Philippa Jackson for this reference.

ASF, MAP XXIV: 89<sup>r-v</sup>). Ranuccio would remain Niccolò's trusted captain during the following decades. In a similar spirit of amity, in 1487 Niccolò refused to take up service with Florence if his nephew did not likewise receive a *condotta* in 1487 (ASC, Archivio Orsini, busta 101: f. 236<sup>r</sup>). After more than a century of rivalry, then, the Orsini of Pitigliano and Farnese were still waging war. Now, however, under the same banner.

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### Abbreviations

- AF Archivio Farnesiano  
 ASC Archivio Storico Capitolino  
 ASF Archivio di Stato di Firenze  
 ASN Archivio di Stato di Napoli  
 ASO Archivio di Stato di Orvieto  
 ASS Archivio di Stato di Siena  
 ASV Archivio Segreto Vaticano  
 BAV Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana  
 RIS *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, ed. L. Muratori [see under Muratori below]

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