WEALTH AND MATERIAL GOODS IN MEDIEVAL ITALIAN CIVIC HISTORIOGRAPHY

By LAURA K. MORREALE

This article examines a corpus of over forty Italian civic histories produced from the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century, when the wealth of many of the peninsula's inhabitants increased significantly. Evidence from this corpus demonstrates that attitudes about wealth in historical writing changed over time and argues for a shift from a more static to a more dynamic representation of material goods in these texts. The novel mechanisms for accruing wealth that developed in the Italian urban context were important factors in the historigraphic turn, but as the period wore one, changes in the types of people writing history also contributed to modified presentations of wealth in their writings. Whether describing the display of luxury or its regulation, civic improvements or the destruction of a town's buildings by warring factions, taxation in a city or the corruption of its offiicials, views towards material goods in medieval Italian urban histories were neither wholly positive nor negative. Rather, the historiographic value of material goods was complex. The frequency with which wealth was a topic of discussion in civic histories highlights how the peninsula's inhabitants were coming to terms with the influx of wealth and the material goods they could acquire as members of their urban communities.

How is history related to wealth? In the late 1260s after an extended period of exile in France, the famous notary and teacher of Dante, Brunetto Latini, brought his encyclopedic *Tresor* back to his hometown of Florence. In the work's opening lines, he informs his readers that the book is called the *Tresor* (*The Treasure*) because

> just as the lord who wishes to amass things of great value — not only for his own delight, but to increase his power and assure his estate in [times of] both war and peace — places, into one small space, the most precious jewels that he can according to his good intentions, so too, in the same way, the body of this book is composed of wisdom, that which is extracted from all the subjects of philosophy, in one brief summary.[1]

This article was first undertaken in 2011 in the context of the DALME (Documentary Archaeology of Late Medieval Europe) Project based at Harvard University. Project leaders Gabriel Pizzorno and Daniel Lord Smail have since developed a digital component to the project (www.dalme.org), to which I have contributed. To both of these collaborators I offer my sincere appreciation for their help and support with this and many other endeavors over the years.

The following abbreviations are used in the notes of this paper: NC = Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols. (Parma, 1990), cited by volume and page number; and RIS[2] = *Rerum italicarum scriptores*, 2nd ed. (Città di Castello and Bologna, 1900–).

[1] Brunetto Latini, *Li Livres Dou Tresor*, ed. Paul Barrette and Spurgeon W. Baldwin (Tempe, Arizona, 2003), 1: "Ceste livres est appellés li Treçor; car si come li sires qui veut

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After his short explanation of the book's title, Latini describes how each of the three books contained within the work corresponds to a species of the treasure to which he has just alluded. The second kind of treasure, he tells us, is like precious jewels, the third like fine gold, but the first, he says, is to be used "like cash money, to spend readily on necessary things."[2] What kind of wisdom is he describing, then, that has such easy currency? It is, Latini reveals, "the beginnings of the world, and the earliest of the old histories, and the foundation of the world and of nature and all things."[3] History and cash money are the same, he claims, for

> just as, without money, there would be no means to exchange men's work and means to evaluate [the work of] one against the other, similarly one cannot grasp the other things fully without knowing the first part of the book [that is, history].[4]

One of the most popular writers of Italy's late thirteenth century, therefore, considered history as precious as ready money, useful to have, easy to spend, and a good point of comparison with other kinds of knowledge.

Latini's materially-oriented approach to the value of history is, to say the least, unexpected for anyone familiar with the genre of historical writing produced in Italian cities during the age of the commune, from as early as the late eleventh until well into the fifteenth century.[5] Rolandino of Padua, for example, who wrote the twelve books of his history of the Trevisan March in around the year 1260, informed his readers that

amasser chose de grandisme vaillanse, non pas por son delit seulement mas por acroistre son pooir & por asaucier son estat en guerre & en pes, il met les plus presieuses joiaus qu'il puet selonc sa bone entension, tout atresi est li cors de ces livres compilés de sapiense, si come celui qui est estrait de tous li menbres de filoçofie en une sonme briefment." Although strictly speaking Latini's work is not considered a chronicle, his historical writing was enormously influential in Italy and beyond and was a bellwether of what was to come.

[2] Latini, *Tresor,* ed. Barrette, 1: "com de deniers contains por despendre tousjors en choses besoignables,".

[3] Latini, *Tresor,* ed. Barrette, 1: "ele trate dou comencement dou siecle, & de l'anciens tens des viellies estoires, & de l'establissement dou monde, & de la nature de toutes choses en sonme."

[4] Latini, *Tresor,* ed. Barrette, 1: "& si come sans deniers n'auroit nulle moienté entre les ovres des gens qui adresast les uns contre les autres, autresi ne puet nuls hom avoir des autres choses plainement se il ne set ceste premiere partie dou livre."

[5] The literature on town chronicles in Italy is vast, but the following works provide a good inroad: *Cronache e cronisti dell'Italia comunale,* ed. Girolamo Arnaldi and Lidia Capo (Spoleto, 2016); *Chronicling History: Chroniclers and Historians in Medieval and Renaissance Italy,* ed. Sharon Dale, Alison Williams Lewin, and Duane J. Osheim (University Park, PA, 2007); Franca Allegrezza, "Le cronache italiane tardomedievale," *Quaderni medievali* 25 (1988): 154–63; Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance* (Chicago, 1981); and Louis Green, *Chronicle into History* (Cambridge, 1972).

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> the purpose of this book is to collect, briefly and summarily, all that is to the honor, and to the welfare and documentation of the people and the commune of Padua, and of all people everywhere.[6]

And Jacob of Voragine, who recounted the history of Genoa roughly ten years after Latini composed the *Tresor*, humbly justified his *Chronicle of the City of Genoa* in the following words:

> Thinking . . . how there are many cities in Italy of which the ancient historians make much mention, we are amazed that so very little can be found written by them about the city of Genoa . . . we have found certain details about the city of Genoa that we have decided to transcribe in the present fashion . . .[7]

Like many historical writers of their time, Rolandino and Voragine presented their histories as a gathering together of information in support of the common good, not as a means of acquisition or a tool of comparative bargaining. And while the differences in approach among these writers may be attributed to their professional and social identities — Latini was a notary of the merchant class, Rolandino a jurist, and Voragine a Dominican archbishop — the tension between these presentations also reveals a fair amount of overlap in attitudes towards how historians assigned value, which in turn found expression in each of their works.[8] For Italians of the communal period, histories could both *have* value as narratives and simultaneously *ascribe* relative values to the things or situations that formed a part of their story. Latini's, Rolandino's, and Voragine's framings all uncover the symbiosis between the ways written histories allocate worth to the subject of a narrative and increase its significance because of the text's attentions, and the ultimate value that the text itself might then have as a means to document experience and thereby shape communal priorities.

Within the Italian corpus of historical texts, and particularly those written during the height of Italian civic historiographic production from the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries, authors regularly indicated worth (or made something worthy of attention) by creating associations between material goods

[6] Rolandinus Patavinus, *Chronica a. 1188–1260*, ed. Philippe Jaffé, MGH, *Scriptores* 19 (Hannover, 1866), 32–147, at 35–36: "Intencio est huius libri, breviter et summatim colligere omnia, que hic notantur ad honorem et utilitatem et documentum tocius comunancie et populi Paduani et aliorum populorum ubique." See also Rolandino Patavino, *The Chronicles of the Trevisan March*, trans. Joseph R. Berrigan (Lawrence, KS, 1980).

[7] *Iacopo da Varagine e la sua Cronaca di Genova dalle origini al MCCXCVII*, ed. Giovanni Monleone (Rome, 1941), 114–15: "cogitantes. . .quod multe civitates in Ytalia sunt de quibus antiqui ystoriographi magnam faciunt mentionem, mirati sumus quod de civitate Ianuensi… dicta scrutantes de civitate Ianue invenimus aliqua que presenti stillo iudicavimus adnotanda"; trans. C. E. Beneš, *Jacopo da Varagine's Chronicle of the City of Genoa* (Manchester, 2020), 41–42.

[8] Daniel E. Randolph, "Rolandino of Padua," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu (Leiden, 2010), 1291–92.

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and the subjects of their narratives. Late thirteenth-century Venetian chronicler Martin da Canal, for example, provided a vivid and exhaustive description of the rich clothing and costly accoutrements worn by late fourteenth-century guild members as they processed through the city to pay homage to the new doge's wife, the dogaressa.[9] As da Canal told it, the stunning, accumulated treasure of the guild members magnified the honor paid to her, which in turn elevated the status of the city about which he was writing. On the other hand, authors who reported on the cumulative effect of factional warfare that so plagued northern Italian cities at the same moment often recounted the number of homes, towers, buildings, or even trees that were destroyed by one faction or the other during such conflicts. Enumerating the destruction of material property was a technique used by nearly all Italian historical writers of the period and could denote the great malice of an enemy or the failure on the part of the hometown government to adequately protect its inhabitants. Mentioning material wealth in town histories allowed historians to glorify or vilify the subjects about which they wrote.

Yet, writing about material goods was not merely a fashionable literary technique among Italian historians of the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries, nor was it simply part of the outpouring of town patriotism scholars of the peninsula have termed "civic humanism."[10] Rather, the seemingly ambiguous or at times even contradictory approaches towards history and wealth found in the town history corpus may also be attributable to real changes taking place in the economies of the Italian peninsula at the same time. In the 1970s, economic historian Carlo Cipolla, along with several other economic historians of the same school, tracked the turn in pre-modern economies away from a dominant model of wealth based on accumulation to the one built upon systems of exchange first nurtured in the economic environments of medieval Italian towns. The shift took root as early as the eleventh century, but it was particularly evident during the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries, at the very moment Italians were so abundantly writing the histories of their towns.[11]

For Cipolla and others, the most significant motor for the move away from wealth-building based on savings (what Latini placed in his second and third

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[9] Martino da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise: Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence, 1972), 282–304.; and Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise*, trans. Laura K. Morreale (Padova, 2009), 108–16.

[10] The standard articulation of civic humanism is Hans Baron, *The Crisis of the Early Italian Renaissance: Civic Humanism and Republican Liberty in an Age of Classicism and Tyranny* (Princeton, 1955).

[11] Carlo M. Cipolla, *Before the Industrial Revolution: European Society and Economy, 1000–1700*, 3rd ed. (New York, 1993), 160–61. For a summary of work that draws upon similar theories, see Maryanne Kowaleski, "A Consumer Economy," in *A Social History of England, 1200–1500*, ed. Rosemary Horrox and Mark Ormrod (Cambridge, 2006), 238–59.

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categories) were the large-scale corporate trade ventures that required an investment of both trust and capital on the part of multiple sponsors. The opening gambit for such an undertaking, that is, the price of entry for anyone wishing to participate in corporate money-making efforts, was the influx of cash that enabled the venture to take place in the first instance. Whether it was overseas trade or the overland cloth market, those who had money to invest could subsequently reap their share of the financial benefits if the venture were profitable. The techniques of financial exchange first developed in Italy supported an economic activity predicated upon the availability of liquid assets, which in turn allowed a larger segment of society to access mechanisms of wealth-building and the material goods those riches could buy. If, as Cipolla asserts, cash was the key to social mobility for medieval inhabitants of the peninsula, this sheds a new light on how Latini's analogies might have resonated with his readership and why other writers of history may also have looked to material wealth as a worthwhile and even necessary theme.

Because the town was the primary space in which fortunes were born and nurtured in medieval Italy, views on wealth certainly shaped how civic history was written. Although modern literature on history writing in Italy has considered the social and professional backgrounds of those who wrote town chronicles or the relative wealth of audience members who consumed them, the semantic value of wealth within the urban community in these same writings has yet to be addressed.[12] Vittore Branca's groundbreaking study of the *mercanti scrittori*, for example, worked to legitimize the writings of domestic chroniclers during the Italian communal period and argued for their inclusion into the scope of a national literary history, but his anthology of city-based merchant chroniclers brought together texts that placed the stories of merchant writers' families — not their hometowns — at the center of their narratives.[13] Janine Larmon Peterson's recent exploration of the relationship between Italian merchants, their wealth, and the language of negotiated piety undertakes an approach to hagiographic writings similar to what this article wishes to do for works of historical writing, that is, to ask how material wealth and attitudes towards it

[12] Some examples that consider the economic status of authors and audience include Paul Oldfield, *Urban Panegyric and the Transformation of the Medieval City, 1100–1300* (Oxford, 2019); *Le Cronache Volgari in Italia: Atti Della VI Settimana Di Studi Medievali (Roma, 13–15 Maggio 2015)*, ed. Giampaolo Francesconi and Massimo Miglio (Rome, 2017); and Alberto Varvaro, "Language and Culture," in *Italy in the Central Middle Ages: 1000–1300* (Oxford, 2004), 197–214.

[13] Vittore Branca, *Mercanti scrittori* (Milan, 1986). Although Branca's work first appeared over thirty years ago, a new translation and edition of this collection appeared in 2017 which underscores the enduring nature of this perspective. See Vittore Branca, Massimo Ballerini, and Luigi Ciavolella, *Merchant Writers: Florentine Memoirs from the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, trans. Murtha Baca (Toronto, 2017).

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shaped and informed Italian municipal history writing at the highpoint of its production in the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries.[14]

The Town Chronicle Repertoire, 1250–1350

The question of how medieval historians bore witness to the relationship between members of their society and their material wealth has implications for our understanding of Europe's economic and cultural past, and even how both material wealth and the region's history have been distilled for us today. This article will therefore examine a corpus of over forty town-centered historical texts written contemporaneously with the economic shifts occurring from the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries to determine how civic historians portrayed wealth, money, and material goods, and medieval Italians' relationships to them.[15] Although the town serves as the main point of reference for all of the histories in the corpus, the texts vary widely in length, form, and content, so that making close comparisons among them can at times present incongruities. The works were composed in both Latin and vernacular languages and authored by historians whose professional lives (as notaries, churchmen, or poets, for example) depended on their skills in writing, or by other highly literate citizens (including bankers and merchants), whose work lacked the generic sophistication of their more learned peers. Earlier histories appear more annalistic than narrative and were more likely written by ecclesiastics than laymen. By the early fourteenth century these tendencies fade, and an increasingly narrative style and professionally diverse authorship are more common. By roughly the year 1350, starting in and around Florence, however, previous practices of writing civic history in Italy fell out of favor and were largely replaced by texts shaped more

[14] Janine Larmon Peterson, "The Service of Merchants," in *Saints as Intercessors Between the Wealthy and the Divine*, ed. Emily D. Kelley and Cynthia Turner Camp (London and New York, 2019), 273–88.

[15] See the appendix for a full list of sources consulted. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather a very robust one, featuring most of what is available in print and therefore arguably largely representative of peninsular town-centered historical writing from 1250–1350. No scholar could claim to include all historical writings from and about Italian towns during this period, for reasons ranging from their large and as yet unknown number to the fragmented nature of Italian archival practice at the time many of them were first identified and published. For the most up-to-date listing of extant civic chronicles, the majority of which are included in this study, see *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Dunphy and Bratu (n. 8 above); and *Chronicon: Medieval Narrative Sources*, ed. János M Bak and Ivan Jurković (Turnhout, 2013). For this article, I have adopted the naming conventions put forth in the *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*. For a discussion of one of the earliest collectors of town-centered chronicles in Italy and how his approach responded to the challenges in the archives, thereby setting the stage for how town-centered historical writing in Italy was understood, see Susan Nicassio, "Ludovico Antonio Muratori," in *Medieval Scholarship*, ed. Helen Damico and Joseph Zavadil (New York, 1995), 33–45.

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by humanist themes and interests than by the authors' immediate circumstances; the late fourteenth century saw a marked decline in production from what might be called "the citizen chronicler."[16] Pre-humanist city chronicles offer a far less stylized version of town life than their post-1350 counterparts, and therefore will serve as the source base for this study.

Authors of pre-humanist civic histories produced their town-centered works at a regular pace over the course of the century between 1250 and the decade or so after 1350; of the forty-three works in the corpus under consideration, nineteen were written before 1300, twenty-three after 1300, and one straddles the divide between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. However, the communities chronicled were situated unevenly along the length of the peninsula, from Naples in the southwest to Venice in the northeast. Far fewer works were produced in the south than the north, and even if multiple works were written in certain northern towns (especially Genoa, Florence, Venice, and Pisa), only one or two were composed in others. This means the sample of extant histories is skewed towards large communities in the north, with Florence represented disproportionately, as opposed to an even distribution of writings produced throughout the Italian territories.

The *Nuova Cronica* of Giovanni Villani, also from Florence, poses one additional methodological pitfall.[17] The *Cronica* stands out among contemporary historical works for both its comprehensive scope and subsequent impact upon the next generation of peninsular history writers. Because Villani was a member of one of Florence's banking families and therefore disproportionately attuned to questions of money, wealth accumulation, and the place of material goods within that society, he refers to all of these elements frequently in his work. Given the length of Villani's history and his recurrent attention to wealth and material goods, the *Nuova Cronica* will be treated in a section apart, so as not to tip the analysis too heavily in its favor.

Despite the differences in form, content, and geographic orientation, the corpus provides a view to the rich range of attitudes towards material wealth that authors depicted as neither wholly good nor evil. The examples put forth in the following pages are not exhaustive, but rather deliberately aggregative so as to illustrate the regularity with which medieval Italian writers addressed material concerns and how mixed their attitudes were.[18] With such a large corpus, a computer-enabled approach might seem the most efficient, where words and concepts form the

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[16] For the shift in the civic chronicle genre around the mid-fourteenth century, see Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography* (n. 5 above); and Green, *Chronicle into History* (n. 5 above).

[17] Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols. (Parma, 1990–91) (hereafter NC).

[18] See n. 16, above.

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basis of a targeted search through the texts to find passages related to wealth.[19] While the histories are organized in a spreadsheet to provide an overall view of where and when they were produced, a machine-based search ultimately proved inefficient, due largely to the linguistic variation found in the corpus; instead, a process of "mid-range reading" was employed. Edited versions of the texts were visually scanned for key words and concepts related to wealth and material goods, and once identified, were entered into a table, and categorized according to type of mention, as reflected in the subheadings below.[20] The categories were not imposed at the outset of the study, but rather emerged as a set of standard tropes found in the texts.

What this approach has revealed is that even if some historians described the celebratory largesse of their towns in loving detail, others countered with reference to the sumptuary laws put in place to curtail such activities. Similarly, reports on a town's civic improvements were offset by lengthy descriptions of how armed conflict damaged those same building efforts, accounts of a town's abundant communal resources and healthy municipal finances stood in contrast to complaints about famine and scarcity, and discussions of abundance and excess were balanced out by considerations of the parameters of charity and greed. Although these contrasting approaches map out the varied topography of attitudes on earthy riches in mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth century Italy, they leave the reader no doubt that material wealth was a subject to be reckoned with. The treatment of material goods by medieval Italian historians, in both general and specific instances, reveals the many ways inhabitants of the peninsula were grappling with their new-found wealth and coming to terms with its place in their society.[21]

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[19] Topic modelling, an unsupervised machine-based methodology where key concepts in a corpus of texts are searched and identified, has its supporters and detractors. See Elijah Meeks and Scott B. Weingart, "The Digital Humanities Contribution to Topic Modeling," *Journal of Digital Humanities* 2 (Winter 2012), http://journalofdigitalhumanities.org/2-1/dh-contribution-to-topic-modeling/ (accessed 28 December 2021).

[20] In looking through the chronicles, I applied the term "material goods" in its most broad sense and noted almost anything that involved money or durable goods. I made note of any instance where excess or luxury goods were in question, and omitted situations in which material goods came into the narratives, but were not first and foremost a question of material wealth. First, I did not make note of enumeration of machines of war, since the goal in most cases was not to demonstrate what was possessed, but rather to gauge the military strength of one side over another in a conflict. The same applies for the account of the quantity of warships used by one side or another. Other topics concerning material goods appearing in the repertoire that did not merit full discussion include mention of elective poverty, monetary equivalencies, overall philosophies or manifestos concerning or including material goods, damages incurred during natural disasters, the comparison of material wealth to intangibles such as loved ones or wisdom, and the premise that God is the source of all material goods.

[21] Even if most of the works in the corpus mention material goods, some, including the *Cronaca Lolliana* from Bologna and the *Historiae Pisanae Fragmenta* from Pisa, do not. Materials goods were not of equal concern to every chronicler, but rather to most of them.

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Static or Dynamic Wealth?

Some remarks are in order on attitudes towards wealth within the corpus overall before more specific uses are examined. Looking to the repertoire diachronically, later chronicles (generally post 1310–1315) feature more frequent, diverse, and detailed considerations of material goods than do previous, late thirteenth- to early fourteenth-century chronicles. Earlier works mention material goods especially in terms of describing the damage resulting from armed conflict, including pillage, unjust seizure, and the costs of ransom. Many of these same concerns remain in later histories, but the treatment of material goods expands greatly in later sources, particularly in areas relating to the costs of continued factional warfare and the monetary consequences of these actions on town dwellers, including the costs to rebuild or the effects on commodities pricing.

What the repertoire at large suggests is that there is a move away from the view found in earlier annal-type Latin histories, that material goods are part of the static characteristics of those who own them, to the approach found in later histories that present material goods in a transactional or interactive capacity. One example of the static nature of material possessions in the earlier works is the frequent association of goods with the persons who owned them. This is often done with the use of some variation of the formulaic terms "in persons and possession," or "in goods and persons," implying that the goods owned by an individual were intrinsic to that person's identity. This terminology, found in many variations in the works of Rolandino of Padua, Iacopo Doria, Pietro Cantinelli, Paolino Pieri, and in the *Storie Pistoresi*, and elsewhere, conflates the person and his or her belongings so that events brought to bear upon individuals implicate their possessions as well.[22] Rolandino of Padua reports that "the army of Padua wished to destroy the da Romano in their persons and possessions," and similarly, informs readers that the Lord Tiso da Camposanpiero came to rule the town of Cittadella, and praises him because the inhabitants "were respected in their persons and their possessions."[23] Multiple examples from the repertoire reinforce the idea that a person's possessions formed a part of his or her whole identity.

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[22] Jacopo d'Oria, *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de'suoi continuatori*, ed. Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, in *Fonti per la storia d'Italia. Scrittore. Secoli XII e XIII*, 11–14bis (Rome, 1901), 5:3–176, at 92; Pietro Cantinelli, *Chronicon (aa. 1228–1306)*, ed. F. Torraca, RIS[2] 28.2, 21; Paolino Pieri, *Cronica di Paolino Pieri fiorentino delle cose d'Italia dall'anno 1080 fino all'anno 1305*, ed. Anton Filippo Adami (Rome, 1975), 67; and *Storie Pistoresi*, ed. S. A. Barbi, RIS[2] 11.5, 3–239.

[23] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 51: ". . . quod exercitus Paduanus volebat illos de Romano delere in rebus et in personis," and 113: "ad honorem et voluntatern dompni legati et potestatis totiusque communis Paduani in rebus et in personis"; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 25 and 136.

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A person's material goods were tied to his identity more often in the earlier histories in the repertoire and portray wealth as an immutable personal characteristic rather than a temporary state. The *Cronica Fiorentina compilata nel secolo xiii* characterizes Countess Matilda as "very rich woman" (*richissima donna*) to prove she was powerful, and Ogerio Alfieri complains that many of the rich citizens of Asti are "false."[24] Rolandino of Padua speaks of a prominent family in Padua who posed a threat to Ezzelino da Romano because "they were very powerful in Padua in wealth, vassals, and friends," and Riccobaldo of Ferrara notes that the wealthy could avoid exile, unlike other inhabitants.[25] At times, the lack of material goods is also documented, such as when Paolino Pieri observes that at Charles of Anjou's arrival in Italy in the late 1260s, he is called "sanza terra," because he does not share in the inheritance of his brother the king of France.[26]

Even if the use of "persons and possession" persists in the later chronicles, an interactive element appears especially when transactional elements such as the documentation of wills, testaments, or personal businesses dealings are introduced into the narratives. The description of these personal transactions then leads toward an integration of the city's political history with the effects those actions had on the business or personal dealings of the author. Although the later chroniclers do not discard the terminology uniting wealth with personal identity, a new type of dialogue about material goods emerges in the histories in the late thirteenth century, finding its fullest expression by the mid-fourteenth century. These later works describe many other ways that the value inherent in material goods can be deployed, so that real estate transfers, costs of conducting business, laws about money, financial transactions, and details about dowries, inheritances, and wills all become part of the historical discussion.

These concerns are present as early as the first quarter the fourteenth century with the inclusion of Guglielmo Ventura's will in his memoirs, and the later fourteenth-century works of Florentines Guido Filippi dell'Antella, Simone della Tosa, and Luca di Totto da Panzano adeptly illustrate this new historiographic trend.[27]

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[24] "Cronica Fiorentina compilata nel saec. XIII," ed. A. Schiaffini, in *Testi Fiorentini del duegento e dei primi del trecento* (Florence, 1954), 82–150, at 87; and Ogerio Alfieri, *Cronaca*, ed. and trans. Natale Ferro, in *Gli Antichi cronisti astesi: Ogerio Alfieri, Guglielmo Ventura e Secondino Ventura: Secondo il testo dei Monumenta Historiae Patriae, Volume V, Scriptores tomo III, Torino 1848* (Alexandria, Italy, 1990), 7–25, at 17.

[25] Patavinus, *Chronica*: ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 87: "potentes in Padua in diviciis et vasallis et in amicis,"; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 88. See also Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva Ferrariensis*, ed. Gabriele Zanella (Ferrara, 1983), 176–77.

[26] Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami, 67.

[27] Guglielmo Ventura, *Memoriale*, ed. and trans. Natale Ferro, in *Gli Antichi cronisti astesi*, 27–153; F. Polidori, "Ricordanze di Filippo dell'Antella," *Archivio storico Italiano* 4 (1843): 5–24; Simone della Tosa, "Annali della Tosa," ed. D. M. Manni, in *Chronichette antiche di vari scrittori del buon secolo della lingua Toscana* (Florence, 1733), 6–19 and 125–71; and P. Berti, "Frammenti

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Antella's work focuses primarily on his personal financial history, including records of quittance sums, real estate transactions, dowry amounts, and taxes, with the events of the city firmly in the background. Simone della Tosa's work, however, juxtaposes personal financial details, such as the records of his home and land purchases with the events occurring in the city at the same moment, often with explicit details about the town's financial expenditures, such as the costs of various peace treaties or fines imposed for a podestà's poor tenure as the city's main official.[28] Luca di Totto da Panzano reports that several noblemen were fined a sum of six thousand lire as a result of the city's Ordinances of Justice, but also that he personally lost "horses, arms, equipment, a silver girdle and a golden ring," in the course of a conflict between Pisa and Florence.[29]

Several of the topics discussed above, especially the pairing of famine with higher commodities pricing, the attention to how communal moneys are collected and used, and the recognition of the costs of war and reparations, all become more frequent in the later chronicles. This attention supports a more transactional view of material goods in later chronicles as opposed to their earlier histories, but also shifts the weight of fiscal responsibility and expectation from the individual benefactor to a town's collective governing bodies.

Du Luxe: Celebratory Largesse, Special Status, and Sumptuary Laws

Moving beyond the treatment of wealth in general, a deeper dive into how historians wrote about the specific uses of material goods reveals their equivocal role in Italian society during the mid-thirteenth to mid-fourteenth centuries. The many luxury items imported into the peninsular community were surely the most visible signs of material consumption for Italian communities and their historians at this time.[30] Luxury items, which have the power to dazzle and fascinate even if one is merely reading about and not beholding them, were described frequently in both negative and positive terms. Mention of luxury goods might fall into three categories: celebratory largesse, items that signal or confer special status, and the regulation of material consumption in the form of sumptuary legislation.

Descriptions of celebrations and the lavish items used in feasts, festivals, parades, and receptions are common throughout the corpus. The most striking

della cronaca di messer Luca di Totto da Panzano da una copia di Vincenzio Borghini," *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani* 5 (1861): 58–78.

[28] Simoni della Tosa, "Annali della Tosa," ed. Manni, 166, 172, 156, 169, and 155, respectively.

[29] Totto da Panzano, "Frammenti della cronaca," 71: "Perdei, il di ch'io fui preso, cavalli, armi, arnesi, cintole d'ariento, anella d'oro."

[30] On the use of luxury items in Italian urban life, see Susan Stuard, *Gilding the Market* (Philadelphia, 2006), 20–83.

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example in the repertoire, mentioned above, comes from Martin da Canal's *Les Estoires de Venise*, written between 1267 and 1275. His description of the installation of a new doge in 1268 fills a full nineteen chapters, bursting with details of the silver vessels carried to the doge, the costumes covered in gold, pearls, and precious jewels, and the trumpets and cymbals that accompanied the procession towards the doge's palace and the dogaressa's home. Da Canal also related the items used during many other festivals which take place yearly in Venice, including those for Christmas, Easter, and the feast of St. Mark.[31] Rolandino of Padua provides great detail concerning the feasts held by Albizo da Fiore when he was podestà of Padua, including a description of the precious stones and costly silks worn by ladies of the court, as well as the delicacies and aromatics found at the castle where the festival took place, and a similar portrayal of a reception held for an incoming podestà.[32] Brief mention is made of the reception of the wife of King Charles of Burgundy in Pietro Cantinelli's history of Romagna (late thirteenth century), with animals covered in scarlet and all sorts of instruments brought to greet her.[33] Jacob of Voragine recounts the celebration of the Genoese, who burned silk flowers and golden insignia in response to a military victory.[34] Guglielmo Ventura (early fourteenth century) reports on the opulence at Matteo Visconti's wedding celebration, and Dino Compagni, in his *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne'tempi suoi* (ca. 1310–1312), disapprovingly recounts the pope's arrival in his home town of Prato, where he was greeted by "ladies well dressed and the streets draped with cloth, dances, and instruments."[35] He also notes how Pisa sent of Emperor Henry of Luxembourg sixty thousand florins to entice him to come to their city, then feted his arrival with banquets and celebrations.[36]

The anonymous author of the *Cronaca di Perugia* notes twice how influential visitors (in the first instance a king, then a duke) were offered cups of golden coins upon their arrival (800 florins for the king, 600 for the duke) and how their female counterparts, the queen and the duke's wife, were also offered cups of coins, but with smaller quantities contained within (200 for the queen and

[31] Da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani (n. 9 above), 246–62; trans. Morreale (n. 9 above), 94–100.

[32] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 45 and 70–71; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 15 and 61.

[33] Cantinelli, *Chronicon,* ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 7–8.

[34] Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 105.

[35] Ventura, *Memoriale,* ed. Ferro (n. 27 above), 47; Dino Compagni, *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suo,* ed. Guido Bezzola (Milan, 1982), 187: "le donne ornate, e le vie coperte, con balli e con stormenti"; and *Dino Compagni's Chronicle of Florence,* trans. Daniel Bornstein (Philadelphia, 1986), 68.

[36] Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. Bezzola, 258; trans. Bornstein, 96.

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250 for the duchess).[37] Giovanni di Durante notes a similar ceremony involving coins in a cup, for a pact concluded between the Pisans and the Florentines.[38] The *Chronicon Parmense*, written between 1270 and 1340, records the feasting and celebration for a marriage which joined the houses of the Marquis of Ancona and the Captain of Milan, albeit with more emphasis on who attended than on the material realities of the feast, despite the mention that the city of Parma paid for some of the clothing used at the wedding.[39] A second wedding, between Pedro Rosso and his new wife Guncta, daughter of a Genoese nobleman, is described in great detail, including the instruments used during the feast and the gifts offered on the occasion of the marriage.[40] The Villola chronicle reports on a joyous celebration for a Bolognese victory with townspeople offering garlands to the soldiers and placing a golden crown and regal vestments on one of them to represent the victorious king Charles.[41] In a unique reference to celebratory largesse, the Villola chronicle also describes a celebration for the granting of a degree upon one of its native sons, Taddeo di Rumio de Pepolli, which may not be so surprising given the strong university culture of Bologna. Finally, the Villola chronicle also describes the lavish receptions offered for the papal legate, the cardinal of Spain, the lord of Bologna, and recounts the particulars of a three-day festival in celebration of the arrival of a cardinal, in which most of citizens of Bologna were dressed in new clothing and many rode on horses, who were also covered with rich fabrics and adornments.[42] The author of the *Storie Pistorese* notes that luxury items were offered at the arrival of prominent visitors, such as the gold and jewels given to the Emperor upon his arrival in Genoa, and in Todi. In an original entry, the anonymous *Storie Pistorese* author also makes note of a celebration lasting eight days that marked a peace treaty between the city of Bologna and the papacy.[43] Finally, Buccio di Ranallo refers to numerous celebrations throughout his *Cronica Aquilana* (written around 1355), including a description of the feasts and dances that accompanied the arrival of King

37 Francesco Ugolini, "Annali e cronaca di Perugia in volgare dal 1191 al 1336," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'università di Perugia* 1 (1963–64): 141–336, at 181 and 203.

38 Giovanni di Durante, "Frammento di Cronica," ed. Domenico Velluti, in *Cronica di Firenze* (Florence, 1731), 141–48, at 141.

39 "Chronicon Parmense ab anno 1308 usque ad annum 1338," ed. Giuliano Bonazzi, RIS[2] 9.9, 80–81.

40 "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi, 188–89.

41 "Cronica Villola," ed. A. Sorbelli, in *Corpus Chronicorum Bononiensium*, RIS[2] 18.1–4, 2:157; and Lucia Sinisi, "Villola, Pietro and Floriano," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Dunphy and Bratu (n. 8 above), 1480.

42 "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli, 2:344–45 and 377–78; and 3:120, 185, and 261.

43 *Storie Pistoresi*, ed. Barbi (n. 22 above), 53–54, 55, and 110.

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Robert of Naples in 1310, and the colorful clothing worn in celebration of a peace treaty for the city.[44]

A common theme running throughout the chronicles is that celebratory largesse exists as a mechanism of display for the town. In most instances, there is little or no judgment about whether the expenses accrued were justified. Rather, celebrations, feasts, and special ceremonies were occasions that allowed town-dwellers to collectively assert a set of communal values, be they religious or political, through the use of luxury goods or extraordinary expenditure. The most common material goods mentioned for celebration are extravagant fabrics such as sendal, silk, or cloth embroidered with gold, as well as precious jewels, pearls, and gold and silver ornaments. Also mentioned frequently are gold and silver instruments used to enhance the celebrations. Items made from luxurious materials, such as gold, marble, silver, gems, or rich fabrics are also used to draw particular attention to the persons receiving or using the special objects, and the items work to signal their special status, or to confer it. On other occasions, luxurious items are described for their own merits, though in the process of chroniclers marveling at their beauty and value, they often serve to indirectly enhance the status of the individuals who owned them.

Two items in particular, crowns and tombs, are consistently fabricated from luxurious materials with the purpose of signaling special status. The *Chronicon Parmense* is but one of the chronicles that mentions that Imperial crowns were made of gold and often decorated with silver or encrusted with jewels.[45] The *Storie Pistorese* claims that in 1327, Ludwig of Bavaria was given a crown of iron when the northern Italian magnates officially recognized him as the "King of Italy," and that he would only receive a golden crown if he were able to attain enough political support and recognition to be crowned Emperor by the pope in Rome.[46] Saints' tombs were often made from marble or decorated with luxurious items, in this case to bring attention to the holiness of the person whose remains were found within. Jacob of Voragine mentions the use of marble for the tomb of St. Syr and Goffredo da Bussero notes the addition of gold to the tomb of Milan's patron saint, St. Ambrose, in the year 840.[47] Pietro da Ripalta comments on the use of silver and alabaster for the relics of several saints, including Saints Martin and Eusubius.[48] And finally, Galvaneus Flamma

[44] Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata di Buccio di Ranallo di Popplito di Aquila,* ed. Vincenzo de Bartholomaeis (Rome, 1907), 74.

[45] "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi, 18.

[46] *Storie Pistorese*, ed. Barbi (n. 22 above), 11.

[47] Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 248; and L. Graziali, "La Cronaca di Goffredo da Bussero," *Archivio storico lombardo* 4 (1906): 211–45, at 235.

[48] Pietro da Ripalta, *Chronica Placentina nella trascrizione di Jacopo Mori (Ms. Pallastrelli 6),* ed. Mario Fillìa and Claudia Binello (Piacenza, 1995), 66.

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describes the beautiful and costly tomb of a secular leader, the Marchesa Beatrice, whose son spent 40,000 florins in 1335 for her marble vault.[49]

Churches were also locales which merited the use of luxury materials. The Villola chronicle observes that marble was used in the portal of Saint Peter's in Bologna, and Simone della Tosa describes how the pillars in the church of San Giovanni were covered in black and white marble and that monuments were placed inside the church itself.[50] Galvaneus Flamma brings attention to the chapel of the Blessed Mary, built by the Visconti and adorned with gold, gems, and precious stones.[51] The *Chronicon Parmense* describes the addition of two red and white marble lions placed at the door of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore to enhance the beauty of this church.[52]

Luxury items could also perform special functions. Jacob of Voragine makes mention of the gold and silver weapons used by the Carthaginians in a rebellion against the Romans, and the author of the *Cronica da Perugia* describes how gold and silver were used in a ritual to ratify peace treaties in Perugia.[53] The beautiful baptismal gifts enumerated in Pietro da Ripalta's work, including "a silver vase and a golden cup full of pearls, rings, and precious stones, with a gilded silver foot," and "a large cup with a crystal foot with silver branches and pearls on the branches all around the foot of the cup," were offered by Ugolino Gonzaga to create a social bond between he and Bernabò Visconte, whose son was being baptized.[54] The author of the *Chronicon Cremonense* notes that the Emperor affixed a golden seal to the list of privileges for the city of Cremona.[55] At other times, luxury items added luster to those associated with them, such as when Paolino Pieri lists the beautiful items brought back by the Pisans after their victory in Majorca in 1118, including a large metal door that ultimately adorned the city's cathedral, or when Galvaneus Flamma describes the Visconti

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[49] Galvanno Fiamma, *Opusculum de Rebus Gestis*, ed. Carlo Castiglione (Bologna, 1938), 14.

[50] "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli (n. 41 above), 1:31; and "Annali della Tosa," ed. Manni (n. 27 above), 154.

[51] Fiamma, *Opusculum de Rebus Gestis*, ed. Castiglione, 16.

[52] "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 38.

[53] Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 43; and "Annali e cronaca di Perugia," ed. Ugolini (n. 37 above), 201 and 210.

[54] Ripalta, *Chronica Placentina,* ed. Fillìa, 111: "Odrovandinus unum vas argenti et in eodem vase unam cuppam auri plenam perlis, anulis et lapidibus pretiosis, que cupa pedem habebat de argento supra deaurato; et dictus dominus Ugolinus de Gonzaga donavit sex cuppas argenti deauratas et smaldatas, item unam magnam cuppam cum pede cristalli cum ramis argenti cum perlis in dictis ramis circumcirca dictam cuppam pendentibus."

[55] *Chronici Cremonensis Fragmentum*, ed. Philippe Jaffé, MGH, *Scriptores* 18 (Hannover, 1863), 807–808.

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palace, with its numerous towers and rooms, and luxurious detailing and decor depicting animals, birds, and heroes from the past.[56]

Given such attention to wealth, it is not surprising that mentions of restrictions on clothing appear in communal histories at roughly the same time that leaders of many medieval Italian towns began promulgating sumptuary legislation to regulate inhabitants' excessive expenditures, including those spent on clothing. Although sumptuary laws primarily restricted paying exorbitant amounts on funerals, marriages, and baptisms, they also set limits on who was allowed to wear articles of clothing based on vocation or social status.[57] A 1388 set of Florentine amendments to sumptuary legislation from earlier in the century, for example, stipulates that under penalty of fifty lire "the wives of knights, doctors of law, canon law and of medicine" should only wear skins of ermine and vair on the sleeves of their garments as long as one-half of an eighth of a *braccia*, and no more.[58] Municipal regulation and civic historiography often worked hand in hand, so that a nostalgia for the honest fashion of times past became the justification for regulating what was worn in the legislators' day.

In keeping with these contemporary legal categorizations of dress, persons of noble status in town histories are often described as wearing extravagant clothing, and those of lesser status, more modest apparel. Rolandino of Padua uses this technique when describing the Marquis Azo, who presided over a tournament that involved many of the noble men of the Trevisan March. The Marquis' noble status was marked by the addition of ermine to his mantle, while others wore vair.[59] Rolandino speaks metaphorically about clothing, suggesting that when a certain judge disapproved of the actions of his political party he "changed his clothes" to match his new perspective.[60] Da Canal often pairs the nobility and gentle breeding of Venetian women with the luxurious nature of their clothes, and describes how the women of Genoa removed all of their golden buttons and ornaments as a sign of their sorrow when their city suffered a great loss against the Venetians.[61] Ogerio Alfieri also praises the beauty and nobility of the citizens of Asti by citing the silver, gold and pearl- and jewel-

[56] Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 3; and Fiamma, *Opusculum de Rebus Gestis*, ed. Castiglione, 16–17.

[57] A debate remains as to whether sumptuary laws were in fact a means on the part of local governments to maintain social hierarchies through the outward markers of dress. See Catherine Kovesi Killerby, *Sumptuary Law in Italy 1200–1500* (Oxford, 2002), 82–86.

[58] Giovanni Dominici and Donato Salvi, *Regola del governo di cura familiare* (Florence, 1860), 227–29.

[59] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 53; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 29.

[60] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 98: "transfigurattus in vestimentis"; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 107.

[61] Da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani (n. 9 above), 6 and 218; trans. Morreale (n. 9 above), 4 and 83.

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encrusted ornaments and collars worn by the rich women of the town along with their sumptuous garments.[62] Dino Compagni also remarks in his opening chapter that the women of Florence are lovely and adorned, and as discussed below, Giovanni Villani also offers an opinion about restrictions that should be made upon Florentine clothing, suggesting that the sartorial abuses are indicative of a want of moral character.[63] In one last example of how "clothes make the man," even to the end, the author of the *Chronicon Parmense* records on three different occasions that prominent citizens of Parma were buried in rich vestments, and that the city paid for the burial robes as a sign of respect for these important inhabitants.[64]

The earliest mention of sumptuary restrictions in the repertoire *per se* appears in the *Gesta Florentinorum* with an entry explaining that in 1274, the pope advised women they were not to wear pearls, gold and silver filigree work, nor to pull their clothing up to the mid-arm during lent, presumably in an effort to provide moral direction for them during their preparations for Easter.[65] The same sumptuary restrictions are noted by Simone della Tosa in his memoirs and were recorded under the same year-heading as found in the *Gesta* alongside a recitation of the political events of that year.[66] Buccio di Ranallo makes several references to clothing and clothing restrictions in his work, but most remarkably when he notes that the revenues from sumptuary fines were used to support the town's military expenditures.[67] The Villola chronicle records the sumptuary legislation for the year 1365, noting that only those who were of sufficient status could wear gold and that even these women had the restrictions placed upon them, including a maximum allowance of twenty five ounces of silver for a belt, as well as limitations on the types of luxury cloth used for their garments.[68] It is worth noting that the sumptuary restrictions recorded in the earlier works were often provided for moral instruction, but by the mid-fourteenth century they were both carefully quantified and viewed as a revenue source for the cash-strapped municipalities.

By way of contrast, the memoirs of Guido Filippi dell'Antella offer a more humble perspective on clothing, for his text includes an inventory of the garments left by his deceased brother, including two shirts, four breeches, an old doublet, and an old black cap.[69] The *Libro del Biadaiolo* remarks upon the pedestrian clothing worn at the grain market, and laments that even these poor garments were at

62 Alfieri, *Cronaca*, ed. Ferro (n. 27 above), 150.

63 Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. Bezzola (n. 35 above), 48; trans. Bornstein (n. 35 above), 5.

64 "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 163, 174, and 255.

65 *Gesta Florentinorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, in *Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca*, MGH, *Scriptores*, n.s. 8 (Berlin, 1930), 243–77, at 274. For a summary of sumptuary legislation in medieval Italy, see Killerby, *Sumptuary Law* (n. 57 above), 23–41.

66 "Annali della Tosa," ed. Manni (n. 27 above), 145.

67 Di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata*, ed. De Bartholomaeis (n. 44 above), 126.

68 "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli (n. 41 above), 3:196.

69 Polidori, "Ricordanze di Filippo dell'Antella" (n. 27 above), 23.

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risk of being stolen because those who came to buy grain were in such a desperate state.[70] Buccio di Ranallo explains that townspeople who were conspiring against a rival faction in Aquila cut off parts of their clothing so they would be recognized by their fellow co-conspirators.[71] Mention of clothing in the chronicles can therefore serve both symbolic and practical purposes in the narrative to demonstrate how actors appeared to those around them and how clothes could be used by their owners, despite the value of clothing to mark social status.

By relying upon the exceptional and sometimes exotic qualities of celebratory largesse, luxury items, and aristocratic clothing styles, historians indicated relative value, whether approvingly or critically, within the chronicle repertoire. However, just as writers noted the attire of poorer inhabitants, so too did they describe the more quotidian aspects of their physical realities to include the buildings, roads, churches, and town squares in which the action of their lives unfolded. Italian civic historians reported frequently on whether structures were being built up, torn down, or neglected to indicate the community's relative worth at certain periods in its history.

Building Up and Tearing Down: Civic Improvements and Civic Destruction

Construction increased in Italian city centers during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and was often initiated and regulated by the governing bodies of those same spaces.[72] The pace of urban construction and a town's ability to maintain communal structures, therefore, came to speak to a town's vibrancy under one regime or another. References to civic improvements are found throughout the repertoire from the earliest and most concise histories to later sources which provide rich detail on the specific costs and materials used in constructing civic works such as bridges, roads, town buildings, squares, walls, waterworks, and markets. Attention to civic works remains constant throughout the repertoire because they stand as tangible material expressions of town identity; they geographically shape life in the town and are permanent reminders of what unites one inhabitant with another.[73]

70 Domenico Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Giuliano Pinto (Florence, 1978), 299.

71 Di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata*, ed. De Bartholomaeis (n. 44 above), 4.

72 For evidence of the growth in urban building projects of twelfth- and thirteenth-century Italy, see Silvia Beltramo, "Civic Towers in Medieval Urban Landscape in Northern Italy: Architectures as Urban Identities," *Eikonocity: Storia e Iconografia delle Città e Dei Siti Europei* 5 (2020): 31–45; Francesca Bocchi, "The Topography of Power in the Cities of Medieval Italy," in *Lords and Towns in Medieval Europe: The European Historic Towns Atlas Project*, ed. Anngret Simms and Howard B. Clarke (Farnham, Surrey, 2015), 65–86; eadem, "Regulation of the Urban Environment by the Italian Communes from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 72 (1990): 63–78; and Oldfield, *Urban Panegyric* (n. 12 above), 130–159.

73 The theme of destruction appeared in other genres of writing in Italy at this time. See, for example, Hannah Skoda, "Differentiation or Destruction? The Effects of War on Human

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At times, the parties responsible for improvements remain anonymous, but in other instances the city officials who initiated or completed the projects are given credit for the jobs they accomplished. In some instances, the ability for a town to complete civic improvements is coupled with an acknowledgement that the town was enjoying a period of peace during that same time. Particularly in the later chronicles, composed during a period of intense factionalism in northern Italy, authors cited the completion of civic projects to argue that the town in question could expand and prosper if only its population were to reject factionalism and work together in a spirit of communal harmony. The corollary to this use of material goods to support political co-operation is the pointed assertion in the chronicles that destruction and waste of material goods can often be directly attributable to factionalism.

Many of the early annalistic writings note only the date the works were completed or undertaken. These include the *Gesta Florentinorum* (composed around 1278) which records the building of bridges in 1218 and 1220.[74] Most of the first twenty-eight lines of the *Chronichetta Pisana* record the completion dates for various construction projects throughout the city, including churches, towers, gates, bridges, and walls.[75] The *Cronica Ronciana* of Pisa notes simply that the Castello di Castro was begun in Sardinia in 1217, alerting the reader that Pisa held significant power on the island during that time.[76] The *Chronichetta antica di Firenze* obliquely remarks upon the building of the pylons for the city's Charraia bridge.[77] Pietro da Ripalta observes that in one year, there was a great deal of money in Piacenza, and the city used it to build two gates to the city, the Fulberto Gate and the Great Gate, and that in the year 1315 city walls and a castle were both built in the city.[78] Writing about Modena, Bonifacius de Morano mentions almost nothing else relative to material goods, but does note the construction of a tower in Bologna in 1108, and that 1226 saw the construction of many other castles in the area.[79] Some histories are more expansive in their descriptions, although remain silent about those who completed the works in

and Social Bodies in the *Commedia,*" in *War and Peace in Dante: Essays Literary, Historical and Theological,* ed. John C. Barnes and Daragh O'Connell (Portland, OR, 2015), 51–71.

[74] *Gesta Florentinorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler (n. 65 above), 247–48.

[75] "Chronichetta Pisana, scritta nel 1279," in *Crestomazia Italiana dei primi secoli,* ed. Ernesto Monaci (Rome and Naples, 1955), 406–407, at 406.

[76] "Cronaca Pisana Ronciana," ed. Emilio Cristiani, in "Gli avvenimenti pisani del periodo Ugoliniano in una cronaca inedita," *Bolletino Storico Pisano* 26 (1957): 3–55; and 27 (1958): 56–104, at 48.

[77] "Cronachetta antica di Firenze 1110–1273," ed. Giuseppe Baccini, in *Zibaldone: Notizie, aneddoti curiosita e documenti inediti o rari* 1 (Florence, 1888), 97–106, at 100.

[78] Ripalta, *Chronica Placentina,* ed. Fillìa (n. 48 above), 76 and 96.

[79] Bonifacius de Morano, *Chronica circulari*, ed. L. Vischi et al., in *Cronache Modenesi*, ed. A. Tassoni, G. da Bazzano, and B. Morano (Modena, 1888), 12 and 34.

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question. Bonvesin da la Riva describes the plenteous water-works throughout the city of Milan, including the measurements of the walls that enclose them, and adds that no other city in the world could claim such marvelous infrastructure.[80] Martin da Canal's description of the Cathedral of St. Mark achieves roughly the same purpose for Venice as do Bonvesin's praises for Milan.[81] The authors of the *Chronica de origine civitatis* and its vernacular adaptation, the *Libro Fiesolano* (composed around 1260–1280) also mention the importance of water-works and argue that those first built in Florence rivaled those of Rome.[82]

The Franciscan Salimbene de Adam, who wrote his *Cronica* of the city of Parma from 1283–1288, grants collective credit to the townspeople of Reggio, who came together from every level of society, carrying sand, stones, and cement on their backs in a communal effort to build the great church of St. James.[83] In the earliest instance of individual credit given for completion of communal improvements, Abbot Arnaldus is recognized for his efforts to revamp the church of Santa Giustiana in the *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae*.[84] Pietro Cantinelli gives the name of the podestà of Bologna who governed when the new city hall was built, as well as who ruled when a new arena and towers were constructed in Ferrara.[85] Jacob of Voragine mentions the towers and a fortification constructed by the first inhabitants of Genoa early on in his work and at the end of his history praises the improvements made to the archiepiscopal palace by Lord Walter.[86] Paolino Pieri notes that work on the walls, gates, and churches of Florence was begun in the year 1218 and explains that the Rubaconte bridge was so named because the podestà who governed at the time it was begun was called Rubaconte and that he himself set the first stone.[87] The anonymous author of the *Chronicon Parmense* provided not only details about numerous communal projects undertaken in Parma, but included the costs to the city as well, such as the building of eight archways over the Galeria bridge at the price of six hundred imperial pounds.[88]

80 Bonvesin de la Riva, *De magnalibus Mediolani/Meraviglie di Milano,* ed. and trans. P. Chiesa (Milan, 1997), 40.

81 Da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani (n. 9 above), 168; trans. Morreale (n. 9 above), 10.

82 "Chronica de origine civitatis Florentie," and "Libro Fiesolano," ed. O. Hartwig, in *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz* (Marburg, 1875), 37–60, at 55.

83 Salimbene da Parma, *Cronica fratris Salimbene de Adam Ordinis minorum*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, MGH, *Scriptores* 32 (Hannover, 1905), 50.

84 *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae*, ed. L. A. Botteghi, RIS^2 8.3, 161.

85 Cantinelli, *Chronicon*, ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 5 and 15.

86 Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 27 and 397.

87 Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 16 and 20–21.

88 "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 45.

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While references to town improvements appear in many town histories, the opposite, that is, the destruction of a person's or group's goods by another, is the most consistent and pervasive theme concerning material realities found in the entire chronicle repertoire. It appears in the earliest and most terse of the chronicles as well as in the more expansive ones. In its most pared down form, chronicle authors simply state that one city overthrew another and destroyed it, as is the case in the *Gesta Florentinorum* which records that in 1258 "the Arentines took Cortona at night and destroyed it."[89] At the other end of the spectrum, Paolino Pieri gives a minute description of damages done by factions in Florence, describing which houses were destroyed, and even which of the trees at each house (including the beautiful orange trees and cedars) were cut down.[90]

Destruction of goods and property in the repertoire serves principally as a shorthand for the dominion that one party, be it a city, a faction, a tyrant, or a king, was able to secure over another. Gaining control over another's goods is done in many ways, not only by simple destruction, pillage, plunder, or unjust seizure, but also through the process of ransom, in which a sum of money is demanded from the disadvantaged party, or through exile, which separates the subject party from his real estate and possibly from his worldly goods. What is important to note in the context of this study and particularly when discussing the physical destruction of property is that the identification of who had control over material goods corresponds to who had power over the other, so that material goods become a medium through which power relations are expressed in the chronicle repertoire. The theme of destruction in the chronicles evolves over time so that other topics related to materialism that accompany the destruction theme emerge and develop according to their own trajectories. For example, the initial description of devastation from conflict eventually gives way to an acknowledgment in the chronicles that wars and battles have costs. These include the direct costs of equipping an army for battle or stockpiling goods to withstand a siege, but also indirect consequences like the costs for reparations or the expenses of disrupting commercial activity during times of war. These arguments become more prominent and well developed in later chronicles when factionalism is blamed for the material losses of both the citizens and the communities in many of the northern Italian towns.

Simple references to destruction can be found in most every one of the histories under consideration, but some of these references take on expanded meaning within the context of the particular text. Rolandino of Padua demonstrates how the destruction of Ezzelino da Romano's goods reveals his personality when he notes that "Ezzelino da Romano alone considered the damages done to

[89] *Gesta Florentinorum*, ed. Schmeidler (n. 65 above), 262: "Ed in questo anno gli Arentini presono Cortona di notte e disfecerla."

[90] Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 69.

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his castles and lands in the March by the efforts of the armies of both sides as an outrage to himself," but also quantifies and lists the booty obtained by forces that opposed Ezzelino, which totaled about 3,000 pounds and included livestock, money, clothes, and all moveable goods.[91] The *Libro Fiesolano* makes reference to the most famous of city destructions, the loss of Troy, to establish a noble lineage for the Florentines, while Ogerio Alfiero estimates that it cost his city, Asti, over 200,000 lire to wage a war against the nearby town of Alexandria.[92] The anonymous Pisan author of the *Cronaca Pisana Roncinana* notes that the Pisans went about defeating Lucca by both positive and negative means; first, by minting coins and crowning Conradin, their Imperial hopeful, and then by sowing the fields of Lucca with salt, and burning and destroying many of the lands around the city.[93] Among Pietro Cantinelli's many references to destruction, he specifies not only that trees, grain, and houses were demolished but also that wheat was carried off as booty by Manfred of Faenza.[94] The *Chronichetta Lucchese* describes a litany of damage undertaken in the years between 1104 and 1117, during which time the fortress of Chastagnori was destroyed by the people of Lucca, the Lucchese destroyed Ripafratta and seized the chatelaines living there, and the Florentines destroyed the Castle of Gualandi and also captured Prato, dismantling its walls in the year 1117.[95]

Aside from outright destruction there were other ways war and conflict could be costly to a town, and many types of material goods were manipulated to meet these expenses. Riccobaldo of Ferrara explains that the Ferrarese paid off the Veronese in land to assure them of protection from aggressors.[96] The Genoese chronicler Iacopo Doria provides both a description and a monetary value for the merchandise lost in many of the ships that came under enemy control during his city's conflicts with other maritime powers, including Pisa and Venice.[97] The *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae* notes that it was an expensive proposition for Venice to maintain the Latin Empire, the Villola chronicle explains how a tax on the mills of Bologna was imposed so that the city could

[91] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 60 ("solus Ecelinus de Romano offensas, factas in castris et locis per marchiam ex utriusque partis exercicio et labore, in suam attraxit iniuriam") and 125; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 42 and 156.

[92] Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), 42; Ogerio Alfieri, *Cronaca*, ed. and trans. Natale Ferro, in *Gli Antichi cronisti astesi: Ogerio Alfieri, Guglielmo Ventura e Secondino Ventura: Secondo il testo dei Monumenta Historiae Patriae, volume V, Scriptores tomo III, Torino 1848* (Alexandria, Italy, 1990), 7–25, at 9.

[93] "Cronaca Pisana Ronciana," ed. Cristiani (n. 76 above), 63.

[94] Cantinelli, *Chronicon*, ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 45, 47, and 22, respectively.

[95] "Antica cronichetta lucchese già della biblioteca di M. F. Fiorentini," ed. Salvatore Bongi, in *Atti di Reale Accademica lucchese di scienze, letteratura e arti* 26 (1889–93): 215–54, at 224.

[96] Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva*, ed. Zanella (n. 25 above), 150–51.

[97] D'Oria, *Annali*, ed. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo (n. 22 above), 30, 37, and 72.

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raise money to wage battle, and the *Chronicon Parmense* enumerates the various material necessities required when supplying military forces.[98] Pietro Cantinelli states that the costs for maintaining mercenary forces in Forli amounted to twenty-six thousand florins.[99]

As costly as war was, historians noted that its aftermath had its price as well. Money was often used to solidify peace treaties arranged between warring cities, and tributes offered to victorious cities could be paid in goods, such as the oil and wine offered to Venice on a yearly basis by the city Istria, or in cash.[100] The anonymous author of the *Storie Pistorese* explains that fines were imposed and lawsuits brought against the city of Florence to provide funding for reparations to Pistoia after it had been destroyed, while Buccio di Ranallo's chronicle lauds King Charles of Anjou, who agreed to pay for repairs to the region after the battle of Benevento.[101] The author includes a careful description of how land was parceled out following the battle, who documented the grants, and that money would be provided to rebuild the town.

Although the costs of war between cities was a major theme in the earlier histories and remained so through the mid-fourteenth century, it was the argument concerning the toll exacted by conflicts that took place within cities, in the form of factional disputes, that later historians took up with fervor. An early reference to the costs of factionalism appears in the *Cronica Fiorentina compilata nel secolo xiii*, with a description of the damages done by the Ghibellines in 1247. The anonymous author writes that "the Ghibellines destroyed the towers and palaces and all of the fortresses the Guelfs had, and all of the other things they made foul and polluted, and they forced women and young girls into great shame."[102] By the middle of the next century, Giovanni di Durante provides a full description of how the Stinche prison was destroyed by the Donati faction during the struggle between the Black and White Guelfs, explaining that

> the other Donati went to the Stinche of Florence and had a fire started at the door, and smashed it, and released all of the prisoners who were in this Stinche,

[98] *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae*, ed. Botteghi (n. 84 above), 181, "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli (n. 41 above), 2:485; and "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 247.

[99] Cantinelli, *Chronicon*, ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 64.

[100] Cantinelli, *Chronicon*, ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 30 (on tributes); and Da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani (n. 9 above), 8; trans. Morreale (n. 9 above), 5 (on Istrian payments).

[101] *Storie Pistorese*, ed. Barbi (n. 22 above), 8; and Di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata*, ed. De Bartholomaeis (n. 44 above), 14.

[102] "Cronica Fiorentina," ed. Schiaffini (n. 24 above), 129: "Ed allora i Ghibellini dissfecero torri e palaççi e turre fortezze che' Guelfi aveano, ed altre cose fecero assai laide e biasimevoli, di sforzare donne pulçelle di grande vergongnia."

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and all of the prisoners, the many who were inside, came out, and then the others had the prisoners put it to flame, and they stole everything inside.[103]

Dino Compagni's earlier fourteenth-century work provides multiple examples of factional destruction, explaining the city's duty to demolish homes of members from vying factions and the displeasure of the commoners if the homes were not completely razed.[104] Yet, the idea that factionalism had only negative effects on the material well-being of town inhabitants is somehow inverted in the work of Guglielmo Ventura, who explains that some citizens were not at peace with their fellow citizens because they were in great debt to their creditors, and therefore encouraged factional discord among others so as not to be obliged to pay those debts.[105]

Finally, factional warfare could also separate individuals from their goods or disrupt their financial activities. Pietro Cantinelli describes how the Lambertuci were exiled from Bologna, and their homes destroyed in their absence.[106] The author of the *Storie Pistorese* explains how a fire set by the White Guelfs resulted in significant damage and loss for the cloth merchants of Florence, and the *Chronicon Parmense* reports that commercial activities in the city of Parma were interrupted due to concerns about the arrival of war.[107] When a town's communally owned goods were destroyed or damaged, the lives of its citizens were disrupted and, at times, even threatened. Moreover, the physical domination over the common spaces often stood as an indicator of who held power within these communities. As participatory government became more common in Italian cities, there was greater oversight and reportage by historians concerning how that same property was protected, managed, or mismanaged on behalf of town inhabitants.

Communal Resources and Responsibilities

In the years after 1300, Italian towns were increasingly ruled by a diverse group of inhabitants to include merchants and commoners working alongside traditional leaders from well-established noble families or the church hierarchy.[108] Naturally,

[103] "Cronica Fiorentina," ed. Schiaffini (n. 24 above), 143: ". . .gli altri Donati andarono alle Stinche di Firenze, e fecionvi mettere alla porta il fuoco, e rupponla, e ruppono tutte le pregioni, ch'erano in esse Stinche, e tutti i pregioni, quanti ve ne avea dentro, n'uscirono fuori, e poi l'altra gente misono il fuoco per le pregioni, e rubarnon ogni cosa, che v'era dentro."

[104] Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. Bezzola (n. 35 above), 73; trans. Bornstein (n. 35 above), 15.

[105] Ventura, *Memoriale*, ed. Ferro (n. 27 above), 69.

[106] Cantinelli, *Chronicon*, ed. Torraca (n. 22 above), 5.

[107] *Storie Pistorese*, ed. Barbi (n. 22 above), 36; and "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 258.

[108] Frances Andrews, "Introduction," in *Churchmen and Urban Government in Late Medieval Italy, c.1200–c.1450*, ed. Frances Andrews and Agata Pincelli (New York, 2013),

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as a greater proportion of the population gained access to the governing process, the actions they took in matters of monetary policy came under closer scrutiny. With greater access to the communal decision-making process and the expansion in the demographics of those who partook in town government, attention to the disposition of town funds, including their misuse through bribery or corruption, appears more frequently and with greater nuance in the later chronicles.

The most straightforward reference to the costs incurred by the towns are the sums given for city officials' salaries, including those for the podestà and other town leaders, although the misdirection of funds more generally also appears. Guglielmo Ventura quotes the six-month salary of the podestà of Asti at 3,000 Astese lire, while the podestà of Ferrara received a sum of 3,000 Bolognese lire.[109] The Villola chronicle notes that the salaries of thirty-three town officials were paid in baskets of grain, an unpopular policy during years of famine.[110] Giovanni di Durante reports that the Duke of Athens was paid fifty gold florins a day to help the Florentines fight Pisa, but that he did not perform well in return for this sum.[111] Dino Compagni also cites several occasions when the town's money was used improperly, observing in one instance that the Guelf party knighted three young men with strong political connections who were then paid the money earned by "poor little women who work the spinning wheels," therefore highlighting how the funds were misdirected.[112] Some chronicles criticize the misuse of funds by leaders other than their own, such as Philip of France who was condemned by two separate chroniclers, first for his misuse of French funds and then for his seizure of the assets of Italian bankers working in France in the year 1278.[113]

The minting of coins was the most common monetary action taken by towns and was frequently cited in the chronicles. Mention of the minting of new currency appears in the *Cronaca Pisana Roncinana*, Jacob of Voragine's chronicle, the *Chronichetta Lucchese*, and in the works of Paolino Pieri, and Bonifacius de Morano, to name but a few.[114] Monetary equivalencies for these new coins are occasionally

1–24. For the regulation of material goods, see Antonella Campanini, "Regulating the Material Culture of Bologna *la Grassa*," in *A Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Bologna*, ed. Sarah R. Blanshei (Leiden, 2018), 129–53.

[109] Ventura, *Memoriale*, ed. Ferro (n. 27 above), 178–79.

[110] "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli (n. 41 above), 1:140.

[111] Durante, "Frammento di Cronica," ed. Velluti (n. 38 above), 140–41.

[112] Compagni, *Cronica*, ed. Bezzola (n. 35 above), 264: "povere femminelle che filavano a filatoio"; trans. Bornstein (n. 35 above), 99.

[113] "Cronica Fiorentina," ed. Schiaffini (n. 24 above), 148; and Ventura, *Memoriale*, ed. Ferro (n. 27 above), 61 and 51, respectively.

[114] "Cronaca Pisana Ronciana," ed. Cristiani (n. 76 above), 63; Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 315; "Antica cronichetta lucchese," ed. Bongi (n. 95 above), 223; Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 27; and de Morano, *Chronica circulari*, ed. Vischi (n. 79 above), 43.

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provided as well.[115] Not surprisingly, another common theme regarding municipal funds was the collection of taxes and tariffs within a town. Among those works which mention taxes are the *Libro del Biadiaolo*, the *Chronicon Parmense*, Buccio di Ranallo's *Cronica Aquilana*, and the memories of Simone della Tosa, who notes the collection of a *gabelle* in the context of his own business accounts.[116]

Bribery and corruption are mentioned in the earlier chronicles, but not with the same sophistication as in later works.[117] Salimbene de Adam, writing in 1282, refers to bribery to criticize one of his superiors, and to extortion to chastise others.[118] Rolandino of Padua also notes how Ezzelino da Romano used bribery to increase his political support.[119] The *Cronica Fiorentina* (from 1297) alludes to witness tampering and the use of "pecunia corrocti," and to the corruption of the Roman nobility.[120] However, the fullest and most nuanced recording of corruption and the use of bribery is by Dino Compagni, who begins his work by characterizing many of Florence's inhabitants as "rich from unlawful profits." He makes numerous references to bribery and corruption throughout the work with specific types of corruption noted throughout (that is, selling justice, extortion, money for political support, misuse of city funds, receipt of both money and grain for political gain).[121] Misuse of city funds also appears in Durante (1345) with his criticism of the Donati, and becomes a major theme throughout the work of Giovanni Villani, particularly in the later chapters which address Villani's own era.[122] Reference to bribery and corruption in these later works signals not only attention to these specific ideas but also a larger notion that authors had the right to both characterize and criticize how money was used.

Famine, Scarcity, and Commodity Prices

Not surprisingly, historians evaluated and criticized the actions of communal leaders most severely when the needs of inhabitants were left unmet, and

115 Pieri, *Cronica,* ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 27.

116 Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), 296; "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 105; Di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata,* ed. De Bartholomaeis (n. 44 above), 126–27; and "Annali della Tosa," ed. Manni (n. 27 above), 22.

117 On some aspects of bribery, see William Caferro, "Italy and the Companies of Adventure in the Fourteenth Century." *Historian* 58 (1996): 795–810.

118 Salimbene da Parma, *Cronica,* ed. Holder-Egger (n. 83 above), 84 and 148.

119 Patavinus, *Chronica,* ed. Jaffé (n. 6 above), 130; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 167.

120 "Cronica Fiorentina," ed. Schiaffini (n. 24 above), 85 and 123.

121 Compagni, *La cronica*, ed. Bezzola (n. 35 above), 48; trans. Bornstein (n. 35 above), 5. See also Compagni, *La cronica*, ed. Bezzola, for the following topics: bribery and corruption, 58, 81, 133, 164, 215, 227, 250, 251, 261; selling justice, 87; extortion, 147, money for political support, 180, 237, 255, 258, 261; misuse of city funds, 264, receipt of both money and grain for political gain, 268.

122 Durante, "Frammento di Cronica," ed. Velluti (n. 38 above), 143. Further on Villani, see below.

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particularly during the periods of famine that visited Italian peninsula in the first half of the fourteenth century. Mention of famine and scarcity were found in most of the works in the repertoire, but some later histories posited a causal relationship between famine and scarcity, whether natural or human in origin, and the resulting effect on prices for commodities such as grain, salt, fruit, wine, and other foodstuffs.[123] The close association between famine, scarcity, and commodities pricing may stem from a belief, first alluded to in earlier histories and more fully articulated in later chronicles, that cities were in some ways responsible to promote material well-being among their inhabitants, or at least to provide an environment in which inhabitants could prosper materially. Two of the later chronicles, the *Libro del Biadaiolo* and the *Chronicon Parmense*, represent the fullest expression of expectations held by northern Italians that their towns would ensure access to the material goods they needed.

The works of Rolandino of Padua and Dino Compagni provide two examples among many in the repertoire of early attitudes concerning the material responsibilities of communities towards their inhabitants. Rolandino explains that material wealth is a condition of civilization, and states that there are "three things especially that adorn all cities and every place where people live: the beauty of the citizens, an abundance of wealth, and the handsomeness of its homes," and goes on to accuse Ezzelino da Romano of denying these three things to the citizens of Padua.[124] Dino Compagni notes that the laws of Florence were created to protect the wealth of the commune, and that if town officials remained faithful to these rules, the populace would benefit greatly.[125] These two chronicles therefore present a view that towns should oversee the material well-being of their inhabitants, that material prosperity served as an indicator of a town's political health, that the deterioration of a town's material wealth was a sign of its decline.

Nowhere are the material expectations of town inhabitants more clearly expressed than in Domenico Lenzi's *Libro del Biadaiolo*, where a noble Florentine's disappointment in his town is fully expressed as Lenzi reports that he is heard grumbling: "here is a poorly managed city, that cannot even provide grain."[126]

[123] Guido Alfani, *Calamities and the Economy in Renaissance Italy. The Grand Tour of the Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (London, 2013), 42–78; and George Dameron, "Feeding the Medieval Italian City-State: Grain, War, and Political Legitimacy in Tuscany, c. 1150–c. 1350," *Speculum* 92 (2017): 976–1019.

[124] Patavinus, *Chronica*, ed. Jaffé, (n. 6 above), 94: "Videns enim Ecelinus, quod precipue tria sunt, que cunctas civitates et loca singula in quibus habibatur exornant, scilicet personarum decor, diviciarum copia et pulcritudo domorum,"; trans. Berrigan (n. 6 above), 99.

[125] Compagni, *La cronica*, ed. Bezzola (n. 35 above), 57–8; trans. Bornstein (n. 6 above), 8–9.

[126] Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), 302: "Ecco città mal guidata, ké non possiamo avere del grano!"

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Although mention of famine and want of grain is found in most of the chronicles, it is the main theme in the *Libro del Biadaiolo*, which dates to sometime in the 1340s. Throughout this work, structured as a day-to-day accounting of grain prices at Florence's Orsanmichele marketplace, Lenzi provides not only a record of the fluctuating costs of Florence's staple food, but also an in-depth view on the mechanics of scarcity with frequent reference to actions taken to maintain a constant flow of food, either by rationing, restricting hoarding, or prohibiting the places where grain could be resold.[127] Alongside the registration of grain prices, the author also chronicles some of the political events that take place Florence on the dates he records, and often makes a connection between these events and the prices he monitors. His heart-wrenching depiction of the evils of famine bring to life the suffering of the citizens in a way that was only alluded to in almost all of the earlier chronicles. The only other depiction of famine that comes close to Lenzi's empathetic portrayal is the almost gleeful reportage in the *Fragmenta Historiae Pisanae* of the death of Ugolino della Gherardesca, who was imprisoned in a tower with his family and left to die of starvation. The lengths that he and his family took when faced with such acute hunger were gruesome and appeared later in literary as well as historical texts.[128]

The *Chronicon Parmense*, although it is viewed as much more than a history of prices in Parma, makes constant reference to the supply level and consequent pricing of many different types of foods, including salt, wine, fruit, grain, pigs, eggs, and meat, among other items. The chronicle also monitors the rise in the cost of wood or other material used for production, and at one point, noted that "wretches and poor women went out daily and cut down trees and destroyed homes in inhabited towns, to sell the wood."[129] The chronicle not only reports on food costs, but uses the fluctuation in commodities pricing as a constant means to monitor the health of the city, as in the case of many of the later chronicles, including that of Buccio di Ranallo and the Villola chronicle.[130] For many historians, poor money management was a matter of communal interest with serious ethical implications.

Morality and the Material

Since the threat of scarcity and famine remained a constant in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century town life, historians naturally reflected upon the moral

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[127] Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), at 382, 293, and 303, respectively.

[128] "Fragmenta Historiae Pisanae," in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 24:1, ed. Lodovico Muratori (Milan, 1738), cols. 643–72, at 655. This story also appears in Dante's *Commedia* at *Inferno* (*Canto 33*, lines 13–75); Dante Alighieri, *La Commedia secondo l'antica vulgate*, ed. Giorgio Petrocchi (Milan, 1966–67), vol. 2, 389–90.

[129] "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 244.

[130] Di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata*, ed. De Bartholomaeis (n. 44 above), 192; and "Cronica Villola," ed. Sorbelli (n. 41 above), 1:413–14.

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implications of how wealth was accumulated and distributed. The themes of abundance and excess appear periodically in the chronicle repertoire and signal a turn towards an ethical evaluation of the subject matter. Abundance is generally viewed as a positive characteristic of town life, indicating that the community is healthy, and in many cases, the inhabitants are virtuous. Excess is often coupled with the notion of waste or dissipation and is introduced especially when a chronicle author is hoping to criticize the material policies of a leader or group of people he dislikes.[131] Although these concerns are incipient within the repertoire of thirteenth- and fourteenth-century historical writings, it is a topic that takes on even greater importance starting in the second quarter of the fourteenth century.[132]

Three early writers — Bonvesin da la Riva, Martin da Canal, and Riccobaldo of Ferrara — highlight the abundance of goods found in the cities they are chronicling. The greater part of Bonvesin da la Riva's *De magnalibus Mediolani* reports on the great wealth of goods found in Milan, including "grain, wine, vegetables, fruits, trees, hay, and all products, as everyone can see," and he concludes that "you will find many men and women who are very advanced in age, and in the same way will find that families are very fertile and the population numerous, due to the abundance of all alimentary products that increase day by day, thanks to God."[133] In a similar style, Martin da Canal introduces the city of Venice to his readers with claims that it is "filled with beauty and all good things; merchandise flows through this noble city like water through fountains," and goes on to argue that "in this city, one can find an enormous amount of food, bread and wine, fowl and water birds, fresh and salted meats, and great fish from the sea or from the river; there are merchants from everywhere who come to buy and sell."[134] Riccobaldo of Ferrara extols the natural wealth and resources found in Ferrara, and explains that the richness of the town's natural resources attracted good families from all of Italy to come and live there.[135] Despite the richness reported in these three works, it is important to note that there was a strong

[131] Oldfield, *Urban Panegyric* (n. 12 above), 95–110.

[132] Peter Howard, "The Language of Luxury in Renaissance Florence," in *Luxury and the Ethics of Greed in Early Modern Italy*, ed Catherine Kovesi (Turnhout, 2019), 47–70; and Cary J. Nederman, "Avarice as a Princely Virtue? The Later Medieval Backdrop to Poggio Bracciolini and Machiavelli," in *Mind Matters: Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Intellectual History in Honour of Marcia L. Colish*, ed. Cary Nederman et al. (Turnhout, 2009), 255–74.

[133] De la Riva, *De magnalibus*, ed. Chiesa (n. 80 above), 62: "Fit in eius territorio bladi, vini, leguminum, fructuum, arborum, feni et aliorum bonorum copia, sicut patet. . .cuius rei est fulgidum signum, quoniam quam plurimi senes grandevi et anus in etate ibi reperiuntur viventes decrepita, et etiam quia progeniei feconditas, populi frequentia, omnium bonorum prosperitas mirabili modo quotidie per Dei gratiam perducitur in augmentum."

[134] Da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise*, ed. Limentani (n. 9 above), 4; trans. Morreale (n. 9 above), 4.

[135] Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva*, ed. Zanella (n. 25 above), 140–42.

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literary tradition of praise poetry for cities that had previously flourished in Italy and which was called by many names, including the *Encomium Urbis, Carmina, Mirabilia Urbis, Laudationes Urbium, Descriptions Urbium, Laudes Civitates*, or the *Laudes Urbium*, and that the work of Bonvesin da la Riva especially relies on this tradition in its description of the wealth found in Milan.[136] Later works, such as the *Chronicon Parmense*, are less exaggerated in their reports about abundance in their towns, which suggests that material goods held a different value in the works of these three earlier authors than in later chronicles.[137]

The ethical flipside of abundance is, of course, excess, a theme which appears most often in works with strong moral overtones. Salimbene de Adam notes that abuse of power leads to greater access to material goods, and applies this personally to his former superior, Brother Elias, whom he charges with the desire to live excessively because of his position in the order.[138] The *Chronica Fiorentina compilata nel secolo xiii* reports that in 1138, Maestro Rinaldo preached against the vice of excess, albeit without approval from the church.[139] Giovanni di Durante also remarks upon the excess of the Duke of Athens, whose rule he consistently criticizes, noting that he owned a vase that he had made from gold and silver, and which valued nearly 30,000 gold florins.[140] Abundance and excess are found most frequently in works with a particular goal, whether promotional or critical, as historians wrestled with the implications of wealth and who controlled it.

Just as abundance and excess appear in the repertoire, so do the virtues of charity and generosity, although less often than the contrary vice of avarice. Salimbene addresses the value of charity in his chronicle, quoting the bible on the virtue and even equating charity with courtliness.[141] The anonymous author of the *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae* notes that generosity was indeed a value, so much so that Ezzelino da Romano feigned magnanimity to further his political aims.[142] Paolino Pieri describes Frederick I as "generous, virtuous, and gracious," a characterization picked up by Villani a generation later.[143] Riccobaldo of Ferrara uses sarcasm to shame the Marquis Azzo, first calling him "generous," then criticizing him for collecting extraneous taxes.[144] Domenico Lenzi praises the rich citizens of Florence for helping the poor during the

[136] See especially Oldfield, *Urban Panegyric* (n. 12 above), 32 and *passim*.
[137] "Chronicon Parmense," ed. Bonazzi (n. 39 above), 154.
[138] Salimbene da Parma, *Cronica*, ed. Holder-Egger (n. 83 above), 93 and 149.
[139] "Cronica Fiorentina," ed. Schiaffini (n. 24 above), 99.
[140] Durante, "Frammento di Cronica," ed. Velluti (n. 38 above), 147.
[141] Salimbene da Parma, *Cronica*, ed. Holder-Egger (n. 83 above), 24 and 94.
[142] *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae*, ed. Botteghi (n. 84 above), 176.
[143] Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 7: "largo et bontadoso, et in tutti i suoi fatti fu grazioso."; and NC 1:225.
[144] Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva*, ed. Zanella (n. 25 above), 178–82.

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famine of 1329, and the memoirs of Luca di Totto da Panzano describe a great feast thrown by the town of San Miniato to honor him and his descendans, although he does not mention generosity in particular.[145]

References to avarice appear regularly in the repertoire as a means to chastise groups or individuals within the narrative. Salimbene de Adam and Jacob of Voragine, both of whom were members of the clergy and whose works are moral in nature, offer extended warnings on the dangers of avarice for the public good.[146] These values reappear in later chronicles where specific instances of greed are cited. Riccobaldo of Ferrara asserts that the Venetians who transport goods out of Ferrara are greedy, and Domenico Lenzi accuses the city of Siena of avarice because it does not care for its poor in times of famine.[147] On a personal level, the historian of Vicenza, Ferreto de Ferreti, accuses Charles of Anjou of greed in his conquest of northern Italy, and the author of the *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae* characterizes Ezzelino da Romano as a "greedy wolf."[148] Although the twinned virtues and vices of abundance versus excess and charity versus greed speak most directly to the moral implications of wealth management, the willingness of historians to tie material goods to ethical concerns indicates just how heavily these questions weighed upon inhabitants of the medieval Italian peninsula. And of the historians writing during this period, few were more influential or quick to moralize than the Florentine merchant-historian Giovanni Villani, whose *Nuova Cronica* could be considered its own study of how Italians of the early fourteenth century understood wealth, money, and material goods.

Materialism in Giovanni Villani's *Nuova Cronica*

Giovanni Villani was born to a wealthy Florentine merchant family and spent much of his adult life travelling as a banker involved in the business of international commerce. His *Nuova Cronica*, which tells the story of Florence from the perspective of world history was first conceived on a trip he made to Rome in 1300 and written down in the 1320s and 30s, once he was able to settle more permanently in his home town.[149] As a man whose life's work revolved around

[145] Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), 317; and Totto di Panzano, "Frammenti," ed. P. Berti, (n. 27 above), 70.

[146] Pieri, *Cronica*, ed. Adami (n. 22 above), 137; and Varagine, *Cronaca*, ed. Monleone (n. 7 above), 146–50.

[147] Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva*, ed. Zanella (n. 25 above), 17; and Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Pinto (n. 70 above), 318.

[148] Ferretto de Fereti, "Historia rerum in Italia gestarum ab anno MCCL ad annum MCCCXVIII," in *Le opere di Ferretto de' Ferretti vicentino*, ed. Carlo Cipolla (Rome, 1908), 1:23; and *Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae*, ed. Botteghi (n. 84 above), 153.

[149] Francesco Salvestrini, "Villani, Giovanni," in *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Dunphy and Bratu (n. 8 above), 1478.

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money management, Villani's history is of great importance to understanding how material goods were viewed in Italy during the mid-fourteenth century, not only because they are mentioned so frequently in the *Cronica,* but also because the text subsequently served as a source and model for many of the historical works written throughout the Italian peninsula thereafter.[150] Citing every mention of materialism in Villani's chronicle would require a book in itself, so the chronicler's approach towards material goods will be merely summarized, then noteworthy sections indicated that merit the attention of future scholars.

Villani's work includes all the themes related to material goods found in the repertoire discussed above. Three things, however, can be said generally about Villani's approach towards material goods that differ from the repertoire as a whole: first, he tends to quantify the value of material goods rather than provide rich or extensive descriptions of them; second, he often uses material considerations to bolster the moral position he is putting forth in the chronicle; and finally, like his compatriot Dino Compagni, Villani fully explores the range of ways in which material goods, and money in particular, operate within the historical setting he describes. All three of these characteristics coincide with the more transactional rather than static approach towards material goods usually found in later chronicles. Not surprisingly, the earlier sections of Villani's work rely on the static depiction of material goods that would certainly have been found in the sources he used for this period. Many of the individuals Villani describes are characterized simply as "wealthy," "very strong, affluent people of great wealth," "rich and wise," or even "cunning, malicious, and rich."[151] Unlike abundance, wealth was not necessarily an indicator of moral superiority. Later references to wealth are at times downplayed, such as when the leader of the Black Guelf party, Corso Donati, is described as "a noble man skilled in battle, not of excessive wealth."[152]

Villani's overall approach to the function of material goods changes, however, as he relies more heavily on contemporary sources. Examples listed below, including the extensive documentation of Florence's yearly expenses found in Book Twelve, Chapter 93 and the detailed depiction of periods of famine in the city, support the idea that Villani's work presented an expectation that material goods and money should circulate in the town rather than remain in the

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[150] The impact of Villani's work was far-reaching. Two such town histories can be noted here by way of example: these include the anonymous mid-fourteenth-century *Chronicle of Pisa* now archived as MS L54 of the Archivio di Stato of Lucca, and the *Cronaca di Partenope*, a chronicle from the city of Naples from around the same time. On the L54 Chronicle, see Ottavio Banti, "Studio sulla genesi dei testi cronistici pisani del secolo xiv," *Bullettino Dell'Istituto Storico Italiano per Il Medio Evo E Archivio Muratoriano* 75 (1963): 259–319, at 259. On the *Cronaca di Partenope*, see *The Cronaca di Partenope: An Introduction to and Critical Edition of the First Vernacular History of Naples (c. 1350)*, ed. Samantha Kelly (Leiden, 2011).

[151] NC 1:166, 1:280, 1:48, and 1:114, respectively.

[152] NC 2:63.

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domain of a powerful few. One scene, in particular, demonstrates that Villani's approach towards historical events, at least in some part, could be viewed in terms of credits and debits, much akin to Latini's transactional approach in the *Tresor*. Chapter 35 from Book Eight describes how a Florentine rebel, as he was facing judgment for his crimes, asked his co-conspirator as they came before the judge, "Where are we going now?" to which his friend replied, "To pay a debt left to us by our fathers."[153] This transactional presentation of the effects of Florence's immediate history is supported elsewhere in Villani's work though his continuous attention to the credits and debits accrued by the city.

Descriptions of feasts and festivals in Villani's chronicle display a remarkable lack of attention to luxury items in comparison with other works in the repertoire. Material goods, including new clothes made of rich fabrics, are occasionally mentioned to establish the extraordinary nature of a feast or festival, but the descriptions pale in comparison with the effusive imagery found in other chronicles.[154] In the realm of public entertainment, however, Villani also reports that in 1322, a Sienese musician was able to ring the bells of Florence at full peal, a feat which none of the twelve men before him had been able to do in the city for a period of seventeen years. For this service the musician was paid three hundred gold florins.[155] Villani's portrayal of the event did not include a rich description of the sound of the bells, but rather a quantification of the particulars of the event to underscore its meaning. If anything, Villani's descriptions of special feasts and events are structured to emphasize the quantifiable value of the event rather than the luxurious details.

Villani's treatment of luxury items to signal or confer special status on persons or situations does not vary greatly from the approach found in other chronicles. Villani observes that luxury materials such as marble, gold, and porphyry are used in the building of churches, that jewels are brought as a gift to a wedding, and that the pope was clothed in rich garments at his burial.[156] In one instance, Villani's didactic purposes are exposed as he provides an opulent picture of the wealth and beauty of the city of Poggibonsi, but explains that it was their pride and arrogance that caused their destruction at the hands of the Florentines.[157]

Villani often uses clothing styles in his work to add a moral dimension to the political program he puts forth in the narrative. Although at times Villani

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[153] NC 1:467: "E la mattina, quando s'andavano a giudicare, Neracozzo domandò messer Azzolino: 'Ove andiamo noi?' Rispuose il cavaliere: 'A pagare uno debito che'cci lasciarono i nostri padri.'"

[154] NC 1:606.

[155] NC 2:356.

[156] NC 1:85, 2:14, 1:398, and 2:119, respectively.

[157] NC 1:468.

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remains neutral in his recounting of clothing styles, such as when he describes the distinctive apparel of the Lombards, his bias becomes clear elsewhere, as when he speaks of the modest dress of the Florentines in the age of the *primo popolo* (around 1265), or when he explains that the French were "nobly adorned" or that the forces of King Charles of Anjou, one of Villani's heroes, were outfitted in sumptuous armor of gold and silver.[158] Villani also critiques the clothing styles of his own day, preferring instead the "beautiful, noble, and honest" styles similar to the togas worn during the time of the Romans.[159]

Villani pays special attention to civic works in the *Cronica*, especially since he begins his work with the founding of the city and so therefore documents how and when many of the city's landmarks were first built, including the fountains and waterworks, the gates and city districts, local fortresses, and city walls.[160] Villani notes specifically that the city was at peace during the year 1294, and so undertook improvements to the Church of Santa Maria del Fiore, adorning it with marble and carved sculptures.[161] In the year 1321, Villani makes a connection between the end of King Robert's rule in Florence, which had lasted eight and one half years, and the initiation of a series of new city works, which Villani himself helped to execute. "And I the writer," he explains

> since I was an official of the city along with other honorable citizens undertaking the construction of these walls, first decided that the towers should measure two hundred by two hundred arm-lengths; and in the same way it was ordered that the *barbacani* [protrusions in the upper stories of buildings] or *confessi*, next to the wall and on the outside of the trench, should be begun, for the strength and beauty of the city, and this is how everything else went along.[162]

This connection between the Florentine's self-rule and the undertaking of public projects adds a moral dimension to the material reality of new civic construction. In 1337, Villani recounts that the construction of a "grand and magnificent palazzo" was begun and specifies which taxes were collected for the completion of this work, thereby creating a link between the benefits of new construction in the city and the costs required to attain them.[163]

As in most of the chronicles, destruction, reparations, and the costs of war and factionalism loom large in Villani's chronicle. Destruction is not quantified in the

[158] NC 1:109, 364, 412, and 2:32.
[159] NC 3:302.
[160] NC 1:60–62, 148–49, 237, and 175.
[161] NC 2:206.
[162] NC 2:338: "E io scrittore, trovandomi per lo Comune di Firenze uficiale con altri onorevoli cittadini sopra fare edificare le dette mure, di prima adoperamo che le torri si facessono di CC in CC braccia; e simile s'ordinò si cominciassono i barbacani, overo confessi, di costa a le mure e di fuori da' fossi, per più fortezza e bellezza de la cittade, e così si seguirà poi per tutto."
[163] NC 3:150–51, at 150: "un grande e magnifico palazzo."

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earlier sections of the work that rely on older sources, but as the *Cronica* continues and Villani relies more on eyewitness testimony and contemporary sources, the author is able to offer more precision concerning the nature and extent of damages. Villani, for example, notes that the walls of Cremona were breeched by the Milanese in 1321, and that all the goods that remained there were confiscated, and gives a monetary value (200,000 Genoese pounds) to the losses sustained by Genoese exiles in the year 1322.[164] As in other histories from after 1300, the losses due to factionalism are also chronicled and monetary sums assigned to those losses as well, such as the goods valued at 60,000 gold lire lost during the factional violence in Florence in 1342.[165] The costs of war include payment for soldiers, or the price, in monetary terms, of peace settlements and at times a mention of the taxes or fines that were imposed to make those payments.[166]

Villani pays special attention to how communal resources are used. Taxes are continuously and precisely monitored and instances of corruption and perceived betrayal noted.[167] Villani carefully documents how the Guelfs established and divided their fortunes after their reinstatement as leaders of Florence in 1267, and an entire chapter is devoted to the expenses of Florence during Villani's time, with both the goods purchased and services rendered to the commune and prices for each of these.[168] Among those costs are musicians, including horn players of all sorts, whose salary amounted to 1,000 small pounds per year, as well as the expenditures for ambassadors, whose cost to the city came to 5,000 gold florins per year. Villani frequently notes when the city minted coins in support of the town's economic needs.[169]

Like many of his fellow historians, famine, scarcity, and the conditions of the poor are all concerns for Villani. Famine and hunger are discussed independently of commodities prices in the earlier part of the work but, like the Domenico Lenzi and the author of the *Chronicon Parmense,* are paired with exact prices for grain in later parts of the *Cronica*.[170] Two and one half measures (or *staio*) of grain, for example, cost one gold florin during the great famine of 1332.[171] In keeping with his political views, Villani mentions the poverty of the Guelf exiles in particular when he decries how "the miserable Guelfs, chased from Florence and all of the lands of Tuscany, where no one was of the Guelf party, stayed for a long time in

[164] NC 2:232 and 378.
[165] NC 1:250 and 319; 2:128; and 3:357.
[166] NC 1:378, 1:351, 1:374, respectively.
[167] NC 1:327; 2:361; 3:93; 1:218; and 2:121, respectively.
[168] NC 1:440–41; and 3:194–97.
[169] NC 1:161, 302, and 346; and 2:365.
[170] NC 1:108, 311–12, and 418.
[171] NC 2:376.

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Bologna in great suffering and poverty."[172] An extended discussion of the famine of 1345 to 1346 in Book Thirteen, Chapter 73 includes multiple references to the prices for foodstuffs and the actions taken by the city to procure food for its inhabitants.[173]

A famous passage from Book Twelve, Chapter 94 of Villani's *Cronica* serves a similar purpose to the works of Martin da Canal and Bonvesin da la Riva, both of whom go to great lengths to extol the virtues of their cities.[174] Villani's extended discussion of Florence's assets differs from those of da Canal and, to a lesser extent, da la Riva, by the sheer accumulation of figures Villani inserts into his description. The Florentine's tendency to quantify is fully expressed in this passage, whereas the other authors relied more on material description rather than monetary valuation. The author also uses abundance as proof of the moral value of those he describes, such as the early Florentines who prospered and multiplied because of their skills in trade, or Count Raymond of Provence (father-in-law to Charles of Anjou), who was able to amass great treasure at his court, largely because of his superior sense of courtesy and honor.[175] Excess also plays a role in Villani's moral program. A fire in 1115 is portrayed as punishment for the Florentines' disproportionate desire for luxury, and Villani's disgust at the immoderate practices of his age are detailed at length in the first chapter of Book Twelve.[176]

Like the themes of abundance and excess, charity and greed are closely tied to the moral outlook of Villani's work. Florence's political rivals are at times depicted as greedy, such as the *castellani* Guido Bigherelli and his nephews who were killed by the Florentines because of their avarice, or King Philip of France who was motivated by his avarice to dismantle the Templar order and to seize their goods.[177] Villani also alludes to the practice of usury in a criticism of his own compatriots, when he quotes a rival of the Florentines, Count Guido, who states "It seems to me that the Florentines are great lenders and usurers."[178] Instances of charity are also mentioned to bolster the status of a historical actors, such as the generous and conscientious Pope John, who left a rich fortune to the church valued at more than eighteen million gold florins, which included precious stones, gold, crowns, crosses, miters, and jewels.[179]

[172] NC 1:392: ". . .I miseri Guelfi cacciati di Firenze e di tutte le terre di Toscana, che niuna se ne tenea a parte guelfa, più tempo stettono in Bologna con grande soffratta e povertà. . ."

[173] NC 3:467–72

[174] NC 3:197–202.

[175] NC 1:145 and 400.

[176] NC 1:214; and 3:23.

[177] NC 1:623; and 2:181.

[178] NC 1:615: "'Parmene bene, se non ch'io intend che' Fiorentini sono grandi prestatori ad usura.'"

[179] NC 3:61.

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Although Villani's approach to wealth and material goods relied heavily upon the work of former historians, he set new standards for discussing affluence and money management by incorporating an enhanced quantitative awareness into the dialogue and highlighting the topic as a crucial point of interest and analysis. Given how attentive Villani was to questions of wealth and material goods, it is no surprise to also find echoes of those themes in post-Villani texts, particularly those written by authors who shared his mercantile background. Prior to Villani's work, historical narratives often addressed matters of wealth, but the merchant-readers of the *Nuova Cronica* were familiar with transactional wealth and saw the accounting and recounting of a day's work as integral to their own well-being and to that of their cities and kin.

How is wealth related to history?

This essay began with two closely related questions, that is how medieval Italians perceived wealth as expressed in their historical writings, and how considerations of wealth in turn shaped the writing of history in medieval Italy. For those who study historical epistemologies, these are salient issues. The wide-ranging view of this corpus has revealed several points of comparison between history writing and wealth in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy. First, when viewed over time, strategies of creating wealth were understood differently in earlier as opposed to later texts in the repertoire, and this had a fundamental impact on how historians characterized material possessions and those who owned them. For earlier historians, wealth was built through accretion, like the cautious and forward-thinking lord of Latini's prologue who accumulated wealth and kept it secreted away for a rainy day. This is especially evident in the paired terms "in persons and possessions" that appear so frequently in these texts. Later historians found that wealth was also amassed through the circulation of goods, but that an increase in the frequency with which money and commodities changed hands translated into added opportunities for mismanagement and even outright corruption. By the mid-fourteenth century, writers associated wealth less with the personal characteristics of a historical actor, and more with one's skills in money management or the opportunity to defraud at the moment of exchange.

Secondly, and not surprisingly, we see a real struggle that increased as the years wore on to understand the positive and negative aspects of the influx of wealth and material goods into Italian society. By and large, and despite the great amount of evidence to the contrary, the impression gained from reading the chronicles written roughly between 1250 and 1350 is that for those living at this time, there was not a sense of overall economic expansion in the region, but rather the feeling that intense factional discord, famine, pestilence, and widespread destruction were dominant. The increased wealth and access to material

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goods attested in these and other historical sources did not, in fact, convince historians or their readers that their lives were any better than in previous generations. To wit, many topics that celebrated lavishness and pageantry in the corpus were answered with competing themes calling such extravagance into question, including the paring of luxury display with the recall to sumptuary legislation to regulate profligacy, for example. Abundance and excess, charity and greed, honest or fraudulent asset management were all two sides of the same coin. The more wealth was in play, the more anxieties about material goods were expressed in the corpus.

Finally, one point should be made about the sources privileged in this and many discussions of Italian civic historiography, that the prime placement of Florentine materials may shade our perceptions of how wealth influenced historical writing. Although it is dangerous to focus too closely on historiographic production in Florence and then extrapolate to the entire peninsula, it is fair to grant more attention to the works of Florentine historians since they produced exponentially more material for consideration. Moreover, and especially in the case of Villani, the Florentines were trendsetters for how vernacular town histories were written, which means that their narrative orientations were readily adopted by writers elsewhere in Italy. Especially in the case of the Arno city, then, the influx of wealth and material goods not only made them relevant topics of historical discussion, but also increased the number of inhabitants who felt they were eligible to write history at all. Civic pride has long been cited as rationale for the flourishing of town-centered historiography in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy, but in the case of Florence and other parts of the peninsula, it may well be the inhabitants' increasing net worth that allowed them to consider their histories worthy of recording. More than some vague sense of civic patriotism, it was money and material wealth that made them active and valued participants in their towns' decision-making process which, as Villani articulated, allowed them to witness and report upon activities of historical import as they took place. This new class of citizens-turned-historical-actors contributed their own graphic norms — that is, their own professionalized approach to how things were written down — to their towns' historiographies, which included a recall to the transactional and quantitative writing styles they practiced in their daily affairs.

In sum, attitudes towards material goods and the important role of wealth in Italian town historical writing is not simply the result of the change in economic models signaled by Cipolla and his school, nor was the growth in municipal historiography uniquely the result of increased civic pride. Rather, wealth became a frequent topic of historical discussion because, in some measure, those who had it were empowered to make it a subject of concern and to write stories about it. The manipulation and management of wealth — the mechanics of creating, accumulating, maintaining, displaying, and distributing it, and the ethics

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of those actions — shine forth in these narratives because Italians were coming to terms with how they ought to undertake them. It was a big part of their lives, and so it also became a part of their story, both individually and communally.

Independent Scholar
lmorreale3@gmail.com

Keywords: wealth, material goods, civic historiography, Giovanni Villani, Italy, civic humanism, communal politics, factionalism, chronicles

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Appendix: Italian Civic Historiographic Texts, 1260–1355

Accepted Title	Author	Language	Start Date	End Date	City or Region	Edition Cited
Liber chronicarum sive Memoriale temporum de factis in Marchia et prope ad Marchiam Tarvisinam libris XII	Rolandino of Padua	Latin	1260		Padua	Rolandinus Patavinus, *Chronica a. 1188-1260*. ed. Philippe Jaffé, in MGH Scriptores 19 (Hannover, 1866), 32-147; Rolandino Patavino, *The Chronicles of the Trevisan March*, trans. Joseph R. Berrigan (Lawrence, KS, 1980).
Les Estoires de Venise	Martin da Canal	French (Franco-Venetian)	1267	1275	Venice	Martino da Canale, *Les estoires de Venise: Cronaca veneziana in lingua francese dalle origini al 1275*, ed. Alberto Limentani (Florence, 1972); Martin da Canal, *Les Estoires de Venise*, trans. Laura K. Morreale (Padova, 2009).
Gesta Florentinorum	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	1270?		Florence	*Gesta Florentinorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler, in *Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca*, MGH Scriptores, n.s. 8 (Berlin, 1930), 243-77.

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Cronica	Salimbene de Adam	Latin	1283	1288	Parma	Salimbene da Parma, *Cronica fratris Salimbene de Adam Ordinis minorum*, ed. O. Holder-Egger, in MGH Scriptores 32 (Hannover, 1905).
De magnalibus Mediolani	Bonvesin de la Riva	Latin	1288		Milan	Bonvesin de la Riva, *De magnalibus Mediolani/Meraviglie di Milano*, ed. and trans. P. Chiesa (Milan, 1997).
Chronica de origine civitatis Florentie	Anonymous	Latin	mid-13th		Florence	"Chronica de origine civitatis Florentie," ed. O. Hartwig, in *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz* (Marburg, 1875), 37–60.
Libro Fiesolano	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	unknown	1290	Florence	"Libro Fiesolano," ed. O. Hartwig, in *Quellen und Forschungen zur ältesten Geschichte der Stadt Florenz* (Marburg, 1875), 37-60.
Chronichetta Pisana	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	1279		Pisa	"Chronichetta Pisana, scritta nel 1279," ed. Ernesto Monaci, in *Crestomazia Italiana dei primi* secoli (Rome and Naples, 1955), 406-407.

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Continued

Accepted Title	Author	Language	Start Date	End Date	City or Region	Edition Cited
Annali	Iacopo Doria	Latin	1280	1293	Genoa	Jacopo d'Oria, *Annali genovesi di Caffaro e de' suoi continuatori*, ed. Cesare Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, in *Fonti per la storia d'Italia. Scrittore. Secoli XII e XIII*, 11-14bis (Rome, 1901), 3-176.
Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae	Anonymous	Latin	1289	1293	Veneto, Lombardy	*Chronicon Marchiae Tarvisinae et Lombardiae*, ed. L. A. Botteghi, in RIS^2 8:3 (Città di Castello, 1916).
Cronaca	Ogerio Alfieri	Latin	1294		Asti	Ogerio Alfieri, *Cronaca*, ed. and trans. Natale Ferro, in *Gli Antichi cronisti astesi: Ogerio Alfieri, Guglielmo Ventura e Secondino Ventura: Secondo il testo dei Monumenta Historiae Patriae, volume V, Scriptores tomo III, Torino 1848* (Alexandria, Italy, 1990), 7-25.

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Cronaca Pisana del secolo XIV	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	late 13th/ early 14th		Pisa	"Cronaca Pisana Ronciana," ed. Emilio Cristiani, in "Gli avvenimenti pisani del periodo Ugoliniano in una cronaca inedita," *Bolletino Storico Pisano* 26 (1957): 3-55; and 27 (1958): 56-104.
Chronichetta antica di Firenze	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	late 13th		Florence	"Chronichetta antica di Firenze 1110-1273," ed. Giuseppe Baccini, in *Zibaldone: Notizie, aneddoti curiosita e documenti inediti o rari* 1 (Florence, 1888), 97-106.
Chronicon	Pietro Cantinelli	Latin	late 13th		Romagna	*Petri Cantinelli Chronicon (aa. 1228-1306)*, ed. F. Torraca, in RIS[2] 28:2 (Città di Castello, 1902).
Cronaca	Jacob of Voragine	Latin	1295	1298	Genoa	*Iacopo da Varagine e la sua Cronaca di Genova dalle origini al MCCXCVII*, ed. Giovanni Monleone (Rome, 1941); *Jacopo da Varagine's Chronicle of the City of Genoa*, trans. C. E. Beneš (Manchester, 2020).

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Accepted Title	Author	Language	Start Date	End Date	City or Region	Edition Cited
Cronica fiorentina compilata nel saec. XIII	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	1285	1297	Florence	"Cronica fiorentina compilata nel saec. XIII," ed. A. Schiaffini. in *Testi Fiorentini del duegento e dei primi del trecento* (Florence, 1954), 82-150.
Chronichetta Lucchese	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	late 13th		Lucca	"Antica cronichetta lucchese già della biblioteca di M. F. Fiorentini," ed. Salvatore Bongi. in *Atti di Reale Accademica lucchese di scienze, letteratura e arti* 26 (1889-93): 215-54.
Cronica	Paolino Pieri	Vernacular Italian	1303	1305	Florence	Paolino Pieri, *Cronica di Paolino Pieri fiorentino delle cose d'Italia dall'anno 1080 fino all'anno 1305*, ed. Anton Filippo Adami (Rome, 1975).
Cronaca	Goffredo da Bussero	Latin	late 13th		Milan	L. Graziale, "La Cronaca di Goffredo da Bussero," *Archivio storico lombardo* 4 (1906): 211–45.

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Ricordanze	Guido Filippi dell'Antella	Vernacular Italian	early 14th		Florence	F. Polidori, "Ricordanze di Filippo dell'Antella," *Archivio storico Italiano* 4 (1843): 5–24.
Annales	Ptolomy of Lucca	Latin	1303	1305	Lucca	*Die Annalen des Tholomeus von Lucca in doppelter Fassung nebst Teilen der Gesta Florentinorum und der Gesta Lucanorum*, ed. B. Schmeidler (Berlin,1955).
Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suo	Dino Compagni	Vernacular Italian	1310	1312	Florence	Dino Compagni, *Cronica delle cose occorrenti ne' tempi suo*, ed. Guido Bezzola (Milan, 1982); *Dino Compagni's Chronicle of Florence*, trans. Daniel Bornstein (Philadelphia, 1986).
Chronica Parva Ferrariensis	Riccobaldo of Ferrara	Latin	1311	1317	Ferrera	Riccobaldo da Ferrara, *Chronica Parva Ferrariensis*, ed. Gabriele Zanella (Ferrara, 1983).
Chronici Cremonensis Fragmentum	Anonymous	Latin	14th century		Cremona	*Chronici Cremonensis Fragmentum*, ed. Philippe Jaffé, in MGH, Scriptores 18 (Hannover, 1863), 807-808.
Libri Memoriales	Guido di Vallechia	Latin	unknown	1315	Pisa	Guido da Vallechia, *Libri Memoriales*, ed. M. N. Conti (La Spezia, 1973).

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Accepted Title	Author	Language	Start Date	End Date	City or Region	Edition Cited
Memoriale	Guglielmo Ventura	Latin	unknown	1325	Asti	Guglielmo Ventura, *Memoriale*, ed. and trans. Natale Ferro, in *Gli Antichi cronisti astesi: Ogerio Alfieri, Guglielmo Ventura e Secondino Ventura: Secondo il testo dei Monumenta Historiae Patriae, Volume V, Scriptores tomo III, Torino 1848* (Alexandria, Italy, 1990), 27-153.
Nuova Cronica	Giovanni Villani	Vernacular Italian	1320	1330	Florence	Giovanni Villani, *Nuova Cronica*, ed. Giuseppe Porta, 3 vols. (Parma, 1990-91).
Annali	Simone della Tosa	Vernacular Italian	1320	1340	Florence	Simone della Tosa, "Annali della Tosa," ed. D. M. Manni, in *Chronichette antiche di vari scrittori del buon secolo della lingua Toscana* (Florence, 1733), 125-71.
Cronaca di Perugia	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	1327	1336	Perugia	Francesco Ugolini, "Annali e cronaca di Perugia in volgare dal 1191 al 1336," *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia dell'università di Perugia* 1 (1963-64): 141-336.

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Frammento di Cronica	Giovanni di Durante	Vernacular Italian	1334	1345	Florence	Giovanni di Durante, "Frammento di Cronica," ed. Domenico Velluti, in *Cronica di Firenze* (Florence, 1731), 141-48.
Fragmenta Historiae Pisanae	Anonymous	Latin	14th	1337	Pisa	"Fragmenta Historiae Pisanae," ed. Lodovico Muratori, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* 24:1 (Milan, 1738), cols. 643-72.
Chronicon Parmense ab anno 1308 usque ad annum 1338	Anonymous	Latin	14th		Parma	*Chronicon Parmense ab anno 1308 usque ad annum 1338*, ed. Giuliano Bonazzi, in RIS^2 9:9 (Città di Castello, 1902).
Historia rerum in Italia gestarum ab anno MCCL ad annum MCCCXVIII	Ferretto de Feretti	Latin		1337	Vicenza	Ferretto de Ferreti, "Historia rerum in Italia gestarum ab anno MCCL ad annum MCCCXVIII," in *Le opere di Ferretto de' Ferretti vicentino*, vol. 1 (1908).
Libro di Ricordanze	Luca di Totto Panzano	Vernacular Italian	1340	1374	Florence	P. Berti, "Frammenti della cronaca di messer Luca di Totto da Panzano da una copia di Vincenzio Borghini," *Giornale storico degli archivi toscani* 5 (1861): 58-78.

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Storie Pistoresi	Anonymous	Vernacular Italian	unknown	1348	Pistoia	*Storie Pistoresi*, ed. S. A. Barbi, in RIS^2 11:5 (Città di Castello, 1907-27), 3-239.
Cronaca Lolliana	Anonymous	Latin and Vernacular Italian	unknown	mid-14th	Bologna	*"Chronicon Bononiense," in* G. Ortalli, *Alle origini della cronachistica Bolognese: Il Chronicon Bononiense (o Cronaca Lolliana*) (Rome, 1999), 41-67.
Cronaca Villola	Pietro and Floriano Villola		1334	1372	Bologna	"Cronica Villola," ed. A. Sorbelli, in *Corpus Chronicorum Bononiensium*, RIS^2 18.1-4 (Città di Castello, 1910-40).
Speccio umano	Domenico Lenzi	Vernacular Italian	1339	1347	Florence	Domenico Lenzi, *Il Libro del Biadaiolo*, ed. Giuliano Pinto (Florence, 1978).
Opusculum de Rebus Gestis	Galvaneus Flamma	Latin	1330	1344	Milan	Galvanno Fiamma, *Opusculum de Rebus Gestis*, ed. Carlo Castiglione (Bologna, 1938).

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Chronica circularis	Bonifacius de Morano	Latin	unknown	1347	Modena	Bonifacius de Morano, *Chronica circulari*, ed. L. Vischi et al., in *Cronache Modenesi di A. Tassoni, G. da Bazzano, B. Morano* (Modena, 1888).
Cronaca aquilana rimata di Buccio di Ranallo di Popplito di Aquila	Buccio di Ranallo	Vernacular Italian	after 1355		L'Aquila	Buccio di Ranallo, *Cronaca aquilana rimata di Buccio di Ranallo di Popplito di Aquila*, ed. Vincenzo De Bartholomaeis (Rome, 1907).
Cronaca di Partenope	Bartolomeo Caracciolo?	Vernacular Italian	1350		Naples	*The Cronaca di Partenope: An Introduction to and Critical Edition of the First Vernacular History of Naples (c. 1350)*, ed. Samantha Kelly (Leiden, 2011).
Chronincon mutinese	Giovanni da Bazzano	Latin		1363	Modena	Giovanni da Bazzano, "Chronincon mutinese," ed. L. Vischi et al., in *Cronache Modenesi di A. Tassoni, G. da Bazzano, B. Morano* (Modena, 1888).
Chronica Placentina	Pietro da Ripalta	Latin		1374	Piacenza	Pietro da Ripalta, *Chronica Placentina nella trascrizione di Jacopo Mori (Ms. Pallastrelli 6)*, ed. Mario Fillìa and Claudia Binello (Piacenza, 1995).